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The Participation of women in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971: A Historical Analysis

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ABSTRACT: “If blood is the price of independence, Bangladesh has paid the highest price in the history” ----- (London Times 1971)

This paper quests to know the sacrifices of women in the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. Whenever we conceive the participation of women in the liberation war we only envision the women who were censured and raped. But women also participated in the war as fighters, helping hands, cooks, messengers, Diplomats, Inspiration, medical assistants and also as mothers. Most of the woman in Bangladesh participated in the war sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. Some of our heroines also joined in the front war, among them two women had been awarded as “Bir Pratik”. We know our Liberation war was not an abrupt matter, so the participation of women in liberation war was also not an astonishing thing. If we see the mounting of liberation war, we can see women had participated all the movements as like- Language movement in 1952, The Education Movement in 1962, The six points movement in 1966, The Mass Upsurge in 1969, The Pakistani General Election in 1970, 7th March speech in 1971 at the Race Course Ground. So it was a general matter for women to participate the liberation war. But they had not been recognized according to their sacrifices. They are only Recognized as a ravished woman. The women who forsaken their lives and were raped by the Pakistani Army and their collaborators, we could never recognize them what they deserve. About 4 lakhs and 50 thousand women were abused by the Pakistani Army and their collaborators. So it must be said that women had a great contributions in our liberation war as like as men. So women who participated in our liberation war in any ways, should be given due respect and recognition imitating to their devotion. This paper has endeavoured to present the sacrifices and devotion of women in the liberation war of Bangladesh..

Keywords: *Independence, Liberation War, Recognition, Respect, Sacrifice*

I. INTRODUCTION:

Liberation War of Bangladesh lasted for nine months, but the scratches it left behind in the heart of the people of Bangladesh cannot be demolished in any way. Irrespective of race, cast, gender, profession, age, society everyone spontaneously participated in the liberation war; the participation of women in the war was not as visible as men's was; however, there is no scope for the denial of immeasurable contribution of women in this war. Probably it was indirect, probably it was abstract in many cases, probably it was beyond solid categorization or calculation - the participation or contribution of women in the war of liberation can be well found in the chronicle history of Bangladesh. War mostly studied from a perspective reflecting overt male chauvinism and ego-centrism. The history is mostly men's domain. Where women were not acknowledged as a part of history. In the narratives of the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, women were visible only when depicted as victims. When the war of liberation started, many women took part in the war. Muslim-Hindu-Buddhist-Christian-Women of all religions participated in the liberation war. Not only Bengali, indigenous women had participated in the liberation war. During the war, although the policy of the Government of Bangladesh was not decided to train women in war, prepare them for guerrilla war and give women MPs the leadership of administrative work, the women were neglected in this regard. They expressed a strong desire to participate. They tried their level best to help in any way in the liberation war of Bangladesh. It is a matter of very sorrow that we have been failed to recognize their participation in a proper way and give them proper respect and recognition.

II. OBJECTIVE AND AIMS:

- To find out the actual role of women in the liberation war of Bangladesh.
- To describe their participation in different sectors in the liberation war of 1971.
- To uphold their sacrifices to the whole world.

III. METHODS & MATERIALS

This paper has been completed through primary and secondary data. For this reason, we have collected the data from local freedom fighters. Then we have collected some books which are related to our research. For Data collection, used Historical data collection method and Qualitative data collection method (Interview, Case study).

IV. BACKGROUND OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION:

Bangladesh has great history of freedom. They sacrificed a lot for their freedom. They passed some steps for their freedom. Women participated all the movement of freedom.

