



ACHRH

Empowering Communities
through Knowledge & Research

ACHRH Newsletter

April 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

Hello to all our friends

International Women's Day is celebrated annually on March 8. Originally conceived as a way to remember the struggles of women in the workforce, it is now about acknowledging the challenges and achievements of women past, present and future.

In this newsletter, you can read about the International Women's Day forum, including some poetry written especially for the event.

One of the very special guests for the event was Mr Godara. Many of you will know he lost his own daughter Deepshikha Godara Benipal to the scourge of domestic violence and traveled from India specifically to attend the forum.

Mr Godara also addressed the IWD function at the Victorian Parliament. The function was hosted by Shadow Minister for Multicultural affairs Ms Inge Pulich MP, on 10 March 2015. The Leader of opposition Mr Mathew Guy attended as the guest of the honour.

Mr Godara made a plea to the leader of the opposition to bring in laws to stop dowry demands by legislating against dowry demands in Australia.

The Opposition leader and the Shadow Minister agreed to help.



**Manjula
O'Connor**

International Women's Day

You can read about the forum, and some of the beautiful poetry presented, in the following pages.



Lecture report

Gauri Kapoor recently attended a lecture by Prof Kelsey Hegarty, an expert on the issue of intimate partner violence. You can read about this below.

Did You Know...

In countries as varied as Afghanistan and Nepal, Eritrea and Turkmenistan, IWD is an official holiday?

Community Forum on Prevention of Domestic Violence by Indian-Australian community

By Tanvi Mor

THEME: "HE FOR SHE"

For the 2015 International Women's Day celebrated on Sunday, the 8th March, The Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health organised a community forum on 'Prevention of Domestic Violence by Indian- Australian community. The restaurant 'Spirit of India' Preston Victoria graciously hosted the event. ACHRH was pleased to collaborate with a number of community organizations who came forward to support the cause. Among them were Wyndham Gymkhana Club led by Mr. Sudhir Juneja, Mr Bhakta Das from Iskcon Temple and Ms Nayana Bhandari from Oorja Foundation Craigieburn. 65 people attended the event from diverse backgrounds and communities. We were particularly proud of the participation and efforts made by male community members to come forward to spread the message.

The forum theme was inspired by the UNWOMEN theme 'HE FOR SHE'.

The highlight of the forum was the tribute paid to Late Ms Deepshikha Godara Beniwal and Late Ms Nikita Chawla with one-minute silence. Both young women were victims of serious domestic violence. We were moved and honoured to have Deepshikha's father, Mr. Ashok Kumar Godara among us. He flew especially from Delhi to attend this event. He wanted to raise awareness on the massive dangers of ignoring domestic violence where the victim can end up paying with their life. Domestic violence and gender inequality is unacceptable in any culture,

in any society.

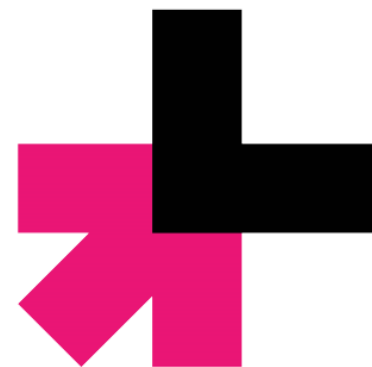
Pandit Bhakta Das ji from ISKCON graced the presence by reciting verse from Gita.

We were honoured to have Speaker of Victorian Parliament, the Hon Telmo Languiller, as the guest of honour. He spoke about challenges faced by women

not only in Australia but all over the world by particularly reflecting on his experience from his work with the multicultural communities here in Australia. He also mentioned his own personal experience in the country of

his origin Uruguay, South America where domestic violence is pretty severe. He also stood by the theme of this year's women's day 'He or She' that aims to bring gender equality in the world.

