

Dharna in Pune City on 29th March
Demand: Men's Welfare Ministry
Shivaji Nagar Court, Gate # 1, Pune City from 11 AM to 2 PM

Requesting your journalists and anchors to attend the protest for coverage

Save Indian Family Foundation
In association with Mynation Foundation

<http://www.saveindianfamily.org>

<http://www.mensday.in>

<http://www.498a.org>

<http://www.mynation.net>

<http://www.protectindianfamily.org>

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PRESS RELEASE

(Soft copy of this press release can be downloaded from http://pressroom.prlog.org/siff_pune/)

Misuse of anti-dowry laws and other woman-protection laws has now become a well recognized problem in India. Increasing number of aged parents, sisters, pregnant women and even little children in the husband's family are falsely accused and arrested under these inhumane laws, and find themselves defenseless against the systematic harassment unleashed thereafter by the state sponsored institutions.

To protest against this outrageous and horrific legal terrorism sponsored by the state and its institutions Save Indian Family Foundation (SIFF) will conduct a protest On Saturday, 29th March 2008, demanding the establishment of Men's Welfare ministry and National Commission for Men (NCM). People from all walks of life including Software engineers, doctors, drivers and plumbers will participate in this protest. Azim Premji, CEO of Wipro, who faced a false and frivolous Domestic violence case by wife of an employee of Wipro, has also been invited to the protest. In addition, several reputed lawyers from Pune city have been invited and are expected to attend the event.

The location of the Protest will be in front of Shivaji Nagar Court, Gate # 1 and the time of the protest is from 11:00am till 2:00pm. About 150 men, women, elders and children are expected to participate in the protest. Most of them are scientists, NRIs, Software Engineers, Doctors, Lawyers and Business persons. The protests will be held every month in different parts of India till Indian parliament amends the laws to "stop legal terrorism" and makes all the laws "gender neutral" and "crime based". A series of protests have been conducted in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Lucknow in the last three months for the same purpose by respective chapters of Save Indian Family Foundation.

Over the years, various responsible agencies including Indian Judiciary have stressed on the need for amending these atrocious laws. The World Health Organization identified misuse of IPC Section 498A as the prominent reason for elder abuse in India. The Supreme Court of India has described the misuse of IPC Section 498A as 'Legal Terrorism', and stressed that the law must be amended in order to protect the innocent, and to ensure justice to the genuinely aggrieved. Rational and responsible citizens from all over the country and abroad have repeatedly warned that these laws in their present form are detrimental to family harmony, and left unchecked, these laws have enormous potential to shatter marital and family stability in years to come.

While ordinary law-abiding men, along with women, senior citizens and children, are being summarily arrested and ruthlessly incarcerated on false charges of dowry harassment every day, the Government has not raised a finger yet. It was not until the Union Minister for Human Resources Development (Mr. Arjun Singh) was accused of dowry harassment that Smt. Renuka Chaudhary (Union Minister for Women welfare) finally acknowledged the misuse of anti-dowry laws in public. What is deeply agonizing to us is that contrary to the way common men and women are arrested immediately and suspended from their jobs, the Government is according special concessions to the HRD Minister Mr. Arjun Singh who is not arrested till date or has been suspended from his job yet, thereby demonstrating that the otherwise brutal anti-dowry laws do not apply equally to all citizens of India. In addition, Union Minister for Coal Mines (Mr. Dasari Narayan Rao) who faces dowry harassment charges by his daughter-in-law is also not arrested or suspended from his job yet violating the norm followed for common citizens.

Today, men and women in his family are facing a lot of issues due to lack of protection to men according to law from extortion, dowry harassment (of men), domestic violence and economic abuse. According to National Crime Records Bureau, in **every 10 minutes a husband is committing suicide in India due to domestic violence and financial abuse by wife and her family**. About 90,000 innocent women were arrested in the last four years on false dowry harassment cases alone. The grim statistics from National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) speaks volumes about the systematic abuse of men in India.

The current Domestic Violence act (DV act 2006) was drafted by divorced women lawyers, whose expertise on 1st principle of law making and justice is questionable. Some of their key members are unable to understand that words police, bail, jail, bonds have no place in DV act which is supposed to be civil law. The current Domestic violence Act suffers from too many maladies including the fact that the definition is wrong, procedures are wrong and the relief is wrong. There have been many instances wherein violent and abusive women have got their way not to mention the fact that under the law men have no rights or protection from any kind of abuse. The law is used grab the property and wealth created by Elderly People out of their retirement funds and force them out of their own homes to live in temples and gurudwaras. This has removed the peaceful residency rights of elderly people from their own hard earned homes and unleashed "legal violence" on elderly. **The Supreme Court of India has termed the DV Act as a badly drafted law, which can lead to "social chaos"**.

That the Dowry law and Section 498a of IPC are being heavily misused is no longer in question. As per National Crime Records Bureau (2005) more than 98% of the dowry harassment cases are false. **The judges have spoken**. Justice Malimath Committee has already recommended the law to be made bailable. Justice Arijit Pasayat and Justice Seema of Supreme Court have already spoken in anguish about it and termed the misuse of Section 498a as "legal Terrorism". They also urged the legislature/parliament to make provisions to **stop misuse of the Law**. The Indian parliament has ignored this judgment and repeated requests by Supreme Court to stop misuse of dowry law for last 2 years for reasons best known to them.

The judgments denouncing the legal terrorism are too numerous. Considering families as "guilty till proven innocent" is against the cardinal principles of natural justice.

