

## Ministry biased against NRI husbands?

I would like to bring your attention towards the website of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA). There is a section which talks about the issue of 'failed and fraudulent' marriages with NRIs (<http://www.moia.gov.in/dfmain1.asp?tid=1>). Ironically, the ministry intended to protect NRI rights is trying to put all the blame for such failed marriages on NRIs. The website also published the letter sent by the MOIA secretary to all the chief secretaries of Indian states in this regard. There is also a draft of an *Information Booklet On Marriages to Overseas Indians* which the MOIA wants to publish.

A cursory reading shows how outrageous the contents are. All the examples of 'typical incidents' the booklet cites suggests that the overseas Indian groom and his family members are cruel, arrogant and indulge in fraud. Further, it suggests that the overseas Indian (abbreviated to OI in the booklet), and his family members are solely responsible for failed/failing overseas marriages. Every 'overseas marriage' has similar problems as an marriage in which the couple lives in India.

'Overseas Marriage' has additional caveats due to immigration/visa issues. Indian government, The National Commission on Women and other women organizations cannot say that the husband's family is mostly responsible for 'sufferings of women who are the victims of marriage to Overseas Indians.'

If any of the above organization has cited the statistics to support their findings, it must be present on MOIA's site (along with its source). Is the Indian government trying to suggest that OI's beat and abuse women and lack respect for the institution of marriage and their wife? Is the government trying to prove that the NRIs who bring fame, glory and prestige for the nation are bunch of cruel people.

I have seen umpteen cases here in the United States where in a tense relationship, the wife goes back to India and files a false dowry harassment charge and misuses IPC 498a to get back at the husband's family.

There are cases where a wife wants to support her family in India by sending them part of husband's earning and when husband objects to that, problems start in their marital life. There are cases where marriage turns sour when wife tries to control husband's life in various ways.

The booklet must provide details and directions for both men (including OIs) and women about how they can protect their own rights before, during and after marriage both in India as well as overseas. The MOIA should also publish the names of the NGOs, law agencies and addresses of the people who helped MOIA prepare this draft. The booklet should help all the Indian citizens irrespective of their gender and location. The MOIA should consider the facts and such views before finalizing the contents.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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