

FCPP - Frontier Centre for Public Policy

July 12, 2010



In Brief:

- "Honour killings" represent a new type violence against women in Canada
- Toronto social workers argues few researchers appreciate the distinctions between Western patterns of abuse of women, and newer, *culturally*-driven abuse in newer immigrant communities
- As many as 15 honour killings in last eight years

Media Release - Culturally-Driven Violence Against Women: A growing problem in Canada's immigrant communities

Aruna Papp

Winnipeg: The Frontier Centre for Public Policy today released *Culturally-Driven Violence Against Women: A growing problem in Canada's immigrant communities*. The report, written by Aruna Papp, M.Ed., M.A., a Toronto-based social worker who deals with domestic violence, focuses on the growing problem of the abuse of girls and women in Canada's immigrant communities.

"Most advocates and activists for female victims of abuse shy away from challenging the immigrant communities to examine their own traditions and cultural values in explaining the violence in their homes," writes Papp.

"Even the most well-meaning advocates for female equality tends to avoid any discussion of cultural values and traditions. So it is much safer, but dishonest, to blame the abuse of women on the 'global phenomenon' of women abuse, or settlement issues, or discrimination and racism in the host society. But that ignores values that must be challenged within some immigrant communities."

Specifically, the report notes the substantive and critical differences between abuse as historically observed in Canada with newer, culturally-driven abuse. Some critical differences include:

- "Honour killings" are carried out in order to "cleanse" the family name and restore the family honour. Unlike normative western domestic violence, typically perpetrated by one intimate partner on another, honour violence is perpetrated within the context of the extended family: against girls and women by male relatives - such as fathers, fathers-in-law, brothers, brothers-in-law, husbands, and occasionally sons - often with the complicity of older females.
- Amongst other differences, *normative western abuse* is: statistically infrequent (in comparison to the rate in recent immigrant communities); stems from psychological dysfunction around intimate relations between individual adults; and is considered a cultural aberration by kinship groups and society in general.
- In contrast, *culturally-driven violence* is: statistically frequent; stems from culturally approved codes around collective family honour and shame; is condoned, and even facilitated by kinship groups and the community.
- Recent examples of "honour killings" include Amandeep Singh, 17, living in British Columbia, who was murdered in 2003 by her father because she wanted to date a non-Sikh classmate; in 2003 Amandeep Atwal, 17, was stabbed to death by her father because he did not approve of her dating; in 2006 Khatera Sadiqi and her boyfriend Feroz Mangal 23 were killed by her brother.
- In the 2007 case of Aqsa Parvez, 16, recently in the news because of the conviction of her father and her brother, the mother was quoted as saying that she felt that the father would only go as far as breaking her arms and legs not killing her.
- Since 2002, twelve murders of women have been identified as honour killings, three other murders identified as domestic violence also have the hallmarks of honour killings.

Download a copy of the *Culturally-Driven Violence Against Women: A growing problem in Canada's immigrant communities* **here**.

For more information and to arrange an interview with the study's author, media should contact:

Aruna Papp
905-985-9902
aruna.i.papp@gmail.com

Mark Milke
Research Director
Frontier Centre for Public Policy
403-230-2435
mmilke@fcpp.org



Related Items:

- **Culturally-Driven Violence Against Women: A growing problem in Canada's immigrant communities**
-