Intimate Partner Violence in South Asian Communities: Exploring the Notion of 'Shame' to Promote Understandings of Migrant Women's Experiences

Abstract

The notion of 'shame' is increasingly being recognised as a tool with some explanatory power to help promote understandings about a range of social problems. Through an exploration of migrant South Asian women's experiences of domestic violence and help-seeking practices, this paper considers the relevance of the notion of shame as a unit of analysis to help contribute to the growing theoretical and empirical literature. The paper sheds light on the meanings, events, processes and structures in the lives of migrant South Asian women respondents living in Hong Kong. Within the framework of the discussion on shame and IPV, the paper also identifies the implications for social work practice.

Key words: Intimate partner violence, shame, migrant, South Asian

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is undeniably a universal phenomenon and is one of the most damaging and widespread social problems. Intimate partner violence remains one of the most common forms of violence against women (WHO, 2013). While it is true that IPV affects both men and women, research evidence indicates that generally it is women who are more commonly the victims of abuse, and although women may also engage in some physical aggression, it has been observed that violence is more often perpetrated by men against

women than vice versa (Espinosa and Osborne, 2002). This paper provides an empirical account of the narratives of migrant South Asian women experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) in Hong Kong. The main objective of this paper is explore the notion of shame, and to examine narratives and context within the social and cultural framework in which women experience IPV / domestic violence. The discussions of the findings draw upon the in-depth qualitative interviews with fourteen South Asian women who had experienced domestic violence. In our discussion and analysis, we explore the tight connections between shame and other categories including pride, honour, guilt, and fear of retribution. We also examine the gendered aspects of shame, and examine the impact of shame in terms of how feelings of fear / retribution, and pride may reduce one's ability to seek help and assistance.

Background

The word 'shame' can be traced back to the Indo-European root Kam/Kem, and refers to 'hiding', concealing', and 'covering up' (Karlsson and Gustave-Sjoberg, 2009). Social scientists have attempted to promote theoretical understandings of the notion of shame with discussions about related human emotions including guilt, embarrassment and pride (Chase & Walker 2012). Definitions of shame demonstrate an array of components that rest on the central plank about the fear of the external gaze. Such fear can manifest itself in feelings of powerlessness and belittlement (Tangney et al 2007).

Kaufman (1996) has argued that shame is taboo in society since there is shame about shame. In other words, the perceived impact of shame serves as a powerful deterrent and prevents individuals from engaging in discussions that are regarded as shameful. Thus it becomes shameful to talk about shame. In social psychology, shame has been linked to various forms of public self-consciousness and fear of negative evaluation from others (Crozier, 1990).

Thus, shame is associated as arising from internal judgement about how an individual exists for the other or the impression they make on others. Central to shame is the idea of being observed or watched by others. It is the gaze of other people from which one feels ashamed. Such actual and/or perceived public scrutiny ensures that the shame experience is kept as private as possible.

Arguably therefore, shame is a social force that can have tremendous impact on people's lives as it can make a person feel alienated, worthless and stigmatised (Kaufman, 1996). Shame has also been considered both an interpersonal and personal experience (Scheff, 1988; Scheff, 2000, Scheff, 2014).

Kaufman (1996) describes the notion of shame in terms of social control utilised by all cultures as a primary socialisation strategy to inculcate and reinforce the integration of personal and social behaviour. In most Asian societies, family disputes are kept within the family. Where collective sharing of shame is institutionalized, shame is often associated with pressure for conventional conformity. Members of the collectivist are likely to take caution not to cause vicarious shame for others, or conversely to make efforts to achieve honour to be shared by others. In collectivist cultures, shame is a group rather than an individual concern (Wilson, 1978; Wilson, 2006). Failing to live up to certain standards, norms and ideals of others can bring a source of emotion such as shame. Shame has an impact on diverse human phenomena from the individual to that of culture and society (Cheers et al, 2006). One must preserve practices specific to each community or if one chooses to abandon, shame may occur if those practices or values are abandoned. In South Asian societies, shame and honour can impact one another, for example in families where family honour is considered highly important, it can have a high degree of restriction on the freedom of women. Migrant family

contexts may be particularly susceptible to this due to the increased pressure to 'save face' and preserve the unity and sanctity of the family (Raj and Silverman, 2002). Here, the failure to control the behaviour of women (and children) can result in shame if they fail to live up to the role expectation of the family in a 'foreign' country. In a context where social, cultural and community support may be vital, family honour becomes an invaluable commodity. Memoirs such as 'Shame' by Jasvinder Sanghera (1997), and English / Hindi films including *Provoked* (2006), and *Heaven on Earth (2008)* are powerful depictions of the powerful and pervasive nature of shame and its negative consequences for migrant women. Guilt, self-blame, and fear of retribution can all be seen to have associative connections with shame that serve to maintain secrets, deceptions and lies.

