

PLIGHT OF ABUSED MARRIED GIRLS DESERTED BY THEIR NRI HUSBANDS (Through Fraudulency and Treachery)

NRI Marriages in Punjab, in some other Northern States too, are proving a curse for many unsuspecting girls and an enigma for the society. It is a more painful and soul stirring social issue and continues to wreck the married lives of hundreds and hundreds of young innocent girls, causing them untold misery as also socio-economic ruination to their parental families. This virus has so widely spread its tentacles in Punjab. NRI groom maneuvers his marriage in India through matrimonial columns for better life abroad makes the unsuspecting girl / her parents succumb to the allurements. He usually hides his pre-marital status (he may already have been married one or twice, having even issues) and does not reveal details of his actual profession, income, passport or even residence abroad. After enjoying hospitality and abuse of a girl, he slips away to the country of his adoption assuring his spouse to sponsor her later- a promise never fulfilled. If the bride by any remote chance succeeds to join her husband abroad, her stay is willfully cut short and is brought back home in India on some pretext and she is divested of her passport and other documents, disabling her to rejoin her husband. She is deserted. All her efforts and her parents to patch up are spurned; rather, the boy and his parents pressurize the girl for more and more cash, cars and costly gadgets, and failing to oblige, the girl is taunted, abused, harassed, humiliated, tortured and brutalized and her honour is slighted by her NRI husband / in laws. What eventually happens is that with zero chance of mutual compromise coupled with the denial of any financial support makes her an unwelcome dependent on her own parents, and if per chance she happens to be a mother, it is all misery-her two generations are ruined. She is also faced with

a piquant situation inasmuch as she no more can perceive herself to be "married". Duped, abandoned, deserted and yet un-divorced, she loses her marital identity, with remote chance of re-marriage. She is shunned even by the society.

Another problematic area is the ex-parte divorce that accused NRI usually manages to get from a court abroad without the knowledge and consent of his defenceless spouse by presenting false information and fake documents; whereas the moot point is that if the marriage has taken place in India in accordance with Indian custom and law, the divorce must necessarily be sought from a court in India.

Non-registration of FIRs upon complaints of victimized married girls is yet another cause of deep concern. It is at the lower police level, especially the district women's Crime Cell to whom complaints are routinely referred, where obstructionist attitude is adopted; insulting behaviour is handed down, and either action to register FIRs is not taken or inordinately delayed. The aggrieved girls are then compelled to file appeals before the Courts or Punjab Human Rights Commission seeking justice. Even, names, of aggressive accused persons as indicated by victimized girls in their complaints are deleted from FIRs under pressure-political or otherwise. Even after registration of FIRs, inordinate delay is caused in filing of challans. The worst is that whenever accused NRI or his accused parents named in the FIR visit their home-towns in Punjab, they are let go and no action to arrest them or impound their passports is taken. Also, Look Out Notice (LOC) to concerned immigration authorities is not sent in time; facilitating the escape abroad of these accused persons.

The support system by our counselling centre is being adopted in providing help to the victimized girls, inter alia, includes: initial counselling at party Headquarter; legal advice by Party's prominent lawyers; assistance in

getting FIRs registered and in filing of challans – the aggrieved girls are entirely dependent on the degree of commitment of police officers or their attitudes-; swift action to prevent re-marriage (s) of fraudulent NRI grooms ; taking up desertion cases with State and central Governments as also with concerned Indian Missions abroad and with Party Units in respective countries; out-of-court settlements in cash and kind; conducting awareness publicity campaigns at public meetings and highlighting the problem in print & electronic media – all these services are voluntary and GRATIS.

SOME SUGGESTIONS:-

1. Registration of FIRs upon complaints of victimized girls be made mandatory by law, or, procedure be so simplified as to make FIRs registration possible with a minimum period, say 15 days.
2. Prompt action to arrest all accused persons named in the FIR, without deleting any name under any pretext or pressure, with follow up action to restore 'istri dhan' and transfer the moveable & immoveable property of accused husbands / In-laws complete with ownership rights, to the victimized girls.
3. Challans be filed in Courts with minimum of delay, and for speedy trial and justice, FAST TRACK COURTS BE SET UP. That would help defeat the game-plan of accused In-laws in prolonging the suit in courts for years to make their deserted daughters-in-laws old in age.
4. Indian Missions abroad, who are vital links, be empowered to impound passports of accused NRIs / their parents against whom FIRs stand registered. And additionally, if they are declared "proclaimed offenders", Government should consider extraditing them as fugitives and criminals. Their

- names be also black listed for denying consular services including debarring them from acquiring "dual citizenship" in course of time.
5. Annulment of NRI marriages, solemnized in India, be made invalid / inapplicable by foreign courts through an act of legislation. That would prove a deterrent and compel accused NRIs to seek divorce in India.
 6. The Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCCOCA) be enforced in Punjab against accused NRIs.
 7. Registration of marriages with NRI grooms be made compulsory and the Marriage Certificate should indicate their passport details. NRIs Indian passports be affixed with photographs of their legally-wedded Indian wives. On receiving complaints from abandoned married girls, Police should immediately intervene to stop the re-marriage of accused NRIs. Spurious Marriages Bureaus in Punjab be also banned.
 8. Law enforcing authorities should negate all attempts of vested political big-wigs or others to favour accused NRI grooms, and make erring police officers, particularly of the Women's Crime Cells, accountable for stern action against them.
 9. There should be code curbing extravagance and vulgarity during marriages. On complaints against the groom side demanding and accepting hefty dowry and cash, police should intervene on the spot for lawful action.

Courtesy:

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A Crusader against NRIs excesses