



Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

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Qu',9en pensez-vous?

What do you think?

- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language by the 25th of every month to:
- adisun3@gmail.com

Annual Picnic 2014

Join us with your family and friends for a day full of fun and sun !

We would appreciate if you bring your favorite dish to share and add more taste to our picnic.

When: Saturday, August 9th, 2014

Where: Park National d'Oka

Details:

Two buses from Metro Namur at 9:00 AM

Two buses from Metro Parc at 8:30 AM

Tickets: adult \$18, child \$12

For RSVP and any information please call 514-528-8812



An open letter to all my male friends

I know you are not the guys catcalling women in the streets. I'm not trying to make you feel bad for being a man. But I want to tell you about what it's like to be a woman

To all my male friends,

I want to tell you about something that happened to me today.

I was walking to the gym when a guy on a bike rode past and said, "baby, can I smack that ass?" I am used to this kind of behaviour in my New York City neighbourhood, so I usually ignore it. Trust me – if I had it out with every man who said things like this to me, I'd have a much shorter, much more annoying day. So I just kept walking. He said it again, but before I could even decide what to do (or if I should do anything) about it, I felt his hand on my butt.

That's right. He rode up to me on his bike so he could touch my arse. Then, again before I could think about doing anything, he rode away.

I was, and am still, so angry. At the time, I felt a bit sad and scared but then quickly grateful that nothing worse happened. Soon after the initial fear subsided, I started thinking about whether I *should* go to the gym at all. Maybe I should stay home and never leave the house again. That would be safer. Silly, no?

Continued...

CENTRE UPDATE



Summer Hours

During the months July and August

Monday to Friday 9am—5pm

1st September (Labour day) is a holiday

From 2nd September, the center will be open until 9pm on Mondays and Thursdays

The Centre is wheelchair accessible

Le centre est accessible aux fauteuils roulants.

Volunteers

If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Homa (Ext. 102 or homa@bellnet.ca) to coordinate a meeting!

SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION

SAWCC has received new informational material on sexual health, including information on sex, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), STI testing, Pap Smears, and Contraceptives. There are copies of these informational booklets and pamphlets at the front of the centre and in the youth zone. Feel free to take some for yourself, loved ones and others!



SAWCC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC) FOR 2014-2016

On 14th June, after the business of the AGM was concluded, we moved to the elections for the EC for 2014-2016.

The following members were acclaimed:

President: **Dolores Chew** (was also in this position for 2012-2014)

Secretary: **Diane Shea**

Treasurer: **Indu Krishnamurthy** (was Secretary on EC 2012-2014)

Programs Secretary: **Kakali Ghosh** (was Treasurer on EC 2012-2014)

Public Relations Secretary: **Mela Sarkar** (was also in this position for 2012-2014)

Publications Secretary: **Adithi Sundarakrishnan** (was also in this position for 2012-2014)

Elders representative: **Jennifer Chew**

We are very grateful to these members for coming forward to serve on the EC. Members are welcome to attend EC meetings. It's a way of learning more about SAWCC, as well as providing your input. EC meetings are held on weekday evenings. The next meeting will be in August. The date will be announced in the August bulletin.

AN OPEN LETTER

Continued....

Since I moved to New York City from Melbourne, I've been subjected to street harassment with a regularity that almost defies belief. To begin with, I chalked it up to the bigger population in the city, and didn't want to make a big deal out of it. I felt – and still feel – extremely grateful that I've rarely suffered any worse than catcalling, and it seemed like something I could just deal with and move on.

But eventually, I realised it was happening every day. It's so predictably a part of my life now that I cringe in anticipation whenever a man looks at me. I internally genuinely bless every man who turns his face away from me when I

walk past. I've tried dressing down and wearing no make-up when I leave the house, which hasn't helped. It should go without saying that I don't want to be the one who has to alter my behaviour to go unnoticed, and I hate that I even felt like I should try – but results say it's a useless exercise, in any case.

And because of recent awful events, the harassment I receive has seemed like the gentler side of a spectrum that has a much more violent and destructive end. By now, you've heard the news that 22-year-old Elliot Rodger posted a video and wrote a manifesto about his hatred of and planned retribution towards women, before shooting and killing seven people, including himself in California. Within days of this, a man shot at three women after they refused to have sex with him and his friends. This terrifies me. Every time a man whistles me up on the street, murmuring that I'm gorgeous or sexy, I ignore him. And doesn't that mean I'm rejecting him too? Could I be in the same kind of danger one day?

I realise this doesn't have much to do with you. Most of you are back at home in Australia, and you'd have no reason to know what a day in my life is like. But I want you to know. A few months ago, I avoided telling my boyfriend about these incidents, thinking it would sound like contextless boasting: "Look how many men think I'm hot!" But I've started telling him about more and more of these incidents. In fact, I want to start telling him about every single one. Not because I'm delighted to hear about how attractive I am to these men, or because I want people to feel sorry for me. I just want him – and you – to know. That harassment and violence against women is a very real thing, and that it affects its victims daily.