Fear of rejection and loss of both familial and community support can act as key deterrents to prevent disclosure and help-seeking. Individual sense of shame is tied to the fear of being ostracised by causing disruption to the family system. Thus, shame operates to ensure individuals avoid tainting the family name and honour to help preserve social standing in the community. In general, one's image or reputation is intensely affected, if not entirely shaped by others' image of them. Due to collectivism, the individual behaviour reflects largely upon the family reputation. And in the case of IPV, abused women risk losing everything if they take steps to leave an abusive situation. This loss is accompanied by the burden of shame. Family honour, in relation to availability of resources, social economic status and support of male kin, can benefit women but also can be a source of control and abuse (Figueredo et al; 2001). In South Asian cultures that operate with strong dynamics of shame and honour systems, there can be additional sources of shame that can act as barriers to problem identification and help-seeking. Research literature on intimate partner violence has consistently reported that shame is one of the many factors that hinders disclosure and

seeking help (e.g., Fox et al., 2007; Yuen-Tsang & Sung, 2005; Yoshihama, 2002; Crandall et al., 2005; Shiu-Thornton et al., 2005).

Notably, the role of shame in the context of Intimate Partner violence (IPV) is largely understudied. Although shame may be reported as an all too common emotion and an obstacle to disclosure and help-seeking in some IPV studies, it has been inadequately explored as a unit of analysis (Montalvo-Liendo, 2008; Ismail, Berman, and Ward-Griffin, 2007, Buchbinder and Eisikovits 2003; Lievore, 2003). There is some scholarship that has focused on the destructive nature of shame and the ways in which it targets the very centre of a person's sense of identity and may involve feelings of self-disgust, failure, low self-esteem and disgrace (Rahm et al 2006, Weiss 2010). Invariably, the action of shame is to hide and conceal personal difficulties for fear of exposure, stigma and isolation (Frijda et al 1989, Macdonald and Tantam, 1994). Often, women who are abused feel ashamed of what happened, as being a victim of partner abuse can cause a loss of social honour and respect, thus, preventing them from disclosing the abuse or confiding in others (Lievore, 2003). The paucity of research literature in this area led to the particular focus of this paper which seeks to examine the role and impact of shame and IPV.

Research aims and methods

To explore and examine women's experiences of domestic violence, it is imperative to understand their subjective realities (Burr, 2003; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). A methodological approach was required that was best suited to the sensitive and exploratory nature of the research which could help provide a rich contextual understanding of the participant's experiences of shame and IPV as told from their own perspectives. As such, a qualitative approach in the form of in-depth interviews was considered the best means to

meet the aim of encouraging the active involvement of the participants in the construction of narratives about their lived experiences in their own words. Moreover, the use of in-depth interviews can help to provide a rich contextual understanding of the participants' experiences as told from their own perspectives.

The study was granted ethical permission by second author's university ethics committee board. The fourteen respondents in this study were first-generation South Asian women residing in Hong Kong comprising of Pakistani (n=10), Indian (n =2), and Nepalese (n=2) background. They ranged in age from 27 to 39 years (mean age = 33.9), and the length of residence in Hong Kong varied from 3 to 20 years. Of the 14 participants, six were married, and the others were divorced or separated, at the time of conducting the interview (all divorce/separation were initiated by the husbands except for two). All the respondents had attained some level of high school education, and one a university degree. Six of the women were employed part-time and eight were housewives. In terms of types of employment, they were mostly in elementary occupations (for example, shop assistant, and cleaner).

