



BIRANGONA

TOWARDS ETHICAL TESTIMONIES OF SEXUAL
VIOLENCE DURING CONFLICT

NAYANIKA MOOKHERJEE

AND

NATMUN NAHAR KEYA



This graphic novel and guideline is based on the research findings in Nayanika Mookherjee's book [The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971. Durham: Duke University Press (2015); Delhi: Zubaan Books (2016)]. What was and is still unprecedented about Bangladesh is that there was no silence about wartime rape of the 1971 war unlike other instances of sexual violence during wars. Instead, there was a public memory of wartime rape as evidenced in the government declaration in 1971 of women raped to be referred to as birangonas (meaning brave women). Nayanika's research ethnographically examines the testimonies of survivors, state officials, human rights activists as well as archival sources, visual and literary representations. Most of the research in this area focuses on highlighting the testimonies of violence only.

Interviews with survivors show that with the focus on documentation of the experiences of wartime rape:

- (i) inadequate attention is paid to the conditions under which such testimonies are recorded.
- (ii) As a result, ethical practices of documentation can be flouted by journalists, human rights activists, government officials, NGO personnel, researchers in their pursuit of recording wartime rape.
- (iii) Hence, survivors can experience a double set of transgression in the very process of testifying to their violent experiences during wars.
- (iv) Hence, there can **emerge a critical disconnect between survivors needs and transitional justice processes.**

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For further information about this project and for printed copies of the graphic novel, please contact Nayanika Mookherjee (ethical.testimonies.svc@durham.ac.uk).

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Grandmother had another nightmare



Labony's School Project

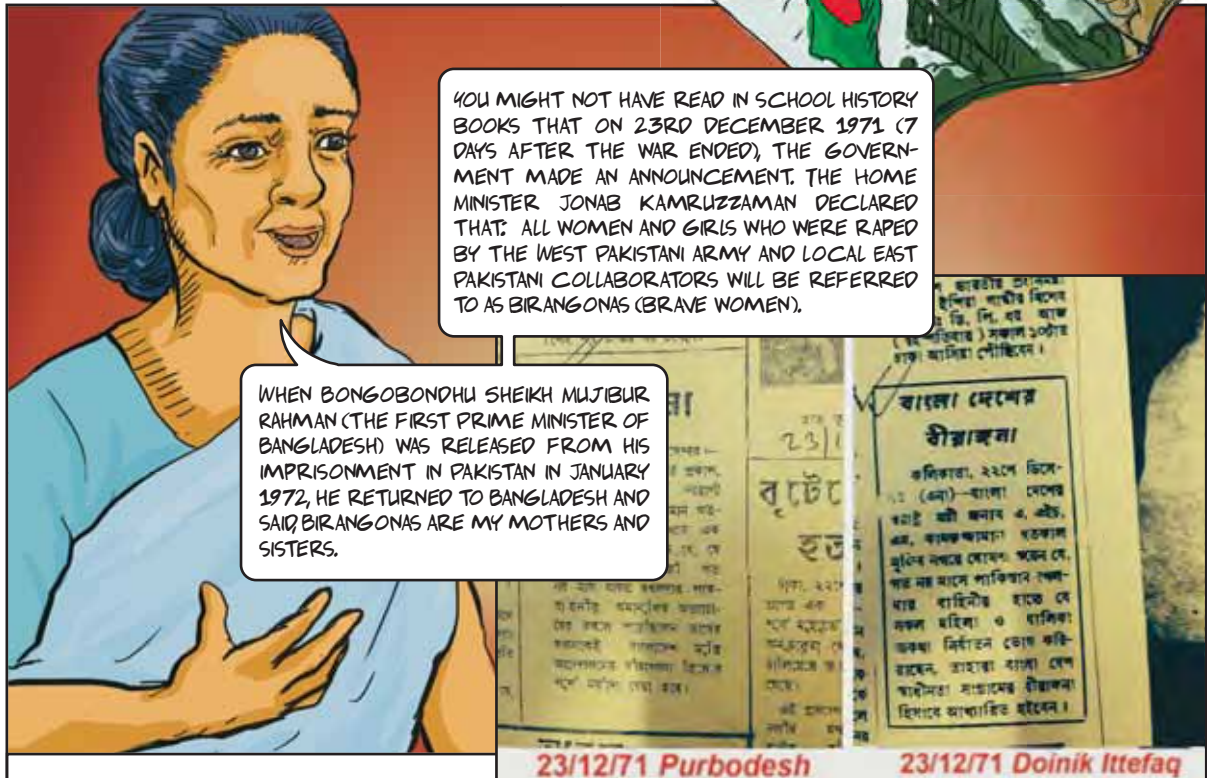
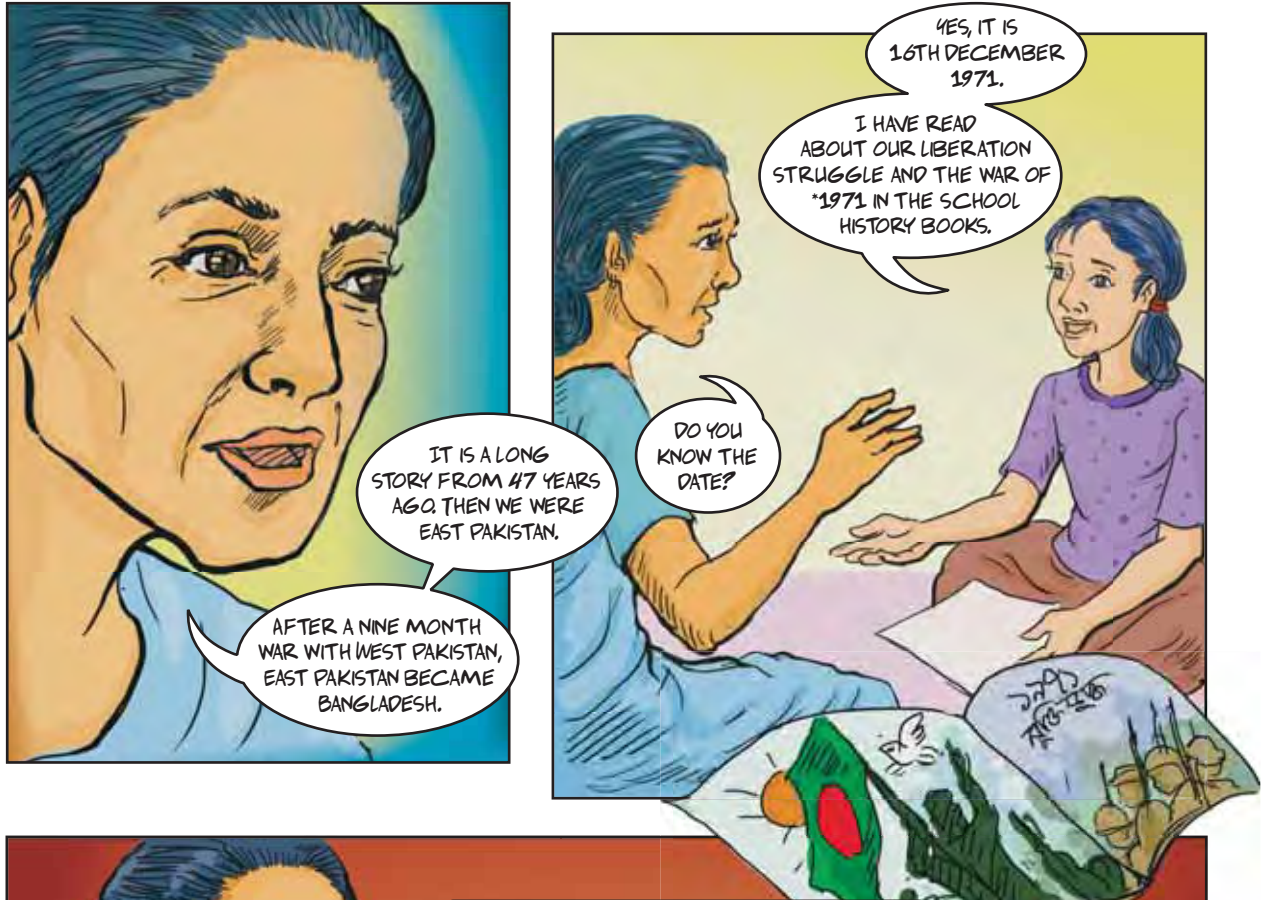


* A maternal grandmother is referred to as Nani or affectionately Nanu among Muslim families in Bangladesh. It is also used among Hindu and Muslim families in some other parts of South Asia.

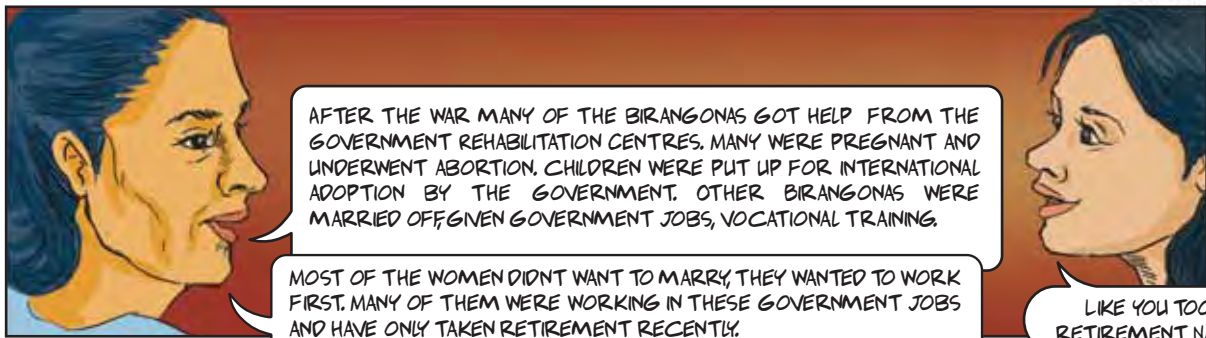
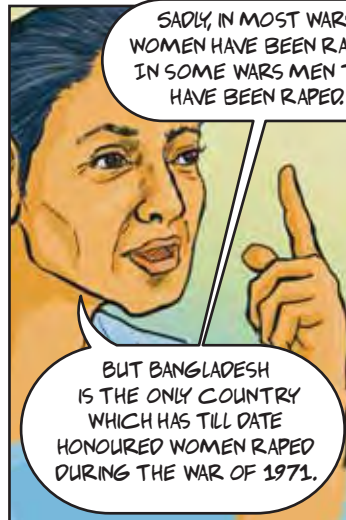
We had a huge loss in the war of 1971



It has been 47 years. Bangladesh honoured women who were raped during the war of 1971 and tried to rehabilitate them.

