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An Examination of the Relationship between Shame, Honour and Child Sexual Abuse of Females in South Asian families

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PHD WORKSHOP - CSA CENTRE
20 MARCH 2019
• Explain the focus and timetable for the research;
• Discuss the meaning of shame and honour through some initial findings;
• Discuss the pervasiveness and inter-generational presence of these concepts and the implications for victims and survivors;
• Discuss my research strategy and methodology;
• Share barriers to participant recruitment and solutions;
• Seek comments and advice from the audience around aspects of the research.
• A more concerted effort needs to be made about the incidence and prevalence of CSA in South Asian families and understanding the experience of victims and survivors from these families;

• It is widely accepted that this is a gap, in practice, policy and research terms (Gilligan and Akhtar 2006; Children’s Commissioner 2014).

• Part-time PhD:
  - started Jan 2017
  - data gathering started August 2018 and due to complete Dec 2019.
  - planning to submit Jan 2021 😊
Discuss the meaning of *shame* and *honour*: some initial findings

**Shame**

- Shame is a universal emotion and crosses all communities;
- Is there a distinct element of shame as experienced by South Asian communities, as often cited in academic literature and government research (Gilligan and Akhtar 2006, The Home Affairs Committee 2013; Cowburn *et al.* 2014; Gill and Brah 2014)?
- Interviews have certainly defined the concepts of shame as one relating to family and community shame (in addition to individual shame and may be even more so than individual shame);
- ‘Shame’ has at times been difficult to define by participants, possibly as the concept is so integral to their lives.

**Honour**

- Honour as an emotion also has universal applicability;
- Is there a distinct interpretation of ‘honour’ as experienced by South Asian communities;
- Themes around family honour have certainly emerged from the data.
The pervasiveness and inter-generational presence of these concepts: implications for victims and survivors

**Inherent and powerful influence of shame and honour**

- Questioning the term ‘concepts’; they are very much a permanent and deeply embedded reality for these women and unfold in different ways from childhood to adulthood;
- Concerns about damage to and potential loss of family ties appear to be the main reason for remaining silent about the abuse;
- Where a disclosure was made (in adulthood), very little was done to support the survivor in terms of action against the perpetrator.

**Inter-generational survival of these concepts**

- The need to acknowledge the ‘positive’ nature of these concepts and balancing this with the need to problematize them;
- Understanding their powerful and irremovable status including across generations;
- Noting where a ‘change’ may occur: particular ethnic communities?; particular generations?; particular socio-economic factors?

**Strengthening professional practice**

- Fully appreciating that there are child victims facing additional barriers to disclosure – really understanding the impact of this reality;
- We need to continue our questioning of inequalities of services for ethnic minority families.
### Research strategy, methodologies, barriers and solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessing survivors</th>
<th>Accessing practitioners</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Survivor support groups</td>
<td>• Survivor support groups</td>
<td>• Face to face interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Snowballing</td>
<td>• Snowballing</td>
<td>• From the very creative to the more practical 😞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Personal’ contacts</td>
<td>• Local authorities (to be revisited)</td>
<td>• What does this mean in terms of <em>how</em> we research CSA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local authorities</td>
<td>• Police forces (to be undertaken)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research website (to be launched end of March)</td>
<td>• Research website (to be launched end of March)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social media</td>
<td>• Social media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentations about the research</td>
<td>• Presentations about the research</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Methodology**

- Face to face interviews
- From the very creative to the more practical 😞
- What does this mean in terms of *how* we research CSA?
Comments and advice around aspects of the research

Comments about the research topic and findings

Comments/advice on the research methodology

Advice on recruiting survivors

Advice on recruiting practitioners

CSA Centre BME Project

VANISHA JASSAL
References


• House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2013). ‘Child Sexual Exploitation and the Response to Localised Grooming’.

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