I don't want you to think that this is something that only happens in America. Sure, it's constant here, but my female friends are catcalled back home in Melbourne, too.

Then there was that time the guy on the train tried to fondle me. I'm not sure I ever told you about that. When I told a group of female friends about this on Facebook (in all caps; I was very angry), I found I wasn't the only person with such experience. One girl I know in London told me that she had had a very similar thing happen to her. While she was jogging, a boy on a bike slapped her on the bum. "I still feel rage and I feel rage for you," she said. Another girl I know, in Poland, had literally also just walked home from the gym and been approached by a drunken man who tried to attack her. He verbally abused her as she walked away. "The saddest part is that I saw it coming," she added. "I had this reflex as soon as he made eye contact with me, steeling myself for the inevitable, calculating what was the worst that could happen, and how to make that not happen."

I was moved, yet also chilled to see an Instagram post in writer Durga Chew-Bose's feed this week that reflected the danger women face in our lives every day: a screenshot of safety check-ins that she and her friends routinely sent each other. When texting each other last thing before bed, these women said not goodbye, or goodnight, but things like "Home! You?" or "Get home safe".

It's understandable how much responsibility we women take upon ourselves in these situations. We want to be able to move around freely, but we don't want to be hurt.

Honestly, I don't want to spend too much time thinking about what happened to me today. But there is another aspect to it. Legally speaking, in Australia this kind of thing is illegal. It's assault, as is force of any kind visited upon an unconsenting person.

Anyway, thanks for listening. I'm winding up now. I know you are not the guys doing this. I'm not trying to make you feel bad for being a man. Believe me, I know there are good and awesome guys out there. But I suppose I wanted to explain a bit about what it's like to be a woman. And while I'm at it, perhaps this goes a little way to explaining why I'm always a killjoy about your rape jokes (sorry, I will never laugh at those.) I'm not asking you to become my personal vigilante force, or anything like that, either.

What do I want? I'm not sure. Maybe keep your eye out; read the #yesallwomen hashtag for more examples of what women have to deal with on a daily basis; don't pay attention to the people who said Rodger's wasn't a misogynistic crime; and don't make rape jokes?

I'm not entirely sure. I guess I just wanted you to know.

Love,
Estelle

Estelle Tang from theguardian.com

Ponni Arasu , excerpted from interview on CBC's radio programme, "WorldPride 2014 [Toronto]: LGBTQ activists share thoughts on human rights successes and setbacks", on *The Current*, aired live on Wednesday 25 June.



Members of the LGBT community protest against Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. AFP

Ponni was a panelist on this programme. She is an activist from India who is a member of the group, Voices Against 377, which has been fighting to repeal the anti-homosexual law in India. She is currently in Toronto working on a doctorate in history. She spoke with CBC's Pia Chattopadhyay. Member of Voices Against 377 which *.

PC: *You live here in Toronto right now, but take us back to India. What are things like there currently in 2014?*

PA: Well the situation in court is easier to assess b/c we literally had had ourselves de-criminalized. Sec 377** was read(?) down to de-criminalize adult consensual same sex sexual activity in 2009, and we were more than thrilled with the judgment. It was even better than what the lawyers who drafted the papers expected. And the judges were visionaries. And on De-

cember 11th last year, we went back in time and in history and in legal rights when the highest court of the country re-criminalized homosexuality and rejected the Delhi High Court judgment since then we remain in court with the few remaining provisions that we have to challenge that judgment but we will have to see how that goes.

PC: *Ponni, what about you, when you go home to India, what have you come up against personally?*

PA: Well, you know the thing with me is I am third generation queer activist in India, so there are people who have gone before me, who have had to have secretive meetings, who never came out, who are still not out to their families, for example, and I am specifically blessed with a very open family, but I know that I am not the norm but the exception. Just in the past week we've had one hijra person from a traditional trans community raped by a police officer. We've had one young man who was just taking his final school exams who had burnt himself to death because he saw himself as a hijra and was constantly harassed at school and otherwise. We've had two queer women who have killed themselves in the past week so it's on-going violence.

Religious institutions have all come together in one single voice against us in court and in everyday life. It's the only context in which all the religious groups are together in India, you know, otherwise they are killing each other. So it's difficult. You would never go to a police station to seek safety as a queer person. You would not do that. You wouldn't go as a woman anyway, but as a queer person, all the more you wouldn't.

PC: *One of the... things that comes up for discussion is what responsibility do countries like Canada where there are already levels of protection for LGBTQ people have to provide support for countries where they are still struggling to gain recognition, whether it be legally or culturally. What is the role of countries like Canada. What should we be doing in order to help people in your country?*

PA: Well I think my sort of standard thing on transnational support is that any country that is hoping to have a comment or make any kind of intervention in another place should ground itself in its own reality. So we have a few things to learn from here and those are grassroot level movements that existed in a place like Canada whether its the trans peoples' rights which I know is an on-going struggle and a conversation even with Pride itself. So I think the internal conversations that are happening here are things that we need to learn from. At the level of the state and so on legally we definitely looked at cases and legislation and places like Canada while we filed our own papers, and I think immigration remains a very important question. I think Canada needs to think long and hard about its immigration policies for all persons, including queer persons.

