

# FEMINAR ON HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE



SUMANTA ROY  
&  
LIA LATCHFORD

# WHO WE ARE

*imkaan*®



- National organisation which provides support for black and minority ethnic and refugee (BMER) women's organisations who work around violence against women (VAWG) issues
- Work includes: strategic advocacy, training, capacity-building and research

# EXAMPLES OF IMKAAAN WORK

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- **Accredited programme of professional development training** on forced marriage and honour-based violence (recognised by OCN).
- **Policy work** e.g. CPS pilot on Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence, informed Government strategy on VAWG, DH taskforce.
- **Models of prevention** - funded by Forced Marriage Unit to pilot a peer educator programme using volunteers to raise community awareness on FM/HBV.
- **Research:** Greater London Authority commissioned Imkaan report on harmful practices on prevalence, service needs and guidance for policy makers and local authority commissioners.

# FOR CONSIDERATION



- What does “Honour” mean
- HBV and its links to other forms of violence
- Gender and Power – HBV/FM as Violence Against Women and Girls
- Media portrayal – impact and assumptions
- Who it affects, issues, needs and current responses in the UK

# HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

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An 'honour crime' or 'honour related crime' is one that is carried out in the name of so called honour.

There is no universally agreed definition of honour crime however there are some working definitions. For example,

# GLA DEFINITION



**VIOLENCE COMMITTED TO PROTECT OR DEFEND THE HONOUR OF THE FAMILY AND/OR COMMUNITY.**

**WOMEN, ESPECIALLY YOUNG WOMEN, ARE THE MOST COMMON TARGETS OFTEN WHERE THEY HAVE ACTED OUTSIDE COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES OF PERCEIVED ACCEPTABLE FEMININE/SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR. IN EXTREME CASES, THE WOMAN MAY BE KILLED.**

- As well as murder acts of violence may include physical assault, kidnap, excessive restrictions and monitoring of movements, suicide and coerced suicide, forced marriage, poisoning, abandonment, starvation, rape, forced abortions, repeat incidents of female genital mutilation, acid attacks.

# WHAT DO WE KNOW?



- A global issue - 5,000 women and girls killed (UNFPA) (this is likely to be underestimate)
- A lack of robust statistics in UK - but recent police figures suggest increase (from GLA/IMKAAN report on harmful practices, May 2011):
  - Police data indicates - 414 incidents and 228 offences of HBV and 336 incidents and 110 offences of forced marriage (Dec 2008-Apr 2010)
  - MPA report indicates an increase in recorded cases in London - from 127 in 08/09 to 237 in 09/10

# IMKAAAN RESEARCH



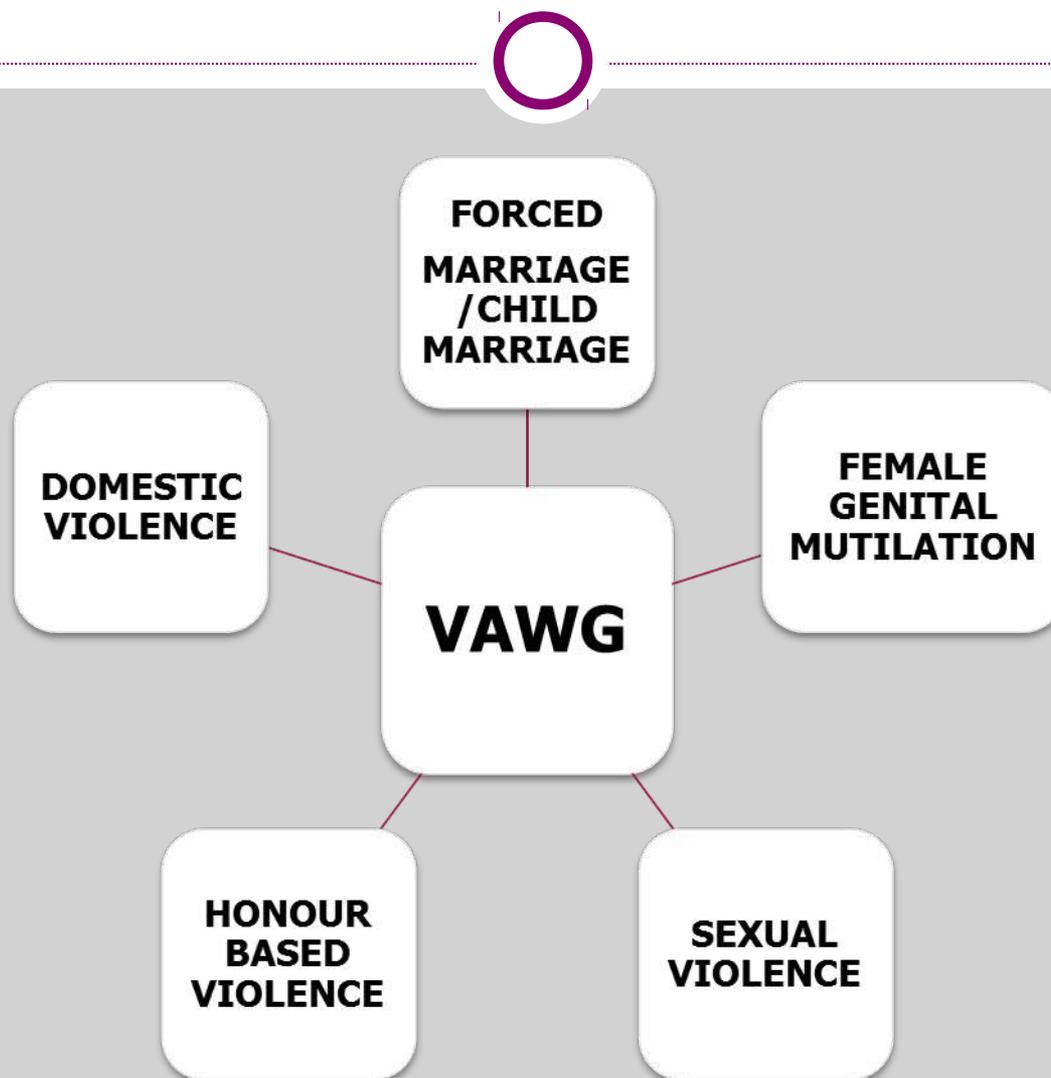
- Almost 27% of the women had lived with the abuse for 10 years or more and for two-thirds this had been their first attempt in leaving (Vital Statistics, 2010).
- A third of the women experienced attempted or threats of murder (Vital Statistics, 2010).

