



Enforced disappearances in Bangladesh and Women's role:

Does a woman become the new 'Patriarch?'

A Thesis Presented By

Yasmin Ara

STUDENT ID: 18117003

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Examining Committee:	
Supervisor: (Member)	<hr/> <p>Seuty Sabur, PhD Associate Professor, Department of ESS, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, BRAC University</p>
Program Coordinator: (Member)	<hr/> <p>Shahidur Rahman, PhD Professor, Department of ESS, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, BRAC University</p>
School: (Chairperson)	<hr/> <p>Farzana Munshi, PhD Professor and Chairperson, Department of ESS, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, BRAC University</p>

Table of Contents

Chapter: 1

Introduction4

Chapter: 2

Framework.....6

Chapter: 3

Methodologies.....8

Chapter: 4: Findings

4.1 The Reincarnation of Women10

4.2 Protection or Abandonment: Changes in Family Dimensions14

4.3 Resistance and Breaking the Gender Norms.....17

Chapter: 5

Analysing Findings19

Chapter: 6

Conclusion23

Reference24

Chapter: 1

1. Introduction:

Three main political parties- Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamat-i-Islam, and Bangladesh Awami League exist in Bangladesh. However, the political dimensions of this country change with every election. Oppositions who are critiquing the activities of the ruling party do the same thing when they come into power. This was true in the case of the birth of RAB - an elite force. The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) ¹was founded under the rule of BNP as a result of the 9/11 tragedy in order to maintain internal security and comply with the government's orders (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Besides, Many extrajudicial killings and disappearances were done by the RAB and DB Police (Detective Branch) ("No Right to Live", 2016)

However, these parties keep throwing dirt on one another to meet their political interest. But such incidents have a great impact on the lives of victims who may or may not come between their political interests but still get a little bit of that dirt sprinkle. The most affected victims are those who become a scapegoat for enforced disappearances and their close families as they don't even know whether the disappeared people would come back or not.

Moreover, this country has seen an intensified picture of repression, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings by the counter-terror group the Rapid Action Battalion in recent years. (STATEMENT ON ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE IN BANGLADESH, 2021). However, when heads of the family get arrested in front of the other members of the family which later on turn out to be not an 'arrest', it shatters the world of those victim families, especially women. Women members of the families are left with two options, either to fight like a man in order to

¹ Rapid Action Battalion or RAB, is an anti-crime and anti-terrorism unit of the Bangladesh Police. (Rapid Action Battalion, 2022)

find their loved ones or rely on other male members of the family. In both of the scenarios, women invent themselves in a newer dimension and notice the changing dynamics of their families and life.

However, this paper aims to explore how the women members of the family dealt with such disappearances and how they resisted the stereotypical gender norms within the political power structure of this country. The purpose of choosing this topic is to understand the dimensions of gender norms broadly, and specifically the reimagination of the role of women and the changes in family dimensions. However, the role of women in any scenario often either goes unnoticed or not recognized, for instance, during the liberation war women sacrificed in every possible way but mostly the incidents of women getting raped are highlighted. Similarly in these enforced disappearance cases the sufferings and struggles of women haven't been in the spotlight. It is really fascinating to see how even in the 21st-century women's struggles are still out of the limelight. Besides, struggles force women to see themselves and the world through a different lens. And I want to explore how these struggles and sufferings due to the disappearances of immediate family members help women to reinvent themselves and revert the gender norms. My lay assumption is that due to the disappearance of the male members, women of the family go beyond their designated roles and are compelled to reinvent themselves to survive the trauma and cope with everyday life. Moreover, in absence of the patriarch of the family, the equations among family members change. This paper would try to explore how these women are coping with the new invention of 'self' and familial changes.