PC: *I just want to end our conversation by asking you briefly, you're here this week to talk about your home countries, but also to share experiences and learn from that. What are you hoping to accomplish this week at Pride, here in Toronto?*

PA: I think having been here in Toronto for a while, one of the most interesting roles for me to play as an Indian queer person has been to actually be of support to Diaspora communities here of South Asians, and I think ... for Diasporic South Asian Canadians it's important to know that we are challenging what are called 'traditions' back

home on a daily basis. Their parents give them an idea of the homeland, which is fixed in time, a homeland that doesn't exist, the way they imagine it, and it's important for them to know of the existence of people like us, who are actually on the ground, in their home, challenging these norms. So I think for me that has been one of the most important roles that I can play in a place like Toronto.

Apart from Ponni Arasu, the panel also included Richard Lusimbo, an activist who works with Sexual Minorities Uganda -- or SMUG -- an advocacy group for gay rights, and **Anna Rekhviashvili**, a Georgian human rights activist and the Pride Toronto 2014 International Grand Marshal. The complete interview can be heard at <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2014/06/25/lgbtq-activists-share-thoughts-on-the-future-of-human-rights/>

****Sec 377 of the penal code in 42 former British colonies criminalizes anal sex between men and other homosexual acts. The provision was introduced by British colonial authorities in the British Raj as section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, and was used as the model for sodomy laws in many other British colonies, in many cases with the same section number.**

The prohibition of homosexual acts is provided for in section 377 of the penal codes of India, Malaysia, Singapore (see Section 377A of the Penal Code of Singapore), Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Maldives and Jamaica. It is the model for similar laws that remain in force in Bhutan, Brunei, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Ghana, The Gambia, Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It was the model for since-repealed laws in Australia, Fiji, Hong Kong, and New Zealand. (Wikipedia)

Chapter XVI, Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code dating back to 1861, introduced during the British rule of India, criminalizes sexual activities "against the order of nature", arguably including homosexual acts.

The section was declared unconstitutional with respect to sex between consenting adults by the High Court of Delhi on 2 July 2009. That judgment was overturned by the Supreme Court of India on 12 December 2013, with the Court holding that amending or repealing Section 377 should be a matter left to Parliament, not the judiciary. (Wikipedia)

Article put together by Dolores Chew

SUBVERSION OF JUSTICE

28 May 2014

On May 22, 2014, a lawyer from Tis Hazari molested and attacked a Naga woman student at the Delhi University metro station. The assailant lawyer was nabbed and handed over to the police. The following day, when the statement of the survivor was to be recorded before the magistrate of the Tis Hazari court, a chilling series of events ensued. When the survivor entered the courtroom with her woman lawyer, they were subjected to intimidation by 10-12 lawyers, outraged by the "temerity" of the complainant to bring a case against a fellow lawyer. Several lawyers who represented the accused continued to intimidate the victim's lawyer and silence her arguments by shouting her down. In the presence of the magistrate, a lawyer slapped a friend of the victim. The police intervened and these male lawyers were asked to leave the courtroom, while the victim and her lawyer were asked to stay inside the courtroom in the interest of their safety.

The crowd of lawyers outside grew as they hurled abuses at the victim, her friends, lawyers and even the police. Under police escort the victim and her lawyer were first taken to the ground floor and then to the second floor to record her statement. However, the lawyers on the second floor attacked the police officer investigating this case, by tearing up his file. The victim and her lawyer were escorted to different courtrooms, at which point the lady lawyer rang up her friends for help. Each time they walked the corridors of the court they faced verbal intimidation by groups of lawyers. Ultimately, the victim's statement was recorded in this cacophonous context of terror and intimidation. She had to leave by the back door of the courtroom, escorted by the police.

A woman advocate, also from the North-East, who came to help was threatened, abused and humiliated. The mob now 40 or even 50 in number hurled hate speech at this woman lawyer, by using words which denigrated her as a woman from the North-East. And one lawyer slapped her. Her collar and gown clearly did not make her an equal — marking lawyers who are women and from the North-East as exceptional subjects whose rights are suspended with impunity. The outnumbered police, who were also threatened by the rioting lawyers, rescued them.

The victim's friends were chased out of the court, while a couple of her friends were severely injured. The lawyers grievously assaulted Mavio Woba, a friend of the victim and a student activist on the court premises in the

presence of the police. These assaults are considered to be atrocities under our law, yet it would appear that in practice this law is suspended when it concerns systemic and targeted violence against the scheduled tribes from the North-East in Delhi.

Instead of holding the lawyers in criminal complaint, ensuring safe conditions of testimony and filing a police complaint against these male lawyers, the accused succeeded in getting interim bail. The message was loud and clear: stage a riot and secure bail. Equally, the lawyers seemed to think that violence is far more effective than using the art of defense in courts of law.

