Women in Post-Violence
Victimization and Traumatization of
VICTIMISATION AND TRAUMISATION OF WOMEN
IN POST-VIOLENCE

In social conflict the pressures on women are even greater when they are forced to flee with their dependents. More than eighty percent of the displaced are women and children. It is shocking to hear these women describe what displacement, death and loss meant to them personally, and that really brings home the human cost of conflict. Violence is what happens afterwards, the years of suffering hopelessly with a disabled family members and no money, or struggling to rebuild, when life and property has been destroyed.

Women's prime duty is caring and nurturing the family, and in riot situations, where there is break down in the normal structure, it becomes difficult for women to perform their roles. Even so, the reconstruction of community and society is often entrusted to women. Women are, therefore, crucial to the recovery process of both their families and the wider community and have to emerge out of trauma and loss to rebuild their societies.

Often women supress their feelings of fear or grief because of the need to support or protect their children. While this can help women through particularly stressful times, it may also mean that they deny themselves the opportunity to deal with the psychological wounds of violence. Competing demands can force women to make painful decisions: the family may need her support or attention. Women have immense emotional and physical energy to combat the situation foregoing their own personal pain. This is why women are considered essential for reconstruction of community as they have immense power to tolerate pain and still perform the role of provider and caretaker. Whatever the situation, even in shelters, relief camps, they are busy looking after the children and family caring and nursing, while men
in situation of social conflict lose their role, as they can't go out of the home. Women play important and active roles both economic and social in helping communities to survive conflict. Women are more supportive in times of social crises.

**LIFE AS A DISPLACED PERSON**

Most of the women affected by the carnage of November 1984, have had to bear the multiple trauma of being uprooted at least twice. Some of them come from families driven by the India-Pakistan division of 1947. Some of these, mainly Labhana Sikhs of Sindh, first came to Alwar and Bharatpur in Rajasthan, and then to Sultanpuri-Trilokpuri region of Delhi in search of livelihood. Most of them had just about managed to settle down to a better life. They talk of how their young sons had just started bringing in a substantial income through rickshaw pulling, charpoy weaving, hawking goods or from small repair shops they had set up. This was when tragedy stuck again, leaving mothers and housewives helpless witnesses to unimaginable carnage. The scars left on their psyche and on those of their young children and old parents are indelible.

**Harbans Kaur (70 Years) Recalls**

"I had seen the partition, but neighbours had been a great help to us. They had informed us before hand and at least we got time to pack the valuables. It's true that many people were looted on their way to India but it was different. Trouble was hanging in the air for months and there was apprehension of leaving our house, so mentally we were prepared. The attack on the Sikhs in November 1984 was not between the two community's clash. It was a carnage, a planned way to displace us. We were caught unaware, unguarded. We never thought this will happen to us again and that too in our own country. After
partition it was now that we had felt that we were fully settled and then this blow came, reopening our wounds, destroying us completely, virtually reducing us to the status of a destitute, making us a refugee for a second time.

My sons had made a beautiful house in Sadar-Bazar behind Idgah road. This was the land we got as compensation, when we came from Pakistan. My sons had built it into a beautiful house in 1983. We had not even enjoyed our stay in that house, and then came this blow. Every thing was destroyed, three storyed building was turned to ashes. We had to run without chunni and chappals. My daughters-in-law never keep their heads uncovered but as we were attacked early in the morning, unexpected. Some were still sleeping, some were in the bathrooms. We had to flee in seconds, without thinking of anything. We did not go back to that house, as children were too scared and actually we thought it better to stay in our own community. I had to see both partition and November 1984. My memories of displacement from Pakistan had not faded, and I suffered a second displacement, which is more cruel than the former”.

MOURING

Mourning provides legitimacy to death but there were no death bodies to weep on and follow the period of mourning. Many victims live with the guilt that they could not cremate their dear ones, dead bodies, cremation frees soul from the evils so widows at Tilak Vihar have internalized this guilt of not performing the death rituals, which is the moral obligation for the survivors. In fact most of the family did perform the death rituals but after long span of time. As was narrated us by Vidya:
“The way our men were burnt, the way they died, the way their bodies cut into pieces... you know we had never seen a body burning, women do not go to the cremation ground. But my man was half burnt, he was lying there and no one had put a piece of cloth on him, and I then took my dupatta (scarf) off and gave it to my son and asked him (because part of Hindu and Sikh ritual is to cover the body of the dead person with a cloth). And the body kept lying there, a dog came and started licking up the blood and then I thought we can not let this happen so we picked up our broken doors and the wooden bed and we put those on top of him and my son set fire to the body, with his own hands (because in order to release the soul. The body must be cremated).

And the some days later it was the 12th day and we thought we should do something and we got together and planned a bit. Then our husband's relatives (who would normally perform these rituals) came and said, "You did not inform us and you have done this ceremony. We said, "you know we have become this man's sister, father, mother". Whatever had to be done, we all decided to do, we thought we were the family now.

Later, (the relatives) kept saying we had not told them, but we thought who knows wheather they would have turned up or not? And if we had waited on them our husband's souls would have continued to suffer and would not have been released".

LIFE IN RELIEF CAMP

The term refugees conjures up an image of a featureless mass of people queuing in to be fed, whereas time and again women victims describe how the worst aspect of being a refugee is precisely the humiliation of losing one's identity and having all options for independent action curtailed.
Many testimonies contain description of being refugee. Loss of individuality and control over their existence and the humiliation of dependency, is a thread that runs through almost every account of life as a refugee. Jasbeer was compelled to move to relief camp due to lose of her husband and diestuction of her house. She told:

"I had never folded (cupped her hands) like this except for parshad in gurdwara. In relief camp, I had to stand like this for hours to wait for my turn to receive food. In fact it was only for my children that I had to live otherwise, I had preferred death to this life, standing like a pauper in queue, recalling the past days of having everything in my house. A person like me who has never seen any dearth in life has to kill self respect and then only accept the alms, it was really painful for days I could not eat, but children had to be fed, I could not reconcile with the fact that I had lost my husband, my property, and everything. I had to push aside these feeling and grab whatever little we were offered for the sake of my children".

Zahida was forced to live in relief camp after her house was burnt down. She life in a refugee camp is incredibly hard if one does not try to adapt. There are many reports which state women falling ill in relief camps. Intense fear and insecurity lead to high blood pressure, palpitation, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, shivering and vomiting. Bad hygienic and sanitation conditions lead to outbreak of diseases like diarrhea, cholera and other contagious diseases. She remembers:

"The experience of becoming a refugee is awful, truly wrenching. It is impossible to convey the misery of it. It was very difficult to stay in a relief camp as well as dealing with the problems of over crowding, shortage of food and health facilities. I used to manage somehow in day time, but nights were terrible, haunting me with the scene of
killing of my husband. I could not even cry because my children used
to sleep hugging me so if I cried they too used to cry. Relief camps are
the biggest source of depression.

Life in relief camp was uncertain, I was so fearful to think about
future; the refugee status made me panic about future. I could not eat,
could not sleep at night thinking what to do? It was a kind of living hell.
I got sick and it lasted for months. I was just floating through life; days
passed one after another. The only question in my mind was where to
take my children from here? I had lost my husband, his father, my
father mother and brother and I was all alone, How to bring up my
children? I had lost all my belongings. I could not conceive of normal
life in such circumstances".

Similar feelings were echoed by Zohara:

In the camp who had stayed in relief camp after her house was burnt
she noted, “I was surrounded by blank faces. Faces like masks, all had
undergone terrible tragedy. Thousands of people were already there.
Women and children were separated from men. I was apprehensive
about my future. I could not return back to that house, I recalled how
narrowly I had escaped death, the mob would have killed me, I
returned to my house to see if I could collect something left. I feared to
enter the compound. The first time I returned and saw the destruction,
I felt like crying but there were no tears in my eyes. Then I realised I
was in deep sorrow. Even the water pitchers were broken. The house
was completely looted and what they could not loot was burnt down. In
fact, on my visit I feared to live in that place and I went back to the
relief camp with firm decision to take shelter with any of the relatives,
instead of going back to my previous house.”
Janaki was victim of Delhi riots in 1984. She witnessed the killing of all the male members of her family. In one day she was reduced from riches to rags she remarks:

"I along with my children, jethani, her children and mother-in-law came crying to the road and there I saw around 100 women from Trilokpuri sitting on the road and crying. They had also lost everything and were sitting on the road directionless. It was the next morning that the military came and took us to Jhill-Mill Camp.

After reaching the camp I tried to seek medical attention for my mother-in-law, who had been injured in the attack. My jethani's parents came and took her to Punjab. I was in the camp. Relief started trickling in. Many women, social workers from different organisations used to come and encourage us to face life. They inspired hope in our mind, telling us that this was a collective disaster and we should face it boldly.

I stayed in that camp for one and a half year. I used to make hankies in the camp which Nagrik Ekta Manch people used to take and give me Rs.250 per month. I used to get some money from gurdwara also. I got Rs.10,000 from government in the camp. I got this flat in 1986 and along with this I got another cheque of Rs.10,000. Then I shifted to this flat".