The existing research on this topic like *Abductions and Disappearances in Bangladeshi Policing*. Policing by Md. Kamal Uddin (Uddin, 2018) and *ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE: AN UNDEFINED CRIME IN BANGLADESH* by Md. Raisul Islam Sourav (Sourav, 2015) mostly

focused on the political aspects of such disappearances. They hardly provide us any information on changing gender roles and subversion of the conventional family norms Whereas, I explore the context in which women emerge as the matriarch replacing the ‘patriarch’ in family and society. In order to find these families, I reached out to the organization ‘Mayer Daak’ [1] which works on such disappearances and by documenting acknowledges the sufferings of these families. I have reached out to my key informant who helped me reach my interlocutors. [1] Mayer Daak (English: Mother’s Call, Bengali: মায়ের ডাক) is a platform for the families of the people who fell victim to enforced disappearance allegedly by government agencies during the rule of the Awami League-led government from 2009 to until date in Bangladesh. (Mayer Daak, 2022)

Chapter: 2

Framework:

The absence of a patriarch in the family allows us to look into women’s lives and their families through a different lens. As such enforced disappearances have intensified in recent years, the number of such families increased which led us to look deeply into this matter. This topic took the attention of the whole nation not only because of how many people have disappeared but also because such incidents are still happening in a democratic country. It is needless to say that the families of disappeared people are the most affected ones, especially the women. They not only live in despair but also lose their role as the woman in that significant person’s life which used to define their identity. The question that concerns me is whether they could unshackle themselves from the domestic role of a ‘woman’ or do they still negotiate their role in the line of patriarchy. Whichever scenario might be, in both cases women have no choice but to reinvent themselves as

an active participant in society. However, in this journey of struggles of women, in short, I will explore the gender roles, specifically the reimagination of the role of women, their everyday resistance, and the changes in their family dimensions.

In order to explore the gender norms and the new 'patriarch' of the family, I would use the works of Kandiyoti's *Bargaining with Patriarchy* (Kandiyoti, 1988) in which it is revealed how women negotiate with patriarchy in their everyday life. I used the concepts of Agency and Resistance by Lila Abu-Lughod where women's resistance is seen in everyday practices rather than something revolutionary or rebellious and additionally, how Abu-Lughod's concept of resistance and agency allies with enforced disappearances. (Lughod, 1990) where my interlocuters have seen to emerge as the political subjects and resistance in everyday life and its public manifestation became the only way of living, Mrinalini Sinha's *Gender and Nation* (Sinha, 2006) where women are considered to be active participants of the public sphere and the connection of women and nation, Michel Foucault's theory of Counter-Memory (Foucault, 1977) and to relate my topic to other countries perspective of disappearances' incidents I would focus on the book of Ather Zia titled 'Resisting Disappearances' (Zia, 2019) where the everyday practices of women play a vital role to keep the matter burning and what kind of role men have. Moreover, I have used the article 'What Kinship Is' by Marshall Sahlins (Sahlins, 2013) where circumstances play a vital role in constructing kinship while pursuing the thesis.

Through this research, I would try to understand how women deviate from their gender norms and is only binary forms of gender norms exist- meaning if women deviate from their gender role, do they perform the gender norms of men or they come out of the binary gender norms creating a new form of the role.

Chapter: 3

Methodology:

I have chosen qualitative research and in-person interviews. And in order to do so, I have managed to talk to four (4) families where I conducted eight (8) interviews over the course of one week. Secondary research was conducted in order to support my research framework. Besides, this helped me find existing literature to compare my research with. My interviewees belong to various strata of society. I have interviewed people from low-wage earners to families owning an area of a city, which helped me understand the magnitude of the problem across classes. The age group varied from 25 to 80 years old which has provided me with different perspectives. Society sees an 80-year-old fights with sympathy but younger women's fights deal with different aspects not only within the society but within families too. However, the duration of each interview was around forty-five (45) minutes to an hour and a half.

