

Hindu Women in The Context of Forced Migration Post-Bangladesh Liberation War: A Qualitative Study

Somali Mukherjee, Dr. Amitava Sengupta

Department of Psychology, West Bengal State University Barasat, North 24 Parganas (West Bengal)

Abstract

At the advent of last century, millions of females were migrants in India, the majority being Bangladeshi forced migrants, migrated since the time of Bangladesh Liberation War, with a trauma of war and forced migration. Current study, a qualitative investigation, was conducted with women, aged between 55 and 65 years of age, who are first generation survivors of Bangladesh Liberation War and forced migration, . The objective was to understand the nature of war and forced migration trauma, as well as the processing of the trauma in the 1st generation women survivors. Data collection was done using oral history interviews and Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The results highlight different psychosocial elements of hideouts, war, migration and acculturation. Women experienced violence of beliefs, soft violence and violence from family for honor apart from the loots, physical and sexual violence which are typical to war situations. Anticipatory fear of attacks by East-Pakistani soldiers and 'Razakars' made unmarried women's (teenager and adults) forced migration a priority of the community. Each of the themes revealed in the study has greater scopes of exploration in the understanding of war trauma and forced migration specific to socio-cultural contexts of India.

Introduction

The Bengal Presidency was one of the two provinces in India, that had the major cuts of religious margins during 1947 partition. When the rest of the country celebrated independence, Bengal started fighting a state of destabilization, that continues till date, as thousands of refugees migrate between Purba Banga/East Pakistan/Bangladesh and Paschim Banga/West Bengal, India. Therefore, a political decision destabilized not only the economy, but also destabilized the psychological state of thousands of human beings giving them a cultural trauma of forced migration. With the war-cry of 'Joy Bangla' in March, 1971, Mujibar Rahman called for the 'Bangladesh Liberation War'. It was a combination of a civil war (East vs West Pakistan) and an international war (India vs West Pakistan) fought simultaneously (Saikia 2004). This continued up to December, 1971, accounting for 'Bangladesh Genocide' resulting in mass systematic killings, rapes, lootings and arson. This took turn to thwart Bengal at large, again, as the citizens of East Pakistan/Bangladesh started migrating to West Bengal during and after war. These migrants during 1970s were victims of forced migration and survivors of civil war, communal violence, loot, brutal aggression against women folk of the

community and challenges of acculturation. However, the traditional sources of History often miss out on the experiences of women. Even if included in traditional history, women are subjected to gendered retelling of their stories (Menon & Bhasin 1998). Amin, Ahmed and Ahsan (2016) and The documentary 'নারীর কথা' (Masud & Masud, 2000) identifies the blind-spot in the traditional history of Liberation War using *oral history* from women, pointing out women who were Muktiyoddhas (Soldiers of Freedom), nurses, Birangonas (women who were raped and molested during war) and even rural womenfolk who fought the Pakistani Army, uniting with their community. These narratives were reiterated only at the beginning of this millennia. However, these narratives still seem to be unheard to traditional history.

Migration is an ancient as well as constant aspect in the history of human civilization. 'Refugee' is defined as someone having a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (UNHCR 1951; Bronstein & Montgomery, 2010, 2011). In the mid-nineties 'Forced Migration Studies' was introduced. Forced migrants are different from the voluntary migrants as they experience a higher level of 'push versus pull' factors involved in the decision-making (Ryan et al., 2008) and is known to originate from severe economic conditions, natural calamity or from increased violence in the society (Sundquist, 1994).