The impact of the legal terrorism is enormous:

- **In every 6 minutes an innocent is arrested.**
- **In every 30 minutes an innocent woman is arrested.**
- **In every 2 hours an innocent elderly is arrested**
- **In every day an innocent child and a pregnant women are arrested**

Source: National Crime Records Bureau 2005

Thousands of men are forcibly separated from own their children if there are any differences between the couple. Thousands of children today are living as fatherless children as they are forcibly disconnected from their fathers. As a result, the suicide rate of Indian Men is increasing at a rapid rate. At present, about 73000 men commit suicide out of 113,000 over all suicides in India every year. The Married men's suicide is extremely high (52483 suicides) and at least 24000 married men commit suicide directly due to domestic violence by wives and till date there is no law to save them (source : National Crime Bureau). Recent suicides and suicide notes left by Late Mr. Pushkar Singh (Lucknow) and Late Mr. Amit Budhiraja (Bangalore) where they have explicitly mentioned the threats of false dowry cases for their suicide, point to the terrible systematic abuse driving innocent people to commit suicide due to lack of any other option.

The contribution and sacrifices that men make to society with commitment and shear hard work are often neglected. Slapping Men by women is considered a fashion and is encouraged in TV commercials, TV Serials and in Movies, where as if a man slaps a woman then it is considered as worst form of domestic assault and a hue and cry is raised. It has become a fashion to abuse men and to portray them in bad light.

Save Indian Family Foundation also demands a commission for Men Issues. When there can be commissions and ministries for women, children, minorities and even Animals, why there can not be a Men's Welfare Ministry and National Commission for Men (NCM)? After all, it is the Men who work in most hazardous and difficult environments like working as a Coolie, a rickshaw puller, a fire fighter, a soldier or garbage cleaner. **In every 10 minutes a married man commits suicide in India**. Life expectancy of men is lesser than women. The tax money paid by men contributes to 84% of all funds to government and it is appalling that this same money given by them is used to abuse, harass and torture those very people who contribute this money to run the government and society.

Some of the demands by Save Indian Family Foundation:

1. That 498a (Dowry law), DV act 2006 and Dowry act be made gender neutral. All laws must be crime based and not based on religion, caste or gender as it is against the fundamental principles of humanity. A murder committed by woman is no less a crime than a murder committed by man. Slapping husband is as heinous as slapping wife and hence both must invite equal punishment by amending Domestic Violence Act (DV act 2006). Gifts given by husband during or after marriage to wife or any of her family members must be treated as dowry given by husband to wife and must be treated as his property to be returned to his family in the event of his un-natural death.
2. Set up Men's welfare ministry and National Commission for Men to reduce the alarming number of 73,000 men suicide per year. In comparison, married women suicide rate is just 26,000 per year.
3. Senior citizens in this country have no security or protection in their old age due to the abuse of these gender biased laws and are mercilessly thrown out of their own homes and forced to run around courts. We want senior citizen abuse to stop immediately. We want that young members of family must support elders. In the event of un-natural death of a son, we demand that the duty to care for the old in-laws must be given to his widow by default and strictly implemented. It is often difficult for senior citizens to work for a living in the last phase of life and it must be the duty of young members in the family including daughter-in-law to help the weak and old members during their most vulnerable phase.
4. Stop country's next generation kids from growing without fathers (so called Pappa) and becoming criminals. A shared parenting (Equal custodial rights) must be the default in the event of a divorce, unless there is undeniable evidence to prove the cruelty of either spouse. With concessions accorded to women in education, jobs, income-tax payment and promotions it is far easier for women to find work and hence the idea of alimony must be made gender neutral and applicable to both spouses based on economic status rather than gender.
5. Punishment to those who file false cases once the above amendments (making laws crime based and gender neutral) are made. This will prevent false and frivolous cases from being filed. As per National Crime Record Bureau (2005 records), 98% of the dowry harassment cases were false. This puts tremendous burden on the state judicial and police machinery and has prevented genuine victims from getting justice (as it takes about 10 to 15 years for any case to reach its logical conclusion).
6. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has reported that Tihar jail is overflowing with innocent victims of false dowry cases who are the majority of inmates. This over crowding of jails has resulted in criminals roaming on the streets while innocent are lodged in jails and has tremendously increased crime in society. In addition, the over burdened police is not able to concentrate on its other critical duties like watching terrorists and this has increased the terrorism in the country as witnessed by recent serial bomb blasts in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.
7. Spread awareness of the abuse of men and misuse of laws amongst authorities.
8. Gender neutrality training (as opposed to biased gender sensitivity training) to all authorities, police and judiciary. Crimes do not have religion, caste or gender and hence we demand that no laws be based on religion, caste or gender and create needless divisions and abuse innocent in the society.
9. Include help booths to protect abused men suffering from domestic violence or financial abuse by wife to be run by NGOs in the Police Commissioner's offices.
10. Celebrate International Men's day and recognize the tremendous contributions of men to society in the role of a son, brother, husband and father.
11. All family laws must be drafted by retired judges and preferably include grand mothers and grand fathers who have led successful family lives, understand the nuances of family issues and know how to solve them in an amicable way. Sadistic and failed women from national women commission have no role to play in family affairs as they have proven themselves to be anti-social with their activities of abuse on innocent.

This necessitates that Government appoint a **Men's Welfare Ministry and National Commission for Men (NCM)** immediately to look into the issues holistically and provide relief to all citizens irrespective of gender and age.

On **29th March (Saturday)**, SIFF NGO activists from various cities of India will conduct a protest in front of **Shivaji Nagar Court, Gate # 1, Pune City** from **11 AM to 2 PM** to demand formation of Men's Welfare Ministry and National Commission for Men (NCM). SIFF is requesting you to cover this protest by sending your journalists and anchors to attend the event, who will be regarded as invited guests.

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