# USEFUL WORDS



- IZZAT (used mainly in South Asian communities) – Honour
- NAMUS (used very often in a Middle Eastern Context) – interpreted as honour as it directly relates to women’s virtue and overall sexual integrity
- CORRECTIVE RAPE (South Africa) – rape of lesbians in order to ‘cure’ / punish them
- IRD (Bedouin) – code of honour for women – linked to sexual integrity ‘protected’ by men and linked to sharaf
- SHARAF (Bedouin) - general honour code which includes responsibility for protecting IRD
- SHARAM (used mainly in South Asian communities) – shame
- DISS – (used mainly in a Western urban context) from disrespect

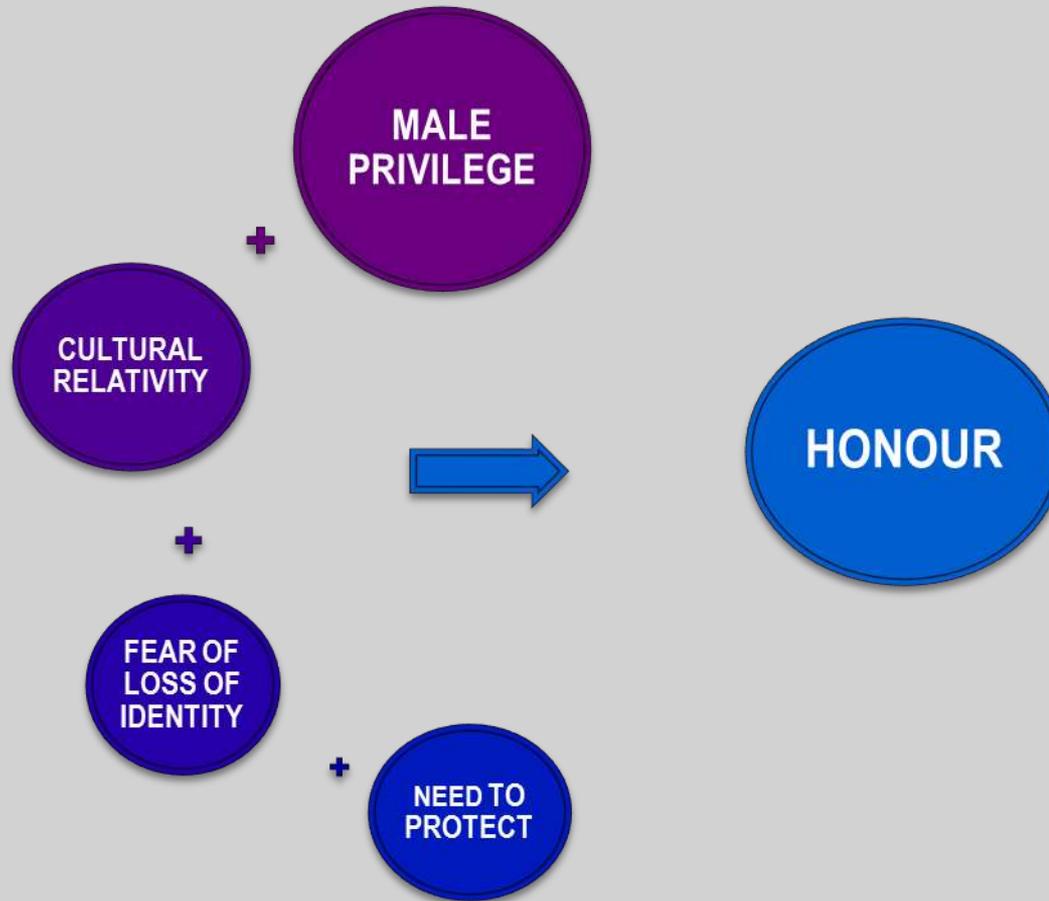
# LINKS TO VAWG



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS



- Majority of victims are women (often younger women)
- No universal definition of what constitutes *dishonourable* behaviour
- Highly motivated perpetrators (often premeditated crimes)
- Multiple perpetrators/interested parties/multiple risks
- Condoned by family/wider community members
- Male privilege: the existence of hierarchical power relationships between men and women which are used to legitimise and control the behaviour, choices and sexuality of women.



# A GENDERED ISSUE



- Women and girls disproportionately affected by all forms of HBV/forced marriage (quantitatively)
- Women's experiences of HBV/forced marriage occur within wider structures of power and control i.e. with patriarchal contexts
- Women and girls who are at risk of / who have experienced forced marriage are likely to be subjected to other forms of violence
- Men largely experience HBV/forced marriage in a different way

# MEDIA MESSAGES



- Why does a discourse on race matter - where do the following statements come from?



**Forced Marriages and 'Honour' Violence On The Rise** -The brutalisation of children and a mechanism for further Third World immigration into Britain. That's the ugly reality of forced marriages in the Asian population in Britain. And it's getting worse. South Wales Police admit that they are dealing with the largest amount of forced marriages and "honour"-based violence that they have ever seen.

# YOUNG BMER WOMEN'S VOICES *imkaan*®



*“There is a lack of understanding of HPs”*

*“There is vague knowledge in relation to FGM, FM, but people do not know the details apart from through tabloid stories and the sensationalisation of the HPs”.*

However, it was felt the *“right kind of publicity”* was needed, and that the journalists *“who want to do something about it”* would help to portray the right kind of messages in a way that present the reality but do not stigmatise communities at the same time.

# DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

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- When we begin to discuss VAWG as it affects BMER women, there is a tendency to further 'otherise' us.
