nation/group can be reproduced".[6]

The use of rape in war has been broadly ascribed to three motivations: the "booty principle", where the enemy's women also become a part of the spoils of the defeated and conquered territory; as a message of humiliation through the women to their men for failing to protect the former; and to promote "soldierly solidarity through male bonding".[7] Gang rape, too, has been seen as promoting cohesion within groups of men or soldiers and it has been argued that men who would not rape individually do so as part of a display within the male group, to avoid becoming an "outcast".[8]

Wartime rape has been used as a form of genetic imperialism, where the forcible impregnation through martial rape "can undermine national, political, and cultural solidarity, changing the next generation's identity, confusing the loyalties of all victimized survivors" and thus can be seen as an act of genocide. Rape in sectarian conflicts such as that which took place in Bangladesh is thus also used as a tool of ethnic cleansing in which it is used to either impregnate women in order for them to bear the "enemy's" children, or to prevent them from becoming mothers in their own communities by making them socially unacceptable or physically unable to bear children. Rape has been described as an "instrument of domestication", which "breaks the spirit, humiliates, tames, produces a docile, deferential, obedient soul" possessing only that degree of control over their bodies as allowed by men. Martial rape affects not only its immediate victims but also the men connected to the victims. It splits ties between the victims and the rest of society, while helping to form bonds between the rapists. Rape has a symbolic impact, that of dominance, not only over women but also the men who failed to protect them from their aggressors. It may also be relevant to note that martial rape is a practice defined by unwritten rules, for example, that only females are 'fair game,' that age does not matter, that soldiers who rape 'enemy women' are not to be reported for it, that anonymous publicity of it may be desirable)".[9]

Lisa Sharlach in her study on rape as genocide in Bangladesh, Bosnia and Rwanda, attributes this to the signification of women as symbols of honour in their role as "mothers of the nation and transmitters of culture" in some communities, which then stigmatise rape victims/survivors even more for the dishonour brought upon themselves and the community. The actual rape is followed by a "second rape", in the ostracism of the women from those communities and their own families where they become pariahs.[10]

Feminist analysis of gender violence during war does not differentiate between it and gender violence in other contexts. Sexual violence is seen as a deliberate strategy in war and political repression by the state is connected to sexual violence in all other contexts. In the context of armed conflict, already existing attitudes and behaviours, by which violence against women is justified, are just intensified. Nothing changes in wartime except that the violence increases and is public for the community and world to see and that "the limited protections available to women and implicit toleration [during times of peace] are replaced by condoning and even an outright policy of sexual violence".[11]

Bangladesh's *Birangona*

Almost immediately after victory was gained, in the newly independent state of Bangladesh, the state awarded the women who were raped during the war with the title of "*Birangona*", meaning "war heroine". Rehabilitation centres were set up to provide medical aid to the women including treatment for diseases and abortion of unwanted pregnancies, and, following that, socio-economic support. Under the latter schemes, the women were provided with training which would enable them to make a living on their own. Also, a marry-off campaign was lodged which encouraged Bangladeshi men to come forward and marry the rape victims and the war babies were put up for adoption by foreigners.

Anuradha Chenoy, in her article on women in South Asian conflict zones, describes the tendency to "rehabilitate men and cover up the abuse of women" after war. She cites Amena Mohsin's concept of the gendered nation and gendered peace where power valorises masculinity.[12] Indeed, while the sacrifices of male freedom fighters have been glorified in Bangladesh, little is said on women's contribution to the struggle for independence, not to mention the crimes committed against women during the nine months of war. Despite naming the women "war heroines", it is men who were honoured, while women who were violated in wartime were largely rejected by society in peacetime, even by their own families, because of the social stigma associated with rape. Children resulting from these rapes were also