Darshan Kaur remarks:

"Till the time, I reached relief camp I was worried about how to save my honour and life of my children. After I reached camp, life started settling down. But then my actual problem started. I could feel the pain of loss, dislocation and uprooting had reduced us to the status of refugees. I was virtually turned into a beggar. I could not imagine this."
I had lost my husband, my house, my belongings, the only thing I possessed were the clothes on my body and my two children. This realization of 'whatnext?' was quite shuddering. I knew that one day we would have to leave this relief camp. This thought was quite traumatic. At first I used to cry day and night looking at my children. I wanted to die as I could not bear the pain. The social workers coming to the camp, encouraged us saying that this is another phase of life the storm is over. Look at your children, they need you. Slowly I started picking up the threads of life. I got the first instalment of Rs.10,000 and after that I got this flat and from the camp I directly came to this flat”.

Ishrie Kaur told that:

“After two days, when everything was over, relief started coming in. Social workers, doctors, community leaders, relatives started visiting the camp. I realized in the refugee that impact of violence was much deeper. I did not have any relatives surviving. My husband had been killed, my father, husband too had been killed. My husband was the only son of his parents. My parents-in-law had died long before the riots, so for me no one was left except for two the kids, for the first few weeks I used to cry day and night. I could not get over the fact that I have lost my husband and I was all alone. This fact being left all alone was more painful. I knew I could earn as I used to help my husband in his tea stall, but without him life seemed incomplete. Slowly, with the help of social and relief workers, I applied for compensation and flat. I was fortunate to get the flat soon, I shifted and brought essential items of household. Initially, I was working under the Nagrik Ekta Manch they used to give Rs. 250 per month. When we were in camp we used to make hankies for them. When we shifted to Tilak Vihar we were taken to Narayana to stitch underskirts. This way we were kept busy so we could not think much about the problems and our minds free”.

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Mita, worked as a relief worker in November 1984. She had been actively involved in the relief and rehabilitation of victims of 1984 riots. She worked with the victims for almost five years. While talking of her experience as a relief worker, she mentioned her unease at the tendency to treat refugees like children who will only be rewarded for good behaviour. She recalled:

"When we went to riot victims, it was like another world and this was only 10 to 15 miles from where I worked and lived and I felt a great guilt for that. That we have two worlds. I think the relief agencies were not able to handle this, absolutely not. To all of us this was like Mars, a completely strange land, strange people. It was dead cold in those months and some of the camps were held in shamianas which could not protect the chilly onslaught of winter and the most painful point was that there were many camps not recognized by the government. Further, the administration refused to recognise most of the people who had taken refuge in gurdwaras as displaced persons entitled to relief and compensation. Nagrik Ekta Manch had identified at least 18 such camps in and around Delhi and there were about 50,000 displaced persons.

"For just two days thousand went hungry and had to urinate and defecate in the corridors of the school building or outside the tents. The injured lay in the rooms without any medical treatment. There was no one to share the horror or the anguish of widows, to say a word to them. The first initiative for relief came from local communities, mostly Hindu and from Gurudwaras who brought the first meal and organised langars.

"I was involved in relief measures and here I got an opportunity to interact with other relief workers from different organisation. All of them were doing commendable task but my only difference with other
relief workers was our attitude towards the victims. No doubt they had
tremendous experience in establishing rapport with the people, but on
the other hand they also expected people to conform to their notions of
behaviour, correct attitudes to men and women and a host of other
things. Their relief was based on certain conditions and to this I had
strong resentment. Their perception regarding the widows was that
these women were not in a correct frame of mind. They only wanted to
grab, they were only interested in grabbing things.

"These kinds of remark do not take into account the fact of (i) their
normal socio-economic situation, and (ii) a terrible situation being
brutally aggravated by the tragedy they went through. So how can one
expects them to be in a proper frame of mind? You know it is like
saying "if you are good deserving poor then we will help. Otherwise
we will not". Such kind of conditional relief is not possible in such
choatic and traumatic circumstances. There is class and cultural gap
between the refugees and relief workers."

COMPENSATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Since both the riots, Anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and the Surat riot of 1992 were
clearly of incidents anti-minority riot. It was felt that the role of state of being
a mute spectator and failure of its organs (police, fire brigades etc.) to
control the riots made the state liable to compensate the riot victims
accordingly.

After the 1984 riots the state announced compensation for the
rehabilitation of the victims. It promised compensation of Rs.10,000 to the
nearest relative of each dead person; Rs.5,000 to the grievously injured and
Rs.2,000 to the not so seriously injured. Similarly Rs.10,000 was also to be
given to those who had lost their homes Rs.5,000 for seriously damaged
dwelling units and 2,000 for damaged units. Compensatory amount in case of
dead was increased to Rs.3 Lakhs by a ruling of the Delhi High Court in 1996, which is yet to be implemented. In Surat, the state announced compensation of Rs.2 lakhs in the form of 60,000 cash and security bounds worth Rs.1,40,000 for the nearest relative of each dead person. Rs.5,000 for the loss and destruction of house, and Rs.2,000 for the injured.

In both the cases of social conflict widows received compensation, which gave them some economic power. Generally it is the men who are considered head of household thus they are entitled to compensation, but in case of death of husband wife becomes the legal heir to compensation. In both the riots, we had seen it was organised massacre of males belonging to age group of 16-50 though in Surat even younger children and kids were burnt alive. Gaining access to compensation often requires knowledge of rights and entitlements which many testimonies suggest women lack. Often they have no experience of dealing with the bureaucracy, moreover, they have to look after children which makes time-consuming visits to offices, standing in queues and so on all but impossible.

Money had brought in lot more problems for these young widows in both the riots. Many interviewees describe how money became a source of contention between them and their relatives. As was recorded by Sukhi Kaur:

"I got the first cheque of Rs.10,000 while I was in relief camp. My father-in-law wanted that money; he said, 'you give this money, since I have lost the son who was earning'. My father-in-law was staying in Alwar before violence phase and my husband used to send some money to him although not on a regular basis, and he had other sons to support him. I did not have any other support, so I refused to share anything with him. Latter on, with the intervention of Panchayat, I had to give him Rs.5,000. When I received the second instalment after taking that money none of my in-laws had bothered to call on us, or to drop in and, and see how I and their grand-children were managing. It
is almost twelve years now. I had managed everything satisfactorily. I have raised my children single handily and now when it came in the newspapers that we will get the compensation to the tune of Rs. three lakhs my in-laws have started visiting me but I am not going to give them a single penny out of it and I have no respect for such persons who consider money their first priority”.

Kamla Kaur became a widow at the young age of 25 years. She was resident of Tirlokpuri staying with her in-laws and two un-married sisters-in-law. Toti’s husband and father-in-law had joint business. Kamla’s husband was killed in riots but she and the rest of the family members managed to escape.

"I use to observe purdah from my father-in-law. I was not permitted to come and talk to relief workers. My father-in-law brought compensation form and took my thumb impression on it. At that time I was not in a right frame of mind. I could not come to terms with the harsh reality that I had been widowed at this young age. There were many women who’s husband had managed to escape and for me it was as if sky has fallen on my head, so I was not interested in what relief was coming, I had lost interest in life. It was only for my children that I mustered the will power to survive. I could not tolerate the pain and grief that I had to undergo due to my husband’s death.

We observe strict purdah from the elders of the community, (specially from elder male members of in-laws). When I received this cheque of Rs. 10,000 in the relief camp. I was told by one relief worker that it was ? my money. I had never seen a cheque before so how could I know what it was for me it was a piece of paper. After that lady (relief worker) left, my father-in-law for the first time spoke to me face to face. he told me that it had to be deposited in a bank and from there we will get cash and he also told me I could not handle all these
financial matters and hence forward if any relief worker comes and talks to me in connection with financial matters I should direct her to him. Since in our homes men manage finance and women manage kitchen.

He kept that cheque for the antim sanskar of my husband. He did not give a single penny out of it to me. My parents took me to Alwar for a few days. They wanted to take me out of this situation but to my surprise on my return, my father-in-law refused to take me back, saying that since bad luck had fallen on their family after my marriage into that family. They had lost their only son so they had no relation with me. I got this flat after a year of riots. Till then I stayed in relief camp and in between I used to visit my parents. After I received this flat my mother-in-law came to stay with me. But I did not allow her to stay as they had already disowned me. In a few months I had undergone the bitterest experiences in the world. All relations are governed by money”.

Zohra is young woman, she lost her husband during the riots. She got compensation of Rs. two lakh, she was forced give share from this amount to her parents-in-law she narrates:

“I received Rs. 60,000 as a first instalment of compensation after the death of my husband but money has created lot of problems for me. My parents-in-law, were staying separately before the violence. After I got the compensation, they started demanding share in that money. They said : ‘We had lost our son so we also had a claim on the compensation amount. I did not understand how people change. They had no relation with me and my husband in earlier days, but still my husband used to give them every month some amount as a token. It was not fixed but after the riots they started demanding every month Rs.500 from me out of my dividend money of Rs. 1500. I do not understand
their logic. Instead of helping me, they started demanding Rs.500
every month. I had paid them Rs. 15,000, when I received that Rs.
60,000. Now the community elders have decided that I should pay
them Rs.500 every month, I fail to understand why community (elder
male members) fail to understand the hardships of women they always
think that women need less money”.

Sukhvinder Kaur feels the brunt of violence even today. Her husband died
during riots and her house was burnt down. She was thirty five years old at
that time. She had managed to bring up her children and even got her
daughters married few years back. But her ordeal did not end there she
narrates:

“No one looks at us with pity, we had to marry our grown up daughters
community look at us, widows, with lot of money earlier we had to
tackle relatives and in-laws they had an eye on our possession and
now our own daughters have became source of agony. You know, with
this news in papers that we will get compensation of Rs. three lakhs,
my son-in-laws have left their wives (my daughters) in my house. They
say they will take them back only. If I give them in written that I would
give them Rs. One lakh each. Though normal life has set in but of
course their own personal baggage of trauma is continuing”.

