



S ON BRID

NORTH
 ♠ 7 5 3
 ♥ Q 7
 ♦ A Q
 ♣ A 7

WEST
 ♠ K Q 10 4
 ♥ 8 6 4 2
 ♦ J 6 5 2
 ♣ 8

SOUTH
 ♠ 6 2
 ♥ A K
 ♦ 7
 ♣ K J

Vulnerable: Both
 Dealer: South

The bidding:

South	West
1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass
4♣	Pass

Opening lead: Spade

BID WITH

South holds:

North	South
1♥	1♠
2♥	1♠

ANSWER: T
 slight overbid
 excellent inter
 scales.

GET LOST
 IT'S MY INTER
 NEL MATTER



Society
 News
 16.5101
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DO'NT BEAT
HER!

OST
MY INTER-
MATTER!



Khalid

Allah's wrath to fall upon her."

Further, the successive promise made to restore reserved seats for women in political bodies remains an issue kept on the back burner by different governments.

Because of the patriarchy of the system it became nearly impossible to compete on an equal footing with men. It is for this reason that most political parties did not award tickets to women unless they have an established name in politics like the fine women who have been elected to the parliament. In the last elections, only 35 women competed and just 5 of them succeeded.

The problem with acquiring women's rights in this country is that the crusade had been led by a handful of women and human rights activities who have had little support or representation in the government bodies.

*The issue has, therefore, been marginalised and side-stepped in favour of other concerns including law and order. **Leena Magsood** condemns the situation asking for immediate remedies.*

In the tribal areas, a strong bias against women's political participation was seen in that the *jirgas* declared that it was against their culture to allow women to vote. One *jirga* even laid down penalties claiming that if a woman dared to cast her vote, her house would be burned and the men in her family would be punished.

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Societal violence against women continues in almost all parts of the country, in different forms depending on the customs and norms of that region.

In Sindh and Balochistan, it happens in the form of *Karo Kari* in which a woman and a man are killed on the suspicion of having illicit relations. The issue of *Karo Kari* seems to be another issue that has crept into the international limelight after a US television report was aired on the practice just recently — bringing much embarrassment to the society as well as the government.

Regardless of the authorities' insistence that the problem is not a wide spread as portrayed in the show, the fact remains that 233 people were killed only

during in the period from January to November 1998 in *Karo Kari* of which this number comprised 141 women.

Many times, the honour killings are based on falsehood and stem from tribal disputes or personal grievances against women or men. Other times, they are simply an excuse by the *wadera* to extract money from the families of the accused. In tribal areas, *jirgas* continue to carry out their own summary trials and extreme punishments with their main targets being women.

Women continue to be treated as a commodity in parts of NWFP and Balochistan. If one tribe wants to settle a dispute with another, it offers one of its women in marriage to some one from the other tribe. This practice is called *savera*.

Not a woman

Another form of violence against women is in the wide spread practice of trafficking. Next to drugs and arms, it is said to be the biggest illegal trade. In different parts of the country, this practice goes on unabated and most times with the connivance of the police.

It is said that the current selling rate for women is around Rs 100,000 per woman depending on her looks, age etc. The fact that this goes on in this country is tantamount to the slavery of destituted women, many of whom have been lured

into this country with promises of legitimate employment. The incidence of rape, kidnapping and murder continues to unabated against women.

Only Lahore based newspapers reported the rape of 717 women of which 65 per cent were minor girls and 30 per cent were victims of gang rape in the year 1997. Custodial violence continues to be another form of the ill-treatment of women in country jails. There has been a case in which a police sub-inspector Manzoor Shah of Sahiwal was

accused of taking a girl out of the district keeping her in his house for a week threatened her father and filed a case against an inspector, they were another incident in Nagar where settlement was made with a Muslim mob.

The issue of violence against women continues to be a topic in the realms of the media since it is wholly a private affair.

man's domain

accused of taking a 14-year-old girl out of the detention and keeping her in his home to rape her for a week. The police threatened her father that if he filed a case against the inspector, they would commit another incident like Shanti Nagar where a Christian settlement was attacked by a Muslim mob.

The issue of domestic violence against women continues to be an issue out of the realms of the legal system since it is wholly considered a private affair. Of the 465

women murdered in a list tabulated by HRCP from just the Lahore Press in 1997 as many as 57 per cent were killed by some member of their families. And of these cases it was astonishing to see how little police follow-up there was. Even a simple FIR was registered in only a little over 14 per cent of the cases.

Women continue to suffer from discrimination and discouragement in employment as well. One particular incident recently highlighted the trouble faced by the most women at

their work place, especially in government posting and in an official capacity. In Battagram District Abottabad, a female Assistant Commissioner came under fire from local religious scholars, elders, members of Khidmat Committee and traders association backed by her subordinates, for holding a high administrative post. Religious groups staged numerous processions against her appointment and claimed that appointment of a female officer was "an unpardonable, violation of Islamic laws and asked for

representation in the government bodies. The issue has, therefore, been marginalised and side-stepped in favour of other concerns including law and order as well as the Shariah Bill by the former government. Unfortunately, a government with strong political will and conviction is needed to correct the current quagmire and so far, no such government has ever existed.

As long as men are the only representation of women in the government and as long as they choose which rights will be given to women failing to acknowledge certain inalienable women's rights, women in this country will continue to have little to celebrate now or in the future and especially on the next year's International Women's Day.