

BOOK REVIEW: HUMAN VISAS

HUMAN RIGHTS BODY CHALLENGES ARRANGED MARRIAGES

The Norwegian based Human Rights Service has published a book, entitled “Human Visas”, on the use of arranged marriages to avoid immigration controls in Europe. It is valuable research into the marriage patterns of immigrant communities in Europe.

The book considers Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the UK and Germany. It shows that most first generation immigrants marry spouses from the homeland or from the same national background who already live in Europe. Well over 90% of first generation women from Turkey, Morocco, Somalia, Sri Lanka, India, Iraq and Pakistan married men from their country of origin or of the same national background, already settled in Norway. The pattern for first generation men was similar. Even in the second generation, some 96% of both men and women married a spouse of the same national background.

The effect of this is brought out in a research study conducted in Denmark during the period 1969 - 1989. A report by E Vesselbo focused on 145 Turkish men who had arrived in Denmark as guest workers. By the year 2000 the size of this group had increased by a factor of 20 to 2813 persons ranging from the first to the fourth generation.

The book goes on to describe revisions to Denmark's immigration policy in relation to family reunification. The two cohabitants must now have reached the age of 24 (irrespective of their ethnic origins) before they can qualify for family re-union. This and a number of other changes have resulted in a substantial reduction in applications for family reunification.

"Human Visas" goes on to examine the suffering of women forced into marriage and to make recommendations for the revision of criminal and immigration law.

For anyone concerned about the Human Rights of women in immigrant communities, this book is required reading.

The book can be purchased at www.kolofon.com ISBN 82-300-0038-7