



Honour or Dishonour?

The hideous stoning of a 19-year old woman in Afghanistan, the 11-year old girl in Bangladesh who was thrown acid in her face, and the 23-year old woman in Delhi who was gang-raped by six men in a bus. One does philosophize what went wrong with humanity, and especially, why many of these perpetrators are still not held accountable for their vile crimes. These horrendous crimes illustrate the extensive violence that is perpetuated against women worldwide, by those who seek to impose their backward values and traditions.

One in three women worldwide have been victim of sexual or physical violence, and in times of calamity, it is especially the women who suffer most due to their subordinate position in their families and communities. Honour based violence is the most ancient practice of gender violence, and is committed in a wide variety of forms against women throughout our world. Unfortunately, Despite the efforts of many courageous women and men, still 8000 women are killed in name of honour each year.

The complexity of this dilemma is not that there isn't sufficient extensive support and protection provided to women through government-policies or NGO's, but rather that these so-called 'honour-codes' are collectively sustained through covert transnational networks, which silently utilize these horrible practices, in order to preserve the 'honour' of their family and tribe: honour is essentially embodied in the body and 'worthy' behaviour of a woman. Moreover, one must note that these attacks are not solely committed in underdeveloped countries which lack a resilient civil society, as the intensifying globalization process provides more opportunities for these patriarchal actors to perpetrate their crimes around the world.

In order to raise awareness for the chased and oppressed women worldwide, the Think Tank Gender @Lighthouse headed by Ms Kirsten van den Hul, organized in partnership with Ad Pacem a thought-provoking event on Gender & Honour Based Violence.

The unique combination of these great women driven by justice and humanity, Ms Shirin Musa – founder and director of Femmes for Freedom, Dr Nazand Begikhani – Senior Research Fellow Bristol University, and Ms Kirsten van den Hul – The Change Agent, empowered us to do our utmost best- each in our own capacity- to counter discrimination and violence against women worldwide, and raise more awareness for these women in our direct communities, in an attempt to liberate them from their oppressors.

In fact, a grassroots approach by those caught in patriarchal societies, supported and empowered by the revolutionary transnational network, will prevail in the struggle to liberate women worldwide.

As Elie Wiesel said: "silence helps the oppressor, never the oppressed"

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