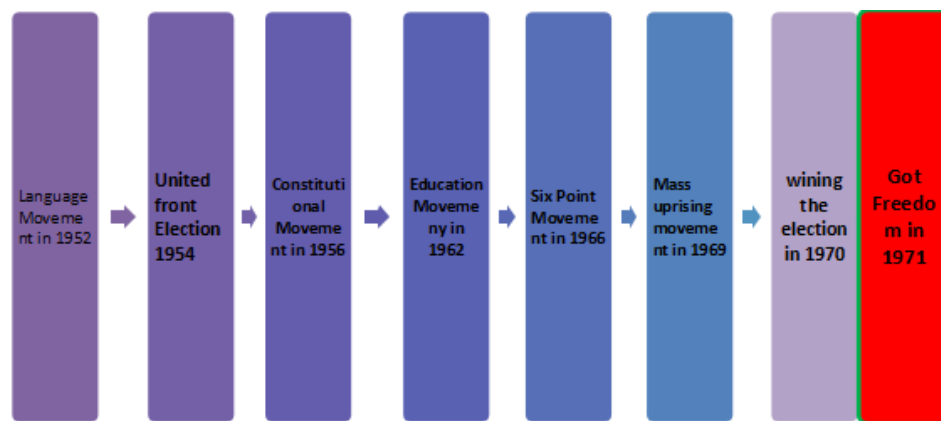


Table: The steps of Bangladesh's freedom

During the Language Movement of 1952, women had a great participation. women were first to hit the streets defying curfew. It was a woman who broke through a barricade at a protest where everyone else was passing under it and a woman who demanded legal justice for the victims of February 21 at a legislative assembly. During The Language Movement it can be seen female students making posters, assembling activists across schools, contributing Processions, chanting slogans in the face of police violence and persisting even through jail time. Women from all over the country rallied for their right to speak in the Bangla language. The 21st February, we reconsider some of these heroines of history. It was really difficult for a girl under that social circumstances. But in 1952 female students took position at the front of procession of language movement. It was an important role from women at the language movement. Police charged batons brutally on a good number of female students and some also were arrested. There were a number of women including Dr Halima Khatun, Dr Sufia Khatun, Rawshan Ara Bachchu, Sufia Ibrahim, Fazilatunnessa, Zulekha, Nuri, Sara Taifur and others among them. In 1952 women like Momtaz Begum, Halima Khatun, Nadera Begum and Novera Ahmed were at the forefront of the language movement. After the Language Movement, in 1954 the United Front election in the East Pakistan and West Pakistan, men as well as women campaigned as agents for the United Front. Halima Khatun, Jannatul Ferdous, Latika N Marak, Ranila Banawari, Yadumani Hajong, Roshan Hasina, Rokeya Mahbub, Hossein Ara Baby, Aftabun Nahar, Mojiren Nesha, Fatema Chowdhury they joined with men (Rokeya Kabir 2012). Unlike the Muslim League, which acquired 9 seats against the United Front. Where United Front acquired 222 seats and they won the election (Muntasir Mamun 2014) Of them, fourteen women including Begum Badrunnesa Ahmed, Ameena Begum, Selina Banu, Razia Banu, Tofatunnessa, Meherunnesa Khatun and Nelli Sengupta were elected members of the Legislative Council (Purokyostho 1999). In 1955 twenty-two girl protesters were arrested along with 200 men for breaking law and order in educational institutions. During Rabindra (The Bengal Poet) Hundred Years Birth Anniversary in 1961, it had been seen greater involvement of women participating in protest marches and rallies pushing forward the demand for Bangla as the state language of East Pakistan. During cultural movement of 1967 women like Rowshan Ara Firoz, Maleka Begum, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Mahfuza Rahman, Rafia Akhter Dolly, Moriom Begum, Motia Chowdhury, Ayesha Khanam, Laila Hasna Banu, and others in the vanguard protested and joined the movement which had evolved significantly to a demand for greater autonomy for East Pakistan. Looking at the pre-context of the Bangladesh Liberation War, it will be seen that this struggle has achieved its

results step by step, where women had a strong role. Women and students had actively participated in the mass movement in 1969. The armed police force of the military junta stormed the protesting students on 5th January. Assaduzzaman was shot dead by police on January 20. Then, from the village house of Shibpur, Asad's mother sent a message to the student leaders saying, 'My Assad did not die, My Assad used to say, "Mother, this motherland will have a new life within the next ten years." Make this dream of my Assad a reality.' Assad's mother reveals to us that the identity of her is a freedom fighter (Begum, Muktijuddhe Nari 2012). At that time, the students have been active in all the processions. East Pakistan Mahila Prishad led by the renowned poet Sufiya Kamal, has joined every day in the liberation movement, mass movement and procession. On 8 February, at 8 am, under the leadership of Sufia Kamal at the Central Shaheed Minar, around half a thousand of women rallied, marched to Bahadur Shah Park (Begum, Nari Andolon Ebong Sufia Kamal 2013). According to Newspaper Azad's data released on March 27, thousands of screened women wearing burqas also joined the procession. Women voted in large numbers in the December 1970 general elections, the last election held under the Pakistani flag. In that election the Awami League (Present Bangladesh) won 162 seats out of 169 with 95.85 percent of the votes cast. Women played a significant role in achieving that result.

When Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced at the race course, the present Suhrawardy Udyan, on the 7th march in 1971. The women joined with some bamboo stick and acquiesced with their leader Bangabandhu. As a result, Dhaka, Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal, Faridpur, Khulna, Ishwardi, Pabna, Sylhet, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Mymensingh - there had been protest, meetings and marches in all the districts. During this time, they started organizing marching and weapons training in districts, cities and towns. On March 7, black flags were seen flying from house to house. In this work the women and the community took a leading role.

