Oxfam Briefing Paper

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Towards Ending Violence Against Women in South Asia

There are 50 million fewer women in South Asia today than there should be – girl babies are killed before birth through sex-selective abortions, or die prematurely through violence and neglect. Millions more girls and women face discrimination – they have less to eat than boys and men, are denied an education, are forced into dowry marriages, have little or no access to health services, and suffer violence. This situation will not *just* be changed by state laws and international agreements. Until men's and women's belief that violence against women is a 'private' matter and culturally acceptable is challenged and changed, the violence and discrimination will continue.

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Summary

One in every two women in South Asia faces violence in her home. Violence is an inescapable reality of women's lives, as the social customs and attitudes that support violence against them are entrenched and institutionalised at all levels – home, family, community, society, and the State. Breaking the silence on this violence is not an easy, or even a real option for most women; to do so would threaten their lives.

What does violence against women consist of? The globally accepted definition considers as violence 'any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life'.[1]

The pervasive culture of gender-based violence in South Asia has eroded women's fundamental rights to life, health, security, bodily integrity, political participation, food, work, and shelter. It has severely limited their choices in practically all spheres of life, and explains the uniformly poor gender-related development indices in crucial sectors like health, nutrition, education, political participation, and employment. Sharp gender bias has also led to 50 million fewer women in the population; girls and women in South Asia die prematurely through neglect and violence. This is known as the 'missing women' phenomenon.[2]

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Report 2003* exposes how women in this region remain deeply vulnerable and disadvantaged; indicators for literacy, health, economic activities, work burden, empowerment, and political participation are among the lowest in the world.[3] A recent World Bank regional brief for South Asia reinforces the message that women are in crisis; stating that 56 per cent of South Asian women are illiterate, and one third of all maternal deaths in the world occur in the region.

The small gains made across the region in improving access to health care, nutrition or education are being rapidly eroded through other forms of discrimination such as sex-selective abortions. In India, for example, the impact of such practices is visible in the ratio of girls to boys among children below the age of six. Compared with the normal ratio of about 95 girls being born per 100 boys, there were 92.7 girls born per 100 boys in 2001, and in some states such as Punjab and Gujarat, the ratio of girls is as low as 79.3 and 87.8.[4] This already distorted sex ratio for children below the age of six is predicted to worsen across the region. Thus, even though overall development gains have led to a decline in women's excessive mortality, other forms of discrimination are increasing (and new forms are arising) which negate any positive impact on women's lives.

State interventions to protect women through effective implementation of legislation have been consistently impaired by the lack of support from dominant interests within the community, who legitimise violence against women as 'normal'. Despite punitive legislation, most women have to abide

by the rules of a patriarchal social system which reinforces gender inequalities.[5]

Research also shows that despite three decades of activism by women's groups all over the world, and the issue of violence against women gaining attention in global policy debates as a health and human rights issue, the social crisis is growing. A recent UNIFEM report calls for urgent action to enable women to experience real change in their lives and to be free of the fear of violence.[6]

As violence against women varies in its nature and manifestation, there are four critical challenges for all those working in the area of violence against women:

1 to challenge and change existing social and individual attitudes that accept violence against women as 'normal';

2 to mobilise all sections of the family, community, and society to act to prevent violence against women;

3 to build popular pressure on the State to formulate and implement gender-equitable policies;

4 to bring together diverse local, national, regional, and international efforts working towards ending violence against women.

Violence against women: the South Asian context

In South Asia, one in every two women experiences violence in her daily life. Social, cultural, political, economic, and legal factors in the region combine to leave women vulnerable to community-sanctioned violence.

In a region affected by a high level of volatile human conflict, violence against women is viewed as just 'another form of violence'. There is no acceptance that violence against women is a serious human rights issue; that it impacts on women's socio-economic well-being, health, sexual and reproductive rights; and, significantly, that it reduces women's contribution to the gross domestic product.

