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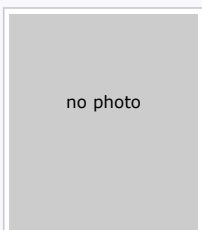
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## Abha Singh's Blog

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### Don't marry off your daughter to an NRI H1-B visa Groom

 by: [Abha Singh](#) on Dec 8 2005 7:16PM in [Diaspora](#)

Calling all the Indian parents with daughters who salivate at the prospect of marrying their daughters to 'boys' working and living in the U.S. – please give up your fixation with NRI grooms. It is the silliest thing you can ever do with your well-educated, talented, intelligent and beautiful daughter - especially if your daughter is not a techie and has not studied engineering or computers.

You are going to be wasting all her talents and all her education and instead going to be condemning her to a life of isolation, household work, boredom, unemployment, and most importantly, a total lack of economic independence when she could in fact be doing a really good and well-paying job in a multi-national company back in India.

Why?

Because if the 'boy' is a temporary worker in the U.S., authorized to work there on the coveted and highly rationed H1-B visa, she will accompany him on a dependent visa called the H4. And, the provisions of this oppressive, draconian and repressive visa are such that they do not permit the holder of the visa to be employed and to earn any money at all.

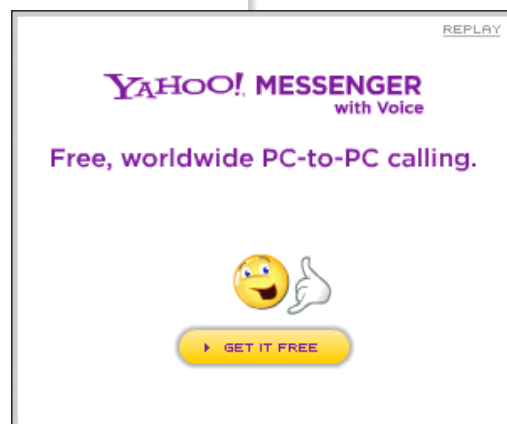
When you get to know the extent of her dependence on her husband in the U.S., you will be appalled.

It begins with her not being entitled to a Social Security Number - which is a unique number that the government of the country allots to all its legal (and often illegal) residents. And, since this number is required for anything and everything in this country, this is pretty much where her problems begin.

She cannot have her own bank account because she needs to give the bank a Social Security Number. The bank will also accept an Income Tax Identification Number. But, if like her, it is also her husband's first year in the country, chances are that she might have to wait till the end of the year (and a few months after that too) for her husband to file his income tax returns, claim his refunds, and then apply for her Income Tax Identification Number (which takes a good 6-8 weeks to come in through the mail). Only then can she have a bank account.

But, what good is the bank account when she cannot make any money of her own to deposit in it? She is not allowed to work and get paid - so no money can come into her account - except if her husband transfers some of his own into her account.

Another important document to have in this country is the driver's license - not only because it is



an approved and accepted "State ID with Photo" but also because this huge sized country lives mostly in the sprawling suburbs, with no public transport system to speak of in such areas. So, the only way your daughter can get to anyplace outside of her home is in a car. And, she cannot even go get a driver's license on her own. The Motor Vehicle Commission needs her to come in to their office with her husband when she is applying for a new license.

So, she is a totally and hopelessly dependent person with no social security and zero economic independence.

There are two basic reasons for a lack of opportunities, especially in the softer professions - which include ALL professions other than engineering and computers. Apart from there being Americans available to fill up these positions - and the very first requirement of applying for an H1-B visa is that the prospective employer has to state and prove that he/she cannot find an equally skilled and educated and experienced American to do the same job - a lot of these jobs and functions are being actually being outsourced by the U.S. to countries like our homeland, India!

Getting a work permit in the U.S. is difficult, time consuming and expensive.

Apart from work permits being in limited supply each year, they involve a great deal of paper work that an attorney (or a lawyer) needs to get done. And, he charges a good sum of money for it too. Also, since processing of the paper work takes a while and employers cannot take on the candidate on their payroll until the processing is done, companies are usually discouraged from hiring candidates who require work permit sponsorships and, often settle for second-best candidates who have their papers in place and can begin work immediately.

And, since she does not have the right to work and it is illegal for companies to employ her and pay her - she also becomes an easy target for exploitation.

She will discover through 'friends' and 'agents' that there are companies that will give her a small time job - employing her illegally. But, her illegal employee status encourages employers to exploit her, make her work long hours and often pay her only the minimum wage - in spite of her being a skilled and educated worker.

So, even if your daughter has an MBA in Human Resources from Delhi University or a Masters in Journalism from Xavier Institute of Communications or a Degree in Fashion Designing from a NIFT and a few years of work experience to back her up, chances are that her resume will keep getting overlooked by American companies. And even if she does happen to land a couple of job interviews, she will keep on getting the cold shoulder and the "can't do anything" shrug from them.

A way out for her is to get a U.S. education - do a Masters. But, even that has a glitch. To do a Masters in the U.S., you need four years of education after Higher Secondary. And, all our undergraduate colleges (with the exception of Engineering) offer 3-year course. So, unless she has a masters degree from India, she cannot even apply to a masters program in the U.S.

So, she can choose to be exploited by an Indian employer (most of whom are often very sly, deceptive, and unscrupulous) and be paid by the hour or, be relegated to the margins of society, with zero economic independence and a life of cooking, cleaning and looking after the house, raising children, and being a dutiful wife in this developed nation - even though most of her counterparts back home in her 'developing' nation are coming out of their homes, utilizing their education to participate in economic activity and contribute to their households in every way and, living their lives with a smile that comes out of satisfaction with their economic independence.

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