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Check misuse of dowry laws, save women

DH News Service, Bangalore:

Save Indian Family Foundation (SIFF) has urged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to come to the "rescue" of thousands of women who are arrested upon dowry harassment complaints, without any trial or investigation.

Speaking to media persons in Bangalore on Monday, SIFF's Delhi coordinator Swaroop Sarkar and State team member Virag said that around 1,15,645 women had been arrested in dowry cases during the past four years.

This is in view of large scale misuse of dowry laws, they said drawing attention to the rights of such women victims, on the eve of Women's Rights Equality Day on August 26. Section 498A of Indian Penal Code penalising harassment of women by husband or his relatives and the provisions of Protection to Women against Domestic Violence Act are duplication of existing legal provisions. They are against the principles of natural justice as they put burden of proving their innocence on persons facing a complaint that is booked merely on verbal allegations, Virag said.

He said, such laws proposed for protection of women were being widely misused and women alone were becoming the worst victims.

One complaint from the daughter-in-law lands, entire family including ailing senior citizens, minor children, and pregnant women is sent behind bars, and even if they get bail, are struck in long running legal procedures. In most cases, the complainants extort hefty ransoms for settling the case, he claimed.

Intervention sought

On the occasion of Women's Rights Equality Day on August 26, SIFF, SIFF, which works for "Gender Equality" and "Family Harmony," has demanded that the Prime Minister should intervene in view of Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Renuka Choudhary's failure to protect 1,15,645 women arrested under 498A IPC.

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Other demands - State Women Commissions (SWC) and National Commission for Women (NCW) should hear the grievances of mothers and sisters of men too, he added.

MEN TOO VICTIMS

As per suicide statistics of National Crime Records Bureau, 52,483 married men committed suicide as against 28,188 married women during 2005, and about 55,452 married men committed suicide as against 29,869 committing suicide during 2006, SIFF members pointed out.

Many men too are victims of domestic violence, they said while seeking the Domestic Violence Act to be made gender neutral to provide redressal for their grievances also.

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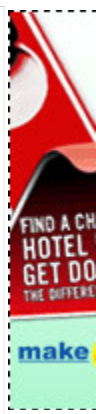
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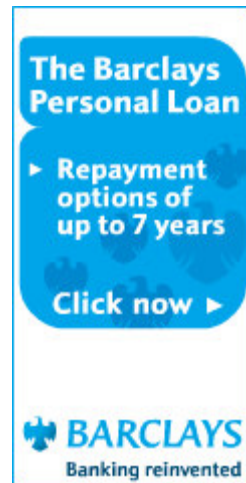
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