Box 1: Violence against women: a growing crisis

- In Pakistan, 80 per cent of women experience violence within their homes. Despite the fact that many incidents of 'honour killing' are not reported, in 2002, more than 450 Pakistani women or girls were killed by relatives in so-called 'honour killings', and at least as many were raped.[7]
- Every six hours, somewhere in India, a young married woman is burned alive, beaten to death, or driven to commit suicide. It is estimated that more than 15,000 women suffer from dowry-related violence ever year.[8] In a nation-wide survey in India, nearly 50 per cent of women reported at least one incident of physical or psychological violence in their lifetime.[9]
- Forty seven per cent of Bangladeshi women experience some physical violence at the hands of their intimate partners.[10] If psychological violence were included, the figure would be much higher. Every week, more than ten women in Bangladesh suffer from an acid attack that leaves them brutally disfigured, and often blind and disabled.[11] A study in Bangladesh shows that 32 per cent of women working outside their homes experience disruption of their work due to incidents of domestic violence.[12]
- According to the Chairperson of the National Committee on Women, violence against women is on the increase in Sri Lanka. Sample surveys reveal that 60 per cent of women suffer domestic violence in Sri Lanka.[13]
- There is no accurate figure of the scale of sex-trafficking of women and girls from Nepal. Despite published figures suggesting that between 5,000 to 7,000 Nepali women and girls are trafficked for sex work each year, and that 200,000 Nepali women and girls are working in the sex industry in India (Human Rights Watch 1995:6), the actual magnitude of women and girls who are trafficked from Nepal is unknown.[14]
- In Afghanistan, there is a significant incidence of rape, forced marriage, abductions, and assaults. Women are also attacked and imprisoned by armed groups without due process, for not complying with their Taliban-

style edicts on dress and behaviour. Statistics are scarce, but in 2003, an Amnesty International report indicated a high incidence of such violence.[15]

- Female foeticide is reported in 27 of India's 32 states, and the impact on the sex ratio among young children is alarming. The 2001 census shows only 927 girls for every 1,000 boys (compared to 945 girls in 1991). The declining numbers are most pronounced in the economically advanced states of Punjab and Gujarat. In Punjab it is estimated that one in five girl children is missing due to selective abortions.

South Asia has nearly 40 per cent of the total number of people living in poverty in the world, and 400 million people affected by hunger. Key statistical indicators for human development are poor. Gender-related development indices (life expectancy at birth, maternal mortality, literacy, access to health services, employment, earned income, and political participation, among others) are far worse, and pull the region down into the 'low human development' category.[16] Due to the sharp gender bias (women suffer from discrimination in access to resources in every sphere, including nutrition and health care, and are victims of violence), there has been a higher rate of mortality among women in South Asia than in many other parts of the world. Currently an estimated 50 million women are 'missing' from the population due to gender-discriminatory practices .[17]

Violence against women is endemic in the region, with culture-specific variations. It begins at the stage of conception; sex-selective abortions are frequent. One in six deaths of a female infant in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan is due to neglect and discrimination. Culture-specific forms of violence include domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, incest, trafficking, honour killings, acid attacks, public mutilation, stove-burnings, and forced temple prostitution.[18]

The State and women's organisations have tried to deal with the problem in their own ways. Despite introduction by the State of extensive constitutional and statutory safeguards, women remain disadvantaged in their quest for a life free of violence. Legislation, policy measures, national programmes, the allocation of resources, and institutional mechanisms have not translated into a gender-just environment. The efficacy of State legislation and programmes is also largely undermined by the strong culture of patriarchy. In fact, even as State actions to curb violence against women have multiplied, resistance to change in the community has grown.

South Asian women's organisations have made more progress. Adopting a rights-based approach, they have managed to establish a range of services and programmes to empower women. While they have achieved a measure of success at the policy and programme level, they have faced resistance at the community level, as their

efforts to challenge existing community attitudes have been made to appear contradictory to conventional wisdom and culture.

Activists from women's organisations confirm the worsening situation. They maintain that women will be less safe in the future if priority is not given by the State to a range of policy initiatives and public campaigns to bring about change in *community* beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions. The focus of this action needs to be on two areas: removing the stigma experienced by women facing violence, and making such violence visible and unacceptable.