The photograph of Mavio Woba's bruised face is wounding since it is a lacerating testimony to the violence that constitutes the legal profession and courtroom culture in Delhi. Not only does the legal profession direct routine violence at women, the court is also converted into a macabre theatre of intimidation, violence and terror.

Such racist and sexist form of collective violence against victims, activists and lawyers of the North-East creates zones of exceptionalism in the heart of Delhi's legal system. The suspension of law inside a courtroom produces such sexual and racial exceptionalism. Surely, this is evidence of the impact of the circulation of the political culture of exceptionalism in the North-East, where cultures of impunity and immunity make women from the North-East vulnerable to routine and everyday forms of sexist and racist violence in cities like Delhi. Such violence communicates a message to all women from the North-East deterring them from resisting the routine sexual violence directed at them in our city.

When the bar protects its male members against charges of sexual harassment, assault, rioting and criminal intimidation, not to mention atrocity, as a matter of protecting its honor, it signals several pathologies of the legal profession. First, it abandons any pretence of representing women: be these judges, lawyers and their clients. Second, it suspends its code of ethics and rules of discipline. Third, by supporting unlawful violence by lawyers, it diminishes the profession and the dignity of court. Fourth, it substitutes the art of legal argument with the obscenity of violence. Fifth, it converts the court into a traumatic space of terror and humiliation.

Such violence by lawyers in court is obscene. It speaks of a systemic assault on the dignity of the legal profession, while severing justice from law completely. Courts are spaces where justice is sighted rarely, and in this instance, lawyers themselves assaulted law's promise of justice. Indeed, how do we expect women to testify against sexual violence if the court itself is converted into a theatre where unlawful violence displaces the promise of justice?

These events unfold alongside the Delhi High Court's decision to fine the government of Delhi for not implementing a serious campaign against sexual violence in the media, using sexual violence as a resource for doing politics and addressing an elite English speaking urban audience. The steps taken by appellate courts have yet to be taken seriously by the Bar Association, to whom some of us petitioned in the aftermath of the Delhi gang rape protests in 2013, to no avail. Complaint committees to redress sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination have not yet been constituted.

Surely legal professionalism demands an allegiance to inculcating cultures of constitutionalism, equality and dignity in our courts of law. This is not just a struggle that must be waged by students and lawyers from the North-East—rather it must be our collective struggle to translate transformative constitutionalism and dignity into the legal cultures that inhabits courts of law. Justice beckons all of us to institute her in our courts of law.

¹ Nagas are an indigenous group from the NE of South Asia.

By Pratiksha Baxi

Associate Professor, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Article taken from <http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/column-subversion-of-justice-1991707>

HONOUR KILLINGS -- RECKLESS PRACTICE OF THE CULTURE

Honour killings locally known as karo-kari are completely against the concept of Islam. The root of honour killings is centuries old and it is a practice followed before the Islamic era called Jahiliyah, the time of ignorance before the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Although such kind of practices are strictly forbidden in Islam it has still grown and spread worldwide and unfortunately, Pakistan is one of the states where every year a large number of Karo Kari or honor killing cases are reported. Sadly, many such cases are not reported.

Karo-kari is the standard practice in all four provinces of Pakistan. Its rate of occurrence may be higher in the tribal areas of Sindh, but it is almost equally rampant in Balochistan, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkwa province.

Karo kari is defined as an act of murder, in which a woman is killed for her actual or perceived immoral behavior. In Karo Kari if a woman is engaged in some kind of unlawful sexual relationship with a man or if she has refused to submit to an arranged marriage, she is branded as Kari or "black female" and in order to cleanse the honour of the man to whom she 'belongs' he received permission to kill her and prove that he has safeguarded his honour by doing so. Whereas the tribal law dictates that the man who is branded karo or "black male" should also be killed but usually that does not happen and the karo has the opportunity to flee, while his family members negotiate with the dishonored family to save his life.

In Jirgas decisions are made by the 'Sardars', the tribal council leaders; they are the ones who set up agreements between the victim of the dishonoured family and the perpetrators. Once the decision is made both the parties are bound to accept it. In many cases 'honour' is used as an excuse to perpetrate crimes that stem from inter family, land and personal disputes.

In Shikarpur, Ghotki, Jacobabad and in many others parts of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa it is the common practice that a Kari is kept in the adjoining servant quarters where she remains as long as she is with the Sardar. If the Sardar's son fancies the Kari he will not marry her of course, but will maintain illicit relations against her will. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2004¹ against honor killings in the National Assembly (adopted October 2004) is a small step in this direction. It aims to eliminate procedural delays and increase the punishment in honor related crimes and killings committed in the name of honor. Karo-kari is now to be treated as premeditated murder according to the amended law. This is to encourage people especially women, to step forward and report acts committed against them which violate them physically and end in the grisly murders of wives and daughters.

The Government of Pakistan passed a bill in December 2004 making honor killing punishable under the same penal provisions as murder. But this bill did not alter the provisions whereby the accused could negotiate a pardon with the victim's family under so-called Islamic provisions.