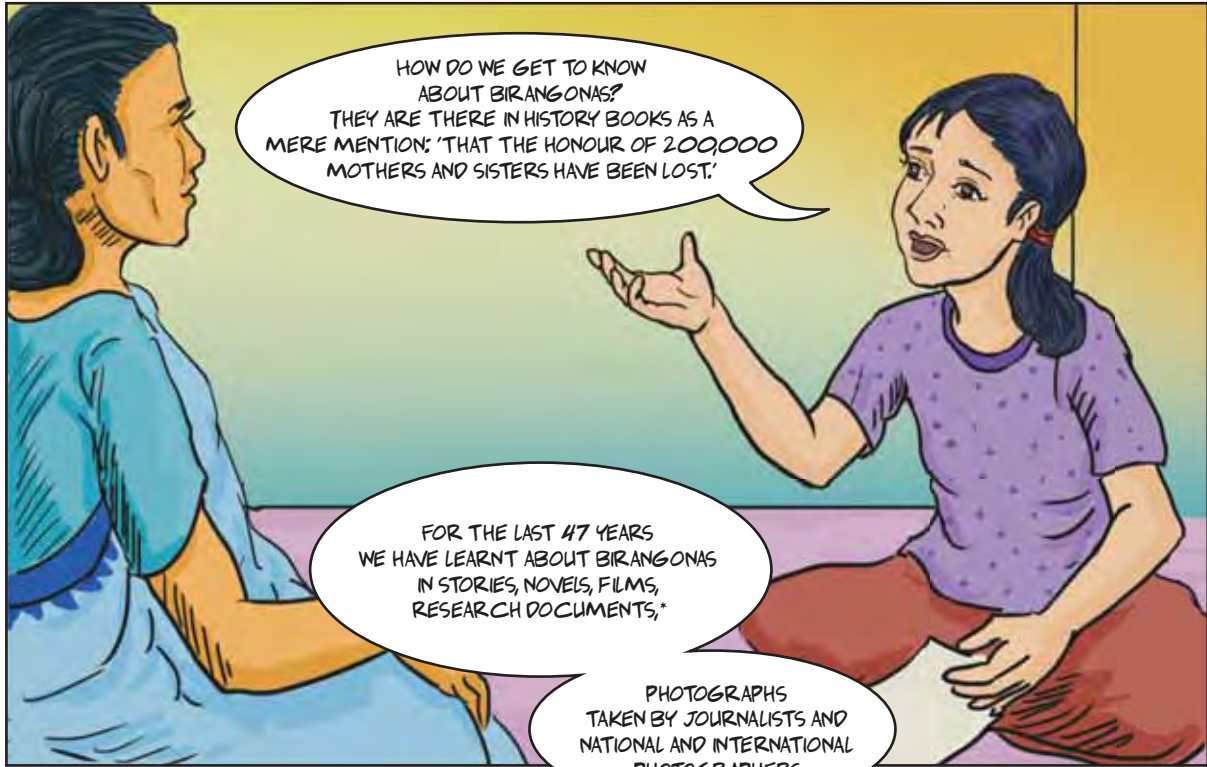


Bangladesh is the only country which has till date honoured women raped during the war of 1971

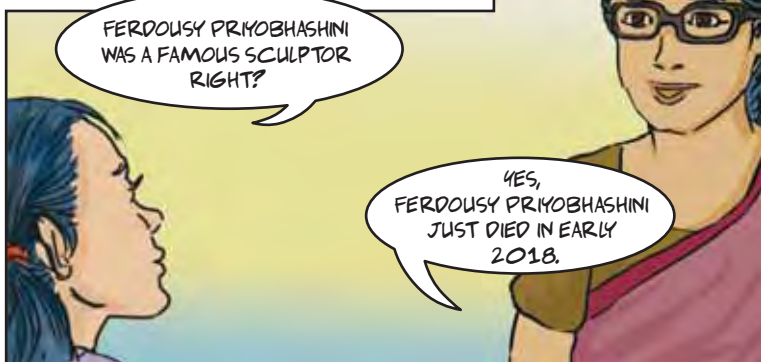
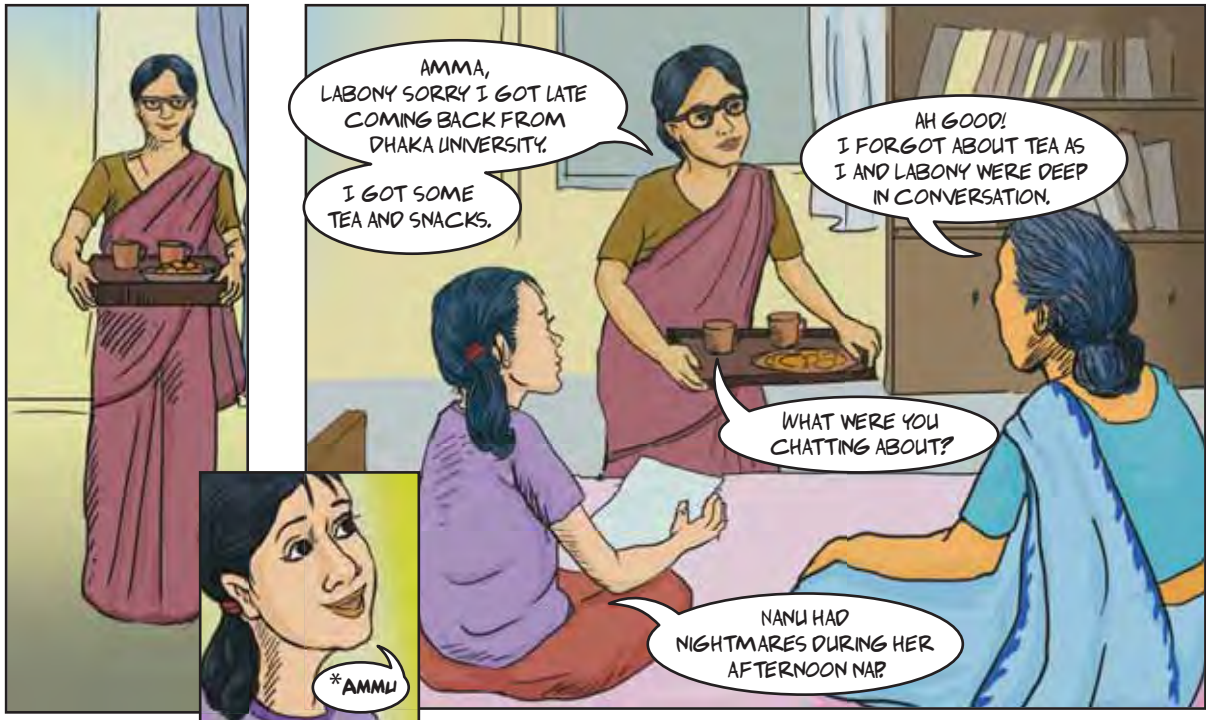


Photograph by Roshid Talukdar

After the war we get to know about the birangonas in stories, novels, films, plays and photographs.

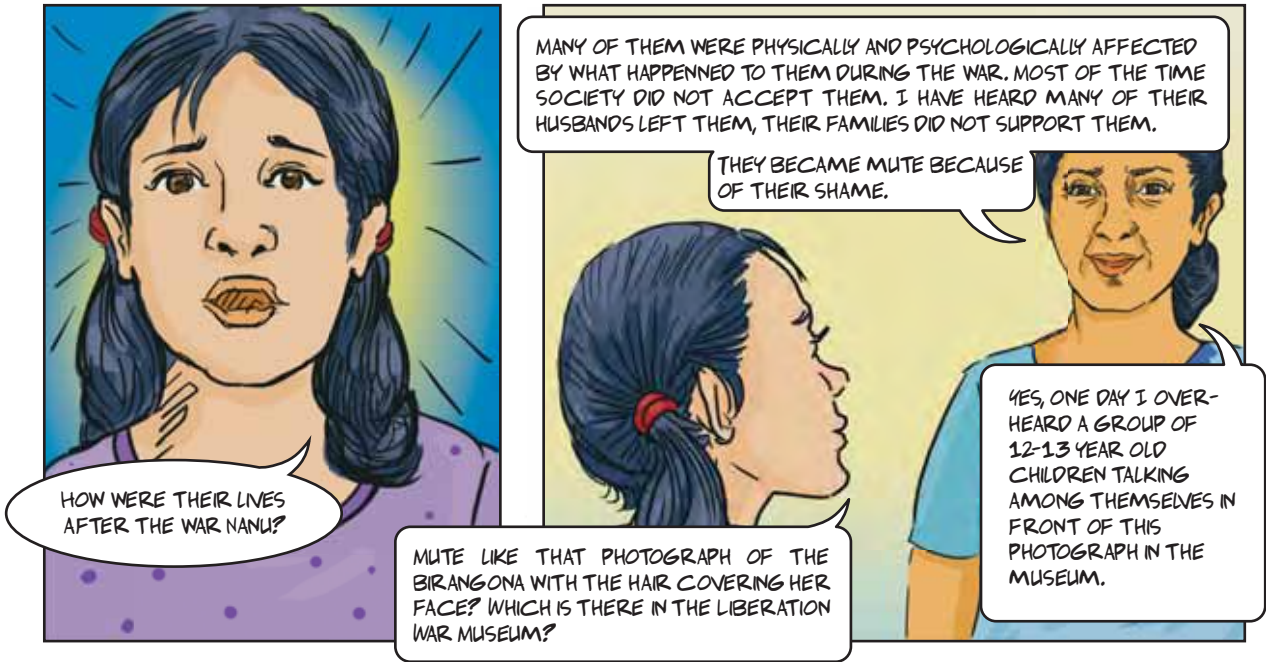


Hena was part of an Oral History Project which was collecting testimonies of Birangonas. They are all slowly passing away.



*Meaning Mother.

The common assumption about the lives of birangonas in the post-conflict context



Many of the Birangonas are with their family



HENA,
DID YOU ALSO NOT INTERVIEW
MANY BIRANGONAS AS PART OF
YOUR ORAL HISTORY PROJECT?



YES, AMMU,
BUT ALL OF THEM WERE NOT
OSTRACISED BY THEIR FAMILIES AND
SOCIETY. MANY LIVE WITH THEIR
FAMILIES TILL TODAY.

THEY HAVE HUSBANDS,
EXTENDED FAMILY, IN-LAWS. THEY
HAVE BEEN THROUGH A TURBULENT
TIME AFTER THEY WERE RAPED DURING
THE WAR. BUT NOT ALL OF THEM
HAVE BEEN SOCIALLY
OSTRACISED.

MANY OF THEM
TODAY HAVE THEIR NAMES
IN THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL
GAZETTE AND RECEIVE
MONTHLY PENSIONS
SINCE 2015.