Figley (1985), defines psychological trauma as, '*an emotional state of discomfort and stress resulting from memories of an extraordinary catastrophic experience which shattered the survivor's sense of invulnerability to harm*' and also defines trauma behaviourally as '*a set of conscious and unconscious actions and behaviours associated with dealing with the stresses of catastrophe and the period immediately afterwards*'. A traumatic memory is mostly unprocessed. The traumatic memory is an '*implicit (unconscious) emotional/sensory memory without a corresponding explicit (conscious) cognitive memory of all or part of the original experience*' (Levine, 1997; Descilo et al., 2017). To focus on autobiographical memory of trauma, experiments suggest that confusing two events with the passage of time, would be a concern only for children below 3 years of age (Gold, 2017). Appraisal of anticipation of a traumatic event increases the magnitude of trauma to more than the event itself (McNally, 2004). This is one of the primary features of the pre-migration distress contributing to the decision of migration. Although trauma is subjective (Descilo et al., 2017), War and Forced Migration has been one of the catastrophic events held responsible for trauma in the individuals. Pre-migration trauma, violence during the migration, and *post-migration stress* (English proficiency, unemployment, feeling of insecurity, geographical and cultural difference with the host country, violence against the immigrants, ethnic discrimination) is a strong predictor of psychological distress in the forced migration population (PTSD: Bean et al. 2007b; Bronstein, 2011 Heptinstall et al. 2003; Ellis et al. 2008; Chung et al., 1998; Ryan et al., 2008; Depression: Heptinstall et al. 2003) emphasizing study of the host environment to understand the psychological wellbeing of the forced migrants (Sundquist, 1994; Ryan et al., 2008).

Women of Hindu families, constituted a layer of women who amidst the violence, migrated to settle in India carrying the traumatic memory of war and forced migration. Women are at a higher risk of experiencing psychological distress (Ryan et al., 2008). Separation from the extended family network, occupational downgrading (rejection of overseas qualifications), poor English proficiency is considered to be the major factors behind psychological distress in the women population of forced migrants (Driedger & Hallis, 2000; Loh & Klug 2012). Adaptation into a new host environment presents the migrants with a number of potential stress factors which exert demands, such as *Personal, Material, Social, Cultural Demands* (Ryan et al., 2008). The capacity to manage these demands depends on range of resources available (*Personal resources, Material resources, Social resources, Cultural resources*. *Acculturation* is defined as an "ongoing process of adjustment in which migrants adapt to the cultural values and lifestyles of the new society or culture (Bhugra, 2004; Loh & Klug, 2012). Among four styles of acculturation strategies, namely: 1)

Integration, 2) *Assimilation*, 3) *Separation* and 4) *Marginalization*, *Integration*, refers to the adoption of the new culture and retaining the old one (Tartakovsky, 2007) and argued to be the best form of adaptation to psychological distress (Berry, 1997) is used most by women¹. Although the vulnerability of women forced migrants were recognized, the decisions taken as solutions were mostly gendered (Boyd, 1999). **Oral history** method has been an intrinsic part of the feminist movement (Gluck, 2013; Ritchie, 2014) and social history has welcomed this method, especially where areas like immigration, labor and women's history corresponds (Sangster, 2013).

The aim of the present study is, to understand the traumatic experience of the women who were born and raised in East Pakistan and have been a witness to the 'Bangladesh Liberation War' and had to leave their homeland during or after the war, and migrate to India for safety.

Methods

Participants

Participants of this study were selected using **purposive sampling** technique. The pre- decided inclusion criteria included women who witnessed Bangladesh Liberation war being at least 5 years of age and migrated to India during or after the war to be permanently settled in India. The women who were above 65 years of age were not included due to memory concerns. Participants of this study were 5 women, aged between 55-64 years, born and raised in East Pakistan, witnessed The Bangladesh Liberation War (1971) and migrated into India during or immediately after the war. They experienced war within 6 to 16 years of their age and their migration years ranged between 1971 to 1988. These women belonged to middle-class background and have not been permanent liability camp members/seekers. All of them after migrating to India, moved to either some relatives' house or of their own until marriage and settled in Indian middle class family backgrounds. Their educational qualification varied between 6th standard and Graduation. All of them were married with more than one children; while some were living with husband and family, others were widowed and living with children/on their own.

Oral History Method

Interviewer has preferred Basic *descriptive, Clarifying, Example, Comparison/Contrast Questions* in the interview sessions and at times has guided it with incidents from various books, films, and articles on 'মুক্তিযুদ্ধ' (Muktijuddho) to understand specific situations. Other than the formal interview sessions (on record), the interviewer has spent a significant amount of time was spent with the participants which served for necessary trust building for the interviewee. The participants were observed in their natural environments without the interview ambience, talking their hearts out and working.

Data Collection

Gaining access to the interviewees and scheduling interview was rather difficult. Some of the interviewees did not want to be recorded in any digital medium. However, 5 interviewees were selected who gave their informed consent for the study. Each interview took 2-3 on record sessions to complete.