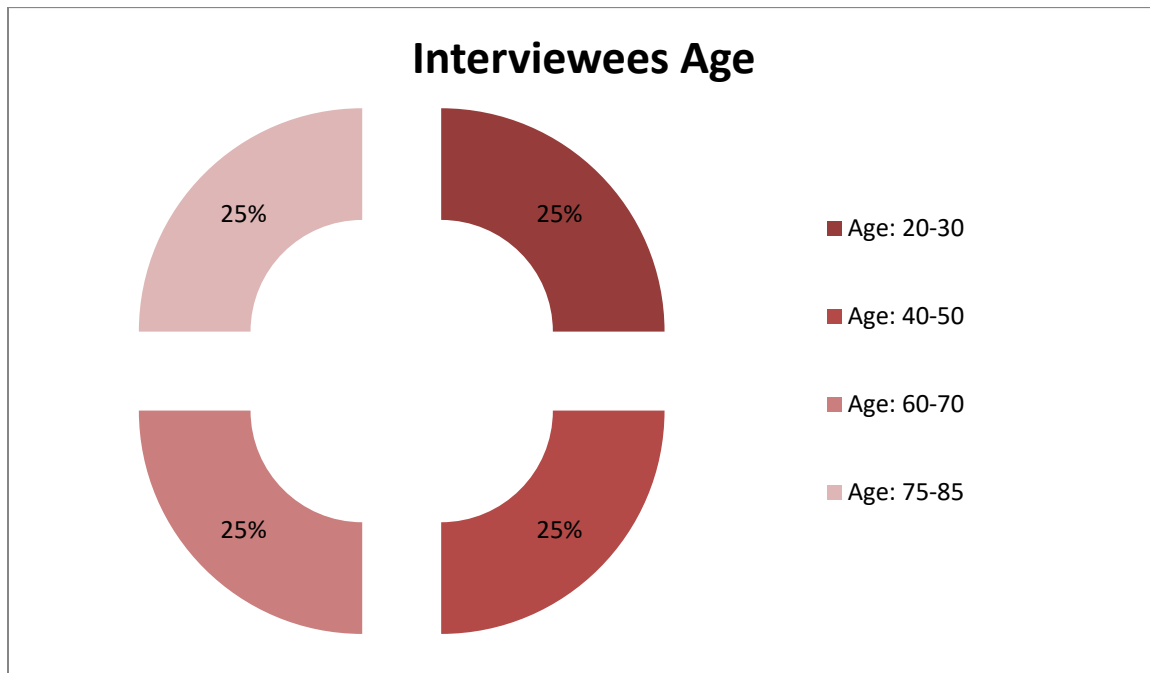


FIGURE NO: 01

My research locale was confined to Dhaka where the interviewees were living comparatively more expensive lives than people residing outside Dhaka. I wanted the true essence of their experiences, therefore I chose Dhaka. Moreover, Dhaka being the center of almost every organization and institution, the fight of the victims of Dhaka was quite direct. However, my research is centered around women's experiences. And some of my interviewees consider discussing this topic very sensitive, a few of my interviewees wanted to remain anonymous so I'll be using pseudo names for them to keep their identities private. Moreover, the interviews were recorded audibly with the permission of the interviewees and these recordings were only accessible to me. The demographics of my fellow interviewees are given below-

SL. NO.	NAME:	AGE:	RELATION WITH DISAPPEARED PERSON:	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:	RESIDENCE:
1	Hajera Khatun	85	Mother	SSC	DHAKA
2	Ruhul Amin	75	Father	MASTERS DEGREE	DHAKA
3	Firoza	62	Mother	HSC	DHAKA
4	Ferdous	60	Sister	DOUBLE MASTERS' DEGREE	DHAKA
5	Afroza Islam Akhi	45	Sister	MASTERS' DEGREE	DHAKA
6	Nasima	40	Wife	HSC	DHAKA
7	Farzana	30	Wife	HSC	DHAKA
8	Minu	28	Wife	SSC DROPOUT	DHAKA

Each and every interviewee was treated equally and it was an amazing experience to gander at their experiences through their lenses. Each and every participant has provided me with various different perspectives and broke many of my preconceived notions. However, it would have been better if the period was a bit expanded so that I could have the chance to include more interviewees in order to have a wider perspective and could have proffered a more concrete analysis of this topic.

