

**Fractured Narratives, Totalizing Violence:
Notes on Women in Conflict – Sri Lanka and
Pakistan**

Neloufer de Mel

Working Paper Series # 83
2003

All rights reserved. No part of this paper may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission of the publisher.

A publication of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

The opinions expressed in the papers are solely those of the authors, and publishing them does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the opinion by the SDPI.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute is an independent, non-profit research institute on sustainable development.



WP- 083- 002- 065- 2003- 022

© 2003 by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute

Mailing Address: PO Box 2342, Islamabad, Pakistan.
Telephone ++ (92-51) 2278134, 2278136, 2277146, 2270674-76
Fax ++(92-51) 2278135, URL:www.sdpi.org

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Totalizing Violence.....	3
Fractured Narratives	6
Comparative Notes	8
Overlapping Her stories: Strategies of Survival	11

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute is an independent, non-profit, non-government policy research institute, meant to provide expert advice to the government (at all levels), public interest and political organizations, and the mass media. It is administered by an independent Board of Governors.

Board of Governors

Dr Amir Muhammad
Chairman of the Board

Mr. Javed Jabbar
President, MNJ Communications Pvt. Ltd

Mr. Irtiza Husain
Director, Pakistan Petroleum Ltd

Ms Khawar Mumtaz
Coordinator, Shirkat Gah

Mr. Shamsul Mulk
Minister For Irrigation, NWFP

Dr Abdul Aleem Chaudhry
Director, Punjab Wildlife Research Centre

Mr. Mohammad Rafiq
Head of Programme IUCN, Pakistan

Dr Zeba A. Sathar
Deputy Country Representative, Population Council

Mr. Malik Muhammad Saeed Khan
Member, Planning Commission

Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy
Professor, Quaid-e-Azam University

Karamat Ali
Director, PILER

Dr Saba Khattak
Executive Director, SDPI

Under the Working Paper Series, the SDPI publishes research papers written either by the regular staff of the Institute or affiliated researchers. These papers present preliminary research findings either directly related to sustainable development or connected with governance, policy-making and other social science issues which affect sustainable and just development. These tentative findings are meant to stimulate discussion and critical comment.

Fractured Narratives, Totalizing Violence: Notes on Women in Conflict – Sri Lanka and Pakistan¹

Neloufer de Mel

Abstract

Comparative studies are fraught sites of analysis. Issues of generalization, specificity, historical context and audience/readership challenge the comparative study. In looking for commonalities, generalizations may occur, erasing the specific nuances of each situation. Setting out a detailed context for each situation within the format of a paper or presentation has its challenges too as it necessitates a condensing of events. Such a collapsing of events is always a selected data. The selection is one privileged by the scholar according to available material, his/her research goals and interests. However, comparative studies can be useful in understanding how systems of social control and resistance work. In drawing on the oral archive collected for the SDPI project on women survivors of the violence in Karachi, and research carried out in Sri Lanka on the affects of its multiple sites of violence, this paper attempts to understand better the processes of militarization, patriarchy, and feminist resistance and survival in both countries, albeit in differing contexts. The issues raised have significance for scholars and activists in South Asia working for social and political change, good governance, de-militarization and gender equality. They are particularly pertinent to South Asian women's movements in presenting challenges for future platforms of action.

Deleted: ¶

The birth of Pakistan and the emergence of Sri Lanka as a postcolonial nation happened in vastly differing circumstances. The scale of the violence and bloodshed of partition that led to Pakistan was a far removed reality from the sedate ceremony of Sri Lankan independence, obtained on the back of British withdrawal from India. These 'births' had their impact on each nation's military. The Pakistan army was a highly visible force at partition, supervising the evacuation of refugees and their welfare, charged with the task of restoring authority to the civil administration.² The Sri Lankan army on the other hand was largely regarded as ceremonial.

However, this did not mean that both countries did not share a legacy of militarization bequeathed by British colonial rule. Force was used by the British in both Sri Lanka and India to quell anti-colonial dissent. Once independence was won, the nationalist leaders used these same structures of state coercion to police, regulate and contain their own citizens. Pakistan has seen successive military coups and military governments. Although defeated in two wars with India, continuing enmity with its neighbour has accorded the military a central role in Pakistani politics and foreign policy today. Its militaristic ambitions have reached its apogee in the country's nuclear weapons program. Apart from the major wars between Pakistan and India over Bangladesh and Kashmir, and the protracted separatist war in Sri Lanka, both states have also dealt with uprisings from groups like the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). Communalism, state authoritarianism, unemployment, distorted

1. This paper was commissioned by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan. The research on militarization in South Asia the paper draws on was supported by a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur research and writing grant.
2. Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan 1947-1997*, Lahore, Sang-E-Meel publications, 2000, pp. 48-9.

distribution of resources, poverty, language and caste discrimination have been some of the major causes for these insurrections.

The uprisings themselves have been brutal and their suppression by the State has seen the threshold of violence escalate. Sri Lanka's post-coloniality has been marked by repeated states of Emergency declared by various governments, policed and maintained through its armed forces. Both uprisings of the JVP in the south of the country were brutally crushed. The JVP, comprised largely the youth from the south of Sri Lanka, took to armed struggle for a socialist state. The 1971 uprising was quelled in a matter of three months by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, raising concerns at the time about its methods.³ The second JVP insurrection from 1987-1991, far more ruthless than the first to begin with, saw a retaliatory response from the UNP government of Ranasinghe Premadasa unprecedented in its brutality. Thousands of youth, mostly male, but female too, were 'disappeared'. Estimates vary on the numbers of 'disappeared'. The Presidential Commission into Involuntary Removal proved 7239 cases from an alleged 8739 reported to it. Of these, 4858 cases were at the hands of state forces while 779 were JVP instigated.⁴ However, journalists and scholars who have written on this period place the figure much higher, at an estimated 40,000.⁵ Meanwhile, the methods adopted by the security forces to quell the JVP had been honed to near-perfection in their operations against Tamil youth. From the 1970s onwards, the demand for a separate state of Tamil Eelam in the north and east had been met with force by the State. Para militaries, arbitrary arrests, abductions, detention without trial and rape became part of the reality of the north and east. The war between the Sri Lankan state and the Tamil Tigers since 1983 turned the Sri Lankan military into an estimated combined fighting force of about 210,000 today.⁶ It has come a long way from its ceremonial role at independence.