WHY DONT YOU
TELL US SOME OF THEIR
STORIES AMMU?

LABONI, YOU KNOW
ABOUT THE WELL KNOWN SCULPTOR
FERDOUSY PRIYOBHASHINI?

Life story of some of the birangonas*



FERDOUSY PRIYOBHASHINI: SCULPTOR

During the war of 1971, Pakistani military and her colleagues at work raped her for many months. She had to go to work as she was responsible for the sustenance of her widowed mother and young siblings. After the war she was mistakenly referred to as a collaborator by her neighbours. As a result, she and her husband (who was a liberation fighter) had to constantly change their home and cities to escape these rumours. Only in 1999 she told her daughter about 1971. She used to say, " If the end of your finger is touched without your consent, the finger would burn. Imagine how it would feel if it is the rest/whole of your body." Her story and sculptures inspired many in Bangladesh, particularly the younger generation. She died in March 2018.



CHAYA RANI DUTTA (ANNONYMISED) : A SEX WORKER

During the war Chaya's mother died and Chaya became alone and vulnerable. Taking advantage of this vulnerability, local collaborators in her village gang raped her. Chaya feels sad when thinking of her mother as she feels her mother would have protected her and she wouldn't have been raped. She was good in mathematics and hence after the war she started a business of supplying potatoes to restaurants. Sometime later she decided to take up sex work herself. She follows both Hindu and Muslim religions. As a result of the rapes she had a girl, a war baby who is today 46 years old.



MOYNA KARIM (ANNONYMISED) : A LANDLESS RURAL WOMAN

During the war she was raped by the Pakistani army in the courtyard of her own home. She was cutting fish when she was captured. Holding on to the wooden pole of her house she thought, ' I would give my life but not my honour.' After the war her husband took on the responsibility of cutting fish and after her son got married this job was passed onto her daughter-in-law. Moyna hasn't cut fish since the war. Holding onto the wooden pole of her house she says that the pole is the witness to her event. Whenever she sees this pole she clearly sees the events of that day. In 1992 Moyna gave witness against the war criminals at the People's Court. Today she is appealing to the government to give jobs to her sons and daughters.



SHIREEN AHMED (ANNONYMISED) : HAD A GOVERNMENT JOB

During the war, she witnessed her husband being killed by the Pakistani army. She was also pregnant. The military raped her and she lost her baby. After the war she married a cousin but she always loves her first husband and can't keep his photograph at home. Her second husband does not like it and is jealous of her love for her childhood sweetheart - her deceased first husband. Hence, she kept the photograph of her first husband in her cupboard at work. A few years ago she retired from her job.

Life story of Morjina Khatoon

MORJINA KHATOON: HOSPITAL CLEANER

During the war Morjina's brother was going away to fight. He had recently married.



When the Pakistani military came to their house, Morjina hid her sister-in-law and another beautiful cousin and put herself forward.



For four months, every night a military jeep came to pick her up to be raped and dropped her back in the morning.



After the war neighbours referred to her as a collaborator and so she left for Dhaka to find work.

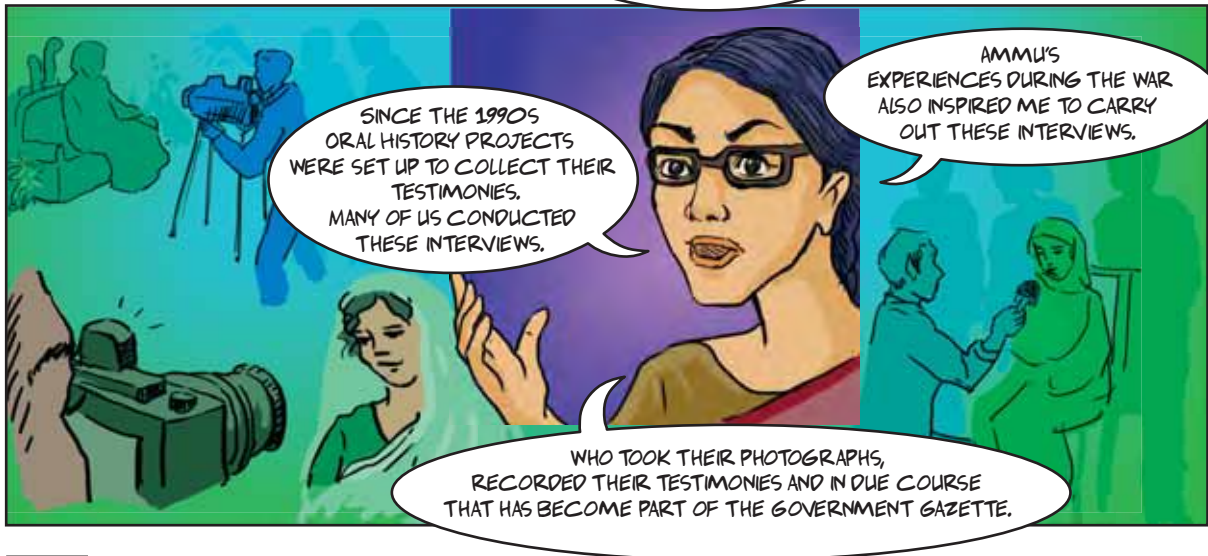
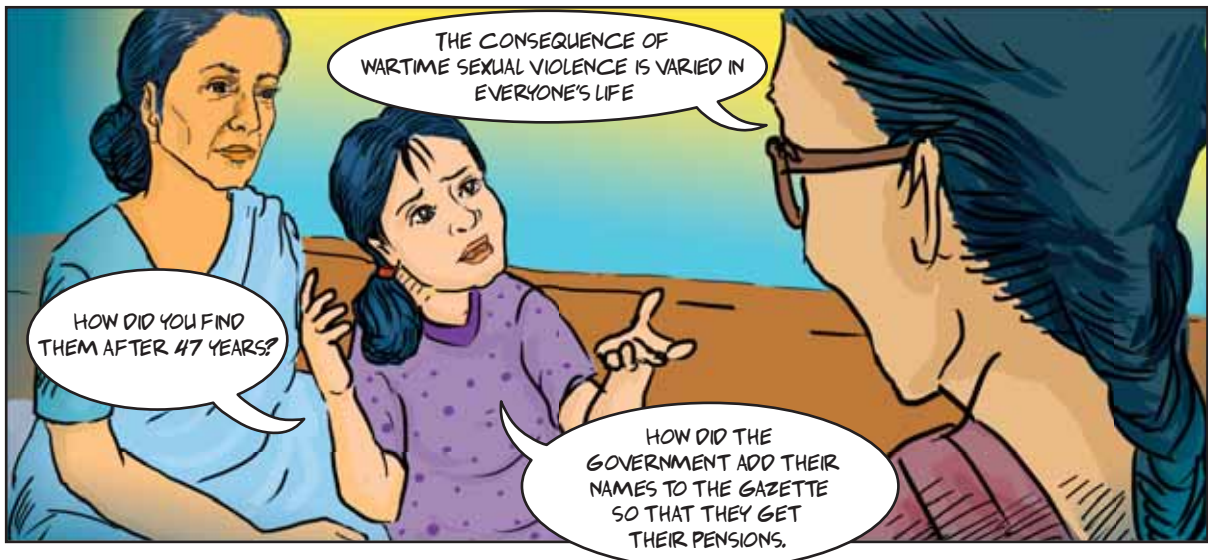


She married, had children, later got separated from her husband and today her children have government jobs. She worked as a cleaner in a government hospital and has recently retired.

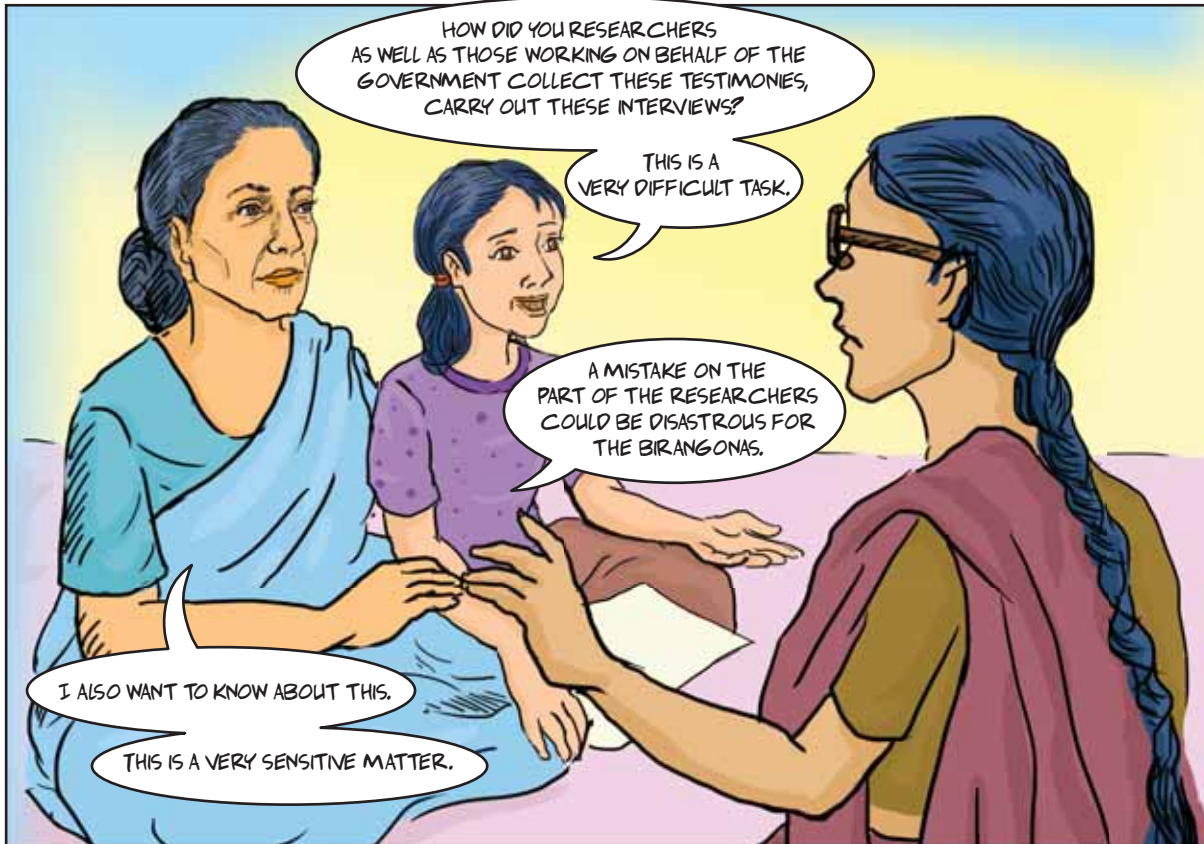


*See elaborated accounts of their lives in Mookherjee, Nayanika Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971 (2015, Duke University Press; 2016 Zubaan) .

