

Violence Against Women in South Asian Countries

S. Vijayanathan

*Hardy Advanced Technological Institute, Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced
Technological Education*

anusuyavijayanathan@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Purpose: In the new millennium, Women's Rights have been the focus of vision worldwide. The Charter of United Nations Endorsement of the equal rights of men and women and the subsequent International Treaties and Declarations, the Vienna Declaration in 1993 (Khan, 2001) and Declaration of Beijing in 1995 (Khan, 2001), stands in 2002 as a sharp contrast to the reality of the life for millions of women worldwide (Khan, 2001). Women's economic, social, and cultural rights continue to be neglected.

Design/methodology/approach: There are several changes which are necessary to combat violence against women. Changes are required at the level of specific countries, the United Nations, and the international community.

Findings: Many traditional social attitudes towards women persist amongst the people across these countries. Even increased access to education and information has often failed to wipe out deeply engrained concepts about women. One such idea is that a girlchild is only a "visitor" in the house where she is born and that, eventually she must go to her "real" or married home.

Practical implications: Pakistan is supposedly bound by its ratification of the International Treaties to ensure respect for women's human rights and fundamental freedom. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1992; Burney and McArthur, 1999), Pakistan is obliged to pursue "by appropriate means and without delay" a policy of eliminating discrimination against women, including any distinction made on the basis of sex, which has the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition of women as being equal to men in regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Originality value: Despite the awareness of the widespread prevalence of all types of violence against women in South Asian countries, governments appear to be unable or unwilling to put a stop to it. The HRCP reports and the government's own Commission of Inquiry for Women reported that domestic violence in Pakistan has been described as the most pervasive violation of human rights.

Keywords: *Violence Against Women; Domestic Violence; Honor Killings; Women's Mental Health; Gender Issues; Cross-Cultural Issues.*