

“Discovery of numerous Mass Graves, Various types of torture on Women” and “People’s Attitude”

Dr. M A Hasan

Every mass grave is an ocean of blood and tears. It is the cruellest symbol of molestation of human regard and failure of civilization. It is our common shame that in the 21st century people still are being dehumanised and massacred by so called human being. It is really disgrace to the humanity that racial discriminates and cult of hatred as well violence are being acclaimed as patriotic move.

It was culmination of discrimination hatred, disregard to human rights, wrong mindset identity and ego which evoked that brute vengeance that lead to war crimes, genocide and crime against humanity in the year 1971 in Bangladesh.

During the period of Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 the Pakistani troops and their collaborators conducted organized program, genocide and atrocities killing 3 million Bangladeshi civilians as per statistics of post liberation Bangladesh Government. There were incidences of both deliberate and wanton killings as well as ethnic cleansing all over the country, some of whom were buried in the killing spots and some were dumped in the mass graves. Many were thrown in the marshy areas, canals and rivers and a few were burnt alive.

Although many killing spots and mass graves were unearthed just after liberation, the proper legal procedure about missing and post mortem remains could not be performed in the war devastated disorganized country. However, some of the account and documentation was made by different Govt. and private organization.

Till today, there are about 5000 alleged mass graves all over Bangladesh resulting from atrocities and indiscriminate killing of Pakistani military force. After 37 years of the incident, self-revelation of some mass graves allowed me to participate in excavation of some Genocide spots since July 1999 and examine about 196 fresh site to make a scientific observation of mass grave and genocide remains.

WCFFC research has revealed that most of non-Bangalees were in favor of Pakistan. 90% of non-Bangalee refugee collaborated with Pakistani army and took part in annihilating Bangalees through the act of genocide. Even the non-Bangalee woman and children took part in the heinous act of genocide-- that was the study of Mirpur massacres. Forensic examination has shown that dead bodies of 70% victims had been thrown into different rivers, ponds, well and marshland. 33% remains of victims who were buried in different mass graves bear the mark of bullet injuries. Among all bullet injuries, 20% were to the vault of calvarium, 33% were to pelvis and vertebrae. Blunt injuries of the skull were two times higher than bullet injuries. Most of the injuries on the skull were in the tempero parietal region. Injury to the left of the skull were two times higher than right. Common weapons used in Mirpur were sword, big knife, chopper, iron rod and hammer. In 1971, the whole Bangladesh were made mass grave and marsh grave. Of these, 940 mass graves have been identified by WCFFC. There are more than 70 mass graves in Dhaka district; 23 of them are at Mirpur only.

Highest number of mass grave (74) were found in Dhaka district. Next highest were (52) mass graves which were found in Mymensingh an adjacent district of the Dhaka. Highest killing that took place in the month of April and May 1971 when highest number of mass exodus did happen. Gender based genocide statistic revealed male female ratio as 6:1.

Identification of remains of the victims itself is a challenge and a bigger challenge is to medico legally prove the identity and the cause of the death of victims and correlate it with the artifacts like empty cartridges, live ammunitions, explosives, sharp and blunt weapons found in the mass graves in close association with the remains. Though radioisotope strontium test are being tried yet it will be difficult task to determine the specific time of death.

Besides oral statements of eyewitnesses supporting torture and killing of alleged victims by the Pakistan Army and their collaborators causing their death and later dumping of them in graves in front of some witnesses are the only strong evidences of crime which can be placed in proper Court of Justice.

Scientifically correlation of offender's onslaught and victim's death and association of artifacts – cartridge, casings and other blunt and sharp weapons after 30 years is a quite a difficult task. However, documentation through mapping and photographs of site and victims with summing up of ante-mortem and post mortem evidences and testimonies of the witnesses as well as DNA profiling of victims and correlating it with relations of the missing peoples shall act us basic foundation of the case. Other post mortem findings and audio visual record of the whole procedure would provide the slim hope to put the matter in the proper court of justice to punish those war criminals who conducted one of the biggest crime against humanity and genocide and escaped punishment earlier.

Cause and time of death: A few bones had bullet and bayonet injury and some of the skulls had blunt injury. Sharp cutting injury of bones has not been considered as a strong evidence for slaying as it could be iatrogenic in a disturbed grave.

