

# THE HINDU

Date:11/08/2007 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2007/08/11/stories/2007081156641600.htm>

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## Now, harassed NRI grooms

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NEW DELHI: While the country struggles to deal with the issue of brides abandoned by the Non-Resident Indians (NRI), not much attention seems to be given to the NRI grooms who allege “duping, cheating, humiliation and harassment” by the brides.

Raising the issue here at a press conference, a number of harassed grooms spoke about the exploitation by Indian brides for immigration, visa or a permanent residency of a foreign land. They alleged they were “blackmailed,” their family members put behind bars and many of them even lost their jobs following false complaints under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code. Organised by “498a” (an Internet forum for harassed NRIs) and Rakshak, a non-governmental organisation, the victims spoke about their harassment through video-conferencing. They said that efforts by them to raise the issue with the Indian Government had met with resentment and hostility.

The Government apathy to the plight of these innocent men is best exemplified by the Ministry specially created for NRI affairs — the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. It was expected to liaise between the NRIs and people in India, but was steadfastly pursuing an “anti-NRI agenda” by acting under undue pressure and influence from the National Commission for Women and the Ministry of Women Child Development, said Anupama Singh, convener of Rakshak.

“The Government is considering further gender-biased legislation against the NRIs, which are based on faulty assumptions and unsubstantiated statistics. While one may have heard about the 30,000 NRI abandoned brides, one may not know that these numbers are largely unconfirmed.”

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