Gains in the international arena

At the international level, violence against women is receiving more attention now than ever before. Nearly three decades of persistent work by women's organisations has resulted in violence against women being clearly defined and recognised as a health and human rights violation. Various international agreements have enabled signatory States to put in place legal measures and services to combat such violence and to support women affected by it (see Box 2).

Efforts by women's and other support groups around the world have highlighted the widespread nature of violence, publicised women's suffering, analysed its causes, and prompted international bodies and national governments to action. As of 2000, 118 countries have developed national action plans to implement their commitments to the Platform of Action produced by the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995), which outlines violence against women as one of the key areas for action.[19] Several crucial international and regional coalitions have also emerged, facilitated by international conferences and meetings.

In South Asia these efforts have resulted in ground-breaking conventions such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002. On the whole, however, these gains have not translated into action by the states in the region to make women's lives free from violence, says a recent United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) report,[20] and the 'gaps between norms and practices remain'.[21]

Box 2: World organisations speak out

In the 1990s, violence against women emerged as a focus of international attention and concern.

- In 1993, the UN General Assembly passed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, UN Resolution 48/104.
- At both the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, women's organisations from around the world advocated that ending violence against women should be a high priority.
- In March 1994, the Commission on Human Rights appointed the first Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, and empowered her to investigate abuses of women's human rights.
- In 1998, UNIFEM launched regional campaigns in Africa, Asia/Pacific, and Latin America, designed to draw attention globally to the issue of violence against women.
- In 1998, the Statute of the International Criminal Court codified rape and other sexual violence as war crimes (in armed conflict of international or non-international character), and those crimes committed on a systematic or widespread basis as crimes against humanity, including genocide.
- In 1999, the United Nations Population Fund declared violence against women 'a public health priority'.
- In 1999, the Optional Protocol to CEDAW was signed, allowing the Committee to address petitions from groups or individuals on alleged violations of the convention.
- In 2000, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Security and Peace provided a framework for addressing women's needs and rights to protection during conflict, and acknowledged their role in peacekeeping.
- The UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, 2000, included a protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially in women and children.

Core challenges

The core challenges for all those working in the area of violence against women are:

1 to challenge and change existing social and individual attitudes that accept violence against women as 'normal';

2 to mobilise all sections of the family, community, and society to act and prevent violence against women;

3 to build popular pressure to implement equitable policies and to help to sustain the political will to achieve them;

4 to bring together diverse local, national, regional, and international efforts working towards ending violence against women.

Attempting to change deeply entrenched community norms that accept violence against women as 'normal' is a formidable task, which often invites confrontation. Even as legal solutions are pursued, women's organisations and other groups recognise the essential role the community plays in perpetuating and promoting gender inequality and violence. Attitudes and biases that support violence against women are created, sustained, and played out at the community level.[22]

Laws, programmes, and policies can be easily undermined if they are not accepted and supported by the community. In societies where class, caste, and religious dictates overrule other laws, women's rights are lost in the larger goal of community rights. The key to change, then, is to influence a shift in popular opinion. Community structures that promote opinion-change and positive collective action to prevent or combat violence against women need to be strengthened. State policies and programmes would be better received and easier to implement as a result.

This task is far from easy. A recent United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) study of male attitudes to violence against women in Bangladesh found that an overwhelming majority of men felt that a wife was accountable to her husband for her behaviour and that violence was an acceptable form of corrective punishment. Only 30 per cent of men opposed general (not marital) violence against women.[23] Studies from other South Asian countries echo the same male attitudes.[24]

Enormous effort is required at the cultural and social levels, as most forms of violence against women are still viewed by a majority of the population as 'private matters' to be endured, and most certainly not a crime (see box below). Addressing violence against women requires challenging and changing unequal power relations between men and women, as much as it means dealing with issues of gender inequality in relation to resources, benefits, and political power.

Box 3

In Pakistan, twelve-year-old Reshma's marriage was decided in a *watta satta* (reciprocal) arrangement. A dispute soon broke out between the two families, but her father could not call off the wedding, as the exchange wedding had been formalised. Reshma was forced into the marriage at gunpoint, and on her wedding night her husband shot her dead, claiming that she had admitted to an illicit relationship with a relative of hers. He said that it was her fate to die. Her family could do nothing.