State repression and counter-insurgency have perpetuated a militarized society in both countries. Military checkpoints at the airports, on the roads, at entrances to buildings are common. In Pakistan a military government is in place. Its restaurants and private houses have armed guards. A mixture of feudal authority, religious dogma and disregard of the right to life has seen violence against women escalate. Honour killings have the sanction of the State. In Sri Lanka the level of political thuggery has risen to a new high with armed guards of politicians patrolling the streets, engaged in private and political vendettas. Elections are routinely disrupted by violence. University students, albeit a handful but a significant number given the disruptions they cause, settle scores and arguments by resorting to violence in the first instance. Army deserters operate freely in Sri Lankan villages. Incidents of armed robbery and domestic violence are high.⁷ Militarization as a social process and militarism as an ideology has taken hold, affecting all social aspects from political practice to the production of culture, education and the media. In seeping into institutions not directly connected with war, they have a presence even in peacetime and are therefore 'larger' than a particular war and battlefield.⁸

3. The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) in Colombo issued statements about the human rights abuses of the SLFP government in crushing the insurgents.
4. *Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal and Disappearance of Persons in the Western, Southern and Sabaragamuwa Provinces*, Colombo: Dept. of Government Printing, Sept. 1997, pp.13.29 and 159.
5. Rohan Gunaratne, *Sri Lanka A Lost Revolution?: The Inside Story of the JVP*, Kandy: Institute of Fundamental Studies, 2001, p.269, and C.A.Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka, The Years of Terror – The JVP Insurrection 1987-1989*, Colombo: Lake House Bookshop, 1991, p.312.
6. The estimated breakdown is as follows: the Sri Lanka army – 110,000, air force – 8000, navy – 12,000, police – 80,000.
7. Womens' Rights Watch (ed. Kumuduni Samuel, Colombo, Women and Media Collective) documented incidents of domestic violence as reported in the Sri Lankan press from 1997-9.
8. See Anuradha Chenoy, 'Militarization, Conflict and Women in South Asia,' in Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (eds.) *The Women and War Reader*, New York and London: New York University Press, 1998, p.101.

Totalizing Violence

While we should be wary of regarding violence as endemic to our societies, and while there are peace movements in both countries which lobby for de-militarization, in contemporary time, militarization and violence have become, particularly for its survivors in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, totalizing experiences. For the women interviewees who suffered directly under MQM, JVP and/or State violence, their intense trauma has an endless quality.⁹ That the conflicts, whether in Karachi or the Sri Lankan north/east are on-going, further the climate of apprehension. Violence draws on an already existing repertoire for organized collective action amongst societies¹⁰, and in becoming embedded in local contexts can surface long after riots and mob violence themselves have abated.¹¹ Thus, Saroja, a survivor of the July 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom in Sri Lanka, experiences violence first-hand at the hands of her Sinhala landlord in 1987, four years later. Any unrest or dispute can spark off violence of a communal nature. For her, to be Tamil, is to live in fear,¹² always in anticipation of violence.¹³ Women in Karachi, interviewed for the SDPI project, spoke of the uncertainties of their lives as always present.

There is always danger in Karachi. Every mother worries about her son. We always panic when a husband or son or daughter goes out. Every mother prays to Allah that they come back safe and sound. - AM

In Sri Lanka, during 1987-1991, the period of the JVP uprising (the violence tapered off around 1992), families witnessed summary abductions, bodies burning on the roadside or tied to lamp posts. Words associated with torture, informants and death such as vadakagaraya (torture chamber), billa (informant), and athurudahanwoowo (the disappeared) became commonplace.¹⁴ That period came to be known as bheeshanaya yugaya or the reign of terror, and its overwhelming climate of fear and anxiety seeped into the consciousness of the community as a totalizing period of violence and terror.

For some of the women who lived through these periods and witnessed the abductions and killings of their sons, husbands and brothers, there was another factor that contributed to the feeling of overwhelming, all pervading violence: Patriarchy and its links with aggression. Patriarchy and constructions of masculinity have shaped militarism's mindset from the outset,¹⁵ and feminist scholars have convincingly established the links between militarism, masculinity and patriarchy.¹⁶ War has, for centuries based itself on male aggression and prowess, and weaponry taken on phallic designs. Women

-
9. This paper draws on interviews carried out by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, with women affected by MQM/State violence in Karachi, the Psychosocial Epidemiological Survey (PSE survey) on victims of conflict in the north and south east of Sri Lanka, my interviews with women who suffered during the 1987-1991 'reign of terror' in the south of Sri Lanka, and scholarship on the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom in Sri Lanka.
 10. Veena Das, 'Introduction: Communities, Riots and Survivors,' in *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, p.22.
 11. Valli Kanapathipillai, 'July 1983: The Survivor's Experience,' in Veena Das (ed.) *Mirrors of Violence*, op.cit., p.326.
 12. Ibid., p.328.
 13. See Pradeep Jeganathan, 'In the Shadow of Violence: "Tamilness" and the Anthropology of Identity in Southern Sri Lanka,' in Tessa J. Bartholomeusz and Chandra R. de Silva (eds.) *Buddhist Fundamentalism and Minority Identities in Sri Lanka*, New York: New York State University Press, 1998, pp.89-109.
 14. Sasanka Perera, *Stories of Survivors: Socio-Political Contexts of Female-Headed Households in Post-Terror Southern Sri Lanka*, Vol.1, Colombo: Women's Education Research Centre, 1999, p.19.
 15. Chenoy, p.101.
 16. See Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, London and New Delhi: Sage, 1997, Chapter 5, and Cynthia Enloe, 'All the men are in the Militias, all the women are Victims: The Politics of Masculinity and Femininity in Nationalist Wars,' in *The Women and War Reader*, pp.50-62.

