

Being a VIP spouse

by Suchita Malik

“UNEASY lies the head that wears the crown” is an old adage. Who says it is great fun being a VIP? The syndrome may have its touch of glamour apparently, yet the grind involved in it often goes unnoticed by the general public. You may be a very important person while the going is good but are obliged to sit on the other side of the fence and can be an object of ridicule once the going gets tough. Thus, the line of demarcation between being a Very Important Person (VIP) and a Very Ignored Person (still VIP) is indeed very thin.

And, in case you happen to be a VIP spouse, it's indeed a tight-rope walk for you. Let alone being denied your normal reflexes, you are expected to behave like a perfect robot that has to carry out his brief with almost mechanical precision. And, by God's

grace, if you are a VIP spouse and a working woman on top of it, the combination can be deadly. You are an easy prey for long sermons on flouting of all norms and nothing seems to come to you in normal routine. You are denied the right to exist in your own individual capacity and are constantly slighted as “that VIP's biwi”.

As a VIP spouse, you generate preset notions of bias and a hostile environment at the outset itself. Invariably, your colleagues get all set to “fix” you in the first place whenever the occasion presents itself. It is presumed that you do not have any merit or standing of our own; and you happen to be in there “courtesy your VIP husband” alone. You are looked down upon and ridiculed as being the “black sheep” who might have trampled over the rights of oth-

ers to make a place for yourself. So, you are often lambasted as “bourgeois” while all others are taken to be the “proletariat” in Marxian terms.

And, who said that the so-called “proletariat” were all idealists or had a devotion to duty par excellence? Take, for instance, teaching profession! (Let me use “you” for the “bourgeois” and “they” for the ‘proletariat’.) If “they” absented themselves from taking regular classes or were compulsive shirkers, it was all right since they did it themselves and were well within their democratic rights. But, if you happen to perchance miss a single class, all hell would break loose since you are there in your job “primarily to while away your time” and that too, dressed in all your finery. When it comes to performing some other duties at your

workplace, you are among those “chosen few” who have to be shown their proper place every time; it does not matter that there are a number of those who would never be seen.

As a VIP spouse, you are strictly forbidden to have any aspirations of your own. You must never try to raise your individual status lest your husband may be accused of illegally “pressurising” the “powers that be” for vested interests. Ambition may be lethal to you and vanity a sin. You are expected to dwell in your own “ivory tower” and any attempt to venture out of it may be taken as a sign of arrogant sinister overtures. If you dress well, you obviously are the “rich-n-famous”! If you joke well with others, you obviously are in a “position” to do so. If your write-ups are published, you have obviously

“managed” it with your connections.

You and your actions are under constant scrutiny and you are unable to lead a normal, healthy life. So attuned you are to the public glare and gaze! Being a VIP is like a finished product of the cinematic world where the glamour is reflected on the screen while the grind comes to a halt once the “show is on”.

I often wonder...where will it end? ...This VIP syndrome. Are they really VIPs? These so-called VIPs, like “bourgeois”, are the creation of the “proletariat”. Be that as it may, don't the VIPs (so called) have a right to live a life of their own...don't they want a whiff of privacy sometimes.... Aren't things “managed” and “fixed” outside this rung of VIP syndrome. Hasn't “fixing” come of age globally and internationally?