On 9 October 2000, 18-year-old Rahima Khatun of Jehnaigati in Sherpur, Bangladesh, was beaten by her husband, Wahab, and forced to leave home, while her six-month-old daughter Ontora was murdered. On 12 October, Rahima's father filed a case against Wahab in the court of the Sherpur magistrate. On hearing the news, Wahab went to the local chairman, who was politically influential, and they began to pressure Rahima's family to retract the case. On 20 October, a *shalish* (community court) was arranged, and Wahab was made to give Rahima 1,400 takas (US$9) as 'compensation'. However, her family was told to withdraw the case.[25]

Box 4: Female infanticide

This is a crime, and yet it continues unabated as the example below illustrates. In response to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's appeal asking parents to leave girl babies in orphanages instead of killing them, the 2001 records of one orphanage show that only seven girl babies were left at the orphanage while over 700 other girl babies born in the surrounding villages just 'disappeared' shortly after birth.

The following example highlights the difficulties of challenging and changing traditional attitudes and practices:

'Two social workers from the Indian Council for Child Welfare had been keeping a close watch on Lakshmi, a woman who was due to deliver her third child. Though Lakshmi was in the high-risk group because she had already borne two girls, she had refused to go to hospital for her delivery.

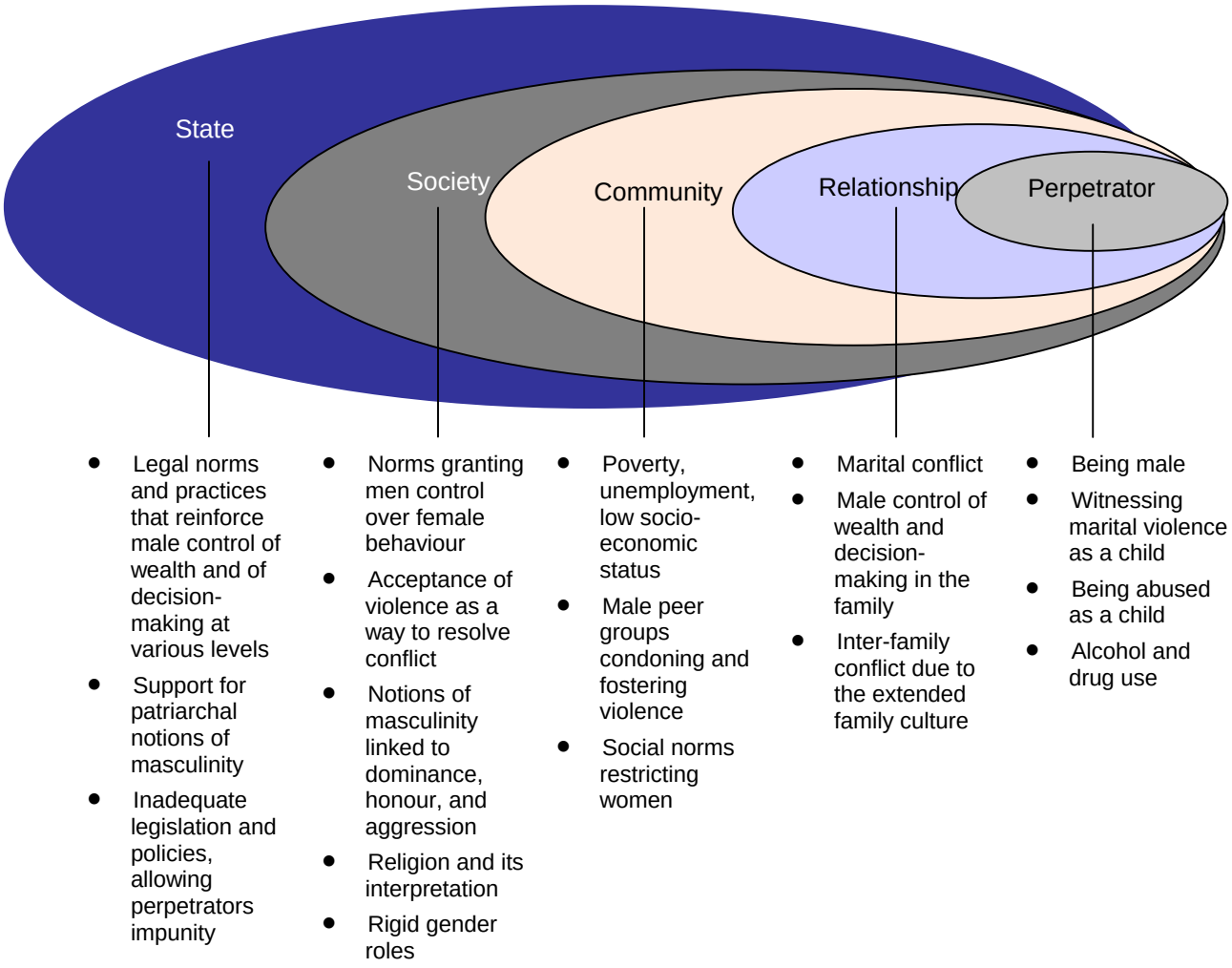
The two social workers stood outside her house waiting for the child to be born, putting up with jeers and name-calling for a couple of hours. But when a couple of men, bearing their trademark *aruvaals* (axes), appeared threateningly on the scene, the young women got intimidated and moved away. By the time they returned, Lakshmi's girl child had been born, killed and buried. They had even placed a stone on the burial spot to avoid detection. The social workers did not dare ask any questions.'[26]