V. ROLE IN THE LIBERATION WAR

As a Guerilla: During our liberation war, near the Calcutta Padmapukur Par and Park Sarkas, there was established a Training Camp which name was 'Gobra Camp'. In that camp about 400 freedom fighters were trained. The Awami League woman leader Sajeda Chowdhury took care the camp. The women who were trained. They are Shirin Banu Mittil, Geeta Mujumdar, Geeta Kar, Mukti (Faridpur), Sajeda, Tiyoba, Shrifajessor, Tript, Mukti, Lota, Ruma, Vakti, Bela, Jinatunnesa Talikdar (Rajshahi) (Rahman 2014). The Pakistani military killed Geeta's father in the liberation war of 1971. Geeta was shocked but not afraid; she decided to fight for her motherland. For receiving fighting training, the 15 years old girl left home headed for India. After completing the training, Geeta enlisted her name in the Mukti Bahini. Another woman was Shirin Banu Mittil. She was studying graduation at Pabna Edward College in 1971. Shirin was preparing herself for fighting when got directions from Bangabandhu on March 7, 1971. But being a woman, she was at a disadvantage for participating in direct combat. Even so, her determination helped her to find an alternative. She disguised herself as a boy and joined the war. Rounak Mohal Dilruba Begum, When the liberation war started, Rounak preferred to fight instead of being a refugee in the neighbor country. She also played the role of a trainer and prepared six groups of young people for fighting. Fighting for motherland as a woman is a great satisfaction that shows on Rounak's expression whenever she talks about the war. A girl who was born in Barisal but she had a lot of courage for the country, so she joined the 'Mukti Bahini'. The brave girl name was Alamtaj Begum Chhabi. She joined Peyara Bagan camp in Barisal which was Sector nine under the leadership of Major Jalil. She took extensive training in arms and instruction in weapons and combat techniques from her co-fighters. In her first operation near the Shondha river in Kuriana under the leadership of Siraj Sikder, she did excellent in frontal war. She also joined the operation near the Gabkhan river and Peyara Bagan and also some underground activities. Another woman freedom fighter was Halima Parveen. She lived in Jessore. On May 1971, she joined her first operation and launched an attack on Bagharpara Thana (Police Outpost) and looted their arms and ammunitions. Another operation was at Sheikh-Er-Bazaar operation and Fierce fighting in Srirampur School Camp. She was Captured by Pakistani Army while fighting and taken to Jessore Cantonment. She was brutally tortured by them.

Taramon Bibi was the one of the two decorated female freedom fighters in Bangladesh, engaged in. She fought for the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Army) which was a guerilla force that fought against the Pakistan military in during Bangladesh War of Independence in 1971. She fought in her village home in Shankar Madhabpur, Kurigram District. She fought in Sector 11 under the leadership of Sector commander Abu Taher.

It was Taramon's Godfather, Muhib Habildar, who motivated her to become a freedom fighter. Taramon was about 14 years when she joined the camp. Godfather Muhib trained her how to use arms like the rifle and stein gun. Beacuse she was very strong and had a sacrificed mind for the mother land. Taramon Bibi recalled the first time she attacked the enemy with arms. She was partaking lunch at the camp. Suddenly, the muktijoddhas came to know that a gunboat carrying the Pakistani army was heading towards where they were located. Taramon got prepared for combat with her comrades and together, they succeeded in getting rid of the enemy. Taramon and her camp mates sought refuge in bunkers when the enemy changed their tactic and started

an air-bombing onslaught. The Army searched the camp a few times and hurled bombs killing several people. But fortunately, Taramon escaped from death.

On the other hand, Karuna Begum who lived in Barishal. She commanded a group where five women and ten men went to attack the Pakistani Army's camp. Karuna Begum threw down five grenades to the Pakistani. The Pakistani Army became rudderless and about 10 soldiers were killed in the percussion. Karuna Begum became wounded by the Pakistani's attacking but all the members of her group were safe. Karuna Begum showed the greatest courage in all the battle field in 1971. Forkan who also led a group there were eight women freedom fighters. They are- Shova Rani, Bithika Biswas, Shishir Kona, Shahana Shova, Ashalata Boiddo (Gopalgong), Meherunnesa, Monowara Begum (Patuyakhali), Saleha Begum (Jessor). Begum Jahanara who also belonged to Barishal. She was president and Political Commissioner of the Front Area 1. In this Front area, under her leadership there were few women fighters they are: Monika Ray, Konika Ray, Alamtaj Begum, Sikha, Shova. These women joined the frontal war with a lot of courage. Another woman was Rozina Ansari, she showed a great courage in Patuyakhali, Amtoli, Bamna, Patharghata operation. Nazia Osman Chowdhury, She also joined the Jessor, Kustia, Chuyadanga operations with her husband. At last 6th November she became martyrdom. At the beginning of the war, a few students of Dhaka University took part in the preparations. In 25th March Night, Roshnara Begum who was a student of History Department at Dhaka University, she tied a mine in her chest to kill a platoon Tank Pakistani Army at the inauguration have been summarized in brief but she was not called a martyr (Rokeya Kabir 2012). Anjoli Chowdhury who belongs to Hemayet Bahini, she trained about fifty women for the motherland.

