

SANKAT MOCHAN SAMITI Inc.



COMMITTED TO PHYSICAL, MORAL & SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE

Dr Sunila Shrivastava, President Sankat Mochan Samiti Inc.

In 2008 Sankat Mochan Samiti Inc. (SMS) was established with a commitment to provide 'Physical, Moral and Spiritual' support to individual, Families and community in critical needs. As a part of our Social Welfare pledge we have recognized and are also working towards very daunting problems associated with the Family Violence (FV) issues in community at large and in Indian community in particular by early prevention and intervention and ultimately the eradication of family violence.

Our members have been providing family related counseling and support services to the community for more than 3 decades. In 2011 SMS signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Relationship Australia Victoria (RAV) to assist Family Violence sufferers. In 2012 SMS signed another Memorandum of Understanding with InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence as Partner Agency for the project '*CALD Communities leading the way to respectful relationships: A community engagement initiative to prevent Family violence in Victoria*' funded by FaHCSIA.

Family Violence Issues in Indian Community as perceived by SMS are:

- Feeling of reluctance by police to register complaints related to family domestic violence
- Effectiveness of Intervention orders is questionable where crime took place though Intervention Order was active
- Suitability and safety of shelter e.g. a single woman living in a four bed room house alone without any safety
- There are many FV situations where the victims are the male partners. Explicit protection to women sufferers in domestic violence has been exploited in some situations where male partners and their immediate families found totally helpless to protect themselves One should know the one sided implications of the law.
- Australian immigration law does not provide adequate protection to the spouses on student's visa when one of them is subjected to the family violence situation. The social welfare assistance is not available to migrants on students and temporary visa.

SMS actively providing the support services to sufferers of Family Violence in terms of counselling and referral services. We have got a group of professional Social Worker, Counsellor, Family Dispute Mediator, Lawyer, General Practitioner, Psychiatric, Immigration Agent and Spiritual Leader who help in various situations such as arranging for safety, providing moral support, arranging the expert appointment for legal, medical, psychiatric problem (depression etc). This 'Integrated Approach' works as the sufferer gets support all the way through. However, there are resource constraints. Therefore we plead the Royal Commission to recommend adequate funding to voluntary organisation like SMS who provide support at the grassroots level.