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The India Monitor (Jan 9 - Jan 16, 2000 issue Vol.X, No.464, p.16)

The Ambati family, which was embroiled in a dowry-harassment case in India in November 1995, has now been acquitted of all the charges in the dowry harassment case. Kolar Gold Fields sessions judge K.S. Venkoba Rao pronounced the order of acquittal on April 28, 1999.

Dr. Jayakrishna Ambati and his family were accused by his former wife Archana of taking Rs. 50,000 (US \$1,200) in dowry and of mental & physical abuse. The couple was married in June 1995 in Bangarpet, Karnataka and came to the United States shortly thereafter, but Archana returned to India in July.

However, she did not file a police complaint until 4 months later, in November, coinciding with the well-publicized visit of the Ambati family to Visakhapatnam. There they were taken into custody by Sub-Inspector T. Konappa Reddy of the Bangarpet police.

During the course of the trial, which lasted over 3 years, Konappa Reddy, also the investigating officer, admitted that the police had not ascertained the veracity of the complaint, or investigated the reason for the 4 month delay in filing the case, or interviewed any of the witnesses prior to the arrest.

Under cross-examination he also acknowledged that no permission from superior authorities was obtained to cross state lines and arrest the accused. He also admitted that the U.S. Embassy was not informed of the arrest of the Ambati family, who are American Citizens, as per the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

Although the initial chargesheet listed over 20 witnesses, only 2 of the material prosecution witnesses appeared in court during the trial. Even Archana's mother and sister, who initially provided statements to the police did not testify.

At the trial these two witnesses, recanted their earlier statements and testified that they did not witness any demand of dowry by the Ambati family. Assistant-sub-inspector H. Munivenkataiah who initially took the statements of the witnesses, stated under cross-examination that none of the witnesses told him that dowry was demanded by the Ambatis.

In an unrelated twist, Konappa Reddy is himself now facing murder charges for the July 1997 custodial death of Mr. Gopalappa in the Bangarpet police station.

In October 1996, Kolar sessions judge K. Sathyamurthy Holla discharged Dr. Balamurali K. Ambati from the case and dismissed all charges against him for lack of prima facie evidence. Although the state of Karnataka appealed this decision, Justice L. Sreenivasa Reddy of the Karnataka High Court upheld the discharge in April 1998. This decision was appealed by Archana but the Supreme Court of India dismissed the appeal earlier this year.

During the course of the trial the Ambatis produced a tape in which Nanda, the father of Archana, demanded US \$500,000 to drop all the charges. Although the prosecution opposed the production of this audiocassette, Justice Narayan of the Karnataka High Court ruled that such evidence was admissible in February 1999.

The Ambati family feels that although the courts have vindicated them after almost 4 years, the victory is bittersweet. Although Drs. Jayakrishna and Balamurali Ambati and their father Dr. Muralimohan Rao were allowed to leave India and return to India in January 1996, their mother Mrs. Gomathi was not permitted to do so. Despite 3 separate Karnataka High Court rulings that the trial should be completed within 3 months, the case dragged on, and the family was separated for more than 3 ½ years. In addition, Dr. Balamurali Ambati lost 2 years of his professional career because he had to wait until 1998 to commence his ophthalmology residency at Harvard, which he was supposed to join in 1996.

The Ambati family is well known in the New York area for their social and community service. For the last 10 years, they have been conducting free weekly academic classes for hundreds of middle and high school students. Also, they have established a charitable educational foundation, the Ashtavadhani Vidwan Ambati Subbaraya Chetty Foundation, which recognizes and rewards talented students in India and the U.S.

They believe that the close police ties of Nanda, a former honorary Home Guards Commandant, were responsible for the brazen actions of the police. The case achieved tremendous sensationalism because of the celebrity status of Dr. Balamurali Ambati, who at 17 became the world's youngest graduate in 1995. However, little press coverage was given to his discharge or to his family's subsequent acquittal.

The Ambatis feel that this case is a prime example of how the Dowry Prohibition Act can be abused by unscrupulous families to extort innocent families, especially NRIs. They also believe that NRI organizations and the Indian government should take notice of the growing epidemic of false dowry harassment cases filed against NRIs and take steps to curb the spiraling abuse of this law.



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## Wife dumped after a week gets Rs40 lakh as alimony

PTI

Wednesday, March 07, 2007 16:20 IST

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KOLKATA: An NRI doctor has agreed to pay Rs40 lakh as alimony to his wife, from whom he had separated just a week after their marriage six years ago.

Dipak Sharma of New Hampshire in the US has paid Rs30 lakh to his wife Vinita for withdrawing criminal charges she brought against him and his sister and will pay another Rs10 lakh as a divorce settlement.

Sharma, a paediatrician, was married to Vinita of upmarket New Alipore area in this metropolis in 2001 but relations between them soured within a week following serious differences on some issues.

He left for the US just eight days after the wedding and allegedly took with him Rs10 lakh in valuables.

After attempts at a patch-up failed, Vinita filed a police complaint in 2004 under section 498A (dowry-related torture) of the IPC against Sharma and his sister Sunita, who had arranged the marriage.

Learning about this, Sharma gave power of attorney to Sunita, who filed a divorce suit in a court in Delhi.

The West Bengal Women's Commission, which was approached by Vinita, moved the Delhi court and had the case transferred to Kolkata.

Sunita was arrested by West Bengal Police from her residence on January 25 on the basis of a police complaint.

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Following her arrest, Sharma rushed back to India and negotiated a settlement with Vinita.

After getting a bankers' cheque for Rs30 lakh on Tuesday, Vinita approached Justice SK Gupta of Calcutta High Court through the Commission's lawyer Bharati Mutsuddi to quash the case against Sharma in a court in Alipore.

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## PAGE ONE

### For Rs 25 lakh, NRI gets divorce 'settlement'

**Aman Sharma**

**New Delhi, June 25:** FOR Mayur Vihar resident Surbhi Anand the dream wedding came arranged in February 2004, when she married Ashutosh Garg, an NRI software engineer working in California with Google.

The "full and final settlement", too, was 'ordered', at a Delhi court, when Garg paid Rs 25 lakh on Saturday as compromise for the FIR she had lodged against him for harassment over dowry.

Passing the directive, the Additional Sessions Judge at Karkardooma courts said Garg's payment now settles all civil and criminal disputes between him and Anand. It also takes care of future "maintenance" for Anand, a decree of divorce by mutual consent, and quashes the FIR she had registered at Mayur Vihar Police Station on February 14, 2005.

"We are grateful to the court that the matter was settled on the first hearing (June 21) and Garg was allowed to leave for the US," Garg's advocate N K Singh Bhadauria told Newsline. "Usually, an NRI feels harassed in such cases — their passport is seized and they're not allowed to leave India till the end of trial." According to 25-year-old Anand's FIR, her family met all his demands, save a "flat demanded in Hauz Khas". Garg's family asked for the flat for the engineer to stay in during his visits to the city, the FIR said.

According to the FIR, she went to USA with Garg in February 2004, and was constantly "humiliated and harassed for bringing insufficient dowry". She was forced to return home with her brother Sagar Anand in August 2004, the FIR states.

In the FIR, Anand claimed Rs 25 lakh as compensation for the harassment meted out to her by Garg and his parents, based in Shipra Sun City, Ghaziabad. Garg's parents, though, paid only Rs 4 lakh in May 2005, and the issue was in the courts till Garg finally decided to fly in last month.

"The court gave him a month to come but Garg was here within 18 days," advocate Bhadauria said. "He pleaded that his work in the US was suffering due to his absence, and the court took note of it — on the first hearing itself, on June 21, the court decided the matter as both parties mutually agreed (to settle for) Rs 25 lakh."

As per court directions, Garg yesterday paid the balance — Rs 21 lakh — through pay orders.

### The damages: Groom at wife's FIRING line

As per the February 14, 2005 FIR, Surbhi Anand's parents asked Rs 25 lakh as compensation for...

\* Rs 4 lakh as bill of Hyatt Regency, Delhi, where the engagement ceremony was held on November 2, 2003. Plus 40 gold coins, two diamond rings and cash gifts worth Rs 1.5 lakh.

\* Rs 51,000 cash, plus two diamond sets, four gold chains and two gold rings at god bhara in February 3, 2004.

\* 40 rooms booked for six days at Agra's Holiday Inn hotel for the groom's family and relatives for the wedding on February 6, 2004.

\* Diamond jewellery set given on kanyadaan, gifts worth Rs 3 lakh given on lagan and sangeet functions.

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## NRI arrested in Howrah for harassing wife

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HOWRAH: A day after a New Hampshire-based doctor was forced to pay Rs 30 lakh as divorce settlement, another NRI was arrested on Wednesday on charges of torturing his wife, the daughter of a high-profile CPM councillor in Howrah.

He was released after an out-of-court settlement. Rohit Jaiswal, who runs a business in New York, was nabbed as soon as he landed at his Howrah home with wife Indruja.

His parents and nephews living in the same house were also arrested.

Indruja married Rohit in 2002 in a lavish ceremony attended by 30,000 guests. But it wasn't a happy marriage. Her relative told The Times of India that the "battered" Indruja would call her mother, Mamata Jaiswal, from New York to narrate her plight.

It was Mamata who lodged the complaint under Section 498A. All the arrested were produced in court on Wednesday afternoon and released on bail after Mamata decided on an out-of-court settlement, a Howrah court lawyer said.

"True I made the complaint. But on second thoughts, I chose not to drag family matters in public because it involves my daughter's life. I decided to go in for an amicable solution," Mamata said.



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## **Misuse of the Dowry Act in India**

### **US NRI family paid for settlement and case reopened for more money**

Ludhiana, March 13, 2004  
Tribune News Service

The district police has initiated proceedings to declare a US-based NRI family proclaimed offenders in a dowry case registered at the Model Town police station here by their city-based daughter-in-law two years ago.

The NRIs had agreed to pay \$ 1.5 lakh to the girl's family as part of the compromise deal struck between them to settle the issue.

The case was reopened after the family could pay only \$ 90,000. The NRIs, however, have claimed that they had fulfilled the compromise deal.

While the NRIs Desh Paul Mehta and his son, Max Mehta and some relatives have in letters to The Tribune alleged that they are the real victims in the case and are being blackmailed through the misuse of the Dowry Act, the police is convinced that the charges levelled by the daughter-in-law, Rajni Kalra, and her father, Virender Kalra, are true.

The police has proceeded on getting the suspects declared proclaimed offenders after rejecting their allegations that the dowry charges and the compromise deal was effected after some policemen were allegedly bribed by the opposite party in the case.

The case was closed after the deal was struck in September last year. However, two months later, it was reopened as the full compromise amount had not been paid. Mr R.K. Jaiswal, SP (Headquarters), had conducted the inquiry along with Model Town SHO Harjinder Singh. Talking to The Tribune, the police officials said the NRIs had breached the compromise.

The case file includes allegations and counter-allegations filed by both parties. As per the file, Desh Paul Mehta's son Max Paul Mehta had married Rajni Kalra, daughter of Virender Kalra, a resident of Model Town, in 1999. The couple had a son. In 2002, the girl came back from the USA alleging maltreatment and demand for dowry. The local police arrested Desh Paul Mehta, Max Paul Mehta and other members of the family in November, 2002, when they came to India.

Desh Paul Mehta claimed that they were unaware of the dowry case lodged against them and had treated the girl well. They claimed that they were harassed by the police and forced to sign the compromise. As per the deal, the NRIs were to pay \$ 1.5 lakh but they have paid only \$ 1 lakh so far.

The NRIs, who had not been able to return abroad had paid \$ 40,000 as the first instalment to be allowed to leave the country. Mehta claims that he was forced to pay. However, the police said he brought about the compromise just to get off the hook. He sent \$ 60,000 from the USA but allegedly refused to pay more.

Desh Paul Mehta says he did not pay the remaining amount as the girl's family was demanding \$ 80,000



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### Power-babes' booby trap, The Sexes

Marriage today has become an extortion racket!" These were the shocked words of a young man whose best friend had just about managed to extract himself from a messy divorce. His bride of two months had walked out of the marriage, and walked straight into a cop station. She had accused her newly-minted husband of being a "known homosexual" who had tricked her into marriage. She had also hurled other charges—dowry demands, physical abuse and mental harassment. Canny lawyers hired by her had given full assurance of winning the case and getting a fat package by way of damages. The person talking to me said, "This is the newest racket in certain circles. Pretty ambitious girls from so-called good families conduct a detailed research on rich bachelors in the marriage market. They then go about attracting their attention by being at the same parties. Often, hi-profile society ladies play a significant role in 'fixing up' these dates (for a discreet gift or two). Once the bakra is phasaa-ed, it is a cake walk. By then enough page 3 interest has been generated and it becomes a prestige issue. Wedding dates are announced in style, and all goes according to plan.

The 'homosexual' angle is slightly new. In the entertainment business, there are quite a few gay millionaires who exert a lot of clout. Since they refuse to come out of the closet and keep up the pretence of being straight, at some stage in their lives, it becomes important to acquire a wife—mainly to get anxious parents off their backs. These predatory women are only too happy to step in and oblige. All the while pretending they don't know the man's preference (even if the entire world does!)

The marriage is conducted with all the traditional dhoom-dhamaka, even as guests openly speculate and snigger about the groom's sexuality. The bride plays her role to perfection, behaving like a coy, naive vestal virgin. Then comes the wedding night drama. Nothing happens. The man feigns fatigue and begs off. The girl picks up her cell phone and hits all the pre-planned buttons. News of the no-can-do groom gets out before dawn. He is humiliated and angry. His family goes into deep shock. The girl threatens exposure via her pals in the media. It is either that or a juicy settlement. The man promptly agrees to pay up. As easy as pie!

The dowry-angle is catching on even more rapidly. And it isn't uneducated, under-privileged women who are rushing to the cops. The new dowry "victim" in urban India is a power-babe. She wants it all—the house, car, jewels. And if the man resists or refuses to play instant ball, off she goes to the nearest police station, with a long list of complaints. If the husband digs his heels in and decides to fight her in

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Adoption	court, she pulls out the 'morchha' card. She goes to any listed 'mahila' organisation and insists on volunteers embarrassing the man at his work-place. She starts an aggressive campaign against him on the Internet. She sends details about their differences to all the people in her address book. If that doesn't get him to "cooperate", she steps up her demand and her vilification propaganda. But first she gets the cops to pick him up and call him for questioning. If the cops are friendly and she has arranged for their 'chai-pani', they take to calling the poor boy at odd time and demanding his presence for "further questioning". They tell him all that he is likely to lose if he goes to court. They ask him to produce the items listed in the wife's petition, most of which doesn't exist. If he fails to do so, they threaten him by insinuating worse things to come. The word "lock up" is mentioned just a few times to drive the point home. If the man pales or looks visibly agitated, they know they have won half the battle. The wife shows up with a lawyer and offers to settle matters 'amicably', which means, she is prepared to 'forego' some of her more absurd demands. The guy is finally cornered. And ready to cut a deal. It is all over in under two months, if the women plays her cards well. She walks away with a large chunk of his assets. While he's left cursing his fate and far poorer.
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Ask-A-Desi	Fortunately, there are a few men in Mumbai who have decided to reverse the roles and play victims themselves. Men like Arun 'Bandgala' Nayyar. Believe it or not, Liz Hurley's boy friend has accused his Italian wife, Valentina, of mental cruelty and harassment, in his divorce petition. May be he will get a new wardrobe of bandgalas out of her, yet!! What fun.
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## Grad. student facing challenges across borders

False statements in hometown paper are among Ganguly's numerous problems

*By Craig Eisenberger*

Published: Friday, August 20, 2004

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The Times of India allegedly made false statements about University student and teaching assistant Adrish Ganguly in its article "'Deserter' son spoils father's case for bail" Aug. 7.

The Times of India reported that Ganguly was married to Tanupriya Guha Roy Dec. 8, 2003 for the purpose of obtaining his U.S. visa. The marriage occurred two years after Ganguly obtained a U.S. visa in Calcutta Feb. 23, 2001, which will not expire until sometime in 2005.

Executive Director for International Students and Scholars Services Kathleen Trayte wrote a letter to the editor of The Times of India, stating that the article "contains many inaccuracies" and the comment about the reason for the marriage "is completely and utterly without basis."

The article also mentions charges filed against Ganguly and his parents by his wife, under Section 498A and 406 of the Indian Penal Code.

According to section 406, "whoever commits criminal breach of trust shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term, which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both."

Section 498A states that "whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine."

Cruelty in such a case is defined as "(a) any wilful conduct which is of such a nature as is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or to cause grave injury or danger to life, limb or health (whether mental or physical) of the woman; or (b) harassment of the woman where such harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her to meet such demand."

Ganguly told The Triangle that Tanupriya's statements and charges were false. He claimed that she had an ulterior motive for the marriage, saying she wanted him to bring her and her family over to America.

"I told her that I could bring her over but not her parents. If I was going to bring anyone's parents over, it would be my own," Ganguly said.

He added that Tanupriya wanted him to help her parents get jobs in America, an action that is illegal given immigration laws. It would also cause Ganguly to lose his student visa status.

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**What do you think should be done with the vacant lot at 32nd and Powelton?**

Drexel should be able to develop the student housing.

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Something in between what Drexel and the PVCA want.

Nothing, it should remain vacant.

**VOTE**

**RESULTS**

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## Grad. student facing challenges across borders

False statements in hometown paper are among Ganguly's numerous problems

*By Craig Eisenberger*

Published: Friday, August 20, 2004

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"They kept calling me, telling me I was going to fail and that I wouldn't be able to get the 'P' in my Ph.D.," Ganguly said.

Currently, Ganguly is a graduate student earning a degree in materials engineering in the College of Engineering. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering with his advisor, Michel Barsoum.

Tanupriya said she submitted two letters to Barsoum about Ganguly saying that "what he is doing can harm his Ph.D." and he "misguided me, and this is necessary to come in front of everybody at Drexel." She then told her side of the story.

"On Jan. 2, he left, taking all my cash, gold, everything." She said that he "fled" to the United States. Ganguly did return to America shortly after the marriage celebrations; however, he said that he did not take anything from her since he had no need of money.

Tanupriya submitted a personal ad to The Triangle regarding her husband. The Classifieds Manager stated that the ad could not run because there was no way to support the claims made, and it could be considered libel.

To look for help in the situation, Ganguly sent a message to the Chief Minister of West Bengal explaining his situation. In it he wrote, "I realized that the objective of the entire family of my bride was not to tie the knot between their daughter and me but to immigrate here in USA as my dependent, not to mention about the monetary support they asked me for, to continue the study of their daughter at Drexel University (\$35,000/year) as a graduate student here."

When asked about Ganguly's statement saying she was using him to come to America, Tanupriya said that Ganguly is a criminal who wants to save himself and will lie to everybody.

"I don't think that I am telling a lie in any sense. A criminal will tell a lie to save himself because his Ph.D. is in front of him."

She said that Ganguly told her he would call her regularly, but he never did. When trying to contact him, she said he would disconnect her, saying he did not wish to talk.

*Continued...*

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"He is a fraud. He is telling lies to all the people at Drexel University," Tanupriya said. "I am not lying at all."

"The court has issued an order, as well as an arrest warrant, against him," Tanupriya said. The Triangle has not been able to independently confirm this.

Tanupriya added that her family's lawyer said Ganguly's father, Dilip Ganguly, stated that Adrish married her to get his visa early.

Ganguly forwarded the message to Barsoum, who offered his assistance, calling the entire situation a nightmare.

The Triangle contacted Trayte and asked for her opinion of the situation.

"I feel sorry for him," Trayte said. "He feels that he is going to be kicked out of the University, but I assured him that isn't going to happen."

Trayte advises all international students with problems to come to the Office of International Students and Scholars Services.

"We have resources at hand that [students] may not know about," she said. "That is why we are here, to assist them in situations like this."

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## Indian Husbands Fall Victim to Dowry-Immigration Fraud

News Feature, Lisa Tsering,  
 India-West, Jan 19, 2005

"Everything happened so quickly," says Pradeep, a tall, trim real estate agent based in the eastern San Francisco Bay Area, recalling his first nervous meeting with Madhu, his bride-to-be, at the Asoka Hotel in New Delhi on Christmas 2002.

He didn't feel entirely comfortable with her, at first, he explains. "She was kind of quiet. We sat separately, and she didn't say 'Hi.' Instead, she just sat there, biting her nails."

But he was impressed by something she said. "I asked, 'What are you looking for in a husband?' and she said, 'He should be nice and caring.' Usually, they ask how much money you make!" tells India-West in an interview at his home.

Pradeep and Madhu (not their real names) were married three weeks later, and she came to live with him in California in May 2003. In some ways, their story is typical — a nonresident Indian man settles in the United States, earns some money, and goes back to India to choose a bride.

But what happened next illustrates a dark side of the non-resident Indian (NRI) marriage story. Pradeep, 31, a naturalized U.S. citizen, says he became the victim of extortion, embezzlement and immigration fraud.

Pradeep and Madhu returned to India in January 2004 at her insistence, so that she could see her family. According to documents Pradeep filed with U.S. immigration authorities, once they arrived at her family's house, he was drugged, held at gunpoint, and held captive for weeks in an attempt to extort \$60,000 and help in obtaining visas to the U.S. for the rest of the family.

Only after his family in the U.S. contacted the New Delhi offices of the FBI, the Diplomatic Security Services and Delhi police, was he able to escape.

Ajay (not his real name), a 27-year-old H1-B high tech worker in New Jersey, told India-West in a phone interview that he met his bride on Shaadi.com. After two years of marriage in the U.S., she said she wanted to return to India to be with her parents and accused him of demanding dowry, he says. Back in India, she filed a complaint against him under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code. Commonly called "498A," the section defines the offense of "matrimonial cruelty" and makes demanding dowry a crime.

The law has been a (literal) lifesaver for women who have faced harassment or torture at the hands of their husband or his family, and calls for up to three years' imprisonment and a fine for offenders. The offense is non-bailable (the accused can remain in police custody at the court's discretion), and non-compoundable (even if the accuser withdraws her complaint, the court can continue to investigate and prosecute).

It is a simple procedure to file a 498A complaint, and the police must follow up on the complaint, notes Peco Chakravatru, an NRI online columnist, "Filing a 498A is as easy as ordering an idli sambar. Actually, it is easier — the proprietor could refuse to give you an idli sambar but the police cannot refuse."

In some cases where the accused man has left India, judges have refused bail unless the accused's family deposits a sum of money in the complainant's name as a precondition to the grant of bail; some men say their parents have been taken into custody as well. Ajay says he has had to pay a total of \$10,000 in legal expenses to keep his own parents in India out of jail.

The number of false dowry claims against men is still overshadowed by the number of dowry deaths and other dowry-related crimes against women in India. A BBC report last year stated that Indian government statistics showed that nearly 7,000 women were killed in 2001 by their husbands and in-laws over inadequate dowry payments.

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Bikram Jeet Batra, legal officer for Amnesty International India, writes: "A large number of cases registered under section 498A are subsequently withdrawn though this is not necessarily because they were false. These withdrawals take place for a variety of reasons. At the same time, cases of abuse of section 498A cannot be ruled out."

Abuse of anti-dowry laws has become serious enough that the United States Department of State has published the following travel warning on its Web site, <http://travel.state.gov>, about "Dowry/Visa Demands" for travelers to India:

"A number of U.S. citizen men who have come to India to marry Indian nationals have been arrested and charged with crimes related to dowry extraction. Many of the charges stem from the U.S. citizen's inability to provide an immigrant visa for his prospective spouse to travel immediately to the United States.

"The courts sometimes order the U.S. citizen to pay large sums of money to his spouse in exchange for the dismissal of charges. The courts normally confiscate the American's passport, and he must remain in India until the case has been settled."  
The warning also adds, "There are also cases of U.S. citizen women whose families force them against their will into marriages to Indian nationals."

The State Department cannot say how many false complaints are filed each year. However, "The fact that we issued a warning should be an indication of how widespread the problem is," said John Peters, the department's Citizen Services Specialist for India. Peters, who is based in Washington, D.C., told India-West that the local American Embassies could provide a list of Indian lawyers in New Delhi.

Angela Aggeler, a spokesperson for the State Department in Washington, D.C., says that "American citizens are often extremely desirable" to Indian families with marriageable daughters.

Still, as in any case where an American citizen is accused of breaking local laws overseas, there is not much that the State Department can do, she told India-West. "Our role in the State Department is maintaining the safety and security of American citizens overseas. That is even more important to us than issuing visas."

Although the department will do "what we can to ensure fair treatment under local laws, you need to be aware of the laws in that country, regardless of how true the accusations are. It's incumbent upon [the U.S. citizen] to adhere to the local law."

Aggeler, who has lived in India, says she empathizes with citizens in this predicament. "I know how complicated the law is in India," she says. Aggeler says the State Department decided to publish the travel warning after receiving information from the three U.S. embassies in India as well as from local law enforcement agencies and global agencies such as Interpol.

Just as the U.S. State Department's ability to get involved is limited, so too is that of the Indian Embassy here in the U.S. Akhilesh Mishra, deputy consul general for the Consulate General of India in San Francisco, told India-West: "The Consulate has no specific role or comment on the issue, which has to be addressed through usual legal means."

The Government of India's proposed "overseas citizen" dual nationality program may not be much help, either. The State Department's Web site states: "The U.S. Government recognizes that dual nationality exists but does not encourage it as a matter of policy because of the problems it may cause. Claims of other countries on dual national U.S. citizens may conflict with U.S. law, and dual nationality may limit U.S. Government efforts to assist citizens abroad."

Palvir Shoker, an attorney in Fremont, Calif., reminds readers that it is required for U.S. citizens traveling to India to register within 14 days at their local Foreigners Registration Office. Shoker, who says that her office has only handled two cases of this type in three years, says she the false dowry accusation and visa extortion problem is not as widespread as commonly believed.

Still, many Indian men who immigrate to the United States would never think to be concerned over whether a "homely, slim, fair" bride advertised in the Times of India or on a marriage Web site might try to extort money or visas out of him.

"I had no idea!" says Ajay. "If I had any idea this was a problem, I wouldn't have gone back to India (to find a bride). Most girls are honest, but you have to be aware."

Udit (not his real name), a high-tech worker from Toronto, told India-West, "In India, you're assumed guilty unless you can prove your innocence. If you're caught in India, your life is destroyed. It's a horrible law, 498A. The police are goondas."

Deepak (not his real name), a 28-year-old computational engineer in the East Bay, describes his early days as an immigrant after coming to UC Berkeley on a study fellowship. "It's a huge culture shock," he says over coffee at a neighborhood café. "It's adjusting to your new surroundings, missing your family. There's huge pressure to conform, to establish yourself."

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Deepak selected his bride in December 2001 from a list selected by his family, and was engaged within a month. After going home to his native Punjab, he married her the following year. “She had a huge problem adjusting here,” he says. Since his bride had come from a bustling city, the contrast with California’s lonely, wide-open spaces was difficult for her, especially because she wasn’t allowed to work (Deepak, formerly an H-1B visa holder, is now a green card holder).

Although he suspects one of the reasons his wife married him was that she could immigrate to the U.S. (“I learned that she or her parents had arranged the marriage solely to come here,” he says), he wanted to make the marriage work. “It’s typical of Indian families — they hate the word divorce.”

Deepak says his wife started drinking heavily and threatening to kill herself, occasionally calling him frantically at work. After she bit him once during an argument, he called the police. Finally, the two agreed to file for divorce. “She and her family asked an immigration lawyer about the effect the divorce would have on her green card application,” he remembers. “I was being used.”

In February 2004, she returned to India and Deepak had the divorce papers served to her there in May. Soon after, “she filed a case against my parents, my brother, my sister and my sister-in-law, stating that they’d been asking for dowry,” he recalls. She also took some pre-signed checks he’d given her for paying bills, and cashed them at Indian banks, (Deepak showed a reporter a photocopy of one check she’d cashed for \$12,000). In her case, his wife accused the family of torture, and said they had demanded “Rs. 10 lakhs [\$23,000] or a Honda city car.”

Despite the fact that over two years had passed since the marriage, the police took on the case and started harassing Deepak’s family, he says. “All the genuine cases of dowry start right away, or before the marriage.”

Deepak says he signed a “fairly huge and unfavorable settlement” with his wife, more than \$60,000. Plus, the attorney fees here and on behalf of his family in India have “wiped out my 401K and savings,” he says. Deepak has plans to travel to India over the New Year to see his family, though he doesn’t know what he’ll face when he arrives in India. “The hassles in India have trailed off,” he says.

In fact he says the very same Punjab police inspector who first took her case changed his mind when presented with the evidence of Deepak’s (and his family’s) innocence. In a document provided to India-West, the inspector writes, “On investigation it is found that there is absolutely no truth regarding the facts mentioned in this complaint.”

Pradeep says his wife has been found guilty of immigration fraud and her father found guilty of smuggling and embezzlement. “Her dad owed people some money. That’s why they wanted all that money from me,” he says. The marriage has been annulled and he has secured a three-year restraining order against his wife, who is now in Delhi.

One of the first widely publicized cases of 498A fraud occurred in 1995, when East Coast physician Dr. Jayakrishna Ambati and his family were accused by his former wife, Archana, of mental and physical torture as well as a dowry demand of \$1,200. The Ambati family, well-known community leaders who had founded a charitable educational foundation known as the Ashtavadhani Vidwan Ambati Subbaraya Chetty Foundation, were acquitted in 1999. The case achieved notoriety because of the celebrity status of Jayakrishna’s younger brother, Dr. Balamurali Ambati, who at 17 became the world’s youngest physician in 1995.

A small but vocal community of so-called “498A victims” has been mobilizing over the Internet, trading furious stories and offering help and advice for men who find themselves in that situation.

During his interview with India-West, Deepak’s cell phone kept ringing nearly every five minutes — calls came from men around the country who also claim to have been falsely accused. Deepak plans to launch a Web site so that more NRIs can support each other.

A small but dedicated nongovernmental organization in Bangalore, Sangyabalya, is working to create a dowry-free society and works on behalf of falsely accused individuals in India (see below for its helpline phone number). Sangyabalya’s helpline only operates two hours a night, two nights a week, but still manages to receive up to 10 calls per night.

After all he’s been through, Deepak offers this advice to men desiring an “old-fashioned” Indian girl: “Don’t go to India to get married. There are a lot of great first-generation Indian girls here.