Tools Used

The necessary information of the interviewees was noted in the **information schedule** prior to, during and after the interview. The principal conversations of the interview were recorded in a **video or audio recording devices**, considering the permission and comfort of the interviewees.

¹ Men and women show different styles of coping in the context of the host environment (Berry, 1997; Loh & Klug, 2012).

Reflective Journaling (Memo) was used to note interviewer's own reflections regarding the interviews. These reflective journals were also included for analysis.

Data Analysis

In the **Transcription** process, conversation and non-verbal cues taken into account were translated into the written form. The transcript, along with the information schedule, and reflective journals were used for further analysis using the qualitative data analysis methods. *Descriptive coding, versus coding, value coding* methods were used. *Themes* were identified and analyzed. **Descriptive coding** was done in two steps. At first, **Open coding** was done by categorizing and labelling the inquiry data while examining the data carefully. It was done reading through the transcript multiple times. After that each sentence of the transcript is read carefully so as to identify and highlight the meaning in this (also called Line by line coding). The second step being **Selective coding**, is reaching a narrowed higher level of codes from large number of codes. In it, the meaning units are labeled or given descriptive / analytic codes that best sum up the content of that portion of the data that are finally referred to as categories. **Versus coding** and **Values coding** were also used. **Themes** are extended phrases or sentences that summarize and explain some of the manifested (apparent) and latent (underlying) social meaning from the narratives which were therefore, identified, categorized and analyzed.

Discussion

The participants, on the very first day of interaction, had a typical pattern of communication. even before stating the necessary information, a whole narrative was presented every time a participant was approached for interview. Meagre naming of the era, or the '71 War, all of them **presented with a 'story' version of their traumatic experiences**. Unique to these narratives was that these narratives often had factual misplacements, repetition of a particular event or emotion. Psychoanalytic concepts can be borrowed to explain this concept. Jung (1964), explains the process of 'forgetting' of the disagreeable memories saying that the memories that are unwanted and incompatible, are ready to be lost. These lost memories create holes into the conscious remembrance of the traumatic memories as they are frequently avoided for the associated pain. But, as Jacobi (1964) explains it, the more holes are created into the conscious experience, the more the unconscious gets to interact with them. This interaction might lead to filling the gaps with fantasy and imagination. As Sanyal & Sengupta explains it, storytelling is a cathartic method that facilitates the process of healing. But, the method of storytelling drives the participants back to their traumatic experiences, reactivating their pain which they try to avoid. Therefore, the more avoidance generates, the more unconscious fantasy and imagination comes at play.

However, the experience of these participants can roughly be categorized into three different periods, on the basis of their displacement from the native land to a host country. These are mentioned below –

Pre-migration Period

The pre-migration period indicates the time when people were living in East Pakistan/Bangladesh (both before and after the war). Even before the war, the social situation of Bangladesh was destabilized due to religious conflicts. Value coding reveals prejudiced ideas of Muslim community predominant within the Hindu household. The narratives revealed the perception of Muslim men to be frequently associated with violating honor of Hindu women [“সব মুসলিম তো। ওরা সুযোগ খোঁজে”; “ধরো ওই মেয়ে একটা রাস্তায় যাচ্ছে তাকে টেনে নিয়ে চলে গেল।” “all of them are Muslims. They are always looking for opportunities.”; “suppose that girl is passing by, they

*will grab her.”]. This might be more of a fear of religious conversion and less of a prejudice [‘একটা হিন্দু মেয়েকে তুলে নিয়ে বিয়ে করল মানে ওদের দশগুণ পুণ্য’ “it is ten times more sacred if they marry a Hindu girl..]. The fear of attack on religious beliefs and practices became a constant shared belief in the lifestyle of this community and therefore kept them in a constant anticipatory fear and gradually extended to various aspects of life. The war of liberation only further ensured and fastened the already accepted forthcoming displacement. The most important of the essential themes found, are the **unique experiences of forced migration and different kinds of violence** specific to women which took place during the War and the post-War condition.*