Compensation money did brought respite and economic empowerment for
these victims but on the other hand these victims came face to face with the
harsh realities of outer world. The fragile relationships was broken with one
stroke as money dominated all the aspects of life.
STRATEGIES OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SURVIVAL

Situation like war, social conflict and political turmoil leave major impact on women, since men are either fighting on the front or else in case of social conflict generally men are killed in more number. It is observed women causalities has been less. After social conflict/war, women are entrusted with new responsibility. Most notably economic provision for their families and also new forms of management, decision making and administrative tasks such as dealing with officialdom and government.

Shaki Kuar resident of Tilak Vihar at Delhi echoes:

“We widows have become both mother and father. We are always worried about. How to feed our children and look after them for we have become both mothers and fathers, we feel crushed by day to day problems our personal problems appear to us bigger than those of khalistan or Babri Masjid”.

Women who have started working out felt some amount of empowerment but they still cherish their previous lives as stated by Shanti:

“You know there is that one thing the support and companionship between two people, that is the key thing. We never felt any lack (of wealth) because there was that. In the early days when we were alone we used to feel very scared. We had no idea how to operate, what to do, how to travel alone gradually I learnt how to cope on my own.

For a few months (at work) it was quite difficult, I didn't know how to talk to people but my office people were very kind. They would help they would advise me how to deal with people. Now I like going to
work. Now even one day at home longs heavy! It feels a bit odd, you feel suffocated. Going out, meeting people, all this helps to take away the unhappiness, the resentment goes away”.

Viday is resident of Tilak-Vihar, she is illiterate and uneducated but still she has a practical approach to life she said:

“You see, we have no choice. These children need to eat, and if we keep weeping they will starve, so of necessity you have to stop tears and get on with the work of feeding the family”.

As its first time women are taking on economic responsibilities to maintain, to feed children and to do all the chores so they get into worse psychological state. Despair adds to the grief as this is first time they are interacting with outer world in capacity of worker or earner. But moment they are involved in income generating they move on and in fact acts an agent of healing and revives victims interest in life. As was reported by Burfi.

“Working out provides ventilation to grief it keep mind occupied, when you are busy you can cope up with such situations in better way”, Economic independence has provided us power to take important decisions earlier we were dependant on our males for small small-things, in fact previously it use to be difficult to adjust with outside world but now I have adjusted. I like now this changed life style. I enjoy working out it gives me lot of confidence and sense of achievement (earning my living)”.

Gurdeep Kaur refrained from working outside home, but to cope up with the household responsibilities she started stilling clothes at home she told:
"I tried to adjust best with the circumstance and if I look back at past ten years. I am satisfied I did my best I got my two daughters married in good families, since day one I had strong determination to face life. I used to stitch clothes, I did not work outside as it is consider below dignity to work out so my relatives and I myself did not wanted to work out side so I use to stitch clothes at home. And had managed quite smartly with finances. I feel quite proud that I had managed everything with self respect and dignity".

There was qualitative change in economic status of there women victims of riots. They have taken to new role. These are few testimonies from field study reflecting their reaction to their new role.

"Initially I could not adjust with kind of life, as ours is very traditional family and we had never stepped out of house, we have never dealt with people. Since now I was employed in dispensary. I did not know now to inter act with people, because I was used to Purdah it was very difficult to adjust to this new life style and I could not trust anybody though people here (work place) are very good but still initially I could not trust them but slowly I picked up the style and now I am perfectly comfortable with this changed life style".

Shanti Kaur

"I got govt job after 4 years of riots till that time I was working very hard, I used to sell soap door to door during day and in night I used to sell eggs. I had to work very hard as my parents were left without any support plus I had old mother-in-law and three children to look after. In fact I used to sell boil eggs on at night along with my father, but men around (Tilak Vihar) had made my life miserable they use to make filthy comments, finally I decided to stitch clothes instead of selling eggs I do not like this life though it has provided lot of economic
independence and decision making power but it has taken away the previous carefree life, I never use to give glass of water to my husband now I have to serve water to outside men I feel very bad about it”.

Ranjit Kaur

“I still cherish my old life, we had very good business. There was no dearth in my life. I used to eat good food and wear good clothes, now life has become miserable, I have to save every penny I walk down to my work place as it’s Rs.5 one side and that way I have to pay around 280 per month which I can not afford. My son is suffering from stomach ailment I need around 25,000 rupees for his operation which is beyond my reach I try to save as much as I can and now my daughter is also earning through stitching clothes at home earlier only my husband use to earn and we all use to sit and eat now almost all of us except my son who is ill are working and still leaving hand to mouth”.

Darshan Kuar

Darshan Kuar’s house was burnt down and her husband was attacked brutally during violence. He suffered injury in spinal cord and thus became paraletical. After riots Darshan had to take over economic responsibilities of her family she recalls:

“I have a little kiosk, I sell eggs, tea, milk. Whatever I make of it, I lookafter my family, that is my husband, three sons and daughter, Initially I had lot of problems, local goondas used to take things on credit and never use to pay back. I had to pay to local constables their monthly also. Sometimes people get drunk and smash the kiosk and often it was demolished by local authorities on pretext of extracting some money as it is illegal construction. When we came to Tilak Vihar I had very though time. Now I know how to tackle the police and babus, they want their hafta. As long as I pay them, they do not to disturb me”.

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Qamar-un-Nisa

Qamar-un-Nisa's husband was popular advocate in Surat he was killed along with his father during riots. Qamar had never seen dearth of anything in her life as she belonged to upper-middle class. Riots brought sudden change in her world. It was shattered with one blow of violence, she can never be same Qamar, she expresses her sentiments in painful words:

"Now I have to act as both mothers and fathers for our children. They have seen nothing in their life. I feel guilty if I am not able to provide them what they demand. I and my mother-in-law get around Rs.3000 as dividend from the security bounds. My both the children are getting special scholarships. But it is true, death of my husband and father-in-law has effected the economic status of our family. I had never worked out earlier, but after riots, I have started working to keep myself busy and to earn also. I do feel the pinch, I never use to think before spending in pre-violence days but now every penny is important. Since I have to look after my children. We have sold all gold and that money is invested in financial institutes so that we get an extra buck out of it".

Fatima was widowed in recent riots of Surat, she had two small kids to bring-up, her husband was auto-rickshaw driver and used to earn enough. Zohra used to work independently at home as most of the women are working in their homes. They get fabric for embroidery from factories or rolls of fabric for finishing from cloth mills. These are two popular engagement of Surati women irrespective of caste and religion. Before riots these engagement of Surati women irrespective of caste and religion. Before riots these women use to work for their own pocket allowances, but now after riots they are earning as sole breadwinners as Zohra narrates:
“I use to work before riots, I do not like to sit ideal. But before violence it was not compulsion to work. Whatever I used to earn. I used to spend on buying clocks and cosmetics. But after violence my earning is the source of survival for me and my children. After riots competition has increased, women like me who are the only bread-winners in the family are ready to work at low prices. Infact after riots we are working more and earning less.

Ayesabi had seen no dearth in her life till riots took place in Surat. She was well provided by her husband. But this episode of violence in Surat proved fatal for her. Being a wife and mother, her worry in post-violence phase was how to make her both ends meet. She did not even hesitate to stand in queue to get relief for her children. She narrates her experiences:

“After the riots when my husband and I were penniless, without any possession, the local organisation and friends helped us. We had lost everything, the equipment to work and the raw-material (fabric) was also burnt. We did not get compensation for the material burnt, it belonged to mill owner. My husband used to get these big rolls of fabric cut into sarees on contract basis. We had to pay for the damages of material to the mill owner. Local organisation gave us some money to repair our houses. I had accumulated household items standing in queue. Utensils and rations were by distributed to riot victims by the community for first few months. Men have no patience to stand and wait for their turn to receive all these goods.

My husband use to feel frustrated and irritated when I use to come back with all these things. It hurt his self respect. But what else I could do? I had to feed my children. I could not see them starving, my son and husband did not find work immediately after riots. Hindu mill owners did not wanted to heir Muslim workers. Hunger can not wait,
you have to fill your stomachs to survive. I and my daughter started stitching and doing embroidery at very less prices, when you have hungry mouths to feed profit becomes secondary".

SOCIAL RELATIONS

Post-violence phase is marked with transition in the lives of women victims. Women victim experience completely different world after the violence, for them violence comes as routine in an aftermath. Social relations get affected with the change in the situation of women. Women raped or widowed in process of violence undergo revictimization during post-violence situation. It is bad situation for them because the standard structures had broken down and what came up in its place was even worse. Women who have been unfortunate victim of sexual assault become stigma for the community and have to face social ostracism for none of their fault. Women is loser in all the sense if she is raped she becomes the black sheep in the community and if she is widowed, she again has to go through the stressful period of suppression. Since their is objective change in her status, she becomes inauspicious object for family and community, which has definite impact on her relationship with both the families. They are seen with suspicion by both family and community.

Satinder Kuar was widowed in anti-Sikh riots at Delhi at the young age of 22 years. She had decided not to re-marry. She remarks it is very difficult to lead solitary life as everyone keeps watch on single women she said :

"We avoid going to the houses where there are males due to suspicion. The woman next door is suspicious about my dealings with her brother, who is staying with her, even he is old but his sister has objections to it and often accuses him having soft corner for me and my
children. Due to this irritation I am nervous to talk to men. Even for an emergency I would think twice about calling a male to assist. It is only with those who have suffered the same fate that I could share my grief and talk freely".