“I see these guys at the airport on their way to India, and I think — they look like poultry going to be slaughtered,” Deepak says with a melancholy laugh.

The Dark Side of NRI Marriages:  
What You Can Do

- 498A victims offer the following advice for men getting married in India:
- When the bride and groom’s families exchange gifts, keep a written record of everything received and given.
  - If you are traveling to India, make copies of your passport, visa and all credit cards and leave the copies with a



trusted friend or relative.

- Don't give anyone your tickets or passport.
- Register with the local Foreigners Registration Office upon arrival in India, and let them know your expected date of departure as well.
- "Don't sign any blank checks."
- Consider a prenuptial agreement.
- Keep aware of any bank activity by monitoring your bank statements.
- Print out and save any emails that may help your case. Under India's recent cyber-laws, the emails may be admissible as evidence.

For more information, contact the following:

- Yahoo! Groups: Misusedowryact and Nridivorce
- [www.sangyabalya.org](http://www.sangyabalya.org) (site is not always operational; alternatively, call them in Bangalore at 011-91-80-5696-9850 or email them at [victimsof498a@rediffmail.com](mailto:victimsof498a@rediffmail.com)).
- The FBI's local Indian staff can be reached through the American embassy in New Delhi: 011-91-11-2419-8000
- A few blogs are online, such as [batteredmen.fullhydblogs.com](http://batteredmen.fullhydblogs.com), [batteredmen.rediffblogs.com](http://batteredmen.rediffblogs.com) and [batteredmen.blogspot.com](http://batteredmen.blogspot.com).

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Monday July 24 2006 00:00 IST

**IANIS**

After a year of his marriage in 2003, Jatinder who married Seema (names changed) returned to India from California at his wife's nagging, unaware that he was landing into deep trouble. At his in-laws' house, he was drugged, threatened at gunpoint, imprisoned illegally for weeks, forced to pay \$60,000 and forced to apply for visas for the rest of Seema's family, according to his complaint with US immigration authorities. After his family in the US informed FBI in New Delhi and Delhi Police, he was freed.

How an Indian bride cheated and harassed New York's renowned Ambati family has set a new, low standard for rotten NRI marriages. Well known for their social and community service with donations in thousands of dollars, the Ambati family was harassed by their daughter-in-law, Archana, just four months after her marriage in 1995. Archana accused her husband, Dr. Jayakrishna Ambati, and his family of demanding Rs.50,000 (\$1,200) in dowry and mental and physical abuse, right on the day they were due to be honoured with a major award during a visit to Andhra Pradesh.

Instead of the celebration, they were taken into custody under section 498 A of the Indian Penal Code. Dragging for four years, the case reached the Supreme Court. In 1996, the court dismissed all charges, but Archana appealed. During the trial, the Ambatis produced an audiotape in which Archana's father, Nanda, demanded US \$500,000 to drop all the charges.

Although the prosecution opposed this evidence, the court in February 1999 admitted this evidence. Archana then wrote to the ministers for Home Affairs and Law & Parliamentary Affairs that she was "unconditionally withdrawing" all charges against the Ambati family.

The Ambatis paid a high price as they were separated for three years, and eminent physician Dr. B. Ambati, Jayakrishna Ambati's brother, lost two years of his professional career in addition to financial losses and mental

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trauma.

These are just two of thousands of cases of NRI grooms who are cheated, defrauded, hounded and extorted by Indian brides who manipulate the highly biased dowry laws of India. Conniving Indian brides who make false complaints under IPC 498A, torture not just the grooms but also their parents, siblings and the extended families.

The coy Indian bride, has undergone a sinister makeover. The educated girl gets married to an unsuspecting NRI groom for reasons other than holy matrimony. The 'underground' reasons for marriage include: supporting her family in India by transferring large sums of money from her husband's earnings; nagging her husband for obtaining a Green Card or immigration to the rich countries for her parents or siblings, filing a divorce in the new country as soon as possible to settle down on her own or with her boyfriend, claiming huge sums of money by filing false dowry harassment charges, among others.

Filing a non-bailable dowry case under IPC 498A is easier than ordering a meal. But while a restaurant can refuse service, the police normally arrest the groom and the in-laws. While the Indian media is flooded with reports of dowry-related bride torture, it hardly mentions the horrific cases of suffering husbands at the hands of cunning wives.

After matters reached a critical stage, a police unit for the grievances of the husbands was formed, but it is far short of the response required. Thus many vocal groups of so-called 498A Victims have been formed over the Internet with websites, blogs and web groups to highlight their horror stories, lists of victims and help and advice for men in this dire situation.

NRI husbands are at a further disadvantage in this scenario. A travel warning on "Dowry/Visa Demands" by the US Department of State at <http://travel.state.gov> warns: "A number of U.S.-citizen men who have come to India to marry Indian nationals have been arrested and charged with crimes related to dowry extraction. Many of the charges stem from the U.S. citizen's inability to provide an immigrant visa for his prospective spouse to travel immediately to the United States.

"The courts sometimes order the U.S. citizen to pay large sums of money to his spouse in exchange for the dismissal of charges. The courts normally confiscate the American's passport, and he must remain in India until the case has been settled." Sometimes, the parents are also kept in jail. And the cases drag on, and on in courts. The complicated Indian administrative

machinery is greased by bribes and NRIs are not adept at this game.

A Ministry of Overseas Indians booklet warning about NRI husbands defrauding their newly-wedded wives queered the pitch against NRIs, resulting in a vitriolic response as it paints all NRIs in a very negative manner. An article about this problem in this column had a similar reaction from scores of NRIs and the 498A victims.

NRI marriage dreams can turn into nightmares - both for wives and husbands.

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### Interview with an NRI Divorcee

When Nisha Sharma brought her dowry-monger of a fiancé to justice, she became media's favourite maiden.

An icon for young women, a case study for ladies' forums and the torch-bearer of the Indian middleclass girl's cause.

But there are a few guys out there who do not take dowry and never make the headlines.

Like this young NRI software engineer who gives *Hyderabad Times* an account (on the condition of anonymity) of how his marriage ended in a disaster.

And he believes it's because he took no dowry.

"I am a young software engineer, well settled in the US . I had it all, a decent apartment, a nice car, a good job and an above average pay check."

"I was perhaps a prize catch, a part of the growing tribe of 'NRI techies' in the US . After a trip to India , to 'see' a girl selected by my parents, we got married in the traditional way. No dowry was asked for, given or received."

"After the new bride joined me in the US , small tiffs started erupting over little nothings. Soon the 'usual' tiffs erupted into bigger brawls."

"About two years into the marriage, the (now ex) wife and her parents arm-twisted me into sponsoring her education in a town about 100 miles from where I lived and worked."

"She then moved there, ostensibly to pursue her ambition of getting a US degree. I was left leading a bachelor's life while the wife whose visa and Green Card I had sponsored lived hundred miles away."

"I shouldn't have been surprised when, one evening, a courier knocked on my door to deliver the divorce notice from the wife!"

"I can't help thinking that meticulous planning had gone into that action. She ensured that she had moved her belongings including jewels, personal belongings and stuff in the pretext of taking them for our impending trip to India ."

"Her dad, a senior bureaucrat, had made an 'official' trip to the US a few months before that, to supposedly to patch things up between us."

"I was in a quandary. I would have to prepare myself to grapple with notorious American lawyers and I wasn't ready! Without a pre-nuptial agreement, a divorce in the US can leave the earning member of the family extremely vulnerable."

"In a typical filmy style, the ex-wife's lawyer, demanded a hundred thousand dollars to settle the case out of court. To throw salt on my wounds, the ex-wife, during a mediation debate threatened to file a dowry lawsuit in India if I did not meet her demands!"

The practice of young NRIs demanding 40 to 50 lakh as dowry is rampant in AP.

The narrator of this account claims at the end of his ugly divorce, he was left feeling that if he had demanded that amount from his wife's parents, he could perhaps have thrown it back at the ex and walked away with only a bruised ego.

( As told to Revathy Menon, TOI ) Source: [TIMES NEWS NETWORK](#)

Note: The opinion presented here is that of the author and not GaramChai.com

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## Of brides and prejudices

Shivli Tyagi

[ 20 Dec, 2006 2316hrs IST TIMES NEWS NETWORK ]

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*Do most potential immigrants have a lopsided view of both their own country and the so called 'promised land'?*

The lure of the promised land is hard to resist. But when it's not a scholarship, an NRI spouse or a job that you have in hand — what reason do you give for desiring to shift out?

Immigration consultants chuckle when they recall some bizarre excuses they have heard. Collegians, working professionals, married couples or even aged parents — all seem to have their 'fundas' clear about vying for that elusive green card.

According to official records, in 2006, 43,167 H1B visas have been issued from India. "This is an increase of about 10 percent over the previous year.

Since September we are processing between 3500 and 4000 visas a day in India. The number of applicants are increasing every day,"quotes an immigration official from Delhi.

Vishal Shah, owner of a visa consulting firm recalls some such cases. "There was this person who claimed he didn't like India because of increasing corruption and wanted to go to a country where there was more freedom (sic),"says Shah.

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US visa regulations expert Dr Arun Vakil says he has lost count of funny reasons he's heard. "One man wanted to immigrate to avoid his ex-wife from stalking him. He felt it would be safe in the US."

Talking about students, Shah narrates an incident of a young man who wanted to go to the US to meet Angelina Jolie! "Of course the best story I have heard is of a man who said if he went abroad, his standing would go up in society and he would surely land a beautiful, highly educated Indian bride one day."

Surprisingly, Sudhir Shah, a visa advocate from Mumbai informs, there are more women than men in the age group of 24-30 who want to immigrate. "This wasn't the case a few years ago. Some of them even go in for fake marriages to get their visas,"he says.

In many cases even though visa consultants try and do their best, they are stumped by the excuses their clients come up with.

"It isn't just the money which lures them as they have enough assets here to lead a comfortable life. They are willing to forego everything for a new beginning. I know of doctors who are willing to work as a salesperson in the US,"says Shah.

Now it doesn't get more bizarre than this, does it?

shivli.tyagi@timesgroup.com


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## NRIs cry foul over IPC 498A, dowry law

[ 14 Jan, 2007 1506hrs IST PTI ]

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NEW DELHI: Many NRIs are crying foul over the alleged misuse of anti-dowry law with social activists claiming that Indian men and NRIs are becoming soft targets of IPC 498A. Once a case is registered under 498A, the police gets into action and books the groom and his family and they are immediately taken into custody. And if the groom is an NRI, a 'Red Corner Notice' is issued against him and his passport impounded. It is a cognizable offence and a non-bailable offence, one has to get the bail from the court, if, booked under 498A.

In order to protect the rights of the male bastion, groups like '498a.org', 'Rakshak' and 'Save the Indian Family' are not only taking the issue to Parliament but have also presented memorandums to the Prime Minister and President.

"IPC Section 498A can potentially ruin a man and his family both mentally and financially," said Dr Anupama Singh, convenor, 498a.org. Singh's family has been dragged to the court and falsely booked under IPC 498A.

"The Indian judiciary and police are so crippled by this law that no sooner does a woman lodge a complaint that the man and his family are booked," she alleged.

"Around 58,000 dowry cases were registered last year, out of which 25,000 were proved to be false," Singh claimed.

So much so, the NRIs claim that most Indian girls dream of a lavish stay abroad, but when

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the party ends, they come back to India and lodge complaints.

"My wife thought that we would always keep on travelling to wonderful places, but I have a job to do and I am not a money minting machine. As soon as she knew that, she left me and after reaching India booked me and my family under domestic violence act and dowry laws," Naveen from Florida said.

However, the Commission doesn't agree that there is no inside story about it. "There is no smoke without fire," the official said.

"If NRI men are facing the threat of losing their jobs and social status, then they should consider not marrying in India. We have third generation NRIs, so what's the point coming to this land. If you marry in India, then you have to abide by the laws of the land," she insists.

And as far as revision of the law is concerned, NCW maintains that this is the sole way to ensure women empowerment and this is the only way to instigate the police and judiciary to get working.

"The idea should be to see how the police system works, the concerned official out there should not lodge an FIR and arrest the groom and his side before investigating. These kind of shortcuts are mainly tainting the image of the prevailing law," NCW spokeswoman added.

The Commission also agreed that not all should be booked under this law. "The way uncles, aunts are also humiliated is not fair, we agree that they should not be booked until a full-proof investigation is carried out. Instead of amending the law we should try to improve our police system and investigating procedure," she said.

With *Pravasi Bhartiya Divas* being held in the city and the government wooing the NRIs to invest in India, this matter needs to be settled, so that NRIs don't scrap all ties with their roots.

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# Botswana Indian community shaken by 498a fraud racket

*For scores of Indian immigrants staying in Botswana, e-mail adverts of "homely, slim, fair" brides flagged on India's marriage websites may be the difference between freedom and prison — Writes SUNDAY STANDARD REPORTER*

**R**ahul Chawla, an expatriate working for a computer company in Gaborone, is a face on one of the police "WANTED" posters in India. His widowed mother, uncle and siblings have been locked up in Indian jails. This, however, is not because of some rampant criminal gene that runs in the family. His wife of 20 months has filed charges against them under Section 498a alleging harassment to extract dowry payment.

The Indian government has made it a criminal offence for grooms to demand dowry from brides. The Penal Code makes it mandatory for police to arrest without bail, parents and other relatives named in a 498a complaint by the wife (bride). An arrest is made without investigation.

The law has been a life saver for Indian women who have been harassed and tortured by their husbands or his family, and calls up to three years' imprisonment and a fine for offenders. A BBC report last year stated that Indian government statistics showed that nearly 7000 women were killed in 2001 by their husbands and in-laws over inadequate dowry payments.

"Filing a 498a is as easy as ordering a pizza," says Rahul, explaining the simple procedure and how the police are compelled to follow up the complaint. India has a number of marriage websites flagging picture advertisements of "homely, slim, fair" brides. Some end up extorting money or visas from unsuspecting immigrants. The abuse of anti-dowry laws by Indian women pursuing vendetta against their husbands, however, has become so serious that the United States Department of State has published the following travel warning on its Website about "Dowry/Visa Demands" for travellers to India: "A number of US citizen men who have come to India to marry Indian nationals have been arrested and charged with crimes related to dowry extraction. Many of

the charges stem from the US citizen's inability to provide an immigrant visa for his prospective wife to travel immediately to the United States.

"The courts sometimes order the US citizen to pay large sums of money to his spouse in exchange for the dismissal of charges. The courts normally confiscate the American's passport, and he must remain in India until the case has been settled."

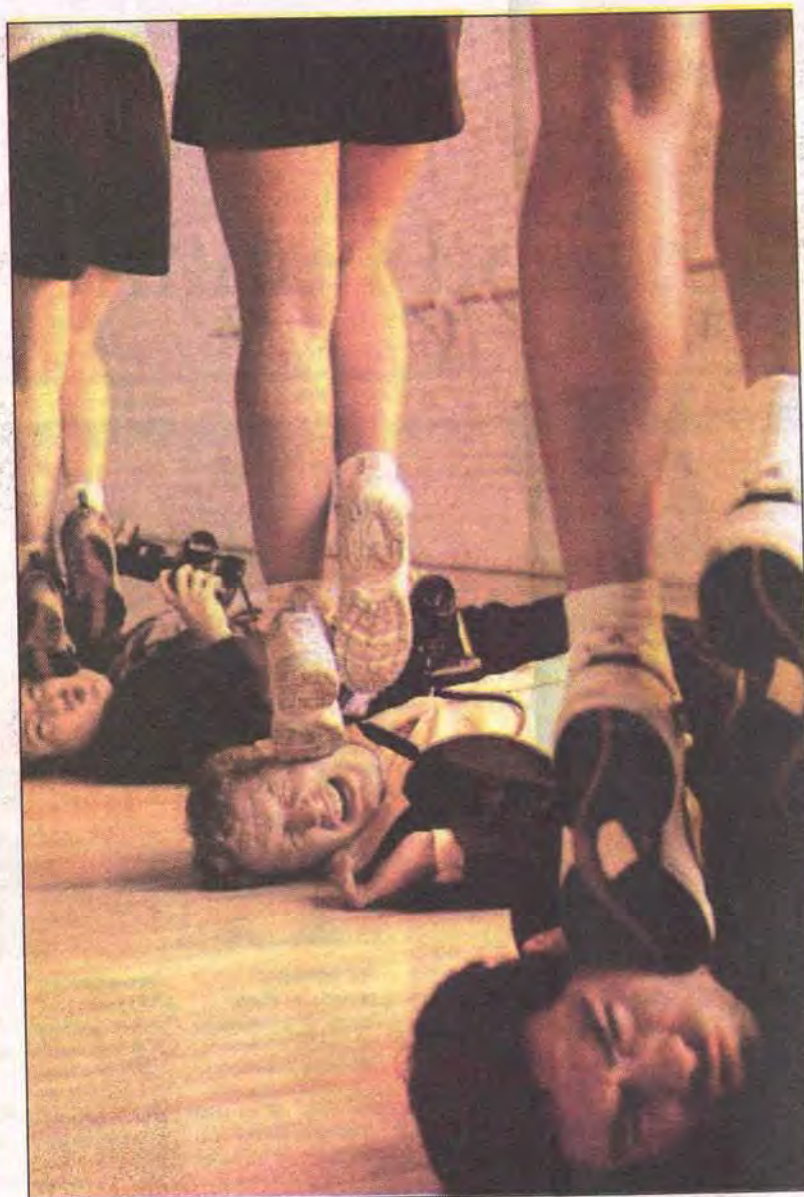
The State Department cannot say how many false complaints are filed each year. However, "the fact that we issued a warning should be an indication of how widespread the problem is," said John Peters, the department's Citizen Services Specialist for India.

A flurry of SMS messages on Rahul's mobile phone and e-mails on his computer suggests that he is a victim to India's dowry immigration fraud. An SMS message believed to be from his estranged wife reads: "I did the biggest mistake by marrying you but you will have to pay the price. A number of e-mail addresses and messages on his computer monitor links him to a growing and vocal community of so called "498a" victims which is mobilising over the internet, trading furious stories and offering help and advice for men who fall victim to dowry immigration fraud.

Rahul, a Non-Resident Indian (NRI), in Botswana with an M.Tech degree from one of India's most prestigious engineering colleges, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) fits the identikit of an anti-dowry immigration fraud victim which has been compiled by Save Indian Family Foundation.

The Save Indian Family Foundation is one of numerous non-governmental organisation campaigning against India's anti-dowry fraud.

The foundation says most common cases of anti-dowry fraud involved "Monetary harassment: in this case, the woman wants out of marriage because she is not able to



Petticoat Government: 496 campaign posters depicting Indian women walking all over men

connect with her husband and hence treats the Section 498a as a voluntary retirement scheme to make a lot of money. Most of the victims are Non-Resident Indians (NRI).

Putting up a profile of the typical anti-dowry immigration fraud victim, the foundation stated that he is "studious and less practical which makes him a good catch due to his earnings, but a boring life partner due to his simple and straight forward nature. His lifestyle does not meet requirements of romance. His woman feels life is becoming a drain and files for

498a to instantly gain a lot of money as settlement."

Rahul has been living in Botswana since 1999. He married a well-educated girl named Komal Nanda in India allegedly without demanding any dowry. Fresh from the church aisle, both groom and bride took the next plane to Botswana where they lived together for almost 20 months.

Rahul says "Komal's greedy parents continuously disturbed our marriage with their unnecessary demands for money from their foreign settled

son-in-law. Having own responsibilities, we couldn't fulfill their demands which created differences between me and my wife.

Rahul says his in-laws started coming up with excuses and putting pressure on him to send their daughter to India. "At some stage they even proposed their daughter for marriage to another rich NRI in England who could easily fulfill their demands." He says his wife was sold on to her in-laws' designs.

In July 2003 he bought his wife a return ticket to India. His wife had claimed that she wanted to visit his father who was not well.

"On the eve of her departure I bought gifts for all her family members and a diamond ring for her. Just one day before her departure," Rahul flashes pictures of her estranged wife taken thirty minutes before she boarded the plane to India. The pictures show a happy wife all smiles and colourful dress.

No sooner had she unpacked her bags than "her family started blackmailing me demanding INR 10 lakh (P110,000). They threatened to file false dowry harassment cases against my family.

Rahul says his parents stood firm against the threat. His brother recorded calls from his in-laws blackmailing Rahul's family. The tape was passed to the police who put it away and forgot all about it.

Rahul says although Komal never stayed with his family after marriage, Indian Police booked the whole of Rahul's family under non-bailable offences and kept them behind bars for days.

He says his wife fabricated a list of dowry items with exaggerated claims. Rahul, who claims he did not taken a single penny from his in-laws at the time of wedding, asked the Indian Police to give him the bills and promised to pay double the money to the girl's side if the bills are verified. He asked that his widowed mother, uncle and siblings be spared from the 498a harassment in return.

A year later, the Indian Police who have been held hostage by India's strong women lobby groups have not made any effort to verify the claims although there are orders from the home ministry to investigate the matter properly. A number of e-mail messages from senior officials in the Indian Police Force involved in the investigation suggest

that they believe Rahuls in-laws may have framed him, but there is little they can do. They instead claim that the money Rahul's wife is demanding is her income she earned during her 20 month stay in Botswana.

Rahul's wife has currently filed for divorce and is understood to have made a huge settlement demand. It is estimated that about 30,000 false 498a cases are registered in India every year.

A member of the anti 498a community stated, "I'm working in the social welfare department and come across hundreds of cases where Punjabi girls once in the UK, leave their in laws' house, attain permanent

residency and return to India. This is either to help siblings settle there or to marry their boyfriends and bring them back to the UK. This problem was highlighted by the immigration department and they increased the time span for permanent residency from one year to two years. Still people abuse it, says Akilesh settled in Birmingham, UK.

Such cases also abound in Canada where unlike UK as soon as the spouse gets a visa stamp, he or she becomes an immigrant. If the girl sponsors the boy, she thinks she can make him dance to her tunes and vice versa says Daljeet Kaur, lawyer who has fought cases of victimized NRI wives.

## Skelemani running with the hares and hunting with the hounds

Continued from PAGE 5

Although President Festus Mogae would want to be remembered as a president who went to great lengths to bring about tribal harmony, Ndaba tars Mogae's with same brush he uses on the two preceding presidents.

To Ndaba, like his predecessors Mogae has failed. He is a helpless hostage of the vested tribal interests of the so called principal tribes. He points out that Mogae has been too obsessed with placating and appeasing the dominant tribes at the expense of others.

Although he wants to take credit for coming up with changes, "Mogae's changes are cosmetic, meant to maintain the status quo under different names."

"That is how they forced him to backtrack and withdraw the first white paper which had some hope of settling this matter."

He contends that there can never be ethnic equality as long as there are certain tribes mentioned by name in the constitution, at the exclusion of others.

He is adamant that as the foundation of all laws of the country, the

constitution should either mention everybody, or mention nobody. Mentioning some and excluding some creates distortions of identity, he maintains.

"What pains is that this thing can be resolved overnight. We have never called for a revolution. All we are saying is either we are all there, or nobody is there."

His advice to those with the power to institute changes is that history is awash with examples of ethnic wars and strife, "and these people did not wake one morning and say we are starting a war. These wars are a manifestation of a long struggle of people clamouring for recognition, talking nicely to those who suppress their being until they said 'oh no. Enough is enough.'"

At the end of the interview Ndaba says wryly that there is not much option for SPIL but to continue with its struggle not only to promote Ikalanga, but also to point out the inherent evils of inequality of ethnic groups — a sad, and hard but worthwhile struggle which for SPIL will all be the harder without Phandu Skelemani's brains who they will miss as he is now presenting from the government benches.



CITY VIEWS

■ Anti-dowry law

# Dowry law used for extortion and harassment, say NRI husbands

By Ashok Easwaran

Section 498 A of the Indian Penal Code is a law that was passed by the Indian government to prevent the harassment of brides, and their families, for dowry. The law has, quite literally, been a lifesaver for women who face harassment or torture at the hands of their husbands and his family, and calls for imprisonment up to three years, and fines for offenders. The offense is non-bailable( the accused must remain in custody at the court's discretion) and non-compoundable (even if the accuser withdraws her complaint, the court can continue to investigate and prosecute).

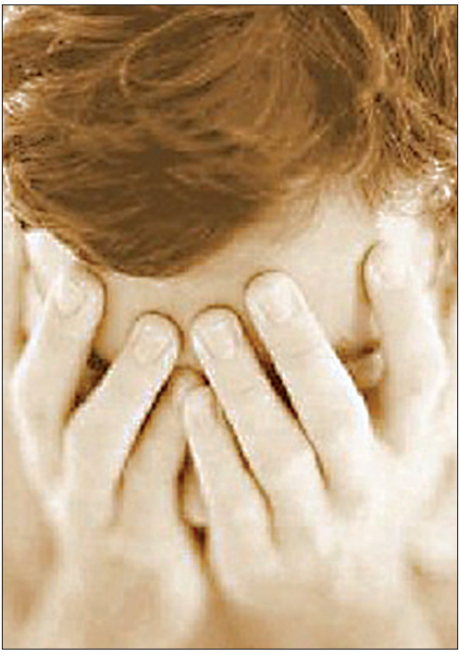
It is simple procedure to file a 498 A complaint and the police must follow up on the complaint. "Filing a 498 A is as easy as ordering an *idli sambar*. Actually, it is easier-the proprietor of the restaurant can refuse to give you an *idli sambar*, but the police cannot refuse (to register the complaint)," said one victim.

A law meant to protect wives is now increasingly being used to harass husbands. In the recent past, there has been a sharp increase in the number of husbands who say that they have been falsely implicated under 498 A. Most of them allege extortion or vindictiveness by their wives, and wives' families. Non-resident Indians, it appears, are especially vulnerable. Not only do they face demands for thousands of dollars to withdraw cases, but they are also coerced to give visas to the wives' families.

According to activists, there have been cases of harassment misusing the 498 A reported from the US, UK, the Middle East and India. The number of cases against Indian Americans have been significant enough for the United States State Department to publish a travel

warning which says, "A number of US citizen men who have come to India to marry Indian nationals have been arrested and charged with crimes related to dowry extraction. Many of the charges stem from the US citizen's inability to provide an immigrant visa to prospective spouses to travel immediately to the United States. The (Indian) courts sometimes order the US citizen to pay large sums of money to his spouse in exchange for dismissal of the charges. The courts normally confiscate the American passport and he must remain in India until the case has been settled."

The US State Department cannot say how many false complaints are filed each year. However, Josh Peters of the department said, "The fact that we issued a warning should be an indication of how widespread the problem is." Angela Aggeler, a spokesperson for the State Department in Washington DC added that "American citizens are extremely desirable to Indian families with marriageable daughters."



**A number of US citizen men who have come to India to marry Indian nationals have been arrested and charged with crimes related to dowry extraction. Many of the charges step from the US citizen's inability to provide an immigrant visa to prospective spouses to travel immediately to the United States. The (Indian) courts sometimes order the US citizen to pay large sums of money to his spouse in exchange for dismissal of the charges. -US State Department warning.**

There has been a proliferation of support groups and web sites for the male (and female) victims of 498 A, especially in the US. Some

blogs and web sites have names like batteredhusband or *Indianbakra*. In December 2005, a group of victims and their friends in the US set up [www.498a.org](http://www.498a.org). Satya, who is 30, and a software engineer in California, (who gave only his first name) is one of the victims, and has helped set up, and maintain the site. "In July alone we had 100,000 hits on the web site", he said. "About 80 people from the US have filled up a form on the site seeking advice. There are 20 others seeking help who are Canadian residents. We have had about 200 such requests for help from the Delhi-Noida-Ghaziabad belt alone."

Rajeev Mehta, a New Jersey based physician is one of the victims of the misuse of 498 A. Mehta is a associate director of neonatology and associate professor of pediatrics at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick. In April 1994, when he met his now ex-wife, Nalini Michelle Gupta, he was one of the highest paid academic neonatologists in the US. The relationship deteriorated rapidly "Soon after, we started spending weekends together, and afterwards started living together. We got married in October, 1994, because she was pregnant. Some time after the marriage, Nalini's personality started becoming all too obvious, and I discovered that she had had numerous failed relationships, was a pathological liar, had cheated on her previous partners, and even me, and could not be trusted. I eventually filed for divorce when I realized that her family's sole aim was to use me."

"After more than 3 years of divorce litigation in the US, and having proved my case before the Superior Court of New Jersey, I obtained a divorce. The court awarded me sole legal custody of my children, and determined that Nalini had been cruel towards me, had destroyed my well paid job in New York, and had fabricated a story of domestic violence as a counterblast to my divorce petition," Mehta said.

"Knowing that she was in serious trouble with US courts, Nalini decided to run away to India," Mehta said, "In order to carry out the

**We had to spend our days with petty criminals. The woman who made false statements under 498 A got away scot-free, not even being charged with perjury. Everyone makes money. It is a form of legal terrorism. -Bhavani Ramamurthy, California homemaker.**

abduction (of the children aged 12 and nine), Nalini claimed that her father was on his deathbed in India and his last wish was to be allowed to see his grandchildren," Mehta said.

"In India, my ex-wife filed a false dowry case. For filing this case, she lied and claimed that her parents had given us gifts worth \$ 12,000. She conveniently concealed the fact that ours was not an arranged marriage, and we had met and lived together in the USA, prior to deciding on marriage solely because she was pregnant," he said. Following his ex-wife's abduction of his children, the US government has revoked Nalini's passport. On July 12, Interpol issued an alert for her for the abduction of the children.

The delay in the Indian judicial system did not make it easier for Mehta. "While hearing my petition to quash the false 498A, the Delhi High Court judge told my lawyer, 'your client is a rich doctor in America. Why cannot he give his ex-wife what she wants? Unless you are willing to settle the case and give the ex-wife all what she wants, I do not have the time to hear your petition'", he said.

Mehta has written to US Congressmen, and Indian politicians from the Prime Minister downwards, and spent several hundred thousand dollars in legal fees. But he added, "I do not see any resolution in the near future."

