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## **Evolving Role of Women in Terror Groups: Progression or Regression?**

S.V. Raghavan<sup>1</sup>, V. Balasubramaniyan<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

Historically, women have been victims to a much greater degree than perpetrators of violence. However, the 1970s witnessed the emergence of women as important protagonists in the conflicts across the world. Recent years have witnessed suicide attacks perpetrated by women suicide bombers. This growing trend of women bombers has the general public and counterterrorism specialists concerned because of its implication that women will be key players in future terrorist attacks.

Women's role in terrorist organisations have also transformed since 1970s. Women across the ideological spectrum played different roles at different times. The use of women for "soft tasks" like logistics and recruitment gradually started to change in the mid-1980s when they started playing a much more visible frontline role. A woman taking up a suicide bombing role diverges significantly and is far more dangerous than their traditional activity of playing logisticians, recruiters or even a frontline role. This paper scrutinizes this change.

There are multi causal issues which drive women to join terrorism and more so as suicide bombers. Psychological, economic, political, religious and sociological factors can act as contributors to understanding the causes that drive women towards terrorism.

This paper attempts to highlight the role played by women in various terrorist organisations around the world. It also tries to bring out the factors which influence women to participate in terrorist acts. It aims to bring out the above facts by analysing various groups which have women cadre. Previous studies in the same realm have focused on a particular group or a conflict whereas this paper attempts to examine female participation across multiple conflicts in different groups driven by different ideology, which provides a clear insight into the multi causal factors which are responsible for this trend. The methodology followed is a descriptive one wherein the analysis is conducted on information derived from published secondary data.

*Key Words:* Women Terrorism, Terrorism, Women Suicide Bombers.

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## Introduction

Historical references to women as a terrorists are quite limited. There are instances where women have been known to be involved in criminal activities but a woman entering the field of terrorism is a recent phenomenon which, from documented records should not be more than half a century old. Women terrorists have been and are part of various terror groups around the world. Terrorists groups, regardless of their ideology employ women as suicide bombers, assassins and as frontline fighters, besides the traditional, docile role of messengers, councilors. Their roles have been transformed from playing the original “soft role” of being logisticians to a more “hardcore” role of brutal killers.

It is observed (Herrera & Porch, 2008: Wang, 2011: Gunawardena, 2006: Khan, 2006: Becker, 1981: Alcott) that diverse causes such as ideological, political, social, psychological, religious and inherent systemic causes compel women to become terrorists. In order to understand the factors that drive women to take up terrorism, it is imperative that we understand the role played by women and the subsequent transformations witnessed thereon. These transitions can act as significant indicators to the policy planners as well as feminist scholars on the evolving nature and importance of women within terror groups as well as the larger society there are part of.

**Table 1: Major Terrorists Groups with Women Members, 1960-2010**

Name and Country	Ideology	Inception year of group (Armed struggle)	Women participation indicative year	Original Role	Women's role at later stages	Role Change indicative year
Harakat al Tahrir al-Watani al Filastini (FATAH)- Palestine	Religious-Fundamentalist	1959		Logistician, Recruiters	Suicide bombers	2002 <sup>1</sup>
Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)- Spain	Ethno Nationalist	1959	1965-70	Logistician, Executive members, Frontline roles <sup>2</sup>	More Prominent Frontline roles	1980-90
Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)- Colombia	Leftwing Extremism (LWE)	1964	1964	Frontline roles	Intelligence gathering, Frontline operational roles, leaders of Units <sup>3</sup>	1985 <sup>4</sup>
Maoists- India	Leftwing Extremism (LWE)	1968	1968-70 <sup>5</sup>	Logisticians propaganda, Frontline roles	Frontline operational roles, leaders of Units	1975-80 <sup>6</sup>

Popular Front for liberation of Palestine (PFLP)- Palestine	Leftwing Extremism (LWE)	1967	1969	Frontline roles <sup>7</sup>		
Baader Meinhoff- Red Army Faction(RAF)- Germany	Leftwing Extremism (LWE)	1970	1970	Leadership, Propaganda, Frontline roles		
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)- Srilanka	Ethno Nationalist	1976	1983	Logisticians	Frontline roles, suicide bombers, Leadership roles <sup>8</sup>	1987-90 <sup>9</sup>
Shinning Path- Peru	Leftwing Extremism (LWE)	1980	1980	Frontline roles	Frontline roles	
Lords Resistance Army(LRA)- Uganda	Religious-Fundamentalist	1980	1987	Logisticians Intelligence gathering, Frontline roles	Logistical, Intelligence gathering, Frontline roles for fighters <sup>10</sup>	
Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK)-Turkey	Ethno Nationalist	1984	1987 <sup>11</sup>	Frontline roles	Suicide Bombers	1996 <sup>12</sup>
Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (HAMAS)- Palestine	Religious-Fundamentalist	1987		Logisticians Recruitment	Suicide bombers	2004 <sup>13</sup>
Chechen separatists- Chechnya	Religious-Fundamentalist	1994		Logisticians	Suicide bombers	2000 <sup>14</sup>
Al Qaeda affiliated Iraqi Insurgency	Religious-Fundamentalist	2003	2004 <sup>15</sup>	Suicide Bombers	Suicide Bombers	

*Source: Compiled by the authors from different sources as listed in the notes (1-15)*

Table 1 depicts the role of women members in various terror groups. The role played by women prior to 1980s was more of a supporting role like managing logistics and recruitment but the same changed to active participation into combat roles, more so as suicide bombers in the later part. The period-wise depiction in the table enables us to understand the prominence given to women in different terrorist organisations at different points of time.