Cases where no injury on bones have been found, comment on torture and the cause of death cannot be made. One cannot assume a violent death but presence of remains of 5 individuals without signs of the injury with another five with bullet injury should be suspected as unnatural. On examination of some broken flat and long bones marked the signs of ante-mortem torture.

The scientific study was attempted to unveil following facts about post mortem remains and genocide spots:-

- a. Identification of remains by utilizing standard forensic technology as well as by studying medical and dental records (pre-mortem and post-mortem) and other necessary information.
- b. Determination of age, sex, height and recognition of clothing and belongings and other ante-mortem & post mortem evidences for personal identification.
- c. Total number of peoples killed or left in mass graves.
- d. Cause and time of death.
- e. Lay out of remains in undisturbed graves and pre mortem reaction of the cadaver due to intrinsic, extrinsic and different physical factors prevailing during death and afterwards.
- f. Study of injuries as per existing medico legal science.
- g. Medico legal examination of soil, water and other contents in the site.
- h. Examination of arms, ammunitions, explosives and other materials used to kill, torture, tie and cause destruction of the victims.
- i. Type of arms used in genocide and type of injuries causing death.

- j. Percentage of victims leaving clues about the cause of death where genocide is examined after some time and where only bones are left for examination and no audio, video records are available.
- k. Values of testimony of eyewitnesses and circumstantial evidences of genocide.
- l. Microbiological as well as soil property changes in genocide field.
- m. Call for development of medico legal science and changes in international laws to identify victim of mass graves and genocide spots.

Study of injuries as per existing medico legal science elucidate some surprising facts like 33% victims were shot by bullets before dumping them in a mass grave –

1. Less than 20% of skeletal remains bear mark of bullet injury even where all were alleged to be killed by firearms. Among them 33% of pelvis, sacrum and thoracic vertebrae injuries were made by bullets and bayonets and ratio of injury of left pelvis was 3 times higher than that of right. Incidence of blunt injury to the skull were two fold higher than that of bullet injuries. They were inflicted mostly on tempero parietal area; injury to left were 3 times higher than that of right and two times higher than that of vault injury.

Less than 10% of mass graves contained arms, ammunitions, explosives and cartridges. However, sharp instruments, ropes, knives, rods pipes and other items used in torture were found in most of the graves. Probably the time factor has washed away cartridges and other matters used by the offenders to kill the victims.

As per testimony of eyewitnesses in most of the cases knives, swords, chopper and iron rods were used by professional butchers and slaughterers who were collaborators of the offenders- Pak troops.

2. Where bullets were used for killing, dead or injured victims due to soft tissue injury were buried alive, which could be the probable cause for not finding enough bullet injury in the skeletal remains.

Besides, bullets piercing chest, neck and abdomen sparing bones were quite high in number.

The war that was initiated by the Pakistani army in the soil of Bangladesh in 1971 was not a civil war; it was a preplanned act of genocide. There may be debate regarding the definition of genocide. But, there is no doubt that nearly 1.8 million people were eliminated during the war of 1971. Three millions was the official figure of death. At that time, nearly 10 million people were displaced due to the preplanned pogrom conducted by the Pakistani army and their collaborators. There were many incidents of enforced disappearance and violence on women.

Unfortunately, the perpetrators of these gruesome war crimes, genocide and crime against humanity have not been brought to book.

More unfortunate and regrettable is that the perpetrator Pakistani army and their ally could successfully burry that act of horrendous crimes for sometime. They portrayed those events as matter of internal conflicts, civil war, rightful reprisal actions, 'little bit excess in brotherly quarrels' etc. As a result the hue and cry about the atrocities raised by the human rights activists in 1971 died in the vicious political row and ugly international diplomacy. Following that, the brutal episode of preplanned pogrom and violence against women got lost in the layers of dark chapter of history of the civilization.

Those victims of crimes against humanity ultimately failed to register their pain, grievances and serious allegations in the right place. Hundreds of raped women had to accept a wretched life under boots of perpetrators.

In essence, it was the failure of whole international community, claimed to be torchbearer of humanity, who could not prevent that gruesome genocide and crimes against humanity in 1971 and again failed to answer the call to register those past crimes.

Again and again, they have succumbed to the perilous strife to protect human dignity for which the human race struggled for centuries.