The hapless victims at the receiving end of 498 A misuse are not even aware of the provisions of the law, especially if they live abroad. One such victim, Bhavani Ramamurthy is a homemaker in California, who unwittingly was caught in such a dispute. "In 2005 my brother's wife(both are Texas residents) had left for India with their child, following disagreements. In July, 2005, I went to India to attend my mother-in-law's funeral. One day, the police came to our home in Chennai and said that my sister in law was at the police station and wanted a reconciliation. When my mother and I went to the police station, we found my sister in law sitting there, although she did not speak at all to us. The police officer turned abusive and took me and my mother into judicial custody. Even though I told the police that neither I, nor my mother, had ever lived with my sister in law, it did not help. Both of us were taken into judicial custody, where we remained for seven days. The police also took my passport away."

Bhavani said that at every stage, she and her relatives, had to bribe the police to expedite the legal process. "We paid a lot of money at every stage. For them we (from the US) were like golden ducks. Till this happened, I did not even know that such a law existed. What amazed me was that the police-the investigating agency-did not question any of the statements that my sister in law made. We had to spend our days with petty criminals. The woman who made false statements under 498 A got away scot-free, not even being charged with perjury. Everyone makes money. It is a form of legal terrorism. I still get nightmares thinking of my experience."

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**pakkidost**

January 14th, 2004, 09:15 AM

'Bride' dupes phoren-crazy Punjab grooms

She is nowhere close to Britney Spears, but when it comes to making a joke out of marriages, British citizen Jaswinder Kaur, alias Jassi, is way ahead of the singer.

The pop star might have married a childhood friend and annulled it just a few hours later, but this Jassi is another league completely.

Ask the nearly dozen youths from Punjab's Doaba belt near Jalandhar town, who have been left poorer by over Rs 30 lakh in their unfulfilled desire to settle abroad.

Having solemnised four such marriages in the past one year and getting engaged to over half a dozen more young men in the age group of 18 to 25 years, London resident Jassi told police that she has no regrets.

Her spin came to an end with her arrest in Ludhiana after police tracked down her other 'victims'. She was there to attend a wedding, a favourite venue for spotting prospective 'grooms'.

And they fell by the Jassi-side quite easily, because of her nationality and her typical British accent.

She would use the services of her distant relatives and cousins to spread the word that there was an eligible young girl looking for a suitable boy.

Jassi's modus operandi would be to get engaged or married at no cost to her suitors. She would ask for Rs 250,000 to complete visa formalities. In one case, she had taken Rs.500,000.

She would then do the vanishing act, leaving her mobile phone number behind. Jassi could never be reached on that number again, senior police official Harkamal Khak revealed.

Even if a family did manage to get in touch with her and demanded that the money be returned, Jassi allegedly threatened them with dowry complaints.

Jassi's lavish lifestyle and weakness for Black Label Scotch whiskey are the excuses she now extends for having duped the youths.

Taking advantage of the 'phoren'-craze of youths in the Doaba belt, Jassi netted over Rs.3 million in just one year, during which she visited India about six times.

As for the men she duped, embarrassment added to their woes as they realised their bride had flown without them.

It was one of her 'husbands' Harpal Singh who took courage to file a police complaint in Nawanshahr, where he had fled to escape ribbing from friends and relatives.

As the police investigated the case, it stumbled upon Jassi's other 'marriages' and 'engagements', Khak said. Her other marriages were in Rahon and Mahipur villages and another in Jalandhar.

Hundreds of families from the Doaba belt have migrated to Britain since the 1940s and the prosperity of the area is attributed to these non-resident Indians.

The British high commission in New Delhi was also making enquiries about Jassi's British passport number, police said.

Some of the families had even sold their land and property to see their 'married' sons go abroad. As aficionados of a certain popular television soap would put it: "Jassi jaisi koi nahin!" (There is no one quite like Jassi).

<http://headlines.sify.com/3006news3.html?headline='Bride'~dupes~phoren-crazy~Punjab~grooms>

**EMPLOYMENT ISSUES  
(Harassment at workplace)**

- All facts mentioned hereunder are TRUE and actual proofs could be verified as and when required by the Authorities.
- All names have been masked to protect the identity of those involved.

**Brief Facts of the Case**

1. Mr. Ramesh and Ms. Vidya are Indian Citizens, married in April, 2000 in India.
2. A child was born in February, 2001 (US Citizen).
3. Vidya went to India for vacation in July, 2001 & lived separately for 2 years as she left the house with the child. Ramesh couldn't stop her, as she said she would complain to the police if Ramesh did anything of the sort.
4. Vidya was counselled by family friends and relatives & she came back to USA in 2003.
5. Again problems like fighting on petty things didn't stop, she had paranoid thoughts.
6. Vidya was admitted in Psychiatry for 12 days in August, 2006 in USA. She was diagnosed with BiPolar disorder, given medication **but she refused medication and Psychiatric visits.**
7. Ramesh went to India in September, 2006 along with Vidya so that she could get treatment and then subsequently return to USA in November, 2006 as per schedule.
8. Ramesh left India with the child in October, 2006 as per schedule. Till the point of stay in India there was no cooperation from Vidya's family.
9. Ramesh filed for Divorce on October 11th, 2006, and left for US on October 12th, 2006.
10. Vidya filed 498A on October 22, 2006. She got her father-in-law arrested for 23 days. Mother-in-law secured Anticipatory Bail.
11. Vidya's brother is an Advocate in Supreme Court, Delhi and using his clout listed Ramesh on Interpol, trying to get his Passport revoked.

**Letter Sent by Ms. Vidya's Brother to the Employer of Mr. Ramesh in USA**

I AM SUBMITTING THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR KIND CONSIDERATION IN RESPONSE TO MR. Ramesh's REPLY BRANDING, MY BONOFIDE E-MAIL GIVEN TO YOU, AS STUPID E-MAIL. I AM GENIAL BROTHER OF MS. Vidya. NO LAW BARS A GENIAL RELATION TO REPRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE OTHER GENIAL RELATION AND BEING BROTHER OF MS. Vidya THERE IS NO NEED FOR ME MAKE ANY FALSE REPRESENTATION.

**I SUBMIT THAT IF THIS E-MAIL IS TO BE BRANDED AS STUPID E-MAIL, THE TAMILNADU POLICE WHICH REGISTERED A CASE AGAINST MR. Ramesh AND JAILED HIS FATHER MR.X FOR 25 DAYS, THE COURT**

WHICH REJECTED BAIL APPLICATION OF HIS FATHER FOR THREE TIMES AND ISSUED WARRANT OF ARREST AGAINST MR. Ramesh, THE AUTHORITIES WHO HAD REVOKED THE PASSPORT OF MR. Ramesh, THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION(FEDERAL POLICE OF INDIA) WHICH MADE AN REQUEST TO INTERPOL TO PUBLISH RED CORNER NOTICE, AND INTERPOL WHICH HAD PUBLISHED MR. Ramesh'S NAME IN ITS OFFICIAL SITE IN THE LIST OF INTERNATIONALLY WANTED CRIMINALS ALSO SHOULD BE BRANDED AS STUPIDS .

FIRST TO SAY THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION SHALL NOT BE AN ASYLUM TO AN WANTED CRIMINAL OF INTERPOL. THE ORGANISATION HAS TO GET ONLY REPUTATION BECAUSE OF AN EMPLOYEE NOT IMPUTATION.

A PERSON WHO IS NON- TRUSTWORTHY TO HIS WIFE AND CHILD CANNOT TRUSTWORTHY TO HIS EMPLOYER. MR. Ramesh JUST KIDNAPPED THE CHILD TO US IN THE PRETEXT OF GOING TO PARK. NOT ONLY HE BUT ALSO THE ENTIRE FAMILY CONSPIRED IN THE ACT OF DECEITFULLY AND TACTFULLY SEPARATING THE 5 YEAR OLD CHILD FROM THE MOTHER AND MOTHER FROM THE CHILD WHICH CAN NEVER BE PARDENED.

MR. Ramesh'S FATHER WAS IN JAIL FOR 25 DAYS AND MOTHER WENT UNDERGROUND FOR 25 DAYS TO ESCAPE FROM THE POLICE ARREST AND FINALLY GOT ANTICIPATORY BAIL FROM THE HIGH COURT. THEIR PASSPORT HAD BEEN SEIZED BY THE COURT SO THAT THEY CAN NOT ESCAPE TO FOREIGN COUNTRY AND ARE FACING THE CRIMININAL PROCEEDINGS NOW.

FILEING OF THE APPEAL BY MR. Ramesh BEFORE THE APPELLATE AUTHORITY AGAINST ORDER OF REVOKATION OF PASSPORT IS OF NO USE TILL THE WARRANT OF ARREST IS IN FORCE AND THE CRIMINAL CASE IS PENDING AGAINST HIM.

Let me submit the scheme of section 10 of Indian Passport Act which stipulates that the Passport Officer shall revoke or impound the passport of the person against whom warrant of arrest has been issued or criminal case is pending in any Criminal Court in India.

Unless the person surrenders before the Criminal Court, which issued the warrant of arrest and purges out of the criminal charge, his warrant of arrest will not be recalled and he gets no ground to recall the order of revocation.

Unless the warrant of arrest is recalled the passport will stand revoked till then. **Therefore the appeal filed by the MR. Ramesh will be of no use and would not succeed till warrant of arrest is in force and the criminal charge is pending in the criminal court .**

MR. Ramesh made a representation that his wife Vidya is suffering with parania, sczhophernia and child neglect. Let everything be proved before the Indian Criminal Court before which the criminal case is pending. If his case is fair and genuine there need not be any hesitation for him to plead before the Criminal Court in stead of making the same Defence before the in-appropriate authorities. Though MCA(Master of

Computer Application) graduate now Vidya is studying JAWA Course and other higher certificate courses in Software programme. If she is really affected with the Parania she can not do that course and if she is doing the course means she is not affected with parania. **All the papers relating to her hospitalization are created fraudulently and tactfully for the purpose escaping from the liabilities of the case.**

**AT THE OUTSET I WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT THE PERSONS WHO DO NOT RESPECT HIS MOTHERLAND AND ITS LAW ARE NOT ENTITLED TO USE ANY DOCUMENT WITH THE EMBLEM OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.**

**THE PASSPORT IS THE DOCUMENT THROUGH WHICH THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS AUTHORIZED ITS CITIZEN'S STAY IN ABROAD AS LEGITIMATE BONOFIDE SUBJECTS/CITIZENS OF INDIA. THE PASSPORT IS THE PROPERTY OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT NOT THE PROPERTY OF THE INDIVIDUAL. THEREFORE THE PASSPORT OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL WHICH BEARS THE EMBLEM OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN REVOKED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA , MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE PASSPORT IS THE BASIC DOCUMENT ON THE BASIS OF WHICH ALL OTHER DOCUMENTS LIKE VISA, WORK PERMIT PAPER AND TICKETS TO GO ABROAD ARE ISSUED. WITHOUT VALID PASSPORT THE SUBJECT OF ONE COUNTRY WOULD GET NO PERMISSION TO GO ABROAD AND NO TICKETS, NO VISA, NO WORK PERMIT WOULD BE GRANTED.**

**SIMPLE TO SAY THE PASSPORT IS THE BASIC DOCUMENT WHICH LEGALISE AND AUTHORISE THE STAY OF CITIZEN OF ONE COUNTRY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY WITHOUT WHICH STAY WOULD BE ILLEGAL AND UNLAWFUL AND THE SUBJECT WOULD BE BRANDED AS ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT. WE HAVE ALREADY MOVED WITH THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT OF USA TO EVICT MR. Ramesh.**

**MR. Ramesh CLAIMS THAT THOUGH THE PASSPORT HAD BEEN REVOKED HE HAS US WORK PERMIT, THEREFORE HE IS ENTITLED TO WORK IN US. THE US WORK PERMIT WITHOUT THE PASSPORT STAY PERMIT IS OF NO USE AS IT IS ALMOST LIKE HAVING FIRST FLOOR, SECOND FLOOR AND THIRD FLOOR WITHOUT GROUND FLOOR.**

Now the prosecution has taken steps to declare MR. Ramesh as proclaimed offender and to publish his name as proclaimed offender IN THE LOCAL DAILY and to attach all his family properties in India.

**THEREFORE I REQUEST THE EMPLOYOR OF MR. Ramesh TO IGNORE THE BRILIANT REPLY OF MR. Ramesh AND TO REMOVE HIM FROM THE EMPLOYMENT BEING BRANDED AS INTERNATIONALLY WANTED CRIMINAL BY THE INTERPOL. WE HAVE ALSO GAVE A REPRESENTATION TO INTERPOL THAT YOUR ORGANISATION IS PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT TO WANTED CRIMINAL OF INTERPOL EVEN AFTER THE PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL WEB SITE OF [INTERPOL.INT](http://INTERPOL.INT).**

For Vidya.  
Brother of Vidya.



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## **NRI MARRIAGES**

### **India in action to extradite NRI grooms who desert wives**

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NEW DELHI, Jan 9, 2007

Sonia Sharma

On Monday, the Minister of State for Women and Child Development Renuka Chowdhury was addressing a session on women at the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas and said, "I am in talks with the US and the UK about the existing treaties between us to ensure that Indian laws apply to people no matter where they reside." She spoke about the experience of many harassed women who were left in lurch by their NRI husbands in the alien land, after making rosy promises.

"Why should a woman who has got married here get divorced abroad?... If they (NRI men) violate laws, they should be called back home," she said.

"Don't teach the women to wait for a hand, empower them," she said. She said over 30,000 Indian women have been abandoned in "NRI marriages", and of these 15,000 are from the Doaba region of Punjab alone.

Brinda Karat, member of Communist Party of India (Marxist) said, NRI community should set up linkages with NGOs for giving support to Indian women who are in distress. "There are three million women who work as domestic help in the Gulf region, but they have no access to labour laws," Karat said.

#### **Opinions:**

In any failed Marriage involving NRIs, you can't say whether it is the fault of the Bride or Groom. But your posting is concentrating on that these failures are because of Grooms. But that is not the reality. There are 100s or

even 1000s of NRI grooms whose marriages have failed just for the greediness of the Bride. Do proper investigation before commenting on any issue. Don't be gender dependent. Because of the greedy NRI Brides, not only the NRI Husband, in fact all the family members of the husband including Mother, Sisters, Sister-in-laws are behind bars and facing many problems just based on a oral complaint by the bride. Irrespective of the truth behind that complaint, all the husband side members are sent behind bars. Once they are sent behind bars, then how can you think that the marriage will not break. In this, who actually broke their marriage, Is it the Husband? NO, Is it Husbands Parents? NO, Is it the Bride? Upto some extent Yes, then who is the fully responsible for this breakup? Is it not you, the Government, the Law Makers. If any NRI having any problems they are facing, let them file a law suit in the country where they live and where they are facing the problem, not in India.....Naveen

---

I am ashamed to see the MOIA's article on failed and fraudulent marriages. The entire article deals with NRI husbands who have abandoned their wives in the US. What about NRI wives abandoning their husbands? The ministry does not even want to acknowledge it, let alone give an advisory warning men of indian law misuse. On one hand, the government of India is proud of its NRI professionals for their forays into different areas of science, technology, arts etc. On the other hand, the government thinks of NRI men as criminals born to harass and torture women. To me, these two do not add up. Why can't the ministry make this article in a gender-balanced way? Agreed that there are some women being harassed by men in the US. So are men being harassed by women. Also, I do not understand why proposals by NCW have made their way into this article. Is it the MOIA's website or NCW's website? The proposal asks for treating domestic disputes to be treated under criminal law and wants to extradite men from here. Do these people have any idea what a criminal is and what types of activities needs extradition treaties? US lawyers are laughing here at the mention of 498a. They are asking how can someone disprove something which did not happen in the first place. No body needs to educate the indian government that the allegations have to be proven by the petitioners. It is not the respondent's responsibility to disprove the fancy allegations cooked up by petitioners. How can police take action without any evidence? Are they being held responsible for the damage occurred to the family of the groom and himself in the case of false 498a complaints? Who is going to pay for all this? The proposal even goes to the extent of asking for help with damaging the person's career and citizenship/work authorization status. Do they have any idea of how hard people work here and the difficulties that they go through to come to the stage they are at? What the NCW wants is the power to seal a person's fate on their whim. This entire proposal is disruptive in nature and not constructive in any sense. Also, there are reports of the MOIA snatching away passports of NRIs when they visit the MOIA office. Is it any way to treat your countrymen? Are you here to help or destroy people's lives?.....Sandeep



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## UK's new law to bar Indian wives for British Indian men

RASHMEE ROSHAN LALL

[ 28 Mar, 2007 2100hrs IST TIMES NEWS NETWORK ]

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LONDON: Britain has announced double-"strength" immigration controls, with a bold new focus on rules governing entry-by-marriage, in a move that will mean an estimated 3,000 mainly Indian women will be barred from coming to the UK.

The British Home Office announced on Wednesday that it was raising the minimum age at which foreign nationals can receive marriage visas from 18 to 21. This is expected to plug the perceived gap in Britain's immigration regime, mainly with respect to Indian girls imported into the country as wives of British Indian men.

Officials say about 15,000 British nationals marry non-Europeans each year, the brute majority being on the Indian sub-continent and that India featuring as the largest single provider of wives.

Observers said this is the only the most recent of a range of government measures to limit non-European immigration to the UK. The 1.3-million-strong Indian community is Britain's largest immigrant minority. Though generally seen to be economically important and reasonably well-integrated, a section of "less-globalised" British Indians continues to seek spouses from the mother country.

The Home Office said raising the minimum age for foreign marriage visas would substantially reduce the number of immigrant spouses coming into the country as a result of forced marriages. Sources said the new immigration barriers to letting 18-year-olds apply for marriage visas revolved around the thinking that the older a woman, the less chance of her being dragooned into an unwanted union.

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The new immigration measures published as a document titled 'Securing the UK Border', also sets out how a complete overhaul of the regime governing visitor visas. It proposes urgent consultation on tougher sanctions for sponsors of family visas for non-European nationals, as well as installing technology at UK ports to record biometrics of non-EEA citizens without visas.

Britain's immigration minister, Liam Byrne, said on Wednesday that his government also planned to introduce confidential interviews for people applying for marriage visas, in an attempt to ascertain they were not entering the country after having been forced into marriage. Under the proposals, intended spouses will be expected to show some proficiency in English in a move to ensure they are able "socially and economically" to participate in British life.

He said the Home Office would be setting up a new body called the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), which could advise the government on where migration might sensibly fill gaps in the labour market. Britain has already indicated it does not ideally foresee the import of any unskilled labour from outside the 27-member European Union. This is expected to affect thousands of British Indian restaurants, which routinely employ chefs from India.

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO 160**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.08.2005

INDIAN BRIDES DESERTED BY NRIS

160. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether a number of cases of NRIs getting married in India and deserting their brides have come to the notice of Government ;
- (b) if so, the number of cases reported during the last two years and till date;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to provide protection and render necessary assistance to these hapless women; and
- (d) the success achieved in this direction ?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER)

- (a) Some cases have been brought to the notice of Government.
- (b) One case each from West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan two cases each from Haryana, Maharashtra Andhra Pradesh and Punjab, and six cases from Delhi have been brought to the notice of the Government.

(c&d) The action taken so far has been to request the State Governments to take remedial measures, including creation of separate cells to provide free legal counseling for the prospective brides. Indian diplomatic Missions render all possible assistance in such cases. Also, Government is in the process of finalizing an information booklet for the guidance of prospective brides and their families. The booklet would contain suggestions on the need to get the antecedents of the grooms to be verified, on the legal rights of women married to NRI grooms, etc.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 2104**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.03.2007

BRIDES DESERTED BY NRI HUSBANDS

2104. SHRI RASHEED MASOOD  
PANKAJ CHAUDHARY  
GANESH SINGH  
EKNATH MAHADEO GAIKWAD  
KULDEEP BISHNOI  
MADHU GOUD YASKHI  
SALARAPATTY KUPPUSAMY KHARVENTHAN  
P. JAYA PRADA NAHATA  
BALASHOWRY VALLABBHANENI  
NIVEDITA MANE

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state: -

- (a) whether the number of women abandoned or cheated by their NRI husbands have increased;
- (b) if so, the number of complaints received from such women, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has formulated any policy to provide assistance to the deserted women;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to bring in any legislation to prevent such frauds committed by immigrant Indian;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

### **ANSWER**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) & (b) : Such data is not maintained. However, the Ministry has received about 100 complaints from women victims of NRI marriages which are given State wise in the statement enclosed as Annexure –A.

(c) & (d) : Recently a scheme has been launched to provide legal and counseling assistance through Indian Missions abroad to Indian women who have been deserted or divorced within two years of the marriage by their overseas Indian spouses in the form of financial assistance on a case to case basis. The scheme will cover cases pertaining to USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and countries in Gulf. Besides, there are two schemes, namely, 'Swadhar' and 'Short Stay Home' to provide shelter, maintenance and rehabilitative services to women in difficult circumstances.

(e) to (g) : There is no such proposal presently under consideration.

### ANNEXURE

**Annexure “A”****Lok Sabha un-starred question No. 2104 to be answered on 14.3.2007**

States	Number of cases
Delhi	25
Punjab	18
Haryana	09
Kerala	05
Uttar Pradesh	11
Andhra Pradesh	14
Tamilnadu	03
Bihar	01
Maharashtra	04
West Bengal	02
Rajasthan	02
Gujarat	02
Karnataka	01
Madyapradesh	01
J&K	02
Total:	100



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO 297**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.03.2005

ABANDONING OF NRI BRIDES

297. SHRI SUBRATA BOSE  
HITEN BARMAN

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state: -

- (a) whether the Government is aware that a lot of NRI husbands are abandoning their wives in India ;
- (b) if so, the details thereof ;
- (c) whether the Government is proposing to take concrete steps in the matter ;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the progress made in this regard so far;
- (e) the details of the number of cases reported in this regard during the last one year, State-wise;
- (f) the action taken against each of these reported cases;
- (g) whether an alleged marriage racket functioning to allow entry into Britain has been unearthed recently; and
- (h) if so, the details thereof and the effective measures contemplated to provide necessary assistance to these hapless girls ?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER)

(a) to (h) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO PART (A) TO (H) TO THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 297 TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.3.2005 REGARDING `ABANDONING OF NRI BRIDES`.

(a & b) Some cases have been brought to the notice of Government.

(c & d) The action taken so far has been to request the State Governments to take remedial measures including creation of separate cells to provide free legal counseling for the prospective brides. Indian diplomatic Missions render all possible assistance to such cases.

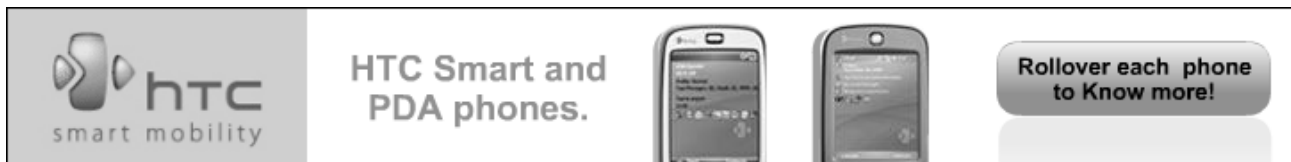
(e & f) One case each from West Bengal, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab, and three cases from Delhi have been brought to the notice of the Ministry. Of these, the cases of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and one of Delhi are sub-judice. Two cases of Delhi and one of Haryana are of Consular nature. In one case of Punjab, relevant details have been sought.

(g & h) Yes, Sir as per a media report, twenty bogus Indian brides, three husbands and a genuinely married couple of fake wedding fixers have been convicted and sentenced to total of 35 years for running a lucrative marriage business between Indians seeking entry into the UK and British passport holders of Indian origin. The report also mentioned that some of the fake weddings took place in Britain, while others occurred in India over a three-year period starting in 2000.

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Photo: Warren Buffett to auction another lunch on eBay

Reuters

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abroad per year from the state, 75 per cent are from Jalandhar, Nawanshahr and Ludhiana alone. This, in brief, is one of the conclusions of the draft report for the proposed Greenfield International Airport at Halwara.

The report, prepared by a Delhi-based firm, Consulting Engineering Services (India) Private Limited, in association with ICRA Management Consulting Services, has been submitted to Punjab State Industrial

Development Corporation Limited. It states that an estimated 3.18 lakh passengers fly abroad every year from Punjab. Also, there are a significant number of additional bookings done from outside the state. Analysis reveals that only 60 per cent tickets are booked from the travel agents in Punjab

According to the report, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Nawanshahr account for 75 per cent of the total international passengers from Amritsar airport. And of these, Jalandhar tops the list with 41 per cent, followed by Nawashahr with 22 per cent and Ludhiana with 12 per cent passengers. Lagging far behind are Ropar and Patiala which account for only two per cent of the passengers.

Among the major destinations of these passengers mentioned in the report 31 per cent are in Canada, 23 per cent in the US, 17 pc in the United Kingdom, 15 pc in the East and 14 pc in the Gulf region. The survey indicates that 76 pc of international travellers from Punjab were in favour of an international airport at Halwara because this would bring the airport closer to them.

The report points out that 70 pc of the total cargo lifted from the state is international.



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Tuesday, July 24, 2007

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M Dhoni*	76(159)
S Sreesanth	4(7)
M Panesar*	26-7-63-2

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## The Big Story

**Flight Out of Punjab**

RITU SARIN

Posted online: Sunday, April 29, 2007 at 0000 hrs

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**Having a family member overseas often determines whether one is a have or a have-not in Punjab. With a visa and ticket having tremendous cachet, immigration rackets flourish and this year alone 57 travel agents have been arrested, says our correspondent after travelling on the road that leads away from the state**

Broad roads, palatial havelis bordering wheat fields and freshly acquired affluence. Welcome to the NRI belt of Punjab where all roads lead out of the country.

In the villages of the Doaba (comprising Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Kapurthala), every family aspires to send its son or daughter abroad. Many have succeeded and it's their money that is slowly transforming Punjab's rural landscape.

In rural Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar, for instance, the bungalows and havelis of the NRIs are eye-catching. Some flaunt concrete models of planes on their roofs, others have gone for falcons and footballs. The havelis are empty for most of the year. But once or twice every year, the NRIs visit their homes, driving up in their flashy cars, laden with gifts.

Other buildings are coming up fast. Western Union outlets, financing companies and travel agencies. And somewhere among these spiralling constructions, a few single-storey houses stand out like aberrations. Houses, perhaps, of families who couldn't send any of their members abroad.

It was in this land of kaboortarbazis, as the immigration racket in Punjab is called, that the Delhi Police came calling last Thursday. The team visited three Hoshiarpur villages, nestling Tanda town. They were probing the case of BJP MP Babubhai Katara, who was caught at the Indira Gandhi Airport, boarding a flight to Toronto along with Paramjeet Kaur from Talli village who was posing as his wife and 14-year-old Amarjeet Singh from Jalalpur, who was impersonating his son. They also visited Salempur village, looking for a "travel agent" called Santu.

The police team met with little success. Santu has disappeared from his village and the families of Paramjeet and Amarjeet are in Delhi, trying to secure their bail. In Talli, Paramjeet's three-storeyed haveli lies locked. Neighbours take it upon them to recount her saga. Similarly, the house of Amarjeet—whose father Jaswant Singh is apparently a "leader" of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) who runs a tent-house business in Jalalpur—too is deserted.

In Salempur Santu's mother Tarshada is alone, suffering from a bout of high-blood pressure. "We disinherited Santu two years ago and don't know where he is. It was only when the Delhi Police came to our house that we learnt about his activities," she said. But neighbours concede quietly that Santu was living in this decrepit house till the Katara case hit the headlines.

The recent hullabaloo and the imminent police crackdown on travel agents have not



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changed one thing in the villages of Talli, Jalalpur and Salempur. Everyone harbours a wish to go abroad, whatever the cost. They are willing to hock their jewellery, sell their land, do anything to get their hands on the big ticket.

What fuels this flight? Unemployment, rising prices and the drudgery of tilling depleted landholdings, answer the villagers. "Everyone who is left in the village wants to go abroad," say the crowd outside Amarjeet's deserted house. "The travel agents come door-to-door telling us the paperwork will be done for a price within a couple of days. We think everything is legal. Now they have all gone underground," says a farmer, Shingara Singh.

An ageing Harbans Kaur speaks for the entire village. Waving at the imposing building, constructed by the NRIs, she says, "Jo chale gaye unaada ei sab hai. Jo nahin gaye, unaada kala kuan (Those who went have all these. Those who did not have only a black well)."

Punjab's flourishing immigration racket reflects a deeper socio-economic phenomenon where people are willing to cross multiple borders, hide in ships as stowaways, impersonate, apply for asylum or exhaust an entire life's savings to get a passage abroad. Every major immigration and human trafficking scandal, like the Malta boat tragedy, the Daler Mehndi case, the ICCR case and now the MP immigration scam, exposes the lengths to which the enterprising Punjabi can go to leave Indian shores.

The newly appointed Punjab Police chief NPS Aulakh admits to difficulties in trying to bust the illegal immigration network. "How can you stop people from trying to go abroad? We are contemplating a series of actions and trying to cleanse the system. In my first meeting with the senior officers of all districts on Thursday, I also reviewed the cases booked against travel agents who run such rackets."

Figures maintained by the Punjab Police of action taken against unscrupulous travel agents reveal just the tip of the iceberg as thousands of cases go undetected. They show that in 2005, 594 cases were registered resulting in the arrest of 655 travel agents. In 2006, 751 cases were filed, with 755 travel agents being booked. In the first three months of the current year, 159 cases have already been registered and 57 travel agents arrested.

The graph shows a sharp upswing in the number of detected cases. But the problem, explain several senior police officers, is that a case is only registered if the complainant gets duped by the travel agent. Says S K Jain, Inspector General of Police (Chandigarh), "The pattern we notice is that once a case is registered, the travel agent and the complainant often reach a compromise and we have to close the case."

Adds Additional Director General (Crime), GD Pandey, "The large number of cases booked by us reflect a social phenomenon and the psyche of the people of Punjab. Educating the masses about the need to follow legal immigration procedures is the only thing that will stem the rot." The police in Punjab, he says, have a fairly high conviction rate of about 60 per cent for cases involving travel agents.

The Katara case, in one sense, fits into the familiar pattern of major immigration and human trafficking scandals, where a petty "sub-agent" like Santu first scouts for clients in rural hamlets and collects a token advance. Then, a more prosperous middleman takes over (in the Katara case, the paan-shop owner, Sunder Lal Yadav). Finally, there is the facilitator, sometimes a rare VIP like the BJP MP.