Similar sentiments were echoed by Ranjeet Kuar who lost her husband in riots and had to take up job to support her family.

"All types of false allegations are levelled at me. I think people feel that I am doing well and that I am prospering by false means even. If I wear new clothes or jewellery that becomes an issue a gossip, why do I dress like that, or from where did I get these things, I feel I have I lost the right to live, my moments are watched. If a male neighbour, relative for friend comes over to my house they believe it is due to relationship. Hence I am unable to seek their assistance. I have to live in isolation, male colloquies in the office offer lifts even such a trivial act is frowned upon. Therefore I feel I am in no position to stretch my hand out to anyone even for an emergency if mishaps come my way I have to face them alone.

My relatives keep a watch and want to know about my relations with men. In fact they behave in way as if they have a right to inquire into my life, they do not spare a small incidence of taking small help from anybody, even if I talk to vegetable vendor with a smile on face, I am looked upon with suspicion, and my interaction with small guys whom I treat like my brother is questioned". My relatives are so prejudiced against me that even a small peace of furniture or a new item of household good gives them impression that I have lot of money salary they (relatives) borrow my money and did not return. But I know the hardship I have to endure".
Majority of the women victims of November 1984 riots were employed as class four employees in schools, dispensaries, hospitals etc. They had first time entered into public life. They have never travelled alone or interacted with males. After they started working out, many women confronted problem of being harassed by men. Since they are widows, society does not allow them to interact freely with males, they use to feel all the more scared. Slowly they learnt how to tackle this problem for example. Sundari remarks:

"There were a couple of stray incidents in the office in the early days but not now, when we travelled in buses and were with crowds there were men who used to feel us up, make us feel dirty and we used to sit together in the evenings and say today this happened to us and so on. In earlier times, we had never gone out without our husbands our favourite outing used to be going to Sisganj gurudwara on Sundays with our husbands. After riots it was first time in our lives, we were going out on our own. So when we came back from work we used to share what happened to us and that way by sharing and support. You'd conquer your own doubts and fear. And again courage yes we have shouted at people in buses. We've even hit them complained about them. and finally learned to tackle them. Now we can go anywhere unescorted.

Social-violence proves destructive not only in on-going violence but destroys the social & economic world of victim in post-violence phase. Many testimonies described after losing their companions and destruction of their defiling in riots women were left support less. They were looked upon as liabilities so even own near and dear ones tried to maintain distance from them. In many cases these widows were surrounded by greedy relatives who suddenly start visiting them with intention to grab the compensation amount".
Jasbeer had gone through better experiences after riots. Her father-in-law took whatever little gold she had and then had an eye on her house. Being harassed and disappointed with the behaviour of her-in-law. She came to stay with her brother, but her pain was aggravated at the behaviour of her own brother she narrates:

"I lost my husband in the riots and my house was burnt down, left without any emotional and material support, I informed my father-in-law, who was is in Punjab about the death of my husband. My father-in-law came took us to Punjab. There we performed the last rites of my husband my father-in-law took a gold bangle and a pair of ear rings from me on the pretext that he had no money to perform death rituals of my husband. I was also concerned about it because it is duty of survivors to perform the last rites so that departed soul may rest in peace.

Initially my in-laws had good relationship with me. Slowly I started noticing change in their behaviour. I realised that I and my children were virtually reduced to the status of servants, we used to work day and night. We had just duties and no rights, I could feel the impact of deprivation on my children. I could tolerate, but for my children I could not bear it and I decided to shift back to Delhi. When my father-in-law wanted to sell my house in Delhi, which was burnt down during the riots. This came as shock to me. I did not say any thing to him and came to Delhi on the pretext of selling that house and decided not to go back to Punjab. My brother is staying in Tilak Nagar. I came there to his house. For first few days at my brother's place was very pleasant. Gradually my sister-in-law used to pick up fight with me on one pretext or other. Then one day my brother told me that I should look for a rented house since he had accommodation problem and his daughter's exams were nearing and they need room for her. I could feel the under current. I sold my burnt house at very less price and
managed to buy this small house of 25 square yards. I got job in garment house, during day I worked in factory and at night I used to do the stitching at my place. My daughter could not go to school. She had to look after the two brothers and do all domestic work since I could not attend to household chores.

My son has become introvert he does not like to meet any relatives, he has very bitter feeling towards them but I try to cure it but it is very difficult erase the experiences which are based on emotional suffering”.

Shaheeda is staying with her chacha and chachi. She has been widowed at the young age of 23. She has two little sons. She was married at the age of eighteen. Shaheeda was leading comfortable and content life with her husband. Shaheeda had come to visit her uncle and aunt on the evening of 6th December. She had never thought she would had to stay permanently with her uncle as next day violence brooke in Surat and she lost her husband and house in that upheaval. Shaheeda's life has reconciled with the loose of her affectionate and loving husband she is staying with her own uncle and aunt but still is all alone. She narrates:

“I am staying with my chacha and chachi since my childhood. They are my parents and guardians. I was adopted by them since I was infant. They got me married also. After Dhmaal I came to them, they are the only relatives I have in this world.

Before marriage, I used to work at home cutting threads of sari. I used to do all the household work, my uncle has huge family nine children and four adults including me it used to be five. I use to get up early in morning and finish household work by 9 a.m. and from 9 a.m. to till late evening I use to sit on to cut the threads to sarees. I was known for my speed.
I have come back to that routine again. I use to work at my home also, but my husband use to insist that I should do only that much work which I do easily. He was against over working. In this house, I realize my status is of Labourer from morning to night I have to work, I can not go out or speak to anybody they all talk to me sweetly but I know my place in this house not more then a servant. I am to serve them. He has nine children. Five daughters and four sons, none of his daughters helps me in the household work, whatever they earn as cutting sari they keep as their pocket money.

Whatever I earn I do not get anything out of it. My uncle keeps it saying that he is depositing my money. My monthly dividend from compensation is used for household expenses. My compensation amount had been invested by uncle in his business. His business has improved but my condition is deteriorated. I feel by loosing my husband I have lost right to live. I feel suffocated no one in this house has time to think about me. I am leading a suffocated and companion less life. I do not see any hope. I would have committed suicide but when I look at my small kids I feel compel to drag my life.

ISSUE OF REMARRIAGE

Regarding re-marriage in Tilak Vihar there has been marked reaction. Basically majority of victims belong to Labhana and Sikhlikar caste. These two caste are famous for leverate marriages. Leverate is common practice in these caste there is not much information how this marriage helps women since I feel in a process she became the worse victim of patriarchy. As expressed by Shanti:
"Though I did re-marry after seven years I am not happy I did re-marry just for one reason that my life had become hell it was like pot without lid its natural it we keep pot uncovered all the dust particles and bits will get into its pound to get duly “Hamari zindigi to aise ho gaye thi jaisi bina dhakkan ke ghada to usmain kankar pathar dhool matti to girni hai agar uska dhakkan toot gaya hai maine shadi siraf wapis dhakkan lagane ke liya ki” frankly speaking I do not enjoy his companionship nor does he loves my children from previous marriage so it's kind of prolonged pain for me”.

Ishri Kuar also shared resentment on re-marriage she told :

“I got mary proposals for re-marriage as I was only 26 years old but I decided not to re-marry because of my children I thought I might get peace through companionship (which is very rare in re-marriage) but what about my children I know men they can never accept some one else's children so looking at my kids I decided not remarry, now my daughter is married and my son is getting married, I might feel this loneliness more now, sometimes I feel that re-marriage would have saved me from this dilemma about loneliness after my sons wedding. In case my daughter-in-law is good enough then I do not think I will have any regrets, other wise I might feel loss of companion more”.

Kamla Kaur was forced to re-marry she recalled :

“I am married to my younger brother-in-law I feel very bad about it, he was small kid whom I had brought up and now in 1992, I was forced to marry him, he is only 22 years and I am 36 years. I feel quite ashamed but my in laws wanted me to marry him. I have two kids from him but I can not say that its marriage of choice, its exploitation it's just to check our mobility we are forced into such kids of marriages.
It's true that my brother-in-law and I get physical satisfaction but we do not share companionship, so without emotional attachment there is no life in relationship. "(Actually in our community this tradition of getting married to brother-in-law is that women is considered property so that she does not move out of the community and bring bad name to family and in the process we women have to lead very suffocated life. Actually these men have no interest in us, just because this is tradition they marry us there is no sense of responsibility and feeling of companionship".

Anwari Begum from Surat is not happy with her new husband she stated

"I was married to my younger brother-in-law. I had three children from my previous husband and two children from this husband. I have regrets on my re-marriage actually this marriage has become source of constant pain for me. My husband is involved with some other lady. He has no liking for me, I feel humiliated. Monetarily also I am pressurised since I get only Rs. 1600 as pension from Government and it is very difficult to manage such a big family with this meagre amount. My husband hardly shares economic responsibility of the house for me all are my children so I have to provide for all.

Bhupinder Kaur also expressed similar feelings:

"I was pressurised for re-marry both by my parents and mother-in-law but I did not want to leave my mother-in-law as she had lost not only her husband but son also. So if I would I have re-married outside I will take her grand children away from her so I decided not to re-marry but this pressure for re-marriage was so intense that then I decided to marry my younger brother-in-law who is not too young than me. We are getting along well. I have one daughter from him but still I used to feel more free with my ex-husband."
There was one strange case of Sakhi Kaur. She told us that she and her jethani (husband's elder brother's wife) are both married to younger brother in law. Who is hardly 24 years of age. on asking how she feels about this, she responded

I feel dirty about, I do not tell people whom I meet at workplace that I am remarried. I did marry him since there was pressure on me and this was the only way to gain freedom, otherwise I would have not been allowed to workout. I do not interact with this man but my Jethani has daughter from him".