VI. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Women in inspiration: Women played a special role in maintaining the determination of the warriors during the liberation war. In this case, first of all, talk about 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra'. At the time of the country's most popular radio transistor, 'Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra', the opening melody, 'Joy Bangla Banglar Joy ...', when the song was played, who would have been stunned! And the women of Bangladesh were able to do so, including Nasrin Ahmed's suggestion to surrender General Niazi in English News, Shahnaz Begum's voice, 'Sona Sona Sona, Loke Bole Sona ...' Kalyani Ghosh's song 's Purba Digonte Surjo Uthese... On March 28, 1971, Hussein Ara, an announcer of the Chittagong Wireless Center, expressed interest in joining the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. Dr. Hussein Ara was given the declaration of independence of Bangladesh, which was cyclostyle Paper was translated by Manzul Anwar but Ziaur Rahman later gave the Declaration on behalf of the Bangladesh that conservative audiences would not accept it if a female activist read the announcement at a wireless center. When Belal Mohammed wrote some statements to Professor Tamjida Begum on April 18, she read them later on wireless center. Some of the programs at this radio station were - every Monday at 7: 35 minute, 'Ronagone Banglar Nari'. Desh Gothone Banglar Nari was aired daily. Begum Mushtari Saphi, Deepa Banerjee, Shubhra Chowdhury, Ivy Rahman, Dolly Shahnur, Nurjahan Mazhar were the authors of the story. The storyline was Sultana Sarwar Zaman, Meher Khandaker, Begum Mushtaree Shafi, Nurnahar Zahur, Deepita Lohani, Rafiya Akhter Doli. Poet Rosie recited poems at Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. Mushtaree Shafi participated in the program titled 'Bangladesher Mukti Juddhe Sangshkritik Potovumi' (Cultural History of the Liberation War of Bangladesh). Some of the events of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra's were - Jollader Dorbare, Jantar Adalat, Mir Jafarar Rojnamcha. These programs were operated by some people. Women were also played an important role at the programs. Those women were Sumita Devi, Madhuri Chattopadhyay, Kazi Tamanna, Sufia Khatun, Karuna Roy, Tajin Shahnaz and some unidentified women (Rokeya Kabir 2012).

At the beginning of the War of Independence, Sheheena Samad was with the Mukti Shrangame Shilpi Sangshta. During the War of Liberation, the 'Mukti Shrangame Shilpi Sangshta' was a strong organization. she had regular visits to refugee camps in West Bengal. At the invitation of the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (Independent Bangladesh Radio), for the first time, a group member about 5 - 6 people went to record eight songs. Then she got to sing the national anthem again. At first the group started with 17 members, but gradually the number increased to 177 members. Not only the established artists, those who could sing roughly also joined the group. Among the singers at that time were Bangla Bhattacharya, Tarak Ali, Milli Ali, Flora, Sharmi, Naila, Mossad Ali and many names came up in his memory. Although Sheheena Samad played a courageous role in the war through music, she did not have the opportunity to participate directly in the liberation war.

Another artist Kabri Sarwar (Famous Actress of Bangladesh), she spoke at various meetings and societies to organize public events in favor of the War of Liberation and organized cultural events in Kolkata. Quoting a memory of this time, Kabri said, "There is a ceremony I was talking about the situation in Bangladesh, There I illustrate how I left my parents, siblings, relatives and family all in one garment with no clothes on. To say that, I request help from the world to save the people of my country, my mother and my

sister. Then I became fatigued of crying and crying, then I became senseless and I know nothing more. (Hi 2011)"