How to carry out interviews with birangonas?



To work on such sensitive issues, a clear set of ethical guidelines is needed.



Before the Testimonial Process

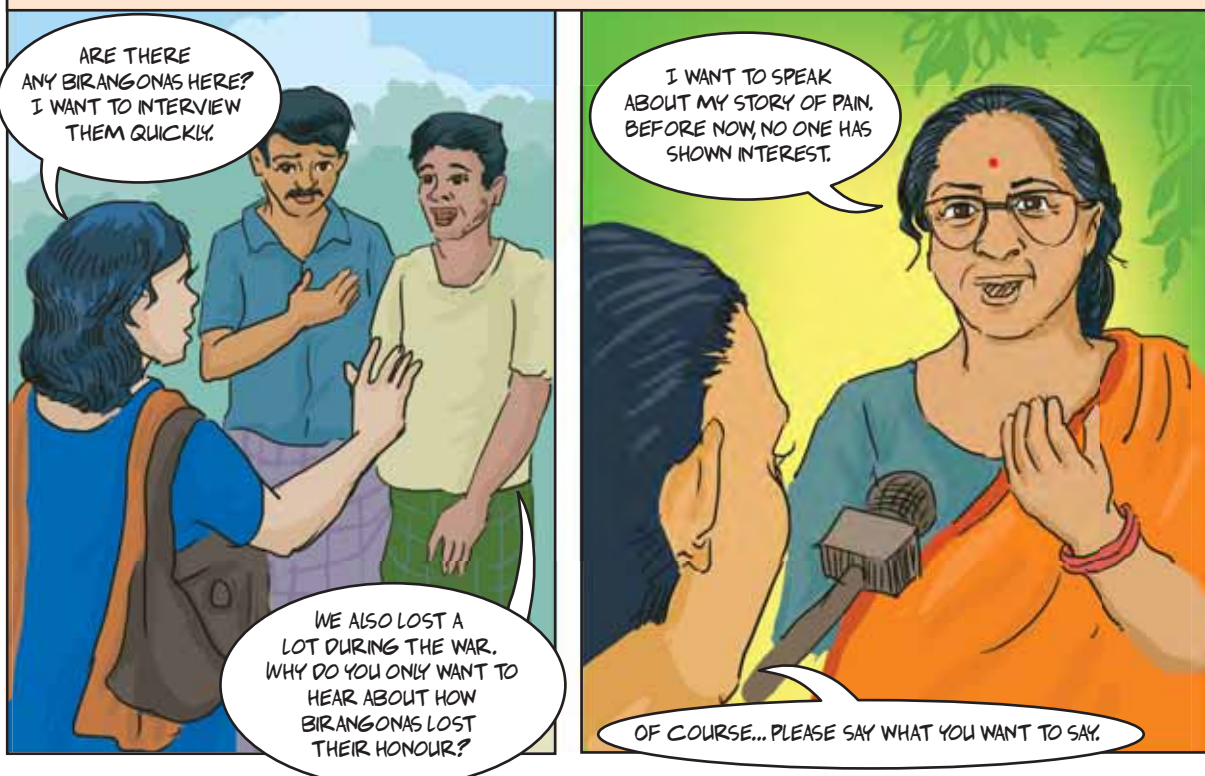
GUIDELINE 1: Have you prepared adequately for these testimonies?

There needs to be intensive preparation before one starts gathering testimonies among survivors of wartime sexual violence. For this, what is indispensable is a background training, reflection on the need for/purpose of testimonies, a study of other secondary sources and avoidance of research fatigue among survivors.

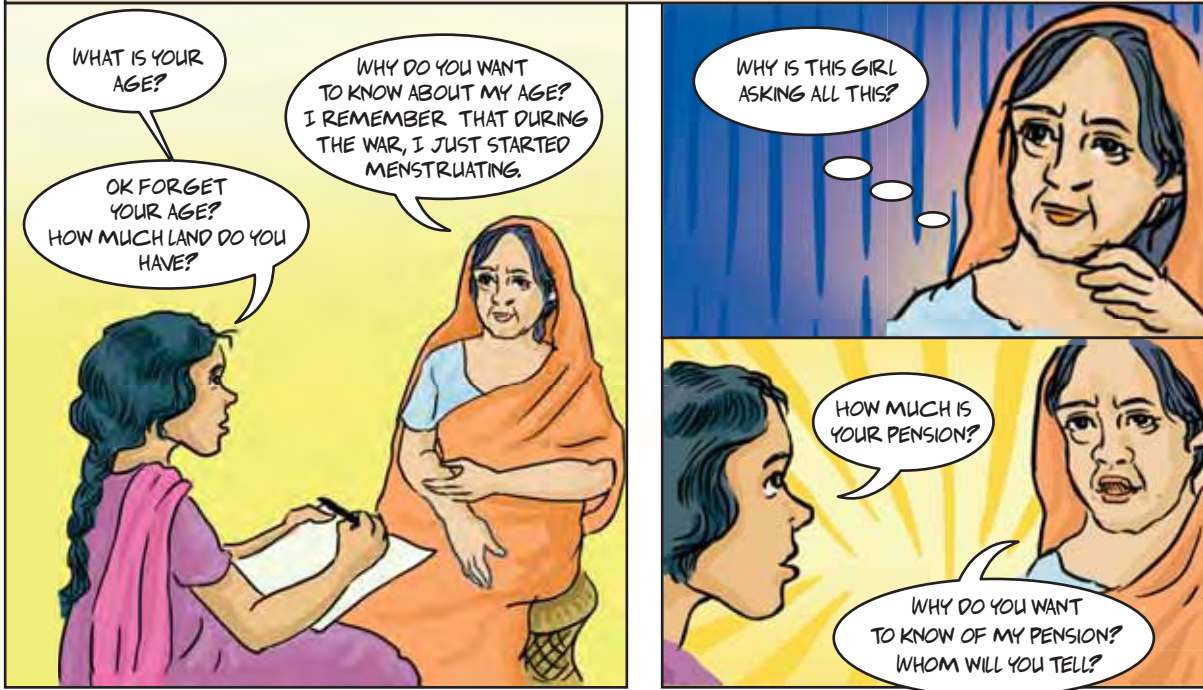


GUIDELINE 2: Whose testimonies are being focused on?

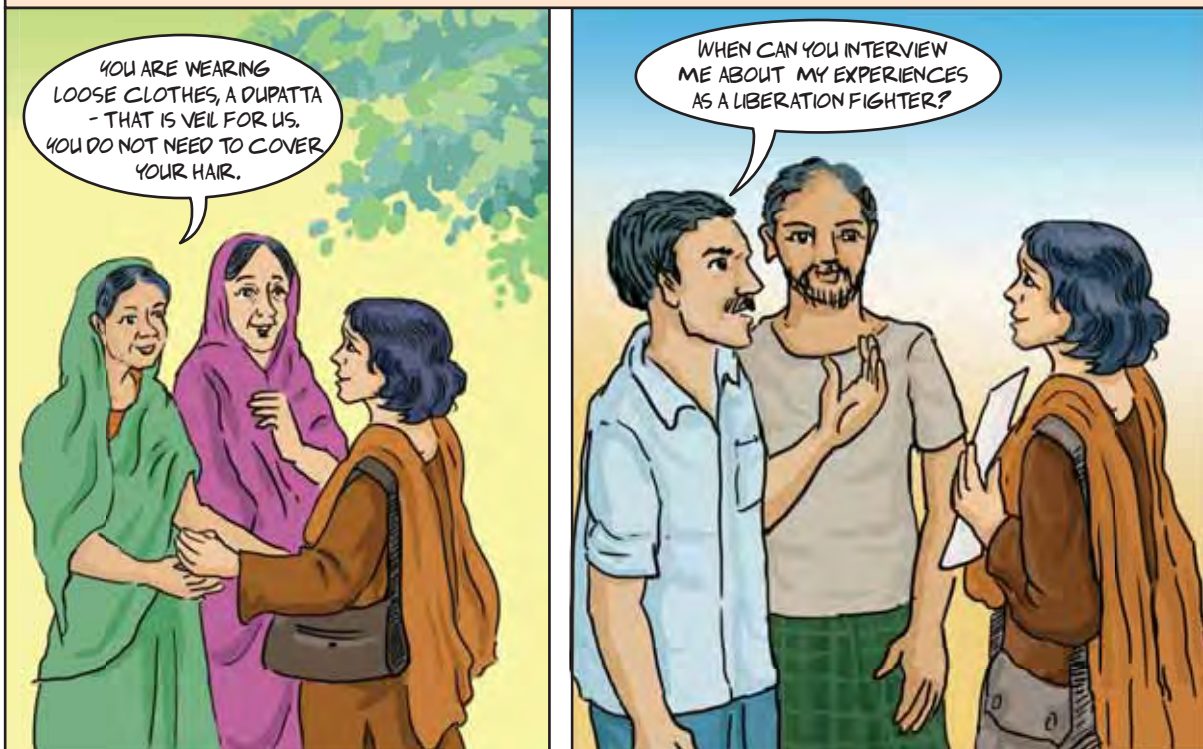
It is ethically important to focus on those survivors who voluntarily come forward to give testimonies. The objective of the testimonies, how they would be used, who they would be read/heard by, what are the possible consequences of giving testimonies— these should be discussed with survivors.



GUIDELINE 3: Have you thought of how the positions of the researcher (gender, age, class, experience) affect the interviews? The questions one asks should be thought through.



Women researchers working on this sensitive topic can work with both men and women.



During the Testimonial Process

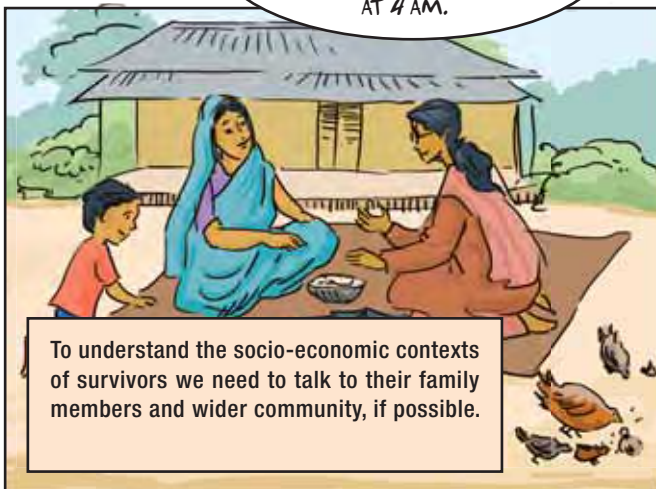
GUIDELINE 4: Have you done a risk assessment before interviewing survivors?