Those who wrote the fundamental laws of human rights, failed to address the issue rightfully and say unequivocally that *IHL is applicable in times of armed conflict, whether international or non-international. International conflicts are wars involving two or more states, and wars of liberation, regardless of whether a declaration of war has been made or whether the parties involved recognize that there is a state of war.*

Victims had to walk in head bowed position. In the heart of the heart they were like withered leaves, fallen on ground, lifeless— everyone could walk on them. Self-pity and self-persecution have haunted all of them. They do not clearly understand why out of all they had been targeted; what was their fault? Common people do not understand why some pay the price of freedom. Nobody understands the tragedy that extinguished the free air of life. They only understand that they are in an endless abyss.

Stories of sexual violence in Rwanda, Bosnia or Bangladesh are almost same. Susan Brownmiller likened the 1971 events in Bangladesh to the Japanese rapes in Nanjing and German rapes in Russia during World War II. "... 200,000, 300,000 or possibly 400,000 women (three sets of statistics have been variously quoted) were raped. Eighty percent of the raped women were Moslems, reflecting the population of Bangladesh, but Hindu and Christian women were not exempt. ...Hit-and-run rape of large numbers of Bengali women was brutally simple in terms of logistics as the Pakistani regulars swept through and occupied the tiny, populous land" (p. 81).

The Bangladesh Documents published by the Indian Foreign Ministry reveals that from March till August 1971, a total of 6971,000 Hindus registered as refugees in India. Families that went to India after April had suffered at the hands of the Pakistan Army and their local collaborators.

It is necessary to mention here that most of the villages in different districts in Bangladesh witnessed widespread rape and torture. The shocking stories of rape in Barguna jail spread by word of mouth throughout the district. Raiding houses in Jhalokati town and the villages in the district and the extensive guava gardens where many were hiding, in order to pick up women and rape them was a regular activity of the Pakistan Army in 1971.

In Greater Faridpur, the Pakistanis ravaged even far-flung villages and then terrorized the women. The stadium was turned into a center for persecuting women. It is of course true that after thirty years information may become distorted. On the other hand, it is also easy for information to disappear with the lapse of time.

The genocide campaign of the Pakistani force and their collaborators spread to the remote villages as well. They killed the innocent villagers who were not at all associated with the war. Rajihar of Agailjhara thana of the riverine Barisal district is one such village, far away from the capital, which bears the brunt of Pakistan atrocities. Nine family member of Kamalini Halder were butchered mercilessly.

Bipul Halder is one of a shaheed family whose seven members were all killed together in this village in 1971. He said, " In 1971 I was home when Pak army *seized* and took away

nine of my family members. They were taken away before my eyes. I heard two loud gunshots after they were taken away.”

On 28 May DMLA Major Nader Pervez came to Barguna. At his orders Pak army carried out the cruelest and most barbaric jail killings on 29 and 30 May. That day when the first bells sounded for classes in Barguna Zilla School the town of Barguna shook up at the sound of shootings in the jail. People wherever they were in the streets and around suddenly stopped, calling out "Allah! Allah!" The raiders left after shooting quite a number of times like this.

After the terrified screams and death moans faded away, people of the Peace Committee came and buried the people half-dead from gunshots in the mass grave dug on the southwestern side of the jail. That way on the first day 55 persons, and next day 36 persons were shot dead.

In the year 1971, approximately 34 counts of major type war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity were conducted by the Pakistan Army and their collaborates. Of them, 17 were war crimes, 13 were crimes against humanity. They got involved in four counts genocide, which were never addressed.

The Pakistan army unleashed their vengeance by orchestrating the worst war crimes, genocides and crimes against humanity in the year 1971. They eliminated nearly 1.8 million people and violated 460000 women in the soil of Bangladesh. Among the violated woman some were sex slaves and comfort girls.

All those victims of 1971 paid the price of our freedom. After that they are only shadows to us, a few faceless numbers. Among the victims those who are surviving are passing a tormenting life, full of remorse, haunted by self-persecution. In the heart of the heart they are like withered leaves. Now who should take the responsibility of this failure? The society? State? The people? I believe the whole nation must shoulder the responsibility of negligence and utter failure. Our government must address the impunity. Justice and punishment for crimes are imperatives by themselves for asserting the morality of social life and for restoring the dignity of victims.

So far our government has failed to address it and the international community did not take any interest in it. That itself has caused a trauma in our heart. And moreover, trauma and tribulation of war victims were surmounting the perilous strife of the society in post liberation Bangladesh. As there were no remorse from the side of perpetrators and there was no justice, self-esteem of the victim could not be reconstructed.