Next the IWD forum session, guided by Prof Bob Pease PhD, Professor and Chair of Social Work at Deakin University in Australia. His main research interests include men's violence against women, cross-cultural and global perspectives on men and masculinities, critical social work theory and practice and pedagogies for undoing privilege. He invited the men in the audience to come forward and sit in a circle. He produced a big roll of paper with a timeline drawn on it representing 5000 years. He then asked the men for participation where each member was to narrate briefly a story they had heard about any



HeForShe

UN Women Solidarity Movement
for Gender Equality



Speaker Telmo Languiller



atrocities against women. The stories could be a personal reflection, from the media, from their own life experience or from history dating back hundreds or thousands of years. This event was then to be marked on the timeline on the long sheet of paper that had been spread on the floor. Here Suresh Vallath alluded to the practice of Sati dating back to many hundreds of years. Sati was culturally enforced suicide of widows practiced in some parts of India dating back thousand or so years. Others spoke about more recent stories of violence against women and rapes. This part of the forum was deep and seriously moving with anecdotes coming to surface that were recent, mid distance from 1970s and ancient. This deep self-reflection by male participants was observed by the women who were asked to stand back in a semicircle and watch.

This experience was seen as a powerful way to engage men actively in the Family Violence debate by many who were present at the ACHRH Forum

The next part was a session of "Mutual Cultural Respect" or MCR designed by ACHRH and the copyright is held by ACHRH. The aim of

the MCR discussion session was to understand culture and life in Australia as compared to other countries from where the

migrants originate. The participants shared thoughts and raised awareness by discussing case histories exemplifying problems entailing gender based behaviours and issues faced by migrant in Australia and some solutions.

Each table got an opportunity to discuss stories on Domestic Violence, Dowry and teenage issues and then each table choose a leader to present their thoughts for panel discussion. Dr Manjula O'Connor guided the panel discussion. We were extremely happy at the active participation of men and women across the table, hearing their views and efforts to resolve issues that can cause problems in marriages and families. Each and every participant freely expressed his and her views and concerns.

Mr Godara spoke passionately about the violence that can be caused by unsatisfied in-laws against the new bride when the husband or the

in-laws believe they did not receive enough dowry. He urged there was a need for action in Australia. This aspect of gender inequality exists in many ethnic cultures of Australia and something can be done to eradicate this expression of gender inequality by making laws against the dowry demands by the groom or the bride's family

Feedback forms that were collected by Clare Keating evaluated the session. She also sat with individuals who had suggestions and points to make. The discussions will form the basis of document that will be submitted to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The forum received a poetic finish by three women volunteers who narrated self-written poems in support of women's empowerment which was much appreciated by the audience (the poetry is reproduced below). Aviti Sharma narrated a poem about the strength of women titled 'Mein Aurat Hun'. Tanvi Mor said few poetic lines on dowry titled 'Gharonde Ki Chhidiya' and Nayana Bhandari spoke about challenges faced by womanhood titled, 'I had an escape from that History'. Dr Ashima Soni spoke and encouraged women to not give up hope or feel stigmatised by the societal pressures after separation but keep fighting for a better, more empowered life.

Finally the forum was addressed by VMC commissioner Chin Tan and MP Dee Ryall

An excellent job was done by the MC Dr Sonia Cheema and Vote of Thanks by Molina Asthana.

Thanks to Spirit of India for providing delicious lunch which was enjoyed by everyone. The sumptuous Buffet Lunch served as an informal platform of further conversations and interactions which ended the forum with a smile and hope for a better future.

ACHRH is grateful to Victorian Multicultural Commission for their support.