According to the women's rights advocates the concept of women as an object or commodity is deeply rooted in the tribal culture as well as in the social, economic and political fabric of Pakistan that the government mostly ignores the regular occurrences of women being maimed and killed by their families.

Statistically, honour killings have a high level of support in Pakistan's rural society. During the last six months more than 500 cases of violence against women have been registered in Sindh including abduction, murder, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, forced marriages and imprisonment within the home. The highest number of cases reported in Sindh is of honour killings.

According to the latest report issued on honor killings by the Aurat Foundation (AF)² the ratio of violent crimes against women in the rural areas are more than those in the urban areas. Around 299 cases were recorded in the rural whereas 197 cases were recorded in the urban areas. Some 251 cases were reported through First Information Reports (FIR), 175 were unreported, and there is hardly any information regarding 71 cases.

Even now in many rural areas of Pakistan the tribal custom of exchanging woman for 'vulvur' or bride price is followed upon marriages. Women are handed over to the groom in exchange of a monetary value which varies according to their status, beauty, health and age and at times this bride price also involves another woman. Men can exchange their daughters and unborn granddaughters to obtain new wives. Moreover women are forcefully married to their cousins and uncles within their families. This brutal system of honor killing provides opportunities for personal interest therefore most of the honor killing cases are fake and are planned for their own benefit.

Recently in March, 2012 several cases of honor killing were reported. On 6 March, 2012 a couple were killed over Karo Kari in the jurisdiction of Sanjar Bhatti police station of Shahdakot, Sindh where 20-year-old Asifa and her alleged paramour, 25-year-old Ghulam Hussain Laghari were killed by her husband's brother Hubdal Ali. On 5 March, 2012 a man killed her 18-year-old sister Hurmat and a 29 year old relative Ali Hyder Jatoti in the Dorki sub division of Larkana by clubbing them to death over allegations that they had illicit relations.

On 3 March 2012 in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa two young girls were shot dead over honor issues. Both the girls were brought to the hospital by their relatives who said that they committed suicide. According to the police both the girls were killed allegedly in separate honor related incidents.

Over the past few years a number of debates have been made calling this practice of Karo Kari a crime under law and to punish the culprits of honor killing as murderers but none of these initiatives have led to new legal procedures against honor killings.

Our statute books are full of progressive laws but the state has failed completely in its responsibilities of enforcing rule of law. Karo kari is specific to areas where the tribal and feudal influence is very strong and due to this the police, courts and the municipal authorities etc cannot function properly. A call for a meeting of constituency from the feudal or tribal lord forbids them from becoming witnesses to the cases of honor killing which changes the whole scenario.

Unfortunately the Government itself protects the Jirga system. Alternate institutions or dispute settlement authorities are in such disrepute that there is no other avenue but the Jirga. These Jirgas are mostly presided over by the ministers, bureaucrats and by the members of the Assembly and others. Government functionaries have lost faith in their own institutions. The jirga system and the karo kari have the blessings of the Government. The Jirga system is unconstitutional and contrary to the provisions of the constitution. It is not only unconstitutional in the countries where normal writ petition can be issued but also in tribal areas.

In Jirgas women are not allowed to participate and there are no women in the audience as well. The decisions are solely made by the male members of the Jirgas. If a woman does not appear before the Jirga then how can a case related to karo kari or any other allegation against women be decided without hearing it from her. A Jirga not only justifies but sustains honour killing. Islam does not permit the Jirga system at all; it respects the decision made by the court of law.

Even if there are cases where a male or a female has engaged in extramarital sex, the family should refer the case to the court of law rather than carrying out their own punishment. Moreover the Quran says that at least four eye witnesses are required to prove the crime of Adultery. Both the adulterers and the adulteress cannot be punished unless they confess the crime or there is sufficient evidence against them. Islam does not give the right to any of the family members to carry out honour killing.

The people who are committing or allowing honour killings are tainting the name of Islam with unrelated cultures and social practices. It is better to say that they are not practicing Muslims. Where is it written in the Quran that if you see a wife, daughter or a sister with a man you can kill her? It does say that if you do not want to live with them tell her to leave the house or divorce your wife but does not say that you can kill them. This is simply the use of religion to clean your dirty linen. All the talk about cultural sanction of honour killing is nonsense.

In the last few years there has been a growing movement against Karo Kari by different sections of the civil society including the media and the human rights groups and the NGOs. There have been persistent demands by non-government organisations (NGOs) and organisations like the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) for the amendment of laws to punish the perpetrators of Karo-Kari severely.

The media and the NGOs have played a remarkable role in bringing into light this issue of Karo Kari. Today more people are aware of the issues of honour killing in different parts of Pakistan especially in Sindh. People believe that the NGOs have not yet framed any permanent solutions to the problems of honour killing. There is not even a single shelter home in five districts of Sindh for the victims of Karo Kari.