have been kept out of state military establishments or when incorporated into them, have been given jobs as support staff, thereby reinforcing the war front/war rear binary – analogous to the public/private - that is deeply gendered. Such a sexual division of labour as well as the gendering of war are organizing principles of state militaries as well as non-state militias today. Even in a group like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) waging a war with the Sri Lankan government for a separate Tamil state, its women cadre occupy an ambiguous position within its ranks. The LTTE women cadre are frontline combatants, part of the elite squad of suicide bombers known as Black Tigers, and enjoy the sanctity of martyrdom (an ideological bedrock of the LTTE), as much as the male combatants. However, there are many patriarchal containments in place that circumscribe these women, showing a significant unease on the part of the LTTE's male establishment about the transformations taking place in the traditional roles of Tamil women.¹⁷ In the so-called 'unclear' areas, held by the LTTE, there are reports of women serving as judges at ad-hoc trials, but there are no women in significantly high positions on the LTTE's Track 1 team, for instance, that currently negotiates with the Sri Lankan government for a political solution to the Tamil question.¹⁸

Like in the MQM, there is a strong leadership cult within the LTTE, which invests, heavily in the male leadership. Women active in the MQM in the mid 1990s unconditionally accepted the decisions of Altaf Hussain and publicly expressed their total commitment and faith in him. The slogans of 'we need our leader and not the destination' and 'death for all who betray leadership' were an index of the intensity of this allegiance to Hussain.¹⁹ Similarly, at the crux of the LTTE is a personality cult of its leader Prabhakaran that produces a powerful, pervasive male discourse. Large cut-outs of the LTTE leader dominated Jaffna, the stronghold of the LTTE until 1995. In the volume of inspirational Tamil Eelam songs entitled 'Songs from the Red-Blossomed Garden', released by the LTTE and repeatedly played in public places in the north so that they replaced the once popular Hindi cinema music, Prabhakaran is invested with the aura of a deity.²⁰ More recently, a 47-foot cut-out of Prabhakaran, along with two huge maps displaying what he has achieved on the road to Eelam and what he hopes to achieve, dominate Mallavi in the Vanni.²¹ In LTTE propaganda, women militants are represented as a site on which its leader Prabhakaran's foresight is inscribed. Adele Ann, the Australian born wife of Anton Balasingham, one of the LTTE high command, stated:

The credit for providing and creating the facilities and opportunities for women to complete a comprehensive military training programme has to be given to the leader of the Liberation Tigers Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran. He was confident that women had the potential for military training and combat. Unlike many of his fellow cadres caught up in the male chauvinist conceptions of women and their place in society, Mr. Prabhakaran was determined that women should have equal opportunities for participation in all aspects of the armed struggle. Even he admits, however, that women have exceeded his expectations of them.²²

-
17. See Neloufer de Mel, *Women and the Nation's Narrative*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2001, chapter 5.
 18. Talks between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE began following the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both parties on 22nd February 2002. The talks are facilitated by the government of Norway.
 19. Anis Haroon, 'They Use Us and Others Abuse Us': Women in the MQM Conflict,' in Rita Manchanda (ed.) *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency*, New Delhi: Sage, 2001, p.185.
 20. *Counterpoint* 1 no.8, November 1993, p.11.
 21. The University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR) Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Information Bulletin no. 23, *The Island*, February 2, 2000, p.12.
 22. Adele Ann, *Women fighters of the Liberation Tigers*, Jaffna: LTTE, 1993. p.7

Here is the male who ushers in, and creates a space, for women within his organization. He is thus the midwife of their agency. The LTTE women refer to him as the ‘King of the Tigers’.²³ In amassing personality cults around themselves in this way, neither Altaf Hussain nor Velupilla Prabhakaran is, of course, inventing history. Many guerilla movements have been dependent on highly centralized organizational structures and leadership cults for their success. But that LTTE women cadres have to negotiate this reality is the implicit tension that binds them. That even a book on the LTTE women such as the one written by Adele Ann, has to open with a full page photograph of Prabhakaran, paying homage to his leadership and foresight, perpetuates a reliance of these women on the male leadership which ultimately reinforces a gender hierarchy that privileges the male.

If militarism is buttressed by masculinity and sanctions masculinist aggression, the experiences of domestic violence suffered by some of the women affected by MQM/State violence in Karachi are of a piece with it. Research conducted on the war in former Yugoslavia revealed that during the conflict there was 1) an increase in the numbers of sons committing violence against their mothers, 2) an increase in assaults involving weapons including pistols and hand grenades, 3) an increase in violence within marriages of mixed ethnicity, 4) an increase in alcohol consumption of men who have returned from combat or security operations and 5) a link between economic decline, especially refugee status, and wife battery and rape.²⁴ AK’s narration of being beaten up by her husband, and of earlier reprimands and beatings by her mother who chided her as the eldest child even when her younger siblings did wrong, are part of the pervasive presence of violence in her life since childhood. The internecine violence between the MQM and the Haqiqi which killed her son is for her, a continuing story of that violence, albeit its most intense manifestation.

Yet another contributing factor to the narration of totalized violence is that the arrival of these women in Pakistan is so overwhelmingly grounded in the violence of partition. As urdu-speaking mohajirs, domiciled in Sindh and marginalized over a period of time, their very identities cannot be divorced from the facts of partition. The starting point of the interviews, which asks how the women came to Pakistan, predicates this narration. The violence at partition forms a prologue to the present, and the violence in Karachi is represented as a continuing, episodic experience of terror. For the women of Sri Lanka who suffered during the ‘reign of terror’ and formed the backbone of the Mothers’ Front (a successful protest movement comprising the mothers, wives and sisters of the ‘disappeared’ which was formed in 1991), there was, however, no such memory of continued historical violence, although they had suffered caste and political discrimination.²⁵ The systematic intrusion of State violence into their homes and lives happened only once the JVP uprising began in 1987.²⁶ However, in Jaffna, in the north of Sri Lanka, and in the northeast, State terrorism against the Tamil population had begun much earlier. Linked to the demand for a separate Tamil state of Eelam, from the 1970s onwards Sri Lankan Tamils living in these areas experienced interrogations, arrests, torture and killings by the State, and provocative as well as retaliatory violence from the militant Tamil groups operating in Jaffna at the time.²⁷

23. Peter Schalk, ‘Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamililam,’ in Joyce Pettigrew (ed.) *Martyrdom and Political Resistance: Essays from Asia and Europe*, Comparative Asian Studies 18, 1997, p.70.