Among the various experiences of war and post-war conditions, women had different narratives of violence. **Loots, violations of property** were the first and most typical of war situations. Soft violence was the second in the list experienced by every woman in the community. Different types of such violence consisted **Violation by Own Family Members for Honor**. In the name of saving the ‘honor’ of the family, young and unmarried girls were asked for suicide or were given poison [‘তখন বাবা বলছে, দেখো তুমি এরকম যখন দেখবে তোমাকে ধরে ফেলেছে, তখন তুমি নিজেকে রক্ষা করার জন্য এই যে Poison টা দেওয়া হল, এটা সঙ্গে রাখো, এইটা খেয়ে নেবে। যাতে তাদের কাছে তোমার সেই জিনিসের কোন ইয়ে থাকেনা ” “then father said, see when you see that they have found you, then you have this ‘poison’ that we have given you. Keep it. So that, your that thing remains of no value to them.”]. This was a deliberate attempt to prevent religious conversion and rape where death was chosen instead. As Menon & Bhasin (1998) travels through the narratives of partition witnesses in Punjab, they explain that women’s sexuality represents the honor of men related to them and therefore violation of it is a matter of such shame to men that to avenge it, own daughter can be pushed to death. This is indeed a gendered lens that reduces women’s identity to a its private parts and religion.

Assaults Aimed at Young And Unmarried Girls. Young and unmarried women report verbal assaults aimed at them at public places which costed them their regular and free lifestyle. The family in such cases stopped the women from schooling and normal movement in the locality [‘আমাদের খুব সমঝে, আমরা ছাতা নিয়ে মুখ ঢেকে, একইরকমের uniform এ বাইরে বেরোতম “we had to carefully cover our faces with umbrella and then go out.”]. These incidents exposed young women to a ‘paralyzing fear’ (Basu, 2013), a ‘psychological pressurization’ which Chakrabarti (1999) mentioned to be a major cause of migration [‘তখন হয়ত দিদি বাড়িতে এসে স্কুলে যেতে চাইত না (...) যদি ওরা আমাকে নিয়ে পালিয়ে যায় এসব করে!” “then didi sometimes came home and did not want to go to school anymore (...) what if they abduct me and all”].

Fear Of Persecution. Rumors are conversations consisting the discussion of Pakistani army slaughtering the Hindus first were having rounds which made people of Hindu families (irrespective of gender) experience a heightened fear of persecution [‘এরাই বলছে, যে যারা হিন্দু তাদের শেষ করে দিবে’; “they were saying that the people that are Hindu, will be destroyed.”] which might have caused the migration.

Violation Of Beliefs. During the war situation, Hindu community had to shift to secure hideouts, preferably in Muslim households, for them being the safest. In the social situation religion was an inseparable part of self-identity to widowed women, and living in such a surrounding was perceived as a violation of beliefs and violation of self-identity [‘দিদিমা যেতে চায়নি। (...) এই মুসলমান বাড়িতে বসে আছি। দেখলাম দিদিমার চোখ দিয়ে জল পড়ছে”] [‘grandma was deeply troubled; she did not want to go. (...) was staying in a Muslim household. Saw grandma chanting on rosary, tears were coming down her eyes. She was in pain.”].

Sexual Violence. Sexual violence on women was an inseparable part of the Liberation War (Ibrahim, 1999). Women’s sexuality almost always was aimed at during war situations, Menon and Bhasin (1998) interprets female sexuality being a symbol of manhood. Therefore, by hurting a female of a community, the males of the community are proved incompetent and future generations lose the nurturance and care.

The women who migrated in this backdrop, even if not physically or sexually violated, had anticipatory fear of a tangible physical violence every second of their lives, which might have caused a different kind of intra-psychic injury than those of the women who were victims of direct physical assault.