Among the districts of Punjab, Jalandhar has emerged as a major hub of the racket. So much so that it has prompted the government to put up a board at the state's Central Passport Office, listing authorised travel agencies.

But hundreds of unregistered travel agents continue to do brisk business. Police officers say that in the entire state the percentage of unregistered agents could be as high as 90 per cent. This year, 76 cases have already been registered against travel agents by the Jalandhar Police and as Superintendent of Police Satinder Singh says, "What we have noticed is that once a travel agent involved in a fake immigration case gets bail in two or three months time, he gets back to business. Also, there is always a Delhi angle to major immigration scams. While the agents lure people from Punjab, the big sharks operate from Delhi and Mumbai."

In a vast majority of detected cases, there is an element of clever forgery involved too. It is either the visas or the sponsorship letters that are forged using sophisticated computer scans. Senior police officers also admit that complicity of Indians working as visa counselors in missions located in New Delhi have come to light along with hundreds of cases of impersonation.

"People in Punjab will go to any extent to get their passports stamped with the important visa. There are cases where people have arranged fake marriages, thrown wedding banquets, even gone for honeymoons to prove they are man and wife to the visa officer," reveals Satinder Singh.

During the Congress regime, the Punjab Government made a serious attempt to streamline immigration laws and draft a tough law that would also bring the complainant into its ambit. Kuljit Singh Hayer, president of the Punjab Travel Agents Association, says that they were all consulted about the provisions of the proposed new law but nothing came out of the exercise.

"Nothing will change in Punjab with the travel agents involved in these frauds being



booked only for cheating," he says. "The laws and the punishment have to be made much, much more stringent. And the person who pays the agents to enter into an illegal arrangement must all come under the scope of police action." Till then the pigeons will continue to fly out of Punjab.

#### Malta didn't sink their business

Eleven years have gone but the pain is still sharp. The families of victims of the 1996 Malta boat tragedy have not been able to forget their loss. Of the 280 illegal immigrants from South Asia who drowned when the overloaded and decrepit boat Yiohan went down in the Ionian Sea on December 25, 1996, 166 were from Punjab. The boat was to ferry them to their land of promise—Italy.

The tragedy showed to the world the desperation of people willing to do anything to go abroad. In the Doaba region of Punjab, the families they left behind are still living with the results of that desperation.

Satinder Kaur lost her husband Jagdish Singh in the tragedy. Kaur who lives in Phillaur is still waiting for the Rs 50,000-compensation the government announced for the victims soon after the tragedy. "The survivors who were deported were a shaken lot and forgot to put my husband's name on the list. My son is now 24 and unemployed. Shouldn't the government help us in some way?" she asks.

By her side sits Joginder Kaur who too lost her husband and has been struggling to bring up her three children since. She remembers, "I had pawned all my jewellery to help my husband reach Italy and give us a better life. But we lost everything." But Joginder Pal's mother Gurbux Kaur says she has still not given up hope for her son's safe return. "When we got news of the boat sinking, the travel agent told us my son will return. I still pray that may be true."

Among those who help bereaved families visit lawyers and police stations is Harbinder Singh. One of the fortunate survivors of the tragedy, Singh has returned to till his fields in Pandori village.

"We had spent three months on the Yiohan and were given barely enough food and water to keep us alive. We were so weak we could barely walk," he remembers. "I was saved because there was no more space in the boat that offloaded people to take them to the coast. That boat was so overloaded that it sank and we were first arrested and then deported to Punjab."

He says he was also fortunate enough to get the Rs 2.5 lakh he had paid for his trip to Italy back from the travel agent and start life afresh.

In Jalandhar, more than a decade after the police registered the Malta case, the trial against the 20-odd accused drags on in court. Of the 20 travel agents, 17 were arrested but three remained untraced. "We are following up the case closely and ask for early hearings. But conviction for the culprits may still be a few years away," says Superintendent of Police Satinder Singh.

Besides an early conviction, the family members of the victims have other demands. Some of them recall former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's announcement that further compensation will be announced. Others ask for government jobs for the children of the victims.

Kuldeep Singh who lost his 19-year-old brother in the tragedy, says that while they are still looking for some tangible relief, the travel agents, all out on bail, were back at business: luring people to the West.

"Balwinder Singh, the travel agent, who duped my brother is still roaming free and doing the same work while we are still chasing lawyers and politicians trying to get some rehabilitation."

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Tuesday, 8 May 2007

## Escape from Punjab - Hidden Numbers

Escape from Punjab : By Devinder Sharma

I was at a dinner with a Punjabi family in the outskirts of London. Mohinder Singh's youngest brother who had only a few months before made it to England was visibly upset : "You are the only Punjabi I know who keeps on going back to India. Why don't you stay here permanently ?"

When I told him that I am often invited to UK to speak at various conferences, and yet I don't want to settle here legally or illegally, he couldn't believe me. "There are instances when I am abused on the streets by the whites if that is what you are meaning, there was also this bizarre incident of one of the white teenager's pissing on me while I lay on the beach one day but bhai ji this is still heaven. Come on, think about it again !"

Surinder Singh, the youngest brother in the Punjabi family I am talking about, is not the only one who feels he has crossed over to heaven. Millions of Punjabis' cherish the dream to escape from Punjab. Legally or illegally, they are willing to take all kinds of risks. Such is the desire and desperation to escape that scores of villages in the 'migration belt' of Punjab -- Phagwara, Jalandhar and Kapurthala districts -- are empty. Almost all houses in these villages remain locked throughout the year.

Punjabis are by nature enterprising. Defying all academic norms of 'distress migration' or the 'pull or push factor' in migration, most Punjabis believe that migration is the best form of economic growth. They have seen this happening with **generations of migratory workers** who made it to the plantation sector in Southeast Asia or as industrial workers in England, Canada and to some extent as farm workers in New Zealand, California, Germany and Italy.

It was in early 1980s that I first tracked a group of asylum seekers who had landed in East Berlin (than part of the German Democratic Republic). Once in East Berlin, they would crossover to West Berlin by train where with the help of some lawyers they would have their papers ready. A majority of those who followed this escape route were apprehended at West Berlin. While their papers were being scrutinised, these migrants would be lodged in what was then popularly called 'flower houses' -- an apology for a dingy accommodation herding some 20-25 people in one room.

The German government provided them with subsistence allowance as long as they were in the 'flower houses'. Realising that migrants were 'saving' from even such paltry amounts ostensibly to send some money back home, the government finally provided them with food stamps that could be exchanged in the grocery stores. I remember asking one of the Punjabi migrants who was awaiting deportation back to India as to why did he take the risk. His reply still reverberates in my ears: "My parents have sold off the land to collect money for my travel.

They are under the impression that within months of my landing in Europe, **I will start minting money**. I therefore save as much as possible from my daily allowance so that I don't let their dream die.'

The unsavoury trend still continues. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, illegal trafficking has found new escape routes. Whether it is through Morocco, Egypt or Turkey or whether it is through sports and culture, the fact remains that Punjabis are more than eager to escape.

After all, what makes them so desperate that they are willing to take the risk of their life? Why is that Punjabis, who are economically well off as compared to the rest of the country, are still not satisfied? Is something terribly wrong with the underbelly of Punjab that we don't see?

Punjab is undoubtedly the **food bowl of the country**. It is the harbinger of the Green Revolution that swept through well-endowed regions of the country.

For 40 years now, ever since Green Revolution began, the nation has eulogised the Punjab farmer. Newspapers have reported time and again about the visible prosperity ushered in through intensive agriculture. Magazine articles have featured the opulent life style of prosperous Punjabi farmers.

Not many of the feature writers however tried to look beyond the false sense of pride the farmers exhibited. Not many journalists tried to explore the reasons behind the new- found prosperity -- not because of agriculture but because of monthly remittances or their side business activities.

Punjab's underbelly was gradually caving in. **Agriculture had turned not only unremunerative but also highly unsustainable**. Intensive farming had led to the collapse of Green Revolution. Farmers were pumping in more chemical inputs to maintain their crop harvests.

**Over the years indebtedness began growing to phenomenal levels**. A recent Punjab Agricultural University shows as many as 89 per cent of Punjab farm households are reeling under debt. The per farm family debt today stands at a staggering Rs 1,78,934. In other words, for every hectare of land holding, the outstanding debt is Rs 50, 140.

Still worse – tractors -- the symbol of prosperity **have now turned into a symbol of suicides**. Tractor owners are more heavily indebted with the average outstanding exceeding Rs 2 lakh. Marginal and small farmers owning tractors are still worse off. With the input prices climbing year after year and the output prices remaining static, Punjab farmers became a victim of the same economic policies that projected them as country's heroes. No wonder, the average income of a Punjab farm family hovers around Rs 3,000 a month.

Over the years, intensive farming practices have pushed farmers deeper into debt. High-chemical input based technology has already mined the soils and ultimately led to the lands gasping for breath, with the water-guzzling crops (hybrids and Bt cotton) sucking the groundwater aquifer dry, and with the failure of the markets to rescue the farmers from a collapse of the farming systems, the tragedy is that the human cost is entirely being borne by the farmers. In Punjab, of the 138 development blocks, 108 have already been declared dark zones, the level of groundwater exploitation in these blocks has been in excess of 98 per cent against the critical limit of 80 per cent. The resulting destruction wrought on the natural resource base – soil health deteriorating, water table plummeting and pesticides contaminating the environment – agriculture has turned into a losing proposition. More and more Punjab farmers therefore began to abandon agriculture. With no job opportunities coming in handy, escape from Punjab became a viable alternative.

What is intriguing are the missing numbers. In 1990-91, there were 2.95 lakh marginal and 2.03 small operational landholdings. In ten years time, by 2000-01, these had come down to 1.23 lakh marginal and 1.73 lakh small operational holdings.

**A careful perusal would show that nearly 1.20 lakh farm families had moved out of agriculture in the ten years period.**

Where have these families gone? What alternative employment opportunities have they adopted? No one knows about that.

I am not suggesting that they had migrated in search of greener pastures. But with rampant corruption keeping them out of government jobs, the only avenue open for the Punjabi youth is to migrate. Whether they apply for a police constable job or for a bus conductor, they are invariably asked to cough out money. "If I have to pay Rs 20 lakh to Rs 35 lakh for a Class III government job, what do you expect me to do?" asks Manpreet Singh, a resident of Ropar district. "Isn't it better that I spend the same money to pay to the travel agents to find me an escape to Europe or Canada?"

**Punjab's underbelly is certainly in an unforeseen crisis.** It is time to feel the pain and anguish the youth are faced with. It is time to put the house in order. The sooner the better.

Indian Farm Exit Policy - <http://www.exitpolicy.blogspot.com/>

Farm Debt - <http://farmdebt.blogspot.com/>

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Posted by Nagarjuna IFP at 14:47 3 comments

Labels: agriculture, alternative, BJP, crisis, deportations, dreams, employment, europe, families, immigrants, jobs, migration, network, punjab, seeds, tractor, watch, young, youth



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ANNIE ZAIDI

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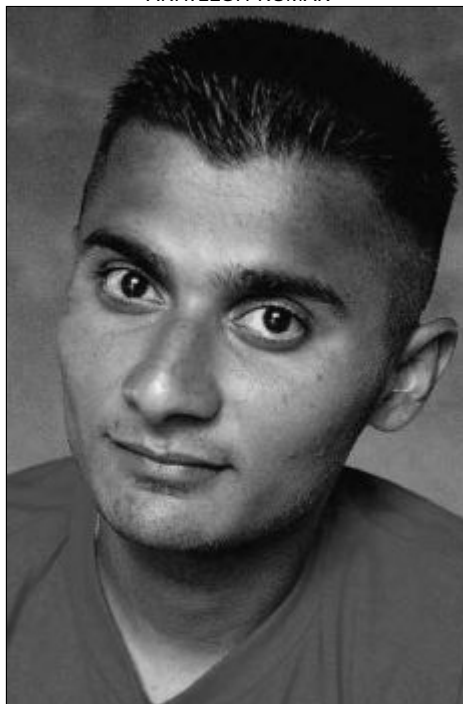
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AKHILESH KUMAR



**Bhupinder Singh went as a stowaway to Ukraine but was deported. He is still determined to go West.**

When film-maker Gurinder Chadha adapted the classic Jane Austen novel *Pride and Prejudice* to the Indian context, the Hindi version of the movie was called *Balle Balle Amritsar to L.A.*

This was not merely freakish nomenclature. It was a telling comment upon the most anxious desire of hundreds of thousands of people in Punjab: go west, by hook or by crook, with visas or without, riding on the back of true love or by arranging marriages.

For decades now, Punjabis have tried to break laws prohibiting their movement West. Their aspirations, in fact, are advertised in concrete



and set high upon rooftops. In several villages of the Doaba belt, households acquire water storage tanks shaped like an aeroplane or a bird poised for take-off.

Often, however, the consequences are tragic. Bhupinder Singh, 22, also known as Pinda, was deported recently from Ukraine. He lives in a large, fairly imposing, recently built house in Cheema Khurd, a village in Phillaur tehsil of Jalandhar district. His hair is fashionably short and spiky; he is well-dressed and rides a motorcycle; his father works in Dubai. Bhupinder dropped out of school in the 10th standard. "Because I always had this craze to go abroad. What is the use of studying? I just want to go abroad."

AKHILESH KUMAR



**Prabhjyot Kaur married a man who claimed his mother was a Canadian citizen. He even sent her brother-in-law Baljinder Singh (right) to Indonesia, from where he was deported.**

Asked whether he had thought about what he would do when he went abroad, he said: "Anything. Any work." What are his interests? "Going abroad. That's my only interest."

While he cannot be faulted for single-mindedness, this young man has lost nearly Rs.8 lakh in a failed attempt to realise his dream. "I paid one Swarn Singh, who promised to take me to Italy. Now, we cannot track him down."

Bhupinder's story is a fairly common one. He met an acquaintance from Gurdaspur who had gone to Italy "do number se" (by the number two method). This person put him on to an agent, who asked for Rs.7.70 lakh, and took him to Delhi. There he was put up in a small hotel with a few other young men of similar ambition. They were then put on a flight to Moscow. In Moscow, they were locked up in a room for eight days. From there, they went "donkey". Going donkey meant being packed inside container-trucks and crossing the border into Ukraine.

"We were asked to tear up our passports in the jungle. About 45 of us were shut inside this container. The weather was bad. Our legs froze. We spent 24 days in the forest and there was little food. We drank off the puddles on the ground. Then we tried to cross the border into Slovakia, but the security forces opened fire."

AKHILESH KUMAR



**Mohinder Ram and his father. He paid Rs.6 lakh to a local travel agent to go to Spain but ended up in Mali, from where he was deported.**

The men escaped with a few injuries, but only just. They tried crossing the border again two days later. This time the forces allowed them to enter, waited 15 minutes and opened fire.

Although nobody died, Bhupinder and his fellow-riders were handcuffed, fingerprinted, photographed, and thrown into jail. He said they were also beaten up. "A day later, we were sent back to Ukraine and we stayed there for a month and a half. I saw at least 250 Indian boys there, and about 50 girls," said Bhupinder. Now Bhupinder is biding his time. All he wants is a new passport and another, hopefully legal, attempt to get away, to Spain, Italy or France.

Men have always migrated from Punjab. In previous decades, the golden destinations lay both west and east - Burma, China, Canada, the United Kingdom or the United States. In fact, old folk songs include lyrics like `tainu cheen di khat nu lat maru' (I'll kick away the money you've earned in China).

Those who migrated would send back money home, and most villages boast large houses that belie the fact that the residents are either jobless or landless, or seriously under-employed. Lifestyles improved; people started equating migration with prosperity. The diaspora's visits home only strengthened this belief, partly because of their appearance and habits and partly because of their descriptions of life abroad.

Naturally, everybody else wants to get out too. Initially, a lot of Punjabis who went abroad arranged to have their family members brought over. However, in recent decades, the West has built its walls higher and come down hard on hopeful migrants, especially those who bring nothing but their hands. With cheap labour available closer home, work permits are hard to obtain. For young people who do not plan to study further, or cannot afford to, it is near impossible to go West legally.

According to R.K. Jaiswal, the Senior Superintendent of Police of Ludhiana, different methods are used to get around the legalities. Marriage to a foreign citizen is the most common among them. The

most common illegal method is to get a tourist visa and once abroad, destroy the papers and disappear. The second most popular method is to travel on a forged visa, which will most likely get the traveller caught at one of the airports. The third is to go along with one of the cultural troupes - often 'folk singers', several of whom have been investigated for human trafficking. Some obtain temporary work visas for 'soft' nations in Africa or Asia, then move West illegally, by sea or land. Several agents bring clients to Delhi, dump them at the international airport and slip away.

Yet another method is to travel on a valid visa, but on someone else's passport. This is what Paramjeet Kaur and Amarjeet Singh attempted to do when they were caught trying to travel along with Babubhai Katara, the Member of Parliament from Gujarat, on his wife's and son's passports.

Jaiswal said that in a special drive against fraudulent agents many fake passports and visas were seized recently. "We had 61 cases registered against agents last year and 18 so far this year. A special officer of the rank of Superintendent of Police has been assigned as a detective to deal with cases of immigration-related fraud," he said.

While young men who have been duped have a lifetime to pay off their debts, Mohinder Ram of Saifabad village is not so lucky. His passport says he is 54 years old and he was deported recently from Mali in Africa. Though he had worked abroad before - in Dubai and Saudi Arabia - he wanted to go West, settle down, and then take his son too.

Unfortunately, things did not happen that way. His attempt to go to Spain cost him his health, his dignity and, perhaps, his house. Mohinder paid Rs.6 lakh to a local travel agent, who is allegedly hiding in Malaysia now. Said Mohinder: "I was told I would travel 15 days. I ended up spending three and a half months in Mali. There was little food, and the water smelt of petrol. When we went 'donkey', 22 men were tied together with rope. We had a few rations and two drums of oil. I spent 15 days in jail in Algeria. Then it was back to Mali. Then back to the Algerian border and to Morocco. For 13 months, and five days we were locked up in a room. Even to go to the toilet we had to take permission. The guards beat us up, partly because my agent owed money to a bigger agent operating from Delhi. They demanded Rs.50,000 to let us go. I did not have money even for food. The younger men with me took pity and gave me something."

When the guards let them out for a day, six of them including Mohinder ran away. They went to the police station, but could not communicate in either English or Arabic. So they ran to the embassy in Rabat, the capital of Morocco. "For four days we crept about, walking only at night and drinking water from the gutter," said Mohinder.

Back home, with failing health and mounting anger, he watches his own father, now in his eighties, selling vegetables and fruits on the streets. There is no land to sell and no way of repaying debts. Mohinder's repatriation was facilitated by Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, Member of Parliament and president of the Lok Bhalai Party.

He is one of the few politicians in the State who takes a serious view of illegal migration and has set up an office in Ludhiana to help those stranded or jailed in foreign countries, or women who have been abandoned by visiting husbands. The party's workers also help to track down dubious agents and recover money.

Speaking to Frontline, Ramoowalia said: "In each village, there are 15-20 men who have gone away. They sell their family property, jewellery, everything. And once abroad, they are treated like dogs. This fraudulent business has cost Punjab at least Rs.10,000 crores. Now, marriage bureaus are also looting girls. Men will come from foreign countries, marry a girl, stay with her for a few days, take dowry, and leave and never send for her. And nobody is doing anything to stop it."

Abandonment or the threat of sexual and economic exploitation is not deterrent enough, though. There are an estimated 20,000 abandoned women, or "holiday wives", in Punjab. Yet, women want to take their chances with the great Western dream.

Bhupinder's younger sister, studying in senior secondary school, at first denied that she would like to go abroad. But asked whether she wanted to marry a local or an NRI (non-resident Indian), she at once said NRI. Her friends often make plans about going abroad to work, but know their chances are too slim to be real. However, getting married to an NRI is a real possibility, and they cling to the idea as if to the tail end of a dream of mist.

So, marriage bureaus work overtime, holding out bait that is so obviously fake that it is surprising anyone gets taken in. In fact, a local newspaper found lying at the office of the Lok Bhalai Party has one such advertisement offering a bride - a Canadian citizen looking for a hard-working, 'heavy driver'.

Besides marital fraud, there are reports of women being trafficked out of the country to be sold off. Few of them ever make it back or file a report. Prabhjyot Kaur, luckily, did. The 26-year-old admitted that it was her own craze to go abroad that landed her in trouble. "I was a BEMS (electrocardiography) doctor and had a small clinic in Mothanwal village in Kapurthala. One man, Avtar Singh, posed as a patient, got close to me, and later proposed. He claimed that his mother was a Canadian citizen. I asked for documents, a letter of sponsorship and so on. He got the documents and they looked genuine. I handed over my passport; we got married."

The nightmare began when, instead of Canada, he took her to Malaysia, left her there and returned to contact her parents. Using Malaysia as a base, he kept bringing more people, including her brother-in-law, Baljinder Singh. Prabhjyot told Frontline that when she saw other women being brought in and disappearing, she grew afraid and fled home. In the meantime, Baljinder Singh was sent on a fake visa to Indonesia, where he was arrested and deported. While a first information report (FIR) landed at least two of the culprits in jail, they are likely to get bail. Prabhjyot's family is afraid, most of all, of angry villagers.

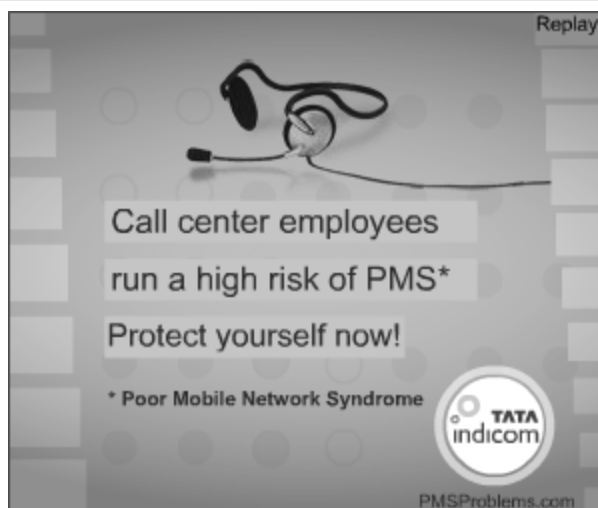
While their anger may be natural, it is not necessarily justified. Every year, thousands of Punjabis attempt to emigrate illegally and are

deported. According to the Regional Passport Office in Jalandhar, which covers seven districts of the Doaba and Majha regions of Punjab, 2,225 people were deported in 2006. For the last five years, the figure is 9,465.

According to Amarjeet Singh, Passport Officer, the demand for passports is growing. "We issued about 2.1 lakh new passports last year," he said. People are also lining up to apply a second or third time. The number of applications for passports under the 'lost or damaged' category has increased. In 2003, there were 4,540 such applications. In 2006, their number was 10,367. The office also detects at least 15-20 cases of 'duplicate' passports, where people apply for a fresh one without disclosing that they already have a passport.

Most of those desirous of leaving the country never make it beyond the nearest international airport. But that does not serve as a lesson. Bhupinder Singh, for instance, is not willing to settle for work in any foreign country that is not in Europe, barring the US, Canada or Australia. He refuses to go to Kuwait or Dubai, where his father works. "That's not money enough. I want more," he says stubbornly.

And on the train journey back to New Delhi, an anonymous co-passenger, a well-dressed young man, talked into his phone: "But why should I stay in Ludhiana? I'm determined not to live there - dirty place, dirty people, no freedom. I'm going to Australia."



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## Fake visa agents eating H1B quota

By IBNlive.com | Friday, 29 June , 2007, 11:36

IBNlive.com

**New Delhi:** Most IT professional in India aspire for a US job and dollar salaries. But working in US requires one to clear the stringent visa requirements, one of which is to find an employer first, who is ready to take your case to the US consulate. **Click here for video**

However, finding an employer in United States who is willing to hire an individual Indian IT worker and get into the legal work of obtaining a work permit for him is not an easy task.

So, there are numerous visa agents and consultants in India that help these elusive H1B Visa seekers get the work permit/H1B Visa through fraudulent means. Newspapers and websites are filled with luring advertisements that claim to get an H1B Visa for a price tag.

### Also read

- All you wanted to know about H1B visa
- 50,000 more H1B visas likely
- H1B visa dreams!

CNN-IBN correspondent Payal Goel and Bikas Mishra posed as a H1B Visa seeker and headed to one such consultant. They were shocked to discover a range of services on offer.

"We will get you a fake employer who will file for your H1B Visa. We will show a proper company owned and operated by a US citizen that will apply for your work permit," the visa agent was caught saying on the hidden camera.

### So what happens once I get there?

"Once these fake employers get an H1B Visa with a work permit, he will give you a NOC saying you can work with any other employer. Your job of landing up in US with a work permit is done," said the agent.

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Going by the proper procedure, even if you find an employer, individuals cannot petition for their H1B Visas. To get this 6-year long work permit to the US, an employer petitions for its foreign employee for a specific job.

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But using the fraudulent route, the so-called visa consultants are able to get H1b Visas for their clients who practically do not yet have a job offer.

The US government too admits such frauds are rampant. Last year alone they found 2,000 Indian applications that were of dubious nature and hence the individuals were sent back for reconsideration.

"We have found that Hyderabad and Bangalore are centers of H1B Visa fraud. It is extremely easy to just walk into someone who rather forthrightly tells you he can produce anything to appear to make you qualify an H1B Visa. In fact our employees conducted search operations and queried various agents office," said Glen Keiser, Consular Section Chief, US Consulate, Mumbai

Genuine IT companies with operations in the US are bearing the brunt of such frauds. Last year, companies like Wipro and Infosys applied for 20,000 H1B Visas each. However, due to a cap of 65,000 on these visas, and many of it being taken by fraud applicants, these companies could manage only about 25% of their requirement.

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## **NRI woman held for fraud**

### **Admits to luring youths into marriage, duping them**

**Mahesh Sharma**

Mandi Ahmedgarh, September 4

Non-remunerative agriculture in Punjab and the desire for greener pastures in Canada and America are major factors why the youths in the state are ready to compromise to any extent for a chance to settle abroad. This was stated by the NRI woman who was arrested from a religious place at Alamgir by the local police yesterday. She was wanted in connection with an FIR registered under Sections 420, 494, 406 and 120-B for allegedly duping a youth of Rs 12 lakh by marrying him and then deserting him.

Parwinder Kaur, daughter of Gurdeep Singh Sandhu of Marwah Khurad, Yamunanagar, an NRI settled in Canada, was arrested from Alamgir while trying to flee after duping Beant Singh, another youth of Momnabad village, near here.

Kuldip Singh, son of Nachhatar Singh, a resident of Manakwal village, had accused her of duping him of Rs 12 lakh.

Preliminary investigations reveal Parwinder, like many other NRI women, lured Punjabi youths with the promise of greener pastures in Canada. Harbans Singh, another NRI and close relative of Parwinder, was instrumental in introducing her to Bhupinder Singh of Dhulkot and Baljinder Singh of Koom Kalan who asked Kuldeep to marry her.

"I am not the first one to have done this. I was deserted by my husband, Gurdeep Singh, who is of the age of my father. There are dozens of NRI women who have been exploiting Punjabi youths at the instance of their husbands," said Parwinder to the police, adding that only a few cases came to light

A majority of duped farmers preferred to keep mum after being duped for fear of ridicule. Admitting having taken money from Kuldeep Singh, Parwinder said she had agreed to marry Beant Singh of Momnabad as she intended to honour her promise to repay him money.

She said she had stayed at a hotel on Ferozepur road, Ludhiana, and the ring ceremony was performed at a restaurant at Neelon bridge near Samrala on Saturday.

Parwinder married Gurdeep Singh Chahal, divorcee, 35 years her senior in age for greener pastures in Canada. Not contented with her lot, she started visiting India in search of young boys desirous of migrating abroad. She succeeded in alluring Kuldeep Singh and got married to him in March this year.

Investigations revealed that after leaving Manakheri, Parwinder started living with one Viney Brahamchari, a self-styled tantrik, at Sital Narwaha. A major part of the money minted from Kuldeep Singh was used to construct an ashram run by the Yad Sewa Trust floated by the duo to grab money from government agencies.

Interestingly the marriage of Parwinder and Kuldeep was registered at Ludhiana had that too without the appearance of parents of the bride.



# Man's sponsored wife runs away one week after arriving from India

**COQUITLAM:** She's been found but says she won't return to husband, who's financially responsible for her

BY JENNIFER SALTMAN  
STAFF REPORTER

When Burinder Manget married his wife in India a year ago, he pictured an idyllic life in Canada.

He never thought that a week after her arrival, his wife would disappear.

"I was just shocked, confused," Manget said quietly. "I thought maybe she was playing a joke."

Now Manget is obligated to his absent wife for the next three years should she demand financial support or need income assistance from the government.

The 31-year-old married Harpreet Dhami on April 12, 2006, 10 days after their marriage was arranged by a relative.

Manget thought 21-year-old Harpreet was shy, nice and respectful, and the couple clicked during their initial conversations.

After the wedding, Manget stayed in India for three weeks before returning to Canada to start the process of sponsoring his bride to become a Canadian resident.

During their time apart, Manget called Harpreet regularly and sent money monthly.

"She was really happy and I was happy," Manget said.

"When she used to call, she goes, 'I'm dying to come there, whenever I get my visa I'm going to come running.'"

Harpreet's visa was approved in May and she arrived in Vancouver June 14.

Sitting on the couch in his mother's Coquitlam home, Manget describes the excitement of finally seeing his wife again after a year of separation.

The house was decorated and Manget's mother was planning a welcome party.

The couple spent a week attending gatherings and greeting family and friends dropping by to see the new bride.

Manget's twin brother Gurinder said everything seemed normal.

"That's why we're so shocked. Usually you'll show signs of being mad or sad or something," he said.

But a week after her arrival, on June 21, Harpreet disappeared.

Her passport, gold jewelry and a few hundred dollars were missing.

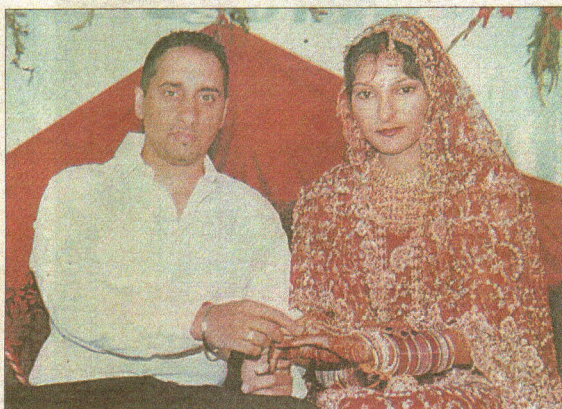
No one saw her leave.