Participants were recruited through the assistance of four social service agencies providing services to ethnic minorities, utilising a purposive sampling method. However, not all participants were recruited from these social service agencies, and a snowball sampling method was also employed. Initially these social service agencies referred five respondents who in turn referred nine other women. The snowball sampling method is considered an appropriate sampling method for exploratory studies among members of a vulnerable or stigmatised group who are difficult to locate (Rubin et al., 2008; Lee 1993). Nine women were referred by the first five participants. Ultimately, a total of fourteen women who had experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse participated in the study. Following

provision of informed consent, participants were interviewed individually by the first author. All information was kept confidential and pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identification.

After potential participants were identified and the initial contact was made, the respondents were reassured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and voluntary nature of participation. Individual, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted, lasting between 60-90 minutes. Interviews with nine of the respondents were conducted in English with some Hindi, and the remaining five interviews were conducted through an interpreter with consent from the participants. Interviews were tape recorded with consent from participants.

Interviews were subjected to a rigorous and systematic analysis by reviewing the transcript of each interview together with the field notes, memo and journal, several times in order to foster clarity of thought and gain familiarity with each woman's story. Interview data were analysed based on the procedures of the grounded theory outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This involves open coding of data in the first instance whereby data are broken down and examined, and then a process of categorising and labelling takes place according to emerging themes or concepts. In the second step, that is, axial coding, the researchers reviewed and re-reviewed the various categories, to help make connections between categories. Although open and axial coding occurs in two separate phases, they can proceed simultaneously as researchers attempt to organise and analyse the data.

Findings

The findings of the study highlight the role and impact of shame in the context of partner abuse. As outlined in the previous section, the women respondents in this study were first generation migrants living in Hong Kong. This was a country context that was relatively new, and foreign for some respondents. They had moved to Hong Kong to live with their husbands, and whilst some had only been there a few years, others reported having lived there for almost two decades. The experience of IPV had resulted in disillusionment, alienation and isolation for these women. Below, we identify the major themes encountered in this analysis.

Shame and Silence

Shame is associated with loss of status including being devalued, disgraced, demoted and dishonoured, and it would appear that one way of dealing with shame is to operate within a framework of secrets, deception and lies (Gilbert and Andrews, 1998). Hence, to understand shame is to understand denial, silence, and secrecy. Importantly, shame as a powerful feeling was a recurring theme and most participants reported similar experiences of shame in the course of their struggles against partner violence. Shame operates strongly against women and their families from addressing the issues of domestic violence in order to prevent a loss of dignity on the individual and family. A framework in which domestic violence is conceptualised as a private and family affair, but one that risks family honour, pride, status and prestige, if exposed, serves to maintain a veil of silence. Here, minimization and denial of domestic violence becomes a common strategy among abused women and witnesses as well as the abusers and general society (McCue, 2008). For women in abusive relationships, minimization and denial are determined by the feelings of shame and loyalty to family. On

the other hand, society, including family members, may often refrain from defining the matter as "violence" and the abusers may minimize their violent behaviour as necessary or "disciplining". Crucially, shame serves to silence the victim through a process of concealment of personal troubles for fear of exposure, stigma and isolation (Goffman, 1956; Frijda et al 1989, Macdonald and Tantam, 1994).

Additionally, the fear of embarrassment and public humiliation play a powerful role in maintaining privacy and obviating disclosure and help-seeking, leading to possible discrimination and disadvantage (Paul and Nadkarni, 2014). Women expressed apprehension about sharing their troubles with outsiders as the consequences of doing so were feared to be considerable. Such fears were captured in the words of one respondent:

"I do not share with others because if I share with someone, then that someone might tell another person who might happen to know my mother-in-law and so on. And the news will spread and it will bring bad name to my family…".

In most South Asian cultures, there is a strong emphasis to keep personal troubles within the family and individual members are discouraged from speaking out or sharing about what is considered 'private' family matters. The fear of losing 'face' and bringing shame to the family may hinder women from disclosing the abuse and seeking help (Dasgupta, 2000). This is evident as reflected in one respondent's voice below:

"I know if I leave the marriage I cannot go back to [my] country …people will talk and say 'she is a bad woman'…maybe she has done something wrong… it is not easy".