Although acts of violence against women are perpetrated by individuals who should be held responsible for their crimes, gender-based violence is learned behaviour. Socialisation plays a major role in such learning. Individual acts are supported overtly or tacitly through social institutions such as the family and the community, and by the State, either through normative rules or by impunity

towards acts of violent domination, as the cases above illustrate. Acts of violence are often committed by a group of individuals acting collectively. These groups may be family-based, or share other forms of identity such as political ideology, religious ideology, or membership of a gang. Within these groups, violence can be fostered through rituals, symbolism, or ideological articulation. In South Asia, even acts of domestic violence are more often than not family-based acts involving more than one perpetrator. Similarly, women are often targeted in time of war, communal conflict, political struggle, and in caste-based violence.

Many researchers now use an 'ecological framework' (see figure below)[27] to understand the links between the personal, situational, and socio-cultural factors that combine to cause violence.

Figure 1: Model of factors associated with partner abuse



Developed on the basis of a wide range of studies, several factors at each of the levels in the figure above are found to increase the likelihood that a man will abuse his partner.[28]

- **At the individual level**: factors include being abused as a child or witnessing marital violence in the home, having an absent or rejecting father, and the frequent use of alcohol and drugs.
- **At the level of the family and the relationship**: cross-cultural studies have cited male control of wealth and decision-making within the family and marital conflict as strong predictors of abuse.
- **At the community level**: women's isolation and lack of social support, together with male peer groups which condone and legitimise men's violence, predict higher rates of violence.
- **At the level of society**: studies around the world have found that violence against women is most common where gender roles are rigidly defined and enforced and where the concept of masculinity is linked to toughness, male honour, or dominance. Other cultural norms associated with abuse include the tolerance of the physical punishment of women and children, acceptance of violence as a means to settle interpersonal disputes, and the perception that men have 'ownership' of women.
- **At the level of the State**: studies have found that inadequate legislation and policies to prevent and punish acts of violence, as well as low levels of sensitivity and awareness among law enforcement agencies and social services, are linked to a higher incidence of violence.

This analysis strengthens the assumption that actions to end violence against women must address a range of issues, from women's unequal access to resources and decision-making in the family to concepts of masculinity and femininity. The male 'right' to dominance and control in all social institutions, ranging from community-level groups to the education system and state structures, where these notions are fostered and perpetuated, needs to be questioned.

