Domestic violence and South Asian Women

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Did You Know That

- over a 45 minute period 200+ women will be victims of domestic violence
- 5 will be killed in an average 24 hour period
- one out of 3 women are victims of domestic violence
- children are also abused in more than half of all domestic violence cases
- women face this problem 10 times more than men
UNICEF studies show the problem is:
- global in nature
- has no class/ethnicity boundaries
- and occurs at all socio-economic groups
Evidence of prevalence of DV

1 in 4 South Asian families in the US experience some form of domestic violence at some point in time.

- 23 support organizations in 13 states.
- RAKSHA in Georgia reported over 75% of 450 calls received in the first year were related to domestic violence.
- NARIKA in California indicated domestic violence calls increased from 1069 in 1999 to 1299 in 2001.
- APNA GHAR in Illinois received 1,500 calls in 2000.
- SAKHI in New York has provided services to over 3,000 women in last 10 years.
Patterns of violence

- Extreme isolation
- Threats of jail or deportation
- Forced abortion
- Deprivation of economic and personal needs
- Abuse during pregnancy
“Undeniable Experiences of family violence but unwillingness to discuss issues of violence with the larger South Asian Community due to shame and honoring family and community. “Family violence” is not seen as a violence problem but one of discipline and family honor. Women are pressured to keep up “community appearances” and felt there are generally high expectations for them to keep silent about family problems.”

Asian Family Violence Report - a study conducted by Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston, MA November 2000
Challenges and Barriers faced by South Asian Women

- Isolation in foreign land with no family support.
- Strong influence of her in-laws over her husband.
- Lack of knowledge about resources available.
- Lack of knowledge on how to access resources
- Unable to confide in members of community due to lack of trust of confidentiality.
Challenges and Barriers faced by South Asian Women

- Lack of availability of culturally sensitive services from the main stream service providers.
- Fear of deportation.
- Social stigma of divorce/separation
- Losing custody of children
- Language
Internal and External Challenges and Barriers

- Lack of social support
- Cultural values and traditions
- Language
- Lack of experience in seeking assistance
- US Immigration policies
- Economic dependency
It is a Problem

- Nationally
- Locally
- In immigration population
- Culture, Race and ethnicity is not a barrier
- South Asian population in St Louis is large and face the same issues
Result of a survey of approximately 50 women of South Asian origin found:

- 56% .........................domestic violence
- 22%..........................child abuse
- 12%............................rape
- 18%.............................suicide
Society pays a price in terms of:

- **Economic**
  - loss of work hours due to absenteeism

- **Health**
  - Physical and mental Health problems
  - Depression and PTSD

- **Social impact**
  - breakdown of family unit
  - psychological well being of children
South Asian Women’s Empowerment Regional Association
SAWERAA

Mission

To serve women of South Asian descent who are victims of domestic violence through support, education and empowerment
South Asian Countries
South Asian Descent

- India
- Pakistan
- Bangla Desh
- Bhutan
- Nepal
- Sri Lanka
- Families from South Asian origin residing in other parts of the world
Services offered by SAWERAA

- 24 hour multilingual helpline
- Referrals to community resources
- Community Education and Awareness
SAWERAA

- SAWERAA means “Dawn”,
  “New Beginning”
- SAWERAA is a not for profit organization
- Department of Psychiatry of SLU fully supports this organization.