



Jatinder Kaur Director

www.jkdiversityconsultants.com.au

30 May 2015

Submission to Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria)

Background to author:

I am a qualified Social Worker with Masters Degree in Social Work (MSW) from University of Queensland (UQ) (2013) and Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) degree from UQ in 2001. I have over 13 years experiences post qualification working in: child protection, family support, domestic violence, policy and research roles. I am the Director of JK Diversity Consultants which specialises in working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. As a Consultant I have prepared Psycho Social Assessment reports for: Child Protection Court proceedings, Legal Aid Qld, Migration Review Tribunal and Local Magistrates Court. I am a current member of the Australian Association of Social Workers (Membership number: 431229) and also volunteer on the Queensland AASW Branch Management Committee (<http://www.aasw.asn.au/queensland/branch-management-committee-bmc>).

As a Social worker from Punjabi-Sikh heritage I am writing this submission as an Independent advocate and as someone who is concerned about the high rates of family violence amongst Indian-Punjabi community in Victoria and Australia. This submission will draw on my direct experience: various community work, community consultation, and clinical counselling work and court reports with clients of Indian-Punjabi heritage. In addition I interviewed victims of family violence who have given permission to share their case studies which will be de-identified in this submission.

I have made all the inquiries I believe are necessary and appropriate and to my knowledge there have not been any relevant matters omitted from this submission, except as otherwise specifically stated in this submission. I believe the facts within my knowledge that have been stated in this report to be true. The opinions I have expressed in this report are independent and impartial. I have complied with the requirements of the following professional codes of conduct of the Australian Association of Social Workers code of Conduct and Ethics.

Question 17: Are there specific cultural, social, economic, geographical or other factors in particular groups and communities in Victoria which tend to make family violence more likely to occur or to exacerbate its effects? If so what are they?

This submission will focus only on the Indian and Punjabi community and how family violence occurs within this community group.

Demographics:

In Victoria, the ABS Census 2011 data showed that there were 111,785 Indian born persons in Victoria, with larger concentrations in local government areas of: Casey (9.2%); Greater Dandenong (9.0%); Wyndham (7.2%); Brimbank (6.9%) and Monash (6.6%). The Indian born community is relatively young, with 25.1% aged 25 years and below, 55.3% were aged 26-44 years (median age was 30years). The religious affiliation of the Indian born population included: 44.6% Hindu, 21.1% Sikhs, 18.3% western Catholic, 3.1% Islam, and 2.4% no religion. Two fifths (41.4%) held Australian citizenship¹.

¹ <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/stories/documents/2013/Censusfactsheetscommunityprofiles/02-india.pdf>

Research

The research on the prevalence of Domestic and Family violence (DFV) against women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds is unclear and drawing conclusions on the nature and extent of D/FV in such communities is difficult (Morgan & Chadwick 2009). To my knowledge there has been no published Australian research which has explored family violence issues amongst Indian community.

In 2009, the Australian Government introduced 'The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010-2022)' which recognises that women from CALD backgrounds experience number of challenges and barriers when dealing with domestic and family violence issues. The research literature has identified that women from CALD & Refugee backgrounds are at higher risk and vulnerability of experiencing domestic and family violence when residing in developed western countries. The following factors have been identified:

- cultural difference,
- gender roles,
- familism, shame and collectivism combined with factors related to migration experience, social isolation, low-socioeconomic status, racism, inadequate access/knowledge of support services (Rees & Pease, 2006).

Women from CALD backgrounds are generally less likely than other groups of women to report cases of DFV, the factors which may influence this include:

- Limited availability of appropriate translator/interpreter services
- Access to support services
- Limited support networks
- Reluctance to confide in others
- Social isolation
- Lack of awareness about the Australian law
- Immigration status/visa
- Continued abuse from the immediate family and in-laws family
- Cultural and/or Religious shame and Religious beliefs about divorce.

These factors will be explored in more detail:

Indian traditional cultural values

Indian men raised in the traditional cultural values and will be taught about 'Patriarchal values', whereby Indian men are seen and assume the role of 'head of the family' or 'breadwinner' of the family and is shown respect and honour according to their seniority by their wife and children/grandchildren. Indian family structure is based on the 'traditional collectivist' culture, whereby the male members of family will undertake employment and the women will traditionally remain at home (house wife) and raise the children. Indian families still hold onto these practices when migrating to western countries. As part of the collective culture there is belief and practice that 'family issues' are to remain within 'family domain' and are not discussed outside the family unit or community.