The analysis shows the role of the State in sustaining gender inequalities and male dominance and violence. State-sponsored violence that targets women is not uncommon, as is often seen in conflict situations across the region. Legal systems are plagued by inaccessibility and strong gender bias. For instance, legal assistance is expensive, and women usually lack independent access to resources. Further, although family courts have been set up for easy accessibility to justice, it is not always possible for women to approach the courts

for fear of reprisal. Constitutional guarantees of equality are negated by legislation based on religious and customary laws such as Pakistan's *Hudood* laws and various personal laws in India and Sri Lanka.

The judiciary is male dominated, and the gender bias in society is reflected within its structure. A study of judicial attitudes to women in India found that 48 per cent of judges agreed that it was justifiable for a man to hit his wife on certain occasions; 74 per cent endorsed the view that preservation of the family should be the primary concern for women, even within a violent marriage.[29] It is important to introduce the issue of human rights into legal discourse, so that it begins to be reflected in policy making and programme content.

Governments in the region are attempting to narrow the scope of the definition of violence against women by excluding domestic and many other forms of community-based violence. They either argue that action against violence contravenes current cultural practices, or that violence by private actors is a criminal offence and not a human rights violation.[30] The Indian government, for instance, uses the argument that action against violence will 'conflict with existing culture and traditions and family structures' in order to stall legislation on domestic violence. It is of utmost importance that those who need to exercise it as well as those who are responsible for respecting and promoting it understand women's rights. Sensitising the state machinery (particularly the judiciary), police, planners, policy makers, and parliamentarians to gender issues is urgently needed.[31]

In some instances where the State has accepted responsibility for protecting women against violence, it has been greeted by social unrest. Communities see it as interference in family and cultural matters, and agitate to have laws retracted. This acts as a strong demotivator for States (see Box 5).[32]

Box 5

Various Islamist groups in Pakistan have been up in arms against the abolition of the draconian Islamic penal law, *Hudood*, which among other discriminatory clauses, requires that a woman must produce four Muslim male witnesses to prove rape, failing which she faces the charge of adultery (an act that is defined as a crime against the state and is punishable with death by stoning). A government commission recommended its repeal on the grounds that it has sparked an increase in crimes against women, particularly in the incidence of rape.

In India, judicial action to reform Muslim personal laws to increase protection and rights for women gave rise to massive protest from some sections of the Muslim community, who described it as a threat to their religious identity and practice.

In Sri Lanka, efforts by women's groups to reform the Muslim personal laws, especially those relating to the age of marriage for girls, have been foiled by the government for fear of a voter backlash and opposition from fundamentalist groups who are able to mobilise public opinion.

Social scientists maintain that dominant groups in society maintain their power not only by controlling resources but also by defusing any potential challenge to their power by ensuring that ideas and beliefs supporting their interests pass through popular culture into the 'common sense'.[33]

Protests of women's organisations have been made to appear as contradicting conventional 'wisdom' or 'common sense'[34], and 'destructive' to culture and family. This is exemplified by the actions of the team members of the Indian Council of Child Welfare to prevent female infanticide being greeted with hostility in villages (see Box 6).[35]

Box 6

Jayanti described the hostile situations her team faced in the villages every day. The male-centric Thevar and Kallar communities were resentful of women activists or *pottachinga* (contemptuous term for women) who came and corrupted their women with evil ideas.

Thus, for cultural and political change to happen, it must be stressed once again, a beginning has to be made at the community level. Communities' perception of the world needs to be questioned, exposed, and replaced by a new awareness.

So far, the responsibility for tackling violence against women has mostly rested on women's organisations. Organisations need to highlight the ways in which violence against women affects the entire community, and thus has to be tackled by both men and women. As a first step, it is essential that women's documentation and experience of violence be 'named' as violence by the community at large, and defined as unacceptable.[36] Statistics from around the world show that too often women view domestic violence as the woman's fault and an acceptable punishment for poor behaviour,[37] while men see their behaviour as an expression of masculinity and maintenance of male honour.[38] Evidently, strategies are required that challenge the 'common sense' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour, where these support or condone violence. Box 7 illustrates the attempts of some organisations to change current opinions and beliefs.