Shame of Divorce / family break-up

The notion of shame has been described both as self-shame, and avoidance of shame to the family. In this study, women talked about avoiding bringing shame to the family, and expressed their reluctance to disclose the abuse to others. As one participant shared:

> *"If I leave the marriage, I cannot go back to [my country]. People will talk, and the shame, the shame on my family…".*

In most South Asian cultures marriage is considered central to family life, and a woman's identity and social status are embedded within this framework (Abraham, 1999). With the values and importance attached to marriage and family, women will strive to maintain their marriage and keep their family intact. Past research and studies among South Asians in western countries have also observed that factors such as stigma of divorce, fear of shaming the family, hinder disclosure of domestic violence (Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Prasad, 1999). As evinced from the sharing by participants in this study, they also strive to make the marriage work, and put the needs of the family before their own regardless of the personal costs. As participants' shared:

> *"I do not think of divorce. . . . I want my marriage to work. I want the children to have a father. If I divorce I feel ashamed to my friends and the community . . . also I cannot go back my home-country".*

Due to the stigma associated with divorce, and the blame attached to women for the break-up of marriage, it hinders disclosure of abuse and seeking help. Despite facing abuses, the

women in this study also do not consider divorce as an option as suggested from the following excerpts:

"It is not socially accepted that women get divorce. It is the reason why women will not initiate divorce. The situation is, whether the woman applies for divorce or whether the husband leaves the wife, the woman is the one to be blamed for the breakup of the marriage…yeah; women get the blame if there is problem in the marriage… and shame it brings…".

Women in our study also expressed concern about the shame of being a 'divorced woman with children'. This was perceived as an added component. The fear of being alone, being ostracised, marginalised, being an outcaste were compounded by the fear of being a divorcee with children. In the words of one respondent:

"I do not think of divorce or separation as I am afraid to be alone and also because of my two children".

Individual who are abused usually go through great lengths to hide what is happening in their lives, because they feel shame. Such concealment was a common theme. As one respondent said,

"It is hard to let other people know about your marriage problems… you don't want [others] to know, you want to cover it up…".

Shame, Disclosure and Help-Seeking

The notion of 'shame' is a central factor that hinders women in abusive relationships from disclosure and help-seeking (Gill, 2004). Here, the impact of shame is not merely individual but familial, social and communal. Thus, feelings of fear of retribution, guilt, blame, and 'keeping face' prevent women from reporting their situation to others who may be able to help or advise. It was not uncommon to hear that even when women reported the abuse to their maternal family, they were invariably advised to adopt a vow of silence and continue with their lives. To speak about domestic violence was to solicit family disapproval, shame and humiliation. The message conveyed to the women was to keep silent in order to avoid bringing shame. Here, shame was used as a powerful weapon, and a key deterrent to disclosure. In the words of the respondents:

"My mother advised me to keep quiet and bear it... shame and humiliation...my family..."

"When the abuse started, I shared with my parents. But they told me to bear it and when I shared that I wanted divorce, they said they would not support divorce. My father said, if you divorce, you are dead to me, do not come back home..."

"When I shared to my brother about the abuse...he told me to try my best to live together with my husband and to keep quiet. He said such problems are part of marriage...".

Women in this study who were now separated or divorced shared that for many years they deluded themselves and others that all was well with them. Importantly, such women were still living isolated lives as they feared being judged by others. The fear of blame and being labelled a 'bad woman' is palpable in the quote below:

> *"Divorce is not a good thing in our culture. We lose respect from friends and community . . . and nobody wants to talk with you. Even if a woman is divorced by her husband, the community will blame her, they will say that she is a bad woman".*

Discussion

Our findings reveal a picture in which shame wields a powerful and controlling influence for migrant women living in a foreign country context. A common experience for the women in this study was that they had left their families in their countries of birth to join their husbands. In their new environment, and in the absence of a family network, they reported the existence of a veil of silence in which they endured the abuse. Many of the narratives suggest that abuse was tolerated in the context of shame. That is, the feeling of shame prevented women from disclosure and help-seeking, it prevented them from initiating separation / divorce, and it prevented them from identifying their situation in a way that might be perceived as selfish and individualised.

Given the fear of blame and retribution, our study identifies the difficulties encountered by the women. For instance, even when disclosure and help-seeking is initiated, women report being advised to keep quiet and carry on. One can see how

family order and harmony are privileged over individual suffering. Women themselves demonstrate a feeling of acceptance of such thinking in the context of children's 'best interests', and the preservation of family honour, pride and prestige.