Migration Period

Post-war conditions were marked with collective displacements of adolescent and adult unmarried women to India, for safekeeping, while married women and the males of the family stayed back [“this ’71 war, don’t marry your sisters here. (...) First marry them off to India, then you think about your own arrangements to leave.”]. Most of the young women, became either victims of ‘marriage migration’, or educated until the age, appropriate for marriage. Migration causes psychological distress to women, more than men (Magdol, 2002) which added up to the psychosocial factors associated with marriage. Findings suggest strange compliance towards painful family decisions of their marriage, although against their will. These women have identified these decisions as harmless to them but necessary means of affirming to their perceived endangered cultural identities (Moghissi, 1999) leading to a suppression of dissent towards these decisions [ঠিক আছে, দাদারা যখন বলছে, অরা মনে করছে এটাই ঠিক আমার যদি বিয়ে হয়ে যায়, তাহলে ঠিক আছে। আমি বিয়ে করে নিই, ওদের জন্য।] [“fine, elder brothers are saying, when they are thinking, its better, if I’m married off, fine I’ll marry. For them.”]. However their narratives clearly depict their anger, discomfort and despair, regarding their untimely and half-willing marriage, pointing to the same power-play and their lack of control over their own body, social and sexual life, and identity. Even, they were married off to places closer to the border, so that they can secure a place for their family. Findings also suggest a coexistence of the pain of losing childhood home, yearning and craving for it [মনে হয় চলে যাই... স্বপ্নে দেখি।] “feel like going back... I dream of it” ৗ “আমি মনে, ভুলেও আমার ভাবতে ইচ্ছে করেনা, যে আমি আমার দেশে যাই। কারণ, এতই তেতো, life টা হয়ে গেলা।,” “in my mind, I can’t even think of going back to my native country. Because life became so bitter then...”] paired with avoidance of ever travelling back. While younger women had no choice but follow seniors instructions of migration, older women of the family continuously preferred death over migration [“আমি মরতে হলে বাড়িতেই মরব। আমি অন্য জায়গায় যাবনা”] [“I will die in my home if I have to. I will not go anywhere else.”]. It might not be a misinterpretation, to assume, older women, did not want to migrate leaving behind the comforts of social networks, and the security of own village and ‘home’. Also, remaining far from the current political scenario, exercised their autonomy over senior males of the family as they could not and perhaps did not want to understand the emergency of migration (Archambault, 2010).

The **memory of food** consumed during the hideouts and migration period was remembered and reproduced in detail although other significant details seemed to be blurred. Probably in a time of insecurity, food, providing a form of nourishment over intense hunger, was the only memory of nourishment to the body. Some **factual discrepancies** marked the memory of the migration period. Although they remembered what they ate, they forgot the time of the days, names of people and places, season and other details during the migration period. However, some common discrepancies are bound to emerge in the women’s narratives such as age. As Geiger et al. (1990) explains, vital-criticism and self-criticism influences their statements regarding date-of-birth and other details. But, Ferenczi (1955), an early psychoanalytic theorist of dissociation and trauma, has identified the trauma memories to might not be repressed but rather be unrecorded due to the splits in the personality caused by the emotional overload of a trauma memory. These discrepancies might indicate the migration memories to have high emotional valence. Otherwise, these discrepancies might indicate an avoidance, silence, or repression regarding the trauma experiences in the following years.

Post-migration Period:

The post-migration period came with different experiences to different participants. After migrating the memory of 'home' keeps inflicting a sense of incompleteness within the individuals [*“তারপরে যদি আমাদের ওইখানেই বিয়ে টিয়ে হত, আমরা একটা ভালমত ওখানে থাকতাম” “if we were married there, we might have lived happily there...”*] which sometimes results in disruptions in identity formation (Basu, 2013). The trauma of war sometimes leaves an everlasting impact on an individual disconnecting from the land of origin [*“ও বলবে তোদের ভূতে পেয়েছে। যার জন্য দেশ ছাড়লাম, ওই দেশে দেখার কি রে? (...) ভুলেও আমার ভাবতে ইচ্ছে করেনা, যে আমি আমার দেশে যাই।” “she would say, you got enchanted. Things made us live our country, what is left there to see anymore? (...) I can't even think in my dream to go back.”*]. An important area of **acculturation process** includes integrating with the host country's community. Mostly this process consisted of the change in the language [(. . .) *অনেক কষ্ট করে বাঙালের ইয়েটা করেছি। কেননা রাস্তায় বেরোলে দাদাদের সাথে কথা বলতে গিয়ে বাঙাল ভাষা বেরিয়ে... (অটহাসি)” “(. . .) it has taken a lot of hard work to manage Baangaal Because if we were out in streets with brothers Baangaal might slip off from our mouth...(laughing)”*]. Women who migrated in their student life, however, had faced cultural as well as **educational differences** mainly in the difficulty level in the curricula. English and Mathematical syllabus differed in the education system of two countries which played an important role and the students had to compromise in the student life experiences. They even had to face unemployment as certificates of Bangladesh were not accepted in here, which might have caused psychological distress in them (Ryan et al., 2008).