VII. WOMEN IN FORMATION OF WORLD OPINION:

Freedom fighters had worked to create public opinion for the liberation war inside and outside Bangladesh. Domestic and foreign women, women's organizations organized public meetings by depicting the massacre of Pakistani forces to the people of the world. In the meantime, Noor Jahan Murshid met the Indian Prime Minister and the President to seek support for Bangladesh. She was the delegates of the Mujibnagar Government. Noor Jahan Murshid and a delegate group of Mujibnagar went to meet with the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President V.V. Giri. They also met Foreign Minister Yadav Singh, Defense Minister Jagjivan Ram, Speaker Dhillon and Leader of the Opposition Party of India Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. On the other hand, Dr. Magaduma Nargis Ratna met Mr. Dyes Prime Minister of Tripura to facilitate the refugees of Agartala (Rokeya Kabir 2012). Moreover, Motia Chowdhury and Maleka Begum spoke at various places to seek support for the Bangladesh Liberation War. On 8th April, the immigrant Bengali women marched through the streets of London and made the memorandum on behalf of the Bangladesh gave it to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (Matin 1991). On April 24, representatives from various action committees in Britain convened a meeting. Lulu Bilkis Banu was the chairman of that committee. On May 1st, Ulster City a protest against the first match of the Pakistani cricket team in the city by the Bangladeshi Women. The settler Bangladeshi sought to support the liberation war. Leader of the Student Action Committee was Suraiya Khanam. Munni Rahman, general secretary of the People's Culture Parliament of Bangladesh, played a strong role to collect the support from the foreign Nation (Matin 1991). On March 23, Mrs. Asma Kibria brought Bangladesh flag and cake when she met with the Pakistani ambassador Enayet Karim to Washington house. Bangladesh's struggling leader Ashalta Sen joined Hunger strike in front of the Pakistani embassy in New York with other Bangladeshi.

Bengali women migrants in the UK played a vital role in supporting the Bangladesh War in 1971. Though the Bengali community was not very big during the 1970's, nevertheless a significant number of these women were fully involved within the Bangladesh's liberation movement; offering and extending support in so many different ways. Many of these women took part in various demonstrations, collected money and goods. When America provided two ships of arms and ammunition to Pakistan, one Razia Choudhury carried out hunger strike in front of the American Embassy. To raise funds, they organized coffee morning, fairs, jumble sales, film showings, cultural functions and collecting donations, selling Beetle nut and leaf along with various other Bengali food. Women carried out many activities to raise funds and public awareness including: cultural shows, dance shows, music and drama events. (Romena Toki 2012).

VIII. WOMEN AS A SQUEALER

During the war, information sharing was an important and risky task. Many times men used to bring news in disguise where men could not go the women could collect the news. During the war it was important to print secret leaflets, magazines and to move from one place to another but the brave Bangladeshi women played a vital role to move from one place to another. The newspaper was printed at the Department of Physics of Dhaka University's cyclostyle machine. And also printed on the newspaper of Notre Dame College's cyclostyle machine. At Kalabagan, the duplicate machine printed the newspaper 'Muktijuddho' (Liberation War) from a house. Men and Women had participated in the printing and distribution the leaflets' and Newspaper. Women also played an important role in delivering correspondence from one place to another in the liberation war. Female sex workers collected important information from Razakars and Pakistanis and provided them to freedom fighters (Rahman 2014). Besides, Taraman Bibi used to collect the news of the Pakistani army in disguise of an autistic girl. She collected news and information the freedom fighters. Another woman was Kakon Bibi who was tortured and raped by Pakistani forces while collecting the information for the freedom fighters. Another woman, Bhagirathi trapped the Pakistanis to help the freedom fighters and helped many operations succeed. One day, she was captured by Razakars and hand over to the Pakistanis. For which she had to suffer untold torture and martyrdom. Hannana Begum of 'Bangladesh Mahila Parishad' played a role in exchanging news for the freedom fighters. Begum Sufiya Kamal's two daughters worked till March-June as an informer. Sakina Khatun of Nikoli police station of Kishoreganj took the training to Kashem, the commander of the Pudda Training Center under Nikli's boss. she identified herself as a messenger to the Liberation Army. Meherunnesa Mira of Bagerhat sighted the operation place before the operation and informed the Mukti Bahini about the whereabouts of the Razakars and Pakistanis (Rokeya Kabir 2012).

IX. WOMEN IN MEDICAL CARE:

Women who had not been able to take part in the war had helped the wounded by serving. Women were responsible for nursing the sick or wounded freedom fighters. Women used to serve in the temporary

