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Now, nobody can escape dowry case by fleeing abroad

Government plans to add clause in extradition treaties to ensure dowry accused are brought back to India.



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By Kanu Sarada

NEW DELHI: Bad news may be in store for Indians abroad who have been booked for dowry harassment.

Faced with a rising number of NRIs escaping punishment for dowry-related cases, the Ministry of External Affairs is planning to introduce this offence in extradition treaties. The inclusion would enable the government to extradite Indians accused of dowry harassment from countries where the act is not considered an offence.

Early this week, MEA told the Lok Sabha that from January 2015 and July 30 this year, it has received 4,257 complaints of distressed Indian women deserted by their NRI spouses.

In India, harassment over dowry constitutes over 30 per cent of all crimes against women. Yet, the crime has the lowest conviction rate. According to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau, over 3.3 lakh cases of crimes against women were registered in 2016. Of these, 1.1 lakh cases were related to 'cruelty by husband or his relatives'. But cases under Section 498A had the lowest conviction rate — 12.1 per cent.

Sources said that henceforth while drafting extradition treaties, several measures would be taken before forwarding the extradition request. It would also explain why the offence must be seen as a criminal activity in other countries. The requests shall cite specific details to determine whether a particular case comes under Dual Criminality or not, and the appropriateness of various sections of IPC.

This is expected to ensure that the extradition request is not returned for modification and save time.

The decision follows a complaint filed by Rajni Sharma against her husband Sanjay Sharma and his family members for dowry harassment in 2012. The husband was declared proclaimed offender by a Delhi court, and a blue corner notice against the accused was issued.

According to Rajni, her husband is in Australia but since dowry harassment is not an offence there, extradition is taking a long time. "We have decided that the process of submitting and forwarding extradition request too would be simplified, which will not only save time but help the distressed women get justice," said the

official associated with the department. This will also prevent the fugitive from trying to delay or subvert the extradition process. (Names have been changed to protect their identities)

CONVICTION RATE LOW

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