Kaufman (1996) conceptualises the notion of shame in terms of power and social control utilised by all cultures to reinforce acceptable social behaviour. In South Asian cultures, shame is intrinsically tied to the fear of rejection and loss of both familial and community support. Individual sense of shame is tied to the fear of being ostracised by causing disruption to the family system. The strong feeling of shame in IPV wields an important influence on individuals, families, and communities in this study population. This is made possible principally because individual behaviour is controlled by shame through the norms and values of socialisation in which one's actions and behaviours are influenced by what is acceptable by the social groups. Crucially, such acceptability is conformity in behaviour, and to conform to social groups is to avoid shame (Goffman, 2009).

Our study findings suggest that shame is reflected in a myriad of feelings, behaviours and practices. These operate at the level of the individual but are intrinsically related to the individual's perception of self, family and community. The strong influences of fear and stigma, within a framework of shame, operate in ways that lead to secrecy, self-blame/self-shame, and family shame. Crucially, shame manifests its power to maintain social control. The different components are inter-related and serve to enmesh the individual in a climate in which a perceived dichotomous context of harmony vs disruption instils a strong fear about disruption and disequilibrium that prevents help-seeking. So, for example, a fear of victimisation, of disruption, of loss of status/dignity, and fear of familial/community support

serve to ensure that a veil of silence / secrecy is maintained to preserve the status quo. Similarly, the shame that would arise from the stigmatic consequences of disruption, for example, in becoming a 'divorced woman', and/or a 'divorced mother of children' serves as a powerful agent of social control to obviate help-seeking practices. As such, women are discouraged from revealing 'shameful' events that may tarnish the family's reputation and honour within the community (Abraham, 2000) and they often remain silent about issues such as domestic violence to save the family honour. In the present study, it has also been observed that women tend to make every effort to maintain the marriage even when experiencing abuse. The shame and stigma attached to IPV and divorce also underpin how they respond to the abuse. Thus for many women in this study, their struggles against male violence are also influenced by the need to maintain family honour. The concept of shame and the responsibility placed on women of maintaining the family honour, are often used as forms of control to keep women from seeking help. This information supports and extends our knowledge into the connection between shame, honour and gender in South Asian context. It is apparent that the existence of gender roles for women and men whereby women are expected to adhere to the socialisation of gender role, make it difficult for women to openly challenge these hierarchies of gender and status.

The findings of the study not only suggest how shame produces silences but that the different gender roles for women and men also mean that, they the women, are subject that are either employed directly by the women abused or operate socially to ensure women abused do not disclose their victimization. Those outside the relationship may also contribute to the construction of shame, though not always consciously. This is especially noticeable in this study in relationship to the woman's family, when others attempt to evoke a sense of shame around their leaving the marriage or seeking a divorce as manifested in the 'shame it will

bring to the family' strategy. Most of the marriages were arranged by the family for the participants in this study, and some of the women were married to their first cousins. Women who had been abused found themselves positioned as 'bad' mothers/wives if they end the relationship and 'destroy' the family. Therefore, even if the women were to consider divorce, they were concerned that it would affect not only their immediate family but also the extended family. From the interviews with the participants, it can be observed that they tend to keep silent in order to avoid bringing shame upon themselves, and to their family. Moreover, women reported not wanting to be viewed by others as having a 'failed marriage' that would open them to the demoralising effects of shame. In essence, shame, both actual and threatened, promotes silence and isolation as the women in this study seek to protect themselves from its painful experience. For women living through abuse, already battered by on-going processes of disgrace of the self, this can make any attempt to shed stigmatised and shameful positioning an extremely complicated undertaking, the attribution of further stigmatised identities and yet more shame. For instance, even response to shame, for instance concealing abuse, can constitute them as not really wanting or needing help.

Our study shows that South Asian women perceive themselves very strongly in relation to others. Since individual behaviour and practices are thought to reflect on their family's status within the community, and since they were raised to embrace family unity and harmony, they are usually very attentive that their actions do not bring shame to the family (Segal, 1991). Crucially, their hesitation to disclosure or help-seeking should not be considered as consenting to male violence. Exploring the notion of shame in relation to domestic violence and how this influences their help seeking may lend some understanding to the complexity of disclosure for the women in this study.

