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'Mother-in-law played spoilsport': Ex-ADC Pandey

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Says would not have uttered a word against his 'Srimati' but for allegations of singeing with cigarette butts...

Deepak Pandey, IPS, who was formerly Governor's aide-de-camp (ADC), until two incidents put a spanner in the works of his promising career, called a press conference yesterday.

Initially, it was traffic constable, Vishnu Patil, who had lodged a complaint against the senior officer saying he was harassed by Pandey when he was on duty. Patil had alleged that he was made to stand in the scorching heat in the Raj Bhavan campus and that Pandey had also threatened to transfer him (traffic constable Patil).

Following this, an inquiry was initiated and the issue was lapped up by the media. However, that was only the tip of iceberg of the hardship that Pandey was to undergo. A few days after this episode took place, his wife Nidhi lodged a complaint of harassment for dowry against the officer, resulting in an FIR being recorded and the subsequent suspension of Deepak Pandey.

Thereafter, Pandey was hounded by the media. However, yesterday he called a press conference since he could no longer stand the allegation made by his wife that he had tried to singe her with cigarette butts. Pandey revealed his side of the story to the media yesterday.

"I kept silent as I did not want to reveal that my 'Shrimati' was a psychiatric patient suffering from panic psychosis and personality disorder," he said, adding that he never had any serious issues on which to fight with Nidhi. He said that they were a happily married couple.

"We were a couple that people would refer to as an 'ideal couple'. Lekin na jane kiski nazar lag gayi," said Pandey. "Hamare beech mein kaha-soon toh hoti thi, but that happens with every newly married couple. We were hoping to sort it out," said the ADC, adding that Nidhi's mother had played a major role in Nidhi making up her mind to sever ties with him.

"Bahut chotti-chotti baton-to bahut galat tarike-sey peah kiye gaye hai. Unki Maloyine saib duniya ko galat bate bataya," said Pandey, adding that the first incident occurred on December 25, 2002 at Gadchiroli when Nidhi's parents had come to visit them. To avoid inconvenience Pandey in-laws were put up in a government guest house with all amenities. But they were unhappy about the lodging and conveyance arrangements made for them and the mother-in-law vowed to ensure that the marriage broke up. Since then, each time that Nidhi would meet her mother, she (Nidhi) would try to implicate him, with a new allegation, Pandey informed.

He said that incidents like his sister's marriage proposal with a man who was seen as Nidhi's prospective husband before she became an IAS officer and before she married Deepak Pandey, only added fuel to the fire. She was upset over the issue and in collusion with her parents decided to leave the house. However, even prior to that on January 30, 2004 she had made an application for her transfer outside Mumbai after returning from a 20-day sojourn at her mother's house in Lucknow.

"I kept silent as I thought she was upset over something and would return to normalcy," Pandey told reporters. However, she left the house on February 12, 2004 only a few days after the marriage of Deepak's sister and on April 19, 2004, an FIR of demand for dowry and harassment for the same was lodged at the behest of the mother-in-law, Pandey stated.

"Hamare aur Nidhi ke beech mein koi mudditha nahi tha, na hai. It is not a mere coincidence that every time her mother had been around Nidhi had drifted towards separation and now she has decided to that," said Pandey, adding that he could prove all the allegations of assault, ill-treatment, demand of dowry etc. as false. Pandey also told the media that since he did not possess any service revolver, there was no question of he having pointed it towards his wife with the intent of threatening to kill her, as alleged by her.

"There is nothing like demand for dowry. These things don't happen in IAS-IPS cadre. She was a gold medallist doctor and being an IAS officer, she was a superior officer, how could there be a demand for dowry," said Pandey.

Pandey also termed the cigarette-burns story as false. He said Nidhi was a gold medallist doctor but nowhere in her 26-page letter to the chief secretary nor in her initial complaint of demand for dowry and harassment had she mentioned anything about it. Demanding that both of them be made to undergo a lie-detector, narco-analysis and brain mapping test to find out the truth, Pandey ruled out the possibility of he having singed his wife with cigarette butts, but challenged that even if one allegation of causing of injury were to be proved, he would resign from his post.

Pandey also denied allegations that he had behaved rudely with the police constable. He said the media made a hue and cry about the whole thing. In fact, it was the constable who, despite seeing his photo in uniform, had deliberately tried to belittle him. "I could have handled the issue much professionally," confessed Pandey, adding that when the days were bad, things tended to go awry. "I have knocked on every possible door in the last few months, including that of astrologers to keep the marriage," said Pandey.

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