Chapter: 4

Findings

4.1 The Reincarnation of Women:

The image of women in our culture or worldwide is ‘private’. We are living in a world where women are considered subordinate to men. The assigned role by society for men is to handle the outside world which is known as the ‘public sphere’ and for women, the world is limited to household chores and child-rearing which is known as the ‘private sphere’. And this perception about women is not ahistorical many authors like Nabila Kabeer on ‘The Quest for National Identity: Women, Islam and the State in Bangladesh,’ (Kabeer, 1991) Shelley Feldman on ‘Exploring Theories of Patriarchy: A Perspective from Contemporary Bangladesh’ have expounded on this concept. (Feldman, 2001) But while doing this research, I came across my respondents deviating from the assigned roles. The disappeared persons of my maximum interviewees were the breadwinners of their families. So when that person became absent from that role, that person’s responsibility is usually bestowed upon someone who’s been closest to

them. In most cases, the responsibility is shifted to the wives. My interlocutor Minu was one of them. Minu, whose husband was a driver said, ‘আমার ৫ টাকার মরিচ কিনতেও কখনো দোকানে যাওয়া লাগেনাই, আমার জামাই আমাদের সব প্রয়োজনের সবই লইয়া আইত- (I didn't need to go to a shop even to buy chilies, my husband used to bring everything we needed). But when he was long gone Minu has to take responsibility for her family which consists of her and her daughter. Her daughter is studying in class 5 and could only come this far because of Minu. A patriarchal family turned into a matrifocal in structure. Her husband's absence made her realize that she has to do something to run her family. However, one and a half years went by in search of her husband. She desperately tried to meet her husband Kaisar (Kausar) wherever he was taken. During this period neither she had a job nor any income source; she hasn't been left with any fortune. Despite being very educated, she tried hard and managed few jobs in this patriarchal system. First, she started providing lunchboxes to the offices in the vicinity of her home. Then she started teaching neighborhood kids Arabic and started an online business.

Minu, the woman who had no idea about the outside world, had run from office to office, conversing with strangers, and dealing with things she had never encountered. All that running cut her life short. But now she is a woman who is working hard, meeting her ends solvently. Her identity drastically changed- From a docile submissive girl to a fighter. In this world of patriarchy, she is fighting against all the odds and trying to make a living. She is bargaining with this patriarchal system on her own terms. These bargains serve a vital role in shaping women's subjectivity. (Kandyoti, 1988) They cannot completely come out of the vicious cycle of patriarchy so they find a middle ground where women negotiate their way. Moreover, gender relations often happen as constituting the 'essence' of cultures as ways of life to be passed from

generation to generation. Minu's daughter witnessing her mother as a fighter that would shape her future.



But not everyone is fighting to change their destiny. Some go through changes in different directions. Farzana, the wife of Sohel, was six months pregnant when her husband disappeared. Soon as she heard about it she went to the security force's office with her father, where neither she received any special treatment because of her pregnancy nor was she neglected for being a woman. Even though her husband has a brother but he didn't come forward to help because of the fear that the security forces might make him disappear too. Their marriage was a love marriage and when Sohel went missing people teased her and her family by saying her husband had left her. For long she lived in duality. She expressed her fear of being unsafe and that's the reason for her to hide from the system but she has been continuing the search for her beloved by shadowing herself. Even though she shadows herself from the system, she is active in Mayer Dak.

In this whole process of searching and fighting, the role of a 'mother' is remolded. Among the interviewees, most of the wives of the victims have children, but only a handful of them didn't. Those who didn't have children experienced a very different journey from those who have

children. I'll discuss it later in this paper. However, in this struggle of the time, the motherhood of these mothers whose husbands were the victims of enforced disappearances deviate from what the society expects from mothers and that is prioritizing offsprings the most. But these mothers faced a dilemma where they had to choose between focusing on their offspring and continuing their search for their beloved partners. But both seemed equally important to them. Despite having the desire to provide equal attention to both the matters, some of them couldn't; as they had to fulfill both the roles of a mother and a father. Nasima, the wife of Sumon, has two daughters. The younger daughter does not even remember her father as she was one and a half years old when her father went missing. Her aunt said, 'The younger daughter of my brother is a bit hyperactive, she might have been like this from her very childhood but we neither could realize nor focus on her as we were too engrossed by the search for my brother'. Amidst this chaos of searching, she has lost her of attention from her family. The whole process of searching for Sumon was directed by his mother and sisters. His wife didn't go outside but this didn't make her less of a fighter. She stayed home and prayed and felt all broken all these years. Her role as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law remains intact despite her husband being absent. Not only the younger daughter but the eldest daughter was impacted by this disappearance. Nasima said, 'After her father disappeared, she became very short tempered'. When a father is absent in a family either mothers take the responsibility of the father and mother or the extended family members take that responsibility. Either way, it's a transition a mother goes through which makes them redesign their role both as a mother and a woman.