Manget and his mother called Harpreet's mother in India and family in Toronto, but no one knew where she was.

Manget called Coquitlam RCMP, who investigated and released a



Burinder 'Bob' Manget, 31, sits in his mother's Coquitlam home Monday. Harpreet Manget, 21, disappeared one week following her arrival in Canada from India after waiting a year for her immigration papers after marrying Bob. JASON PAYNE — THE PROVINCE



Harpreet Manget (right) and Burinder 'Bob' Manget in happier times. — FAMILY PHOTO

missing-person notice to media the same day.

That night, Harpreet called and spoke to Manget's mother.

She allegedly told her that she was fine and was not coming home before hanging up.

On June 22, after seeing herself on

the news, Harpreet called Delta police to let them know she was OK.

Const. Brenda Gresiuk, spokeswoman for the Coquitlam RCMP, said investigators spoke with Harpreet and were satisfied that there was no threat to her safety.

"We've concluded our investiga-

tion," Gresiuk said. "This is not a suspicious circumstance."

An uncle in Toronto, who refused to give his name, said he hasn't heard from Harpreet and has no idea where she is staying.

The uncle said he has spoken to Harpreet's mother, Balbir Kaur Dhami, and the whole family is worried.

He said as far as he knew there was no problem with the marriage, and nobody knows why she left.

"I don't know. I have no clue until I speak to her," he said. "Is there anything wrong? What is the problem? We also would like to find out."

Manget and his family, however, wonder if "it was maybe pre-planned," Manget said, questioning whether "she came here just to come here and use me."

"It's not just me that's used, it's our whole family, her family."

Said Manget's sister-in-law Ruby Toor, "it's not like we kicked her out — she walked out on her own."

Toor said the family has contacted Citizenship and Immigration Canada and was told there is nothing they can do.

"Sponsorship is a legally binding commitment and it can't be can-

celled, regardless of whether a relationship breaks down or not," said Shakila Bezeau of Citizenship and Immigration. "An individual who sponsors someone is pretty well obligated for three years' support for that person."

Manget said that since his wife left, he's heard many similar stories.

"It has to stop," he said.

A *Province* investigation in 2005 revealed there are thousands of abandoned brides in India.

Palwinder Gill of the Canadian Fraud Marriage Victims Society said there are just as many abandoned grooms.

"This is not a one-sided thing," Gill said. "It has always happened."

Gill said men feel ashamed when their wives leave them, and will not speak out. "They don't talk about it because they think shame," he said. "It's a cultural thing."

Gill said those who flout the law should be punished.

People proven to have married under false pretenses "should be charged as criminals because they enter Canada by fraud. Fraud is a crime."

jensaltman@png.canwest.com





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Fake immigration racket:

**NRI couple was charged for bogus wedding scams and  
Court has ordered confiscation of one million pounds**

London, April 7, 2006  
Darshan Malhtra



Jaswinder Kaur

NRI Jaswinder Gill, 43, and her husband Darshan, 42 duped young British Asian women into flying to India by offering them lucrative contracts modeling bridal wear. They were charging Indian men around Rs 7.5 lakh per [Full Story](#)

## UK NRI woman was jailed for 10 years for sham marriage racket

UK, APRIL 26, 2005

A woman who made a fortune through an immigration racket in which vulnerable British women were conned into marrying Indian men who wanted to live in Britain was jailed for 10 years in London.

Jaswinder Gill, who police believe made up to a million pounds (1.47 million euros, 1.9 million dollars) from the scam, was branded a "complete and total alien to the truth" by the trial judge.

Gill's method of persuading the women to take part in the bogus marriages ranged from being charming to being "vile", Judge Sam Kathkuda told Isleworth Crown Court.

The court had been told how Gill was paid up to 14,000 pounds a time to find brides for Indian men who wanted to use the marriage as a passport to Britain.

The "manipulative" Gill told a series of women that they would be taken to India to work as models or in the beauty trade, but once there they were persuaded to take part in weddings, prosecutors said.

Gill took one woman who was a heroin addict to India and paid her to act as a bride in what she claimed was a mock ceremony for a modelling shoot, before abandoning her, forcing the women's parents to travel from Britain to collect her.

The 42-year-old fraudster denied the allegations, but was found guilty last month on charges related to illegal immigration and plotting to pervert the course of justice.

The racket had just one purpose, the judge said, "That was to obtain vast amounts of money." "One only has to look at the amounts that were referred to in court to realise the significance of the financial gain," he said, adding that Gill had later tried to bribe witnesses into withdrawing their testimony.

Gill's husband was jailed for six years after admitting two charges, while two other accomplices were also imprisoned. (AP)

## NRI, Jaswinder accused of marrying 23 men in India

UK, Feb 01, 2004

NRI, Jaswinder Kaur from Glasgow has been accused of marrying 23 men, getting engaged to 12 others and collected £40,000. Jaswinder promised to give them visas by sponsoring thru marriage. She was detained in India is accused of defrauding a string of husbands and fiancés.

Punjab state police said that Jaswinder Kaur has married twice and become engaged on two other occasions, promising to get her suitors visas to emigrate to the United Kingdom. She admitted to marrying two men, Harbans Lal, whom she married in Germany, and Harpal Singh, whom she married last year in Punjab after divorced Harbans.

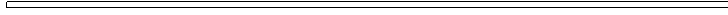
She told that she married just one other man 26-year-old Harpal Singh while in India. He was confronting her outside Nawanshahr's court on Saturday. He became suspicious of her after she began receiving phone calls from other men day and night. Harpal went to police after he found a suitcase containing 25 Indian passports in her room.

Mr. Surjeet Singh and Sukhdev Singh claimed that they got engaged to be married to her on consecutive days in November last year. Both say they have the photographs and engagement videos to prove it

Jaswinder told police that her parents will repay the money but I have no regrets. She admitted that she had deceived some of the men but she claimed complete strangers were approaching police to say they had lost money to her.

Her parents are too ashamed to come back to the town they emigrated from 30 years ago. Relatives of Jaswinder in India have also been arrested.

TOP



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# Wife jailed for sham marriage

**Last Updated: Friday, October 1, 2004 | 12:47 PM ET**

**CBC News**

A bride from India who told her new husband she married him for his Canadian citizenship was sentenced on Thursday to four months in jail in Edmonton for communicating false information.

It may be Canada's first successful prosecution of a marriage of convenience, said federal Crown prosecutor Erin Eacott.

While marrying for citizenship may be common, it's hard to prosecute such cases because both spouses are usually in on the sham, said Eacott.

Not in this case.

In April 2001, Satnam (Sam) Parmar, a 38-year-old drugstore supervisor, went to India to visit relatives. Family members there arranged for him to meet Karmjeet Jaswal, an elementary school teacher.

Their four-day courtship ended in a marriage proposal and a big wedding with 200 guests. Parmar, who looked forward to married life and children, returned to Edmonton, while his new wife began the immigration process.

A year later, when her visa was finally processed, Parmar met Jaswal at the Edmonton International Airport with chocolates and a bouquet of flowers.

But at the luggage carousel, Jaswal told him her true reasons for marrying. She said she never loved him and she wouldn't consummate their marriage.

The next day, she told his aunt she'd only married Parmar in India so she could come to Canada and later bring her mother and nephews.

Parmar says he never knew of his wife's scheme and he was heartbroken when he learned of it. He then contacted immigration officials. After a lengthy investigation, they laid charges of communicating false information, a rarely used charge under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

At her trial, Jaswal said she left the marriage because her husband demanded money from her family as soon as she arrived in Edmonton. But during sentencing on Thursday, the trial judge said he found her testimony full of inconsistencies.

Parmar and Jaswal divorced last December. The Canada Border Services Agency must now determine if she should be deported.

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# murder unveiled

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## Canadian groom wants to shame his runaway bride

Thu, January 05 2006

A Canadian businessman has lodged police reports in India claiming the woman he married used him to get a visa to come to Canada and join her lover.

By Mata Press Service



A Canadian businessman has lodged police reports in India claiming the woman he married used him to get a visa to come to Canada and join her lover.

In an unusual twist to the phenomenon of Punjab's abandoned brides, Satpaul (Steve) Dhaliwal told Indian media that his wife Rukhwant Kaur Toor used him "as a step to land in Canada."

"I am a Canadian citizen and sponsored her. She went to Canada only to be united with her lover, not with her husband. But I will not divorce her. I want her to come to her native village and seek a divorce here, so that everyone here comes to know how she has treated me," he was quoted as saying in Indian media.

The Asian Pacific Post and more recently, The Province newspaper in Vancouver have highlighted the plight of Punjab's abandoned brides. ([See "Where have our husbands gone?" Oct 21, 2004](#))

The phenomenon—some have likened to organized crime— involves NRIs or non-resident Indians who return to their homeland to get married. In most cases dowries are involved and the women and their families are promised new lives in Canada and the U.S.

Official studies in India say that some 30,000 women in India have been left behind by their overseas-based husbands,

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There have also been sporadic cases of women duping men in Punjab like the case involving Dhaliwal from Surrey.

Dhaliwal, a Canadian citizen, alleged that he married Rukhwant Kaur Toor in India in March 2003. After five days of marriage, he returned to Canada and began the sponsorship process.

Dhaliwal said that 15 months later, Rukhwant telephoned him, telling him that she had arrived in Surrey, Canada.

"A few months ago, I received a request for divorce from Rukhwant, who lives with her boyfriend either in Brampton or Toronto."

Dhaliwal alleged that Rukhwant cheated him claiming: "Rukhwant has taken away all the jewellery, her own as well as the ornaments and I gave her, the clothes, and the registry of my ancestral home which is in Sangrur district.



"I had relationships with other women in Canada before I married Rukhwant, but my mother wanted me to marry an Indian girl," he adds.

Dhaliwal said he has lodged a complaint with Jagraon police against his bride and her family, accusing them of cheating him.

Supt. Jarnail Singh Dhaliwal told Indian media: "The case is clear that the girl has duped this man."

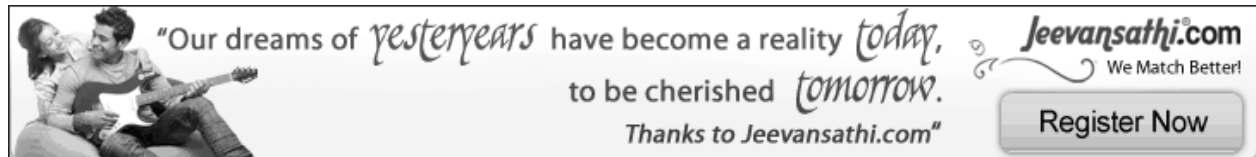
It could not be immediately determined if Dhaliwal had lodged a report on his wife with Immigration Canada.

In October 2004, Immigration Canada took an Indian bride to court in Edmonton after she told her new husband she married him for his Canadian citizenship.

Karmjeet Jaswal, an elementary school teacher, was sentenced to four months in jail in Edmonton for communicating false information, in what is believed to be Canada's first successful prosecution of a marriage of convenience.

The court was told that in 2001, Satnam (Sam) Parmar, a 38-year-old drugstore supervisor, went to India to visit relatives. Family members there arranged for him to meet Karmjeet Jaswal.





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## 'Marriage frauds destabilizing Indo-Canadians'

Ajit Jain in Toronto

July 29, 2006 20:35 IST

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Two cases of alleged marriage frauds are being generalized by a Canadian politician who, in a letter to Immigration Minister Monte Solberg, has reportedly suggested that all marriages between a Canadian and a foreigner should be subject to a certain period of probation.

Liberal Member of Parliament Roy Cullen has reportedly said that only if a couple continues in a marital relationship after the lapse of the probation period should the permanent visa papers be given to the spouse brought from another country.

Many marriages between an Indo-Canadian and an Indian in India are destabilizing the Indo-Canadian community. I suggest that applicants who arrive in Canada be put on probation. If they fail to remain with their spouse for a certain period of time, they would have a hearing in front of a panel of individuals appointed by CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada)," he said.

The *Globe and Mail* daily on Saturday detailed two cases of alleged marriage frauds -- one arranged through an agency in July, 2002 between Indo-Canadian Mehul Parikh, 27, with Pinal Shah, 21, from Baroda; and the other between Bhavita Shah, an Indo-Canadian with Sub Shah, a Textile Engineer from Baroda.

In his court documents, Parikh alleged that he was a victim of marriage fraud. He reportedly said that when he met his wife for the first time in Baroda, he noticed that she walked with a pronounced limp and that had proved to be correct as she was now on a waiting list for hip-replacement surgery.

In his court documents, Parikh reportedly claimed that he found papers in his wife's files from Baroda Homeopathic Medical Hospital, which said that she had a disease called Avascular Necrosis in her leg for which she had been taking homeopathic medicine. This disease causes bone tissue to die and bones to collapse.

The couple, who have since separated, have detailed their own stories in their court documents with Parikh claiming that he was a victim of a fraud in Baroda and that now he was financially ruined and could not work as he was on depressants.

Another story of alleged marriage fraud concerned Bhavita Shah who reportedly accused her husband Sub Shah of using her to obtain Canadian citizenship. Sub Shah 'vehemently' denied the accusation.



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Bhavita Shah came to Canada in 1999 after marrying an Indo-Canadian but the couple separated just a few months after she arrived in Canada due to his problems with alcohol. They divorced in 2003 when Bhavita Shah returned to Baroda in search of a second husband. She married Sub Shah in January 2004 and on her sponsorship, Shah got his immigration papers and traveled to Canada in October 2004.

Their son was born November last year, after which Bhavita went to India to show her healthy son to the family. But when she returned to Canada, Sub Shah had already filed divorce papers.

She then reportedly wrote to the Immigration Department informing them that the marriage was a fraud and asked them to take action against her husband. She wanted the marriage to be annulled and her husband deported.

Marina Wilson, an Immigration Department spokeswoman, was quoted in the Canadian national daily as suggesting that Canadians must take responsibility when marrying abroad to ensure that their spouses' intentions were sincere.

Liberal parliamentarian Cullen said there were numerous cases of marriage fraud in the Indo-Canadian community. His Federal riding of Etobicoke North has a concentration of Indo-Canadian population. So, he took the initiative to ask the Immigration minister to change the Immigration Act to require foreign spouses to be 'on probation' for a time before they became permanent residents.

Under the existing rules, foreign spouses get permanent residency as soon as they land in Canada. The report said that about 15 per cent of the 60,000 Canadians who marry overseas and file international spousal sponsorships had their applications rejected. In case of India, the rejection rate is slated to be as high as 23 per cent.

The latest reports in the Canadian daily are bound to give a reason to Canadian immigration officials in New Delhi and Chandigarh to deny visas to many spouses who marry Canadians and for politicians to take a closer look as to whether there was any merit to Cullen's suggestion.

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**solve**

by annymous on Jul 30, 2006 09:22 AM

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**Good Idea**

by sanman on Jul 29, 2006 10:44 PM

Probation sounds like a good idea. After all, immigration is a privilege and not a right. If anyone commits fraud to obtain immigration, they ought to be deported immediately, and all privileges revoked.

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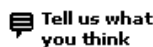
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## Wedding Scams in Canada

Mon, June 11 2007



A Canadian man and his girlfriend are being investigated by Indian police for facilitating fake marriages between foreigners and Indians seeking to immigrate to Canada. Joginder Singh, 50, and his Canadian

accomplice Queenie Nigen were arrested by Delhi Police on charges of cheating Jalandhar-based businessman Amrik Singh of a million rupees (about C\$26,181). The arrests were made following a complaint by Amrik Singh.

Joginder had claimed he would enable Amrik to get Canadian citizenship by arranging his marriage to Queenie, local media reported. Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Praveer Ranjan said: "Joginder and Queenie appear to have cheated two or three more people based in Punjab in a similar manner and we are trying to trace them."

The duo visited India on several occasions and stayed in Punjab. Explaining their modus operandi, another senior police officer said: "Joginder always volunteered to help people who wanted to get job in Canada. Initially he suggested they should marry a Canadian woman and then he gave them the idea of marrying his friend Queenie."

In the present case, Amrik agreed to marry Queenie and paid C\$13,091 to Singh as a "commission". After the marriage earlier this year, Joginder left for Canada with Nigen, saying he needed her there to arrange a visa for Amrik. Amrik received no further communications from Joginder, who had told him that he would return to India soon.

A few months later, Joginder met Amrik in Delhi and said the Canadian authorities had refused to grant him a visa. "Joginder told Amrik that his migration could still be possible if he became a magician," said the officer. Joginder even took Amrik to a magician for training and asked him to shell out another C\$14,400.

As soon as he received this money from Amrik, Joginder returned to Canada.

Amrik then approached Delhi Police. The duo was arrested when they went back to India to look for more victims. An inquiry revealed that there were some more similar complaints against Joginder in Punjab.

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In 1999 Sukhi married a girl named Rashpal who was residing in Canada also. According to him his happy world came to an end when his wife suddenly died. At the time he had a daughter with Rashpal who is six years of age now. He decided not to get married again for few years. He was afraid that his new wife will not be able to give full attention and love to his daughter that she deserves. After being obliged by his friends and relatives he agreed to get re-married. But he tried everything possible to make sure that the woman he is going to marry will give is daughter the love and attention she deserves.

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During this time Sukhi arranged to erect a gate in the memory of his loving wife in his village back in India. The person who was in charge of this project his name is Navtej Singh Rubi, according to Sukhi. He told Sukhi about the sister-in-law of his brother-in-law. Sukhi told Navtej that he wanted to clear everything with her upfront. Every option was discussed and Navtej Singh Rubi who is a baptized Sikh took the full responsibility to make sure that Sukhi will get everything out of the relationship he wants. Sukhi decided to leave his daughter in his new wife's village Chugge Kalan Distt. Moga with her so they get to know each other and learn to live together with love, and he came back to Canada. After Sukhi sponsored his wife Surinder Kaur Malli, who belongs to the first Sikh Canadian MP Mr. Gurbax Singh Malli's village, she arrived in Vancouver, Canada on July 25, 2005. One of Surinder's sister lives in Clgary. Surinder suggested to Sukhi that if they live in Calgary it will be better for them. They moved to Calgary according to Sukhi. The story took a turn for the worst here. He told the media that everything was OK until Halloween. But he has to face many difficulties after that. Sometime he will be tauted that he belongs to a different rural area in Punjab, sometimes of being too tall, sometime of being seven year older than his wife, sometimes even having a daughter from previous marriage. She also accused Sukhi that he does not want a child with her. But according to Sukhi his wife herself suggested that they will have a child together when Sukhi's daughter grows up. Also she started to say that Sukhi's first wife is haunting her. To get cure for this Sukhi took his wife back to India, and according to him he spent about eight or nine thousand dollars on this trip. According to him if he had any bad intentions why would he have taken her back to India to get better? He says that he wanted to live a happy life with his daughter and new wife. He also told his wife that she doesn't have to worry about getting a job she should look after his daughter and he will work hard to provide to the family. But his wife had other plans; she also changed her behaviour toward his daughter whose name is Gagan.

One day Sukhi's wife said that her sister Paramjit is trying to ruin his married life so we will move back to Vancouver from here. And she can also look after her mother and father-in-law. According to Sukhi when they were leaving in the car her sister phoned her. He is unaware of the conversation but after the phone call Surinder told him to turn the car around and drop her off at her sister's house and that she doesn't want to live with me. Sukhi informed the police that his wife is living with her sister, and under these circumstances if some thing bad happens to her he will not be responsible for that. Sukhi told the whole story to the police officer but Surinder blamed Sukhi that he was taking her against her will to Vancouver. But after the police's investigation she agreed that she was going by her own will. Sukhi is very upset by all this and blames Surinder's sister for all of this. He approached the media to bring the whole matter to life. He also reported to the immigration department. He is also thinking to hire a lawyer to go to the court. He also blames Surinder for taking his money. When Sukhi told the whole story to his in-laws they didn't do anything either. When he told the person who was the mediator for this wedding he told Sukhi to get marry somewhere else. According to Sukhi his parents and his sisters tried to make Surinder understand and to

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come back to live with him, but in vain. Sukhi said that Surinder had the bracelet and two rings that were given to him by his in-laws at the wedding time, along with all the jewelry that was given to her from my family. Sukhi told that she confessed to the police officer that she had Sukhi's passport and P.R. Card. She also threatened Sukhi that Ramuwalia is their family friend and he can straighten Sukhi.

Sukhwinder Singh Dhani showed the letter from the Calgary police to the office of this newspaper in which police told that Sukhwinder is a victim of the domestic dispute and he should seek counseling for that. He will be informed if the police decide to lay charges against his wife.

When we phoned Surinder to know her side of the story, her sister Paramjit answered the phone and said that Surinder has gone to school and will phone us back when she comes home. We gave her the phone number and the fax number.

Later Surinder faxed to this newspaper stating that Sukhwinder used to beat her up and he is a very suspicious person. She also blames Sukhi that he used to say that his previous wife is haunting her so he wanted to take her to India so she could have hysterectomy. She also blamed him that he did not work at all and he was taking her forcefully to Vancouver. He also threatened her that will fix her there. She also stated that Sukhi bit her up in the car and also pulled her hair. Surinder said that Sukhi used to beat her so much that she is still scared. According to Surinder, Sukhi dropped her in front of her sister's house and ran away. Later he filed a police report that I had broken his car window. Surinder said that she had no intentions of getting divorce and she is still waiting for him to come back to her. She said that he has her passport and P.R. card.

On other hand Sukhi said that all this is a white lie. If she has been waiting for me then why hasn't she called me? Sukhi said she has confessed to police about the beatings that it was a lie and she also confessed that she filed a police report because her sister Paramjit told her to. Sukhi said that I never touched her and I did get married on the condition that she will help me raise my daughter. And she said herself that she doesn't want her own child yet. He also said that about our visit you can verify with the Saint we went to get her cured. The saint could tell you if it was me or her who was being haunting my dead wife. Sukhi said that she has confessed to her the police she had her passport and P.R. Card.

Sukhi says that Surinder married just a purpose of getting immigration in Canada. She called him many times to file divorce so she can go back and get marry someone else. Surinder's sister did same thing to her husband about 4 years ago, and left him after coming in Canada. If her sister had been removed from this country as she committed a fraud, then Surinder would never have repeated this story again. Sukhi says immigration law is very soft on the sponsored spouse but it is very tough on the sponsor.

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NRI Marriages:

## Marriage for Candian immigration

That many of Citizens of Canada and Permanent Residents of Canada are being deceived by foreign nationals into entering marriages of convenience for the purpose of acquiring permanent residence in Canada for the foreign nationals, and using Canadian Law to their advantage.

Toronto, Canada, Sep. 03, 2006  
Gary Singh

NRI, B. Singh from Toronto describe; **I had a dream to get married, raise a family, live a life as a normal citizen and contribute to the society and community.** I thought marriage was about trusting each other, about looking after each other, about taking care of each other in lows and ups in the life. Marriage without trust is unthinkable for me. I thought marriage was for lifetime, without any selfish purpose or malice. I thought by getting marriage with the approval of parents and your community is the right thing to do, as if in our long life together we have any miscommunication or misunderstanding about each other, we can sit in the family and follow community rules we can resolve those issued, boy o boy was I wrong. Was I that naïve or the meaning of marriage seems changing these days in our community!! Or may be people have different reason to get married?

I still can not imagine how a girl/boy including their parents can ruin someone's dream of happy married life and forget all the rituals and religious duties we are all costumed to for their own selfish purpose!!!!

I truly believe that I and Canadian system was used for the sole purpose of getting the Canadian Immigration and once the other party felt secure that I am no longer needed they dumped me like a used object. For them word marriage hold no meaning.

I am writing this letter in hope that justice will be served according to the quote below and in future innocent Canadian can be saved from this planned prank.

**"Canadian Immigration Regulations, 1978, s. 4(3): The family class does not include a spouse who entered into the marriage primarily for the purpose of gaining admission to Canada as a member of the family class and not with the intention of residing permanently with the other spouse."**

I am a Canadian citizen. I did my studies in Montreal and moved to Toronto for better job opportunities. I went back to my homeland (India) and got married (arrange marriage) with all the traditions in front of all my family. To me marriage is something very sacred bond and it is considered a spiritual union.

When my spouse got her VISA I started to get feeling she wants me to leave her. Anyhow, she moved to Canada, I bought a house as it was my dream to buy a house when I get married. She always expresses her displeasure about moving to Canada, and how her life was better in India. She never mingled with my close nit family. She and her family try to provoke me to leave her by showing me that her character was not good. (Now that she had her visa I was not needed anymore) I didn't wanted to end my marriage because I always took it as a long term relationship bond by culture and religion.

When they saw I am doing everything and more to keep my marriage her true color came on exactly one year after moving into the house, she try to get me arrested by making false claim that I am torturing her, I don't love her, and that my family who is living in Montreal is beating her and asking dowry from her. This was all planned and made up to get me arrested.

(Please note that dowry is usually asked before or on the wedding day not 1 year later when she is already moved to Canada. You can also see the wedding movie and see how simple and traditional the wedding was and also note that I never raise my hand on anyone let alone my wife).

The plan started when she went to her cousin brother's house who lives in Toronto and that's where they plan to get me arrested by calling the police. But thank God I was not arrested. Please note that it was me respecting the culture and social value of brother-sister day (Raksha Bandhan) that dropped her to her cousin brother's house before going to work at 6am.

That is when they planned this whole scenario to put me in trouble. The next day, when I went to pick her up from the work at about 8:45pm, after waiting outside the store for about 30 minutes, I went inside and the owner of the store told me that she left work at about 5:30pm with her cousin brother because her wife was not feeling well. I thought may be there was an emergency. I got home at about 9:30pm and did not find her at home.

At about 9:40pm she came to house and immediately when upstairs, I was in the kitchen on the phone with my mom. My mom told me that she would like to talk to her, so I went upstairs to get her. That is when I find her locked in the bathroom; she wouldn't open the bathroom door. I was confused and did not knew what was going on, so I knocked the door, when I heard her murmuring, I thought she was crying, so I open the door with penny,

that is when I find her talking on the cell phone (given to her by her brother the same night) with the police. I was completely shocked to hear her say that I was torturing her and she was saying to the police to come soon to save her. I just stood there with my jaw to the ground thinking what is she doing and why is she doing to me.

I did not wanted to get in any more trouble by engaging conversation with her as she was on the phone with the police and saying absurd things. Confused, I just waked down stair and waited for the police to arrive near the door. That day she took her passport, PR card and all immigration paper along with cash, jewelry sitting in the house. And she later she took the rest of her stuff along with joint gifts etc.

Since that day she is living with her cousin brother. Since I knew I did not do anything wrong I thought her family will sit with me to do the reconciliation but that day never arrived instead she claimed for legal aid to get a free lawyer while working full time. She sent me divorce paper, asking for support and asking half of my assets which I earn before I got married to her. I had also bought her a return ticket to visit India but she never went back to India since then.

Sincerely,

(ID is in file)





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NRI Marriages:

**NNRI Canadian victimized by wife and Immigration Canada**

Foreigner is marrying you for all the right reasons.

Ontario, July 2, 2006  
Chirag Patel  
NRI press

Me, and my whole family went (from Canada) to India, to find a lifetime marriage partner for myself. I met 6 or 7 girls. 3 or 4 families had also recommended the girl that I had married. I met her and liked many things about her, before getting married. I decided to marry this girl, to whom that I had thought, will spend the rest of my life. After spending 10 days with her, me and my family went back to Canada. We talked on the phone mainly afterwards.

After 6 months or so, she arrived in Canada and showed her true side. **Since she arrived at the airport, she made the most rude and depressing remarks, telling me that she never loved me**, she only came here for because of her parents and she was going to leave in 2 months, etc. I was shocked and heart-broken, and also thought that she was upset with something I may have possibly done. She continued like this, with my family members and refused to show any interest. A few day! s later, I caught her talking to her lover (in India) on the phone and telling him about the playing mind games that she's playing, and also indicating that she came here to Canada for the Visa. I was heart-broken, and very depressed. We granted her wishes, and dropped her off to a residence of her friend. I do not wish to state all the details, as others may mis-use this information, to do the same things that happened.

I called contact Immigration Canada immediately, and to my surprise, they did not help me. The immigration officer just told me to write a letter. Nothing has really happened, but she has clearly broke the rules of the Immigration act by using me for marriage, to obtain a permanent resident visa. She didn't live with me for even a week in Canada (I lived with her for 10 days in India and no problem), left me within days, never contacted me afterwards, agreed to an annulment, and has showed all the possible signs of a fraudulent person who came here to obtain a visa, and enjoy all the other benefits here.

Her parents are the most disgraceful people ever, to support their daughter in all of this. In fact, I believe it was a plan by her whole family to settle where her friend is residing. They never contacted me after she left. These are all greedy people who have no values. People, like them, will never change. I am very much frustrated and disappointed with Immigration Canada, but I have great faith in the great Lord, that justice will be served. The Lord can make anything happen.

I know I decided to marry this woman, but she misrepresented herself and I was trapped. In such a fraudulent scheme, it is very difficult to get out of this organized crime. I hope that the public will be aware that the world has changed, and even a country, like India, has lost its values. If you are a Canadian or USA citizen, just be careful and take all the time you need to ensure that the foreigner is marrying you for all the right reasons.



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I, Jagpal Singh Parmar, a born Canadian citizen, got married to Simran Kaur Phagura in India on March 12, 2005. We were introduced to each other by mutual family friends. After speaking with each other, we both decided to get married. I thought I had found everything I had always wanted in my future wife in Simran. She looked sweet, innocent, caring and loving. Her family presented themselves as a respectable, religious Indian family. Therefore, neither I nor my family ever questioned Simran or her family's motives for the marriage.

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I paid all the marriage expenses and in return only asked for her commitment to me. During the duration of my stay in India after our marriage we had no physical relationship. I thought she was shy and scared so I did not think anything of this. After 14 days of marriage I came back to Canada. After coming back to Canada, I immediately started the sponsorship process so that Simran and I could start our life together here. We had many struggles along the way including getting her a passport and I waited what seemed like an endless NINE months for her to go through the immigration process. We spoke on the phone almost everyday during those nine months and never during any of our conversations did she ever mention any doubt about our marriage.