24. Jennifer Turpin, ‘Many Faces: Women Confronting War,’ in *The Women and War Reader*, p.7.

25. Many of the youth who were killed or disappeared during 1987-1991 belonged to the opposition JVP or Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). Caste enmity in villages also played a role, motivating police informants.

26. 1987-1991 marks the second phase of JVP uprising in the south of Sri Lanka. The first JVP insurrection was in April 1971. It was far less violent than the second phase, although at the time it too elicited a brutal response from the government of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike which crushed the JVP in a matter of 3 months.

27. See E.M.Thornton and R. Niththyananthan, *Sri Lanka, Island of Terror: An Indictment*, Middlesex: Eelam Research Organisation, 1984, and Rajan Hoole, Daya Somasundaram, K. Sritharan and Rajani Thiranagama, *The Broken Palmyra*, Claremont: The Sri Lanka Studies Institute, 1990, Chapter 2.

Fractured Narratives

Gameela Samarasinghe, in an essay entitled ‘Coping with emotions Towards Perpetrators of Violence’ notes that the notion of post-trauma stress disorder is a misnomer.²⁸ Her analysis is based on a Psychosocial Epidemiological Survey (PSE Survey) she carried out with a team of researchers, interviewing 347 people who suffered the loss of their family members in both the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict and the JVP-State ‘reign of terror’. Analyzing 24 interviews from Vavuniya, a district in the northern province of Sri Lanka and a battleground of forces ranging from the State, the LTTE and other Tamil para-military groups, and 54 interviews from Moneragala, in the south-eastern province which witnessed JVP-State terror as well as attacks by the LTTE, Samarasinghe concludes that strong emotions exist amongst these people after the event of abduction and/or killing itself. The JVP-State violence in the south tapered off in 1992, but for its victims, the violence is still very immediate. Narrating the events, which is simultaneously also a quest for a meaning to their experience, made for a continuity of the emotions they first experienced during the initial trauma. Many of the women of the Mothers’ Front interviewed in Matara for my own research on how their lives have been shaped ten years after the violence, still began their narrative with weeping.²⁹ The SDPI archive foregrounds the somatic symptoms many of the Karachi women suffer long after the event of violence. They complain of joint pains, high blood pressure, and dizziness. Added to these symptoms is the presence of coping strategies that point to the continuing affects of violence on survivor’s lives. The ‘postness’ of the stress is a site of contention. That the trauma is never, and can never be, quite over, contributes to the totalizing effect violence has on the lives of its victims.

Narrative is a rich site of how people negotiate the meanings of violence. Narrative and oral testimonies have now come to be recognized as an important part of historiography, hitherto neglected for a focus on the State and the hegemon. Collecting an archive of oral testimonies from victims of violence, from women, from people of colour, from the poor, albeit beset by a host of thorny methodological issues, enables a more holistic perspective on events, foregrounds those hidden from history and changes the focus of how we analyze and present history itself. Memory, the folk tale, laughter, discrepancies, silence, tears, are not extraneous but a part of history and people’s interpretation of historical events. They foreground psychological, psychosocial and cultural transformations that follow particular events with their economic and political outcomes.

Oral narrative can take radically different forms to written narrative. There is less linearity and chronological order in orality, and people can dwell a long time over what seems trivial, and barely speak a word on the most central experiences of their lives. The French literary theorist Pierre Macherey noted that in a text (and this applies to both the oral and written):

It is ...silence which tells us ...of the precise conditions for the appearance of an utterance, and thus its limits, giving its real significance, without, for all that, speaking

28. Gameela Samarasinghe, ‘Coping with Emotions Towards Perpetrators of Violence,’ Asia Foundation Monograph series, forthcoming.

29. Neloufer de Mel, *Women and the Nation’s Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in 20th Century Sri Lanka*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2001, chapter 6. This research tracked the women of the Mothers’ Front 10 years after its successful emergence as a protest movement in Sri Lanka. It is noteworthy however that only the women interviewed in Matara, who were heavily dependent on the patronage of a Minister belonging to the Peoples’ Alliance government, began their narrative with weeping. For the other women, interviewed in different regions of southern Sri Lanka, and members of various activist groups working on development and peace-building, weeping was not a part of their narration. Weeping denoted, therefore, a qualitative insecurity and dependency on the part of the Matara women.

in its place. The latent is an intermediate means: this does not amount to pushing it into the background; it simply means that the latent is not another meaning which ultimately and miraculously dispels the first (manifest) meaning. Thus, we can see that meaning is in the relation between the implicit and the explicit...

What the work cannot say is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is acted out, in a sort of journey to silence.³⁰

Macherey points to the unspoken, what the narrative cannot say, as capturing a text's location within ideological, class, nationalist, (and we can add, gender) configurations. The language of silence is also particularly prevalent in the oral tale, which relates a trauma. The charged emotional reality of the survivor is expressed in a silence that is the very 'elaboration of the utterance' rather than having nothing to say. The silence, the denial, is also, as we shall see later, coping strategies. They are also strategies of survival. In the case of people co-existing with the perpetrators of violence, in an environment of intimidation, rumour and fear, silence is vital for survival. When asked about her thoughts on the MQM and Haqiqi factions, AZ, a respondent from Karachi whose husband is in the police and has lost two sons in MQM instigated violence said

I cannot say any thing about it because I don't have interest in politics.

The refusal to enter into a dialogue about the political motivations of militant groups, or hesitancy to openly express feelings of resentment and revenge against the perpetrators of violence was also noted by Gameela Samarasinghe. People in Vavuniya for instance, living amongst and negotiating with Sate security forces, the LTTE and other Tamil para militaries, were similarly vary of forthrightly expressing their views and reluctant to be drawn into discussions of a political nature.

