

# **Violence against women in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Sudan, Senegal and Yemen**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

It is misleading and simplistic to generalise about violence against women in ‘Islamic countries’ or ‘Islamic societies’. Most of the countries discussed in this report have sizeable non-Muslim minorities and are not homogeneous in terms of religion or ethnicity. More importantly, ‘Islamic’ and ‘Muslim’ are not synonymous; ‘Islamicization’, the process of creating an Islamic society, is the goal propounded by Islamic fundamentalists; a society may be predominantly Muslim, but not necessarily accept or practise Sharia law.

Focusing primarily on domestic violence and prostitution, as has been done here, illuminates only one facet of gender violence. Gender based violence is perpetrated at many different levels, i.e. at the family, community and state levels, and in many different forms. For example, in the context of war, or of the political and/or military repression of particular ethnic or national groups, or political movements, systematic rape of women by agents of the state has frequently been used as a tool of oppression and persecution. Furthermore, some forms of gender based violence, such as forced sterilisation, may be perpetrated under the guise of ‘development’. Gender based violence at family and community levels may be tacitly approved, or even actively promoted through state laws and institutions, as well as by prevailing patriarchal social norms. Even where statutes exist criminalising particular forms of violence against women, such as rape and domestic violence, these may be largely ineffectual and barely enforced, largely because much violence against women takes place in the domestic sphere, where customary, personal or family laws often prevail, and state institutions are reluctant to intervene. (Schuler, 1992; Pisa and El-Bushra, 1992.)

Whilst the physical dimension of gender violence may be the most readily identifiable, psychological abuse, the deprivation of resources for physical and psychological needs, and the commodification of women, through trafficking and prostitution, are also important dimensions of gender violence. (Schuler, 1992.)

Gender based violence thus takes many different forms and there may be distinctive patterns or manifestations of gender violence associated with particular cultures or regions. However, gender violence is present in all societies; it is a structural phenomenon ‘embedded in the context of cultural, socio-economic and political power relations...[which] reduce women to economic and emotional dependency, the property of some male protector. Societies organised around gendered, hierarchical power relations give legitimacy to violence against women.’ (Schuler, 1992.)

This report reflects the information available at the Institute of Development Studies, Brighton and from NGOs, mainly in the UK. Thus the focus is very much on Bangladesh and Pakistan as there is very little material available on the other countries. This may reflect the differing priorities of women’s movements and organisations, societal norms on what are appropriate issues around which to organise and the varying political and social space available to women in different contexts to organise around issues of violence. Also, the availability of material on particular countries may be influenced by the importance which women’s organisations in different contexts attach to the international dissemination of information, in general, and to the UK in particular, or by the differing access of those organisations to international information networks. Clearly, a more accurate sense of the social and political context of gender violence and of women’s responses to it, could only be achieved by direct discussions with activists in locally based women’s organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> This report was researched and compiled by Rachel Marcus for BRIDGE.

The report is structured as follows. For Bangladesh and Pakistan, the social and political context of gender violence in each country is discussed. Then, specific forms of violence and issues relating to prostitution, where information is available, are examined for each of these countries. Finally, the responses to violence against women of various women's organisations and other NGOs and political groups are discussed. All the information relating to Egypt, Sudan, Senegal and Yemen is presented together, since so little is available.

Almost no information was available for any of the countries covered, on the trafficking of women. This is an area where very little documentation exists. A general account of the causes of, and trends in, the trafficking of women, as well as the conditions faced by trafficked women, can be found in van der Vleuten (1991).

## 2 BANGLADESH<sup>2</sup>

This section is divided into four parts. Firstly, an overview is given of the social context of gender violence in Bangladesh; secondly there is a discussion of the scale and social dimensions of particular forms of violence; thirdly, a brief analysis is provided of the legal mechanisms designed to protect women, and their operation; and fourthly, some details of the actions of women's organisations against violence, with suggestions for further contacts, are provided.

### 1. Overview

Jahan (1988) notes the ambiguity surrounding the question of violence against women in Bangladeshi society. On the one hand, violence is held 'in repugnance' and may provoke outrage. For example, a man who sprayed acid on and killed his new wife, on grounds of her inadequate dowry, was hacked to death by villagers in Northern Bangladesh (Reuter Newswire, 8.6.1992). On the other hand, violence against women is accepted, tolerated and 'in certain prescribed forms and given contexts' it is legitimated. Jahan relates this to the fact that 'gender inequality, leading to gender violence, is deeply embedded in the Bangladeshi social structure; all Bangladeshi social institutions permit, even encourage the demonstration of unequal power relations between the sexes'. (Jahan, 1988: 200.)