Mai ek Aurat hu*(I am a Woman)***Utne jeene ke layaak hu; Jitna laayak hai tu!***(Who has an equal right to live as you – Men)***Kehne ko 'Devi' mai hu; Par poochne pe majboor hu***(You give me the status of a Goddess, but I am compelled to ask)***Kyu dete ho devi ka darza – Jab bech dete ho mujhe chukane ko karza?***(Why do you give me the Goddess status – when you sell my flesh for your own gains?)***Mai ek Aurat hu***(I am a Woman)***Utne jeene ke layaak hu; Jitna laayak hai tu!***(Who has an equal right to live as you – Men)***Khud to mai apna 'Varr' bhi nahi chun sakti – Kyunki isse tumhari 'Izzat' hai ghat-ti?***(I can't even choose a life partner for myself – because that is against your honour)***Par tab kaha jata hai 'Sammaan' – Jab loot lete hai mujhe****'Haiwaan'?***(But where are your concerns – When I am reaped by monsters)***Aur kyu meri izzat hai itni 'sasti' – Ki mai bazaar mein hu 'bikti'?***(And why is my respect so cheap – that my body and soul is sold in markets)***Mai ek Aurat hu***(I am a Woman)***Utne jeene ke layaak hu; Jitna laayak hai tu!***(Who has an equal right to live as you – Men)***Do paise ki nahi hu 'Cheez' – Jab jalate ho mujhe toh hoti hai 'Tees'***(I am not a saleable object – when you burn me alive, it hurts)***Kyu shauk ke liye chadathe ho meri bali – Kya mujhe jeene ka 'Hakk' nahi?***(Why do you kill me for your fun – Don't I have the right to live?)***Mai ek Aurat hu***(I am a Woman)***Utne jeene ke layaak hu; Jitna laayak hai tu!***(Who has an equal right to live as you – Men)***Meri hi kookh se janam lekar – Mujhe hi deta hai darr-darr ki thokar***(I've given birth to you – and you don't consider providing me shelter)***Kaisa 'Ehsaan-Faramosh' hai tu – Mujhe kehta hai ki 'Aurat' hu mai***(How selfish it is of you – to say I am 'just' a woman)***Kya mujhe 'Janam' देने का तुझमे 'Dumm' hai?***(Can you ever give birth to me?)***Mai ek Aurat hu***(I am a Woman)***Utne jeene ke layaak hu; Jitna laayak hai tu!***(Who has an equal right to live as you – Men)***Maas ki bani hu mai, lohe ki nahi - Par tere atyachaaro ka koi ant nahi***(I am human and not made of iron – but your torture has no end)***Bardasht ki 'Hadd' jab paar hai ho jaati – Toh khud hi chad jaati hu 'Faasi'***(When I can't tolerate it any more – I hang myself to death)***Kab tak khati rahu mai 'Faasi' – Kyu tumhe yeh baat samajh nahi aati?***(But for how long should I keep sacrificing my life – Why can't you understand a simple thing)***Ki mai ek Aurat hu***(That I am a Woman)***Utne jeene ke laayak hu; Jitna laayak hai tu!***(Who has an equal right to live as you – Men)***Mai ek Aurat hu - Mai ek Aurat hu!***(I am a Woman – I am a Woman)***Us Ghorande Ki Chiddiya***(The Little Bird of That Nest)***Eklauti mein us gharonde ki chiddiya thi, apne maiyya babul ki dulari thi***(I was the only ladybird of that nest; I was the darling child of my parents)***Na samjhi duniya ki kaisi rasme thi, es ghar ki punji, kisi aur ke hisse kyon jaani thi***(Didn't understand these old rituals as to why the girl from this house was sent to another one)***Bachpan beeta mera gudiya ka ghar banate banate***(I had spent my childhood while creating my doll's house)***Chahat thi apna ghar sajaane ki ye ghar ghar khelte khelte***(Playing that game all the way, I had a desire to beautify my own house one day)***Haldi ki rasam aayi, mili duaayen apno se***(When the D day came, lots of blessings were showered)***Aarmaan sajaliye maine tere sang jeene ke***(I was already vouching on the dreams of living with you)***Phoolon se saja tha mera ghar, chamchamata hua wo jhoomar***(My house was decorated with flowers with a bright chandelier)***Gungunati rahi chupke se, jhoom rahi thi idhar udhar***(I was way too happy and was jumping around with joy)***Aa hi gaya wo din jab dil mei khushi aur nami dono thi***(The day had come when the heart was both happy and sad)***Saajan ke ghar jane ki shayad mujhe bhi jaldi thi***(But guess, I was, too, in a hurry to move to your house)***Meri ki har zid puri, Baabul ne kiye kitne jatan***(My father went out of the way and completed my every wish)***Bittiya ko na hau koi kami, soch kar yahi, lutaya apna sara rattan***(He spent all his wealth thinking his daughter shouldn't feel inadequate)***Kehte hai kanyadaan hoti hai sabse badi khushi***(Heard Give-Away for daughter is the biggest happiness for any parents)***Phir kyon nikalte hai ma beti ke ank se bade bade moti***(Then why the mother and daughter cry so profusely)***Dil dehalta hai Baabul ka bhi, har us khadi***(Even the father's heart is sinking every that minute)***Par sambhaalta hai khudh ko, jab tak na nikle beti ki doli***(But he manages his emotions till the time he bids goodbye to his daughter)***Jaate jaate samjhaya meri maiyya ne, bana le us ghar ko bhi apna***(My mother also made me understand to make the other home as mine)***Aur jab thaama tune haath mera, bhulaya maine mera angna***(Just when you did hold my hand, I completely forgot my parent's home)***Rakha jab teri chaukhat pe wo sehma sa kadam***(The moment I stepped into your house with that numbness)***Kyon yaad aaya mujhe mera bachpan**