Implications for Social Work Practice

Through an understanding of the process and impact of shame, it is important that helping professionals develop a nuanced approach to support women in violent intimate partner relationships. Crucially, helping professionals and service providers working with women in abusive relationship need to address women's expereinces of abuse and shame in the context of a variety of inter-related factors including guilt, self-blame, fear of retribution, stigma, and family honour. It is important to address barriers such as fear, secrecy, and social control which serve to fuel shame and prevent women from seeking help.

It is vitally important to explore ways to keep women and children safe from abuse within their most intimate relationships. Mary Koss (2002) suggests taking seriously the notion of social responsibility, rather than individual responsibility, suggesting that eradicating abuse of women within their intimate relationships relies heavily upon social responsibility, rather than individual change. It is important to understand that a combination of institutional, cultural and language barriers can serve to deter women from seeking help (authors' own). The promotion of better understanding of domestic violence, and its negative impact on both physical and psychological health of women and their children is paramount. It might be useful to consider development of shame-focused interventions to break the barriers that hinder disclosure and to assist women in acknowledging and naming their expereinces of abuse be named as 'violence', and recognised as a social problem within the community (author's own). Thus it will enable and empower the women to name their oppression and to address their needs. It is vital for helping professional to facilitate the process of voicing and naming of the truama/abuse. Many women may feel ashamed to share the abuse as they may adhere to a self-blame and self-responsibility framework of thinking, for example, the

thinking that if she had been a good wife the abuse would not have occurred. The fear of being judged negatively by others is crucial to recognise. Educating women about the causes and consequences of partner abuse is vital. It is imperative to find ways to encourage women experiencing intimate partner violence about early disclosure of abuse and to seek help for safety and well-being both for themselves and their children. Additionally, it is also important for social care professionals and practitioners to provide culturally sensitive care to these women facing abuse. Rorie et al (1996:95) proposed a cultural competence model when working with abused women. This model conceptualises cultural competence as "acceptance of, and respect for cultural norms, patterns, beliefs, and differences... (with) self-assessment... and interplay between policy and practice". Cultural competence denotes an ongoing process in which one continuously strives to achieve the ability to work effectively within the cultural context of the individual or community. Such recognition would provide services that are culturally sensitive and cater to the needs of women who would otherwise hesitate to seek formal interventions.

It is also vital to raise awareness within the family and community through educational workshops and programs, since family and community exert a strong influence on the individual through conformity to traditional beliefs, values and social behaviours (authors' own). Most often, the women will turn to the family when they experience abuse. In the present study, the majority of the participants also reported that they first share with their family about their experiences of abuse. However, not all women received support from the family. Some of the women were advised to make the marriage work, not to break up the family or to keep silent. In many South Asian groups, the concept of self includes a familial aspect and an individual's behaviour affects not only that person but also their whole family (Bhuyan, 2008). The family may also experience shame if their daughter get a divorce or the

marriage break up as the family can experience a loss of respect and social standing in the community.

 Educating families and community members about the impact of partner violence on women and children's psychological, emotional and cognitive development may be one way to help families and communities understand the importance of taking steps to end violence and extend help and support to abused women. Another strategy is to enlist the support of family and community in applying pressure so that the abuser will be held accountable and that domestic violence will not be tolerated within the community. Programs and services can build upon this strength and focus on developing family support intervention which can serve as an important support structure for abuse women.

Conclusion

Although the element of power and control exist in all abusive situation, abuse within the South Asian community is compounded by the influence of societal views and the role of shaming. The escalation of shame by the social constructs that surround marriage and gender roles to position intimate partner violence to the private realm will continue the suffering of victims of abuse. Shame is enmeshed with power and social control, in which the individual behavior is influenced and controlled to conform to the social group so as to avoid bringing shame. The women in this study demonstrated internalization of norms and values through the process of socialization in which their behaviour and practices are aligned with what is acceptable by social group standards. Being subjected to abuse can be humiliating and demeaning experience and will, invariably, leave abused women with feelings of shame and humiliation which can disempower them and women will continue to suffer in silence. It is important that those who work with abused women are pro-active in recognizing and

understanding the negative effects of shame to help prevent the social problem of partner abuse for women and the associated fear, silence and secrecy of shame. The availability of creative and supportive responses and services is vital to help engage meaningfully with victims of abuse to help overcome the barriers that shame can so powerfully impose.