The legitimation of male violence, especially battering, allows it to be seen (by women as well as men), as a deserved response to female transgression of male demands or controls. Thus, women feel shame and guilt - as well as anger in some cases - which militates against the reporting of battering. Murder, acid throwing and abduction may suffer less from stigma in reporting. Other factors contributing to the under-reporting of violence against women include: the lack of awareness among women of their legal rights; the perception that their cases will be treated with derision and/or ignored by the police; and the fear that making charges will compound problems with their husband and his kin.

Rape probably evokes the greatest feelings of shame among women, and thus is most likely to be under-reported. Nevertheless, Jahan (1988) suggests that the rise in reported crime against women in Bangladesh may reflect a rise in the reporting of rape, but also an increase in the incidence of assaults on women and in the proportion of female victims of violent crimes (Jahan, 1988: 203). She notes that in 1980, 12.4 percent of the victims of all reported violent crime were female, whereas by 1984, the

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2 Few studies of the scale and nature of violence against women in Bangladesh have been carried out, and therefore much of this section is based on an analysis of three studies discussed in Jahan (1988). These are: Akanda and Shamin's (1983) study of violence leading to murder; the (1985) analysis by UBINIG (Unnayan Bihalper Niti Nirdhaoni Gobeshona - Policy Research for Development Alternatives) of the coverage of rape in two daily newspapers, from 1981 to 1984; and Islam and Begum's study of male violence reported in one newspaper in 1975-84. Jahan also presents evidence from Women for Women, a Dhaka-based research and study group, who have sponsored a research project on violence against women. This evidence is supported by other studies of rural Bangladesh which discuss wife-beating and/or rape, i.e: Hartmann and Boyce (1983); Kabeer (1989); White (1992). The formal studies analyse only reported violence against women, while recognising that its occurrence is much more widespread than the reported figures would suggest.

proportion had risen to 32.7 percent. Kondkher (1990) and Jahan (1988) also note a rise in the availability of weapons such as guns and acid, and also the increased portrayal of violence in the mass media in imported films, as factors which may be associated with the rise in violent crimes, including those against women.

## 2. The Scale and Social Dimensions of Crimes Against Women

### 2.1 Battering of women.

The battering of women within the household appears to be widespread throughout Bangladesh. Roy (1992) notes from a study carried out by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Jamalpur, that most women who are beaten suffer from beatings every week which are severe enough to 'leave marks on the body and cause pain for several days'. Such beatings may be related to dowry, to the perceived failure of a woman, particularly a wife, to fulfil her household duties, or to be 'properly' humble and obedient; or they may serve as an outlet for male frustration. Numerous commentators have remarked on beating as a 'punishment' for failing to do the husband's bidding.<sup>3</sup> Akanda and Shamin (1983:14) cite the case of Roushan Ara in Rangpur who was beaten to death for failing to stitch two buttons onto her husband's shirt; Gardener (1991) describes women in Sylhet being beaten for infractions such as the evening meal not being ready on time, or tasting it whilst cooking. Hartmann and Boyce (1983:89) cite the case of a woman whose husband beat her 'because the chickens stole a few grains of rice', in a village in Rajshahi Division, North-West Bangladesh.

The perceived 'legitimacy' of men beating women is further compounded by the absolute poverty and powerlessness of most of the rural population of Bangladesh. Kabeer (1989) suggests that many men vent their own frustration at their poverty and inability to fulfil their role as the male provider, according to gender based norms, by battering their wives. In the words of one of the Katni villagers in Hartmann and Boyce's study (1983: 89), 'When my husband's stomach is empty, he beats me, but when it's full, there is peace'. Kabeer (1989) notes the seasonality of such beatings - they increased during *kartik*, the hungry season in August-October, and before the main harvest in November-December. None of these studies explicitly discuss whether children are subject to similar violence, and if so, whether the extent and severity of such beatings differs by gender.