4.2 Protection or Abandonment: Changes in Family dimensions:

Family is considered a space in which people rely upon love, and financial and emotional support. But all of these are entangled with something else. Researching this topic helped me see the heavy dependence on the male members of the families. I came across many interesting facets. Minu, the wife of Kaiser, expressed, ‘Before Kaiser went missing, I had a very good relationship with my mother-in-law and Bhashur (Kaiser’s elder brother). But when he went missing, they stopped checking on us’. And added, ‘My Bhashur and his family used to visit us every Eid and bring gifts for our daughter’. Things started to change when she asked for help to find her husband; he didn’t prefer to help out of fear of getting disappeared like his brother. Even the mother-in-law was very fond of her younger son. According to Minu, when Kaiser disappeared, her mother-in-law transformed into something which was unrecognizable. Instead of helping Minu in this difficult situation, she started demanding money as she believed that Kaiser’s family is getting money from the party fund. Minu indeed received some money for two years during Eid-ul-Fitr after Kaiser disappeared but after that, it started to dry up and eventually stopped. Minu completely detached herself from her in-laws. The protection she was supposed to get she didn’t receive instead she was abandoned by her in-laws. Neither her in-laws helped her nor did they help her financially or emotionally. There were days when Minu and her daughter spent the night in hunger but didn’t receive any help from her in-laws. Minu said, ‘Akhi apu (One of the founders of Mayer Dak) told me to bring the things I need from the neighborhood’s grocery shop, she would pay on my behalf. Even me along with my husband used to be a tenant in one of the buildings of Akhi apu, she excused me from paying the rent for several months after he disappeared.’ She expressed, ‘What my family couldn’t do for me, Akhi apu did that for me, Akhi apu could understand my pain because we are somewhat going through

the same situation'. Akhi Apu's brother is also a victim of enforced disappearance. They both share the same grief. Not only these two but all the members of Mayer Dak share this feeling of unbearable suffering and struggles. Mayer Dak is a community that is a family to one another. This is their newfound family. Marshall Sahlins in his article 'What Kinship Is—Is Not' expounded on this notion of kinship. Kinship or familial bond doesn't always necessarily rely on the biological aspects; shared sufferings and experiences often plays a vital role in construction of such kinship bond. (Sahlins, 2013) On one hand, the relationship with their own family became sour and on the other hand, they have got a new family with whom they can relate and rely. Being on the same level of suffering or having similar past experiences help people to bond a new sort of kinship that is nothing less than their 'own family' rather it holds more value compared to what we generally call 'family' in our society.

Some people who are victims of enforced disappearances are getting cut loose from their families, property security issues are making few of them stick to their families despite being ignored and insulted. Nasima, the wife of Sumon, is living with her in-laws since her marriage. Despite the disappearance, she didn't leave her in-laws house. She belongs to a moderately well-to-do family but still, she didn't move out. She and her daughters are been taken care of by her mother-in-law. her mother in law started to talk about property distribution while I was interviewing her. I felt that she needed to say something on this topic so that I could know maybe thinking that I'm a news reporter (although I mentioned my purpose and profession) who would write about how vocal she was about her rights. To ensure her and her daughters' future she is staying with her in-laws, not only that our society sees a married woman staying in her father's/mother's house as a sign of burden. I observed that whatever questions I was asking, she was answering them with the validation of her mother-in-law by looking at her while answering.