Androcentric² ways of looking at traumatic life experiences came out as a significant finding of the study. Almost all of the 1st generation survivors shared the fathers' experience of trauma in the initial storytelling. But, the female figures in the narrative emerged later and only after guiding the conversation towards them.

Findings also suggest a coexistence of the pain of losing childhood home, yearning and craving for it [*“মনে হয় চলে যাই...স্বপ্নে দেখি” “feel like going back... I dream of it” & “আমি মনে, ভুলেও আমার ভাবতে ইচ্ছে করেনা, যে আমি আমার দেশে যাই। কারণ, এতই তেতো, Life টা হয়ে গেল” “in my mind, I can't even think of going back to my native country. Because life became so bitter then...”*] paired with avoidance of ever travelling back.

Until the probing started, the women in the family were not mentioned as a part of the trauma history of Liberation War and forced migration. Even if inscribed as a violent war in the cultural memory, not all the memories of that time are traumatic. At some point, the children enjoyed their hideouts playing during the war and migration journey. Surprisingly so, 4 out of 5 participants did not mention *“ভাষা আন্দোলন”* while reliving the trauma of the Bangladesh Liberation War, referring it mostly to be *‘মুক্তি যুদ্ধ’* or *‘জয় বাংলা’*.

A significant experience central to women were the participants' perceived difference from their mother during the pre-migration (war), migration and post-migration period. [*“মা না কিরকম ছিল বলতো? (...) যে একটা আলাদা যত্ন করা বা একটা আলাদা ই করা, সেরকম করে কিছু করেনি কোনসময়। কোথায় যে হারিয়ে থাকত।” “mother didn't do anything for me, you know? She used to be absent-minded all the time.”*]. even, the participant who herself was a mother at the time of migration, reports being too sad for her husband's death and had behaved poorly losing temper at the sight of the little child making her responsible for her father's death. Apparently, the mothers, overwhelmed with the sudden changes in their lives, had to work hard to meet the expectations of the family and her children making her an unresponsive/absent mother.

² Focused or centered on men.

A desire to share their own experiences of trauma and migration is dominant in all the participants which is considered therapeutic (Sanyal & Dasgupta, 2017). However, the retelling of their stories within their families will reflect the lingering pain of migration and war-trauma that still exists in the psyche of the 1st generation survivor. This retelling will mark the beginning of a family mythology of war- trauma and migration influencing the upcoming generations.

Research journey

The journey for this research had started long before the research itself. Belonging to a migrant family, (from both maternal and paternal side), legends of untouched greenery, escape, lost home and struggle for existence, although never explicitly experienced, colored the imagination of a young mind. Accented Bengali marked 'home', and the term 'Baangaal' outside the house gave a sense of alienation. Initially, hesitant, while going through the literature, we felt stuck at many points. We realize that the topic itself might have been inflicting pain within us as, an untouched root, a lost home, although unknown, was still an ailing bruise within us.

Challenge awaited at the doorsteps of women who migrated after the 1971 War. It was a struggle to gain access to them with a recorder on. They were hesitant to name themselves on record, and get photographed. As we reached our first interviewee, she kept herself busy in the kitchen for 2 hours not mentioning migration or Bangladesh even once, until we asked her when could she be available to sit for the interview. She replied with a gloomy smile asking whether we could start after her daughter returned. Her restlessness was disturbing me. This woman in her mid-fifties, a mother and an expectant grandmother, kept escaping until her niece finally made her sit, but only for half an hour. Her trauma and avoidance was gleaming in her behavior. In the beginning, she talked about the principal events of trauma, all in the first few minutes, as if she was reading flashcards of some kind, all fragmented. As we started probing, trying to reconstruct her memories, we experienced a double trauma, one of forced migration and one of the war- violence. Enormous pain of the interview made the transcription process painful and therefore, it got delayed.