White (1992), studying a village in Faridpur district, notes that the escalation of dowry demands over the last 40 years has created another manifestation of violence against women. Dowry demands among Muslims and Christians in Bangladesh are a relatively new phenomenon (Rozario, 1992) and while the scale of demands may not have reached that of urban India (Kishwar and Vanita, 1984), White notes a tendency for men to explicitly claim that the inadequate dowry they have received gives them a

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<sup>3</sup> Light beating of a wife by a husband is sanctioned in the Quran, though Sisters in Islam (1991) point out that this is a codification of early Arabian custom and is permissive rather than mandatory. If a wife still refuses to do the husband's bidding, he should not strike her again. Sisters in Islam are a Malaysian women's organisation, formed in 1988, who are engaged in consciousness raising and educational work on issues relating to the status of women in Islam and Muslim family laws. Their booklet, **Are Muslim Men Allowed to Beat Their Wives?**, was published in 1991, in response to attempts in certain quarters of the political establishment to dilute or veto new legislation on Domestic violence, on the grounds that it should not contradict Muslim teachings. The details of the booklet are given in the bibliography.

right to abuse their wives. In the words of one man, 'I'll take out the difference in beating' (cited in White, 1992).

While a certain level of beating may be tolerated and accepted as one of the gender dimensions of the social order in Bangladesh, severe brutality may provoke community outrage. Hartmann and Boyce (1983:78-9) note a case of angry villagers tying up and assaulting a man who had beaten his wife too brutally. White (1992:137) mentions that in Faridpur district, a *bichar* (a community hearing) might take place, in such cases. It is rare that the battering of women within the household is reported to the police. However, recently a judge in Rangpur has been fined 5,000 taka (\$125) for wife-beating (Reuter Newswire, 11.3.1993).

## **2.2 Murder**

The murder of women by their husbands and in-laws is associated with both the escalation of dowry demands, and with the more general harassment and severe beating of women. It is possible that, as in India, women are murdered if their dowries are too small; if the woman is disliked by her husband or his kin; if her household skills are perceived to be lacking; or even if her skin is too dark. Often such murders are arranged to look like accidents, or suicides, with bodies being suspended to resemble a hanging, insecticides being poured down the dead woman's throat or burning being passed off as a cooking accident. Like beating, the murder of women appears to be carried out by husbands and in-laws, in distinction to sexual violence, which is more often carried out, or at least reported to have been carried out, by unknown men. However, various reports suggest an increase in fatal mugging, acid-throwing and other attacks by outsiders (Khondker, 1990; Akanda and Shamin, 1984).

Jahan (1988) and Hartmann and Boyce (1983) suggest that many women are in fact driven to suicide by constant beating, harassment and the feeling that there is no escape.

## **2.3 Acid-throwing and Mugging**

There is little firm evidence on these forms of violence against women. Reports to the police of acid-throwing remain few in number - there were 27 such attacks on women recorded in 1985 (Khondker, 1990). It has been suggested that women's increased presence in the public sphere, transgressing the traditional boundaries of purdah, is a source of outrage among some men and may therefore be leading to an increase of attacks of this kind on women (Anne Marie Goetz, personal communication).

## **2.4 Abduction**

Khondker (1990:11) cites 519 reported abductions of women or girls in Bangladesh in 1985, and 509 in 1986. While some of these women and girls may be forced into prostitution, Khan and Arefeen (1989) show that this is fairly uncommon (see below). Women may also be illegally trafficked to Pakistan, India and Middle Eastern countries to become domestic servants and are vulnerable to rape.

## **2.5 Rape**

Khondker (1990:11) notes 516 rape cases reported to the police in Bangladesh in 1985, and 525 in 1986. Police records estimate that 75 percent of these cases involved women aged over 15, but Islam and Begum (1985), cited in Jahan (1988)

suggest that 35 percent of reported rapes involve minor girls, i.e. those under 15. The social ostracization of raped women is much noted - women are widely believed to be responsible for their own rape, perhaps due to prevailing ideas about women's powerful sexuality, and men's inability to control themselves. In law, it is considered that for a husband to force sexual intercourse on his wife constitutes rape in Bangladesh (Bhuiyan, 1986 - see below).

### 3. Legal Provisions on Violence Against Women

There are two main laws relating to violence against women in Bangladesh: The Cruelty to Women (Deterrent Punishment) Ordinance (1983) and The Dowry Prohibition Act (1980). There are also articles in the Penal Code relating to rape. The Cruelty to Women Ordinance outlaws the kidnapping and abduction of women and acid throwing attacks on women, and mandates the death penalty or life imprisonment for causing the death of a rape victim. The same provisions apply to a husband and his family under the Dowry Prohibition Act, for the murder or attempted murder of a woman for dowry.