However, she was bargaining for her rights. Additionally, mother-in-law being the head of the family, Nasima was submissive to her. Kandiyoti's 'Bargaining with Patriarchy' shows that elderly women of the family hold a greater value than younger women in case of dominating them- sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, daughters. (Kandyoti, 1988)

On one hand, she is compromising on the other hand Adnan's wife left her in-laws' house after a year or so the disappearance occurred. They didn't have any offspring. When I asked Adnan's parents about his wife, initially his father, Ruhul Amin, didn't inform me about his wife wasn't living with them. Adnan's mother informed me that she left after a year or two of the disappearance. I tried talking about her but they avoided the topic. The wife of Adnan took a decision that might've hurt her in-laws. But she has chosen a life where she didn't have to rely on her in-laws or didn't have to maintain her relationship with them as she walked out of the marriage. And I feel she could have done this because she and her husband didn't have any children. If they had, she needed to think of providing for her child and ensuring her father's possession. Not only that, women are considered to be the vanguards and transmitters of culture while at the same time, are kept at arm's length in many instances. (Sinha, 2006) And through bringing up children women fulfil this duty.

4.3 Resistance and Breaking Gender norms:

This case of enforced disappearances gives us a picture of what women are capable of doing. As Lila Abu Lughod explains resistance doesn't have to be something revolutionary but it can occur and happen in everyday practices (Lughod, 1990). This is what we see in this scenario of extrajudicial disappearances. When the male members of my interviewees' families disappeared, the woman members of the families left no stone unturned to find them and keep the family running. Minu, the wife of Kaiser, who didn't even know how to talk to a shopkeeper, has become unimaginably strong. Now, she talks to security forces with great confidence. Upon being asked if the security forces ever reached out to give an update about her husband she answered, 'A few days ago, a police officer called me and asked me to meet him at the station to have some tea'. She replied to the officer very confidently, 'I don't need to have tea at your station, I have tea at my place'. That police didn't call her again.



Women are always at the forefront in this whole journey of protesting and fighting. Male members of the family have always avoided any protests, rallies, and human chains. Hajera Khatun, the mother of Sumon, who has two more sons, said, 'I forbade my other sons to attend any program regarding extrajudicial disappearances'. And added that, 'আমি ভয় পাই, যদি ওরা আমার বুক ফাঁকা করে ফেলে! (I'm afraid what if they take away my other sons too!)'. Not only fear

but there's an emotional and political aspect too. Feminist theory testifies the fact that women may be socially invisible, as sex category, they are hyper-visible (Zia, 2019). When women are protesting it becomes more appealing. And another backing for this point is that women are not expected to be seen in the public domain and when are seen, they get the utmost attention. Every news report has published pictures of women even though there have been men present in the protests because it grabs the attention of a larger audience.

Starting from protesting to providing for families women are seen breaking the gender norms of our society in this case. Running to different offices to search for their beloved, legitimately negotiating with the security forces with a strong voice, and raising a family are considered to be the fields of men. But women like Minu, Farzana, Hajera Khatun, and Afroza Islam Akhi are continuously proving this patriarchal society wrong over and over again. When I asked Hajera Khatun about what happened when they approached security forces, 'They (RAB) completely denied filing a complaint of kidnapping, they told us to file a missing report. They tried to make us understand that my son has gone somewhere of his own will, no one forcefully abducted him.' (RAB (Rapid Action Battalion, 2022) is a government-sanctioned and funded security force). Mayer Dak is relentlessly working still now to keep this enforced disappearances issue alive to find the missing people that fall under the concept of counter-memory of Michel Foucault. Counter-memory designates a practice of memory formation that is social and political, one that runs counter to the official histories of governments, mainstream mass media, and the society of the spectacle. It involves the memorialization—a collective practice of relearning - of forgotten, suppressed, and excluded histories, which then becomes an act of political subjectification (Sites of Collective Counter-Memory by TJ Demos, 2012) . The government is still claiming that they are missing and they have gone somewhere of their own will, no abduction has occurred (Human