She had her second immigration interview on October 26, 2005 and was finally granted her Visa on December 23, 2005. She called us in Canada on the very same day to inform us of the good news. She sounded very excited.

It took a couple of weeks to finalize and confirm her airplane ticket. Once the ticket was confirmed she called me to tell me that she was coming on January 9, 2006. I was excited. After nine months of waiting she was finally coming to Canada to be with me. Her flight was scheduled to arrive in Vancouver on January 9, 2006 at 5:50 am. I was so excited to see her that I arrived at the airport at 4:30. I waited over 2 hours for her to come out. When she came out not only did she did not seem excited to see me but she also looked and acted totally different from when I last saw her in India. We took a few pictures at the airport and headed home there after. When we got home she went straight to bed. Thinking she was tired from a long flight I did not wake her up.

We had invited a few immediate families over that evening to celebrate Simran's arrival. Everyone was very eager to meet my new wife and our new family member. Once the families started to arrive, my mom came and asked Simran to get ready. After she finished getting ready, Simran came to me and told me that she did not have any feelings for me and that she did not want to be with me. She told me that she had an affair in India with a boy named **Sukhdev Singh Phagura who was from the neighboring village Thayes**. She also told me that her parents had forced her into this marriage. She clearly stated that she did not want to be with me and that she had gone through with the marriage to get revenge with her father. I was completely shocked. Not once during my stay in India or during the nine months that we were married did she ever indicate, suggest or even act like she had been forced into this marriage. None of the pictures taken since the first day we met give any sign that she was forced into the marriage. On the day of our marriage and wedding reception she was running around taking pictures with everyone. For someone being forced into a marriage she appeared to be quite happy and excited.

Not once during any of our conversations over the nine months of our marriage did she ever indicate, suggest or even act like she was unhappy or forced into this marriage and not once was there ever any mention of her affair. I spoke with her parents, family and friends regularly and never was there any indication. She spoke with my parents, family and friends and again no indication.

After hearing all this I was very upset and hurt. I told my mom about what Simran had said, as she could sense right away that something was wrong. When Simran did not come to greet and meet the families, everyone was curious and could sense that something was wrong. Everyone soon found out what was happening. My family and I tried to speak with Simran to get to the bottom of things and find out what her intentions were. The more we tried to talk to her the more abrupt and disrespectful she became. She sat there emotionless and unaffected by everything and everyone around her. What was supposed to be a celebration and new start, turned out to be something beyond everyone's wildest imagination. After several hours of talking and getting nowhere we called it a night and she went to sleep in the guest room.

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Monday through Wednesday night, she slept in the guest room and during the day we would talk to her about everything that had transpired and also about our future, if any. She asked for time. I was really in love with her and I did not want to let her go so I gave her more time, but the more time I gave her and the more we talked the more we came to learn of the elaborate scheme her and her family had concocted.

On Thursday both of us went out and she sounded and acted different. I really thought she was coming around. Thursday night however, was a different story. Whenever I tried to get close to her she acted as though she did not want anything to do with me. I belong to a decent, respectable, well educated family. I have never seen any man force himself on his wife. All the men in my family respect their wives. Simran seemed to be of a different mindset. She was upset that I didn't force myself on her.

Throughout the week she had been changing her mind, sometimes asking me to give her time saying that she wanted to stay in the relationship and other times wanting out of the relationship. Friday morning she again wanted out of the relationship and wanted us to drop her off at a friend's house. Throughout the week we had also been speaking to her parents back in India and some of her family here in North America. We spoke with her sister and brother-in-law in California who said they were willing to come to Vancouver to help settle the matter but never came. We spoke with her aunt in Vancouver who originally agreed to let Simran stay with her and her family but then called a couple of hours later saying that her kids refused to let Simran set foot in the house. We offered to drop her off at any family member's house however neither she nor any of her family agreed to it. We were even willing to buy her a ticket to Toronto where she also has family, again she refused.

She spent all of Friday calling people we did not know. Finally, in the evening she had all her bags packed and was ready to go. We tried calling her aunt again as we did not feel comfortable dropping her off at just anyone's house. We wanted to make sure she was safe. However, once again the aunt refused to take her in. She started playing tricks with me so I had to call the police. In the process my mother became unconscious and had to go to the hospital. This did not affect Simran at all. The police took her to the police station and a friend picked her up.

During the five days she stayed with us, her father called on a regular basis to find out how we were doing. Since she has moved out he has not called once. Also, since Simran has moved out we have found out from one of her relatives that Simran and her family had planned all this from day one. The plan was for Simran to marry me just to get Canadian Immigration. Her father had promised her that when she went back to India he would marry her to her boyfriend.

I was scammed and fooled from day one by Simran and her family. She has said that her father knew about everything and beat her to get married but her father has denied this. I feel betrayed by Simran and her family. They used me as a way to get a free ticket into Canada. So I would like to make people aware of Mr. Buta Singh Phagura, his wife Kuljit Kaur, daughters Harpreet Kaur, Simran Kaur and son Amandeep Singh and other people like them in the world. I had heard stories of things like this happening to other people but, never in my worst nightmares did I ever think it would happen to me. I did not deserve this. Nobody deserves this. I lost in every way, emotionally, financially and time wise. We have also learned from reliable sources that **Sukhdev Singh Phagura, son of Milkhi Ram**, is currently trying to get a visitors Visa to Canada with the intention of never returning to India. **We strongly feel that Sukhdev Singh Phagura should not be granted a visitors Visa to Canada because he plans to marry Simran after getting a divorce from me.**

I want justice. I want my marriage to Simran annulled, her deported back to India and charges to be laid against the Phagura family. Being a good Canadian citizen it is my right to let you know that she has frauded not only myself but also Immigration Canada to get here. I do not want to be responsible for her in Canada because she is not going to be my legal wife anymore. So I am requesting you to look at all this and help me.

Jagpal S. Parmar

[jagsparmar@hotmail.com](mailto:jagsparmar@hotmail.com)

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### I want to do anything to send her back to India

and set example for all the people in India who take advantage of families like ours and abuse the immigration system to get across here

Jaskaran Mahil  
Edmonton, Alberta  
EMAIL: Jaskaran.mahil@gmail.com  
Nov. 18, 2006

I went to India in February 2004 with my uncle from England. This was my first trip to India. I was 22 years old and I was looking forward to find a life companion who would be with me and my family. I was introduced to few girls through my mom's brother. I was being honest and I was telling them about my child from my past relationship.

During this process my sister in Canada talked to SUKHI (girl's Mama). He lives in Surrey, BC Canada and was a co worker with my sister and my brother in law. My sister talked to Sukhi about my situation and how I was looking for a girl to settle down. Sukhi knew everything about my past and my child. He proposed to my sister to tell me to take a look at his sister's daughter. My sister and brother in law explained clearly to Sukhi that Johnny has a son and he is going to be a part of his life and his partner's life after marriage. Sukhi accepted and says that is understandable and he already knows about it. Sukhi acted on behalf of his sister in India.

Then after this was all accepted and clearly explained he called me personally and proposed me to take a look at his niece. By that time my mother and my grandmother were there already with me in India. Sukhi had a conversation with my mother as well about it.

I, my mother and grandmother went to see \*R.deep. I talked to R.deep one on one. I told R.deep about my past relationship, and my son. I also explained that it would be your decision not anyone else's, because she is going to be my life partner and my sons new step mother. I told her to think before she makes her final decision. The next day Sukhi called from Canada and told me that his niece is willing to get married to me. I talked to my mother and finalized everything and arranged the marriage on a short notice, because my mother had to come back to Canada within 10 days.

I and R.deep got married on April 7, 2004. We went for our honeymoon to Shimla a hill station in India. During my stay in India after wedding I met her close family members. I left from India on April 17, 2004. My first priority after coming from India was to bring my wife R.deep to Canada as I was missing her a lot.

I filed documents for R.deep's Immigration to Canada in May 2004. Because of my past relationship in Canada the immigration Department in India sent R.deep a letter for an interview. I flew to India especially to support and prepare her for the interview. During the whole time when R.deep was in India I was sending money for her day to day expenses and education. I was encouraging her the whole time to join classes for English speaking courses and basic knowledge in computers.

Unfortunately the Immigration department denied her immigration to Canada in Feb. 2005. I was very disappointed as I was looking forward to bring her to Canada for the past 1 year. I hired the lawyer right away with the recommendation of Sukhi to file the appeal against immigration decision. After a long wait the appeal date was set for February 2006. I and my father flew to Vancouver for the appeal date. Finally the Judge made the decision in our favour. I was extremely happy that God finally heard my and my parent's prayers after a long time. I was looking forward to start my life with my wife. We had to reapply for R.deep's medical and police clearance as it was already expired because of the delay in process of immigration.

I was very frustrated because immigration department was not issuing visa to R.deep even after winning the appeal. I called so many times to the immigration department but I didn't get a response from them. So I finally decided to write an email to my local MP Rona Ambrose. I was talking to Tiffany Zender who represented the MP about this situation and she emailed the Indian embassy. Tiffany supported us a lot to make the process faster. Finally we got a response from the embassy on September 6th that the visa has been issued. We all were extremely happy. I booked R.deep's ticket and sent her \$2,900 for shopping in India before coming here.

During the plans of her coming here, I and my family were frequently talking to Sukhi regarding her booking ticket and other plans. We wanted her to land in Edmonton but Sukhi insisted everyone to make her land in Vancouver. He told us that he would like to keep R.deep for couple weeks at his place before sending to Edmonton. We didn't like it as we all were looking forward to see her in our family. Especially my father was going to see her for the first time. Sukhi kept on insisting us to leave her in Vancouver for some time. I and my family agreed her to stay in Vancouver for a week but I decided to come to Vancouver to pick her up from the airport and stay with her for that week. I booked the returned ticket for myself and one way ticket for R.deep from Vancouver to Edmonton. Sukhi got mad that why we booked the ticket for Ramandeep as he wants to keep her in Vancouver for some time. We insisted that we would like her to come back with me as me and my family are loo! king forward to see her as soon as possible. Moreover she is going to stay in Vancouver with him for a week before coming to Edmonton.

R.deep landed in Vancouver on September 25th 2006. I, my brother-in-law, Sukhi and his family went to the Airport to pick her up. I took flowers and box of chocolate for her to the airport. From the very first day she landed in Vancouver, I saw a big change in R.deep. It was not the same person I married and used to talk to me on the phone for two years. She was all for her Uncle Sukhi rather than me. During her stay in Vancouver at her uncle's house she gave me attitude and listened to her uncle. Along with her uncle she started insisting on staying in Vancouver for some time and told me to leave by myself to Edmonton. I was very angry and surprised with this situation as my family was waiting for her in Edmonton and my father was going to see her for the first time. I had arguments with her couple times on this issue and finally she and her uncle agreed upon her leaving to Edmonton with me.

We left for Edmonton on September 29th 2006. My family was very happy and looking forward to meet her. Upon arrival we had a very warm welcome from my family and everyone was excited with the presence of R.deep in our family. During all those happy moments me and my family was getting surprises from R.deep's attitude. Most of the time she was lying in the bedroom, watching TV or calling India or her uncle Sukhi in Surrey. If I ever ask her something or wants her to mingle with us she would say that she is having a headache and want to lie down. I always asked her that if she would like to go to the doctor. Most of the time she refused but upon insisting a lot she agreed to go and see the doctor. Doctor examined her and said everything is normal. I never understood where she was getting headaches from. I took her to the mall and bought her clothes. I even engaged her in the ESL classes to improve her English. I and my dad took her to look for the new SUV we were going! to buy. During all that she never showed any excitement or happiness while her stay with us.

R.deep was not very joyful to be with me, and I did not get to know why because she would not talk to me. She had been in Canada for three weeks and her Uncle in Canada was getting more communication than me. I felt that she was feeling upset so I tried to talk to her and told her that I would do what ever it takes to make you happy. I never knew that she would phone her uncle and say she was feeling upset and she did not want to stay at my house. On October 13th 2006 I got a big shock when her Uncle called and started telling me that I m not taking good care of her. He was totally disrespectful to me and even said that R.deep is smarter than me and Canadian people are dumb. In respect I did not talk back to her uncle. He told me to give the phone to R.deep and I did. After she got off from the phone while I was standing in from of her she asked my Dad if she can go to Surrey to her Uncle. I was shocked, I am her husband and she asked my father if she could go, she shou! Id have asked me and told me why. I did not say anything, because I now felt like ever since she got off the plane her and her uncle's plan was to leave me and stay at her uncle's house. She went upstairs and started packing. I continued working upset and feeling like what did I do wrong. After she was done packing she came to me and asked if she can go to Vancouver for couple of days. My reply was you are going on your own decision not mine, and if I say it won't make any difference anyhow.

I dropped her off at the airport. My heart was broken and I felt used by R.deep and her Uncle just to bring her across Canada. When she left my Dad at the Airport gave her \$100 and said call us once you get there. She didn't call when she got there. After a long wait I called her uncles house and her uncle's son answered the phone. He said R.deep was sleeping. I told him to give her a message to call me once she wakes up. She called me later and said she was so happy to be here. I was so upset thinking why I can't make her happy. The second day she called again and said she was very happy and she has cooked food today. She cunningly asked me if I want her to come back. I said I never wanted you to leave in the first place so come back when you feel right. She replied she is not coming back. She talked to my Dad one or two times, she and her Uncle are always blaming me for all this. I still don't know where I went wrong. All I can say that I and my family were being used to bring her across Canada.

I have heard a lot of stories these days that people living in India especially Punjab don't care about anything. They are even willing to sell their daughters just to get them to Canada and it disgusts me. I want to do anything to send R.deep back to India and set example for all the people in India who take advantage of families like ours and abuse the immigration system to get across here. Please let me know what could be done or what are the chances to teach lesson to people like Ramandeep and her uncle under any act or law. I would really appreciate if someone can get back to me on Johnny\_Mahil@hotmail.com email

\*R.deep made shorter name

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**Toronto husband filed a case of fraud to deport wife who run away after immigration  
(under " INADMISSIBLE CLASS" of the Immigration Act, spouse can be deported)**

Toronto, Feb. 05, 2007  
Sampuran ( Sam ) Singh Benet

It was very kind of you to call me this morning. I appreciate your efforts to helping the NRI's by NRI Internet.com.

As I told you on the phone, we had convinced our Canadian Citizens son to marry in India with a Punjabi Sikh girl. We find a girl by advertisement in " The Daily Ajit " News paper.

We discussed all the aspects in detail with the parents of the girl and also my son had several meetings with this girl who was from Phagwara, Punjab. My son got married on November 30,2003.

My son sponsored this girl immediately after coming back to Canada. She was interviewed in India and was rejected. We filed an appeal and were successfully. She was given Visa and she arrived in Toronto on Dec 14,2006. Her sister was living in Brampton. Later her parents were also arrived in Canada in 2005 and were living with her widow sister.

She hardly stayed with us & our son 7 days. On January 15,2007 she went to the Local Police Station and lodged a report that "

She does not Love her husband " and she has broken all relations with her husband and she want help to get her belongings.

Since then we did not see her.

I have hired a Lawyer who is very competent in Immigration Law. We have filed a case against her for Fraud to declare the marriage Annuled and to declare her under " INADMISSIBLE CLASS". of the Immigration Act.

With the help of this Solicitor we have found various Court Judgements similar to my case' i.e.

**- Last week a Husband named " Mong Hao Tran " from China, who had left her wife with in 3 months after getting Landed Status in Canada was held to be " INADMISSIBLE " and ordered Deported.**

**- On Nov 24,2006 The Federal Court in Ontario granted a Marriage Annulment to Iranian Husband because his wife run away after Landing in Canada. She is also ordered Deported.**

**- On October , 2004 The Federal court** Handed down 4 Months Jail term for Marriage Fraud to a Punjab Bride Name: Karmjeet Jaswal and ordered deported. She had run away immediately after Landing.

**- The recent Landmark decision by B.C. Supreme Court- Ordered** the husband from Fizi to pay his wife all the costs for marriage, jewellery & damages. and ordered the immigration department to review his file. This is the first kinds of Precedent that injured spouse can sue for damages under common law.

There are so many other judgments on this subject and our people do not know. They only run after the Immigration Department , News Papers & M.P.s who can do nothing.

**With your help I want to spread this message to all the injured Canadians to get to-gether and file a Case Law suite together and get all the Culprits deported and pay all kinds of damages they had caused.**

Sampuran ( Sam ) Singh Benet  
69 Crocker Drive,  
Brampton, On Canada L6P 1Z7  
Office 905 695-5170 & Mob: 416 666-1912.

Opinions:



"DO NOT FOLLOW PARENTS TO MARRY IN INDIA". Swaran Singh, Australia,

I am really shocked and cannot believe this. My parents always tell me that we have a great culture as compare to western culture. I was thinking to marry in India.. now.....no way. Thanks God, I did not go through this . How does parents encourage their daughters to desert their husbands after marring in front of Guru Granth Sahib. For immigration purposes, how they ruin some bodies life 2-3-4 years and money. They are animals and even animals may be better. Actually they are sending their daughters in prostitute business.

We may be stupid, if we don't hassle them in the courts and deport them. If Fraud to declare the marriage Annuled and to declare her under " INADMISSIBLE CLASS". of the Immigration Act exist, continue one by one in the court and start sending these culprits back where they belong to stupid land. Once you take to the court, media will explore the issues and law will more enforceable.

From this story, NOW I NEVER go to India and marry there. GOD BLESS INTERENT TECHNOLOGY. Good Luck all Canadians who have sufferered or suffering from this cultural arranged marriage system.

Now I am sending this email to my all my friends, "DO NOT FOLLOW PARENTS TO MARRY IN INDIA".



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NRI Marriages:

**She began demanding a divorce but only after she is immigrated out of Punjab to a foreign land.**

It is sad to see how people have deteriorated the image of the NRI grooms. NRI grooms are usually viewed as villains and people of bad influence. However, this is not true. I am sure if we want to find a honest Panjabi inside India it will be a tedious task. It will be difficult but not impossible to find an honest Panjabi now days. I read articles where they portray NRI grooms as dishonest and cheat. I would like to ask people if the NRI grooms are dishonest and cheat then why they keep marrying their daughters to them? Why don't they marry them to some honest Panjabi living inside Punjab? There is a reason for this. If they marry their daughters to non NRI grooms then their hunger won't be satisfied. A lot of people will disagree with this. I am not writing it because I am an NRI and Panjabi but because I had really bad experience with Panjabi brides. I was only 26 when I got married to a Panjabi bride hailing from North Punjab and I really had bitter experience. I believe in simple marriage and it was carried out in the same fashion. The marriage was a set up for an easy access to foreign land but girl forgot to mention that she never liked me because she considered me too old for her when she was 19 and I was only 26. Few days after the marriage she mentioned it to me and I tried to work out things by telling her the good side of the marriage. The damage was already done and I was just trying to repair it but burned my hands so bad. Despite that I still wanted to bring her and then she began demanding a divorce but only after she is immigrated out of Punjab to a foreign land. I never agreed with those terms and broke my communication with her. Since that day I have never spoken to her. Last year some of my close relative went to visit Punjab and they were put under the police scanner by the girl's parents. These were elderly couples who have never had any experience with the police and they left Punjab before the police could apprehend them. Even the police do not know if this was a civil case or what? They were following the same path as the girl's parents. The girl's parents were demanding huge sums of money to settle the case from them. I don't know what people think of the NRI people. Do they think NRI are the currency printing machines? The greed of the girls' parents forced them to take such an extreme step. People use their daughters to gain access to the foreign land and when it fails they turn around and use them as their shields to protect them and to extort money out of the groom and blackmail NRI grooms. Now I am 31 and fighting this battle. We tried to reach agreement with them by telling them how much we can pay them but they won't agree because it will not fill their mouth completely. Is there any one out there who is honest enough to help me get out of this mess? I don't think so because before even this story is narrated to someone they will also be thinking about one thing and one thing only: money.

If people can say every NRI groom is dishonest then I can say every Panjabi bride is also following the same path. Instead of blaming each other, we really have to look at ourselves and see what root cause of this problem is. The problems is the greed and deception that no one is aware of. I am sure there are a lot of Punjabis who have done some bad things by getting married to more than one girl but every one is not the same like every Panjabi girl is not the same. Some articles have made fun of the mid aged NRI grooms and stated that they should be ashamed for getting married to younger girls. To me this is an option not a binding contract that you can't breach. For example, you go to a store to buy something and if you don't like what you are offered you don't buy it. Before blaming the mid aged NRI grooms, the girl have chance to say "no" to the proposal. Why blame them later on for being old when you had the option. I am not sure what happens to people who say they are so proud of their culture and heritage when they even decide to marry their young daughter to mid aged NRIs. The rich culture and heritage is all drama. Actually people in Punjab are very hypocrites, greedy and selfish. I am not sure what is going to be people's opinion about it but I was told that I was too old for my wife. I was only 26 and this was mentioned by the girl's parent only after the marriage had taken place. If I was considered old at 26 then I don't know what people will say to people who are 31, maybe grandfather. I know lot of people will disagree with what I wrote and this will probably never get published but this article came from an experience backed by solid facts. I am an NRI and victim of such fraud and don't know where to turn for help. I was upset after I saw all the articles were stereotyping the NRI grooms by portraying them as villains so I decided to write back justifying. Hopefully, someone who has experienced the same pain as I did will publish this article. Thanks for taking time to read this.

Very respectfully

Sunny

Sunny Singh [sunnyd479@yahoo.com]



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[Home](#)**What to do if spouse run away after getting immigration?**

Spouses are in weird situation when partners marry only for immigration purposes. Some divorce immediately, some land here without telling their spouses and try to settle

It is strongly recommended that Canadian Law must be changed immediately for grace period of 2-3 years

Your opinions and support will help to change this law

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**Fraud marriage victims want change - Join National Protest at Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa**  
**Toronto husband filed a case of fraud to deport wife** who run away after immigration- (under "INADMISSIBLE CLASS" of the Immigration Act, spouse can be deported)

**Greedy parents of indian girls**

it is very painful to talk on this issue. The subject is on our culture and how indian girls are forgetting their responsibilities and going off the track. It is rather more painful to see that the parents are also joining hands with them and don't want to show them the right path. Marriage is something very sacred bond and it is considered a spiritual union. The whole concept of marriage is changed these days. I am going to write my personal experience. I brought my daughter in law from Khanna, Punjab. She was from a poor family and always hungry for money. She was given all regard all comforts all time to study work and relax. She wanted to be a doctor in this country and it took ten years to meet her goal. Finally she got what she wanted and left child, home and husband as now she wanted to have a white husband. The marriage to a man of her choice was not easy, so again she concentrated on us and started putting all types of false accusations! and asking for crores of rupees. While living with us she used to yell at us but outside she used to pretend like a diva. The whole idea of writing my experience is to tell the NRI parents and their children not to go to India to bring spouses from there. Because now they come with you not to become a part of your family but to use you and loot you with the help of their families. **S. Sahota, USA**, pampukangs@yahoo.com  
 x814-8334848, May 17, 2006 at 05:27:53

**Fraudulent student visa girl married to my brother to become permanent:**

I Canadian Citizen born and raised in Canada concerned of this issue of fraud marriages. I feel like that our Indian society is looking into abandoned Indian brides more than our abandoned grooms. My brother born and raised in Canada got married to a girl from India on September 10, 2005 is a victim himself as an abandoned groom. My brother lives in Calgary, AB got married to this girl from India and got betrayed, not just him but our whole family. His ex-wife came to Canada December 25, 2004 to Toronto, Ont on a student visa. She stayed there for about 1 month with her aunt and uncle, never once attended school, then she never got along with her aunt and uncle in Toronto, Ont, so she decided to come to Abbotsford, BC. She stayed in BC with her friend from India for 1 week but that didn't work out for her either. Then she moved to another family friend's house in Abbotsford and lived there until she married my brother. Her purpose to come to Canada was for a groom search not to study. She has not attended a day of school in Canada since she's been here, but the government issued her a student visa. She got introduced to my brother in March 2005. My brother and our family thought that she was studying here to become a nurse we had no idea what her intentions were. Their wedding was a big wedding with 600 people in Calgary, AB. She got everything she wanted, a big wedding a Canadian citizen boy, and my brother works for the government as well, so she lucked out.

But two weeks after the wedding she was on my brother and my parents case to do her sponsorship, we were kind of suspicious then because her student visa was for 3 years. She never stopped, everyday she only talked about one thing sponsorship, she threatened to kill herself to my brother if he didn't sponsor her. Then he thought that something was wrong with her, and he started to believe that maybe she only married me for citizenship. And she did try to kill herself. She stabbed her arm! and we called the police and they took her to the hospital, that was 6 weeks after the wedding. My brother did not want her back then because we found out that she was here on a fraudulent student visa. Her family paid 900,000Rs in India for her visa. She was on a groom search. My brother also found emails that she had emailed to her boyfriend in India. It's too long of a story there is way more to this story, but it is not FAIR to victims that get stuck with these people and they get away with it. Marriage is not a game and not a way for someone to get a Canadian citizenship. These scams have to be stopped and these people need to be deported back to India where they came from. They are taking advantage of our government and breaking immigration laws. **I strongly believe that it is a great idea of having a 3 year probation period.** I really like to speak out to people and tell them that it's not just Indian brides that are being abandoned but our grooms are too. I am amazed at how these girls and their families plan these scams and ruin their lives and our lives. Being born and raised here in Canada I have been taught by my parents that reputation is a huge for Sikhs but people that live in India don't care about anything, they are selling their daughters and doing anything just to get them to Canada and it disgusts me. I will do anything I can to put a stop to all of these scams, so there will be no more victims that have to go through what my brother and our family is going through right now.... **Vancouver, R. Samran, raman\_samran@yahoo.ca**

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### Victim of Marriage Fraud

My name is Qudsia Javed and I am the Victim of Marriage Fraud. I went to Pakistan last year and got married in March 2005. I came back to Canada and sponsored my husband. He got his Visa in November 2005 and he came to Canada without informing me. After about two weeks I found out that he is here in Canada. It has been five months now I am sitting at home depressed, Don't know what to do and where to go to get some help. Plz contact me at xxx-xxx, I would appreciate it.

I fully suport the Marriage Fraud Victim Force and I hope they would succeed soon. I would like the canadian government to take some serious action on this.....**Toronto, . qudsia\_javed@hotmail.com**  
x Qudsia Javed, 905-676-90

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### NRI Husband Trapped by Indian Bridge & her Family

Add your (cut & paste) opinions/ comments/: This was going as general tradition going in India of Arrange Marriage, the trend which is changing. I had travelled to India in June' 2002 and met Payal first time at his maternal uncle house through some channel from known sources. First meeting was not very comfortable as Payal smile was mysterious. Not a broad smile and nor reserved smile. Though their parents were present at her uncle house, it was her uncle who was the host and talked well. To me she and her family seem to be a simple family with some sort of trouble which I found on their face.

I was just looking for some simple girl and therefore giving thought twice got engaged and shortly left to Hong Kong. We got married after 6 months from engagement and I travelled immediately back to Hong Kong after marriage as I had to resume work and asked my wife to stay for couple of months with my parents in Akola (Maharashtra) and join me as I have to look for new house in Hong Kong. She stayed only for 10-15 days and left to Bombay. Soon the ugly side came up in front of us, my mother was hospitalized for some major operation and payal refused to travel to take her care. On asking her why she replied as she would turn dark their and she will get bored alone. Unbelievable!!!! I fough with her and pursuated her to atleast visit for 15 days and she visited for 7 days.

After this when she was travelling back to Hong Kong, I advised her to keep all big jewelleries with my parents as here there is no social gathering where she would be requiring. But she fought with me and my parents and brought all jewelleries to Hong Kong.

The scheme started than, when she deposited the jewellery in the locker in her sole name despite my instructions to open a joint account and than also opened her bank account again in sole name. All our common savings were kept in that account say around HK\$100,00/- I was under debts so I was maintaing this seperate account. Within period of 6 months she transferred from this common savings INR 150,000/- to her parents stating this transfer were towards her sister's college fees, her mother operation, the shortfall for buying a property by her brother. But the fact what that never her mother was operated, nor did her brother buy any property after such transfers. We had fights on it and thereafter I strictly told her to stop to send out any single penny.

My parents arrived first time in Hong Kong (after 1 yr of my marriage) and payal was not liking this and frequently she insulted them and fought with them. I had big fights with her and my parents had to leave early as they were treated like dog by payal, they were not in position to tolerate more. During this period we came to know she was pregnant, she felt shocked and fought with me for having baby. She after couple of months insisted to travel to India as she wanted to meet her parents. Despite my objection she travelled to India and thereafter meeting her parents they together went and aborted the child without my knowledge/ permission saying that the child was abnormal. I knew by than this was lie as my child was normal when the report carried out earlier were showing normal symptoms.

Payal after 1 month from abortion came back to Hong Kong and now stays at her friends house. She is working here and currently we are going through Divorce case where she has demanded HK\$8,000/- (INR 50,000/) Per month from me and expesnes of HK\$150,000/- (INR 900,000/-) towards her (family's) contribution for marriage. This is beyond the savings she snatched from me of HK\$100,000/- (INR600,000) and jewellery given to her during marraige of INR300,000/-.

Her father who was not stable in business earlier and always struggling in his life for Minimal earnings, is now having good business. Her brother who was out of business too now is into business. They have got enough money now, and I and my parents are struggling whatever savings/ jewelleries we had has been lost. Beyond that I face a trial which can go against me as court favours girls? Now I think is being Male an Crime itself ? I have lost child, money, savings, and peace but for all this loss also will I be punished more ?

I think I am not the only person being under such trap, but lot of NRIS are into this! So my message is to all to be very careful before you get into life time committment.....**Hong Kong SAR, China, .Parekh, parekhrb@yahoo.co.in-983**

If you are cheated by NRIs or indian spouses, please



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## **India announced to crack down on fake marriages by NRIs**

- | Indian Govt. has only one target to aid harassed and abandoned brides at home and abroad.
- | **"There's not only boys who leave girls behind, there are girls who leave boys behind and people who come here and disappear from the airport, or vanish after one week"**
- | NRIs established "The Canadian Marriage Fraud Victims Force Society" and will petition Ottawa for a change to Canada's immigration law placing a "three-year condition" on spousal sponsorship.