Instead of relying on gatekeepers, intermediaries, interpreters and translators, survivors should be asked whether they would be willing to speak.



GUIDELINE 5: Do you have enough time for these testimonies?

Interviews need to be conducted with adequate time so that survivors can give their testimonies (if they wish to) in accordance with the time and place that suits them. Their context is the priority.



During the Testimonial Process: Trust and empathy with survivors

Trust is generated through warm, everyday relationships with survivors.

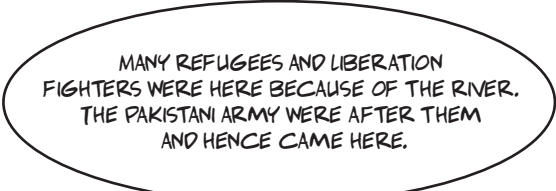


GUIDELINE 5: Do you have enough time for these testimonies?

Understand the local politico-economic contexts and establish a relationship of trust before interviews. Interview other survivors in the area. This makes the birangonas less conspicuous and could mitigate jealousies from others towards them.



We will not get to know about the local political and economic contexts. So alongside the birangonas it is important to interview other survivors and liberation fighters of the war in the area. This makes the birangonas less conspicuous and also avoids others getting jealous of all the attention on the survivors of sexual violence.



We need to examine various secondary documents to understand historical/ political/economic contexts in the area and across time.



During and After the Testimonial Process

GUIDELINE 6: Have you secured meaningful informed consent at every instance?

During the process of collecting testimonies with survivors, ethical decision-making has to be undertaken repeatedly.


Avoid entering personal spaces without permission for the purpose of interviews.



Avoid making any assurances and false promises to survivors of sexual violence.



Any invitation to ceremonies honouring birangonas should prioritise the perspectives of survivors of sexual violence.

The search for testimonies and interviews should not harm the survivors, not put them at risk. If they are taken to ceremonies meant to be honouring them, their narratives and images videoed, photographed and published in newspapers – all without their consent – then their current situation becomes even more risky. Our search for testimonies should not blind us to the possible social and economic harms to survivors as a result of their testimonies being recorded without their consent.

During and After the Testimonial Process



The objective of the testimonies, who they would be heard by, for what purpose, the possible consequences of giving testimonies – these should be discussed with the survivors. Constant informed consent is needed before recording their narratives, taking their photographs, including them in publications. The published work should be shared with the survivors.

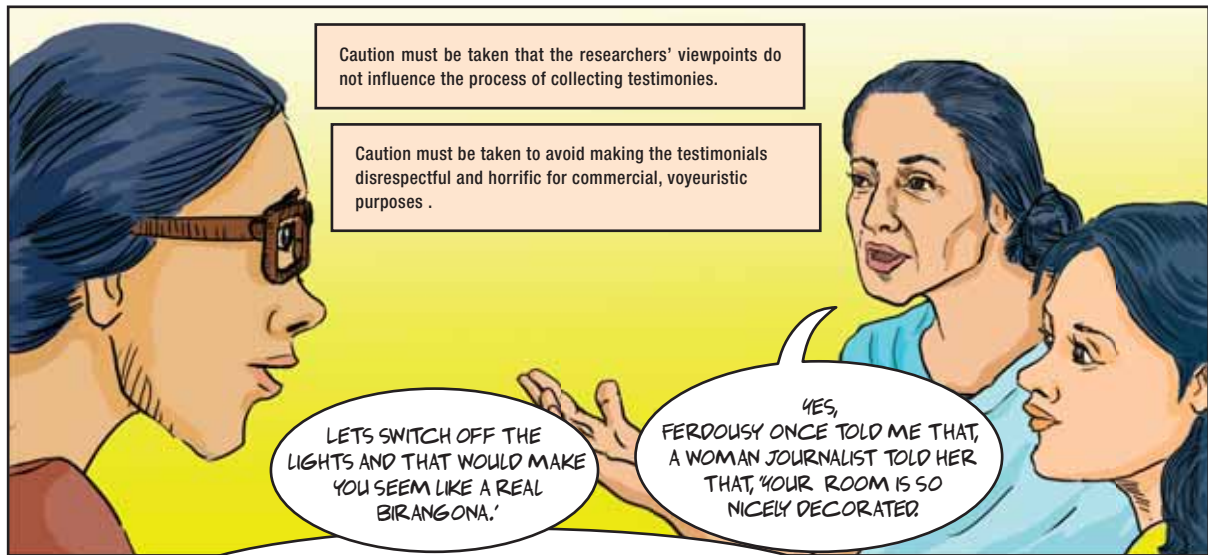


During and After the Testimonial Process

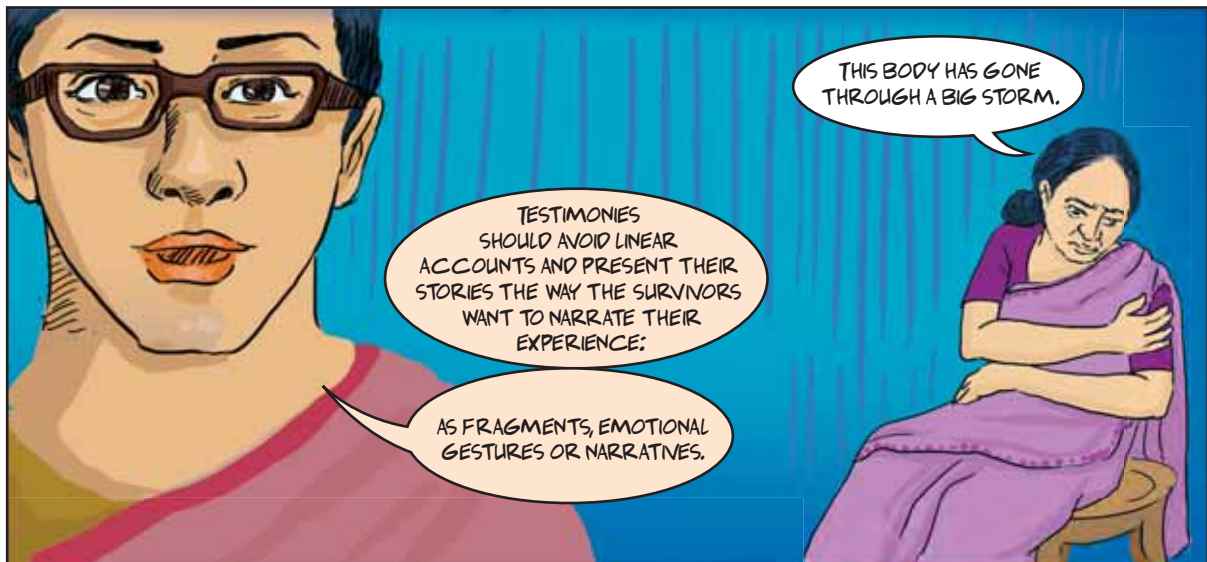
GUIDELINE 7: Have you listened to the post-conflict and contemporary conditions of survivors?
That is very significant.



During and After the Testimonial Process

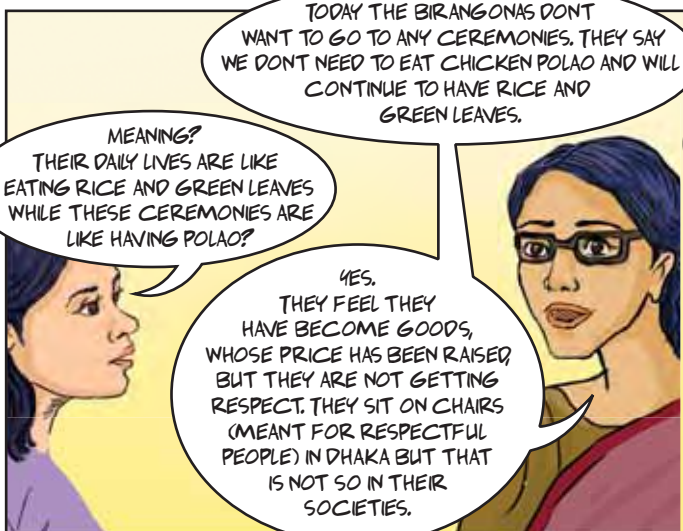


During and After the Testimonial Process

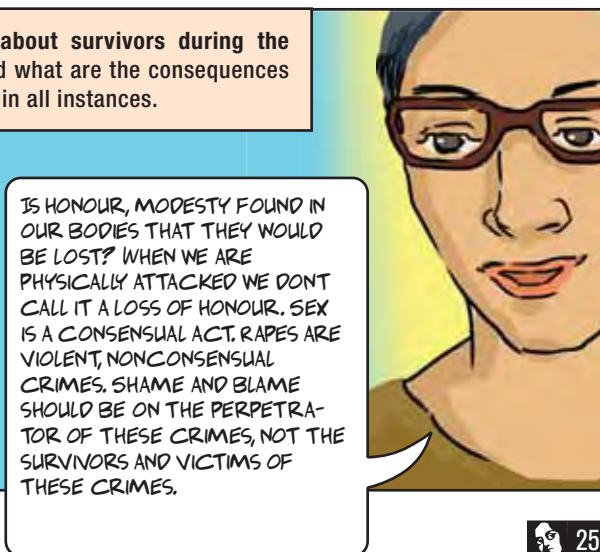
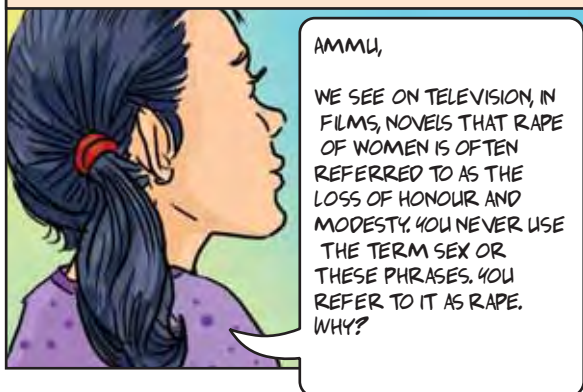


GUIDELINE 8: Have you reflected on how we use images of survivors during the testimony and when representing their life-stories?

And what are the consequences of such image use? Survivor blame should be avoided in all instances.