hospitals that were opened in the border areas or in the Muktanchal (Free Area). Without any nursing training, these women served because of their patriotism. During the Liberation War, Captain Setara joined Bhishramganj Field Hospital, covering sector 2. Captain Setara Begum joined Field Hospital under the Sector 2 in late August (Ullah 2011). The trained women nurses were - Nivedita, Sayeda Kamal, Sultana Kamal, Padma, Gitaa kar, Ira, Anila, Lakshmi, Shobha, Shefali, Ranjita, Yuthika, Anna. Malaria was among the majority of patients in Bangladesh Hospital. Sitara did an impossible task. Regardless of the injured or diseased patient, Dr. Setara and her companions used to reconcile their sick and served them. Hasina Ahmed, Nurunnahar Zahur, Hossain Ara Mannan, Geeta Mazumder (Guptakhali and Agartala), Nazma Khatun, Lutfunnesa (Bongaon Camp), Rokeya Begum, Forida Begum. Hasina Ahmed, Nurunnahar Zahur, Hossein Ara Mannan had also contributed to nursing work in various places of India. Another woman was Dr. Sultana Zaman. She served refugees and their children in India with many other Bangladeshi girls in Kalyani camp. The charge was performed. Tazin Shahnaz, under her leadership, served in Kalyani, another Buddhist woman from Chittagong, Mrs. Suniti Barua, who served the wounded freedom fighters. Among the wounded freedom fighters was the fiction writer Ahmed Safa. Dr. Sayeda Badrun Nahar Chowdhury of Chandpur was a student of the final year of medical college during the war. He served in the service of the wounded fighters during the liberation war. He was always at the camp, either at home or in the boat service. Moreover, Dr Makhduma Nargis Ratna joined the liberation war as a member of the Communist Party. During the nine months of the Liberation war, he volunteered for treatment and serviced in refugee camps and training camps run by the student union and the Communist Party. Also, Dr. Nurunnahar Zahur of Chittagong, Dr. Renuka Barua, Dr. Jobaida was engaged in the service of the Nursing Training Center of Mujibnagar Government - Mrs Badrunnesa Ahmed, Begum Rafia Akhter Doli, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury and Mumtaz Begum (Rokeya Kabir 2012). Moreover, freedom fighter Mohsin Mia was injured by the hands of Biharis in Chittagong after recovering by a Bihari woman's service and he came to his area Noakhali and joined the war (Mohosin 2019).

X. WOMEN PROVIDING FOOD AND SHELTER:

Our Liberation War was the Mass war. Everybody who got chance they helped the freedom fighters. our women had done what they could do for the freedom. But in this case the name of everyone will not end by saying one by one. Women helped the freedom fighters' with provided them food and, at times, shelter. Najia Osman Chowdhury went to the place where her husband used to fight and she took care of the soldiers and the wife of the army. She also cooked food fom them. On the other hand, Laila Samad secretly set up a fund to help the freedom fighters; Nilufar Ahmed Doli used to send food for the freedom fighters etc at Kalabagan in Dhaka. Rokeya Mahbub of Khulna contributed money to the freedom fighters. Pushpa Guha of Barisal worked for food collection for the Freedom fighters. On the Muktagacha of Mymensingh, when Chhaya Basu's husband left for India at the behest of the party, he collected freedom fighters' food, clothes from the country. Rafiya Akhter Doli lived in the Tura camp. In that area,she collected food and clothes for the refugee camp. For this, she had to go to areas like Bangaon, Barasat etc (Rokeya Kabir 2012) . Famous writer Selina Hossain lived in Science Laboratory during 1971. That time she collected the cloths for freedom fighters with poet Humayon Kabir. Journalist Selina Parvin sent the food and assets for the freedom fighters (Supa 2014). Jayonti Rani Ckroborti and Basonti Rani Chokroborti lived in Noakhali (Chakraborty 2019). They were cooking food since 8 months during the liberation war for the Mukti Bahini. Another woman was Hosnera Begum who provided the shelter three freedom fighters at her home about 4 months. Monowara Begum from Cumilla, who also cooking food and provided shelter in her home. Another heroine was Manchura khatun from Noakhali, she hidid the gun of freedom fighters and gave them shelters at her home .For this reason her house was burnt by the Pakistani collaborators during Liberation war of Bangladesh.

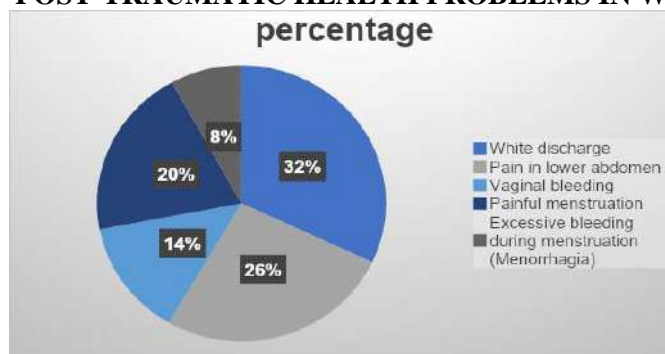
XI. WOMEN ABUSE:

In the war of liberation, we understand the story of mother and sister were raped in the war, but in the war of liberation, women torture also refers to rape and other physical torture of women. According to Dr. Geoffrey Davis, there are 100,000 people who are tortured by Pakistani forces or their accomplices, according to the WCFFC, spot rape70%, Rape and torture in camps 18% and 12% in other location. (A.Hasan n.d.)