Read Full Story:

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### **India steps in to help brides**

Calgary, March 11, 2006  
Mike Roberts  
The Calgary Herald

India has announced plans to set up an international network to crack down on fake marriages, and has vowed to aid harassed and abandoned brides at home and abroad.

Sending its strongest message to date on the issue of marital fraud involving non-resident Indians, India proposes to create "special cells" in Canada and other "locations that have a significant Indian population," said Vayalar Ravi, minister for overseas Indian affairs.

Wherever required, Ravi said, "the effort would be to get the guilty extradited to India."

This is the third initiative from India in response to Abandoned Brides, a Calgary Herald/Vancouver Province series on the tragic trend of brides in India being abandoned by Canadian men. The series ran over five days in October, and sparked an international outcry.

The units will help parents verify eligibility of prospective grooms, and ensure abandoned brides receive legal and medical aid in India or abroad.

"I would advise state governments to establish independent gender cells to deal with issues related to marriages to overseas Indians and to extend the required assistance. These cells can then act in a co-ordinated manner with the overseas centres," Ravi said.

Vancouver's Indian consul general, Ashok Kumar, welcomed the initiative.

"We are seeking details from Delhi," he said.

India's proposal preceded the establishment last week of the Canadian Marriage Fraud Victims Force Society, a B.C. Lower Mainland immigrant services and lobby group.

At the Grand Taj banquet hall in Surrey, B.C., earlier this month, more than 300 concerned citizens voiced their anger over the growing issue of marital fraud in the Indo-Canadian community.

"There's not only boys who leave girls behind, there are girls who leave boys behind and people who come here and disappear from the airport, or vanish after one week, three weeks," organizer Palwinder Gill said.

Gill, whose Indian wife came to Canada last June and subsequently fled, has formed a non-profit society to assist other victims of marital fraud. The Canadian Marriage Fraud Victims Force Society will petition Ottawa for a change to Canada's immigration law placing a "three-year condition" on spousal sponsorship.

"They would get landed status from the very beginning, but if they are going out of that relationship within three years, their landed status would be cancelled," said Gill. "There would be exceptions, if there is abuse or crime, but there must be solid evidence."

Last October, Sikh holy leaders in Amritsar urged Sikhs to stop offering dowries for their daughters in a bid to prevent dishonest non-resident Indians from seeking to defraud their Indian brides.

In January, New Delhi's Union Ministry for NRI Affairs launched an educational campaign listing precautions women should take when considering marriage proposals from abroad, as well as outlining their rights under Indian law.

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## Canada unearths scam: same guests at 42 Indian weddings

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Toronto, May 17, 2007

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Canadian immigration officials have discovered 42 wedding albums - submitted by 42 different Indians applying for citizenship - in which the guests in the photos were identical.

"You'd have to believe that 42 weddings had the same guests," said Mendel Green, president of Green and Spiegel, an immigration law firm.

All the weddings had supposedly taken place at the same wedding

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April 02, 2007

venue in Chandigarh.

"Yes, people have brought fake photos to us," said Ravi Jain, a partner with Green and Spiegel. "We have seen people posing in the photos. We have seen the same wedding halls, the same guests over and over again."

Liberal MP Roy Cullen said many Indo-Canadians have expressed concern over this abuse of the system, the Toronto Sun reported.

"They are telling me it is becoming like an epidemic and it is being seriously abused and so sometime back I spoke with former immigration minister Monte Solberg. I suggested to him - and I am soon going to write to his successor Diane Finley - that immigration rules could be amended to issue spousal visas on a probation of say three to five years and if at the end of this period the couple is still in marital relationship, they should be given permanent landed status."

In addition to people getting legal immigration status with these phoney marriages, Jain said Canadian immigration officers have also started "over-scrutinising all family class applications, genuine marriages."

Statistics show about 60,000 Canadians marry overseas each year and file international spousal sponsorships. About 15 per cent are rejected by the Canada Citizenship and Immigration department. In the case of India, the rate is 23 per cent.

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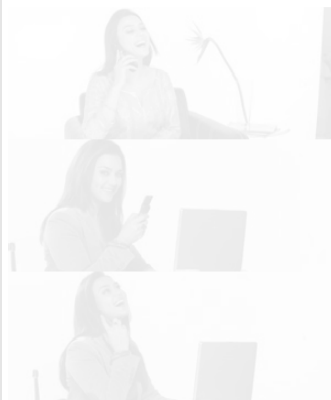
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## **Travel agents cough up 69 lakh**

**Varinder Singh**  
**Tribune News Service**

Hoshiarpur, October 5

Even as the network of unscrupulous travel agents continues to spread in the Doaba region where hundreds of unsuspecting people are duped by these travel agents, the local police has set a record of sorts by making such travel agents return Rs 69 lakh to victims during the past six months by making investigation of such cases a time-bound affair.

Police records reveal that there is a rise in the number of victims of travel agents and during the past just six months as many as 161 travel agents were booked for duping people to the tune of Rs 1.27 crore on the pretext of sending them abroad. Most of the travel agents, simply for pocketed the hard-earned money of their clients while some sent them to wrong destinations like Turkey, Greece and Lebanon.

According to an estimate, over 150 unregistered travel agents were operating in the district, who do nothing but act as 'subagents' of some big sharks operating from Delhi. They pocket their hefty commissions after handing over the charge of their victims to their partners.

Ms Gurpreet Deo, SSP, said the sustained campaign against such travel agents and making investigations into such complaints a time-bound affair had started yielding results with travel agents coming forward to return the ill-gotten money. "We have made it mandatory that no Investigation Officer will take more than one month to complete the investigations before registration of a case on the basis of a complaint. And, unlike in the past, this has made a difference as people have started believing that at least the registration of a case, which acts as a deterrent, will not take months or years," said Ms Deo. She said the Dastak programme launched by the district police to look into such cases had also made a positive change with more and more people coming forward to lodge complaints of economic offences.

According to the data available with the police, of the 161 cases registered against travel agents, in the case of 145 victims, the travel agents did not bother to do anything for their clients, while 16 victims were sent to the Middle-East countries instead of Canada, USA and Italy. Alternatively, they were left in the lurch in Greece, Lebanon or Turkey. "We have observed that registration of a case really works as a deterrent for such unscrupulous elements and they come forward to strike a compromise and return the money to their victims," said the SSP.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that feeling the heat a number of travel agents have either shifted their bases to Jalandhar and the adjoining townships or have simply started handing over their clients to other travel agents of nearby cities after charging commission.

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## Wife jailed for conspiring to kill husband

27 May, 2007 | 1055 hrs IST | IANS

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LONDON: Three people of Indian origin, including the wife and daughter of Coventry-based Jaskarnjit Singh Sanghera, have been convicted of conspiring to murder him and have begun prison sentences.

In a sensational case involving hired assaulters, Sanghera was assaulted repeatedly on two occasions but managed to survive with partial disability on one side of his body.

In what is reported as a real-life drama, on the night of 2 November 2005, Sanghera, 42, went to bed as usual with his wife, Balwinder, at their home in Coventry. At 2.20 am his front door was smashed in and a knifeman burst into the bedroom before stabbing him 25 times.

He suffered serious injuries, but survived. It was the second time within months he had been stabbed. After the second attack, Balwinder, 40, told the police that she suspected that he attacks could have been linked to a land dispute in India, and even suggested that it was connected to a woman Sanghera had an affair with a long time ago.

But the Coventry police became suspicious, and found Balwinder had run up debts of about pounds 50,000 that her husband knew nothing about, and had taken out a life insurance policy in his name. She also took out a loan of 8,000 pounds in the weeks before the attempt on his life in November. The police believe that the money was used to pay a hitman. After a huge inquiry, the police charged Balwinder with organising the attacks.

The police also found her daughter, Amrita, 20, and her boyfriend, Inderpal Singh Dail, 23, had conspired with her. The trio, who pleaded guilty to conspiring to murder Sanghera, were jailed last week for 10, eight, and five years respectively.

However, the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, a local newspaper, reported that the true motive of the assault on Sanghera remains a mystery.

Detective Chief Inspector Nav Malik of Warwickshire Police said: "It could be debt that motivated it but what does come out is she clearly wants him dead."

"The people who are ultimately responsible for committing the attack itself, we don't know who they are. The case will not be closed until we get to grips with who they are."

"He (Sanghera) still remains partially paralysed to his left-hand side. And he's now realised the total betrayal by his wife and daughter. He is devastated by the betrayal."

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## Annexure 27

Details of Attempts to Inform and Engage the Govt. of India regarding Impact on NRIs and their Marriages due to Gender Biased Laws				
Date	From	Mode of communication	Party Communicated to	Subject
November 13th, 2005	Satya Kumar, Rakshak Member	e-mail	Secretary, MOIA, secretary@moia.nic.in, snri@mea.gov.in, rverma@alpha.nic.in, presidentofindia@rb.nic.in, hrwdc@hrw.org	Gender biased booklet by MOIA and Misuse of 498a
January 4th, 2007	Vandana Jhingan, TV Asia Bureau	e-mail	MOIA Ministry, Vayalar Ravi, dg@indianconsulate.com, cg@cgisf.org, CCA@cgisf.org, edu@indiacgny.org, cgi-hou@swbell.net, dsms1@moia.nic.in, dsds@moia.nic.in, dirss@moia.nic.in, minister@moia.nic.in, secretary@moia.nic.in, dsfs@moia.nic.in, diremig@moia.nic.in	False dowry cases by women of Indian origin, defamation of Overseas Indians by MOIA and Interpol Red Corner Notices on falsely accused Overseas Indians
February 16th, 2006	Rakshak Member	email	minister@moia.nic.in, secretary@moia.nic.in, dsds@moia.nic.in, dirss@moia.nic.in, presidentofindia@rb.nic.in	Torture of NRI women: Falsely implicated by 498a (by sister-in-law)
April 18th, 2006	3 Rakshak Members	Personal Meeting at Stanford University	Consul General B.S.Prakash	Handed over 2 booklets: "Misuse of 498a booklet" and "Guidance booklet for NRI marriages prepared by Rakshak" in response to highly pro-women booklet prepared by MOIA
April 24th, 2006	Consul General BS Prakash	email	<a href="mailto:help.rakshak@gmail.com">help.rakshak@gmail.com</a>	Invitation to discuss the misuse of 498a and biased booklet
May 12th, 2006	10 Rakshak Members	Personal meeting with CG's office SF, USA	Prabhat Kumar, Vice Consul	Families harassed by wives misusing 498a, 498a research booklet created by Rakshak, MOIA booklet
June 15th, 2006	2 Rakshak Members	Personal meeting with Indian Consulate officials	Prabhat Kumar and CG	Gender biased booklet by MOIA and Misuse of 498a
June 19th, 2006	<a href="mailto:help.rakshak@gmail.com">help.rakshak@gmail.com</a>	e-mail	Consul General of India, SFO, USA, cca@cgisf.org, jsds@moia.nic.in, dirss@moia.nic.in, minister@moia.nic.in	our concern about MOIA meeting with NCW on 20-21st June'06 without any getting NRIs involved.
June 19th, 2006	Sanjay Dhani, Rakshak Member	e-mail	jsds@moia.nic.in, dirss@moia.nic.in, minister@moia.nic.in	concerns of hundreds of NRI/PIO grooms who are extorted through abuse of IPC 498A filed against
June 21st, 2006	<a href="mailto:help.rakshak@gmail.com">help.rakshak@gmail.com</a>	e-mail	Consul General of India, SFO, USA, cca@cgisf.org, jsds@moia.nic.in, dirss@moia.nic.in, minister@moia.nic.in, manmohan@sansad.nic.in, presidentofindia@rb.nic.in	our concern about MOIA meeting with NCW on 20-21st June'06

June 29th, 2006	4 Rakshak Members	Personal Meeting with MOIA minister Vayalar Ravi and his Staff, Los Angeles	Vayalar Ravi, Vice Consul Prabhat Kumar at Hotel Hyatt Century Plaza, Los Angeles	Gave memorandum/Letter to Minister. Apprised Minister of alarming rate of misuse of dowry law against NRI and their family members. Talked with highly women biased marriage booklet by MOIA and request for changes.
July 6th, 2006	ForgottonWomen.org	Personal Meeting with MOIA minister Vayalar Ravi and his Staff, New York	Vayalar Ravi, Vice Consul Prabhat Kumar at Hotel Hyatt Century Plaza, Los Angeles	Gave memorandum/Letter to Minister. Apprised Minister of alarming rate of misuse of dowry law against NRI and their family members. Talked with highly women biased marriage booklet by MOIA and request for changes.
July 9th, 2006	Vandana Jhingan, TV Asia, Rakshak	Personal Meeting with MOIA Minister	Vayalar Ravi	What is MOIA doing to protest innocent NRI husbands from false cases in India by their estranged wives
May 12th, 2006	10 Rakshak Members	Personal meeting with CG's office SF, USA	Prabhat Kumar, Vice Consul	Famililies harassed by wives misusing 498a, MOIA booklet
December 6th, 2006	Prabhat Kr. Singh (Vice Consul)	e-mail	<a href="mailto:help.rakshak@gmail.com">help.rakshak@gmail.com</a>	acknowledgement that our issues have been forwarded to ministry
December 17th, 2006	Rakshak Members	Letter sent to MOIA Minister Vayalar Ravi	<a href="#">MOIA Minister Vayalar Ravi</a>	Complaints for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas: Misuse of Indian Dowry Laws and unfair treatment of NRIs by MOIA
January 24th, 2007	Rakshak Members	e-mail	Consul General, BS Prakash	Request to consider joint Consul General meetings and meeting with Ambassador to look at NRI families tortured misusing 498a and MOIA not returning requests to consider the matter
January 31th, 2007	Rakshak Members	Personal Meeting with Ambassador of India to US and CG BS Prakash	Ambassador Ronen Sen, Consul General BS Prakash	Discussion about Gender biased MOIA marriage guidance booklet, unilateral policies and laws for abandoned brides, misuse of 498a against NRI families
February 15th, 2007	Rakshak Members	e-mail	Ambassador Ronen Sen, Consul General BS Prakash, JS Rajya Sabha Secretariat	498a research booklet, Rakshak version of Marriage booklet, Memorandum, cover letter, Media reports of NRI husband harassment.
March 19th, 2007	Rakshak Members	Personal Meeting with CG BS Prakash		Letter to Consul General about Misuse of 498a against NRIs

# Activists Mobilize to Change Indian Dowry Laws

A growing number of nonresident Indian men are being victimized by their brides, and their brides' families, who falsely accuse them of demanding dowry. Accused under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, which makes demanding dowry a crime, these men have even been

In the year since **India-West** published an article exposing the scope of dowry fraud, many victims have come forth with their stories. Now, Indian Americans can victims of dowry fraud have outlined their mission — to change the Indian Penal Code — and have begun to mobilize online and in the public sphere. “Till now, there has not been much awareness [of the problem],” Rahul (not his real name), a 29-year-old Silicon Valley research engineer, said this week. “There are hundreds of victims here. The **India-West** article definitely helped, by portraying the reality of what’s going on, especially since the major dailies

A group of activists has created [www.498a.org](http://www.498a.org), a Web site with an active blog and forum. The self-funded group, which calls itself Save Indian Family,

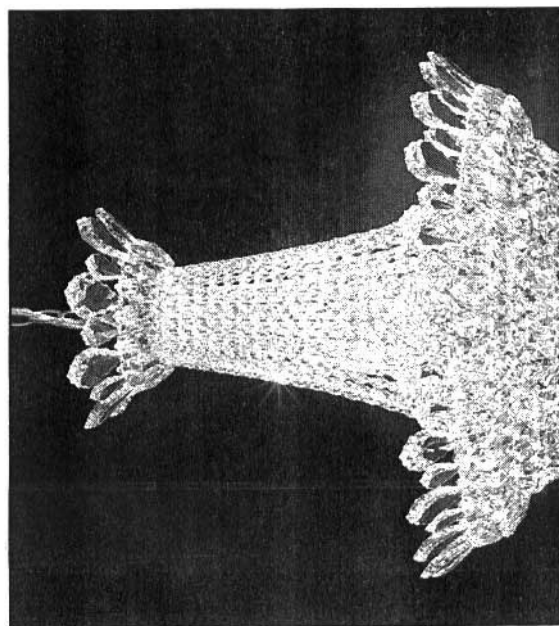
Rahul claims that his wife, an American-educated Indian woman, displayed bipolar behavior after their marriage; when he filed for divorce, she

***"Since the last 50 years we are being ruled and having ideas imposed on us by the previous generation. Most of the ways and ideas of the 1950-1965 generation don't work now."***

**"False dowry complaint has become a racket in India to ex-**

**Representatives of the group made a showing at the recent Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Hyderabad, but felt frustration that the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs placed the wrong**

**"Most of the ways and ideas of the 1950-1965 generation don't work now."**





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# INDIA WEST

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## THIS WEEK

### Activists Decry Dowry Laws

In the year since India-West published its award-winning article exposing the scope of dowry fraud, many victims have come forth with their stories. Now Indian American victims of dowry fraud are mobilizing to change the Indian Penal Code.

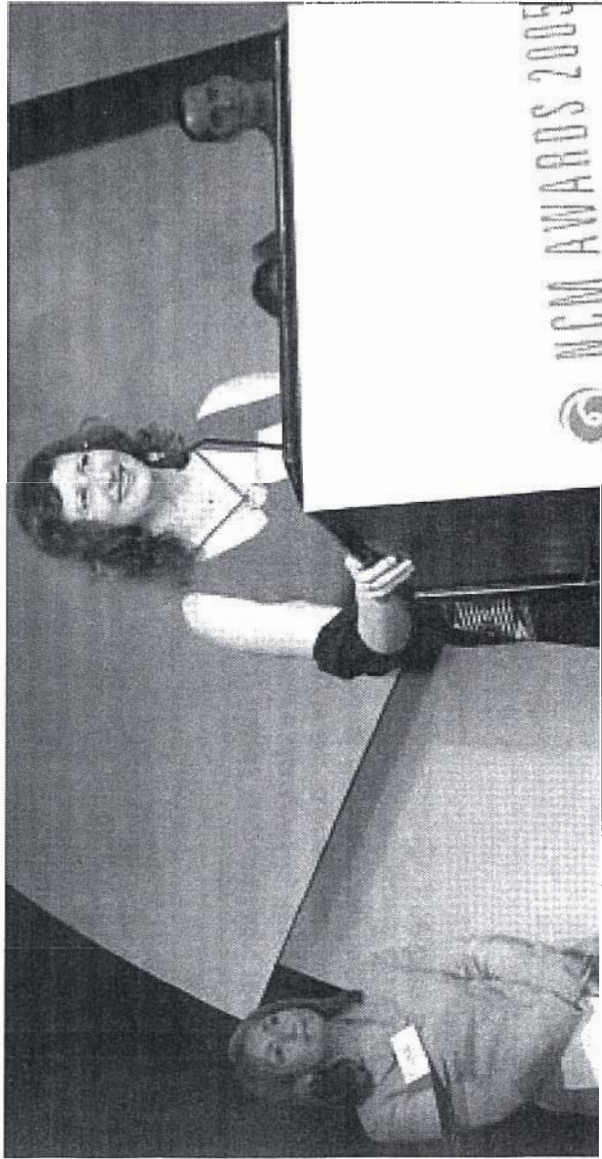


**A28**

**National — U.S.**

INDIA-WEST — February 3, 2006 — **A31**

## India-West Reporter Receives NCM's Top Award at Banquet



**SAN JOSE, Calif.** — India-West's Lisa Tsering speaking to the audience after receiving the New California Media's award for the Best Investigative/In-Depth story in English in the print media category. She received the award, which she won for her story on Indian husbands falling victim to dowry fraud, at the 7th NCM Awards banquet Jan. 26. (Som Sharma photo)

# Till dowry do us part

A growing number of NRI men allege they are victims of Section 498A, India's anti-dowry law, which they claim is used to harass them. **George Joseph** reports

**W**hen Dr Jayakrishna Ambati, his younger brother Dr Balamurali Krishna Amabati, and their mother were arrested in an alleged dowry-harassment case in November 1995, it caused an uproar in the Indian-American community, even making it to the front page of the *New York Post*. Compounding the media interest was the fact that Balamurali was a minor celebrity of sorts, being, at 17, the youngest doctor to graduate from the Mount Sinai Medical College.

Four years and a bitter legal battle later in India, the family was acquitted of all charges by the Kolar Gold Fields sessions judge K S Venkoba Rao on April 28, 1998.

And therein lies a story, one that continues to reverberate quietly through the ranks of the married NRI men who face similar dowry cases back in India, claiming they are no more than innocent victims of a well-meaning law - Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code - run amok.

The law has its origins in the horrific string of homicides in the '80s when unsuspecting brides were burnt alive for not bringing enough dowry, and their deaths passed off the husband and in-laws as due to a bursting cooking-gas stove.

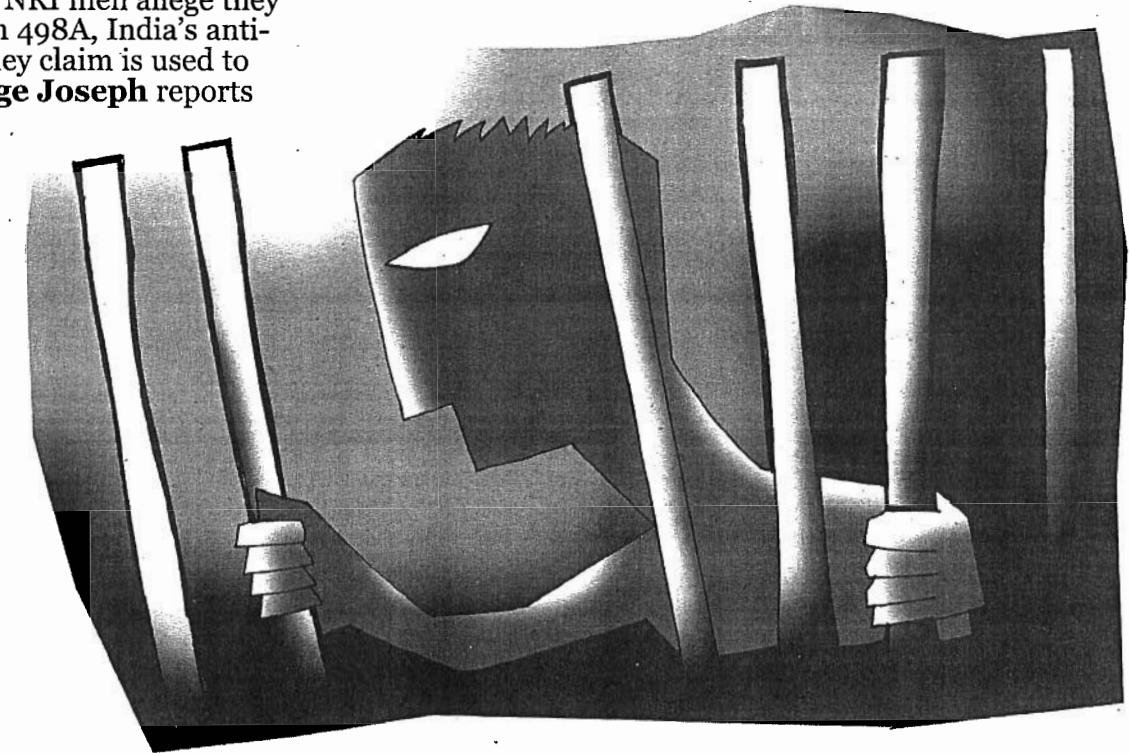
Following public outrage over the spate of deaths, the anti-dowry law was enacted, making it a crime to demand or take dowry or harass the bride and her family for the same, either before or after the wedding.

The most famous application of the law took place two years ago when a young bride-to-be called the police from the altar when her in-laws refused to proceed with the ceremony unless they were paid the dowry up front.

Increasingly, however, NRI husbands in the United States are coming forward with their stories where they claim the law is being used to harass and intimidate them, often in divorce and custody cases.

Loaded in favor of the plaintiff, Section 498A allows for the husband and his family, sometimes extended, to be arrested and held without bail until the case comes to a court of law.

"The law was made to protect the ordinary women in India, but it is used by the women from cities, highly educated and ambitious, to settle scores with their former husbands and fleece money from them," says Rahul Agarwal, a resident of the Bay area, California, who claims he is a victim of the misuse of Section 498A. "Professionals like me are busy with our career. We have no time to think of such things. We keep more Indianness here than these women who come from



UTTAM GHOSH

cities more Westernized than us and with ideas of women's liberation."

However, genuine cases of harassment for dowry still far outweigh the aberrations. Purvi Shah of Sakhi for South Asian Women, a support group for victims of domestic violence, points out that in Punjab alone, the number of women abandoned by their NRI husbands, who married for dowry, is in the region of 15,000.

"In some cases an NRI man will marry two or three times, collect dowry, and leave the brides after a few weeks," she says.

**T**he Ambati case, however, stands out both for its profile as well as the starkest illustration of how a perfectly good law can be twisted out of shape.

Though the Karnataka High Court ruled thrice that the trial should be completed within 3 months, the case dragged on, and the family was separated for over three-and-a-half years.

Balamurali lost two years of his career because he had to wait until 1998 to start his ophthalmology residency at Harvard, which he was supposed to join in 1996.

The Ambati family also claims

that plaintiff Archana's father, a former honorary Home Guard, had undue help from the police.

Jayakrishna says he had put the episode behind him. "It was a bitter nightmare. I don't look back at things that happened. I look forward to accomplish things," he said.

He said his former wife stayed with him only for a few days. "She did not want to be here. It was an arranged marriage and she was only a high school graduate," he said. "Many people think of the Indian women as the epitome of virtues only. That generation has come and gone. They might have been there dur-

ing the generation of my parents."

**I**ndeed, most of the cases involving NRI grooms are fallouts of arranged marriages, in which the parents decide who their son or daughter should marry. And NRI grooms are a prized commodity in India, often holding out hope for a better life.

In many cases, the arrangement does not turn out as expected; in some cases, it is the lack of support systems and services in the US, and sometimes due to the presence of the in-laws in the same house.

## NRI weddings: look before you leap

Victims of abuse by women say that the draft of a booklet by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs titled Information Booklet on Marriages to Overseas Indians Safely is a slap on their face and against basic freedoms.

"It is maligning and defaming all Indian immigrants in the United States," says Gope Lalwani, who is associated with the Save Indian Family movement. He has demanded an unconditional apology from the ministry, saying the booklet suggests that Non-Resident Indians are cruel arrogant and are frauds.

"The draft is completely biased towards women," says Dr Vikas Kumar, who claims to be a victim of Section 498A. "There is discussion only about women rights and no point for men rights! This clearly indicates the gender bias in making such draft."

In a post on the ministry's website, one reader wrote "Is the Indian government trying to suggest that overseas Indians are female beaters, abusers and do not have respect for their marriage and their wives? Is the government trying to prove that the NRIs who bring fame, glory and prestige for the nation are a bunch of cruel people?"

The ministry said it came out with the book-

let following the increase in incidents of women who marry NRIs being ill-treated.

On the other hand, the US State Department is aware of the problems caused by misuse of IPC Section 498A and had issued a travel advisory a long time ago that a number of US citizen men who have come to India to marry Indian nationals have been arrested and charged with crimes related to dowry extraction.

The Canadian embassy too has a warning for its citizens going to marry in India. A growing numbers of Canadian citizens have been caught up in marital fraud and dowry abuse in India. Most cases involve Indo-Canadian men who abandon their wives in India after cheating them out of large sums of money. Other cases involve misuse of India's Dowry Prohibition Act. This law, which was enacted to protect women and makes demanding a dowry a crime, is sometimes used to harass men through false charges of dowry demands.

"To avoid such problems, you are advised to register your marriage in India along with a joint declaration of gifts exchanged, as well as consider a prenuptial agreement," the embassy cautioned.

Meanwhile, India's National Commission for Women, based in New Delhi, has issued a report to the Ministry of Overseas Indians Affairs, wherein it made the following recommendations for women seeking to marry NRIs: Compulsory registration of marriage; bilateral agreements for protection of such marriages be concluded between India and such other countries where the Indian diaspora is in large numbers; concerned Indian laws to apply irrespective of the place of the filing of the petition for dissolution of the marriage, if the NRI husband has not become a citizen of the country or residence; government monitored conciliation process of settlement of matrimonial disputes be initiated and; suppression of information regarding marital status by NRI grooms be dealt with under criminal law and steps taken through extradition treaties wherever operational.

Other measures suggested include seeking the help of authorities at the workplace of the husband, attaching property in India, initiating legal action against the fraudulent spouse for compensation in India and; if withdrawal of dual citizenship to the husband if it has been given.



Should the bride return to India, it is fairly easy to file a case: all it takes is a letter to the police. This section is non-bailable (only court can give bail), non-compoundable (complaint cannot be withdrawn) and cognizable (arrests without investigation or warrants). A non-bailable warrant does not require proof before arrest. No investigation is necessary.

Yogesh, who declined to give his full name, has been living in the US since 1997 and got married in 1999 without, he claims, any dowry. "My wife would threaten me that if I did not break ties with my family in India," he told *India Abroad*. "When I couldn't take it any more, I moved out taking only my clothes and leaving behind everything."

After he filed a no-fault divorce in the US, his wife returned to India and filed a dowry harassment case against him and his parents and sisters in India. Alleging 'dowry demands, physical abuse, mental torture, and financial cheating,' despite the fact that none of the charges were raised in the US court where the divorce was granted.

"My ex-wife obtained her green card through my sponsorship and she continues to work and live comfortably here while I and my family suffer every day and are struggling to protect ourselves against false charges and legal case still pending with the police and courts in India," Yogesh said. "I cannot visit India. For my parents who have lived a truthful life, this is too much to bear. Where is justice?"

A similar case entangles Prakash, a New Jersey resident who also declined to have his full name used. Although his was also an arranged marriage, he met the girl before the wedding and ascertained that she was marrying of her own will. He left for the US two days after the wedding and his wife joined him on a H4 (non-working) visa a month later. "But she was a different person, she would not speak to me, not interact with me," he charges. "She was not interested with anything to do with me and began to insult me in my friends' circle to the point where it became unbearable."

He claims that she then told him she had been seeing someone else before marriage and that she had consented under pressure from her family.