Article 376 of the Penal Code mandates two years imprisonment, a fine, or both, for the rape of a woman by her husband. Article 342, however, requires that a woman undergo a medical examination immediately after rape, which in practice, minimizes the possibility of a conviction being made. In any legal case, including cases of violence against women, if the complainant is absent, the case can be dismissed. In practice this discriminates against women who may be intimidated by their husbands or in-laws into staying away from court. In practice, convictions for rape and other violent crimes against women are rarely made, because women are unaware of their legal rights, because legal institutions are male-dominated and often inaccessible or unsympathetic to women, because of the difficulties of proving the case, because of legal loopholes, and because of an underlying undervaluation of women (Bhuiyan 1986:50).

### 4. Response of Women's Organisations in Bangladesh to Violence Against Women

The main strategies employed by women's organisations in Bangladesh, to combat violence against women, have been: publicizing and organising around particular cases; legal awareness work; and conscientization of both women and men on issues of gender violence. Nari Pokkho, a small autonomous women's group, and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, have both always been vocal on issues of gender-based violence. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, formally linked to the Communist party, provides legal assistance to women, has organised demonstrations around dowry cases, and has set up some battered women's shelters. Kabeer (1991) suggests that Mahila Parishad's links with the Communist Party may prevent it giving independent significance to women's oppression. The Government of Bangladesh's Women's Affairs Directorate has also established some hostels for battered and threatened women, and offers counselling services.<sup>4</sup> However, Jahan (1983) questions the relevance of battered women's shelters in the Bangladeshi context, when for most women, both psychologically and materially, leaving the 'security' of their marital home is impossible. She calls rather for greater community mobilisation around gender violence, whilst recognising that this may be difficult to achieve.

Bangladesh Jatiyo Mahila Ainjibi Samity - the National Association of Women Lawyers - has organised legal awareness classes aiming to reach 50 million women,

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<sup>4</sup> More information on this is available from Mrs Mehrunnessa at the Department of Women's Affairs, or from NORAD, who fund the shelters (Anne Marie Goetz, personal communication).



and some men (Huda, 1986). One of the primary foci of Ain-o-Shalish Kendro, a women-oriented legal issues and aid group formed in 1989, is domestic violence (Anne Marie Goetz, personal communication). Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), a large rural development NGO, whose grassroots membership consists of 70 percent women, has decided to set up women's legal aid centres in all its area development offices.<sup>5</sup> This arises from a recent study carried out for BRAC on domestic violence, which has not yet been translated into English, but which documents the severity of marital violence faced by women (Roy, 1992). Grassroots NGOs such as Nijera Kori, Saptagram and Proshika (Kabeer, 1991) are active in conscientizing women and men on issues of violence, and Grameen Bank organisers may also be working in this area.

## 5. Prostitution

One study on prostitution in Bangladesh is available (Khan and Arefeen, 1989). This focuses on prostitution in Natinagar, one of the four red light districts of Dhaka, and in Anandabazar, one of the three such districts in Narayanganj. It is estimated that there are approximately 2000 prostitutes in each of these two areas. The main types of prostitution are: in brothels, where women are organised under *sardanis* (madams); street-walking; in hotels, especially in Dhaka; and in rented houses. In addition, *baijis* (dancing girls), and escorts, who may or may not engage in sexual intercourse, are active in these districts. Khan and Arefeen (1989) found that, contrary to popular opinion, the majority of prostitutes were not abducted and had chosen the profession, perceiving it to have major economic advantages and also feeling that they had no alternative skills with which to secure a livelihood.

Generally, the prostitutes in the study were well-nourished but many suffered from untreated sexually transmitted diseases. Rates of contraceptive usage were relatively high, but only a small percentage of women used condoms, thus increasing their exposure to HIV infection. Prostitution without a licence is illegal and carries a sentence of two years imprisonment or a fine, although in practice seven days is the normal sentence. Prostitutes are vulnerable to exploitation by pimps or *sardanis* and by muscle-men (*mantans*) who organise protection.