Gopi is dead against remarriage she reports:

"What help can another man give us? He will not give money he will eat he'll take money away instead, he may well be unkind to the children, but he will give the one thing.

Now at least our children are our own. Another man will fight, he will be violent, he may ruin your body and everyone will get bad name your in-laws, others... And he will start asking where did you go? today you are late from work who have you with? After all we meet people at work some one may offer you a lift on their motorbike one day. You may go out but there is no one to say anything to you. You are your own mistress, yes, our sons (are sometimes critical of us) but today we do what we want we get what we need. Of course, there is a little restriction you do want to do things, to eat certain kinds of things, but you stop yourself thinking that money can be better used. Who knows whether the son will give anything or not?"

Nanki Kaur feels satisfied that she did not succumb to presence of her relatives for re-marriage. She told:
"I feel very happy I did not remarry basically what I feel all those men who had offered to marry widows had monetary gain in their mind they did not marry them out of compassion, they married keeping in view the amount of compensation and flat I know many cases where widow as remarried and disposed of her whatsoever little property she had and then deserted again".

SEXUALITY

Most of the women widowed at Tilak Vihar were of the age group of 24-35 and even younger, so to deal with this aspect was very important. In fact elder of the community thought that they should be re-married in the family. Leverrate marriage is essential feature of Labhana and Sikhlikar community. They feel that women will step out of community to fulfil their physical demands since our is traditional society women were not that forthcoming to talk about it but few did share their feeling how do they deal with such problems. Our testimonies from reflect following view points.

Burfi Kaur

"I suppressed my physical needs and now I realise my body has become power house of illness but what could I do, its too late now, whenever I see same love scenes on television I feel that I could have enjoyed that life. I still aspire for that caress love affection which only your man can give you."

Pritam Kuar

"I was very much attached to my husband and everytime I could feel his touch, you know I have been suppressing my physical needs which
has effected us mentally as well physically regarding re-marriage I
could not think since I still cherish the moments spent with my
previous husband so how could I think any other man though I felt that
we also have physical need but we can not express it it's immoral".

**Bhupinder Kaur**

"Sexually I feel hesitant with my new husband firstly he was my
brother-in-law and younger to me, so I can not express myself with that
freedom I use to with my previous husband. I feel there is something
missing in this new relationship though I have one daughter from him
and we have been married for almost ten years. I still do not feel
comfortable with him".

**Toti Kaur**

"Women here have become loose there are two reasons one is
economic pressure as there are large families and women in the sole
earner so to meet their expenses they home taken to such means. And
secondly there are some widows who become widow just after few
days of marriage and no body is there to check her so they have taken
up these means and there are still few who want to fulfil their desires
have extra marital relations".

**EFFECT ON CHILDREN**

To bring up children single handily is very difficult. Children may seem
outwardly calm but inside them there is confusions. They fail to understand
the complex world around them and this is reflected in their personality
when they grow up. They turn out to be complex personalities with lot of
confusion.
In most of the testimonies it was children who were only inspiration for their mothers survival. Mothers had to pick up the threads of their lives for their children only. Many women who had lost their husbands in riot voiced their difficulty bringing up children alone. These women felt that it was difficult to deal these children who had go through violence. They have emotional problems. Tripta Kaur describes:

"To bring up such children, specially sons it is very difficult. I feel I can not remove the trace of the violence and help them forget the past. You can not guarantee that this will be accepted by children who grew up without a father. And there are things that are impossible to change to talk alone. The child who could not go to school because the family's bread winner was killed or who can not eat properly or whose mother can not take him to the doctor. Such child is bound to develop complex nature. Since I am also most of time busy working and have my own problems and can not pay much attention to my children. In a way they are deprived of both fathers and mothers affection".

The children of such events are more mature of their age, it seems they grow faster, in fact violence snatches their carefree days of childhood and they straight away grow into the youths. Aamar Narrates:

"My son has turned introvert after his father death. He does not demand anything. He hardly talks like other kids. I have never seen him laughing since my husband's death, as most he will smile. I am pained to see this change in him.

Nanki feels that mother alone can not control sons boys are scared of their fathers. After the death of their fathers boys have been spoiled She remarks.

"Children had have a lot of mental torture and it is not very easy to handle them. Due to lack of proper care some of them roam about and
are very violent and have started stealing and pick pocketing. We are out most of the day, so there is nobody to check them, earlier, they used to listen to us. They know otherwise they have to face the wrath of their fathers but now they have no one to fear”.

### PLIGHT OF OLD WIDOW WOMEN

These riots had proved very harsh to old female dependants, who were already widowed and were staying with their sons. They had undergone bitter experiences at the fag end of their lives. We met many old age women victims who told distressful stories of their lives. They had seen partition when they were young, in the prime of their youth. Dislocated for a second time, they had to take shelters with their daughters. Which is inconventional of Indian culture.

Veera Bai is now 75 years old. She was staying at Sultanpuri with her some in Sultanpuri. she narrates:

“My both the sons were killed in riots. My husband was away in Rajasthan, he came to Delhi week after a riots. When he came to know that his two sons and one son-in-law had been killed. He could not survive the shock and died of heart attack. I was left depended on my two daughters-in-laws. They got separate flats in compensation. I was not entitled to flat as my husband had died a natural death, both the daughters-in-law refused to give me shelter in their homes. I tried to plead with them, but they refused to listen and had thrown me out of their houses. I came back to the camp and was staying there praying to god to bestow death on me. My widowed daughter came to know about this. She came and took me along with her. Now I am staying with her. Actually, it is not considered good to stay in a married daughter’s house but circumstances have compelled me to make this compromise".
Minjar Kaur is another old lady of 70 years of age who had lost all the young male members of family. She painfully recounts:

“My three sons and four sons-in-laws were killed in the violence. My one son had gone out of Delhi so he was saved. I had to run with my three daughters-in-law, four daughters and their children to a safe place. We ran towards Chilla Gaon. There one of my husband’s friends gave us shelter and from there we shifted to Camp. I had lost my husband before riots, so there was no question of compensation. My daughters-in-law and daughters got compensation and flats. Since I had lost my husband long before riots. I was not entitled to any compensation. After my sons death my daughters-in-law refused to have any kind of relationship. My son who was 13 years old that time had become introvert and after that had taken to drugs. Earlier he use to come home but now he has lost sense, he had been admitted to de-addiction centre various times he runs away from there, he had taken to stealing also. Last time when I went to doctor with him. He told me that his blood has turned into water and if he does not stop drugs immediately he will die. I have left him to his fate.

Obviously now I had to bank upon my daughters. I used to live with my youngest daughter, who was also widowed in 1984, but she also died after few years, now I am living in her flat, taking care of her children. My daughter used to get pension, which I am now getting and with that I am trying to bring up these children. At this age, When I should have taken retirement from household responsibilities. I have to look after these children, since my daughter was disowned after riots by her in laws I have to look after them, bring them up”.

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Khadija Bi is 72 years old, who suffered tremendous trauma emotionally and materially she lost all her family members in this riots. Her husband, son, daughter-in-law and grandson were hacked to death and then burnt. She recorded:

"I was cruelly beaten up but I fell unconscious in the pit. The mob took me as dead and left me there. The next day I was brought by the army to the relief camp. My widowed daughter who had come to stay with me had met very tragic end. She had to leave that day, but as trouble broke out she stayed back. She was raped and then killed. She had an eight year son who somehow managed to escape. When it came to compensation, his grand parents came and took him earlier they had disowned my daughter and her son after the death of their son. But relationships in the modern world are strange and complex. They came running when they came to know that he is entitled to compensation of Rs.2,00,000 and till he becomes major I will be his guardian. They came saying that they want to take him back as he is the only surviving memory of our son. It was hardly any love for the child, it was money which they loved.

Regarding my compensation I did not do anything. My son-in-law, looks after that. In any case he is going to handle it after my death let him handle now, I do not need any money except a couple of hundreds for my medicine I sign wherever and whenever he wants. At this age I have no requirement, money can not infuse spirit into my life I am waiting for death I was destined to see this qyamat (dooms day). I have seen the worse, what could be more painful than watching my family being killed in front of my eyes. I can not say my son-in-law wants this money, as he has never demanded anything, but surely money is very important for young people.
Within the family first it was male relatives whoever was remaining, they came and took over (the women’s) lives. Then more recently a new phenomenon had developed 12 years old sons have become 22 years and 24 years old and now many of them had started harassing their widowed mothers. Many young boys have taken to drugs in case of victims of Delhi-riots the reasons quoted by the elders of the community are that these children had seen the violence at the very small age. The impression of violence had a permanent impact of these boys lives. Most of them became introvert and many of them lost interest in games and studies. They could not cope-up with the vacuum created by violence in their lives and thus had taken to drugs”.

But now when these widows have grown old and find difficult to carry on with the responsibilities of household find that their woes have no end. These youths who were small children were inspiration for their mothers to survive at the time violence erupted have become now permanent pain for old widowed mothers. Popli’s case was really bad she had this son who must have been 18 years and he was totally shiftless. She narrates:

“He would wait around on the day I get my salary and beat me up and grab the money and go off. He got married and expects me to feed the family. In fact I now I think it would have been much better. If I had given birth to daughter in his place”.