Victims had to walk in head bowed position. In the heart of the heart they were like withered leaves, fallen on ground, lifeless— everyone could walk on them. Self pity and self-persecution has haunted all of them. They do not clearly understand why out of all they were the ones been targeted; what was their fault? Common people do not understand why some pay the price of freedom. Nobody understands the tragedy that extinguished the free air of a rape victim. They only understand that they are in an endless abyss.

As no remedy could be provided to the victims, restoration of normal social life for them was impossible. Opportunity for moral and democratic reconstruction of the society was also lost. In this way, by not delivering justice, the society has been plunged into disarray. In essence, the impunity has turned the society relatively tolerant to crime and infected it with arrogance of power. Absorption of crime of the perpetrators has changed the mindset of the society. There is confusion in the concept of peace and there is permanent casualty of our values. As a nation, we have lost our pride and honor. People have lost confidence in justice and nation is suffering from identity crisis. When our conscience is traumatized, a defeated attitude has taken hold of the psyche of the nation.

Dr. M A Hasan
Convener, War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, Bangladesh
Tel. 88 02 8914506, Fax: 88 02 8913819, Mob.: 88 02 01817007921
E-mail: aaersci@aitlbd.net

In her book 'Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape' Susan Brownmiller compared the sexual abuse of women in Bangladesh by the Pakistan army in 1971 with the rape of women in Nanjing by the Japanese and the rape of the Russian women by the Germans in World War II. However, the result of our research shows that the torture of the women in Bangladesh by the Pakistan army in 1971 was so inhuman that it defeats all past records of rape of women by any army in the world if we consider such facts that the war lasted over nine months and took place in a small area of 56,000 square miles. Brownmiller wrote on page 83 of her book: "'Rape in Bangladesh had hardly been restricted to beauty,' Brownmiller writes, Girls of eight and grandmothers of seventy-five had been sexually assaulted. ... Pakistani army had not only violated Bengali women on the spot; they abducted tens of hundreds and held them by force in their military barracks for nightly use. Some women may have been raped as many as eight times in a night (Brownmiller, p. 83). How many died from this atrocious treatment, and how many more women were murdered as part of the generalized campaign of destruction and slaughter, can only be guessed at.'"

In gang rapes like these eight to almost one hundred Pakistani soldiers took part. In some cases, a part of the enemy force drove the men to some unknown place or killed them as they made them stand in a lone. And the other half looted the houses and shops, set them on fire, and huddled the women in one place and raped them. Throughout the nine months of war they carried on raping the women in groups or individually side by side the war. The women tried to flee to save themselves. The men also tried to escape. But the enemy dragged the men out of their hiding and raped the women in front of their eyes. They wanted to break the moral of men as they satisfied their lust by raping women. It can be easily assumed by the analyses of their actions that they took the *Rape, Burn and Kill* strategy supervised by their superior to win the war. By their barbarous acts they wanted to cleanse the Bengalis from this part of the world. They wanted to break the confidence and pride of a nation by the instigation of rape and torture so that the Bengalis are drained of their courage to win freedom.

Rape in Custody and Gang Rape:

Throughout the nine months of war Pakistani soldiers abducted and prisoned women from wherever they could. They abducted women from houses, schools-colleges, passenger terminals, rail stations, bus stops, ports, and even from the bus and trains. Women were arrested and taken into Pakistani armed camps when running away with families for shelter. Freedom fighter Moksed Ali Mamun of Dinajpur narrated to us one such incident: 'Pakistani soldiers had their bunker next to the bridge in union number eight in Dinajpur Sadar. We fought them on October 25. After a bloody battle they retreated. As we reached to their bunker we saw clothes splattered with blood. We thought that we would find a few dead bodies that the enemy left behind. As we looked inside we saw two naked women on a *chouki*. They couldn't come out as they were naked. Then we sent for some women from the nearest village and also asked for some clothing. We waited outside the bunker for their arrival. Then we positioned a bamboo ladder in the bunker and sent a few women inside the bunker. They helped the two captive women to wear clothes and helped them climb up out of the bunker. Their names were Asma Khatun and Mariom. One of them had passed intermediate, as the other one was a candidate for the matriculation exams. They were from Chirirbandar thana of Dinajpur. As they were fleeing for India with their parents the Pakistani force captured them. Afterwards we sent them to the women rehabilitation centre in Dhaka.

