

To
Shri. Vayalar Ravi
Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs
India

Date: Dec 31st, 2006

Subject: False dowry cases by women of Indian origin, defamation of Overseas Indians by MOIA and Interpol Red Corner Notices on falsely accused Overseas Indians

Dear Sir,

I, Vandana Jhingan, am a reporter for TV Asia. I met with you at Gaylord restaurant in Schaumburg (Chicago) on July 9th 2006 during your visit to the United States. We discussed (1) the issue of false dowry cases on Overseas Indians and (2) the extremely biased booklet on Marriages with Overseas Indians published by your Ministry. I am writing to express my deep concern over the rapidly worsening situation of Overseas Indians and the highly antagonistic attitude of your Ministry towards the Overseas Indian community.

I learned that a group of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in the United States had personally met with you in June 2006 to discuss the increasing harassment of Overseas Indians due to the misuse of anti-dowry laws (especially IPC section 498a). I understand that you had acknowledged the prevalence of the problem on multiple occasions. During my personal meeting with you in the United States in July 2006, I broached the topic of the misuse of dowry related laws by women of Indian origin to blackmail, extort money from and seek revenge on NRI husbands and their India-based families. Interestingly, during that meeting, you expressed your ignorance of such problems due to being new to your office, but assured me that you would look into the issue and convey your response through your officers

I also understand that a group of NRIs in the United States had met with the Consular General of United States in San Francisco, in May 2006, to express their concerns over the then proposed MOIA Booklet on Marriages with Overseas Indians, which made blatant generalizations denigrating Overseas Indian husbands. I am also informed that this group of NRIs had invested a lot of thought, time and effort into preparing an unbiased, gender neutral booklet that accurately portrays the potential problems in Overseas Indian marriages, and discusses measures to prevent or cope with fraud, abuse or failure of marriage with a person of Indian origin in a foreign country. This well-researched booklet was circulated to many authorities including the Consular Generals of the United States and the Ministry of Overseas Indian affairs. I am aware that the booklet was also personally handed to you, in June 2006, by the same group of NRIs, and while you expressed your sympathy, you refused to act, fearing protests and demonstrations, by radical feminists.

I have personally written to you twice stressing that the booklet proposed by MOIA unfairly assumes that only women married to Overseas Indian men are victims of fraud, abandonment or harassment while the truth is that hundreds of Overseas Indian men have been defrauded, abandoned, harassed and tortured by conniving women, who eventually file false dowry cases in India. I urged you to ensure that the booklet is made gender neutral in order to represent the interests of both men and women in Overseas Indian marriages. Many Overseas Indians have also commented on the MOIA website expressing their protest against the outrageous statements made in the MOIA booklet defaming the Overseas Indian community at large. Just to remind you, here are some of the exaggerated and demeaning claims in the booklet:

- Overseas Indian husbands and their families are solely responsible for failed and fraudulent marriages
- Overseas Indian husbands physically, emotionally and financially harass their wives
- Overseas Indian husbands get married for dowry and abandon/divorce their wives after a short honeymoon

Despite the repeated suggestions by NRIs in the United States to make the MOIA booklet balanced and truly informative and useful to Indian citizens, the biased version with lopsided views, was published, reflecting

your utter disregard to the concerns of Overseas Indians . In addition, the MOIA, in collaboration with the National Commission for Women, has also conducted workshops to publicize the biased MOIA booklet, thus propagating hostility against Overseas Indians among the Indian public .

I would like to emphasize that the situation of Overseas Indians has gone from bad to worse ever since you assumed office in January 2006.

1. Some Indian men have lost their hard-earned overseas jobs and have been forced to relocate to India to fight long-drawn false dowry cases in order to prove their innocence.
2. Overseas Indians, who unwittingly landed in India for various reasons have been and are being arrested, ill treated and exploited by the police and the legal system.
3. The passport of a falsely implicated Overseas Indian is invariably seized as one of the conditions for granting bail, and subsequently, the accused person is required to furnish enormous amounts of security in order to retrieve his/her passport.
4. Overseas Indians who choose to remain abroad due to the fear of "legal harassment" are either being declared "proclaimed offenders" or threatened of being declared "proclaimed offenders" .
5. Red corner notices are being indiscriminately issued by the Government of India, through the Interpol, seeking the extradition of several Overseas Indians, thus equating innocent citizens with dreaded criminals like Dawood Ibrahim.
6. Hundreds of Overseas Indians and their families are suffering immeasurable economic hardship and emotional trauma due to false criminal cases.

It is very disappointing that the very Ministry that is responsible for ensuring the interests of Overseas Indians, has thoughtlessly backstabbed the entire Overseas Indian community. Overseas Indians have significant financial, intellectual and emotional investment in India. Hundreds of Overseas Indians embraced India, and enthusiastically participated in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2006; they are about to celebrate the occasion again in January 2007. The MOIA has been successful in swindling the resources of Overseas Indians in ever manner possible, but made no efforts to use an important occasion like the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to spread awareness regarding the alarming rate of increase in false dowry cases on Overseas Indians. Instead, the MOIA has been deplorably opportunistic in hiding its biased booklet on Marriages with Overseas Indians and the harsh and hostile policies it has framed against Overseas Indians. Such antagonistic attitude of MOIA against Overseas Indians is impeding the progress of extremely talented, intelligent and resourceful young Indians in India and abroad, and this trend reflects very badly on the Ministry and our country as a whole. On behalf of all Overseas Indians I demand a response from you regarding the role of your Ministry in addressing the issue of false dowry cases on Overseas Indians, the defamation of Overseas Indians by your Ministry and the increasing number of Interpol Red Corner Notices on falsely accused Overseas Indians.

Thank you,
Vandana Jhingan
TV Asia
Chicago, Illinois , USA