Gender roles

Indian society still places 'men' and 'boys' at higher pecking order within the family structure. Their needs will be prioritised and showered more affection and attention in comparison to girls/women. There is still preference to have boys than girls and female infanticide is still common practice despite legislation criminalising gender selection abortions in India. Indian women are raised to be 'subservient' to men and be obedient, show respect. It is expected after marriage that they be able to cook, clean and serve their husband and his family (in-laws). Majority of Indian parents will train their girls to be raised within this 'cultural value', the challenge arises when the girls adopt western cultural values and assert their independence and demand gender equality within household or relationship. Indian families still hold onto these practices when migrating to western countries.

Marriage custom and dowry

The cultural norm is that majority of Indian young people will marry within their own cultural community group and usually through arranged marriages or a matchmaker. Majority of Indian young people do not marry outside of their culture or ethnic group or from different race or religion. Marriage ceremonies can include dowry, whereby the girl's parents are required to pay the boys family through: money, gold/jewelry, clothes and household appliances. Those families who are wealthy may even give a car or land (dependent on their financial circumstances). The dowry system and practice is still very prevalent in contemporary India and is practiced overseas by Indian communities/Diaspora.

Familism and Shame

The family unit is very important within Indian culture and there is preference that you will form connection with your relatives. There is tendency to keep issues that may arise within the family and accessing external social welfare services is not encouraged or promoted. Families who do not conform to traditional Indian cultural values, beliefs or practices are then ostracised, shunned and shamed by various community members/leaders who want to maintain the 'status quo'. For example a single parent or divorcee is 'looked down upon' and rumours usually circulate that "she was of bad character" that is why she is separated without any proof.

Religious beliefs

Within Indian community there is diversity of religions: Hindu, Sikh, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hari Krishan, Jain and Yogi Practices. I can only comment on Sikh religion (my faith) as I am not comfortable to speak about other religious beliefs and how this impacts on prevalence of family violence.

Sikh Religion & Gender Equality

The Sikh religion promotes gender equality and this was one of the first teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji (founder of Sikhism in 1499) he stated that²:

² http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikh_women

From woman, man is born;

*within woman, man is conceived; to woman he is engaged and married.
Woman becomes his friend; through woman, the future generations come.
When his woman dies, he seeks another woman; to woman he is bound.*

So why call her bad? From her, kings are born.

From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all.

Guru Nanak, Raag Aasaa Mehal 1, Page 473

Sikh women are given equal status within the religion to perform religious duties, prayers and preach the Sikh faith. The Sikh Guru's actively promoted and spoke out against social practices within Indian culture, for example: Sati (widow burning), female infanticide, wearing the veil (which was imposed by Mugal Muslim rulers) and the dowry system. Sikhs are encouraged to marry and the marriage ceremony is called 'Anand Karaj' which means the 'ceremony of happiness'³. The Sikh religious teachings emphasizes that the family life is very important and being married is necessary part of this. Many Sikh weddings are arranged marriages and even if the couple have suggested their marriage the families will still be very involved. The Sikh religious Code of Conduct prescribes that a 'Sikh must not marry a non-Sikh without consideration for caste or sub caste'.

Unfortunately, there are many 'Sikhs' who do not practice and adopt the religious code of conduct and follow practices which are inconsistent with Sikh religious beliefs and practices.

Migration stress and settlement to Australia

The Indian community population residing in Victoria and Australia has increased significantly; this was partly due to the influx of 'Indian students'. Indian students are the second largest group of International students studying at a tertiary level in Australia. From 2004 to 2009 the number of Indians studying in Australia rose from 30,000 to 97,000 with 45,000 of these living in Melbourne, 32,000 in Adelaide and the remainder shared between Sydney, Brisbane and Perth⁴. Majority of these Indian students came from rural areas of India and had taken significant loans/debts to pay for their education/admission and struggled financially in studying whilst securing employment. Majority of Indian students were not given any orientation or awareness of 'living in Australia'. For example many of Indian students were not aware of 'Family violence laws' and access basic social welfare services. Additional stress factors for Indian students included limited family and social support system if they arrived to Australia as a couple or family unit with young children.