“যদি তোমার এতে কোন উপকার হয়, তবে ভালো” “if this is helpful for you, then fine”; *“এই যে বলছি, এতে আমার কোন অসুবিধে হবে না তো?” “Now that I’m saying these things, it won’t be a problem for me right?”*, were the phrases, common with all the participants. This points at the discomfort reminiscing the past. All of the interviewees, were very anxious throughout the interviews, for obvious reasons. All of them kept pinching and scratching their fingertips while talking. Even some left the interview out of extreme fear. However, the off-camera interactions after the interview were the ones most cherished. The long talks in 'Baangaal', about long-lost land and joint families secured a bond between us and made us fly back to the land with them.

It was a different challenge interacting with husbands of the women who believed their wives know very little to be interviewed. Despite having clear knowledge about the research, they kept trying to convince me to interview at least their brothers who are better at 'these matters'.

During this work, we had the opportunity to interview people who had experienced different intensity of trauma. It was a learning experience. Initially, we used to forget to question in the interview and had to reiterate. We lost women, who cancelled meetings at information of being recorded. Some left the interview in-between because to them, the objective of my work was incomprehensible and they felt I was some TV reporter trying to expose them to the central government and prove that they are outsiders. I grew during the interviews. I cried and laughed with participants, traveling to their villages and migrating with them.

Implication

Social: This work has findings indicative of the latent attitude of migrant population regarding international relations, and inter-relations between different religious communities. Work findings indicate a latent insecurity of migrant population which might influence important social and community-based decisions. **Refugee Studies:** This study has focused on some features of the forced migration women population, which might be incorporated in conceptualizing women of the refugee population of Bengal. **Training the Field Officers:** Professionals who are constantly in touch with the migrant population, might have certain cultural and further dissimilarities. These interview findings might help them bridging the gap and conceptualizing the women migrant population. **Clinical:** Although clinically diagnosable PTSD pacifies over time, there might be significant psychic injuries still causing hindrance in psychological well-being. This emphasizes the need for clinicians to be aware of clients' trauma-related background and their possible psychosocial consequences, even when the client may not present this as relevant information.

Future Directions

The study extended with larger participant group sizes, more interview durations might shed light into a comprehensive mapping of war trauma in women of Bengal. Organizing participant groups considering the age of experience of war and migration might lead to more concrete findings. The socio-political ambience changed in both countries in every decade influencing different patterns of migrations changed with changing reasons. Future work might localize the participant group criteria into a single decade with respect to migration to carefully understand the interactions of political scenario into individual psychic history.

Conclusion

The present qualitative study explores areas of trauma related to War and Forced Migration of Hindu women. The findings show a variety of themes useful in understanding the experiences of women during Liberation War and forced migration specific to Bengal's cultural context.

References

- Archambault, C. S. (2010). Women Left Behind? Migration, Spousal Separation, and the Autonomy of Rural Women in Ugweno, Tanzania. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 35(4), 919–942. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/651042>
- Basu, J. (2013). *Reconstructing the Bengal partition*. Kolkata: Samya.
- Boehnlein, J., & Kinzie, J. (1995). Refugee trauma. *Transcultural psychiatric research review*, 32(3), 223-252.
- Bonanno, G. A., Galea, S., Bucciarelli, A., & Vlahov, D. (2007). What predicts psychological resilience after disaster? The role of demographics, resources, and life stress. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 75(5), 671.
- Bronstein, I., & Montgomery, P. (2011). Psychological distress in refugee children: a systematic review. *Clinical child and family psychology review*, 14(1), 44-56.
- Castles, S. (2003). Towards a sociology of forced migration and social transformation. *Sociology*, 37(1), 13-34.