Guruprasad Das from Rajshahi told us one such incident. At twelve noon on April 21, 1971, thirteen convoys of Pakistani soldiers arrived at the Rajbari filed of Pachani of Puthia. Major Sherwani's car was also part of that convoy. He got down from his car and

went to the house of Kamar Begum of Charani Rajbari. From there he drove in his car to the house of Babu Sree Anilendranath Chowdhury of Raamjibanpur mouja, a place at the eastern side of Puthia. Chowdhury Babu had three daughters and three sons. His two elder daughters were called Radha and Nupur and the third one was called Swapna. At two thirty that afternoon Sherwani abducted by force the two beautiful elder daughters of Babu Sree Anilendranath Chowdhury and his eldest son Shambhu. He took them to Rajshahi cantonment. Though by the evening Shambhu was released the girls were kept in captivity. Major Sherwani and his accomplices raped the two women time and again and sent them home at around three thirty in the morning. They were so much tortured that they couldn't even walk. On that night Chowdhury Babu flee for Indian with his two daughters.

In these concentration camps women were raped days after days and months after months. To wipe out the evidences of their crimes the Pakistani army killed most of these women at the end of the war. In the course of these sexual tortures many women got pregnant; the Pakistani army was also killed them so that the crimes can be concealed.

From the statements of Nazia Khatun from Jhinaidah we get to know about the barbarous crimes of the Pakistani army. As she was feeling with her family at the outbreak of the war the enemy captured her. She was taken to the concentration camp near Raninagar at Shoilokupa. Those days were dangerous and unbearable. In a small room she had to live huddled with other girls where there was hardly any ventilation and passage for light entrance. Being beaten up or kicked at were everyday experience. Side by side they were sexually assaulted day in and day out. She thought of committing suicide. There weren't any rope. Even their clothes were also taken away. So there was nothing with which she could strangle herself. They were only allowed to wear blouse or kameez. In the course of such sexual tortures she got pregnant. Pakistani army drugged her; as a result the baby died before its birth.

Some of the members of the Pakistani army were so pervert that they sexually assaulted Sandhya – a nine-year-old female child. In June in 1971 the enemy attacked Kuriana of Jhalakathi district. During the heat of the attack Sandhya was running away with her family. All of them were captured by the Pakistani army and then detained at the enemy camp at Kuriana school. They were there for four days. They were shown no mercy – the torture was unbearable. They sexually tortured the little girl so much that she became pale due to ceaseless bleeding and pain. She died in a few days time.

Kamrunnesa of Jhinadaha pretended to be a lunatic to escape the sexual torture of the Pakistani army. As the enemy attacked Jhinadaha in April she was fleeing with her husband, *another wife of her husband and their three daughters*. On their way at the Satiganj Bazar the enemy caught them. The enemy raped Kamrunnesa and one of her daughters in the Bazar. Though she was released somehow she was captured again. This time she was taken to a camp of the enemy near the Jhinadaha thana. Around five hundred to six hundred women were being detained there. The enemy raped all those women and Kamrunnesa time and again in the camp and in the adjacent Notun Court Building. Kamrunnesa witnessed many women to faint and many to die in the course of the rapes. After a few days the enemy deported all these women by trucks to Meherpur. They were being prisoned in a large go down. The Pakistani soldiers did not stop the act of rape. Many of the women were injured and some got pregnant. As Kamrunnesa understood that there was hardly any chance of escape she started acting as a lunatic. She even used to dress up like a crazy person. As she acted very well the enemy started to ignore her. Afterwards a Razakar (collaborator) helped her and she could finally escape.

Comfort Girl and Sexual Slavery:

Dr. M A Hasan
Convener, War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, Bangladesh
Tel. 88 02 8914506, Fax: 88 02 8913819, Mob.: 88 02 01817007921
E-mail: aaesci@aitlbd.net

If we do not analyse the incidents of rape and torture we will never understand how numerous were the ways in which the Pakistani army assaulted the women of our country. Sometimes they have taken the young women of our cities and villages as captives to their camps and bunkers. Days after days the Pakistani army kept the women at their disposal and assaulted them time and again. The Pakistani army also compelled the women living in the vicinity of their camps to pay visits to their camps. Sometimes they used to permit the women to live in their houses if their husbands were killed in the war. And they kept these women on guard so that they could not run away. The enemy used these women as prostitutes for their use. These women were being violated by a number of Pakistani soldiers and they were taken from camp to camp. If they had to leave a camp they used to take these women with them to their next destination. We came across a number of such incidents.