(Why it made me remember my childhood days)

Anjaano ke beech, dhoondh rahi thi nazre

(My eyes were wandering around among those strangers)

Kahan gum gaye mere apne, ye kahan aa gaye hum

(Where were my own folks and why I was there?)

Raat ke ye taare kuch kyon bolte nahi

(Why didn't these stars speak?)

Bin apno ke baawri si tham na jaye zindagi

(I was afraid; hope my life doesn't stop there without my family being around)

Dil se dil ke taar nahi the abhi joode

(We could not even bond our hearts together)

Shuru hau gaye daulat ke naam se wo silsile

(There started the series in the name of money and dowry)

Socha tha maa ne meri us roz, zindagi meri khushiyon se hai nayi saji

(The day my mother thought how my new life would be full of happiness)

Nibahana hai mujhe har tarah se rishta, ye soch soch mein kyon sab seh gayi

(So far I happen to bear all of it, thinking I had to put every effort to make the relationship work)

Tune jab kiya tha pehli baar jikr paise ka, Kyon nahi jawaab diya maine teri nasamjhi ka

(Why didn't I object at your stupidity when you referred about the money, the very first time?)

Kyon aisi fidrat teri ban chali, laalach hi tera raag ban gayi

(Why it got into your head that greed happened to be the only song you started singing)

Roopiye se kab tak karega tu mol mera, ye pooch pooch mein haar gayi

(I got exhausted asking how long you would keep on weighing me to money)

Soch rahi thi gumsum si bethi mein aansuon ki majhdhaar mei

(I was thinking sitting loaded with eyes full of tears)

Ghut ghut ke kyon jiyun har din ki takraar mei

(Why should I live by getting suffocated with this everyday tussle?)

Hairat hai, tujhe koi haya nahi, kaayar maange teri kabhi rukti nahi

(I am dumbstruck that you do not have any shame, and that your demands never stop)

Shaadi ka wajoot tere liye kuch maaiyne rakhta nahi

(All the more, you do not believe in the sanity of marriage)

Bunne aayi thi rishte pyar se, nahi taula tha maine samaan

(I came to bond well with love, never weighed the things I was getting along with me)

Kama sakti hun charr paise apne dum pe, aakhir kyon sahun ye apmaan

(Why should I bear this insult when I can very much earn money on my own?)

Kyon sahun mein zulm dahej ke naam ka

(Why should I bear the torture in your name?)

Kyon dun hisaab mein apne ladki hone ka

(Why should I be giving justification for being a girl?)

Hak hai mera meri saanson pe

(I have that every right on my breath)

Fir kyon rahun ban ke panchi tere pinjre ka

(Then why should I become the prisoner bird of your cage)

Written by: Tanvi Mor (<https://www.facebook.com/tanvimor>)
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I had an escape from that history!