In terms of narrative form, the oral tale produces diverse registers. Language can shift from the standard to dialect. Historical, mythological and religious narratives are intertwined. Testimony, the interview, dialogue and conversation become part of the narration. In the oral testimony therefore, the tight disciplinary boundaries of written forms get displaced for a more heterogeneous narrative. Where the shifts in narrative occur and why they take particular forms are rich sites of analysis into the genealogies of narrative as well as the dominant discourses available to it. The discourses are often predicated on ideological bedrocks – for instance, what does patriarchy allow women to express and how – as well as historical circumstances. The vagaries of success on the part of militant groups or the State, and public opinion of them, dictate whether a woman survivor of violence who has sympathies with either party, sounds defiant or defeated. The narrative is also determined by the age of the narrator. Hopes for the future animate the narratives of younger women, while a sense of fatalism and despondency can be heard in those of older women.³¹ In narrating life histories, the oral form also shifts in tone, register and mood according to the time of life being recalled.³² That the act of mourning itself is gendered with women and men taking on different roles, dictates that women express their grief differently to men. The lament can also be a meaningful and defiant mode of speech through which women make the connection between what has happened to their kith and kin, and the larger world of politics that engulf them. As Veena Das

30. Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trnsl. Geoffrey Wall, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, pp.86-7.

31. Lubna Chaudhry, 'Constructions/Transmissions of Self by Women in Conflict Situations,' presentation at the SDPI workshop on 'Women, Conflict, and Security', Islamabad, August 2001.

32. Nafisa Shah, 'Stories of Survival: Genealogies of Death in the Narratives of Suffering of Afghan Women,' presentation at the SDPI workshop on 'Women, Conflict, and Security'.

states ‘through mourning women (become) the interlocutors between the domain of kinship and politics.’³³ In their laments both the private and the public meet. Thus the respondent’s gender, age and class, the materiality of the interview – its location, the time of day, who else is present – as well as the ideological and discursive paradigms that frame the re-construction of self impact on the narrative and its forms.

The oral tale can encompass a sophisticated world-view, presented through figures of speech. IJ, a Karachi respondent notes:

Enmity is a complete thing, it is an organization, it is a chain if you take out one link then the other will be there. It lasts if it is not finished from the root or the base.

Describing her harrowing experience of chaperoning her daughter to an exam through a hail of bullets during a street gun battle, she marks their sense of utter isolation in these terms:

We asked the police people to help us cross the road and a baby bird was not even passing on the road and we said that help us cross the road. We were in bad shape because of our fear.

It is the speaker’s subjectivity that is foregrounded. Here, the woman’s subjectivity is keenly gaged to the surrounding environment in which she sees the earth and sky as indifferent, hostile and forlorn. Where there is no predetermined interview structure, the organization of the narrative reveals a great deal about the speakers’ relationship to their history.³⁴ Agency can be mapped in the way women choose to construct themselves and their community through narrative. The narratives, often, do not have a definite sense of closure. They interrogate, therefore, the notion of a history that is ‘complete’.

The silences, denials and contradictions in oral narrative are also coping strategies which encompass ‘moderators’ that regulate avoidance, denial, vigilance, irritation and other behaviours caught in interviews.³⁵ Narratives have the power to go against the grain of the carefully edited, officially sanctioned account of events. Its ellipses, moments of hesitancy, outpourings of grief etc. are representations of how people really feel and attempt to make meanings of their lives. Particularly when systems of socio-political justice have broken down, survivors find it more important to narrate events than find causes for them.³⁶ How the scholar/historian in turn represents these narratives, without seeking, in re-transmission and analysis, to substitute and thereby undermine their content, tone, mood, heterogeneity and agency, calls for a consistent critical self-awareness of the methodological issues surrounding the collection, refraction, representation and re-interpretation of the oral archive.

Comparative Notes

When one listens to the Karachi women alongside the Sri Lankan women who either suffered at the hands of the JVP, the State or the LTTE, there are notable differences, but also overwhelming commonalities in

33. Veena Das, Introduction to *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 31-2.

34. Alessandro Portelli, ‘What makes oral history different,’ in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.) *The Oral History Reader*, London & New York: Routledge, 1998, pp.66-7.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

their experiences. A significant difference is that in Sri Lanka, the ‘disappearances’ of thousands of youth meant that for many families, there were no dead bodies to mourn over. Thus they could not complete mourning rituals and offer alms-givings in memory of the dead. Accepting that their loved ones were dead itself was difficult given the absence of a body. When a mass grave was found at Suriyakanda in January 1994, people claimed bits and pieces of cloth as their missing husband’s or son’s clothing – so compelling was the need to find some proof of the dead.³⁷ In the interviews from Karachi, there is no overwhelming absence of bodies. It could be the case that the Islamic practice of 24-hour burial encouraged the bodies to be ‘returned’ or at least dumped in locatable places. It could also be that the perpetrators of violence in Karachi had the license to act with impunity – they had no necessity to hide bodies in mass graves. The common story on the part of the security forces in Karachi seems to have been that the victim was an armed thief and was apprehended while thieving and/or shot in self-defence. In Sri Lanka, the systemic elimination of youth called for a more systematic obliteration of evidence. The absence of a body meant the abrogation of responsibility on the part of the security forces. For the families, their grief and inability to honour and mourn the dead accordingly, was further compounded by a host of other problems related to the absence of a body. Compensation was not paid because death could not be proved, and until recently, young wives of the disappeared were not considered widows – which would have legally entitled them to widow benefits and possibilities of remarriage. It was only after a significant number of Sinhala women became war widows in the on-going separatist war between the Sri Lankan State and the LTTE, that the government changed its policy to accepting disappearance as death after a period of one year.

In Sri Lanka, as in the case of Karachi, murderer and survivor often co-exist in the same village and neighbourhood. In a crisis ridden society in which systems of justice have broken down, and bringing the culprits to book is politically too burdensome for complicitous governments, the survivors of violence have to live with the torturers and murderers of their sons, husbands and brothers. In such a situation, the Gods become their only recourse to justice and security. Many members of the Mother’s Front supplicated the Gods during the reign of terror. Bodhi pujas, vows and supplications to Kali were undertaken for information on the missing, for revenge. In similar vein, many of the Karachi women invoke Allah:

May Allah fix the politicians of this country. People don’t have the power to do so - AM

They prayed to Allah for a miracle that would bring about social and political change. That people had no alternative but to turn to the Gods and the supernatural for reparation when the security forces refused to be accountable for its human rights abuses, and governments were complicit, is a powerful indictment on their loss of faith in the democratic and secular judicial processes of the postcolonial State.