The people of the civil society are very vocal about it and lots of changes have been made in the law as a result of work done by the civil society organizations but they cannot take over the whole work of the State as it is a huge task. In fact,, it is the responsibility of the State to provide protection to the women for which the State needs to develop a whole system.

The religious leaders should also play their positive role by preaching the people according to the Islamic point of view as to what are the rights of a woman in Islam rather than just considering them as a commodity. Unless and until we provide security, education, economic empowerment and other means of livelihood to our women it is really hard for us to get rid of the evil practice of Karo Kari or honor killings. Representatives of the State needed to be educated to discourage such practices in Pakistan.

The police should make committees and the role of the committee should examine the incidents of Karo Kari and collect all the facts; follow up each and every case in detail and punish the real culprits. The police should be sensitized as they are also involved in this Jirga system. There is no doubt that we need to abolish the Jirga feudal system and hit the patriarchic system.

Since the problem of honor killing or Karo Kari is a social one and has nothing to do with the religion. So far no law has been passed by the Government to completely stop this evil practice. Even more alarming is the fact that the number of Karo Kari cases have been increasing since 2001 and many such cases remain unrecorded or

unreported.

It is no doubt the responsibility of the authorities to prevent these killings by investigating and punishing the perpetrators. But unfortunately both the police and judges display gender bias in favour of men who have killed women or girls for alleged breaches of honour.

References:-

1. <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~shusain/governmentaction.html>
2. <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8359>

By Rabab Fizah

The AHRC is not responsible for the views shared in this article, which do not necessarily reflect its own.

About the Author:

The author is a student and can be reached at rababfizah@gmail.com

Article taken from <http://www.humanrights.asia/opinions/columns/AHRC-ETC-010-2012>

AURAT FOUNDATION STATEMENT

Islamabad, Pakistan, 29 May 2014

Aurat Foundation is deeply shocked at the brutal murder of a 25-year-old pregnant woman by her family in front of the Lahore High Court on Tuesday May 27, 2014, for marrying the man of her choice. We demand immediate arrest of perpetrators and exemplary punishment for those involved in the heinous crime.

The woman was killed by around two dozen relatives, including her father and brothers, who attacked her and her husband with batons and bricks. Neither onlookers nor policemen deputed around the court tried to intervene. Attackers were able to escape uninterrupted.

The victim had gone to the court to record her statement in a case lodged by after she had married of her own choice. The incident was a clear example of planned attack as several months had passed after the marriage. The family had obviously come prepared to commit murder.

Farzana's father, presently in the custody of police, justified the cold-blooded murder as 'honour killing' and said that he did not regret what happened. The incident highlights the impunity with which killings in the name of honour are occurring throughout the country.

From <http://www.af.org.pk/>

Draft INDEPENDENT REPORT ON CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN UTTAR PRADESH (India) AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...

The draft report is circulating among groups in India. The report contains the findings of a study done at Badaun (Uttar Pradesh state in India), the site of abduction, rape and murder by hanging of two girls, aged 14 and 15 years (27 May 2014); Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh), the site of an acid attack killing and rape of a 22 year old girl (2 June 2014) and Mishrikh (Uttar Pradesh), the site of rape and hanging of a minor Dalit girl (2 June 2014).

The authors say, "We discovered that the most important factor for the growth in these **bone chilling incidents of rape, hanging, sodomy are in infact, indicative of a much deeper form of disempowerment**. Gender based violence in Uttar Pradesh is both persistent and widespread and ranks as the topmost crisis for women in the state after health. Across India too, the situation is equally bad. This violence is taking on new forms – be it acid attacks, hanging, rape, molestation, internet based crimes along with the traditional demands for dowry, child marriage and sodomy."

(An article, "Harvest of Shame" by the authors of the report, Hema Badhwar Mehra and Shefali Misra is available at India Legal <http://indialegalonline.com/harvest-shame/>)

Call out for support and Solidarity Roma family facing deportation in one week

Renata Buzas and her husband Tibor, their children Tibor (13), Mercedesz (11) and Lili (9) are scheduled to be deported in one week, on Thursday, July 3rd.



The Buzas family is of Roma ethnic origin and fears to return to their native Hungary, where racist violence against Roma and Jews is again on the rise, against a background of long-standing, deep-rooted discrimination. Renata herself was violently attacked by two racist men in the presence of her son Tibor, who was deeply traumatized by the incident. In Hungary, the three children were bullied and ostracized as Roma. In Montreal, they have made friends and found confidence. Importantly, Tibor (13) and his sister Lili (9) have finally received the support they need to address language development difficulties that did not receive necessary attention in Hungary.

Despite the widely documented violence and discrimination against Roma in Hungary, the Canadian government maintains that the country is "safe", meaning that the Buzas family is not eligible for a pre-removal risk assessment before deportation.

The family has lived in Quebec since 2011 and applied for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds last year after being refused as refugees. They are now scheduled for deportation on July 3rd, even though their application has not yet been decided. If they are deported, the minister no longer has any legal obligation to respond to their application and in practice deportees are not accepted.