References:

Abraham, M. (1999) Sexual abuse in South Asian immigrant marriages. *Violence against Women,* 5, 591-618.

Abraham, M. (2000) *Speaking the unspeakable: Marital violence among South Asian immigrants in the United States*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Agnew, V. (1998) Tensions in providing service to South Asian victims of wife abuse in Toronto. *Violence Against Women,* 4(2),153-179.

Ayyub, R. (2000) Domestic violence in the South Asian immigrant population in the United States. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9(3), 237-248.

Bent-Goodley, T.B. (2005) Culture and domestic violence: Transforming knowledge development. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* 20,195-203.

Burr, V. (2003) *An introduction to social constructionism.* London: Routledge.

Buchbinder, E. & Eisikovits, Z. (2010) Battered women's entrapment in shame: A phenomenological study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 73(4), 355-366.

Bhuyan, R. (2008) The production of the 'battered immigrant' in public policy and domestic advocacy. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(2),153-170.

Chase, E., & Walker, R. (2013) The co-construction of shame in the context of poverty: beyond a threat to the social bond. *Sociology*, *47*(4), 739-754

Cheers, B., Binell, M., Coleman, H., Gentle, I., Miller, G., Taylor, J., & Weetra, C. (2006) Family violence: An Australian Indigenous community tells its story. *International Social Work*, *49* (1), 51-63.

Crandall, M., Senturia, K.,Sullivan. & Shui-Thornton, S. (2005) Latina survivors of domestic violence: understanding through qualitative analysis. *Hispanic Health Care International,* 3, 179-187.

Dasgupta, S.D. & Warrier, S. (1996) In the footsteps of "Arundhati": Asian Indian women's experience of domestic violence in the United States. *Violence against Women*, 5, 238-259.

Dasgupta, S.D. (2006) Women's realities: Defining violence against women by immigration, race and class. In Sokoloff, N.J. (ed.). *Domestic violence at the margins*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 56-70.

Dutton, D.G.,Van Ginkel,C., & Starzomski, A. (1995) The role of shame and guilt in the intergenerational transmission of abusiveness. *Violence and Victims*, 10(2),121-131.

Easterby-Smith,M.,Thorpe, R. & Lowe, A. (2002*) Management research: An introduction.* London: Sage.

Espinosa, L & Osborne, K. (2002). Intimate partner violence during pregnancy: Implications for practices. *Midwifery & Women's Health*, 47, 305-315.

Fox, A.M., Jackson, S.S., Hansen, N.B., Gasa,N., Crewe,M. & Sikkema,K.J. (2007) In their own voices: a qualitative study of women's risk for intimate partner violence and HIV in South Africa. *Violence Against women,* 13, 583-602.

Fitzpatrick,D. & Halliday,C. (1992) *Not the way to love*. Amherst, NS: Cumberland County Transition House Association.

Figueredo, A.J., Corral-Verdugo,V., Frias-Armenta, M., Bachar, K.J., White, J., McNeil, P.L., Kirsner, B.R. & Castell-Ruiz, I.D.P. (2001) Blood, solidarity, status and honour: The

sexual balance of power and spousal abuse in Sonoro, Mexico. *Evolution and Human Behaviour*, 22,295-328.

Gill, A. (2004) Voicing the silent fear: South Asian women's experiences of domestic violence. *The Howard Journal,* 43, 465-483.

Goffman, E, (1956) Embarrassment and social organization. *American Journal of Sociology* 62, 264-274.

Goffman, E. (2009) *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Simon and Schuster.

Heaven on Earth. Dir: Deepa Mehta. Hamilton-Mehta Productions Inc. 2008. Film

Ismail, F., Bermna,H. & Ward-Griffin,C. (2007) Dating Violence and the health of young women: a feminist narrative study. *Health Care women International*, 28(3), 453-77.

Karlsson, G., & Sjöberg, L. G. (2009) The experiences of guilt and shame: A phenomenological–psychological study. *Human Studies*, *32*(3), 335-355.