The general state and societal perception of prostitutes is of socially deviant women, who need to be rehabilitated into society (Guhathakurta, 1985). The rehabilitation of prostitutes through corrective institutions is seen as necessary. Such institutions 'place such women in the protective custody of the state until they have been taught how to conform more closely to the social norms of poor but virtuous womanhood' (Kabeer, 1991:130). IWRAW (1993) and Kabeer (1991) report that such institutions are much disliked by prostitutes because of the infringement of their rights to go out or see relatives and friends. Shamin (1988) notes that prostitution is not confined to urban areas, but forms one of a range of survival strategies of some poor rural women. For urban prostitutes, by contrast, prostitution tends to constitute their sole means of livelihood.

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<sup>5</sup> BRAC may be collaborating with Ain-o-Shalish Kendro to develop these centres, but this is unconfirmed.

### 3 PAKISTAN

#### 1. Violence Against Women and The Law.

Issues relating to violence against women in Pakistan are intimately bound up with the legal system, and more specifically with the Hudood Ordinances, which set out different legal statuses for women and men (Akber, 1992). The other major issue is that of family honour, which is felt to be violated if there is any suspicion that a woman has had sexual intercourse with a man she is not married to. Violated male honour may result in the murder of the 'offending' woman, in some cases, purely on the suspicion of illicit sexual relations (Iqbal, 1990) (see below).

The part of the Hudood Ordinances with the most severe implications for women is the Zina Ordinance, concerning *zina*, the crime of adultery and fornication. This crime carries the maximum penalty (*hadd*) of 100 lashes in public and stoning to death, and the lesser *tazir* penalty of between four and 10 years in prison, 30 lashes and a fine, if there is not enough evidence to give the *hadd* punishment. *Hadd* has never been carried out in Pakistan, but *tazir* is frequently given (War Against Rape, 1991). A *hadd* conviction relies on the evidence of four reliable adult Muslim men (Patel, 1991). Women's testimony is discounted in rape cases.

The implications of the Zina Ordinance in rape cases are discussed below. In general, the Zina Ordinance presupposes a woman's guilt (Iqbal, 1990), and thus provides a tool which can be used to intimidate and control women.

Men who want to get rid of their wives often accuse them of *zina*. Eighty percent of the people arrested and imprisoned for *zina* are women (Akber, 1992). Of these, 40-80 percent are reported to have been sexually assaulted in prison, but are unable to complain since this would be regarded as further evidence of their guilt, or would lay them open to new charges of *zina* (Akber, 1992; Harrison, 1989).

Sumar and Nadvi (1988: 39) note that accusations of *zina* are used as a weapon to control young people and to prevent them contracting marriages with the people they choose. The sentence of flogging given to a 15 year old girl who had eloped with her intended husband, after her parents filed a case against them under the Zina Ordinance, sparked off mass protests and the birth of the Women's Action Forum.

Divorced women, whose divorce has not been registered with the local Union Council, but who are either ignorant of the necessity to do so, or assume that it has been done by their former husband, are also subject to accusations of *zina* and imprisonment, should they remarry. The documentary film 'Who Will Cast the First Stone ?'<sup>6</sup> documents one such case, where the couple were sentenced to death, though later acquitted due to mass protest action.

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6 This film was made by Sabiha Sumar in 1988 (see contact addresses in Pakistan).

## 2. Rape

Unconsenting sexual intercourse is termed *zina-bil-jabr*, and carries a *tazir* penalty for the perpetrator of 25 years in prison and 30 lashes; there is also a more severe *hadd* punishment, but, as noted, this has never been carried out. However these penalties offer little protection to women since, in practice, a woman who has been raped and makes an accusation of *zina-bil-jabr* is laying herself open to accusations of adultery, and thus to conviction for *zina*. Simorgh Collective (1990) cite numerous cases of raped women being convicted for *zina*. Sumar and Nadvi (1988: 39) note that men are more confident of getting away with raping women since the introduction of the Zina Ordinance, and this may have caused a rise in rape.

The fear of accusation of and imprisonment for *zina* is the main factor which discourages women from making accusations of rape. Other important factors preventing women from reporting rape include women's own feelings of disgrace and shame, and the perception of male relatives that their own honour has been violated. This may result in increased domestic violence against the woman and even her murder.

