

Never ever Nanjundappa has imagined his fate will bring him and his family to such a terrible juncture. Son of a freedom fighter, thin, frail Nanjundappa worked as a post man in the Head Post office in cyber city Bangalore for last 35 years. Over all these years his meager earnings did not stop him from following his father's idles and he brought up his three children with ethics and principles.

He spent all his earnings and sold ancestral land to finance his only son study engineering. He married got his eldest daughter married a few years back. After engineering his son got job in a small software firm and started earning some seven thousand rupees per month. That was of great help to Nanjundappa.

The problems started once he got his son married. By that time, his son started working for a big MNC software firm in Bangalore. His daughter-in-law came from a lower middle class family. Soon after marriage she left for her house and put condition that she will come back only if that she and her husband stay separate from the family. All convincing by family elders went no away and her parents further pampered her. Finally, Nanjundappa agreed to allow his son and daughter-in-law to stay in a separate rented house even against his son's wish. The problems did not reduce even a bit. His daughter-in-law and her parents started insisting that his son must not pay for education and some expenses of the family which also included Nanjundappa's 85 year old father who was a freedom fighter.

Nanjundappa had spent everything saved on his children's education. He had even sold the ancestral land for education of his son. He gets paltry pension now which does not even cover the medical expenses of family. But now, his son foot his foot down and told his wife that she has no right to dictate terms to him and how he treats his family. His wife immediately left his house and next day Nanjundappa's son heard there is police outside his company asking to see him. He reached police station along with his father. His wife has complained at the police with her lawyer uncle that she is being mentally and physically harassed by her in-laws and husband along with a whole bunch of lies. The counselors in police station started bullying them so that they will give in writing that Nanjundappa's son must not pay anything and must not visit his parents. His son refused. His daughter-in-law gave the ultimatum that if they do not comply in 2 days, she will get the entire family arrested and put inside jail.

Next day morning, police walked into their house and arrested Nanjundappa, his wife, his son, his 5-months pregnant eldest daughter, his younger daughter studying BSc in a local college. They are immediately sent to the central prison in Bangalore. The FIR was lodged by his daughter-in-law that she was harassed mentally and physically and that is enough under section 498a of Indian Penal Code for arrest of all family members without any investigation by police. After 4 days, a family friend got a lawyer to apply bail for the entire family. In another 5 days, the family got released and returned home. The bail had the condition that he and his 85 year old father (who was also accused) must visit police station every Monday morning and give attendance.

Now, the entire family is shattered. Nanjundappa cries "Who will marry my younger daughter. My daughter-in-law ruined my family."

He went to the local NGOs and women organizations seeking some help. They told him to get lost. He keeps running to local Human Rights organizations. They all told him that they have not time for people who are falsely accused under section 498a and they have high priorities like women empowerment and other human rights issued. Nanjundappa retorts "Is not my wife a woman? Is not my pregnant daughter and my unmarried daughter women who got jailed without any fault?"

The daughter-in-law and son were staying separately and where is the question of harassment?" The daughter-in-law has not complained of any dowry harassment as no dowry was taken by their community. He had only complained of mental and physical harassment.

Nanjundappa wonders how can innocent women, old people be arrested with a word alone of daughter-in-law and that too without any investigation. He asks "How does Indian constitution allow people to be arrested just by one line of complaint by a vicious daughter-in-law?"

He is also extremely critical of human rights organizations. He says "They fight for rights of terrorists and anti-nationals. But they do not have time for innocent people getting jailed and tortured." Govt. of India is trying to change this law called section 498a by a bill in parliament. But many women organizations and human rights organizations oppose this move my govt. saying that "which law is not misused ? and let a few innocents suffer, but the law must be kept as it is ?"

Finally, Nanjundappa's son came to know about a group of 1000 techies, NRIs who themselves have been victims of this massive section 498a scam in India. This group started giving legal and strategic support to the family. The entire family was in tears as they recounted their ordeal in the first meeting with this group which calls itself "Save Indian Family" and works with a bunch of highly dynamics NGOs tackling these issues in Bangalore, Delhi, Pune and Kolkata.

Now, Nanjundappa feels a bit relief with support from these NGOs even though his entire family has to make rounds at court in each month.