Many widows who have grown old now have this complaint against their grown up sons. Most of them (sons) have taken to drugs and instead of helping their widowed mothers they pester them for money as Purna Bai narrates:

“I was shocked when my younger son after his marriage told me to leave the house. I was harassed everyday both by my son and daughter-in-law. I was widowed before riots so I did not receive any
pension or claim. Before riots I was staying with my sons. I lost my elder son in the riots and was staying with him (younger son) after the violence. My daughter who was also widowed during riots came to know about my plight. She could not bear my pain and brought me here and I am staying here with her. I have all the comforts she and her children are very caring and affectionate but the only regret is why I gave birth to such a son. What went wrong with him? In what way I was responsible for all this violence? In fact I had overcomed the trauma of violence but this violence was more traumatic which came as a routine through my own son’s behaviour”.

Lajwanti Kaur has also gone through similar experience. She narrates:

“I felt lucky my youngest son had escaped death during the violence, he was out of station. I was very happy when I saw him alive. I had lost my husband and two elder sons, so this youngest son Jagtar was on whom I had all my hopes. When he returned to Delhi he applied for the compensation. I also did not opt for job or pension due to old age he got job on my place. Since he was the only surviving male member in family and was looking into the matters of compensation. I never questioned him about the money he got as compensation.

He started staying separately after his marriage. He all the things we had bought after riots. Now I am left alone without job or pension. I have to look after my grand-daughter, her father died in riots and her mother went back to Alwar. She re-married there. Now at this fag end of my life. I am burdened with the responsibility of my grand-daughter. My son has refused to give me single penny. It is through gurdwara and other organisations. I get some money, which has helped me to survive hand to month I had never thought that my son let would let me down. I had never seen dearth of any thing during my husband’s life. I am not able to reconcile with it”. 

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But there are women, who have overcome the pain of widowhood. Their sons have become more responsible due to sudden loss of the head of the family. Many boys who lost their father in such episodes of violence start sharing the economic responsibilities of their families at young age as echoed by Gurdeep Kaur:

"My son was 14 years at that time, he used to study in 8th standard, he had become introvert but on the same time he was quite responsible he took up the job of newspaper vendor and joined the school in evening shift. He also learnt the work of motor mechanic. Whereas I used to stitch clothes at home, so we both son and mother had managed well, which helped me to marry my second daughter honourably in a good family. Now my son has his own workshop and has established the business of car sale purchase. I had bought small kiosk for him with the second cheque of Rs.10,000 and believe me I have no regrets now. He does not allow me to work now and I am sure he will not change after his marriage".

Abida Begum had become widow in Surat riots. She lost her son as well but she is looked after why well by her three sons with whom she is staying one son is staying separately for accommodation problem. She told:

"I gave compensation money to my three sons as they need to repair their auto-rickshaws which had been burnt during the riots. Hart the money out of compensation was used to buy and repair the auto-rickshaws for my sons and half of the amount was invested in buying the flat. None of my son had asked for the money. Which I received as compensation. I myself decided to give compensation money to my sons. It was important to get back my sons to work. My house in Vijay Nagar was looted it was rented house but all the belongings were either looted or destroyed. We bought house here in our own locality. My daughter-in-laws contributed by selling their gold and I invested
other half of my compensation amount to buy a flat. I get Rs.3000 per month as dividend my sons never question about that money but I give equal amount to all my grand children as pocket money and rest I contribute in household expenses”.

Ayesa bi

“My house was looted and burnt no a single spoon was left. My husband was rendered jobless. He had suffered great lose, he use to deal in wholesale fabric which was burnt during the riots. He narrowly escaped death, he was completely broken man, after riots he had lost his role (breadwinner) also. My son who was 18 years old and was already working he also lost job as his employer was in two minds to employ back Muslims. My son showed lot of courage he know driving so he use to hire his friend’s auto-rickshaw in the night and used to drive in the night and during the day time he use to work as scrub collector from the mills till he found a suitable job.

He managed to get a suitable job after a year he has shared the burden of household expenses while his father had failed to perform his role in post violence phase”.

Keemat Kaur was about 55 years old when anti-Sikh riots took place. She had never worked out in her life. She remarks:

“I was old I did not want to work out at this age. So I decided to give that job to my son. My son got the government job of peon but he did not go to work. Instead he got addicted to drugs and this addiction made him irregular with work, which resulted in termination of his job. He is not economically responsible for the family and if I try and argue with him he fights, and even beats me, his wife and children in fit of alcohol. He snatches the money. It is me and my daughter-in-law
dragging the family because after all these children have to be looked after and fed. I curse my stars for such a bad son. Sometimes even I curse my fate and think if there had been no riots in November 1984 we would have not been dislocated and my son would have been different man.

There are many old women, who are living with these sons who have become permanent pain. these old widows can only curse November 1984, which has left this wound in their lives, in which gangrene has set in".

COMMUNITY

Community support is very essential in any disaster or holocaust. It has important significance in time of communal conflict, because during that period polarisation takes places on community lines so victims falls back for help and support on the community. Survivors of communal-conflict or communal-riot are dependent on community for their rehabilitation.

It has been observed that community affiliation prove more stronger than any other associations. In our study. Delhi and Surat riots we observed community had played important role in ongoing phase of violence by organising relief camps and providing victims with food and clothing. Community help was active in post-violence phase also. In both the places victims were rehabilitated with active support and backing of the community.

In Delhi Sikh community's participation was marked in the process of rehabilitation of riot-victims of anti-Sikh riots in 1984. Special appears were issued to community through gurudwaras to contribute generously for the rehabilitation of widows. Community came forward with generous grants both monetarily and materially.
When these widows were in camps they received utensils woollen clothes blankets and when they shifted to Tilak Vihar, many large hearted Sikhs came forward and donated other household goods like ceiling fans, folding beds, stoves and other utensils which are very essential to start kitchen.

The indebtedness to community was expressed by Sakhi Kaur who stays in Tilak Vihar in following words:

"We received from our Sikh brothers all the essential goods we required, many people use to make frequent trips to our colony to see that we have atleast all the basic facilities Nagrik Ekta Manch had done lot for us, it in fact worked in a organised manner and saw to it that all of us get our share General Arora, Chairman of Sikh forum popularly known here as Arora Uncle was of great moral support he use, to set and chat with us discuss our problems and encouraged us to face the challenges of life".

There are instances of unhappiness towards community also. Many organisations have come up to help these widows in post-violence phase Nishkaam is one of the organisations which was established by the community grant to help the widows. It has not been able develop rapport with the widows, basically widows are very critical of the Nishkaam one of the widow remarks:

"They say Nishkaam gets lot of funds on our behalf and they do not give us what we need. They change us money for medicine and stationery. They do not give us more than ten copies annually, suppose if I have three children studying in school how long these ten copies are going to last Medicines issued by Nishkaam are of sub-standard quality, we never get relief from their medicines. Office bearers of Nishkaam use to come office cycle ten years back. Now they come of
Maruti they had one room office which has been expanded into multi-storey building. We did not get much benefit from this office. They are getting money on our name then why do not they give to us? They have done nothing constructive for us and our children.

STATE

State definitely has an important role in period of communal violence. State and its agencies are responsible to maintain law and order in the state. State is also responsible for the safety of its subjects. But those riots have proved that state machinery has been completely communalised. Both the riots have ample examples where police had participated in the violence or had been dumb spectator and at times active participant in killing rioting and looting, secondly laxity on the part of state to deal with culprits of the riots has further built the resettlement in the minds of survivors. Political protection of the criminals has discriminated the victims. This sentiment was strongly voiced by Shanti Kuar. she said:

"State has reduced us to this status state is considered 'mai-bab' but it has step motherly attitude towards us, state did not provide protection to us, if state would have intervened no body would have denied to touch anyone. Government purposely gave this laxity to finish off Sikh community. Government has given us Rs.10,000 for our men "Hamare heerey jaise admi ki keemat das hazaar rupay lagai, hamare admi kaya das hazaar ke the" (State has taken our men like diamond and given us ten thousand, Is worth of our men ten thousand)" state has given us permanent wound. Though wound has healed but this scar is there scar can not be rubbed off, we have been reduced the status of widow, widowhood in itself is sharp."
It is true people say that Sikh widows have got so much. State has over compensated them, but no state is otherway, state is trying hide its misdeed by compensating us. One can always recover economy lose but life can not be recovered. Can state give me my blissful world, back, that peaceful life, those carefreedays?. It is due to state's negligence that we have undergone so much pain trauma dislocation. We have lost our traditional occupation our children had gone astray and we have become servants, peons, and sweepers. We had never done such jobs earlier. Is this improvement in our status or it is reducing us to fourth class employees. Still "I use to be Maharani in my house now I have become nukraani. I have no option to refuse the job. I have to rear up my children so I had to take that job".

Syeda expressed her resentment towards state:

"My husband had served the state he was senior office and my son was advocate both of them were killed. My son had approached police station for the protection of society. He was send back with the assurances that soon patrolling squad would be send to our society. To my disbelief we were attacked as soon as police reached there. In front of police we was attacked, both my son and my husband were killed. There was curfew in the city but mob roaming scout free and was allowed to loot and kill Muslims. There was no law and order. What kind of state machinery is this which can not protect its citizens?