³ http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Anand_Karaj

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence_against_Indians_in_Australia_controversy

Prevalence of family violence amongst Indian communities

Victoria Police⁵ has released the following statistics, rate per 100,000; the data does not identify different cultural demographics of family violence victims:

Region - LGA	Rates of Family Violence Per 100,00
Casey	3752
Hume	2909
Geelong	2769
Frankston	2368
Whittlesea	2359
Campaspe	4295
Central Goldfields	3345
Latrobe	2767
Mildura	2568
Swan Hill	2492

Community advocates believe that prevalence of family violence is in higher rates amongst Indian community, at least 15 family violence-related deaths in two years have been documented in Victoria's Indian community, including two horrific incidents in recent months, according to an Indian women's rights advocate (Dr Manjula O Conner)⁶. There have been some high profile cases reported in media which were of Indian/Punjabi origin:

- In 2012, Mr Avjit Singh stabbed and killed his wife Sargun Raji and then poured oil over himself and died in house fire. This case has been before Victorian coronial inquest⁷ and the ruling can be accessed via the court⁸.
- In January 2015, a current murder trial case reported in the media of Mr Parmjit Singh who confessed to killing his wife Nikita Chawla⁹.

Without clear data from Victoria Police, Courts, hospitals, Domestic violence services, it is very difficult to gauge the prevalence rates of family violence issues amongst Indian communities.

The following case studies are actual real cases and their real names have not been used. The case studies are used to highlight the complexity of addressing family violence issues within Indian community/Diaspora living in Australia. There is a need for Governments and service providers to develop more culturally responsive system to address and preventing family violence within Indian community.

⁵ <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/family-violence-rates-higher-in-victorias-country-areas-20150303-13th4x.html>

⁶ <http://www.smh.com.au/national/advocate-documents-family-violence-deaths-in-victorias-indian-community-20150305-13w4vv.html>

⁷ <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/sargun-rajis-killing-by-estranged-husband-avjit-singh-too-well-planned-to-be-crime-of-passion-court-hears-20141126-11u8wx.html>

⁸ <http://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/home/orders+and+rulings/rulings+-+inquest+into+the+death+of+sargun+ragi+and+avijit+singh>

⁹ <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/law-order/accused-husband-parminder-singhs-chilling-000-call-to-report-wifes-death/story-fni0fee2-1227330270587>

Case study A:

'Sonia Kaur' is from [REDACTED] family and grew up in Melbourne (western born) and came from a large family. In [REDACTED], she had an arranged marriage with Mr Singh ([REDACTED] born and raised). Within few months of marriage there few incidents whereby he started to complain about her parents 'interfering' in their personal affairs. He asked her to make choice between him and her parents. Sonia cut herself 'off' from her family despite living 10 minutes from her parents to keep her husband happy. Mr Singh was well known and respected in the community. The family violence first started with verbal arguments over money/finances, Sonia was the main breadwinner and she been educated in Australia and was able to earn more money than Mr Singh. Mr Singh started to control the finances and without her knowledge or consent used her money to 'provide money' (approximate [REDACTED] to his family in [REDACTED]). The situation became worse when his [REDACTED] migrated to Australia' and started meddling in their marriage and 'encouraged Mr Singh to control his wife'. When Sonia questioned him, he became physically violent and commenced assaulting her. She was married to him for [REDACTED] and has [REDACTED] daughters. During their marriage, he continued to be violent and was abusive to her in front of his daughters and other relatives, yet no family member intervened. Police was called on several occasions (by the neighbours) and she was encouraged to make statement. Sonia wanted to "preserve her marriage" for her daughters sake and denied the allegations of family violence and lied about how she got her injuries. The Police officers in their paperwork always stated 'suspected family violence'. Sonia tried to get help from community leaders, they would 'blame her' for the issues as they were more supportive of Mr Singh and his version of events. It was only when she got an email from him 'saying that I am separating from you', did she make safety plan and then went to the police and finally confessed to the years of abuse. The Police assisted her with getting an Intervention order, during this period the Department of Human services (Child Protection) also got involved as the children accidentally told their teacher of an incident involving their father hitting their mother. As Sonia had taken an intervention order she was only given a warning and no further action was taken. Mr Singh froze their joint bank account so she had to ask her parents for money. She had to go to bank and try to change bank accounts so that he could no longer access her money. She sought help from her parents and they have been supporting her since the separation. Mr Singh went back to [REDACTED] and had not made any contact to see his daughters. Since separating, Sonia has been diagnosed with depression and was on medication and see's Psychiatrist and Psychologist. Her daughters were traumatised and required intensive therapy with a child psychologist. The [REDACTED] daughter would have bad dreams, behavioural issues and younger daughter had developmental delay in her speech and emotions. Sonia was western born educated [REDACTED] woman and could speak English fluently. Yet she always felt ashamed of 'seeking help' and was determined to 'preserve her marriage'. She feels ostracised by the community and there are places in Melbourne where she can't go as she feels that community members judge her and have labelled her 'characterless' and 'bad wife/mother'. She wants to help other [REDACTED] women now and no longer remain silent about family violence.