Renata Buzas brought her children to Canada to protect them from the discrimination and violence against Roma that she experienced her entire life in Hungary. Canada is about to send them back, before their application for permanent residence is even decided.

Reports on violence and discrimination against Roma in Hungary are well-documented by the European Union and Amnesty International, among other.

For more information on how you can help <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/en/>
Status for All! End Deportations!

STOP PRESS: Recently, a federal court judge has granted a stay order against the family's deportation. However, their application to stay on humanitarian grounds is still pending.

QUEBEC BUDGET 2014-2015

CUTS to social services, health, education, daycare and welfare HURT WOMEN, MIGRANTS, MARGINALIZED

1) Press statement from TCRI* (*Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes*) Cuts that will hurt integration and francization of immigrants

Montreal, June 23, 2014 - Despite the recent indexation of Ottawa transfer of \$ 35 million, the Quebec government has decided to cut 5% of program integration of newcomers and 4.4% of the budget of the French language . Thus, the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MIDI) loses its \$ 4.7 million budget while the federal transfer to the integration of immigrants is increasing year after year.

Darryl Barnabò, Co-Chair TCRI expressed his indignation: "It is surprising that four weeks ago, the Premier of Quebec had immigrant integration as a priority, and we are told today of unprecedented cuts of integration and francization programs. "

Recall that the financial compensation received by Quebec under the Canada-Quebec Accord on Immigration has got significant annual indexation. Therefore, Quebec's spending on integration and francization do not directly affect the Quebec treasury, especially since the funds made available by the federal government rose from \$ 104 million in 2000 to \$ 320 million in 2013. This represents an income of \$ 1 billion over three years for Quebec.

It is clear that in 2014 immigrants in Quebec still face many difficulties and obstacles during their socio-economic integration process. We demand that the \$ 320 million that Quebec will receive in 2014 are fully dedicated to services and integration measures for new immigrants.

For front-line actors related to immigration, integration and regionalization issues we ask the government to develop a coherent inter-governmental strategy and effectively invest these funds for diversity and prosperity of our local communities and regional.

Information: Stephan Reichhold 514 -791 2455 www.tcri.qc.ca

2) Regarding cuts to Credits awarded by the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) for autonomous community organizations [including women's centres]

The Liberal budget is negative for the health of the population. Through its 2014-2015 budget, the government announced that groups and vulnerable people who are helped are not part of the government's concerns. The government refuses to increase subsidies to community groups working in health and social services and the whole movement of autonomous community action. The government should reconsider its decision and increase subsidies. Neglecting these groups does not improve the economy, but prevents action for prevention, increases inequalities and harms the social climate.

The government did not raise the support to independent community organizations in the field of health and social services (OCASSS). Moreover the proposed Commission on the evaluation of programs will challenge the existence and importance of PSOC (created in 1973). The Minister should defend the merits of PSOC and the need to inject the necessary funds so that it adequately meets the needs.

As it stands, median annual grants for 90% of OCASSS is between \$ 50,000 and \$ 95,000 - which is clearly insufficient to ensure basic operations. The difference between the amounts used by OCASSS, when filing their forms, and the amounts they receive, shows an annual shortfall of \$ 225 million - an amount that is documented in the records of the same MSSS;

The total amounts allocated to OCASSS represents only 1.5% of the entire budget of the MSSS.

The PSOC represents only 47% of actual needs for community organization funding. Everything else should be collected by multiple requests from many different donors, with renditions separate accounts. On top of this, hundreds of local, regional and national organizations are awaiting an initial grant PSOC for their mission;

The Government appreciates the work of community organizations and knows how people rely on the help of community groups in all aspects of their lives. Despite all this, the government has chosen to refuse to increase subsidies OCASSS, like those of the whole movement of the autonomous community action.

Minister Charlebois and the Liberal government must reverse its decision to increase funding to autonomous community organizations in the field of health and social services.

1 A coalition of 140 organizations working with refugees, immigrants and non-status people in Québec

2 Based on information from l'R – le regroupement des centres des femmes du Québec

3 Organismes communautaires autonomes du domaine de la santé et des services sociaux

4 Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires

RECAA (Ressources ethnoculturelle contre l'abus envers les aînés) is an organization whose mission is working towards a culture of respect for our elders. RECAA believes that our elders should be able to live in dignity, safety and free of exploitation and physical and mental abuse. June was the month of World Elder Abuse Awareness and on June 19, 2014, RECAA organized a presentation on elder abuse and social engagement at the Atwater Library. SAWCC members were invited to the event. Some members, Nighat Hussain, Sajida Imam, Sadeqa Siddiqui (also a member of RECAA), joined in the flash mob on Friday, June 13, 2014, in Alexis Nihon Plaza to advertise the upcoming event as well as to raise awareness. Anne Caines, one of the founding members of RECAA, also a member of SAWCC, invited SAWCC members, Nighat Hussain, Maya Khankhoje and Jennifer Chew to join in the presentations at the event.

THE WATERSHED

Many people aspire to a ripe old age, but when they reach it, they spend most of their efforts denying it. For others, age is so irrelevant that they do not even know how old they are. Some measure their lives not chronologically but in terms of achievements.

