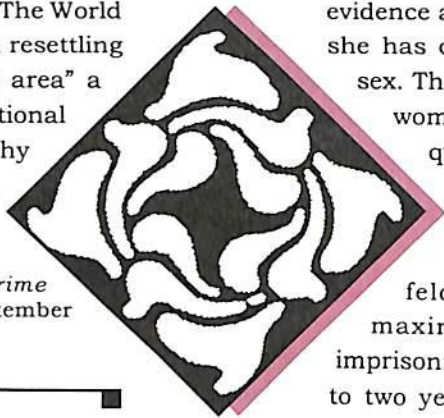


murdered by the civil defence patrol, one of the most notorious paramilitary units used by the state as death squads. "The World Bank was involved with resettling 3,500 people from the area" a spokesman for International Rivers Network said. "Why didn't they notice that 376 people were murdered?"

Source: *Corporate Crime Reporter*, U.S.A., 30 September 1996



A MATTER OF RAPE

by Ms. Maureen N. Devi (Fiji)

There are many legal practices in Fiji which discriminate against women but which cannot be challenged. For example, marital rape is not a crime in Fiji, even when the parties are separated. By refusing to protect wives from rape by their husbands, the legal system entrenches its control over women's bodies within the confines of marriage. The notion that a husband should be prosecuted for rape is unthinkable because the law protects the husbands' interests not those of the wives.

Currently, the law holds it against a woman if she waits more than 24 hours to report a rape. Many women are often ashamed to report a rape because of the social stigma it attracts. Given the level of police sympathy and legal responses to the crime of rape, it is not surprising that women need the benefit of advice before deciding whether to report and face the discrimination, inconsistencies and inefficiencies of the legal system. Questioning of the victim's past sexual experiences during a rape trial is permissible, and evidence of her moral charac-

ter may be admitted as evidence against her. A woman's past sexual experience is rendered as evidence against her to show that she has consented to the act of sex. The implication is that if a woman is not a virgin it is quite likely that she would have consented to sex with the accused.

Although rape is a felony for which the maximum sentence is life imprisonment, eighteen months to two year sentences are more common with suspended sentences increasingly being awarded. A common traditional practice of *bulubulu* or an apology is also accepted by the courts as an excuse for not being charged or in lieu of a custodial sentence. The *bulubulu* is also accepted in lieu of punishment in sexual offenses against children. In 1988, Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) officially launched its Anti-Rape campaign. The project included researching the socio-cultural and legal aspects of violence, a nationwide outreach program, the publishing of mass media articles in newspapers and radio, the production of pamphlets and posters, street drama and educational workshops with schools, medical personnel, police officers and judicial personnel. The FWRM also conducted workshops and seminars for rural women's groups in an attempt to educate women about rape and to obtain their support for its legal reforms.

Organizations such as these are helping to make a difference today in the Fiji society. We can only hope that they will increase in number not only for the sake of women in Fiji but for women

worldwide.

Source: *Asian Breeze*, No. 18, October 1996

ENFORCED CHASTITY IN LOMBOK, INDONESIA?

District officials on the eastern Indonesian island of Lombok are using contraceptives as a modern-day chastity belt for local housewives, said press reports from Jakarta in October 1996.

According to the daily *Jakarta Post*, district spokesman Lalu Zakaria said women would not be allowed to buy birth control devices, such as IUDs, while their husbands were working overseas. Written consent from their husbands would be required for women to buy contraceptives, he added.

Officials here fear women might "misuse" the devices while their husbands were working in places like Malaysia. "It is meant as a precaution, so lonely housewives won't be tempted to do negative things while their husbands are away," Mr. Zakaria said.

He said the policy was introduced after migrant workers complained that their wives were using contraceptives while they were away. The newspaper report stated that up to 25,000 men from East Lombok work in neighboring Malaysia, mainly in the plantation and construction sectors.

Local officials were also quoted as saying that many women demanded to have their IUDs removed to demonstrate their faithfulness while their husbands were away.

Source: *Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights Newsletter* 57 No. 1, 1997