And now I am running for the pension of my husband, I am yet to receive reply from his office, the callousness on the part of the state has infact aggravated our problems. There should have been spent department to deal with such disaster and government should speed up the process for victims. Infact justice delayed is justice denied".
Gurdeep Kaur

“I am fighting case against 14 people whom I had recognised. I will see that they are punished, Souls of our dead relatives will rest in peace only if these culprits are punished, we will see that we get justice. State has given us money, flat, but just tell can it give us those days back. Those care free days the pain trauma we have suffered throughout these years the nightmares which we have undergone these days, the only problem with human life is you can not die with dead, that is why we are living other wise there is no life in us we are living corpse “Jinda Laash.

State gave us only Rs. 20,000 Is that the cost of our men? Why state did not stop this carnage for three days, we understand there could be small incidence of violence. But in 1984 it was uniform method followed to kill Sikhs in Tirlokpuri, Sultanpur, Nangloi and Nand Nagri. Why police not intervene? Indira Gandhi’s killers have been hanged, they got the punishment, why not people, who have killed our men have been punished or many to deaths. This attitude of state proves that it has no respect for human life specially of poor, and it was anti Sikh police followed by state”.

JUSTICE

Women who had seen their men being brutally killed feel responsible to fight for justice. There is additional moral responsibility added to women’s lives to see that culprits are punished and souls of their dear relatives rest in peace as echoed by Vidyabai:
"It's ten years but what have they done, we have all but held the criminals by the hand and pointed them out, but what has happened? The government certainly bothers us. If we do not go to court on the appointed day. We receive summons. But what have they done? We have given evidence so many times but nothing has happened. Instead of helping, they tried to trap us. people tried to persuade us to give false evidence but we refused.

Those five rioters we testified against they are still there. And what justice we did not get, that is true. But now we think they too are ruined in away. Endless numbers of times they have been called to the court, they have had to pay up bribes we feel they are not really alive".

**Darshan Kaur**

"I want justice, state should punish these culprits so that no body, whatsoever religion he belongs to can dare to indulge in the sort of brutal killing. It's very important that these culprits should be brought to book otherwise a layman will have no trust in state and it's organs we still have faith in judiciary and I hope that they will punish the criminals.

Many testimonies of widows of anti-Sikh riots at Delhi see in Rajiv Gandhi's death as a natural justice done to them. They feel state has fouled to give them justice but God has done justice as narrated by Paramjit.

He said, that my mother has been killed and when a big tree falls, small ones also fall? But some sort of justice has been meted out, whether or not. In Rajiv's death we see (Justice). You see Sonia had been widowed. Rajiv met the same kind of death as our men has body was charred beyond recognition, so this gives us assurance of Justice of the Almighty *Der Hai andher Nahi Hai*.
Similar feelings were expressed by Rajrani Kuar, who was staunch supporter of congress before riots she expressed undisappointment.

And we have still managed to live, to survive God has at least given us this and in a way our lives were put together again. But (Rajiv) died a dog's death. A leg here a foot there, his stomach all over, fifty people died with him and someone's limbs moved with another's a part of body from this one, another from that one, what kind of death is that?"

COPING WITH THE GRIEF AND LONLINESS

It's impossible to come to terms with the harsh reality that within few hours every thing was finished. During our discussion with victims we realised they have coped up with circumstances but that pain of loss and dislocation is still simmering. Even at mentioning of those fateful days leads to flow of tears. It is uncontrollable, suffering, the pain is still continuing. Violence has become the prolonged trauma for these victims, economically they have coped with the situation but emotionally they are still suffering.

Qamar expressed her feelings in following words:

"When I am at home it's not so bad during the day, but after 6 p.m. I feel like I am waiting for someone to come home. The person who did this thing - he will pay for it. If not in this world, then in the next. If my husband had been killed because he had done something wrong I could have borne it. But he never did anything of disrepute. There was no one who did not think highly of him either at the court or at the colony. If not for the children I would have ended my life. I talk to lot of people who have lost their husbands like this. They all say the same thing."
I had to live for my children they were leading a protected life and now there was this uncertainty whether my husband is dead or alive but I had to put smile on my face for my children sake. I use to cry a lot at night, not in front of my children.

Rehana lost her husband in Surat riots, she was hardly thirty years of age at that time. She has to three children who are small, she feels all alone after the lose of her husband she said.

I feel Miserable, I have to took after these children, they need everything. I also want their lives should be comfortable and I try my best to provide them everything. But inside me is suffocation which on one can share. I never realised I would miss my husband that much. I do not want to re-marry, I cherish days spent with my husband. I feel all alone in this world, there are my relatives but these days all relations are of money. My relatives specially my brothers and sister-in-laws look at me as liability. They have never said it but I can sense it from their behaviour. I feel pained to see my own brothers thinking like this. I prefer to live alone with my suffering, no one can share my pain and agony”.

Gurvinder, lost her husband and her house was also burnt, so she was uprooted from her original dewelling she was advised by her relatives to sell her old house and buy house among her own community. She stays in Rajouri Garden but longs for her earlier life.

"These riots have snatched everything from me my husband, my house and my happiness. I was forced to move in alien environment. I still not feel comfortable her my children have grown up, they are busy in making their carrier and I am left alone, I can not share my feelings with my children, riots have created permanent vacuum in my life and I have to live with it till I die."
Losing some one in this way is a devastating sorrow because it is arbitrary it is not like a person dying of an illness. And this terrible thing of the house being invaded and your child pulled out of your arms at the point of knife is a denial of one's own right as a citizen. And from that arises a you feel disadvantaged to start with but it is the beginning of asking for justice”.

Stainder Kaur from Delhi also spoke Similiarly:

“It's not so bad when I am with people in crowded place. But when I am at home in the nights I always remember him. Even the children remember. I keep losing weight and I feel like I am wasting away. Sometimes I wonder why I am still going on like this. There are children who do not care for their parents. I do not think my children will be like that but sometimes I wonder. How do I know they will not leave me?

For a while I stayed at home and cried a lot, the pain only increased. Now I am in state where I can laugh and talk and act normally. And since I started going for all these committee meetings I have realised that I am not alone. There are so many people like me. Who had worse experiences”.

PROLONGED TRAUMA

Many women have to live with impaired family member. It is very difficult to put up with this trauma, most of these women have taken up the role of breadwinner and with that this additional responsibility to look after the disabled family members add to their agony. Darshan Kaurs husband was disabled due to brutal attack on him during riots. She told:
"I feel very sad when thinking of my future, I lost everything in terms of spiritual life and material life. Yes, I have a husband, but in name only, our emotional life is badly affected. I never have a chance to enjoy happiness and sympathy from husband after riots. I am living with (him) now but we are like strangers, he does not like my sitting out and working at tea stall, but I had to run family he can not work after riots as he has been impaired permanently, he can not sit for long he has chest infection, for which he has to be operated.

I just live with him because of my conscience. I could care for him, but he could never care for me. I never complained. He suffered a lot himself from the riot. I have stopped hoping (he) will recover and help me. The riots took everything away from my family, my wealth, my happiness, my future and my love. All the money we had earned has been spent on medical expenses. The aftermath of the riots was so severe. The effect had been devastating".

**Ranjit Kaur**

Ranjit Kaur is undergoing different kind of trauma, she is still not sure whether her husband is dead or alive. This uncertainty has proved devastating for her. Her hope continues even after so many years she narrates:

"I was staying in Sultanpuri on 1st November my husband left early in the for Ramesh Nagar (West Delhi) to meet his sister. He was not aware of the trouble outside. In West Delhi, it was quite peaceful he left on 2nd November from his sister's place for his home, but in Sultanpuri. Situation in Sultanpuri become quite violent on 1st November itself. My house was attacked and burnt but I was rescued by one my neighbours."
On 4th November my neighbour advised me to leave with military for Rani Bagh camp. He assured me that he will inform my husband

It is on 4th November evening my sister-in-law came tracing me in the camp where she told me that my husband had left Ramesh Nagar on 2nd November itself. This news had broken hell on my head, I was scared to death, still I could not imagine that he is no more, I mustered courage and started locating him. I went from one camp to another one hospital to another, one police station to another but without success. I did not any information about him. I ran from post to pillar looking from him.

I had to file application for compensation, but I did not want to write he is dead so I only applied for flat and no monetary compensation. My husband was missing and not dead. I did not know what to tell my children it was really hard time, I still some times feel that he will return like Masterji of Buniyad serial who returns after long time and is reunited in the family. I still have that little hope inside me, he might come one day”.

Laxmi Kaur

“Laxmi Kaur has become the victim of post violence phase or prolonged trauma. She had seen her husband being killed and many other relatives. Her trauma became acute when her daughter became sick after riots, her daughter came under the state of shock, laxmi tried her best to save her daughter she left no stone unturned but she could not save her daughter.
After she lost her husband, she lost her daughter, to whom she was very attached, it gave her serious blow. She had not recovered from this shock, she learnt that her in-laws have sold her Mangolpuri house and taken the money and her younger brother-in-law was processing the matter of compensation, he took the 1st instalment of Rs. 10,000 and never returned. This added to her pain. She could not get over this loss, so as she was not in proper state of mind. She did not even get job. She was given pension of Rs. 600, here agony did not end her. To claim further compensation which was due to her, this time her brother-in-law had filed case against her that she has got married, so that now they (in-laws) should get the compensation. Laxmi had to go through immense pain and humiliation in process to prove to court that she is widow and not re-married and thus should not be deprived of further compensation. She was able to prove her innocence, but in this process, she lost her mental balance and now has became permanent psychic patient”.

