Dame Jasvinder Sanghera

A Survivor’s Experience and What Must Change



Promised into Marriage aged 8

Robina

In my sister's name

Karma Nirvana

1993



Arranged V Forced Marriage

- You have the right to choose who you marry, when you marry or if you marry at all
- If you're under 18 any marriage is considered a forced marriage, even if there is no physical or emotional pressure involved

- Forced marriage is when you face pressure to marry, for example, threats, physical violence, emotional and psychological pressure, or if you're made to feel like you're bringing shame on your family
- Emotional Blackmail
- Religion-Tradition
- Mental Capacity – Consent

Honour Based Abuse – No Honour in Abuse

"An incident or crime which has or **<u>may</u>** have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and or community"**NPCC**

Distinguished from other forms of abuse, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and or collusion from family and/or community members.

Multiple perpetrators not only in UK but can be abroad. HBA can be trigger for a FM.

Coercive & Controlling Behaviour is a criminal offence – Introduced 2015

Includes:

Isolation from friends

Monitoring

Surveillance

Restriction of movement

Threats, intimidation, emotional pressure

Such patterns often present in honour-based-abuse

Forced Marriage is a Criminal Offence

- FM has been a criminal offence in England and Wales since 2014
- Illegal to use threats, coercion to make someone marry
- Illegal to deceive someone into going abroad to marry
- Maximum penalty up to 7 years imprisonment
- Consider those who lack capacity to consent

Raising Age of Marriage in England & Wales

- Legal age of marriage now 18 no exceptions
- It is a criminal offence to arrange or facilitate a marriage under 18
- Applies to religious, civil & non-legally binding ceremonies
- If person is habitually resident in England/Wales it is illegal under UK law to be taken abroad

- Previously 16/19 with parental consent
- Change introduced through the Marriage & Civil Partnership Act 2022
- Designed to better protect young people from forced marriage & coercion
- Law applies even if legal in another country

Shafilea &
Banaz



Banaz
A Preventable Death

- Forced to marry as teenager
- Lived in London age 20
- Seen kissing a boy at a tube station
- Reported threats to police multiple times
- Named those who wanted to kill her
- Not believed – Not protected
- Murdered by father, uncle & cousins 2006





17-year-old girl from Warrington
Faced pressure to enter a forced marriage

Lived with ongoing control and fear
Sought help from school and authorities

Risks were known but not fully understood

Murdered by her parents in 2003
Her body was found months later

Shafilea Ahmed

'Happy Families'

I don't pretend like we're the perfect family no more
Desire to live is burning
My stomach is burning
But all they think about is honour
I was like a normal teenage kid
Didn't ask 2 much
I jus wanted to fit in

But my culture was different
But my family ignored



Aged 17

GUILTY



Iftikar Ahmed,52



Farzana Ahmed,49

Sentence 25 years - No Parole

Sentencing remarks 2012

"Your concern about being shamed in your community was greater than the love of your child"

"Shafilea was a determined, able and ambitious girl who wanted to live a life which was normal in the country and in the town in which you had chosen to live and bring up your children"

"However, you could not tolerate the life Shafilea wanted to live"

Experiences of Victims and Survivors

- Controllers of honour are based within the family including women
- Honour related to issues of family honour & reputations
- Watched, controlled, monitored especially when seeking help & agency engagement
- Honour creates internal conflict, failure, guilt
- Fears linked to confidentiality/engagement with families/disclosures

Honour Broken

- Saying no to a marriage arrangement
- Integrating
- Relationships outside of marriage/sexuality/ divorce
- Revenge porn/child sexual exploitation using shame
- Leaving home
- Changing religion
- Social networking/mobile phones
- Divorce
- Appearing too westernised
- Seeking help from police and other agencies

Honour Gained

Agreeing to marriage

Complying with family honour code & enforcing on others

Reprimanding those perceived to be ‘dishonourable’ – i.e. honour killing, disowning

In some families, perception of becoming ‘more religious’ or wearing a headscarf

Being dutiful according to family

Keep land, money, marriage within family

Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO)

- Threat of a forced marriage or forced into one
- Prevent being removed from UK
- Specifically designed to protect individual circumstances
- For example, the court may order someone to hand over passports or reveal whereabouts of a person, keep them education

- Breaching a forced marriage protection order can result in a sentence of up to 5 years in prison
- Not restricted to any age or number of people
- Emergency Orders – without notice
- Family Court
- DSL – Refer to Children's Services

You are not alone

- Forced Marriage Unit
- Handles 800-1,000 cases annually
- Supports victims in UK & Overseas
- Assists with safe return to UK
- Intervene in high risk cases
- Third of cases are under 17 years old
- 020 7008 0151

- Karma Nirvana
- Receives up to 1,000 contacts a month to helpline
- Supports both men, women & professionals
- Over 30 years' specialist expertise
- Survivor Support/Advocates
- 0800 5 999 247

Cultural

Acceptance

Does not mean

accepting the

unacceptable





Next Generation

Any Questions?
jasvindersanghera.com