Nina Berberova was first published in her 80's and she is now the talk of literary salons. During his brief life, Mozart found time to create a legacy of beauty for us to enjoy. Christ sacrificed his life at the age of 33 for us to learn the meaning of our own. Does age matter? Not really. Age is just a marker between a point called birth and another one called death in a continuum that is known as life. It stands to reason that living life fully is more important than measuring it.

Most people in the industrialized world live out their biblical three score and ten. Many in the Third World do not make it past childhood due to hunger, disease, war, the cruelty of the human species or the simple alienation of the modern world. Statistics vary.

I'm one of the lucky statistics. By turning fifty last year I more than beat the odds faced by the average Indian born in 1942, whose life expectancy was about 37. I'm now too old perhaps to change my career, not old enough to retire, the right age to become a grandmother and young enough to yearn for a partner of my own.

In fact, my daughters will be horrified to learn that I entered a contest in which winning would mean losing, because then everybody would know my real age. And considering that I look and feel younger, they will reason, why would I want to proclaim my age to the four winds? And why not? After all, why withhold my age from friend or lover when my banker, the government, my employer and a host of other strangers know it?

I am as proud of my age today as I was when young and as I hope to be when truly old. Especially if I get to earn the title of lovely old lady, lovely as in full of love.

Age, of course, is a social construct as much as a fact of life. Aging well means wearing life like a warm and beautiful and useful garment and then shedding it lightly, when the time comes. My Indian father, who was born in a culture that values the elderly, died at eighty-two, his head cushioned on his hands folded as if in prayer, a picture of his family under his pillow and a peaceful smile on his lips. I aspire to die like him but for that, I will have to live like him as well.

He showed me how youth and age can coexist in one body; how the body is the temple of the soul and therefore deserves respect; how it is necessary for mind, body and soul to work in harmony. Since he was already old when I was born I was aware of how briefly his light would shine on us, so one morning when I found him standing on his head, I chided him for endangering his health. His retort was that he had been doing yoga all his life and that it was the first time in mine that I had got up early enough to see him do it.

From him I also learnt that whereas the past informs your life, it is the future that provides it with inspiration. At eighty he didn't consider himself too old to add another language to the many he already spoke or to contemplate a perilous journey, even if it was only in his imagination.

Youth believes in the myth of immortality. Old age destroys that myth. At the watershed age of fifty I no longer believe in myths. My imagination is fired by the secrets that nature chooses to reveal to us and intrigued by those that the human soul tries, not always successfully, to withhold. And my heart is warmed by the love of friends and family. As for my soul, it awaits release without a sense of urgency.

As I look out my window at the frozen landscape, I smile at the certainty that come spring, the rose will bloom.

And if it does not, it is because it is time for the land to lie fallow.

By Maya Khankhoje



**WORLD
ELDER
ABUSE
DAY
June 2014**

**RECAA & CONTACTIVITY
Alexis Nihon Plaza, Montréal**

**Featuring RECAA & SAWCC members
Anne Caines, Sadeqa Siddiqui & Sajida Imam**

CHANGES

At last there's time to stand and stare
Await the next bus without a care
Not slotted into nine to five
This is retirement.

It's taken one lifetime to get there
Now another life awaits
With anticipation and expectations
Imagined,
Sighed for in the previous spate.

Is it time to put in place
The travel plans to Ancient Greece?
Or wander through Steig Larsson's streets?
Or draw or write, suppressed delights,
While running, breathless,
Grateful for the night?

But now there is a disruption.
The secret hope, grandchildren!
Whose first step
Is worthy of no less
Than an Olympic medal
Whose first word spoken
Is an indication
Of Shakespearean oration.
And so some plans are postponed
For pure indulgence
In this unimagined joy.
Yet with retirement
Comes liberation
To live life with choice
Not obligation.
To view a tree
Or sit and read
This is retirement.

By Jennifer Chew

June 19, 2014

Read at RECCA Annual Celebration



For more information on RECCA visit
<http://a-c-m.ca/>

Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

South Asian Women's Community Centre
1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage.
Montréal, QC H2J 2J5

Phone: 514-528-8812
Fax: 514-528-0896
E-mail: sawcc@bellnet.ca

33 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2014

www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca

July 8—Arts and Crafts (10:30am-12:00pm)

July 15— Ovarian Cancer (10:30am-12:00 pm)

July 22— Nutrition (10:30am- 12:00 pm)

July 25— Potluck (12:30 pm-2:00pm)

July 29— Consumer Protection (10:30am- 12:00 pm)

8 Juillet—Une activité sur l'artisanal(10h30—12h)

15 Juillet— Session d'information sur le cancer de l'ovaire (10h30—12h)

22 Juillet— Session d'information sur la nutrition(10h30—12h)

25 Juillet—Potluck (12h30—14h00)

29 Juillet— Session d'information sur la protection du consommateur (10h30—12h)

July 2014

Sun

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