Most of the process of torture of women:

- # Raped wife in front of husband
- # Daughter was raped in front of father
- # Raped the sister in law in front of father-in-law
- # Naked women with legs tied up.
- # Pakistani army killed husband and buried his dead body with new widow.
- # Pregnant child and maternal mother were killed by brutal torture of childbirth, full-fledged intestinal and newborn mothers.
- # Breastfeeding women, having vaginal lesions, cutting the genital tract or cutting the flesh

XII. POST-TRAUMATIC HEALTH PROBLEMS IN WOMEN:



Source: War crime Facts Finding Committee

Poet Meherunnesa: The first woman martyr poet Meherunnesa of the Bangladesh Liberation War. He formed an Action Committee on March 7. He was present there at the Racecourse Ground on March 7. On March 27, he, along with his two brothers, raised the flag at the slogan 'Joy Bangla'. She was killed and his head was hung with a fan.

Rama Chowdhury: She was the mother of three sons during the liberation war of May 6. Pakistani forces raided her house on May 5, 1971. She was forced to take her to the adjoining house. That time she was raped. After some time, her house was burned with gunpowder.

Bhagirathi: Bhagirathi of Pirojpur was brutally tortured by a Pakistani army camp. Then Selim, a member of the Pakistani army, released him when the freedom fighters were brought to the news. Thus, she helped the freedom fighters with misinformation to the Pakistani forces. One day she helped the freedom fighter to kill the soldiers for 20 of the Pakistani army. But the Pakistani Collaborators doubted her and took her the Pakistani. Soldier Selim was got order from the Head of the Army Officer to give her brutal death. Selim tied her with Motor Bike and naked her body. Then, Selim ride his bike whole Phirojpur at time Bharirathi's body was blooded and she was died.

Another tragic incident of brutal torture of the Pakistani forces and their allies is that on April 24, a group of local Razakars brought a group of raiders to Haluyaghat. The Razakars pulled the woman from the slope of the river and removed the saree, petticoat and completely uncovered it. Then, lying on the floor, pressing the abdomen on the womb and pulling the baby off the abdomen (Begum, Mukti juddhe Nari 2012).

Sweeper Md. Saheb Ali gave an example of brutal torture of Rokeya Hall (Girls Hall) of Dhaka University. The body of a girl was on the roof. On that body there was no symbol of bullet, fire and others. When he asked an army man, 'why there was no sign of any firing,' the soldier burst into laughter and said that We had killed her by raping.

Dhaka University Professor Neelima Ibrahim and Professor Nausheva Sharafi met some women who left from Dhaka Cantonment, where about a hundred abused Bengali women were voluntarily deporting with Pakistani prisoners. Only thirty to forty women were rescued from there and one of them said, "I will go to a brothel or work in a brothel in a strange country. Even then my identity will remain secret and my husband, son, children will be released from disgrace (Ibrahim 1998)." Bangabandhu returned to the country and honored them with the title of 'Birangana' and promised to assist them in rehabilitation. For the purpose of rehabilitation, the National Rehabilitation and Welfare Foundation and the Women's Rehabilitation Board, apart from providing shelter to the oppressed women, were providing employment opportunities through various training in terms of education and skills. In addition, the abortion law was legalized from January 12 to October 12 in order to prevent unwanted pregnancy and want to be exempt. In Noakhali, A Hindu woman Basonti Rani was brutally raped by Pakistani collaborators (Rani 2020).

By the above mentioned way during the nine months of the war, Pakistani forces carried out brutal and inhumane killings, torture, looting and rape.

XIII. ROLE OF ETHNIC WOMEN IN LIBERATION WAR:

Garó women: Garó people are living in hilly region of Mymensing. In this place Latika N Marak was born. On April, 1971 she reached the Baghmara. According to her Party's decision she exchanged the letter, Leaflet, News. She also collected the News from different camp and she was a messenger of Mukti Bahini.

Rakhine women: Rakhine are located in different areas of Barisal. On July, a Rakhine woman Princa Khey who was captured by Pakistani and was raped in different camp of Pakistani Army. At last she was reached at Baukhali Camp. Then she made a plan and making counterfeit relation with Pakistani. Gradually, Pakistani trusted her. Then she went to a doctor who was the supporter of freedom fighters. He helped Princa Khey to collect the toxin. One day she mixed the toxin with the food and she escaped from the camp. About fifteen Pakistani Army was died to eat that toxic food (Ayub Hossain 2008).

Khashya women: Kakon Bibi was Carrying ammunition to the Mukti Bahini in a 'kolar bhela' this poor Khashya woman from Shunamganj helped blow up a bridge in 1971. She fought with the Mukti Bahini in twenty battles and also served as an informer against the Pakistani forces risking her life and that of her family as all freedom fighters did. She left home for war in 1971 but was held and tortured by the Pakistani occupation forces. She, later, took training on operating arms and joined freedom fighter Rahmat Ali.