In the May of 1971 Pakistani soldiers abducted Supriya Nayek from the tea garden of Lankapore in Habiganj. Her story is one of the examples of sexual slavery. She was only sixteen; used as a comfort girl by the Pakistani army. On the first day she was taken to a camp of the Pakistani army where a number of them severely assaulted her. That was the beginning. After that she was taken from camp to camp from tea garden to tea garden. She was shown no mercy and the abuse went on. In the eight months of her captivity four to five Pakistani soldiers were raping her every night. Every night used to be the same torture. She had nothing to do but to accept what happened to her. She managed to run away once but was caught and was brought back. Then onwards the torture went on till the dawn of the independence of Bangladesh. During the war almost fifty Pakistani soldiers raped her regularly. She was not given proper food. When she was ill she was not given treatment. They raped her day after day.

After the independence Supriya Nayek came back home. But as people got to know the incident of the torture she faced a lot of tribulations. Even in a free country she had to face a lot of reproach and ignominy. She had to accept conversion and married a freedom fighter that lived in the area of that tea garden. They had two children. But after six months of their marriage her husband abandoned her. She lost everything as her children and home was taken away from her.

I should here retell an experience of mine that may convince the reader about the truth in the incidents narrated by me. We ambushed an armoured vehicle of the Pakistan army near the *Milestone 86* on the road to Sylhet adjacent to Teliapara Tea Garden. I was with my brother pioneer Shaheed Lieutenant Selim and General Matin (retd.). Our anti-tank chain mine destroyed the five ton armoured vehicle carrying Pakistani soldiers. We could see mutilated bodies of the Pakistani soldiers with the armoured vehicle shattered to scraps. As we were busy collecting broken weapons left by the Pakistani soldiers we discovered three handkerchiefs wet with blood. On the corners of each of those handkerchiefs, which were surprisingly not in pieces, three names were knitted. I still remember the name Jamila; she was probably a village girl. From my later research I could assume that these girls received a treatment similar to Supriya Nayek from the Pakistani soldiers.

The Brutality and Perversion of the Pakistani Soldiers:

The Pakistani soldiers violated in the most barbarous manner ever experienced by humanity. The behaviour of the Pakistani soldiers was perverted. They should be lined in the same league with the sadists and psychopaths. Numerous Pakistani soldiers undressed the helpless women one after another in front of many people and raped so violently that the wounds of the assaulted oozed blood. The perverted Pakistani soldiers did not stop there but mutilated the anuses of the women and made them gorge on their own waste and mutilated vaginas. When underage girls whined in pain the enemy mutilated their

vaginas with bayonets. The bit into and scratched on the bodies of the women and left them in a pool of blood. Sometimes they reaped the breasts of the women. The Pakistani soldiers enjoyed very much to put sticks, nozzles of rifles, and uneven tops of bottles through the private parts of the women.

The perversion of the Pakistani soldiers is so terrifying that they could be considered as psychopathic personalities. Their crimes and delinquency should be considered as subjects of scrutiny for psychiatrists. The more there were battles where the Pakistanis lost the more they became rapists. The more the Pakistani soldiers lost contact with general people the more increased the brutality of the sexual tortures. By increasing their torture they wanted to forget the memories of defeats in wars. The psychopath is one whose conduct is satisfactory to himself and to no one else” (G. D. Patridge). But behind perversion of the Pakistani soldier worked sexual repression, impatience and the inspiration of a nation. We could explain this sadism of the Pakistani soldiers this way: “The attainment of sexual gratification through infliction of bodily or mental pain on others by physical or verbal means In a broader, nonsexual sense, sadism refers to any type of cruelty or extreme aggression. The term is derived from the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) who practiced or fantasised a wide variety of perversions which he recorded in a novel entitled *Justine and Juliette, or The Curse of Virtue and The Blessing of Vice.*” As a result to their defeat, perversion and hopelessness the Pakistani soldiers killed many women as the nine month long war ended. They mutilated the vaginal area and stomach of the women and reaped away the breasts of the women with bayonets.