Case Study B: The following case study was part recent ABC 7.30 report 15 May 2015:

Saanvi (Indian National–Hindu) came close to becoming another murder statistic. Her family in India answered an ad in a local newspaper calling for potential wives for an Indian man with permanent Australian residency. Saanvi was chosen, the couple married in India and her family paid the agreed dowry. But when she arrived in Australia, her husband demanded her family pay more. She refused. "Then he put so many restrictions on me like not to take a bath, not to make food, not to come out of your room," she said. "It's like a prison because for the first three months I didn't get permission to come from my house, from my room. "He tried to control me in every way he can. Then he started beating me." Fearful of the shame that would be brought upon her and her family if she left her husband and unsure of the laws and customs in Australia, Saanvi decided to stay in the home. It was only when he threatened to kill her that she fled.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-15/melbournes-indian-community-calls-for-end-to-domestic-violence/6474228>

Case Study C:

Aman ([REDACTED]) came to Australia with her husband Mr Singh in [REDACTED] on student visa. After [REDACTED] months of marriage they came to Australia. Aman was International student and her husband was dependant, he came to Australia with to help her financially. He couldn't find any job in Melbourne so they moved to [REDACTED]. They experienced a lot of stress and problems at home, lots of arguments almost every day. Mr Singh got a job but he didn't come home for [REDACTED] days, he took all the money and all the debit cards with him. She had no money and nothing to eat, she was pregnant at that time, then he came back home and forced her to abort the baby. After few months they came back to Melbourne and she started working in [REDACTED] because she had to pay her college fees. She got pregnant again but he continued to have fights and arguments with her. The family violence included: harassing her mentally and physically. At that time during one incident Mr Singh slapped her and she fell down and miscarried the baby. She called the police, they gave him a warning "To not to do those things again". Mr Singh promised to not to do this again. The stress in their marriage was around money, finances, cost of living, paying rent and limited social support system. Mr Singh started spending more time with his [REDACTED] and ignoring Aman. Aman fell pregnant [REDACTED] she had a baby [REDACTED] she had to leave job to take care of the baby as her husband was not helping to caring for the baby. During this time, Mr Singh's [REDACTED] started coming home regularly and Aman was required to cook food for all of them along side taking care of her baby. She was frustrated because of all this, and this led to more arguments. The [REDACTED] also started to have arguments with her and expected her to continue serving them. One day her husband made a plan to send Aman back to [REDACTED] and her husband and his [REDACTED] called the police and complained about Aman stating that she "was trying to suicide and tried to kill her baby as well". The Police and Ambulance came and they took Aman to mental hospital in [REDACTED], they admitted her to psychiatric ward because Mr Singh and his [REDACTED] told them that She was "mentally upset". Aman had to stay in the hospital for [REDACTED] days. The Child Protection department became involved and they didn't allow her to see her baby. During this time her baby remained in her father's care. After [REDACTED] days the Doctors discharged her, they didn't allow her to go back home so she had to stay at one of her relative's house. Since that incident Aman and her baby are still staying with relatives. Mr Singh told her "that he got his own visa (permanent resident visa) and he wants to live separately. He asked for a divorce but she has refused because she is "worried about her [REDACTED]'s future". Mr Singh does not have contact with his [REDACTED] and does not pay any child support or assistance. Aman had approached me to assist her with advice on what she should do and is struggling to remain living in Australia as she no longer as valid visa. If she does study she does not have child care facility as she is temporary resident (not eligible for child care). She has sought help from Migration agent and various DV support services but is frustrated that there is limited support available for her.

Case Study D:

Jasvinder ([REDACTED]) had an arranged marriage with devout [REDACTED] man 'Mr Singh' in [REDACTED] and there were two conditions placed on her: that she was study in Australia and also become baptised [REDACTED] and adopt religious practice [REDACTED]. Jasvinder was not from wealthy family and her parents were only able to afford a modest wedding and her in-laws paid for large portion of wedding expense. Jasvinder parents were also not very religious or practising [REDACTED]. After the marriage her In-laws told her that she "was not allowed to have any contact with her parents" as they were not 'religious' and her in-laws did not want to eat food cooked from non-baptised [REDACTED] family. The family violence commenced [REDACTED] months into the marriage after Jasvinder confessed to having a pre-marital relationship. She was forced to write her confession on paper which was distributed to the community (in their village in [REDACTED]). She was dishonoured in front of the community and her parents, the public humiliation led to her father cutting off all ties with his daughter Jasvinder. She arrived in Australia in [REDACTED], she studied [REDACTED]. Her in-laws controlled her financially and made her work because they made her feel enslaved to them as they took 'responsibility' of her expenses [REDACTED].

