PREFACE

This research study attempts to capture the unfolding dimensions of human rights of women and children in the seven South Asian countries - popularly known as SAARC COUNTRIES.

The study was undertaken to create awareness on the magnitude of human rights deprivation of South Asian women and children. It provides specific information about the heinous crimes that are being committed against women and children in the region. It highlights the discrimination and ineffectiveness of existing laws. The study will convince the readers that despite constitutional guarantees and assurances of a life of freedom, equality and dignity - women and children bear the greatest burden of human rights deprivation.

Violation of human rights of women and children is a global phenomenon. However, it has not gained desired momentum compared to its importance. This is especially true in the developing South Asian countries, which present a sad reality of gross coalition of human rights of women and children.

There is quite a dearth of literature in the field of human rights of women and children in the SAARC countries. Therefore the research on the human rights problems of South Asian women and children has been somewhat strenuous but challenging task. Despite the support the study received from different people and institutions, very little analytical material has been available on these seven countries. While some of the SAARC countries have a rich tradition of involvement in and documentation on the subject, others lack
them almost completely. This alone made the task worthwhile. Unearthing literature on the Maldives and Bhutan was an experience itself.

The experience of going through pages of material in search of substance revealed that most of the work in this field is descriptive and mechanical. There is a need to develop much greater research effort to develop more specific knowledge and understanding of the human rights problem of women and children in the region. The present research is a positive step towards this direction. It attempts to fill the gap by covering some of the burning human rights issues of women and children in the SAARC countries. It is hoped that this work will be of immense use to the social workers, planners, administrators and the common fold alike. The future bright and hopeful belongs to women and children. It is only reasonable that they should become the focus of all development.

It must be admitted here that the present research on human rights is limited in scope and comprehension. Moreover one has to rely on secondary source of data, as direct access to research material is often impossible. Given these limitations this is a humble attempt to stimulate some enquiry into certain deeper and larger question relating to human rights of women and children in South Asia.

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