With no redress from the law, survivors have, in some instances, experienced displaced or transferred expressions of revenge. Sasanka Perera cites the example of a father and daughter who have become possessed by vengeful Gods. The need for revenge against the killers, who murdered two sons, one daughter and the wife/mother, is here uttered by the Gods when in possession of the survivors.³⁸ The father and daughter have now established a reputation for themselves as medium who advise other families of missing persons. It is a transformative justice that has propelled them from helplessness to a relative position of strength, with a reputation for supernatural power. The profusion of ghost stories from the south of Sri Lanka during the reign of terror in which ghosts pelt the security forces with stones

37. Sasanka Perera, *Living with Torturers*, Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1995,1999, pp. 4-5.

38. *Living with Torturers*, pp.51-3.

and frighten them, was another site of restorative justice for people denied the full process of the law.³⁹ The stones never really hit the soldiers who, in turn, don't use their guns on the ghosts. Perera reads this as acknowledgement, within Buddhist paradigms, of the futility of violence.

If the discourse of restorative justice amongst survivors is rooted in religious paradigms in this way, we see however that amongst the Karachi women, recourse to Allah's justice can take a slightly different form. At least two women insist that if Pakistan was under Sharait law – Allah's law – justice will be given them. The respondent AK believes that under the Shariat, even the MQM will have an equal place in society. There is belief in a theocratic state, wholly missing in the Sri Lankan responses. The Sri Lankan constitution does uphold the primacy of Buddhism, and State rituals/ celebrations are legitimized and sanctioned by Buddhist practices and the clergy. Recently there was mass ordination of very young children into the Buddhist priesthood,⁴⁰ and Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayake ordered affirmative action of 10 extra marks for students who enter universities through the *daham pasal* or Buddhist school, and announced plans for bringing back the *Sangaadikaranaya* or priests' tribunal, a judicial system in which Buddhist priests will be the arbiters of disputes.⁴¹ Despite these moves, the Sri Lankan polity by and large has not yet endorsed the formation of a Buddhist State. Criticism and satire, directed at the Buddhist clergy for its part in politics and big commercial businesses keeps the clergy from real contention in amassing State power. The birth of Pakistan as an Islamic State on the other hand, strategic alliances between successive governments and the religious right, blasphemy laws that are harshly punitive of those outside of Islam, the Madrasa school system and the presence of religio-political movements like the *Jammat-i-Islami* and hard-line groups such as the *Jamiat-Ulema-Islam* and *Sipah-e-Sahaba* have made a deeper impression on the possibilities of a theocratic State for Pakistan.

We don't have our own system in this country. It is not according to Shariat. There is no justice. There is no law. Here things happen according to others, America is saying this and so and so is saying this. When we eat in our house, this house is ours; I live in this house, why is the neighbor claiming rights over my house? Tell me this, this country is also ours. Why are others ruling over it? We call ourselves Muslim when we are all Muslims then there should be Islamic law in this land, why is it English? AK

Inflected with the desire for an Islamic State is AK's strong feelings of religious nationalism which takes on an anti-U.S.A. stance. Earlier in the interview she had wished for a strong leader like an Ayatollah Khoumeni for Pakistan. We note that Khoumeni's imposition of an Islamic state in Iran was simultaneously an anti-U.S. platform. AM, a sympathizer of the *Jamaat-I-Islami* also subscribes to a religious nationalism that implicitly critiques the US in her participation at demonstrations against Pakistan signing the CTBT. For women like AM, Pakistan's nuclearization is a demonstration of its sovereignty, national pride and power. An Islamic, nuclearized State of Pakistan would, for women like her, be the answer to redressing both internal social inequalities and schisms, and external bullying and marginalization by the United States.

Nationalism is also inflected with vehement feelings about ethnicity. Samarasinghe notes that ethnic hatred was a strong emotion amongst survivors of violence in Sri Lanka, indicating deep levels of ethnic polarization in its society, most strenuously felt in the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic divide. Ethnic tension is present in the Karachi respondents too, given the city's competing and complex ethnic mix. For women

39. *Ibid.*, p.53.

40. Nirupama Subramaniam, 'An Army of Monks?', and Gananath Obeyesekera, 'Child Ordinations and the Rights of Children,' in *Pravada* 7, no.3, 2001, pp.10-13.

41. TNL News, 20/09/2001.

sympathizers of the MQM, while the Sindhis were definite rivals in obtaining employment, Punjabis and Pathans domiciled in Sindh were also targets of resentment.⁴² In a province that also houses thousands of Afghan refugees, the dominant antagonism of the Mohajirs vs Sindhis carries complex group identities that are shifting sites of ethnic focus and negotiation. What is of real significance is that no over-arching, monolithic view of their ethnic identity was voiced by the Karachi women interviewed by SDPI.⁴³ Some were proud to be Mohajir, others were not. In re-constructing themselves for the interviewer, some women foregrounded their ethnicity, others did so only after being asked a specific question about their ethnicity. Blame for the violence was, in some instances, manifested in terms of the larger communal identity that simultaneously expressed self-negation:

Do you feel any shame being Mohajir or Urdu-speaking?

This very thing is our identity. People don't understand the purpose of being Mohajir. But after this incident it is shameful to be called Mohajir – AM.

Another woman wanted a more cosmopolitan identity for herself:

I want to be called Pakistani not Mohajir, although I am Urdu speaking – TK.

TK's need is to be valued as a Pakistani citizen. She does not want the appendage of being 'Mohajir', always a migrant, always an outsider in Karachi's socio-political fabric.

