

MARRIAGE IN CRISIS!**Restore hope for your marriage****Chief Guest: Honorable Justice Kailash Gambhir (Delhi High Court)***(January 17th 2009, 3PM - 6PM Tagore Hall, Scope Convention Centre, Scope Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi – 110 003)**(Contact: Dr. Anupama Singh Phone: 9810452017 E-mail: seminar@rakshakfoundation.org)*

The Great Indian Wedding is succumbing to the Great Indian Divorce. The Indian family is definitely under threat with divorce rates having nearly tripled nationwide within the last decade. There has been a profound metamorphosis of values in a nation trotting toward new affluence. Delhi, the nation's capital, is also the divorce capital of the country, with about 9,000 cases, or almost double the number registered in family courts four years ago. Mumbai captured recent headlines when news surfaced that for every five weddings registered since 2002, family courts have received two applications for divorce. "Economic Growth" while bringing with it the rewards of a better lifestyle also brought excessive materialism, unrealistic expectations, and stressful professional lives all of which strain the matrimonial dynamics.

The panelists will discuss the reasons for increasing legal disputes arising from matrimony. Traditional Indian society has always upheld the sanctity of the family, as the stability of the family unit is at the core of social stability. The encouragement for reconciliation between couples has therefore, always been prioritized with divorce being a last resort. Irrespective of gender, bitter contested divorces do not create winners, invariably stretching the resources of both partners. Divorce has never been associated with an increase in the emotional well-being of unhappily married spouses. Divorce does not make unhappily married spouses personally happier, or reduce depression or increase self esteem. By ending a strained marriage, divorce relieves some sources of emotional distress. At the same time divorce can create new sources of distress, from financial troubles to new relationship problems. Seeking legal redressal for every real or imagined dispute within a marriage has resulted in an ever increasing spiral of marital disputes reaching the courts. The ponderous Indian Justice system based on arcane and obsolete marital laws offers hardly any useful "counseling" or opportunities for "rapprochement". The Indian Justice System is practically choked. At the current rate, India could soon have the highest number of estranged couples quagmired in marital disputes festering for years and denied a fresh and healthy new beginning. This backlog of millions of matrimonial cases would also mean delaying and denying justice to victims of grave crimes like murder, dacoity, terrorism, etc. that actually need to be addressed on priority! With over 3 crore cases pending, it is already beginning to have a "snowball" effect.

Given that rapid socio-economic changes have metamorphosed the landscape of our society, there is a dire and urgent need for starting and sustaining a national level dialogue on "Preserving and Nourishing Marriage" and approach it in a way that protects the rights of all involved and most importantly that leads to greater social harmony. It is an undisputed fact that as marital strife and divorce rates in any country increase, all manner of crimes increase. Decline of the "Family / Marriage" and prolonged marital litigation result in depleting the Country's savings rate and hamper the long term national economic growth.

This seminar is an attempt to highlight that there is an urgent need for reform of laws relating to all aspects of marriage including divorce, domestic violence, dowry harassment, child custody and visitation rights, maintenance and alimony. The need of the hour is to salvage marriages that haven't gone bad and to speedily end marriages where no rapprochement is possible, to prevent the abuse of laws.

Rakshak Foundation is an international organization dedicated to preserving the family and social values of Indian culture. Rakshak endeavors to create greater awareness amongst Indian Polity and Citizenry, about familial harmony and how to foster the same. We at Rakshak believe that a national policy needs to be devised to review the legal provisions pertaining to matrimony that have failed to protect the rights of innocent victims of both sexes. It is imperative that the law reflect the new challenges faced by modern marriages in India and preserve and cherish the traditional role of family in our society.