Rights Watch, 2021). But the relentless effort of Mayer Dak since 2014 has kept the issue of abduction alive which is a counter to government narratives. Not only that, celebrating Enforced Disappearance Day yearly, organizing rallies, protests, human chains, approaching security forces' offices, and knocking on every possible door to find the disappeared people is a sign of resistance. Mayer Dak does not take an aggressive stance against the government, but the politics of counter-memory, protesting through different mediums are more than just simple notions of a battle against oppression. And Mayer Dak is an organization that works hard to keep the memories of the disappeared alive by performing programs and appearances of the victims' families to make these memories stronger. And I believe this is a resistance Lila Abu Lughod talks about. Resistance like this doesn't pose as something revolutionary but it definitely creates an impact in keeping it alive.

Chapter: 5

Analysing Findings:

Women, who are always considered subordinate to men, have repeatedly shown their capability whenever it is needed. Likewise, when enforced disappearance instances surfaced to intensify it is women who took a step further toward ensuring justice. In our culture, men perform the role of protectors (Zia, 2019). But in this case, the table has turned; here women became the protectors by protecting other male members of the family, their offspring, even the people who disappeared. They not only fight for finding their beloved ones but also against the gender norms those have been assigned to them. Women are continuously reinventing their roles through breaking gender norms and resisting. When I asked Ferdousi, sister of Sumon, 'How many

people or offices did you reach to find your brother?’ She answered, ‘We (she, her mother, and her sisters) tried to reach everyone we knew who we thought could be of a little help to us’. She excitedly shared, ‘Did you know that we even seek help from Fakirbabas² to find our brother’. And let me mention that she is a double Master's degree holder. Victim’s family has gone to great extent demanding justice; enquire about the disappeared. Besides, this process of finding and seeking justice is intergenerational. When Sumon disappeared his younger daughter was one and a half years old. She knows her father only from his pictures. She has not only witnessed her female members of families finding her father, but she herself also attended many programs regarding enforced disappearances. At least she knows that his father disappeared. Farzana, the wife of Soheli, was pregnant during that incident. Later on, the child was told that his father is living abroad. Her mother thinks that he is not yet prepared for this news. But her eldest offspring attends press conferences and rallies and appeal to the nation like any other victim’s children to return his father as they (victim’s family) believe that they (victims) have been abducted.

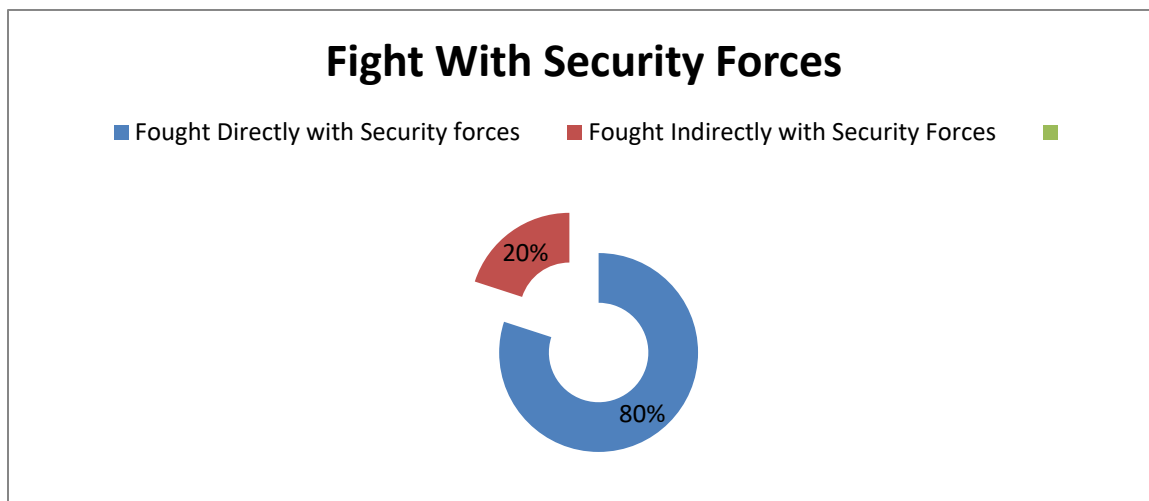


FIGURE: 02

² A fakir or faqir, is a Sufi who performs feats of endurance or magic. (Fakir, 2022)

Not only have women fought for bringing back the disappeared ones but for their own rights too. This fighting instinct is internalized in women. Where men are considered to be the protectors and women are supposed to be protected, in this case, has been reversed. Women protected the male members of their families, ensuring that their voices are listened to.