Overlapping Her stories: Strategies of Survival

The oral testimonies from both Karachi and Sri Lanka point to many common factors in how survivors of violence live out their lives. They may not represent the wide variety of strategies for survival that women living in conflict zones have developed, but enunciate nevertheless some of the coping mechanisms that sustain women in such situations. Many of the narratives involved moments of silence and denial in a management of memory. A member of the Mothers' Front interviewed in Matara said

On July 16, 1990, my only son disappeared. I have been talking about losing my son for the past ten years and I do not want to dwell on it.⁴⁴

In the Karachi interviews, AM, when asked what her reaction was to her son's murder, replies:

You are asking me this! What should I tell you. Obviously what would be one's feeling at the loss of a son. **I don't remember what I felt.** I got worried that my husband was not at home and thought what would he feel at this news. - AM. My emphasis.

AM does respond to the interviewer in going on to describe her feelings at the time, but 'I don't remember what I felt' clearly indicates she would rather forget. AZ, another women from Karachi at first relates the killing of her two sons with a stark matter-of-factness:

42. Anis Haroon, 'They Use Us and Others Abuse Us,' op.cit., p.184.

43. Rubina Saigol, 'The Partition of Self: Mohajir Women's Perceptions of the State, Nation and Identity,' presentation at the SDPI workshop on 'Women, Conflict, and Security', Islamabad, August 2001.

44. Neloufer de Mel, *Women and the Nation's Narrative*, op.cit., p.257.

I was cooking food at home. When they were coming back after saying their prayers the terrorists killed my sons. – AZ

Here is an example of how a central event can be collapsed into a few taut words in oral narrative. But as Samarasinghe notes, the ellipses, the forgetting, or persuading others to forget, is a coping strategy on the part of those who remember the trauma only too well.⁴⁵

In the absence of a system of justice people have faith in, recourse to a sense of fate and destiny helped many of the respondents. Allied to this sense of fate was a belief in the martyrdom of their murdered sons and husbands. Many of the Karachi women spoke of their sons as martyrs. Martyrdom is also ideological bedrock of the LTTE's militarism. In the case of the Karachi women, the narrative of martyrdom traces its roots to a significant religious discourse within Islam. In the case of the LTTE, Tamil martial traditions are drawn on. Making the martyr synonymous with a great hero makes a shift from the religious to the secular. The heroes of the Eelam struggle are then commemorated through a series of mnemonics. From a Great Heroes Day (expanded to a Great Heroes Week as the martyrs multiplied), to paintings and posters of martyrs, and a dedicated office to administer the entitlements of the martyrs and their families, the dead, including women, and their families are accorded honour within the LTTE's self-conceptualization.⁴⁶ This honouring takes place in the diaspora as well. In Toronto, where an estimated 200,000 Sri Lankan Tamils live, making it the city with the largest Tamil population in the diaspora, rituals of martyrdom and remembering the dead are assiduously organized by the LTTE.⁴⁷ In 1999, the finale of the Great Warrior's Day was held in the Canadian National Exhibition grounds which holds a capacity crowd of 10,000 people. The ceremony and speeches had to be repeated three times to accommodate the huge crowd that turned up. The mis-en-scene constructed replicated the very material and physical space of the martyr's cemetery in Jaffna, complete with artificial tombstones, inscribed with the names and birthdays of the dead whose families live in Toronto.⁴⁸ In this way honour is paid to the dead, and their elevation as martyrs to the cause provide their families with emotional relief at their loss.

Trauma, self-hate (many mothers blamed themselves for not successfully protecting their sons from the enemy, or blamed friends, cousins and other siblings for encouraging their sons to join the militants), and guilt are strong emotions which also give expression to feelings of revenge. Revenge is expressed in several ways. Revenge as reparation through the intervention of the Gods and nature was the most common, given the lack of faith in the judicial process in both Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

“... The people who did these things will have to pay. There is nothing else to say. Even the Gods should look at this.”

“Things will never go right for those people who took those things. To the person who committed this sin, the one who killed my husband, even today what I say is ‘may he pay for it’. What I said was some day, the gods and the “hamuduruwo” will make them pay. Just like that, they had to pay for it.”

(interview, Moneragala)

45. Gameela Samarasinghe, 'Coping with Emotions'.

46. Neloufer de Mel, *op.cit.*, p.223.

47. R. Cheran, *The Sixth Genre: Memory, History and the Tamil Diaspora Imagination*, Colombo: Marga, 2001, pp.2 & 16.

48. *Ibid.*, p.17

“They should be struck by lightning for the terrible things they did to us. Some day they will have to pay for these things eternally. They killed innocent people like dogs and chicken. They are murderers, why are they not hunted. All this talk of finding the killers is all lies”.

(interview, Moneragala)

“... Even if they [the LTTE] are cut up and eaten it will not be enough...”

What is there for poor people, anyone can kill them. Why should they be killed? What kind of justice is this? I also know the law and the Shariat. I read the hadith, the Shariat states that whether one is poor or rich justice must be given where is justice?

I have only one question, tell me his fault? You thought he was a criminal, didn't you? You caught him and punished him. As soon as you took him, you called him from home and killed him. I want to know the justification for it. I want revenge. (AK, Karachi.)

However, this desire for revenge can be tempered in some cases with religious teachings of forgiveness:

All loved my son. He had very good habits, every one was angry but we were depressed and broken-hearted. How could we be avenged in such condition? Secondly my husband had patience and he stated in the newspaper that ‘I forgive my son’s killers. I don’t want to be avenged for; life is in the hands of Allah. We were destined like this’....

But we have been trained to believe that Allah is responsible for every thing and we should be contented and obey Him. This concept soothed us and it worked to make us be patient. When our relatives saw my husband’s submission and endurance they kept quiet. How could we snatch another’s child? - AM

Yet, for most of the victims on record, revenge becomes, as Samarasinghe notes, a kind of fantasy in which there is mirror reversal of the initial trauma.

Just because my brother died, there is no point in going behind the killer and dying myself as well. Yet if I saw the killer, then, dying while killing him is a different story.

The pain in my heart is so great that I can cut to pieces and eat the rulers of that time if I meet them.