Her Husband and the in laws would manipulate, control and severely oppress Jasvinder in her basic life skills. She was not given any help with adjusting to the Australian lifestyle. Jasvinder had [REDACTED], first child born in [REDACTED], second [REDACTED] born in [REDACTED]. Jasvinder was the main breadwinner as she had completed her studies in Australia and was able to get job in [REDACTED], during the day, her Husband would take care of the kids and Jasvinder would work. However on days when Jasvinder did not have to work, she was told she did not deserve to stay in the house without having earned something that day. She was then left outside of the house during the night, to wonder the streets for up to 8hours. She had to resign from her stable job in Melbourne and move to [REDACTED] because her husband wanted to move there. Whilst living in [REDACTED], the family violence became frequent through physical abuse was frequent and the neighbours reported suspicious noises. The Police got involved during two incidents, the physical abuse lasted for a minimum of 2 hours and included: regular slaps to various parts on her body, being hit with implements, hair being pulled. Mr Singh would hit her to the point where she would have swollen face and bruised. After physically beating her, he would then rape her (sexual violence). Her body ached from physical beating, yet he would force himself on her. Jasvinder work colleagues suspected that she was victim of family violence and they could see her with bruises, swollen body parts. There were times when Jasvinder did [REDACTED] shifts to appease the In-laws family and avoid the abuse. She juggled full time work, studying and caring for [REDACTED]. She was not allowed to spend any money on herself without being questioned and made felt guilty. She would earn approximately [REDACTED] per fortnightly. The Credit cards and bank accounts were under her name but her husband and in laws had full control over the finances. All important letters would be sent [REDACTED] to Mr Singh and she was not informed how to manage any of her accounts or any basic life skills. She was isolated from the [REDACTED] as she was made to work during the day and Husband would work during the night and the in laws would take care of the children. Her father-in law was seen as 'community elder' and commanded respect, he also beat his wife (Jasvinder grew up in household where he had observed his mother being beaten in front of him). The father in-law had also beaten Jasvinder on few occasions, where he pushed, slapped and kicked and then pulled her hair. Jasvinder never reported these incidents to Police or anyone in the community; she was too ashamed and afraid of the consequences. Mr Singh would constantly harass and intimidate her about peckish things and blow them out of proportion, causing conflict and creating untrue stories. His

insecurity ruined her reputation. She was told “she had rights in this country and she was intentionally made felt that she had no options and could not make any friends”. In [REDACTED] she got permanent residency and because she was the main applicant, the rest of the family members who had applied also received their PR. They then bought a house and the loan was approved based on her income [REDACTED]. She was the breadwinner of the family. Although the abuse was related to the trust issues and mental instability of the husband, not being permanent residents in Australia was the family’s main concern however, the abuse worsened from then onwards. In [REDACTED] whilst working at [REDACTED], her Husband started taking control in her job and argued and abused her because she [REDACTED] at the workplace [REDACTED]. This was a part of her job (she had to quit due to this event). She was thrown out of the house which led her to calling the police. This was the second incident of the two where the police became involved. She was taken to the Police station and questioned. She confessed to the family violence and her husband abusive behaviour. She had bruises however; the police did not take a medical report. She was then dropped home and they then took the husband into the station to question. An inclusive Intervention order was formalised and included: no financial, physical and emotional abuse - although still living together, the husband took care of himself. The Police also gave her a ‘multiculturalism number’ on which she called however, no one picked up. She separated after that incident, the in-laws still wanted to remain in control and convinced her to allow them to take boys back to [REDACTED]. She was never aware that she was eligible to access Centrelink benefits and social welfare supports. Deciding to finally leave, she was then given the ultimatum that if she wanted to leave the house she had to sign the ‘consent papers’ which gave the right for the father to take the children to [REDACTED]. She signed them out of pressure and because she was out of a job. She could not take in the option to go to a women Refuge (as she brain-washed into believe that this would be against her [REDACTED] religion). She did not know of other options of assistance. Her husband was manipulative and is currently seeking divorce and full custody of the children. Jasvinder is currently seeking assistance from Legal Aid and social welfare service to get access to her [REDACTED]. Her in-laws have told [REDACTED] “your mother is dead”. She has changed her physical appearance and identity (she is no longer a [REDACTED]). She also feels that she cannot show her face in [REDACTED] as people will judge her “being bad wife and mother”. Her in-laws have created rumours about her and have labelled her ‘characterless’, they are already looking for another bride for their son. Jasvinder has been diagnosed with depression and see’s a Psychologist and Psychiatrist. Due to her trauma she has been unable to find work and is struggling to access social welfare support and navigate the complex system in trying to get custody/access to [REDACTED] her property rights.