They went back and decided to seek a divorce. "But her family started asking for money. It was unbelievable," Yogesh says. "They demanded \$100,000. When we did not agree they filed an IPC 498a case. Now my family is going through hell. My parents who are over 60 are going through all these for no mistake of them."

"Our family goes to the court regularly, but her's does not show up. After this I am scared to marry again."

The more painful cases, however, are like those of Dr Rajeev Mehta, where children's custody is involved. Mehta, his former wife and two children are US citizens, but the Indian court accepted a case against him ignoring the fact that it has no jurisdiction, he said.

He and his wife met in 1994 and after living together briefly, got married in New York.

"Soon after our marriage, problems started becoming all too obvious. After marital counseling with three counselors failed; I filed for divorce in the US in 1998," he said. After three years of litigation, through which his wife used seven lawyers, Mehta was awarded custody of his daughters based on the recommendations of the court appointed guardian ad Litem, the court appointed psychologist (selected by his ex-wife's third lawyer) and custody evaluator, as well as the court's own findings.

His ex-wife soon presented a medical certificate saying that her father was seriously ill and wanted to see the grandchildren.

"However, as soon as she reached India, my ex-wife - who is a US Citizen, not domiciled in India and even though neither of us had been to India since 1998 - filed cases in the New Delhi courts to challenge the US divorce and custody judgments, saying that she wanted to re-litigate the divorce in India," Mehta told *India Abroad*. "For almost four years, I have challenged these cases but am facing the problem of delayed/denied justice by the Indian courts as my ex-wife's family and lawyers have postponed several court appearances using political and legal connections," Mehta said.

Three months after the US divorce, she also filed a dowry harassment case against Mehta, charging that her parents gave gifts worth approximately \$10,000 over the four years of the marriage - and average, Mehta points out, of \$1,250/year at a time when "I was earning \$425,000 a year as a specialist/medical consultant and she was earning about \$86,000 a year" - and that constituted dowry.

His ex-wife now wants the Indian court to overturn the US court's orders and give her custody of the children and also some properties.

The Superior Court of New Jersey subsequently issued a criminal arrest warrant after she refused to return the children to the US, following which the Federal Bureau of Investigation issued a Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution warrant. The US State Department intervened unsuccessfully with the Indian Government



■ Purvi Shah, executive director of Sakhi for South Asian Women

## 'Everyone deserves life free of violence'

Purvi Shah, executive director of Sakhi for South Asian Women, a New York based organization working for preventing violence against women, says there could instance of the abuse of section 498-A by some women.

"I feel sorry for the men who are taken advantage of. No one deserves to be subjected to unjust claims or violence," Shah said.

However, she pointed out that the "the number of men who face unjust treatment is far overshadowed by the number of women who face domestic violence or abandonment by NRI husbands, there is far greater gender discrimination and violence in the community against women."

"For example, the number of women abandoned by their NRI husbands has caused concern in many regions in India," she said. "In Punjab alone, it is reported that 15,000 women have been abandoned by NRI husbands. In some cases an NRI man will marry

two or three times, collect dowry, and leave the brides after a few weeks."

Shah welcomed the proposed manual by the Ministry of Overseas Indians on how to marry an NRI since it provides useful tips for assessing whether the marriage is safe.

Shah said fake marriages are an issue our communities need to address. A few weeks after the marriage, grooms who abandon their wives can leave the place and cut off all communication. "In these situations, women suffer because they believe they are still married and bound to a relationship that simply doesn't exist for the husband."

Given Sakhi's work is based in the US, Shah admits she has not met any woman who filed a case based on 498-A or a victim of it. But she is against scrapping the law. "Such laws are needed to protect women," she said. "If somebody misuses it, there should be safeguards in the implementation

of it. For every woman who has the courage to file the complaint, there are many others who do not report the violence in their lives for fear of family, community, or police retribution."

In India, many women and their families think that marriage with an NRI is more desirable. Some may want to live in the West also. "But once they are in the foreign country they may face violence," she pointed out. "Yet many women will not report violence or pursue a divorce fearing the social stigma attached to it - and because they believe they will bring shame to their families."

Shah indicated that for violence to end, the community needs to re-define how it treats men and women. "We need to support healthy relationships and understand that everyone deserves respect and a life free of violence. If we do take a stand against violence, our communities will be stronger for it."

"What makes it worse," says Mehta, "is the bias of the NRI ministry and the Ministry of External Affairs against NRIs," and the ludicrous length they can go in their efforts to secure justice for women.

If that sounds draconian, it can be, depending on how it is used. Indian Penal Code 498A, the linchpin on which all these cases turn, is a criminal law stating that "Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine."

The law can only be invoked by wife/daughter-in-law or her relatives, and can be filed even after a divorce.

However, only two percent of the cases have reached conviction, with some being for blackmailing the husband's family, victims point out. The Delhi High Court once dubbed it 'legal terrorism.'

However, even if the defendants are acquitted, the case can take up to four or five years, if not more, to resolve. Even those who are not part of the 'day-to-day' family life can be named and arrested on the basis of a single complaint, which can also include pregnant women and children.

Victims say that most of the cases are filed because the husband refuses to throw his parents out of the house at the wife's demands. They also allege that with the law weighted in favor of the wife's side, police and lawyers often advise the husband to settle the matter financially out of court, and sometimes try to fleece the defendant.

Many victims consider the women's rights organizations responsible for such a situation.

A committee under Justice Malimath, former chief justice of Karnataka and Kerala High Courts recommended making 498A bailable and compoundable.

Indeed, in Punjab, Patiala Zonal Inspector-General of Police Rajinder Singh recently went so far as to direct senior superintendents of police to exercise restraint while proceeding against members of families charged under various dowry crimes.

Singh was quoted in the Indian media that in some cases, members of the accused family had committed suicide because of the humiliation suffered by them.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has proposed an information booklet on 'Marriages to Overseas Indians Safely.' The National Commission for Women in New Delhi has also prepared a report on the problems of NRI marriages and a proposed Draft Convention (See Box).

Interestingly, though, while the ministry recognizes that dowry is one of the causes of failed and/or fraudulent marriages, it also notes that sometimes failed marriages are an outcome of 'lack of modernization amongst rural brides to respond to the Western way of life.'

Nonetheless, the issue being a state subject, the ministry has advised states to formulate their own responses. Additionally, it has advised that Indian diplomatic mission abroad, whenever they receive a complaint of torture or desertion of Indian wives by their NRI husbands, render all possible assistance with a view to bringing about an amicable settlement.

# The unsaid tale of NRI grooms' agony...

SAM RAO

Silicon Valley, Calif.

**B**havani M has been in the US for over a decade now. With a steady job, she lives a comfortable life with her husband and young children—a typical story of a young professional NRI in the US. After having migrated here, she must have never imagined that the Indian judicial system could affect her tranquil life in the US. And worst of all, it was domestic violence that affected her entire extended family life. Worse still, neither she nor her husband was involved in any marital dispute.

This is one example where the seemingly innocent members of the extended family get caught up in the cycle of vendetta or extortion due to the strictest interpretation and carrying out of the law 498A of the Indian Penal Code.

The IPC 498A is a recent law (1983) written with the view of protecting brides from the vicious cycle of dowry demands and related violence. It aimed at eliminating the dowry problem in India and is defined as: "Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine. The offence is cognizable, non-compoundable and non-bail-able."

The crux of the law is in its broad outreach to any member of the extended family of the complainant and the non bail-able nature of the arrest. This leads to seemingly unconnected family members being harassed and even put in jail without any hearing or bail.

But, Bay area based Ram (name changed) calls it a "false dowry law-immigration extortion" problem. The reference is to the targets who are mostly NRI male bridegrooms. Another allegation that stands against the 498A law is that it is anti-male in language and interpretation, with no recourse for appeal.

Several cases have surfaced recently, mostly from bridegrooms in the US complaining of being tried and convicted by the laws, even before a case has been heard—often resulting in huge legal costs and traumatic incidents in their lives. In some of the cases even the immediate relatives of the groom have been arrested and tossed in jail.

Often, the groom is barred from returning to India, either because



there is a warrant against him or there is the fear of being incarcerated without even the possibility of proper representation, since the IPC 498A can be invoked by wife/daughter-in-law or her relative without appeal.

In what's turning out to be the not too often reported "other side" of arranged marriages, several grooms in the US are coming forward with cases of abuse suffered because of the system.

"This section of the law is written as being non-bail able, non-compoundable (complaint can't be quashed) and cognizable (arrests without investigation or warrants). (Hence) there have been countless instances where, without any investigation, the police have arrested elderly parents, unmarried sisters, pregnant sister-in-laws and children related to the accused groom. A typical case goes on for years (5-7) and the conviction rate is about 2% only," says Sunil (name changed), another ex-groom from US.

This portends very darkly for many of the innocent NRI male victims involved in hurriedly arranged marriages. Especially since a typical case of arranged marriage for a US based NRI takes place within a week or two — as he is just about to transit from an H1 B visa to getting

Labor certification, hops on a plane to India for a three week trip, with the help of his parents gets married in the timeline of about three weeks after which the couple is back in the US, courtesy the spousal H4 visa, for which there are no long waiting lists or backlogs.

Unfortunately, for some, the nightmare starts just here.

While numerous cases of maladjustment, poor communication and resulting domestic abuse of mostly female victims have been documented, there is also the other side of spousal abuse.

"The very nature of this anti-dowry law makes it wife biased or daughter-in-law biased, and the onus is on the husband and his family members to disprove the false allegations," says Bhavani, who was snared in as the sister-in-law of a domestic break-up.

Fremont based Bhavani is one of the only few willing to be identified to bring out her story. Her sister in law was estranged from her husband and had filed a 498A complaint. When Bhavani went to visit her parents, she was arrested, with the police authorities separating her from her child. "Our entire family was upset about the separation and divorce of my brother. And we did not even talk about the issue with

my brother. So suddenly, when such a case is brought up, it gets really very upsetting," maintains Bhavani.

Since Bhavani is a US citizen and was "lucky to have the means to hire a lawyer and make arrangements" with local authorities, she was released from jail and allowed to leave India. She can only imagine the plight of the 498A victim's relatives living in India who have reportedly been harassed as well.

Cases about 498A have been recorded at the US Consulate in Delhi and also with the FBI for extortion attempts against Indian-Americans while in India. Since the 498A offense is termed non-compoundable, even if the accuser withdraws her complaint, the court can continue to investigate and prosecute - as seen in many cases. Also, if the accused is arrested in India, he can remain in police custody at the court's discretion- making it a viable means for the police and colluding spouse's families to extract money from the NRI, according to some victims.

Sunil relates his story of two years of marriage in the US, after which his wife wished to return to India to be with her parents and then accused the groom of demanding dowry. Back in India, she filed a complaint against him under IPC 498A- which has rendered him unable to travel to India for fear of imprisonment. Sunil also claims that his parents have been threatened and intimidated by local cops and he is unable to help them.

In similar cases, judges have refused bail unless the family of the accused deposits a sum of money in the complainant's name as a pre-condition to the grant of bail; and some say their parents have been taken into custody as well. Support forums for such male victims reveal that many have spent more than \$10,000 in "payments" and legal expenses to keep their parents in India, and out of jail.

Abuse of anti-dowry laws has become serious enough for the US Department of State to have published a travel warning on its web site, [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1139.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html) about "Dowry/Visa Demands" for travelers to India. The warning states: "A number of US-citizen men who have come to India to marry Indian nationals have been arrested and charged with crimes related to dowry extraction. Many of the charges stem from the US-citizen's inability to provide

an immigrant visa for his prospective spouse to travel immediately to the United States. The courts sometimes order the US-citizen to pay large sums of money to his spouse in exchange for the dismissal of charges. The courts normally confiscate the American's passport, and he must remain in India until the case has been settled."

However, the US Embassies have no jurisdiction in any matters related to breaking local law, except to ensure proper representation and maintaining of universal human rights.

Similarly, the Indian Embassies in the US have expressed their inability to do much more than forwarding memorandums with foot notes attached while issuing statements like: "The Consulate has no specific role or comment on the issue, which has to be addressed through usual legal means."

According to a US State Department report, Government of India statistics reveal that nearly 7,000 women were killed over inadequate dowry payments and nearly 6,000 cases were filed in Delhi alone in 2005, based on the Dowry Prevention act of 1961. But it remains that the number of false dowry claims against men is a much smaller number than domestic violence and dowry demands against the bride.

Activists like Mukta Sharangapani of Maitri, a local US based non profit agency dealing with domestic violence, while acknowledging that such laws may result in being abused, also stated that "we have rarely heard of such cases, especially considering that we have more cases than we can manage for domestic violence involving spousal abuse, usually dealing with females."

To deal with the issue, a small but vocal community of so-called "498A victims" has been mobilizing over the Internet, trading stories and offering help and advice to men who find themselves in that situation.

Unfortunately, such traumatic incidents have even forced siblings of the affected to reconsider marriage in India altogether, says one such victim who is now an activist and spearheads an awareness movement of the repercussions of the 498A law.

He insists, "don't go to India to get married. There are a lot of great first-generation Indian girls here. You will have less trouble."

## BUSINESS IN BRIEF

### Informatica acquires Infield corp.

■ **REDWOOD CITY, CALIF:** Informatica Corp., a provider of data integration software, has acquired Infield, a supplier of data transformation technology enabling access to unstructured and semi-structured data. The cash transaction for the acquisition was about \$55 million. "It is estimated that the organizations spend over \$1 billion in IT projects to access unstructured data and enable cross enterprise data exchange. Jointly, Informatica to and infield offer our customers the most comprehensive data in-

tegration platform with near universal access to integrate unstructured, semi-structured and structured data," said Informatica CEO and Chairman Sohail Abbasi.

### MIVT to acquire BioSync Scientific

■ **MENLO PARK, CALIF:** MIV Therapeutics, a developer of drug eluting stents and advanced drug delivery systems, has agreed to acquire Biosync Scientific, a developer of cardiovascular stents, based in India. Terms of the transaction have not been disclosed. MIVT can now provide a metal stent plat-

form comparing favorably with the best bare-metal stents available in the market. BioSync Scientific was founded by Rajesh Vaishnav, who also developed many of the bare metal and drug eluting stents currently sold India and other emerging markets.

### Manojit Jolly on Pandora's advisory

■ **EMERYVILLE, CALIF:** Manojit Jolly has been appointed to the Advisory Board of Pandora Networks, a provider of IP Communication Services. Jolly is currently working as the Managing Director of Garage Technology

Ventures.

### SoftJin engineering VP is V Malhotra

■ **SANTA CLARA, CALIF:** SoftJin Corp. has appointed Vinod Malhotra as their Engineering Vice President. Malhotra held the same post previously at Poseidon design systems and was the Director R&D at Synopsys systems. He has a Master in Science (Engg.) from the University of South Carolina, and an MS(Engg.) from the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi.

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# Rampant misuse of anti dowry laws giving jitters to non-resident Indians

By Ravindra Sheoran

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New Delhi, Feb.3 (ANI): Contrary to the routine news about harassment of women by in-laws over dowry, many cases related to men being subjected to harassment by women too are becoming commonplace, especially among the non-resident Indians.

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There are a rising number of cases, especially among non-resident Indians, where individuals are paying a heavy cost due to the gross misuse of the existing anti-dowry law by women or their relatives.

Many women, who marry non-resident Indians (NRIs) use the existing dowry to keep their husbands on their toes due to the advantage enjoyed by women in dowry cases under law.

According to data provided by Ministry of Home Affairs, there were 58,319 registered cases and 134,757 people underwent arrest under 498a and b and Dowry Prohibition Act.

That is on average 2.3 people were arrested in every complaint of woman. There were 358 children and 4,744 senior citizens arrested.

Out of 129,655 cases, approximately 18 per cent (23,337) were not chargesheeted and hence suffered only because these acts are non-bailable.

Non-resident Indians continue to be the biggest victims of such dodgy women, mainly because of their soft side that makes it too difficult to return to India to present their side of the story in most of the dowry cases.

The three hundred red-corner notices issued last year, against non-resident Indians under this law, state the grim situation. Twenty-seven of these individuals have even received extradition notices.

A few social organisations have taken up such cases on behalf of harassed husbands.

"We want the government to revisit the laws to observe how much poorly drafted or badly implemented they are. We want them to amend the law, not scrap it. We are not for the people who demand dowry or who are for cruelty in any relation. Dowry seeker should be punished. But we want the law to remain equal for all irrespective of gender," said Dr Anupama Singh, Co-ordinator 498a.org, an anti Dowry Law organisation of people from India.

Meanwhile, the Government of India is also keeping an eye on such issues.

"What I suggest is we decided to sign the Hague convention which will carry private international law. That law can be used after the discussions with the countries so its arm can reach to this type of cases, which we are working out," said Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vyalar Ravi.

According to Section 498A of Indian Penal Code, "whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine."

## Breaking News

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This section is non-bailable, non-compoundable (complaint can't be quashed) and cognizable (arrests without investigation or warrants) on a report from a woman or close relative.

This law makes it mandatory for the police to file charges against the husband, his parents and other relatives/friends (whoever being named on the complaint by the wife or her close relatives) and put them in jail. There is no penalty (even a fine) for filing a false case.

Many individuals have claimed the wife or her close relatives are abusing this. (ANI)

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## Role reversal: Harassed NRI hubbies

**By Meenakshi Kumar/TNN**

New Delhi: They are the silent minority. Their anguished cries are barely audible and their scars — mainly emotional — well-camouflaged. They seldom make it to the headlines. Yet, the growing number of harassed husbands is as much a reality today as tortured wives. And a sizable number are NRIs, who find their dreams of an 'ideal Indian wife' turning into a nightmare.

When US-based software engineer Amit Gupta had an arranged marriage with a doctor, little did he know what awaited him. His wife was in love with someone else. Plus, she had a violent rage. "When she flew into one, it was impossible to control her. Many times, she hit me and once, attacked me with a knife," remembers Gupta. Yet, he tried hard to make his marriage work,

funding his wife's medical studies in the US and tolerating mom-in-law's interference. "But it didn't work. Once her exams were cleared, she went back to India and filed a dowry case against me," he says. The sad irony, he says wryly, is that his wife is working in a US hospital. "And I can't even go to India."

Similar stories abound across US, UK and Canada. And the victims are software professionals, doctors, engineers and bankers, all victim to the misuse of Indian dowry laws or what's commonly known as IPC 498a. Most cases are of emotional harassment, but physical torture too is there. IT consultant Satya Verma remembers a call he got in the middle of the night. "The man was crying and wanted me to rescue him from his wife who would hit him violently. Today, he's one of the counsellors at our helpline in the US." Most men shy away from reporting physical torture due to the shame involved.

The US alone has over 350 cases of victims of 498a — a substantial rise in the last few years, say sources. UK has close to 25 cases. The US government, alarmed by the number of such incidents against Americans of Indian origin, issued a warning to them on its website recently. The Canadian government has a similar warning.

What makes the law scary is that it doesn't require any evidence from the complainant. The husband and in-laws are immediately arrested on a complaint.

Usually, the root cause is

greed for money. NRIs are seen as cash-rich and easy targets for extortion. London-based banker Gaurav Bhalla, for instance, has been asked to cough up Rs 30-40 lakh by his in-laws. If he does that, they may withdraw the case against him.

But many prefer to give in and buy peace. "Who has the time to waste in Indian courts and endure mental harassment?" says R P Chug, Supreme Court advocate. Others have formed internet groups to garner support. "Till the time the law is amended, some of us will be unfortunate victims. But we hope things will change," says Verma.

(Names have been changed to protect identity)



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### National

## NRI husbands complain against `biased' laws

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: A group of non-resident Indian (NRI) men have raised their voice against section 498 A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) on dowry-related crimes.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, on the eve of the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas celebrations, the men alleged that they were falsely charged under the dowry-related laws, particularly 498 A that was blatantly biased against men.

"We are dedicated to helping Non-Resident Indians in the United States and their India-based families, who are falsely criminalised under Section 498A of Indian Penal Code and related anti-dowry laws. Indian anti-dowry laws are unbelievably draconian, assume that the accused are guilty until proven innocent, and place the burden of proof on the accused individuals. In addition, wives [current or former] who have been separated for as long as 10 years or more are allowed to file cases under these laws. It has been shown that 98 per cent of the cases that are filed are false and baseless," they told reporters.

They charged that many Indian women married successful Indian men living abroad and as it is perceived as an opportunity to lead a better life and to enhance one's own career potential with the help of the spouse.

### Reasons for divorce

"There are several reasons why some of these marriages turn sour and result in divorce including unanticipated cultural differences, domestic violence, prior relationships that either spouse is unable to get out of, delays obtaining visa/immigration documents, concealed or undiagnosed medical conditions, unreasonable expectations of Indian brides for a lavish lifestyle, incompatible personalities and marriages forced by parents," they pointed out.

No matter what the reason for marital discord is, women of Indian origin have been rampantly misusing Section 498A of IPC to threaten, extort money from, and wreak revenge on overseas Indian husbands and their families, the men alleged.

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## Interview with an NRI Divorcee

When Nisha Sharma brought her dowry-monger of a fiancé to justice, she became media's favourite maiden.

An icon for young women, a case study for ladies' forums and the torch-bearer of the Indian middleclass girl's cause.

But there are a few guys out there who do not take dowry and never make the headlines.

Like this young NRI software engineer who gives *Hyderabad Times* an account (on the condition of anonymity) of how his marriage ended in a disaster.

And he believes it's because he took no dowry.

"I am a young software engineer, well settled in the US . I had it all, a decent apartment, a nice car, a good job and an above average pay check."

"I was perhaps a prize catch, a part of the growing tribe of 'NRI techies' in the US . After a trip to India , to 'see' a girl selected by my parents, we got married in the traditional way. No dowry was asked for, given or received."

"After the new bride joined me in the US , small tiffs started erupting over little nothings. Soon the 'usual' tiffs erupted into bigger brawls."

"About two years into the marriage, the (now ex) wife and her parents arm-twisted me into sponsoring her education in a town about 100 miles from where I lived and worked."

"She then moved there, ostensibly to pursue her ambition of getting a US degree. I was left leading a bachelor's life while the wife whose visa and Green Card I had sponsored lived hundred miles away."

"I shouldn't have been surprised when, one evening, a courier knocked on my door to deliver the divorce notice from the wife!"

"I can't help thinking that meticulous planning had gone into that action. She ensured that she had moved her belongings including jewels, personal belongings and stuff in the pretext of taking them for our impending trip to India ."

"Her dad, a senior bureaucrat, had made an 'official' trip to the US a few months before that, to supposedly to patch things up between us."

"I was in a quandary. I would have to prepare myself to grapple with notorious American lawyers and I wasn't ready! Without a pre-nuptial agreement, a divorce in the US can leave the earning member of the family extremely vulnerable."

"In a typical filmy style, the ex-wife's lawyer, demanded a hundred thousand dollars to settle the case out of court. To throw salt on my wounds, the ex-wife, during a mediation debate threatened to file a dowry lawsuit in India if I did not meet her demands!"

The practice of young NRIs demanding 40 to 50 lakh as dowry is rampant in AP.

The narrator of this account claims at the end of his ugly divorce, he was left feeling that if he had demanded that amount from his wife's parents, he could perhaps have thrown it back at the ex and walked away with only a bruised ego.

( As told to Revathy Menon, TOI ) Source: [TIMES NEWS NETWORK](#)

Note: The opinion presented here is that of the author and not GaramChai.com

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# India's dowry fraud hits Botswana

*Police issue arrest warrant against an Indian expatriate working in Gaborone and his family members*

## SUNDAY STANDARD REPORTER

**T**he Indian community in Botswana has become the focus of police and human rights organisations in India in what is believed to be the latest case of India's international anti-dowry fraud. In a case that is expected to feature SMS messages and e-mail texts detailing the goings on in the tightly knit Botswana Indian community, police in India have already issued a warrant of arrest against an Indian expatriate in Gaborone, Rahul Chawla who is working for Kolok Botswana and his family members who reside in India.

The arrest warrants were issued after Rahul's wife Komal, who was working for CA Sales in Gaborone, left Botswana for India where she opened a case against Rahul under India's infamous Section 498a. The section deals with "cruelty to wife by husband with the intent of extracting dowry or behaving cruelly to the extent of driving her to suicide." The Indian government has made it a criminal offence for grooms to demand dowry from brides. The Penal Code makes it mandatory for police to arrest without bail, parents and other relatives named in a 498a complaint by the wife (bride). An arrest is made without investigation.

A flurry of SMS text messages between Rahul and his wife and a number of e-mail messages doing the rounds

among friends inside the Indian community however cast Rahul as a victim of India's international dowry fraud scam which has already hit countries like the United States of America. One of the SMS messages believed to be from Rahul's wife to Rahul reads: "One of the biggest mistakes I have ever made in my life was marrying you. I will make sure that you pay the price."

Rahul claims his wife and in-laws tried to extort about P 100 000 from him by threatening to file for Section 498a if he did not agree to their terms. "I told them to produce proof that I had extracted dowry from them and even promised to double the figure. They failed to produce the proof and instead went ahead and filed for 498a," Rahul told the *Sunday Standard*. Indian police immediately issued a warrant of arrest against Rahul, rounded up his relatives in India and locked them up.

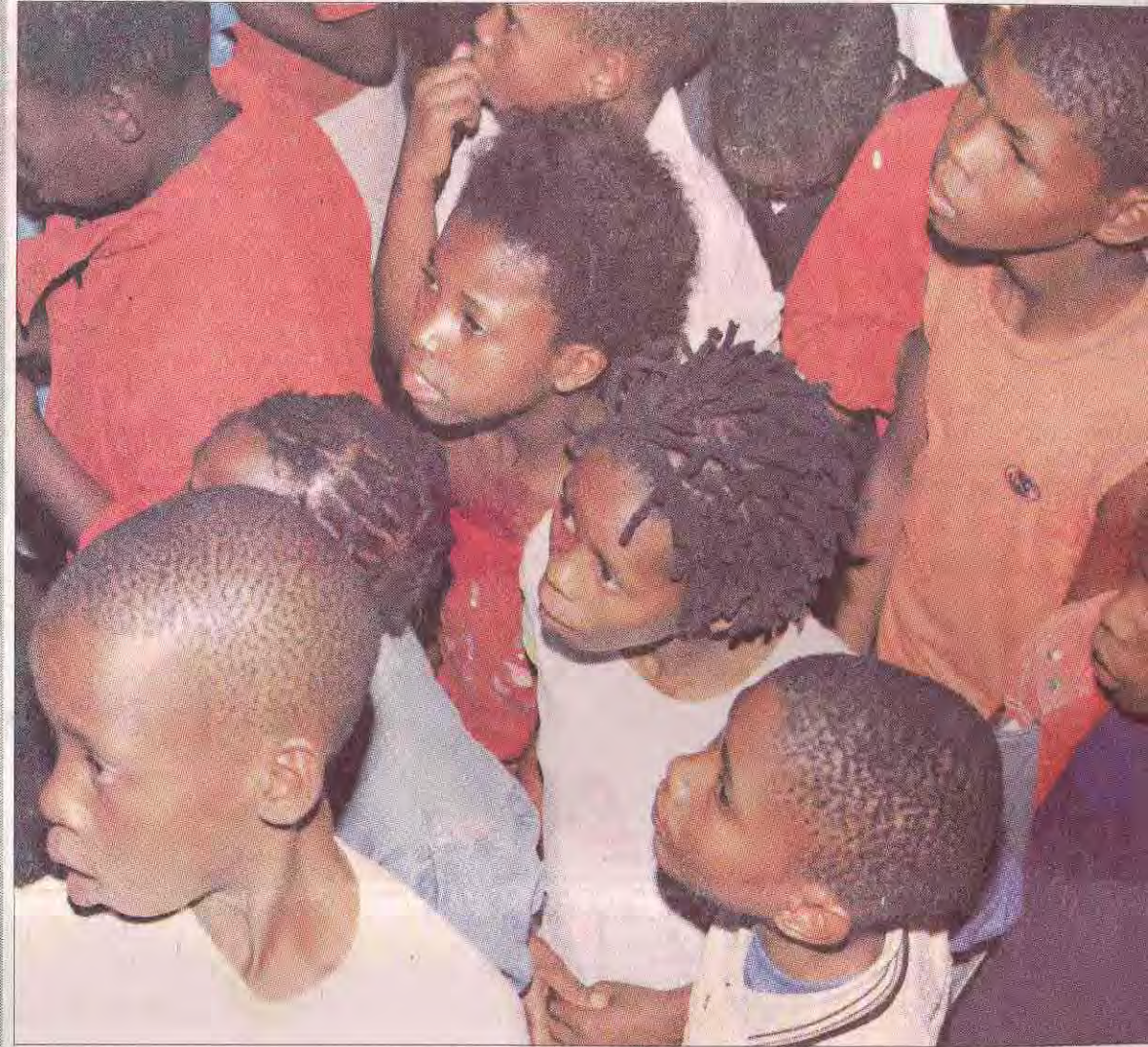
A report by India's Ministry of Home Affairs arising from an investigation chaired by Malimath has unearthed information that Section 498a has created an anti-dowry fraud racket in which, Indian women mostly married to husbands working or doing business outside India, use the anti-dowry law to blackmail and extort money from their husbands, before checking out of the marriage. It is estimated that about 30,000 false 498a cases are registered in India every year. An Indian High Court has also called for a review of

Section 498a because it is being used by Indian women to blackmail and extort money from their husbands. Observing that anti-dowry laws are being increasingly misused by wives to harass their husbands and in-laws, the Delhi High Court urged the government of India to review their provisions. Judge J D Kapoor urged the review while rejecting a plea by a woman petitioner, Savitry Devi, seeking the arrest of her brothers-in-law for allegedly harassing her by demanding more dowry.

The judge said in his order "I feel constrained to comment upon the misuse of the provisions of the law to such an extent that it is hitting at the foundation of marriage itself and has proved to be not so good for the health of the society at large." The judge observed: "there is a growing tendency to come out with inflated and exaggerated allegations, roping in each and every relation of the husband. If one of them happens to be of higher status or of vulnerable standing, he or she becomes an easy prey for better bargaining and blackmailing."

He added: "The ground realities have persuaded this court to recommend to the authorities and law makers to have a review of the situation and legal provisions." Rahul's wife could not be reached for comment as she is in India.

**READ PAGE 3 & INDEPTH FOR DETAILS**



*Part of the crowd which attended the first day of maitisong festival at Old Naledi on Friday*