(interview, Moneragala)

A woman of the Mothers’ Front in Sri Lanka who participated in the procession to the Kalliamma kovil to heap curses on President Premadasa, avenging justice for the disappeared, stated that she broke a coconut into seven pieces and prayed that Premadasa’s head would split likewise. When Premadasa was killed in a LTTE suicide bomb attack on 1st May 1993, many of the women of the Mothers’ Front felt that the goddess Kali had answered their prayers.⁴⁹

Seeking ways of exacting revenge can lead to recruitment into militancy, or if already within the ranks of the security forces, use that apparatus for apprehending the culprits. AZ, from Karachi, describes how her husband, in the face of government indifference despite being in the police force, personally undertook the ‘mission’ to avenge the murder of their two sons. He apprehended the MQM culprits and had them

49. Neloufer de Mel, op.cit., p.250.

convicted in court. When Dhanu assassinated Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991, the LTTE claimed that she did so to avenge her rape by the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKFP), brought to Jaffna in an unsuccessful bid to wrest control from the LTTE after the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan accord. But does this always mean that women join revolutionary movements out of a ‘false consciousness’? Does the need for revenge represent such a false consciousness? How does recruitment into militancy become a strategy of survival when the end-result may well be death in combat? What does it mean as an endeavour for social change and self-determination when it causes civilian deaths and destruction in its wake? How do we map the agency of women militants within these paradigms? These are difficult questions, which force us to confront challenging ethical and political questions.

The increasing numbers of South Asian women recruited into militancy, whether to the LTTE, JVP, MQM, or RSS is a significant phenomenon that can no longer be ignored and pose significant questions for the women’s movements in our countries. Anis Haroon writes of the recruitment of women to the MQM:

A large number of women also joined MQM along with their men... They recreated the Mohajir identity by calling all Urdu-speaking women their ‘sisters’ and wearing bangles and dupattas (scarves) in the MQM flag colours and taking an oath of allegiance to the Mohajir cause...

Since 1947, there has not been such a major political mobilization of women. It will not be wrong to say that it was the major political mobilization of women since 1947. In February 1989, 7500 women workers were enlisted in the MQM in a single day, and broke the barriers, which hitherto confined women in their homes. It was the first time in the history of the country that so many female political workers were mobilized in a single city.⁵⁰

In Sri Lanka, the recruitment of women to the LTTE took place around 1987, following the loss of male cadre and the diaspora comprising many Tamil male youth who fled the country.⁵¹ The LTTE women cadre, known as the Birds of Freedom, form a professional fighting force and engage in battle on the frontline. Women are also trained into the elite Black Tiger squad from which suicide bombers are drawn for various missions. At first, the choice of women suicide bombers may have been dictated by the fact that women found it easier to get through security cordons. The shalwar kameez provided the perfect camouflage for the vest wired with explosives. But this cannot take away from the choice of many women who, in the prevailing climate of militarism and martyrdom, are proud to be part of the elite fighting force of the LTTE.⁵² The MQM women may not be frontline combatants in similar fashion. They have to negotiate counter strategies on the part of the MQM male leadership designed to contain them.⁵³ But it would be important to assess whether their own work as recruiters to the cause, participants at violent demonstrations, at ‘gherao’ (encirclement) of police stations, collecting bodies of militants when it was dangerous for men to come out, and burying the dead (unprecedented for Muslim women) has not meant a radical, if not transformative shift in their traditional roles as women. It is also the case that, membership in militant groups give these women a sense of community, all the more important when violence causes the breakdown of family and community care. Analysis of various testimonies show that

50. Anis Haroon, *op.cit.*, pp.182-3.

51. The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, estimated at around 750,000 is the largest migration of people from South Asia in recent times. D.B.S.Jeyaraj, ‘Lions and Tigers’ in *Himal* 12 no.4, April 1999, p.25.

52. See Adele Ann, *Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam*, Jaffna: LTTE, 1989.

53. Anis Haroon, *op.cit.*

in the wake of violence, sudden widowhood and economic dependency, family structures breakdown, leaving women to fend for themselves and their children.⁵⁴ Communities are reluctant to come forward to help the bereaved, and women who become dependents following violence are either turned out of their homes or exploited for their labour. Militant groups and their keen sense of solidarity and comradeship can, under these circumstances, offer the women an alternative sense of family and community, which is compelling.

Oral narratives of violence and conflict are, then, sites of continuous negotiation between the narrator and her community. They carry memory, laughter, discrepancies, silence and tears as an integral part of the history of conflict itself. They are framed by the discourses of class, caste, race and gender. They are sites on which the private and the public meet. Their disjunctures are metonyms for fractured lives. But narratives also offer their author-narrators the possibilities of giving their experiences meaning, of managing memory, of fantasies of revenge. For some women, they become the only tool with which to challenge the totalizing violence that seems to comprise their world. They encompass therefore strategies of survival, which are also coping mechanisms. Agentive moments can be heard in the way the survivors of violence strive to make meaning of its 'meaningless' and re-construct themselves. Memory, the lament, the folk tale, testimony, conversation, religious invocation are not extraneous tropes but a part of people's interpretation of their histories. The narratives, often, do not have a definite sense of closure. They interrogate, therefore, the notion of a history that is 'complete'.

What, then, are the implications of such narratives for future women's militancy and peace movements in South Asia? How significantly has the breakdown of family and community support after violence led to women's participation in violence? How have fantasies of revenge encouraged them to take up arms? How have they strengthened religious and nationalist fervour? Identity is a multiple construct. Gender is only one of its components, albeit an important one. Some women chose to foreground their ethnic, class, caste, religious, linguistic and national identities before gender. What does this teach contemporary South Asian women's movements and other social movements engaged in the call for gender equality, demilitarization, political negotiation and peace? How do they dictate future strategies for action? The narration of the needs, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses of women survivors of violent conflict present a powerful agenda for the future. For those of us who bemoan the pathology of violence in our societies, these testimonies offer a compelling framework for action towards genuine human security.

54. Sasanka Perera, *Stories of Survivors: Socio-Political Contexts of Female-Headed Households in Post Terror Southern Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Women's Education Research Centre, 1999, pp.20-25, Ayesha Khan, 'Afghan Refugees and the Disintegration of Support Structures,' presentation at the SDPI workshop on 'Women, Conflict and Security, Islamabad, August 2001.