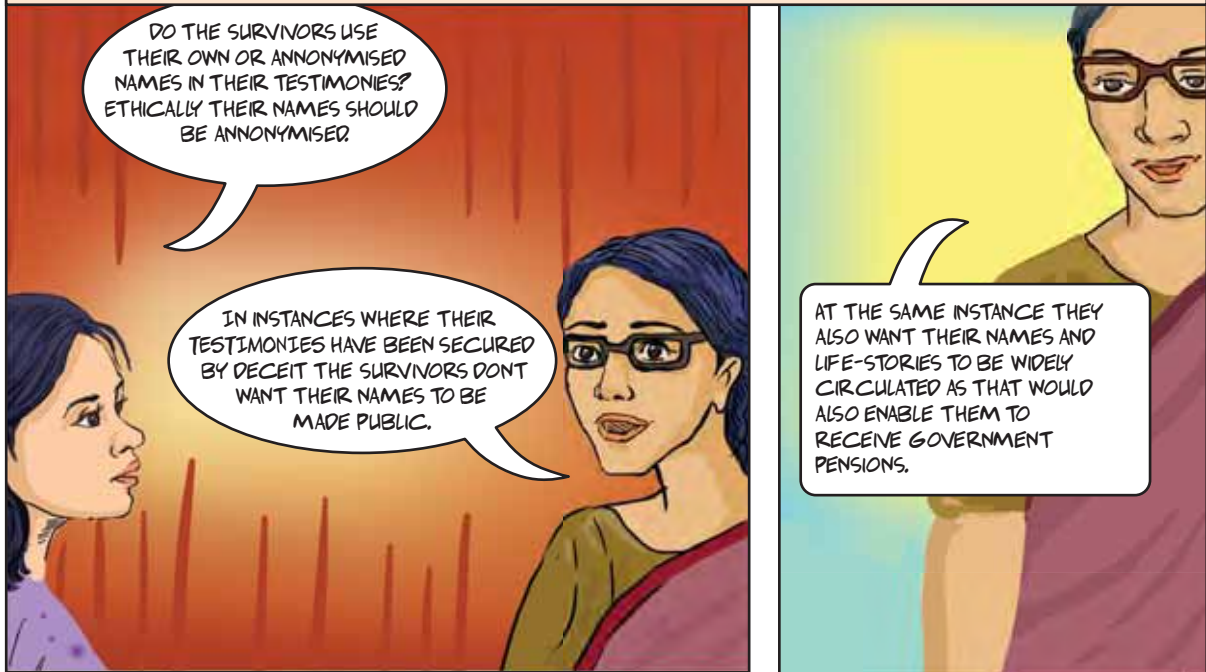


Have you reflected on how we use languages with/about survivors during the testimony and when representing their life-stories? And what are the consequences of such language use? Survivor blame should be avoided in all instances.



After the Testimonial Process

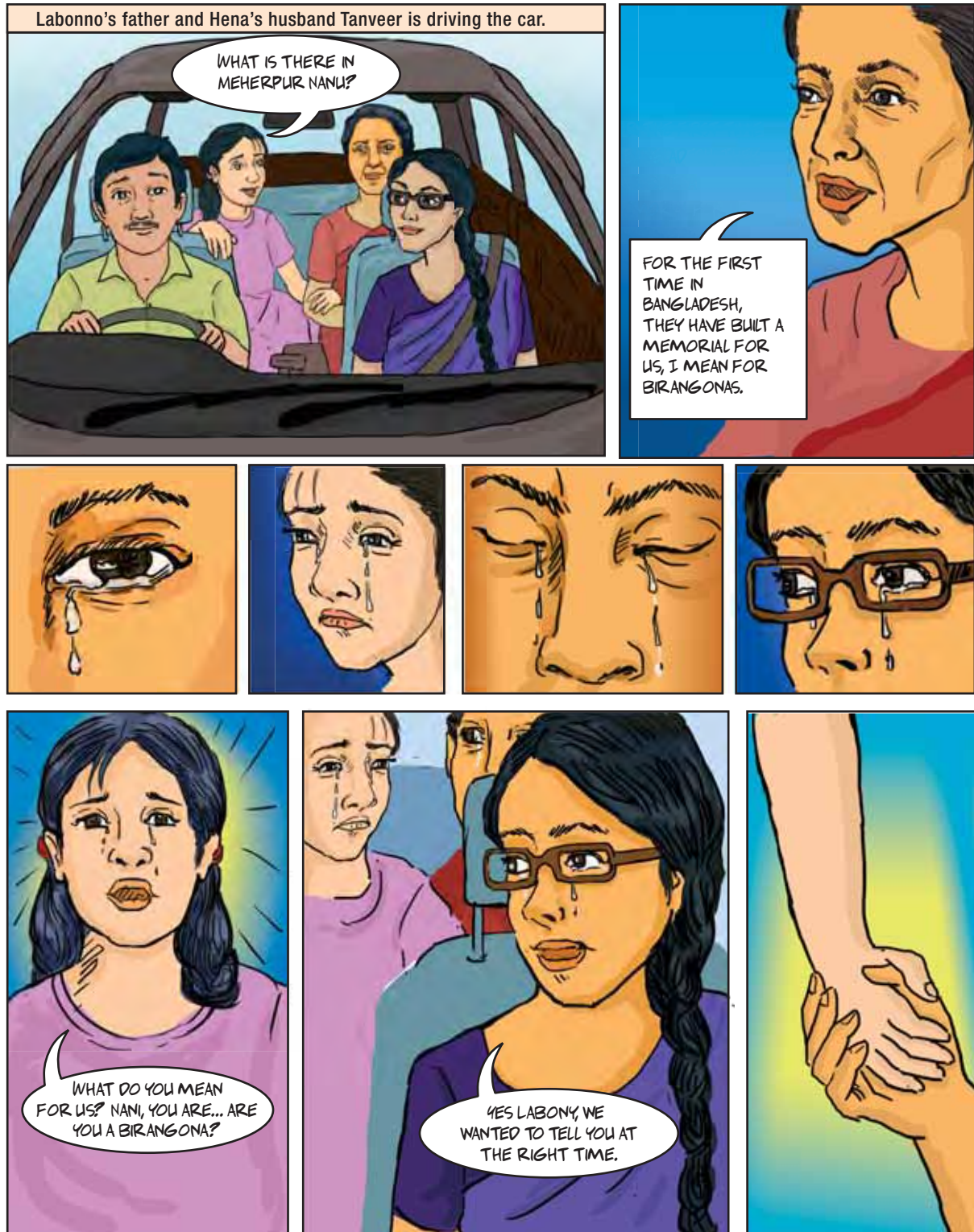
GUIDELINE 9 : Have you thought through the complexities of the rights to confidentiality and anonymity? Survivors should have the right to remain anonymous and to have their rights to privacy and confidentiality respected. The need to identify oneself depends on the survivors and their concerns.



GUIDELINE 10: Have you kept in touch with survivors after recording their testimonies?
If the survivors agree, warm relationships should be maintained in the post-testimonial phase.



Journey to the Meherpur War memorial



YES, MY DEAR. BUT I AM NOT ONLY A BIRANGONA. I AM YOUR NANU, I WORKED FOR MANY YEARS IN MY GOVERNMENT JOB, BROUGHT UP MY DAUGHTER HENA, YOUR MOTHER.



NANU, YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH SO MUCH PAIN. WE GOT THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE OF YOU.



WHAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT BIRANGONAS, SOME OF IT IS MY LIFE STORY TOO. I WAS VISITING MY UNCLE'S HOUSE IN A VILLAGE IN PABNA DURING THE WAR AND GOT CAPTURED BY THE PAKISTANI ARMY. I WAS IN A CAMP FOR THREE MONTHS AND GOT RAPED BY THE ARMY. WE BECAME FREE AFTER A GROUP OF LIBERATION FIGHTERS SET US FREE NEAR THE END OF THE WAR. I HAVE ERASED THE MEMORIES OF THOSE THREE MONTHS AS I DONT FEEL WELL WHEN I REMEMBER THEM. A LIBERATION FIGHTER WANTED TO MARRY ME AFTER THE WAR BUT I DID NOT WANT TO MARRY.



I RETURNED TO MY FAMILY IN PABNA TOWN AFTER THE WAR. TO AVOID QUESTIONS TO MYSELF AND MY FAMILY, AS TO WHERE I WAS DURING THE WAR, I CAME TO DHAKA'S REHABILITATION CENTRE AND STAYED IN THE WOMEN'S HOSTEL IN NEW ESKATON. THE GOVERNMENT HAD ADVERTISED THAT BANGLADESHI MEN SHOULD MARRY BIRANGONAS BUT WE DID NOT WANT TO MARRY. WE WANTED JOBS. SO, THE ADVERTISEMENT WAS WITHDRAWN. SOON I GOT A JOB IN A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT. I RETIRED ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO.

The Women's Movement in Bangladesh

A year later I met your grandfather and we got married. He was away in Kolkata during the war and cried on hearing my story. He would say: 'Rehana, would my love make you forget those horrible days?' But your grandfather's family scorned me and so we left it. So we did not get a share of your great grandfather's property. Remember Hena said all forms of stigma have an economic reason. After your grandfather's sudden death after the war I was heartbroken. But my government job gave me a lot of strength and I could bring up Hena alone.



Women working in Rehabilitation Centres. (Banglar Bani, September 2, 1972)



AMMU, YOU SHOULD TELL LABONNO HOW THROUGH YOUR STORY I MET HENA.

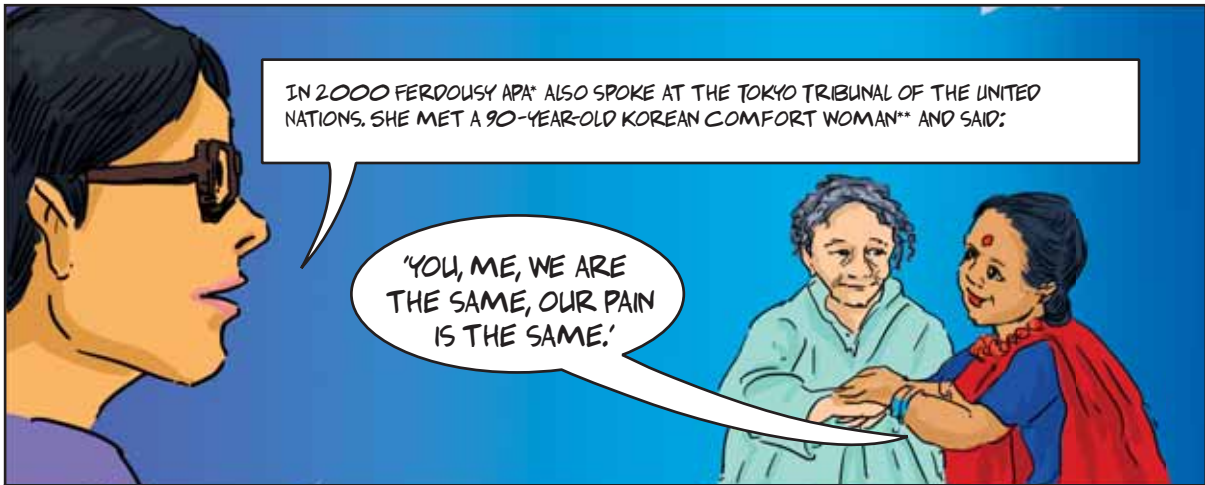
Yes, in 1992 when the three women from Kushtia were testifying at Gono Adalat, I was there with Hena. I was scared and thrilled and wanted to say aloud that I am a birangona, but kept quiet. I was nearly fainting there and Tanveer helped us.



THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN BANGLADESH HAS WAGED A HUGE CAMPAIGN TO BRING THESE DEBATES TO THE FOREFRONT.

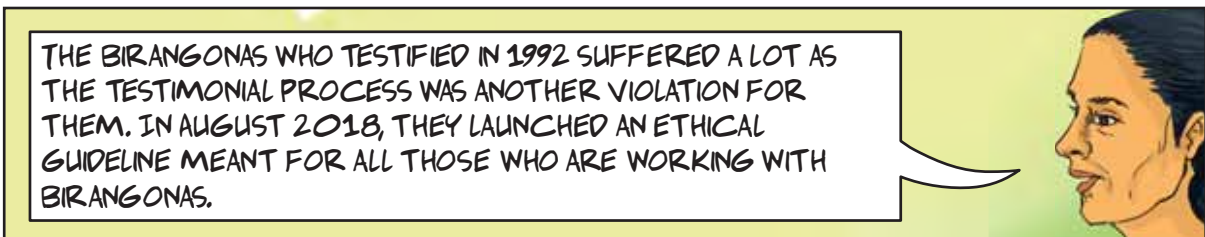


YES AND WHEN FERDOUSY PRIYOBHASHINI TOLD HER STORY OF 1971, I FELT SO PROUD AND STRONG BUT I ACKNOWLEDGED IT QUIETLY INSIDE ME. SOON MANY MORE OF US WERE OPENLY SAYING I AM A BIRANGONA.

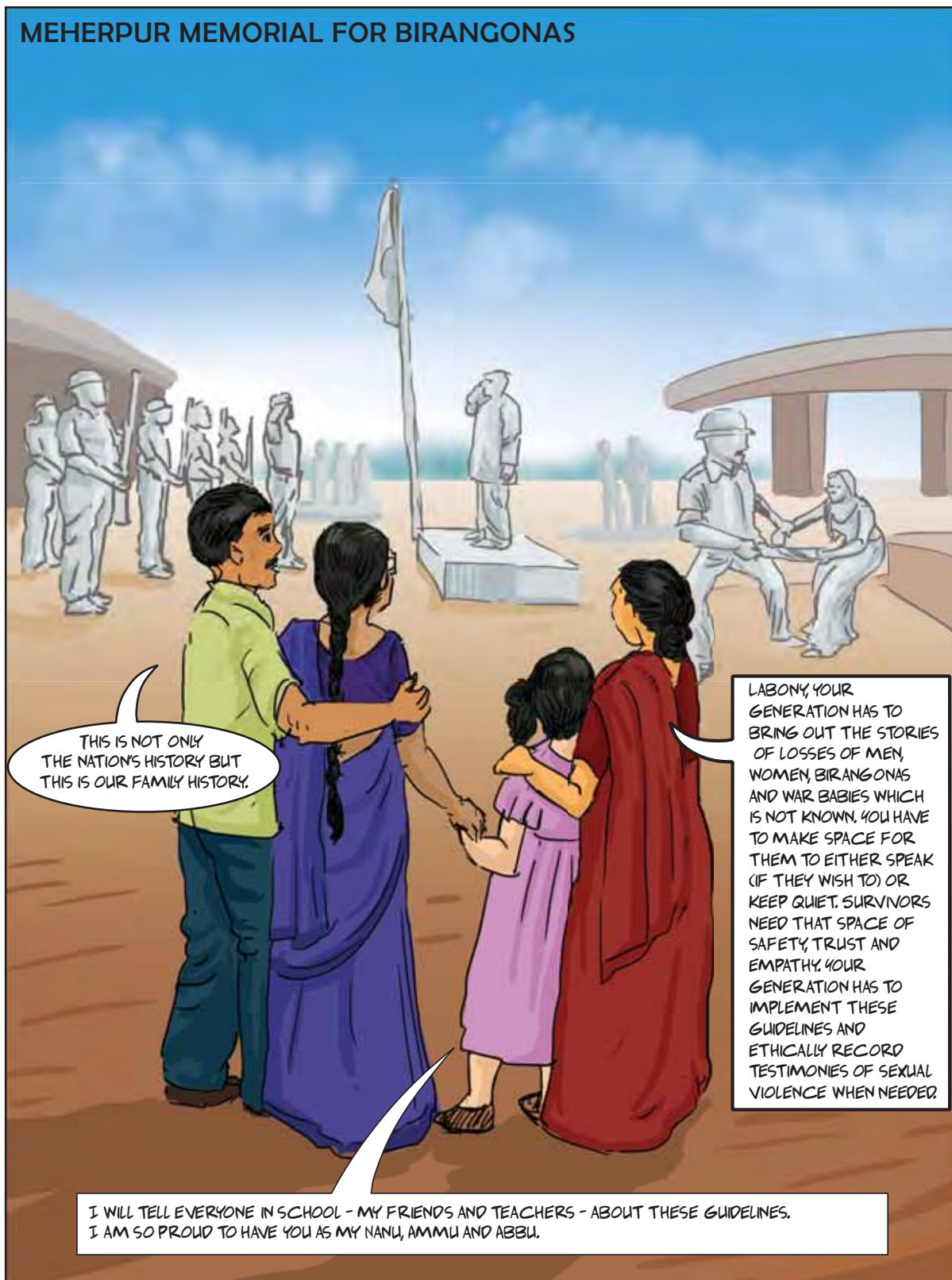


* Apa is a term of respect for a woman in Bangladesh.
** During World War 2 Japan kept mostly Asian women as sexual slaves and referred to them as 'comfort women'.

These ethical guidelines should be implemented



MEHERPUR MEMORIAL FOR BIRANGONAS



THIS IS NOT ONLY THE NATION'S HISTORY BUT THIS IS OUR FAMILY HISTORY.

LABONY, YOUR GENERATION HAS TO BRING OUT THE STORIES OF LOSSES OF MEN, WOMEN, BIRANGONAS AND WAR BABIES WHICH IS NOT KNOWN. YOU HAVE TO MAKE SPACE FOR THEM TO EITHER SPEAK (IF THEY WISH TO) OR KEEP QUIET. SURVIVORS NEED THAT SPACE OF SAFETY, TRUST AND EMPATHY. YOUR GENERATION HAS TO IMPLEMENT THESE GUIDELINES AND ETHICALLY RECORD TESTIMONIES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE WHEN NEEDED.

I WILL TELL EVERYONE IN SCHOOL - MY FRIENDS AND TEACHERS - ABOUT THESE GUIDELINES. I AM SO PROUD TO HAVE YOU AS MY NANU, AMMU AND ABBU.

Guidelines Towards Ethical Testimonies of Sexual Violence during Conflict

Professor Nayanika Mookherjee
Department of Anthropology, Durham University, UK



Context: This guideline is based on the findings of Professor Nayanika Mookherjee's book *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971* (2015; 2016). Bangladesh is the only country which honoured women raped during the war of 1971 as birangonas (brave women). There exists a public memory (not silence) of wartime sexual violence in Bangladesh and this is hardly known beyond the country. *Spectral Wound ethnographically examines this public memory among survivors, state officials, human rights activists as well as archival sources, visual and literary representations. Most of the research on sexual violence in conflict focuses on highlighting the testimonies of violence only.* Interviews with survivors show that with the focus on documentation of the experiences of wartime rape, (i) inadequate attention is paid to the conditions under which such testimonies are recorded. (ii) As a result, ethical practices of documentation can be flouted by those who record testimonies of wartime rape (researchers, human rights activists, feminists, lawyers, filmmakers, photographers, journalists, writers) in their pursuit of these narratives. (iii) Hence, survivors can experience a double set of transgression in the very process of testifying to their violent experiences during wars. (iv) There can **emerge a critical disconnect between survivors needs and transitional justice processes.**

Keeping these sensitive and ethical concerns in mind, Professor Mookherjee has co-produced with Research Initiatives Bangladesh (in consultation with the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh and various stakeholders in UK and Bangladesh) **an ethical guidelines and a graphic novel – both should be ideally read with the Spectral Wound.** This can be used by school children (from 12 years age) as well as professionals working among survivors.

In August 2018, a group of survivors of wartime sexual violence and the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs of the Bangladesh government launched these guidelines in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, survivors of wartime sexual violence are referred to as liberation fighters and have been **receiving government pensions.** These guidelines are thereby essential for the state to record testimonies and include survivors on the government pension register. These guidelines would also enable **war babies** to seek recognition - and could be used in other contemporary instances of sexual violence in conflict like that of the **Rohingyas.** Further, these guidelines might be relevant for those attempting to collect **testimonies of sexual violence in an everyday context.** In November 2018, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's PSVI (Prevent Sexual Violence Initiative) team has proposed the Murad Code - the development of international standards for those working in this field. These guidelines would feed into that consultation process.

A few points are worth noting:

- These guidelines have been created by survivors and these prescriptions are based on their experiences of violations.
- These guidelines should complement local ethical reviews and supersede institutional ethics.
- These guidelines should also help us remember to check if there is a co-ordination body. Importantly, it is crucial to reflect whether there is further need for recording of testimonies and if there are adequate secondary sources to provide that insight.
- Testimonies for juridical purposes might be more limited in its remit and this guideline focuses on ethical testimonies.
- While a longer time is advisable for those recording testimonies, those with less time should be able to provide a nuanced survivor perspective about the: reasons for sexual violence, the varied contexts of testimonies, the use of language, euphemisms and gestures by survivors to uphold their narrative.

The following are the proposed guidelines:

Before the Testimonial Process:

1. Have you prepared adequately for these testimonies? There needs to be intensive preparation before one starts gathering testimonies among survivors of wartime sexual violence. For this what is indispensable is a background training, reflection on the need for/purpose of testimonies, a study of secondary sources and avoidance of research fatigue among survivors.

2. Whose testimonies are being focussed on? It is ethically important to focus on those survivors who voluntarily come forward to give testimonies. **It is important to provide informants with a written information sheet explaining the need for testimonies and the uses of any data that it might generate.** The objective of the testimonies, how they would be used, who they would be read/heard by, what are the possible consequences of giving testimonies– these should be discussed with survivors.

3. Have you thought of how the positions (gender, age, class, experience etc.) of the researcher affects the interview? The questions one asks should be thought through.