Written By - Nayana Bhandari

I had an escape from that history of burning pyres,
Where I was burnt like a wooden log before
the melting of my worldly desires.....

Where I was dissolved thousand times on the
name of relations...

My womanhood was challenged all the times
on the name of religion, custom and
tradition.....

I had an escape from that history!

I had an escape from razor sharps
whose blades pierce into my soul then skin,
When again merely to merge in society word,
I lost my hair which are silk like thin..

When white has been mentioned whole
palette to me.....

N I just have all around deep emptiness to
see!

I believe I had an escape from that history!

And unfortunately I am living the same
present,

Where acid attacks, dowry deaths, rape,
mutilations are predictable then my next day
life,

Where I am getting killed as foetus for my
family delight.

Where I am teased in class, harassed on
street and tortured at house....

Where 24/7 I am getting judged, x-rayed and
killed by spouse...

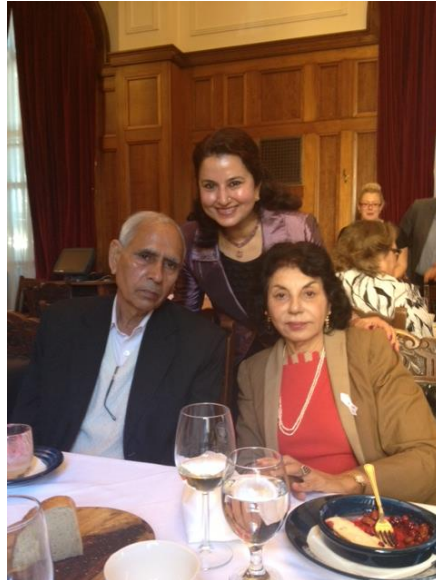
And thinking about my future!

And thinking about my future,

I am already hearing last rites sounds....

As, I am waiting to get extinct with rise in
"missing women count"

As, I am waiting to get extinct with rise in
"missing women count ".....



Mr Godara on IWD with Amita Gill and Manjula



Mr Godara addressed the IWD at Liberal Party function



Mr Godara at Parliament House with Hanife Bushby and Manjula

Domestic Violence: A hidden epidemic

By Gauri Kapoor

Professor Kelsey Hegarty recently delivered an interesting and thought provoking speech on the topic of “Domestic Violence: A hidden epidemic”. Prof Hegarty is an academic General Practitioner and an expert on the issue of intimate partner violence. She is also currently Chair of the Governance Group of the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria. She is credited with having developed the ‘Composite Abuse Scale’ which is the first validated method of measuring levels of domestic violence.

Prof Hegarty runs a research project at Melbourne University and at the Royal Women’s Hospital which focuses on training health practitioners for interventions to respond to and/or prevent violence against women. She is glad that the issue of domestic violence has become a strong “topic du jour” thanks to public advocates such as Rosie Batty and the work of organisations such as ‘Our Watch’. Prof Hegarty pointed out that combating this problem should be a top priority for the Government as it is estimated that domestic violence costs the Australian economy around \$13.1 billion per year. She hopes that new innovative solutions to DV can be developed and that more funding is allocated for multi-disciplinary measures as a result of the Royal Commission into DV.



In her lecture, Prof Hegarty stated that domestic violence (DV) ought not to be seen as a problem affecting only heterosexual couples. Violence in same sex relationships, elder abuse, child abuse and sibling abuse are also widely prevalent in the community. Disabled people are particularly vulnerable. DV victims are more likely to be female than male. The psychological impact of violence within families is profound.



Professor Kelsey Hegarty

Chronic pain, anxiety, depression and other non-physical symptoms are commonplace. Children often suffer from bedwetting and problems at school.

Perpetrators of domestic violence purposefully isolate their victims from supportive family members and friends. It is therefore important that community networks or ‘outsiders’ such as Health Practitioners, police and NGO workers make effective interventions to prevent further abuse. DV occurs in families across all the different socio-economic groups and in all different cultures. It is unclear whether the rate of DV has increased due to increasing willingness of victims to report to police or whether there has been an actual rise in the number of incidents taking place.