The Pakistani soldiers reaped away the breasts of these women after torturing them in utter disgust and disappointment. At the face of defeat the enemy wanted to distract their minds through the tortures and murders inflicted on these innocent women. These were ways for the Pakistanis to ward of the fear and the guilt of defeat that were imminent. They also wanted to destroy the pride and symbol of womanhood.

The aggressors abduct women as they attack and loot so that they could satisfy their bestial sexuality. In the onslaught of ethnic cleansing the aggressors’ captive the wives and daughters and mothers and sisters to insult their opponents and to make them taste defeat. They not only do that to defile the pride of their opponents but also to satisfy their bestial sexuality. They give in to sexual violence to ward of the guilt and fear of defeat. The genocide and rape committed by the Pakistani soldiers had much more to them than all these reasons that were pointed out. They not only tortured the women in our country to insult us but also plundered and set fire to property and killed young men and Hindus so that they could break the courage of ours’ as a nation and stop the war of liberation. They tortured women so that the future generations are defiled and the survivors run away in fear. And the women of other religions were raped in the name of spreading in them the seeds of the victor.

Numerous cases of violent and brutal abuse on women held in custody around the world have been documented by Reports on Crimes against women. Biting, gnawing, needle pricks beneath the cuticle, penetrating the vagina with firearms, bamboo poles, bottles of hot water, broken glass, chili powder etc. and many other masochistic methods of torture are in prevalence whether perpetrated by the Sri Lanka on the Tamils, or the Hutus on the Tutsis. But during 1971, the brutality unleashed on Bengali women by the Pakistani Army was unprecedented.

A Fact Sheet Based on the Research on rape and Torture of Women in 1971:

1. Number of women raped: 450,000
Number of Rape Victims Who Remained in the Country: 202,527
Number of Rape Victims among Refugees: 131,250 (March-August 1971)

Dr. M A Hasan
Convener, War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, Bangladesh
Tel. 88 02 8914506, Fax: 88 02 8913819, Mob.: 88 02 01817007921
E-mail: aaersci@aitlbd.net

(The second figure cited above was estimated on the basis of the testimony of 267 selected witnesses from 85 thanas in 42 districts. Among the victims 56.50% were Muslim, 41.44% Hindu, 2.06% Christian and other Denominations.)

2. Marital Status of Victims:

- a. Married: 66.50%
- b. Unmarried: 33.50%
- c. Of rape victims among refugees in India 44% were unmarried. Most of the victims, whether married or unmarried, did not return to Bangladesh.
- d. The majority of sex slaves, comfort girls and mothers of war babies were Muslim.

3. Either the husband or other near relatives of 70% of the rape victims were tortured and murdered in front of their eyes.

4. Nature of Persecution:

- a. Spot rape and gang rape: 70%
- b. Rape and torture in prisons and camps: 18%
- c. Rape and torture in other locations: 12%

5. Post-traumatic health problems in women:

Sexually transmitted diseases:

Lasting several months:

- a. White discharge: 80%
- b. Pain in lower abdomen: 66%
- c. Vaginal bleeding: 34%
- d. Excessive bleeding during menstruation (Menorrhagia): 20%
- e. Painful menstruation (Dysmenorrhoea): 50%

d. and e were long-term disorder.

- a. Psychological Problems (Long-term): Depression: 80%
- b. Headaches, restlessness, hopelessness, frustration, etc.: 80%
- c. Sense of shame: 90%
- d. Nightmares: 80%
- e. Psychosomatic disorders: 80%

7% of victims received permanent physical scars.

(These findings are based on physical and psychological examinations carried out on rape victims by the WCFFC with the help of specialists in laboratories and selected hospitals.)