Communist groups treated women on equal footing with the male members. Prior to the 1980s, women revolutionaries like Ulrike Meinhoff of the Baader Meinhoff gang and Fusako Shigenobu of Japanese Red Army (JRA) had assumed leadership roles in groups which followed

communist ideology. FARC, Shining Path also had women members though represented initially in small numbers driving the concept of women's emancipation. It is believed that the female participation in FARC which had only two female fighters in the initial stages increased to 30-40% of the group's combat force during later years, while 50% of Peru's Shining Path fighting force was made up by women (Graham, 2008 p. 210). Majority of them took part in the armed struggle actively donning frontline roles.

Nationalist groups like Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) also started harnessing the power of women. ETA female membership slowly but steadily started to climb during 1970-1980. Their role varied from collaboration to direct military activity (Hamilton, 2007:135). The LTTE on the other hand started recruiting women in mid 1980s for direct operational roles and started using them as suicide bombers in the early 1990s. It is estimated that a 30-40% of LTTE recruits were women (Government of Sri Lanka).

On the other hand, the transformation or change in the role of women is more pronounced in religious groups. Religious movements during their infancy phase, had relegated women to supporting roles. As a result, any change from supporting roles to active frontline roles became more pronounced in religious groups. The late 1990s and beyond, witnessed women playing a greater role in war fronts in these groups. The concept of using women for operational frontline roles and later for suicide bombings was first observed during this period in religious groups. Secular groups followed by religious groups started using women as suicide bombers (O'Rourke, 2009: 685). The Chechen separatists in the late 1990s started using women for frontline duties and more so as suicide bombers. It can be observed that the Islamic religious groups in Palestine, more or less started using women as suicide bombers from 2002 which came 15 months after the second *Intifada*.<sup>16</sup>

This transformation from a "backstage" role to a more dangerous "frontline" role runs concomitant to the degree of transformation witnessed in the nature of internal conflicts. The nature of conflicts morphed to a more asymmetrical and unconventional approach from a conventional one. According to Hulan, "The rise of women as suicide terrorists did not happen instantaneously, but women arrived onto the stage of conflict in successive waves" (Hulan, 2011). The gradual but steady rise of women suicide bombers also points to the fact that nation states failed to predict the emergence of women suicide bombers. This failure helped terror groups to use women suicide bombers with deadly effect.

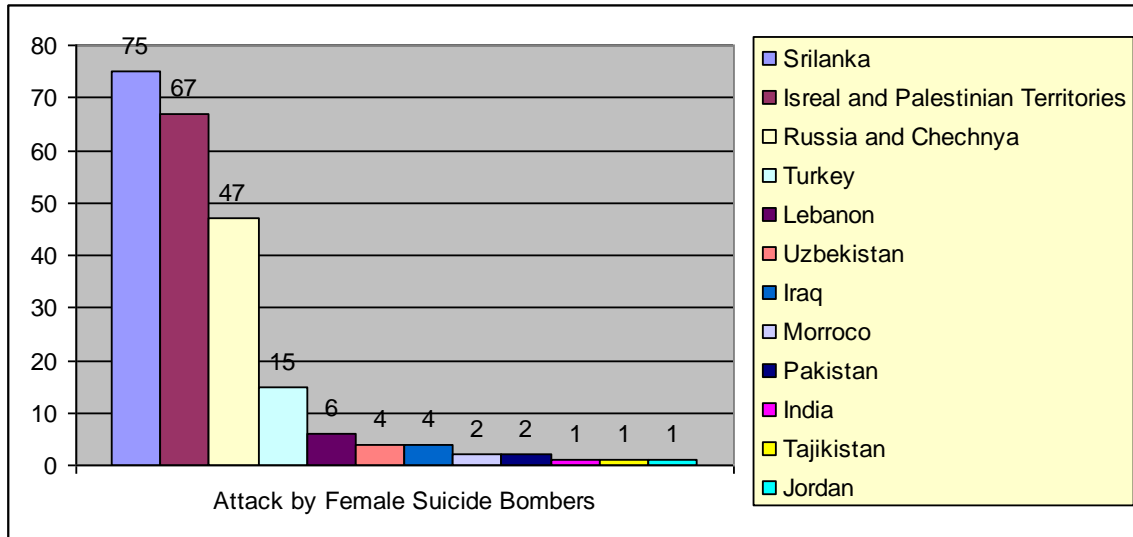
### **Women as Suicide Bombers**

"The secular Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP/PPS) despatched the first female suicide bomber, Sana Mekhaidali, dubbed as "The bride of the south" in 1985 who successfully targeted an Israeli Defense Force convoy in Lebanon, killing five soldiers" (Schweitzer, 2006a:7). Other groups from different ideologies followed suit. Ethno nationalist group LTTE, which had women in its ranks at that time, started its suicide squad unit known as the "Black Tigers" consisting of women in its ranks. The former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed in a suicide bomb attack by a woman suicide bomber named Thenmozhi Rajaratnam popularly known by her nom de guerre<sup>17</sup> "Dhanu".