Krishnan, S.P., Malahat, B.A. Gilbert, L.El-Bassel, N. & Waters, A. (1998) Lifting the view of secrecy: Domestic violence against South Asian women in the United States. In Dasgupta, S.D. (ed). *A patchwork shawl: Chronicles of south Asian women in America.* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Krishnan, S.P., Hilbert, J.C. & VanLeeuwen, D. (2001) Domestic violence and help-seeking behaviours among rural women: Results from a shelter-based study. *Family Community Health,* 24,28-38.

Kaufman, G. (1985) *Shame. The power of caring*. Rochester: Schenkman Books.

Koss, M. (2000) *Blame, shame and community: justice response to violence against women.* Minnesota, Minnesota Center against Violence and Abuse.

Lee, D.A., Scragg,P., & Turner, S. (2001) The role of shame and guilt in traumatic events: A clinical model of shame-based and guilt-based PTSD. *The British Journal of Medical Psychology,* 74, 451-466.

Lievore, D. (2003) *Non-reporting and hidden recording of sexual assault: An international review.* Canberra: Office of the status of women, Department of the prime minister and cabinet.

Merchant, M. (2000) A comparative study of agencies assisting domestic violence victims: Does the South Asian community have special needs. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless,* 9, 249-259.

Montatalvo-Liendo, N. (2009) Cross-cultural factors in disclosure of intimate partner violence: An integrated review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 65(1), 20-34.

Paul, S., & Nadkarni, V. V. (2014) A qualitative study on family acceptance, stigma and discrimination of persons with schizophrenia in an Indian metropolis. *International Social Work*, 0020872814547436.

Prasad, S. (1999) Medicolegal response to violence against women in India. *Violence against Women,* 5, 478-506.

Provoked. Dir: Jag Mundhra. Private Moments Ltd. 2006. Film

Riggs, D.S., & O'Leary, K.D. (1996) Aggression between heterosexual dating partners: An examination of a casual model of courtship aggression. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* 11, 519-540.

Rahm, G.B., Renck,B., & Ringsberg, K.C. (2006) Disgust, disgust beyond description: shame cues to detect shame in disguise, in interviews with women who were sexually abused during childhood. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health nursing,* 13,100-109.

Raj, A. & Silverman, J. (2002) Violence against immigrant women: the roles of culture, context, and the legal immigrant status on intimate partner violence. *Violence Against women,* 8(3), 367-398.

Rorie, J.L., Paine, L.L. & Barger, M.K. (1996) Cultural competence in primary care services. *Journal Nurse Midwifery*, 41, 91-100.

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E.R. (2008) Research methods for social work (6 Ed.). CA: Thomson

Sanghera, J. (2007) *Shame*. Hodder & Stoughton.

Scheff, T. (1998) *Emotions, the social bond and human reality: part/whole analysis*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.

Scheff, T. J. (2000) Shame and the social bond: A sociological theory. *Sociological theory*, *18*(1), 84-99.

Scheff, T. (2014) The Ubiquity of Hidden Shame in Modernity. *Cultural Sociology*, *8*(2),129-141.

Segal, A. (1991) Cultural variables in Asian Indian families. *Families in Society,* 72(4), 233-242.

Shiu-Thornton, S., Senturia, K. & Sullivan, M. (2005) Like a bird in a cage: Vietnamese women survivors talk about domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal violence*, 20, 959-976.

Strauss, A.L. & Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and technique.* CA: Sage.

Thiara, R. & Gill, A. (2012) *Domestic Violence, child contact and post-separation violence: Issues for South Asian and African-Caribbean women and children: a report of findings.* London: NSPCC (National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children).

Weiss, K.G. (2010) Too ashamed to report: Deconstructing the shame of sexual victimisation. *Feminist Criminology*, 5(3), 286-310.

Wilson, A. (1978) *Finding a voice: Asian women in Britain*. London: Virago.

Wilson, A. (2006) *Dreams, questions, struggles: South Asian women in Britain*. London: Pluto.

Yuen-Tsan, A. & Sung, P. (2005) The social construction of concealment among Chinese women in abusive marriages in Hong Kong. *Affilia,*20, 284-299.

Yoshihama, M. (2002) The definitional process of domestic violence in Japan: generating official response through action-oriented research and international advocacy. *Violence Against women,* 7, 339-366.

Yoshihama, M. (2002) Breaking the web of abuse and silence: voices of battered women in Japan. *Social Work,* 47, 389-400.