She also worked as a secret agent for the Muktibahini (the guerrilla resistance movement formed by the Bangladeshi military, paramilitary and civilians during the War of Liberation).

Kakon Bibi took bullets while fighting at Tengratila in Sylhet in November. The injury marks are still visible on her knee.

One of the ethnic woman Kaket who was Khashya. She was born in Dwara Bazar area of Bangladesh. She used to trade clothes on both sides of the border. As a result, she had good relations with the Razakars. Meanwhile, because of this relationship, she could not take even if she wanted to participate in the liberation war. She finally helped the freedom fighters to collect the news from the Razakars. Based on her information, the Mukti Bahini succeeded in an operation. When the Razakars realized that she was handed over to the Pakistanis. She was subjected to untold torture. At one point, the Pakistani army, without receiving any news from her, they launched a stream roller on her. Eventually she died.

Chakma Woman: Gomati Chakma woman was tortured and raped by the Pakistanis. Moreover, Jotprabha, Bashundhara Dewan indirectly assist the freedom fighters.

In addition, a woman from Tripura in Mahalchari in the Chittagong Hill Tracts was raped by the Mizobahini.

XIV. HOW THEY TREAT IN OUR SOCIETY AT POST-LIBERATION WAR

One of the greatest shortcomings in the perception of our fight for Independence is our consistent failure to recognize the role of women in our Liberation War.

- The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu sheikh Mujibur Rahman entitled them 'Birongona'(War Herione).
- After the death of Father of the Nation, the participation of women is largely ignored, denied and misconstrued in our mainstream history. War heroes include those women who have supported the valiant freedom fighters with food, shelter, funds, who have nursed the wounded and hid weapons risking their own lives.
- They also include those who have willingly given their sons to war, who have lost their loved ones.
- Even worse been subjected to sexual abuse and still survived to tell their stories.
- Some Women were collecting fund and strike to stop the Genocide but they are still remaining in Darkness.
- Some were died without treatment for need of money.
- Some faced many crisis and exploited by radiant people.
- Some women who were raped they faced a lot of problem in the society, some committed suicide, some lost their fertility .

XV. DISCUSSION

This is because of our general tendency to think of war only in terms of physical fighting and exchange of gunshots. But our liberation war or any war for that matter, which has involved the entire population of the country, has been a struggle through which a united nation has asserted its aspiration for freedom. Such wars are not fought only in the battlefields neither are they fought only with guns. It was known that about 1.4 million women were abused someway. Some women were taking part in frontal war, medical services, collecting news, cultural activities, as a diplomat, collecting fund and giving food and shelter. If we guess directly or indirectly minimum 1.5 million women were participated and raped in the war. But only 273 women were acknowledged as freedom fighter. Out of the total of 676 gallantry awards, only two women were denominated as Bir Protik Taramon Bibi and Dr. Sitara Begum Rahman.



XVI. CONCLUSION:

Liberation is not a mere concept or feeling; just to come in touch of this feeling a country or a person needs to undergo extreme and violent circumstances. It is almost established that if a war takes place anywhere, women and children become the worst victims of brutality and atrocity. This saying did not come differently for Bangladeshi women. They also had to essentially suffer the torture conducted by Pakistani armies. What is the most precious possession for a Bengali woman is her honor and this very thing was plundered during the Liberation War. So this blow came more strikingly for them, in front of which sacrifice of life became vulnerable. But still Bengali women did not step behind, they stepped side by side with their male counterparts. They in most cases took arms in their hands in order to take revenge on those people who killed their dearest ones in front of them. So it will be less if the sacrifice and role of women during the Liberation War is counted in words; rather it is our heartfelt and immense gratitude which only can uphold the glory of their struggle. The women who have a great contribution in our liberation war. The village women who supported our freedom fighters. The collected food, clothes and provided them shelter. The women who didn't live in this country perhaps the immigrant women of Bangladesh who played an important role to stop the genocide in Bangladesh. They also worked to collect the fund. They joined the Hunger strike in different countries. The Ethnic people were joined the liberation war, the ethnic women were too. Jahanra Imam who sacrificed her son in the war. She is called Shaheed Janani (Mother of Martyr). Another woman was Sheikh Faziluttnesa Mujib who sacrificed her whole life for the country and helped her Husband (Father of the Nation) during his struggle time. Her two sons Sheikh Kamal and Sheikh Jamal were Freedom Fighters. Another woman was Johora Tajoddin she also joined the liberation war as a helping Hand of her husband. So it can be said, women have a great contribution in the liberation war of Bangladesh.

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