- Chimni, B. S. (2009). The birth of a 'discipline': From refugee to forced migration studies. *Journal of Refugee studies*, 22(1), 11-29.
- Chung, R. C. Y., & Kagawa-Singer, M. (1993). Predictors of psychological distress among Southeast Asian refugees. *Social science & medicine*, 36(5), 631-639.
- Derluyn, I., & Broekaert, E. (2008). Unaccompanied refugee children and adolescents: The glaring contrast between a legal and a psychological perspective. *International journal of law and psychiatry*, 31(4), 319-330.
- Descilo, T., Fava, N. M., Burke, S. L., Acosta, I., Swanson, A., & Figley, C. (2019). Effects of Traumatic Incident Reduction on Posttraumatic Symptoms in a Community-Based Agency. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 29(4), 401-409.
- Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E., Loescher, G., Long, K., & Sigona, N. (Eds.). (2014). *The Oxford handbook of refugee and forced migration studies*. OUP Oxford.
- Geiger, S. (1990). What's so feminist about women's oral history?. *Journal of Women's History*, 2(1), 169-182.
- George, M. (2010). A theoretical understanding of refugee trauma. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 38(4), 379-387.
- Cook, J. M., & Gold, S. N. (2017). *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology: Volume 1. Foundations in Knowledge Volume 2. Trauma Practice (APA Handbooks in Psychology®)* (1st ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Ibrahim, N. (2016, March 26). As a War Heroine, I Speak. *The Daily Star*. <https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/independence-day-2016/war-heroine-i-speak-1199590>
- Ibrahim, N. (1994). *Ami Birangona Bolchi [I, the War Heroine, am Speaking]*. Dhaka: Jagriti Prokashoni.
- Jacobsen, K., & Landau, L. B. (2003). The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration. *Disasters*, 27(3), 185-206.
- Jung, C. G., Von Franz, M. L., Henderson, J. L., Jaffé, A., & Jacobi, J. (1964). *Man and his symbols* (Vol. 5183). Dell.
- Krystal, H. (1978). Trauma and affects. *The psychoanalytic study of the child*, 33(1), 81-116. Leavy, P. (Ed.). (2014). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Loh, M. I., & Klug, J. (2012). Voices of migrant women: The mediating role of resilience on the relationship between acculturation and psychological distress.
- Lustig, S. L., Weine, S. M., Saxe, G. N., & Beardslee, W. R. (2004). Testimonial psychotherapy for adolescent refugees: A case series. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 41(1), 31-45.
- McCleary, J., & Figley, C. (2017). Resilience and trauma: Expanding definitions, uses, and contexts. *Traumatology*, 23(1), 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000103>
- Menon, R., & Bhasin, K. (1998). *Borders & boundaries: women in India's partition*. Rutgers University Press.
- Mookherjee, N. (2011). 'Never again': aesthetics of 'genocidal'cosmopolitanism and the Bangladesh Liberation War Museum. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 17, S71-S91.
- Morrison, A. R., Schiff, M., & Sjöblom, M. (2007). *The international migration of women*. Washington, DC: World Bank and Palgrave Macmillan.

- Pant, H. V. (2007). India and Bangladesh: Will the twain ever meet?. *Asian Survey*, 47(2), 231-249.
- Reuter-Lorenz, P. A., & Park, D. C. (2010). Human neuroscience and the aging mind: a new look at old problems. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 65(4), 405-415.
- Robertson, C. L., Halcon, L., Savik, K., Johnson, D., Spring, M., Butcher, J., ... & Jaranson, J. (2006). Somali and Oromo refugee women: trauma and associated factors. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 56(6), 577-587.
- Ryan, D. A., Benson, C. A., & Dooley, B. A. (2008). Psychological distress and the asylum process: A longitudinal study of forced migrants in Ireland. *The Journal of nervous and mental disease*, 196(1), 37-45.
- Saikia, Y. (2004, October). Beyond the archive of silence: Narratives of violence of the 1971 liberation war of Bangladesh. *In History Workshop Journal*, 58(1), 275-287. Oxford University Press.
- Sanyal, N., & Dasgupta, M. (2017). The therapeutic window to the world of fantasy. *Samik.a: Journal of The Indian Psychoanalytical Society*, 62, 33-44. (ISSN)0971-3492
- Schweitzer, R., Melville, F., Steel, Z., & Lacherez, P. (2006). Trauma, post-migration living difficulties, and social support as predictors of psychological adjustment in resettled Sudanese refugees. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 40(2), 179-187.
- Sengupta, A. (2014). Breaking up: Dividing assets between India and Pakistan in times of Partition. *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 51(4), 529-548.
- Sundquist, J. (1994). Refugees, labour migrants and psychological distress. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 29(1), 20-24.
- Totten, S. (2012). *Plight and Fate of Women During and Following Genocide (Genocide Studies)* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Tripathi, R. C., & Singh, P. (2016). *Perspectives on Violence and Othering in India* (Softcover reprint of the original 1st ed. 2016 ed.). Springer.
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology Third Edition (Revised ed.)*. Open University Press.