

Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

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1. Family Violence prevalent amongst immigrants:

In my understanding most immigrants (especially from the subcontinent) are well aware of the law that relates to children – not to beat children, not to leave them home alone, not to allow children to occupy the front seat in a car, to place the child in a child seat etc. Immigrants abide by these rules because they are aware of the consequences of breaching this law.

However, most of them are not aware of the law against family violence. Couples live and behave in the same manner as they would in their home country. Male dominance is the order in most subcontinent countries. This culture is brought to Australia.

People are unaware that one has to treat one's spouse with respect. They are just not aware about equality and equal rights exists in this part of the world. The problem is partly due to the culture and partly due to attitude.

The solution proposed to this problem is to make immigrants aware during the visa application process that it is unlawful to indulge in domestic violence and to ill treat one's spouse. This point should be highlighted in the Do's and Dont's of immigration paper work.

2. Advertisement / Shopping Coupons on Supermarket Receipts and petrol receipts

Supermarkets and petrol stations are places that every individual has to visit weekly, monthly or at least quarterly.

Research has shown that the shopping coupons on the reverse of supermarket receipts are some of the cheapest modes of advertisements.

The department of human services should place regular advertisement on the reverse of supermarket receipts and petrol receipts campaigning the prevention of family violence. The ad should also indicate that it is punishable under the law to indulge in family violence. This will increase the awareness amongst people who are ignorant.

3. Proceedings after a complaint is made

The Dept of Human Services should educate people about the complete process if a family violence is made. Women, especially from the subcontinent, are not used to dealing with the police and other legal matters. There is a huge stigma attached to making a complaint and facing the consequences. Not every woman boldly faces the society after such an incident. Millions of women from the subcontinent prefer to suffer family violence rather than face the consequences of making a formal complaint.

Currently, every website dealing with family violence promotes the ill effects of family violence, it provides the same redundant statistics (copy-pasted from each other). However, no one provides the complete picture.

In the subcontinent, a resident will never prefer to call the police for a domestic matter. Once they call the police, things would go out of their control. The police officer may not be a friendly person leading to further complications. The immigrant lives in Australia with the same mindset.

People, especially immigrants, should be shown the complete process of what happens when they call 000. Or under what circumstance should they call 000. Are there alternate numbers for them to seek help from? What help can they ask from other agencies? How to live separately? What is the definition of separation? Etc. This information would be highly beneficial for the immigrant communities.