Social media is as an emerging area of concern. People are using phone apps, Instagram and Facebook etc to stalk others as well as humiliate them in public. Law enforcement agencies and Internet providers are increasingly seeking to curtail the activities of criminals, terrorist suspects etc on the Internet. It is important that DV perpetrators are subject to similar restrictions when they try to use social media as a weapon against their victims.

Prof Hegarty believes there has been also been a rise in the number of DV cases that involve males applying ‘reproductive pressure’. This could mean continued intimidation and threats against a woman to terminate a pregnancy or, on the other side of the spectrum, repeated pressure to bear a child.

Although most people recognise that DV is a crime, there are still many men and women who believe that women don’t tell the truth about DV. They find it hard to understand why women don’t just leave violent relationships. In Prof Hegarty’s view, women tend to minimise and not exaggerate their experience of DV. It is not easy for many of them to walk away from relationships when there are children involved and when there are financial reasons to stay. It is also often the case that DV victims were in love with DV perpetrators before they became violent. Prof Hegarty explained that women often have mixed

emotions as a result. Women are often harassed even long after separating from their partner.

In her speech, Prof Hegarty expressed her dismay at the growing rate of DV in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups as well as in the indigenous community. In some cultures, it is considered vital for men and not women to be heads of the household. Prof Hegarty argued that the rate of DV in patriarchal cultures is much higher than ones that are less patriarchal. She showed the audience a 'power and control' wheel in which one part is 'male privilege'.

Prof Hegarty also stressed the importance of training health practitioners to better understand DV. She praised the UK Government

for making DV education mandatory for all GPs. In the UK, GPs are taught to make safety assessments when they see patients who are suffering from DV. Disturbingly some doctors in the UK are reported to have been stalked by male offenders. Many DV offenders have a pattern of criminal behaviour. There is much debate in Australia as to whether there ought to be mandatory reporting in place when doctors suspect their patient is suffering from severe family violence. Prof Hegarty believes that female patients do not mind talking to male doctors as long as their communication skills are good.

Together with Dr Laura Tarzia, Prof Hegarty has developed a new I-DECIDE website, <http://www.idecide.org.au/> which they hope will help many women who are in need of guidance.



Support Us

ACHRH is an NGO and as such relies heavily and extensively on the mission partners and the wider community for support. If you would like to support us and get involved in any way then please do contact us, either via the website:

<http://www.achrh.org/>

Or Facebook:



find us on
Facebook

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

-
- **POLICE IN EMERGENCY -- 000**
 - **YOUR GP -- they are helpful, easy to reach, they will refer you to the right place.**
 - **NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE -- 1800 RESPECT**
 - **INTOUCH MULTICULTURAL CENTER AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE -- 1800 755 988**
 - **WOMENS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS SERVICE (WDVCS) 24 Hour state wide line 1800 015 188**
 - **MEN'S 24 HOUR REFERRAL SERVICE 1800 065 973 (FREE CALL VICTORIA ONLY)**
 - **VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN'S COALITION 03 9654 1243**
virwc@virwc.org.au, www.virwc.org.au
 - **WOMEN'S INFORMATION & REFERRAL AGENCY (WIRE) 03 9348 9416**
inforequests@wire.org.au
 - **DR MANJULA O'CONNOR, FOUNDING DIRECTOR ACHRH 03 9654 5271**
manjula@achrh.org
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WHY GET HELP?

- ❖ Domestic Violence damages our culture
- ❖ Domestic violence breaks our homes
- ❖ Domestic Violence causes:
 - Anxiety,
 - Depression,
 - Suicide,
 - Homicide in women, men and children

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ❖ Support those who may be victims
- ❖ Encourage victims to seek help and become survivors
- ❖ Encourage perpetrators to seek help
- ❖ DO NOT BE SILENT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

[*Say No to Domestic Violence*]