- The central focus of the debate is not about women's needs, access to support and experiences and more about the imported practices of foreign, uncivilised and barbaric communities, the problem of multiculturalism and women overall as the poor, subjugated victims.
- Feeds into racist and islamophobic discourses – and assumptions that patriarchy is a non-western concept – that BMER communities are more prone to more violence and sexual abuse than others

# DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

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- BMER women often face multiple layers of disadvantage in terms of a poor service that victims of violence generally receive and because their specific needs are not taken into account.
- BMER women are generally treated as one group with similar needs as opposed to individuals from different communities with differences in language, histories and service needs.

# DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS

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- Roma communities
- Irish Traveller communities
- Middle-Eastern communities
- Turkish communities
- Kurdish communities
- Latin American communities
- South Asian communities
- Several African communities
- South East Asian communities
- Central and Eastern European

# UK RESPONSES



- Grass-roots provision – largely within the BMER sector
- Improved awareness within police and CPS – much of this led by significant failures in police practice in the cases of Banaz Mahmood and Heshu Yones
- Development of a risk assessment tool (CAADA – DASH)
- Regional commitments e.g. GLA VAWG strategy and recently commissioned Harmful Practices research
- Crown Prosecution Service – specialist leads
- Forced Marriage Unit
- Inclusion in VAWG Strategic Narrative (Nov 2010) and Action Plan (March 2011)



- Inconsistency in practice and a lack of holistic response
- Lack of recognition and funding of BMER voluntary sector services
- Harmful stereotyping leading to some groups not accessing services
- Lack of adequate work around early intervention and prevention
- Lack of community engagement
- Fragmented approach – not linked into VAWG
- Not enough identification / data collection / monitoring

# REFLECTIONS



- HBV/Forced marriage is about gender inequality
- Gender equality cannot be achieved without a meaningful shift around the management of power (including individually)
- Global gender equality cannot be achieved without addressing inequality on the grounds of race (race 'neutrality' is as problematic as gender 'neutrality')
- It is always worth asking yourself: 'What assumptions do I make about BMER women?'

# CONTACT DETAILS

*imkaan*®



Website: [www.imkaan.org.uk](http://www.imkaan.org.uk)  
Sumanta Roy: [research@imkaan.org.uk](mailto:research@imkaan.org.uk)  
Lia Latchford: [admin@imkaan.org.uk](mailto:admin@imkaan.org.uk)