Box 7: Organisations are acting with communities

A **network of 17 organisations** and women's human rights groups in the Sindhupalchock district of **Nepal** encourages affected communities and families to organise themselves for action, and mobilises local councillors on village development committees to punish local traffickers.

Polli Sree, working in the northern part of **Bangladesh,** works with students and teachers in 60 different schools and colleges to generate awareness about gender discrimination and violence against women. They mobilise students as change agents in their families and community.

Ain-O-Salish Kendra in **Bangladesh** attempts to challenge and change attitudes at the community level by encouraging the use of gender-aware 'traditional' *salishes* (people's councils) to deal with cases of violence.

The Women's Development Centre in **Sri Lanka** runs awareness programmes on abuse and violence against women, targeting both children and teachers. They also provide counselling and training to teachers so that they can identify victims of abuse. The programme also trains students as 'peer counsellors'.

Organisations in **Bundelkhand** (north India) and **Orissa** (east India) have mobilised a network of rural and urban women's groups to challenge social norms that foster violence against women. They work to prevent domestic violence and to provide support to women facing domestic and other violence.

In **Pakistan**, **Amal** in **Punjab, Roots Work** in **Balochistan,** and **Pirbhat Development Society** in **Sindh** are tackling violence against women issues by organising women and men to work as pressure groups. A couple of groups have already attained effective results on domestic violence. Young women in rural areas are questioning their submissive roles and speaking out in meetings.

The way ahead

- Awareness raising and public education alone will not achieve the desired change in the practice of violence against women. The challenge for organisations and individuals working to prevent and end violence against women is to alter the prevailing gender-biased attitudes, customs, and practices and to encourage a large-scale popular movement that seeks to end violence against women. A popular campaign is needed that involves people at all levels – home, family, community, society, and the State – and simultaneously raises awareness and mobilises women and men to act towards preventing violence.
- Such a campaign would also need to be linked to a multi-faceted and wider social-change process that would link awareness

raising and challenging 'commonsense' ideas and beliefs with actions related to other aspects of gender inequality and women's economic and political empowerment. Community efforts that enable the implementation of positive state interventions and support the efforts of women's organisations and others to promote women's rights would be able to trigger effective change.

- A public education campaign,[39] using mass media and other innovative means of communication, needs to have three main goals:
  1 to remove the stigma experienced by women facing violence and to change the common perception of the issue as a 'private' matter;
  2 to make the prevalence of violence against women visible and unacceptable by exposing and countering existing myths;
  3 to encourage alternative and more equitable attitudes, gender relations, and behaviour.
- Such a popular campaign[40] would support and work in synergy with other national, regional, and international efforts to end violence against women, especially those focusing on policy advocacy and state responsibility.

All these efforts must be coalesced to sustain a long-term commitment to a process involving a wide range of actors, in order to reach all sections of society and to achieve a fundamental shift in the social attitudes and beliefs that support gender inequality and violence against women. It is equally important to remain vigilant to emerging threats, and to develop ways of addressing them.

Notes

[1] United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993.

[2] The figures refer to women and girls who have either died due to gender discrimination and violence, including unequal access to resources, or girl foetuses aborted through sex selection. See Klasen and Wink 2003, 'Missing Women': Revisiting the Debate, *Feminist Economics 9* (2–3), 263–99.

[3] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (2003), *Millennium Development Goals: A Compact Among Nations To End Human Poverty*, New York, Oxford University Press

[4] A. Sen (2003), 'Missing Women Revisited', *British Medical Journal*, Volume 127, 6 December.

[5] N. Gandhi and N.Shah (1992) *The Issues at Stake: Theory and Practice in the Contemporary Women's Movement in India*, New Delhi: Kali for Women.

[6] United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (2003) *Not a Minute More: Ending Violence Against Women*, New York, NY: UNIFEM.

[7] Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Report (2002), see www.rghr.net/mainfile.php/0450/435/

[8] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1178714.stm

[9] International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) (2000), 'Domestic Violence in India: A Summary Report of a Multi-site Household Survey'.