The phenomenon of political rape has been brought to public attention by the cases of Veena Hayat, a friend of Benazir Bhutto, and of Khursheed Begum. Khursheed Begum, whose husband was in jail on charges of belonging to the opposition Pakistan People's Party, was raped whilst being interrogated by the police (Khan, 1992). Police rapes are highlighted by the Simorgh Collective (1990) and Akber (1992).

According to the Simorgh Collective (1990: 44):

'rape within marriage is absolutely not recognised in our society or our legal system. In theory it is possible for a woman to file a complaint against her husband for violence. She cannot, however, file a complaint of rape against him because the marriage contract is interpreted as having given the husband an absolute unqualified right over his wife's body as far as sexual intercourse is concerned'. Simorgh Collective feels that rape within marriage is an important issue, pointing to the trauma experienced by new brides who are totally unprepared for what will happen on their wedding night.

Sabiha Sumar (personal communication) considers that sexual abuse and rape of girls by family members is a serious problem. In such cases, a girl, being young and female, is extremely unlikely to be believed. Abortion is illegal in Pakistan under all circumstances, including rape, and both the pregnant woman, and the performer of the abortion face seven years' imprisonment.

## 3. Murder

The significance given to the suspicion of women's illicit sexual relations varies within Pakistan. In Sindh, under the notion of *kerakari*, a couple who elope may be hunted down and killed (Sumar, personal communication). Simorgh Collective (1990: 35) reports that in Sindh and other parts of Pakistan, if a woman spends a night away from home, even when there is absolute proof that she was not with a man, honour can only be vindicated if she is killed. Iqbal (1990) notes that killing a woman on these grounds is identified in the Penal Code as 'culpable homicide', not murder, and in practice carries a penalty of a few months' imprisonment.

Revenge killings and premeditated murders may use women as scapegoats. An enemy may be killed, and a female family member of the killer also murdered, so that the corpses can be arranged to give the appearance that they had been sexually involved. Iqbal also notes that traditionally, in cases of suspected adultery, relatives are entitled

to disfigure the woman by cutting off her hair or nose, as a punishment (Iqbal, 1990:40). Disobedient women, or those who are in some way disliked by their in-laws, may be burnt to death with the murder then being passed off as a cooking accident. In addition to crimes committed by relatives, Simorgh Collective (1990) documents numerous cases of women being raped and murdered by strangers.

#### 4. Battering and Humiliation

While the precise extent of wife-beating defies documentation, War Against Rape (1992: 3) estimates that 99 percent of housewives and 77 percent of working women are beaten by their husbands. Iqbal (1990: 40) notes that women are also beaten by their parents, in-laws and sons. Women who flee from abusive husbands and in-laws may be accused of *zina* with a man in the household which shelters her (Iqbal, 1990:43). Another recent phenomenon is that of stripping women naked and parading them in the streets. This practice has now been recognised as a crime, again after much public outcry, and the death penalty prescribed for its instigators. The death penalty was also prescribed, though the sentence was later commuted, in the case of a man who exhumed and raped a corpse (Simorgh Collective, 1990). It is tragic and ironic that the rape of a dead woman carries a higher penalty than that of a living woman.

#### 5. Prostitution and Trafficking in Women

Young women are brought from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Thailand to work as domestic servants in the homes of wealthy people. These women are often severely exploited and abused physically and sexually. Marriage of young women and girls to expatriates in the Middle East is also a growing phenomenon (Simorgh Collective, 1990:46). A high proportion (60 percent) of prostitutes are procured through the *walwar* system of paying for a wife; others may have been abducted and raped, or otherwise lured into prostitution under false pretences (Iqbal, 1990:39).

#### 6. Responses of Women's Organisations in Pakistan to Violence Against Women

There are several women's organisations working on legal issues related to violence against women, and giving support to raped women and women imprisoned under accusations of *zina*. In the 1980s there were various demonstrations especially against the Zina Ordinance, but according to Sabiha Sumar (personal communication), these are increasingly unsuccessful as women will not participate, either through fear, or because of the internalisation of societal norms. However, women's organisations are sometimes still able to mobilise successfully around rape cases. The work of some Pakistani women's organisations is detailed below.

Women's Action Forum (Khawateen Mahaz-e-Amal) is an urban-based, middle-class group, formed in response to the sentencing of Femida Bux to 100 lashes and her husband Allah Bux to death for *zina*. The mass protest evoked resulted in the rescinding of these sentences. A related group, War Against Rape, based in Karachi, has taken up the cases of many raped women and has successfully highlighted the psychological trauma they face (Sumar, personal communication). War Against Rape also produces a newsletter. Simorgh Collective in Lahore has documented newspaper coverage of rape and has a resource and publications centre.