During the Testimonial Process:

4. Have you done a risk assessment before interviewing survivors?

- It is absolutely essential to comprehensively assess the economic, physical, psychological safety of survivors across space and time. We need to safeguard the interest of survivors and provide support.
- It is important to discuss the various kinds of possible problems (including socio-economic manifestations of 'stigma') they might face if they are identifying themselves as survivors of sexual violence.
- Instead of relying on gatekeepers, intermediaries, interpreters and translators, survivors should be asked whether they would be willing to speak.

5. Do you have enough time for these testimonies? Interviews need to be conducted with adequate time so that survivors can give their testimonies (if they wish to) in accordance with the time and place that suits them. Their context is the priority.

- If possible, it is important to know about the historical/political context of the area before undertaking interviews.
- Alongside the survivors of sexual violence it is important to interview other survivors of the war in the area. This makes the survivors less conspicuous and could mitigate jealousies from others towards them.
- To understand the socio-economic contexts of survivors, it would be important to talk to their family members and wider community, if possible.
- It is important to examine various secondary sources to understand the historical/political/economic contexts in the area across time.
- It is necessary to establish relationships of trust and empathy with survivors.

During and After the Testimonial Process:

6. Have you secured meaningful informed consent at every instance? During the process of collecting testimonies with survivors, ethical decision-making has to be undertaken repeatedly.

- It is important to ensure that those giving testimonies know and understand their rights and the services available to them which could in turn inform consent.
- Constant informed consent is needed from survivors before recording their narratives, taking their photographs, including them in publications. The published work should be shared with the survivors and it should be agreed how one follows up survivors in the post-testimonial phase. Consent should also be time-bound if so decided by the survivors.
- Avoid entering personal spaces without permission for the purpose of interviews.
- Avoid making any assurances and particularly false promises to survivors of sexual violence.
- Any invitation to ceremonies honouring survivors should prioritise the perspectives of survivors of sexual violence.
- The search for testimonies and interviews should not harm the survivors and put them at risk.

7. Have you listened to the post-conflict and contemporary conditions of survivors? Also:

- We need to avoid sensationalizing these testimonies.
- Caution must be taken that the researchers' opinion does not influence the process of collecting testimonies.
- Caution must be taken to avoid making the testimonials disrespectful and horrific for commercial, voyeuristic purposes.
- Testimonies should avoid linear accounts and present the stories the way survivors want to narrate their experience: as narratives, emotional, non-verbal gestures or fragments.

After the Testimonial Process:

8. Have you reflected on how we use images of and languages about survivors during the testimony and when representing their life-stories? And what are the consequences of such image and language use? Survivor blame should be avoided in all instances.

9. Have you thought through the complexities of the rights to confidentiality and anonymity? Survivors should have the right to remain anonymous and to have their rights to privacy and confidentiality respected. The need to identify oneself depends on the survivors and their concerns.

10. Have you kept in touch with survivors after recording their testimonies?

If the survivors agree, warm relationships should be maintained in the post-testimonial phase.

These guidelines need urgent implementation.

Acknowledgements

The guidelines and graphic novel draw from research findings [Mookherjee, Nayanika *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971* (2015; 2016)]. These guidelines and graphic novel have been co-produced through five workshops (two in LSE's Women, Peace and Security in October 2016, December 2018 and three with Research Initiatives Bangladesh in November 2016, August 2017 and August 2018) in collaboration with various stake holders (like academics, researchers, government officials, policy makers, NGO representatives, feminists and human rights activists, journalists, filmmakers and photographers). All participants emphasized the need for these guidelines and the graphic novel. These guidelines were launched in August 2018 by the Honourable Minister Jonab A. K. M Mozammel Hoque. Since November 2016 the government of Bangladesh's Liberation War Ministry has been involved with these guidelines in a participatory and supportive capacity.

For assistance with translation and transliteration I am thankful to Suraiya Begum, Rashida Akhtar, Babul Chandra Sutradhar, Professors Mirza Taslima Sultana, Sayeed Ferdous and Dr, Zobaida Nasreen. The warm support for these guidelines by Dr. Meghna Guhathakurta, the Executive Director of RIB and Dr. Marsha Henry, the Director of WPS has been invaluable. I am also grateful to all the staff and colleagues at RIB and LSE's Women, Peace and Security whose support has made the workshops a fruitful process. Above all, warmest gratitude needs to be attributed to the birangonas, the survivors of sexual violence during the Bangladesh war of 1971 whose experiences are foundational to these guidelines. My thank you goes out to all the participants of the workshops. We also gratefully acknowledge the use of some of the wording from the ethics codes of The Association of Social Anthropologists of UK and the Commonwealth and the American Anthropological Association.

SELF ASSESSMENT FORM

(This could be a written and/or verbal summary for participants/survivors and/or gatekeepers as well as serve as a reminder for those recording testimonies)

		YES	NO	Explain with reasons: how you have/have not followed each of these guidelines
1a.	Have you prepared adequately for these testimonies?			
1b.	Have you considered the implications of your testimonial intervention on the survivors? Have you considered the following: reflection on the need for/purpose of testimonies, a study of other secondary sources and avoidance of research fatigue among survivors?			
2a.	Have you thought about whose testimonies are being focused on?			
2b.	Will you provide informants with a written information sheet explaining the need for testimonies and the uses of their testimonies? The objective of the testimonies, how these testimonies would be used, who they would be read/heard by, for what purpose, what are the possible consequences of giving testimonies—these should be discussed with survivors.			
3.	Have you thought of how the positions (gender, age, class, experience etc.) of the researcher affects the interview?			
4.	Have you done a risk assessment before interviewing survivors?			
5.	Do you have enough time for recording these testimonies?			
6a.	Have you secured meaningful informed consent at every instance? Please explain how you will deal with the issue of informed consent, as appropriate to your testimony.			
6b.	Will recording devices be used only with the permission of survivors?			

		YES	NO	Explain with reasons: how you have/have not followed each of these guidelines
6c.	<p>Will the survivors be provided with a copy of their testimonies before and after publications?</p> <p>Constant informed consent is needed before recording their narratives, taking their photographs, including them in publications. The published work should be shared with the survivors and there needs to be an agreement as to how one follows up survivors in the post-testimonial phase. Consent should also be time-bound if so decided by the survivors.</p>			
7.	<p>Have you listened to the post-conflict and contemporary conditions of survivors?</p>			
8.	<p>Have you reflected on how we use images of and languages about survivors during the testimony and when representing their life-stories?</p>			
9.	<p>Have you thought through the complexities of the rights to confidentiality and anonymity? Will you explicitly give all survivors the right to remain anonymous?</p>			
10.	<p>Have you kept in touch with survivors after recording their testimonies?</p>			
11.	<p>Are there any other ethical issues arising from the testimonial process?</p>			

Further details – Please specify details with reference to above Question Numbers.

*** References cited on Pg 6**

Non-Fiction

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Films

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Guerilla (2011), Naseruddin Yusuf.

Plays

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QUESTIONS

1. When did the Bangladesh government announce the term Birangona for women raped during the Bangladesh war of 1971?
2. How many other countries in the world has honoured women raped during national conflicts?
3. What is the Bangladeshi government's official number of birangonas?
4. Where can you see Naibbuddin Ahmed's photograph of a birangona?
5. How many life stories of birangonas are there in this graphic novel?
6. Where is the memorial for birangonas in Bangladesh?
7. How many guidelines are there in this graphic novel and guideline? Please tell us if you can think of others we might have missed. Email us at ethical.testimonies.svc@durham.ac.uk

6. Mehernpur; 7. 10

1. 23rd December 1971; 2. None other than Bangladesh; 3. 200,000; 4. Liberation War Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh; 5. 6;

ANSWERS:



Acknowledgements: The guidelines and graphic novel draw from research findings [Mookherjee, Nayanika *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971* (2015; 2016)]. These guidelines and graphic novel have been co-produced through five workshops (two in LSE's Women, Peace and Security in October 2016, December 2018 and three with Research Initiatives Bangladesh in November 2016, August 2017 and August 2018) in collaboration with various stake holders (like academics, researchers, government officials, policy makers, NGO representatives, feminists and human rights activists, journalists, filmmakers and photographers). All participants emphasized the need for these guidelines and the graphic novel. These guidelines were launched in August 2018 by the Honourable Minister Jonab A. K. M Mozammel Hoque. Since November 2016 the government of Bangladesh's Liberation War Ministry has been involved with these guidelines in a participatory and supportive capacity.

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ABOUT US



Nayanika Mookherjee is a Professor in the Anthropology department in Durham University and has worked for over two decades on the public memories of sexual violence of the Bangladesh War of 1971. She has published extensively on violence, aesthetics, ethics and is working on war babies.



Najmunahar Keya is a freelance artist based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She completed her MFA from the Tokyo University of Arts and the Faculty of Fine Art in the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is the recipient of various awards and fellowships.



Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB's) approach is based on Participatory Action Research. Through this it has reached many marginalised communities and has been promoting processes of collective self-enquiry, self-determination and capacity building. Its Executive Director is Dr. Meghna Guhathakurta.



NOKTA / noktarts.com is a publisher based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Specialising in publishing various books of visual art.





Birangona

Towards Ethical Testimonies of Sexual Violence during Conflict

www.ethical-testimonies.svc.org.uk

Labonno needs to do a school project on family memories of 1971, the Bangladesh War. When coming to ask her grandmother, she wakes the latter from one of her frequent nightmares. What follows is her grandmother's narration of the history of 'birangona' (brave women), the term given by the Bangladesh government in 1971 to honour the women who had been raped during the war. Her mother, Hena, also tells her of the Oral History Project through which they tried to collect testimonies. She talks about the ethical dilemmas they underwent and the mistakes they committed when trying to collect testimonies of birangonas. This leads them to talk about the various points that need to be covered for an ethical guidance to record testimonies of sexual violence during conflict (svc). But hidden in these discussions of the guidelines Labonno discovers an intricate secret family history. What could that secret be? What would Labonno feel when she hears of that secret? What will Labonno do in the future about her family and the nation's history?

Based on research findings [in Mookherjee, Nayanika. *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971*. Durham: Duke University Press (2015); Delhi: Zubaan Books (2016)] we have co-produced a guideline and a graphic novel in collaboration with Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB). These can be used by those who record testimonies of sexual violence in conflict (researchers, human rights activists, feminists, lawyers, filmmakers, photographers, journalists, writers). The guideline was launched in August 2018 by the Ministry of Liberation War of the Government of Bangladesh. The Project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council's Impact Acceleration Account and Durham University's Research Impact Fund.

Guideline and Graphic Novel will be freely downloadable in Bangla and English from:
www.ethical-testimonies-svc.org.uk

For further queries, comments and for printed copies of the graphic novel, write to Professor Nayanika Mookherjee, Department of Anthropology, Durham University, UK

ethical.testimonies.svc@durham.ac.uk

Please let us know if you/ your organisation makes use of these guidelines and graphic novel.