[10] United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2000)*The State of the World Population Report*, Chapter 3, page 26, Table www.unfpa.org/swp/2000/pdf/english/chapter3.pdf

[11] Acid Survivors Foundation, Bangladesh.

[12] UNFPA (2003) 'Violence Against Women in South Asia – A Regional Analysis', Kathmandu: UNFPA.

[13] Iryagolle, I. 'The Problem of Violence against Women', *Daily News*, Online edition, 19 July 2003, http://www.dailynews.lk/2003/07/19/fea01.html

[14] M. Henninkand P. Simkhada (2004) 'Sex Trafficking in Nepal: Context and Process, Opportunities and Choices', Working Paper No. 11, April 2004, Southampton: University of Southampton.

[15] Amnesty International, AI Index: ASA 11/023/2003 http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGACT770362004

[16] UNDP (2003) *Human Development Report 2003*, New York, NY: UNDP.

[17] A. Sen (2003) *op. cit*.

[18] UNIFEM South Asia (2003) *Say No To Gender Based Violence, Responses from South Asia*, New Delhi: UNIFEM.

[19] The implementation of National Action Plans is often uneven, with lack of resources as a major factor in non-implementation. Political will is a critical element affecting design, implementation, and resource allocation (UNIFEM, 2003:52).

[20] UNIFEM (2003) *op. cit*.

[21] Cited in highlights of a speech by Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN Special Rapporteur at the 47th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in her final report on 'Violence against Women' submitted to the CHR. See www.hindu.com/the hindu/mag/2003/04/13/stories/2003041300290400.htm

[22] F. Pickup (2001) *Ending Violence Against Women, A Challenge for Development and Humanitarian Work*, Oxford: Oxfam GB.

[23] UNFPA (2003) *Male Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: UNFPA.

[24] ICRW (2002) *Men, Masculinity and Domestic Violence in India*; and Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) Special Bulletin (2002) 'Karo Kari: For Tora, Siyahkari, Kala Kali, There is no Honour in Killing', National Seminar Report, Lahore, Pakistan.

[25] Case cited in WLUML Special Bulletin, *op. cit*.; Odhikar (2000) *Case from Women in Bangladesh: Reflections on Women and Violence,* http://www.ahrchk.net/hrsolid/mainfile.php/2001vol11no5/67/ *see also www.odhikar.org*

[26] G. Aravamudan (2001) Born To Die, Report on Rediff Special, 24 October. http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/oct/24spec.htm

[27] Adapted from 'A Framework for Understanding Partner Violence', Population Reports, *Ending Violence Against Women*, XXVII(4), December 1999.

[28] *Ibid*.

[29] UNIFEM South Asia (2003) *op. cit*.

[30] Cited in highlights of a speech by Radhika Coomaraswamy, *op. cit*.

[31] UNIFEM South Asia (2003) *op. cit*.

[32] For an example from Pakistan see: http://us.oneworld.net/article/view/68164/1/

[33] The analysis and concept was first proposed by Antonio Gramsci in the 1930s-40s. See R. Simon (1991) *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction*, endnote 10, p. 26, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

[34] In Gramscian terms, this 'commonsense' represents the uncritical and often unconscious way in which people perceive the world, cited in R. Simon (1991), *op. cit*.

[35] G. Aravamudan (2001) 'Born To Die: Report on Rediff Special', 24 October, www.rediff.com/news/2001/oct/24spec.htm

[36] F. Pickup (2001) *op. cit*. p. 232, see endnote 12 for reference.

[37] Studies from various parts of the world show that a significant percentage of women hold such beliefs (ICRW 2000 survey for India, *op. cit*.).

[38] For South Asia, see ICRW (2002) *op. cit*.; Bangladesh CARE and UNFPA (2003) 'Male Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women in Bangladesh', Dhaka.

[39] See www.mifumi.org/sitemap.htm for an example.

[40] Oxfam, in alliance with many South Asian organisations, has launched a campaign to challenge and change social attitudes and practices that affect violence against women. See www.wecanendvaw.org for more details.

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