The Centre for Social Science Research in Karachi works with working class urban women around issues of violence. In particular, they run workshops and have been successful in getting wrongfully accused women out of jail (Sumar, personal communication). Sindhiani Tehrik is a grassroots rural women's movement in Sindh, which developed from the women's wing of the Marxist Sindh liberation movement (Mumtaz, 1991). This group is active against *kerakari*, the killing of women and men who elope together (Sumar, personal communication).

The Pakistan Women Lawyers Association, which has chapters in Lahore and Karachi, provides legal aid for women, as does the Fatima Memorial Hospital in Lahore. The Pakistan Women Lawyers Association also runs legal awareness workshops for grassroots women (Simorgh Collective, 1990:86).

The government has set up a fundamentalist women's group, Maljis-e-Khawateen, members of which regularly denounce other women's rights activists (Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987).

## 7. Contact Addresses (Pakistan)

War Against Rape  
102, Pearl Crest 18-C  
4th Commercial Lane  
Zanzama Blvd  
Defence Housing Authority, Phase 5  
Karachi 75500

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Simorgh Women's Resource and Publication Centre  
PO BOx 3328 Gulberg III  
Lahore 54660

Pakistan Women Lawyers' Association  
131- E-1 Gulberg III  
Lahore  
Tel. (Lahore) 879273

Headquarters of PWLA  
67b Garden Road  
Karachi 3

#### 4 EGYPT, SENEGAL, SUDAN AND YEMEN

As stated in the Introduction, there is very little information available on violence against women in these countries. Africa Watch (1990) reports the harassment and beating of women street traders and beer-brewers in Sudan, and the subsequent death from beating of one woman trader in the Public Order Emergency Court at Shejara, Khartoum. Hale (1992:41) records that in November 1991, the military junta of Sudan declared that all Sudanese women should 'wear long black dresses to their ankles and a black veil covering their heads and faces ... all those who disobey will be instantly punished by whipping'. This order has now been withdrawn, but women who do not cover their legs, heads and who wear perfume are liable to be fined (Probyn, 1993).

The beating of women by their husbands and other male relatives in Egypt is documented anecdotally by El Saadawi (1980), Zenie-Ziegler (1988) and Lane and Meleis (1991), who suggest that violence may be greatest in the early years of a marriage. El Saadawi (1980) also notes that women who give birth to a daughter, especially if they have no sons, may be beaten.

El Saadawi (1980) and Zenie-Zigler (1988) discuss the phenomenon of honour-killing - the murder of a woman because she is suspected of having engaged in illicit sexual relations. The loss of a woman's virginity is a 'shame which can only be wiped out in blood'. El Saadawi notes that if she is not murdered, the woman may well be ostracised by her community, even if she has been raped.

In 1992 the maximum penalties for rape in Egypt were increased - rapists now face life imprisonment or death (Ghalwash, 1992). However, the numerous barriers to reporting rape mentioned in the discussion on Bangladesh may well apply here. El Saadawi (1980) also notes the widespread sexual abuse of girls by male family members, and that their word is seldom believed in such cases.

Prostitution is illegal in Egypt and poor prostitutes are very vulnerable, both to exploitation by their clients, but also to community outrage. High-class prostitutes are relatively more secure, as their elite clients often rent or buy accommodation for them. However, in law, prostitutes face imprisonment, and possibly stoning to death. (Zenie-Ziegler, 1988; El Saadawi, 1980.)

No information is available on violence against women in Yemen. In Senegal, there is a law protecting women 'against all forms of conjugal violence' (CEDAW, 1991:19).

In Yemen, prostitution is illegal, as is the traffic of women, and both are punishable by imprisonment (CEDAW, 1992:15). In Senegal, prostitutes are registered and are required to report for medical examination every two weeks, on which occasion condoms are also given out. Large numbers of Senegalese women migrate to the Gambia and become prostitutes. Senegalese and other non-Gambian prostitutes are frequently deported and fined, but normally return to another location very quickly. In the Gambia, where prostitution is illegal, no provisions for medical examination exist, and so the health of Senegalese prostitutes in the Gambia may well be less good (Pickering et al. , 1992).

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