These protesting and rallying are crucial for their social survival. Farzana, the wife of Soheli, said, 'People think that my husband has abandoned me, but it's not true'. And in order to make people understand that her husband didn't abandon her, she attends every program organized by Mayer Dak. She said, 'I attend every rally, human chains, and press conference so that people don't forget Soheli and me'. In order to maintain that social image of 'half widow' and survive in the society these women opt for fighting; They did not have many options either. . Almost all of my interviewees, upon being asked about the topic of remarriage, strongly and clearly have denied it. They have a hope that their dear ones would return. This is not necessarily because they are emotionally attached to their partners but because the fear of the social stigma of the second marriage was pertinent. Conventionally, the second marriage for a woman is considered to be an act in which women failed. It is perceived that she has failed to make her first marriage work and the blame falls entirely on women no matter what the situation is. These decisions are intensifying the issues of inheritance of husbands' and fathers' properties. Absent/Disappeared individuals are mostly the young ones who have a wife with younger children. In most cases the victims' parents or extended family claims the possession of those disappeared people, depriving victims' wives and children. Nasima, wife of Sumon when asked her mother-in-law whether she is willing to give Sumon's share of the property to Nasima the mother-in-law haven't given no concrete answers to her questions. It makes Nasima's right on her husband's property uncertain. These things make relationships bitter.

Women's participation in politics and war creates an expansion of women's autonomy and it changes the nature of the relationship that they keep with the family. The gendered division of labor and roles as defined in the movement is challenged by micro-actions. These practices are the methods by which the current structure is changed without confronting radically the existing ideology. These actions are the basis of the construction of a new female identity redefining power relations institutionalized in everyday life. The way a man behaves towards a woman on the public stage becomes a criterion demonstrating the degree of his integration into the organization. (Sinha, 2006)

Almost everyone of my interviewees has gone through a massive change whether it's in terms of family, society or occupations. Here is a table below showing the occupational changes occurred in my interviewees lives-

NAME:	Pre-disappearance Occupation	Post-Disappearance Occupation
Hajera Khatun	Home-maker	Activist
Ruhul Amin	Teacher	Retired Housebound
Firoza	Politician	Activist
Afroza Islam Akhi	Home-maker	Organizational Founder
Nasima	Home-maker	Home-maker
Farzana	Businessperson	Home-maker
Minu	Home-maker	Teacher and Businessperson

Chapter: 6

Conclusion:

In the beginning I had a lay observation that gender norms are rigid. At the end of the research, I figured that there are few practices that are solely gendered but these norms have fluidity as well. No matter how hard we try to prescribe the assigned roles, different situations and places make norms deviate from their course. I encountered such a situation while doing this research. Women had no other option but to fight. They had to fight for themselves, their children, their rights, social survival, etc. And these fights were seen in their everyday life. Besides, these roles of women have given birth to a new form of gender role that is both a mixture of the existing binary role and new roles. When a patriarch of a family goes absent, no matter how difficult the situation is, women have to step up and perform double duties- in a sense that they not only have to now take the control of that patriarch but also have to fulfill their duties as a woman. And this is how the process of reinvention occurs. Moreover, when they take control, they are never appreciated and face constant criticism and comparisons. This society always makes them feel that they are not good enough. But overcoming all the odds, they move forward.

The family equation was mixed. Some received protection and some did not. But whoever did had to pay for it either by emotional distress or by financial distress or both. Women were battling both inside and outside of their homes. The language of resistance may work differently for different interlocutors but one thing that seems to be common is that they resisted and held their ground. These incidents have disrupted the lives they knew and pushed the new.

Chapter: 7

Reference:

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