Rawel Kaur

“For me violence was aftermath my husband had suffered serious head injury I was busy with his treatment and as we belonged to well off family and since my husband was alive there was no point to claim compensation. There was only two thousand for injured so it was pointless running for the claim. From nursing home I shifted to my brother’s house and my house though burnt was in Nangloi, there was no point for applying for flat. My mind was too pre-occupied with my husband’s illness. I was thinking once he will be all right he can go back to his business his prolonged sickness did not give me time to think about anything else. He had suffered serious head injurious he did not get proper medical attention and for this reason his wound had
caught an infection and gangrene into it, for this he was hospitalised so many times. First during the riots and then 15 days latter he was again hospitalise this time he had lost his memory.

Deep down in his heart he was suffering from emotional crisis also which no doctor was able to understand since he was introvert and had lot of self respect, the way he was beaten up was too much for him to tolerate and our financial condition was weakening day by day. Initially we stayed with his brother but then we could notice the change in their attitude may be that pained more my husband than physical injury. After that we shifted to my brothers place he was always aware of the fact that we are going against the tradition.

In North India (Punjab) it is considered below dignity for men to live with his in-laws so internalisation of this guilt, physical weakness, sickness depression and above all no hope to live drew my husband near death. We did open up small grocery shop outside my brother’s house so that his mind will be diverted but he use to fight with everybody, his behaviour was not normal.

Kids use to laugh at him, you know our society people had no sympathy. In fact he had become laughing stock I had to be with him for twenty four hours. Once he had fallen ill, It was one year after riots. I took him to hospital there he was being treated and he was to be operated and we needed at least Rs. 10,000. I requested doctors to help me. This was first time in my life I went to senior doctor and told him about my condition. That doctor had some sympathy for me, I was exempted from payment. My condition was such that I could not leave my husband for a moment because the moment I use to leave him, he use to run away. I had to stay in hospital because no body else could control him, one day, I remember, it was very hot and I had not taken bath for two days. I requested my neighbour patient, to keep an eye,
as he was sleeping I will bathe and come in five minutes. To my astonishment when I came back he was not there. I was told my neighbour he has gone to urinate. Now I was shocked, I tried to trace him, he was lying collapsed at the other end of the building. He had given me really tough time. I was running from one hospital to another with him for one and a half years and then finally he passed away.

Since that day I am staying with my brother, I did not get any compensation, in the process I lost everything. I can not claim anything my husband expired after one and a half year. My brothers and sister-in-law are very understanding but I feel the guilt that I have become burden on them. This riot has made me permanent refugee, I am waiting for death, I know that is long wait, but there is no way out, my life came to stand still with my husband’s death”.

Minder Kaur

“My mother has never been normal since that date, she could not tolerate loss of so many family members, when we were in relief camp, she use to run away, hit people, or shout at people who use to get food but then my nani use to tell us she will be all right, she has suffered loss of so many family members that is why she behaves like that. Doctors use to come to camp give her injection, she use to sleep whole day, sometimes she use to sleep whole day and night we thought this sleep might put her mind to rest but when she use to get up again she use to behave in similar way.

When she got the cheque for Rs.10,000 she did not knew that this is cheque, she was not taking it, telling what should I do with the peace of paper. Than my Nani and aunt forced her to put thumb impression and took the cheque. As she was not in proper state of mind my grand mother ran here and there for her pension because she could not do
job, so somehow my grand mother managed pension for us and some allowances for us from gurdwara. We got this flat and shifted into it. My nani has got flat at some distance but she was the only person, who inspite of suffering so much at this old age, stood by us. I did not join school after that episode since my mother was not in a position to take care of my younger siblings. I had to cook and feed my two brothers and sisters and take care of my mother, Now her condition is better, but she still can not tolerate sight of fire and starts yelling.

Earlier we had very tough time with her, she use run away and collapse at some place, so I or my brother use to go after her. My youngest brother has suffered a lot he was only one year old, she did not take care of my brother and he was scared of mother due to her abnormal behaviour, so I had to look after him, my brother who is younger to me did go to school for sometime but he left it soon he could not concentrate on studies because environment at our house was always very tense due to my mother, so he thought of earning something so that we can seek good treatment for her. She still shouts at policemen, abuses them and whenever she sees deadbody. She stops the people and shakes dead body and tells everybody he will get up soon do not take him away he will be all right, he is sleeping so we have to be very careful, that she should not go out because children start making fun of her, otherwise she has improved a lot, we have never spoken to her about that event again. Some times she starts crying loudly we do not stop her when she is crying she stops herself”.

Harvinder Kaur

“My husband was in DTC he was senior accountant and I had never thought that there might be any threat to his life since he is government servant. I had 18 years son and another 12 years son my eighteen years old son was killed with my husband but they did not kill
my 12 years son as he is lunatic. In fact they left him saying he can not serve his mother, so what is the use killing him.

My 12 years old son who is now 25 years old was traumatised like anything, he had seen the killing of his father and brother in front of his eyes, he was mentally retarded since childhood but use to speak and walk. In fact he was improving he did not show any signs of retardedness but after the riots his mental condition detoriated, he is not able to speak and walk since that day. He is bedridden, so for me the trauma is permanent now his condition is constant reminder of the event. Though I have taken him to many doctors but he is not responding to treatment I could not take up job for this reason only. I had to manage with pension from stale and some little grant from gurdwara. I am always worried for this son who will take his care after his death?

My pain has no respite. Earlier we both husband and wife use to think that since he was responding to treatment well we will open a small outlet for him and try to make him, self dependent and then his brother was quite attached to him but now there is no hope except for my younger daughter, she is quite considerate I am depending on her for help after my death. She is the only guardian but as she is married and has own family and as custom brother do not stay with married sisters but now there is no other option. I am also worried about this son of mine that how will he lead his life after my death and this gives me bouts of worry in between".

Laxmi Kaur

Laxmi had internalised the guilt that she was responsible for her husbands death. She lives with this guilt, which has become source of permanent agony for her she said:
“I could not come to terms to the fact that my husband has been killed. When they were dragging my husband. I pleaded with mob among there were two three faces whom I could recognise I told them to leave my husband they assured me that they are not going to harm my husband they are taking him along with them to pacify mob they assured me that they will take him to safe place but my husband never returned.

We were evacuated to camp by army I use to make frequent trips to my locality, to find out whereabouts of my husband. People who had given assurances that no one can harm my husband to meet me on one pretext or another people from near by village told me that my husband was hacked to death and then burnt but I could not believe this. I had not seen his dead body, not performed the cremation, so to come to realisation that I have lost my husband was very difficult. I always regret why did I trust them I should had not sent my husband with them had fact had faced the situation there and the. At least this am responsible for my husbands death.”

Political violence/social conflict leads to change in the status of women they never get back to their old selves. The change is permanent, they become new people because they take up new place in the family structure. This new position gives them economic independence and power of decision making but creates lot of complexities in their earlier peaceful life in fact it leads to qualitative transition in their lives.

Widows at Tilak Vihar have feel that they have discovered new capabilities and skills they have develop political awareness. Sakhi Kaur can analyse and deduce and differentiate between things. She has developed political awareness and now is aware of her legal rights. She told:
"I have developed interest in national and international politics. I never used to listen to news before violence. My favourite programme on Television used to be chiter-har and Sunday movie, but after the riots I have developed keen interest for news. I watch news without fail and follow the development regarding our case with keen interest, I want to keep informed of all the development regarding our cases".

Similar killings were expressed by Burfi, who is politically also active she narrates:

“One thing is there, this life has given me lot of confidence and fearlessness now I am not scared of anybody I have no fear of police judge or minister. During these dharanas I have learnt that we widows if united have power, we can challenge these big nate's in fact we have lot of knowledge about world affairs and we watch news everyday. Now nobody can cheat us on more thing is there I do not trust now government I know I have to do or die.

Thus we can say their is qualitative change in the lives of women first they are seen as spoils of war due to sexual violence. The consequences of suspension of normal behaviour during a conflict. In conflict women suffer as an Icon of their community but in post-violence phase women who had been victimised by the men of the outer community are revictimized at the hands of their own male relatives. Rejection or devaluation of their families and wider community is one of the most fare reaching consequences for women of sexual abuse in times of conflict.

Even where the community acknowledges that they were victims of conflict and feels pity, they are seen afterwards as "damaged goods" or discarded as used goods condemned by both their own family and other community. Thus, women become victims of violence."
The other side of the picture is that women are very important for the reconstruction of the community. It is true that they witness the killing of their male members; their kith and kin are wiped out and the entire fabric of their socio-cultural existence is torn asunder. Women are left companionless and shelterless and thrown into an alien environment. However, since they hold multiple roles, they are mothers and wives, and entrusted with the responsibility torear children and care for the family. Under riot-torn conditions, when women’s emotional and material world is destroyed, they are left with additional burdens. Thus, violence and social conflict not only affect women physically but also increases their responsibilities. As the scale of ethnic and social conflict causalities has risen, both women’s suffering and their responsibilities have increased.

Women hold families and communities together. Often playing a key role in providing food and caring for the children, the elderly, and the sick. In communities which have experienced riots and where male members are massacred, it is women who become the head of the family and with this they have to step out of the four walls of their homes of the family and with this they have to step out of the four walls of their homes to provide bread to her children who are left without father. This becomes very difficult for women who had never stepped out of their house. After the riots this new role of the bread-winner when the victim has to interact with the outer world adds to her agony because survival in public domain is very difficult for women.