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Ravi remark outrages NRI hubbies

Rajeev Ranjan Roy | New Delhi

Taken aback by the insensitivity of Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi to the blatant abuse of anti-dowry laws, the abandoned non-resident Indian (NRI) husbands have renewed their appeals to political heavyweights to intervene and respond to their pleas for justice.

"The Minister's lukewarm response to our sufferings caused by the malicious abuse of anti-dowry laws comes to us as a big shock.

"Such posturing amounts to encouraging the abuse of anti-dowry laws by the vested interests," Satya Kumar of 498a.org said on phone from the US.

At the curtain raiser media interaction on Friday on the upcoming Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in New Delhi on January 7-8, Ravi rejected the arguments about the abuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code and that there was need to ring an alarm.

"Very few cases of abuse of Section 498A have been reported, while the number of dowry harassment cases runs into thousands. My advice to them is sort out differences and live a happy life. Otherwise, only courts can decide on such matters," Ravi had said.

The Pioneer on Saturday received a number of calls and e-mails, expressing dismay at the Centre's unwillingness to look into their grievances. "It is shocking that the Government is not ready to look into cries for help. We just want them to check abuse of anti-dowry laws which is being done with ulterior motives," Kumar said.

"Hopefully, all NRIs will take note of Ravi's sayings and respond. Why is his Government helping and protecting the US citizen women who have kidnapped US citizen children from abroad after losing custody battles in divorce cases and taking in excess of Rs 2 crore from joint marital assets, are being given safe haven in India," R Mehta asked.

"Is it not immoral for Government officials in India to allow such women to extort, blackmail and destroy our children's future and psychological well being by not allowing them access to their natural and sole custodial father for many years, based on false 498A cases," he asked.

Section 498A, entailing punishment upto three years, aims at protecting women against harassment by husbands or relatives. "We are not against having laws to check dowry cruelties but what mechanism the Government should have when such laws are abused remains a million dollar question," said Anand, a New York-based NRI victim of 498A.

"Although Ravi is MOIA, which is supposed to be gender neutral, his statements, attitude and behaviour are so feminist. Can Ravi share my grief? My wife abducted my children, took them to India and filed a false 498A case in India against me and my parents to prevent me from coming back," said Jerry Wood.

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