6. Social Position of the Victims after Rape and Torture:

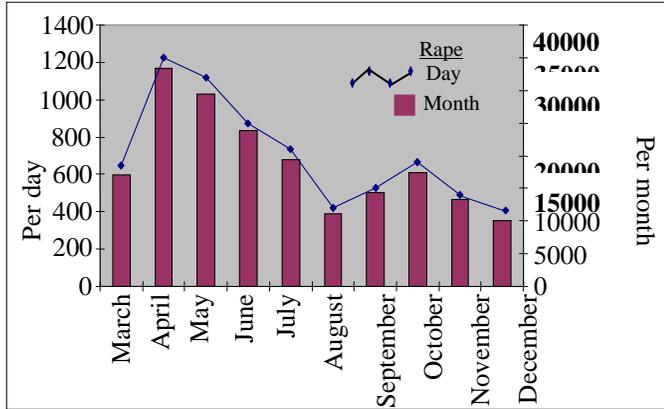
- a. Harassed by husband or abandoned: 7%
- b. Harassed by relatives and kinsfolk: 90%
- c. The majority of victims in the villages received the support of their husbands.
- d. In the cities the victims received less support.
- e. In rural areas victims were married off after the groom's people were informed of her traumatic past.
- f. In cities and among refugees, the rape victims' traumatic past was concealed from their grooms' people at the time of the marriage.
- g. Rape victims were seldom abandoned after marriage:

Hindu: 69.71 lakh, Muslim: 5.41 lakh, others: 0.44 lakh.

There was a correlation between the flow of refugees and the extent and intensity of military oppression from mouth to mouth.

Tables Showing Persecution of Women and Monthly Flow of Refugees:

Abuse and violation of woman

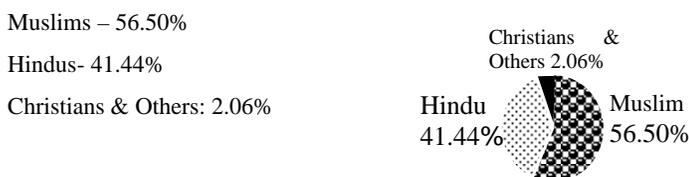


Month	Women Affected	
	Daily	Monthly
March	-	18,527
April	1,166	35,000
May	1,032	32,000
June	833	25,000
July	677	21,000
August	387	12,000
September	500	15,000
October	612	19,000
November	466	14,000
December	-	11,000

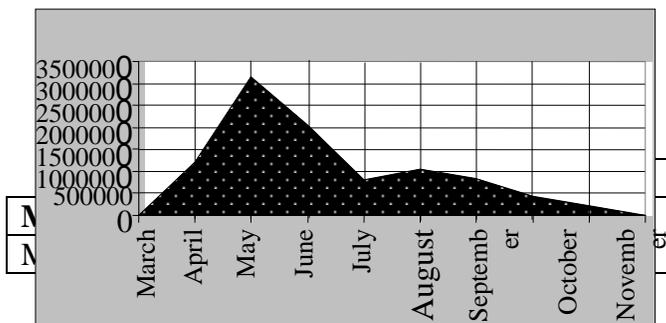
Source: WCFFC

Over thirty months we conducted intensive surveys in 85 thanas in the 42 worst affected districts. We interviewed innumerable people who had been persecuted by the Pakistan Army and its collaborators. The number of rape victims between March and December 1971 that we could trace in these 42 districts came to two lakh two thousand five hundred and twenty-seven. For obvious reasons the survey is complete. Besides, in March and December, in addition to rape, the murder of women was widespread. Information in these unfortunate women remained irretrievable. The figures relating to victims of persecution among refugees have not been included.

Religious Affiliation of Victims:



Monthly flow of Refugee



Convener, War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, Bangladesh
 Tel. 88 02 8914506, Fax: 88 02 8913819, Mob.: 88 02 01817007921
 E-mail: aersci@aitlbd.net

April	40,700	12,21,000
May	1,01,870	31,58,000
June	68,533	20,56,000
July	25,709	7,97,000
August	34,032	10,55,000
September	26,000	8,04,000
October	13,709	4,25,000
November	7,233	2,17,000
December	-	-

Source: Bangladesh Documents

Facts figures and statistics regarding torture may never be complete extent of trauma may be so fathomless that it would remain un-gauge able and unspeakable for many reasons. But the menace of impunity is always perceivable.

Justice and punishment for crimes are imperatives by themselves for asserting the morality of social life and for restoring the dignity of victims. But to prevent repetition of such crime, education and dissemination of information is a must. Probably this discourse is part of that. Without reconstruction of victims' mind, assertion of dignity and self-esteem, there may not be a way for peace and civilization. Peace is only possible through education in broader sense and understanding.

Constructive exposure and engagement with the society can provide the victims an opportunity for a meaningful life. We are longing for a meaningful civilization. It is said, "history of civilization is written in blood and tears". But how much blood is necessary for that, and for how long?

"The righteous is not innocent of the deeds of the wicked" - Kahlil Gibran