Majority of the victims of family violence are women, however there needs to be acknowledgment that men can also be victims of family violence. As a consultant I have prepared a psycho-social report for male victim of family violence who was of Punjabi-Sikh heritage. Due to confidentiality I am unable to outline his situation and circumstance as they were unique. However should the Inquiry Panel seek further information this can be arranged in ‘closed session’.

Question 18:**1. What barriers prevent people in particular groups and communities in Victoria from engaging with or benefiting from family violence services?**

In the 4 case studies outlined above the following barriers existed for women from Indian heritage:

- Limited knowledge about their rights in Australia and Family Violence legislation
- Reluctance to confide in others and keep the abuse 'hidden'
- Shame and honour issues within Indian community
- Immigration status/visa, many of the Indian women were temporary residents and not eligible/entitled to social welfare/legal aid services
- Social isolation and kept away from their parents/family/friends
- Limited financial resources – not allowed to manage own money
- Limited knowledge of Family violence support services
- Limited support networks/friends
- Cultural beliefs about divorce and separation
- Religious beliefs about divorce and shame
- Depression and 'battered women syndrome' (underlying mental illness not allow women to seek help or assistance)

2. How can the family violence system be improved to reflect the diversity of people's experiences?

For many of the Indian women, they did not feel comfortable to be able to make disclosures to Police officers, despite there being female officers present.

- Victoria Police could explore increasing Police Cultural Liaison officers from Indian heritage, I am aware of few Sikh Police officers however the feedback has been that they also struggle to raise awareness and educate the Indian community about family violence issues within Victoria.

For many of the Indian women they did not feel comfortable to speak to professionals employed in Family Violence services system/Child Protection/Health professionals.

- Victoria Government explores recruitment strategy to increase number of allied health professionals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD).
- For example, I am social worker who can speak Punjabi fluently, to my knowledge there are very few/limited Social workers in Victoria who can deliver counselling/case management support in Punjabi language and also have in-depth understanding of the cultural, religious, barriers faced by Indian women experiencing family violence.



Jatinder Kaur Director

www.jkdiversityconsultants.com.au

Question 19: How can responses to family violence in these groups and communities be improved? What approaches have been shown to be most effective?

This submission has focused only on the Indian community and how family violence issues are impacting the Indian women.

I would like to outline the following recommendations or considerations to the Royal Commission:

Recommendations:

1. Improve the data collection on family violence incidents to include a breakdown of demographics of victims of family violence to include:
 - cultural or community group
 - language spoken
 - religion
 - Immigration status (visa type, permanent resident, Australian citizen).
2. Develop mandatory training for frontline workers (Police, Allied health, Medical professionals, Lawyers, women's shelters) on 'dealing with migrant and refugee communities in family violence situation'. Training to cover issues around barriers to access services, culturally responsive service delivery and support for victims of DFV.
3. Develop community education campaign (Prevention strategy) for Indian community which targets different Indian groups (Hindu, Sikh) and is translated and delivered in Hindi/Punjabi and other Indian dialects (as required) in places of worship (Hindu Temples and Gurdwaras) and community centres.
4. Development of Men's Behaviour offender program targeting Indian men which focus on various cultural, religious, gender values and beliefs around family violence.
5. Australian Government and Indian consulate to develop an 'Information pack' about 'Your rights and responsibilities in Australia' (includes Family violence information) for newly arrived Indian nationals (students/fiancé/457 skilled workers) who do not have access to 'settlement support' or any orientation to social welfare system.
6. Community capacity development within Indian community, to train and up-skill Indian professionals (Police, Allied health, Lawyers, Doctors, and Teachers) who could be identified as 'champions' local person to assist Indian female victims in being able to access support services and referral to family violence service system.

If you require any further information please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Jatinder Kaur, Social Worker and Director of JK Diversity Consultants