In the late 1990s and in the early 2000s, more groups started using women for frontline duties and more so as suicide bombers (Davis, 2006:2; Schweitzer, 2006a:7). Even religious groups which were hesitant to use women for frontline duties started using them for suicide bombings which goes to prove the effectiveness of women as suicide bombers. The following

figure (see Fig. 1) depicts the number of suicide attacks carried out by terror outfits with women suicide bombers in target areas.

**Figure 1: Female Suicide Bombers, by Targeted Areas, 1985-2006**



Source: Schweitzer, Y. (2006a).

Nationalist groups like LTTE were the main benefactor of using women suicide bombers. Groups which primarily used women for suicide bombings were the religious fundamentalist groups of Palestine and Chechnya. At this juncture, it is imperative to note that, communists groups like the Maoists in India, Nepal also deployed women for only frontline duties but not as suicide bombers. They were deployed as guerilla fighters. Women suicide bomb attacks were rising and mostly successful, so was the demand and need to recruit more and more women.

### Terror Groups' Need for Women Cadres as Suicide Bombers

*“The fact that a woman took part for the first time in a Hamas operation marks a significant evolution for the Iz a Din al-Kassam brigades<sup>18</sup>. Male fighters face many obstacles on their way to operations, and this is a new development in our fight against the enemy. The Holy War is an imperative for all Muslim men and women.”<sup>19</sup>*

The statement was made by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (the spiritual leader of HAMAS) on January 14, 2004 after the first suicide bombing by a women suicide bomber. The very same leader had denounced the use of female suicide bombers in 2002 when FATAH used a female suicide bomber (Regular, 2004). But as is evident, there has been a complete volte face in his stance like many other Islamic Palestinian groups which had refrained from using women for frontline role during the first *Intifada* which began in the mid-1980s.

This volte face indicates that women play an indispensable part in the terror groups. The concept of women suicide bombers has earned widespread acceptance among the terrorist

communities (Hulan, 2011:17). Following are the factors which contributed to the rise of women as suicide bombers.

- Operational advantage
- Greater Publicity
- Increased recruitment
- Competition among terrorists groups in the same space.

Firstly, people would be hesitant to search a woman. They also arouse less suspicion which enables them go past hurdles easily. This gives a better probability of conducting the operations successfully as compared to their male counterparts. However, this advantage would be lost once a set pattern is established that women are increasingly used as suicide bombers which would subject women to increased physical scrutiny. However, in countries like India and Arab states constituted by traditional and cultural values, searching women could still pose some problems. For instance, in the Indian subcontinent, though there were prior incidents involving women suicide bombers in the early 1990s (Rajiv Gandhi assassination by LTTE), yet for some unknown reasons, the Srilankan government was not able to stop LTTE suicide bombers even in late 1990s (assassination attempt on Srilankan president Chandrika Kumaratunga in 1999). This however, could be attributed to a prejudiced and skewed opinion on women's abilities and motivations which is inherent in traditional patriarchal societies. The traditional clothing or the attire like *Burqa* or a *Saree* worn by women bombers in countries like India and the Arab states help them conceal more explosives (O'Rourke, 2009) which give them an edge over their male counterparts. Using female suicide bombers provides an element of surprise. In the current scenario of asymmetrical warfare, element of surprise is the key between a success and failure. Female suicide bombers provide that element of surprise.

As a result, the effectiveness of the women suicide attacks is much more lethal compared to their male counterparts. The average number of casualty per attack perpetrated by women suicide bombers has been measured at 8.4 victims compared to 5.3 per attack by male members (O'Rourke, 2009:687) A study conducted by O'Rourke on five terrorists groups (The Lebanese groups and the Palestinian groups, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Chechen separatists) and role of women suicide terrorists reveal that they are more effective than men. According to O'Rourke (2009), the suicide attacks by LTTE women cadres is the most effective claiming 12.1 victims per attack. It is interesting to observe that the LTTE is the first group that perfected the use of suicide vests worn by women suicide bombers which would make them appear as if the women is pregnant.

In all the above societies where these groups operate, women have been the suppressed lot. The traditional culture and male dominated society relegates women to a lower social status level compared to their male members. Hence, this leads them to being oblivious in the eyes of the society, thereby, ruling them out of suspicion which in turn contributes to the element of surprise. "The ability to gain the advantage by achieving surprise is what contributes to their effectiveness and why women continue to be employed to carry out suicide missions" (Hulan, 2011:19).

The assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is a classic example of the above as the suicide bomber Dhanu under the pretext of garlanding him, detonated the belt bomb. A woman police sub-inspector who had stopped the suicide bomber from approaching Mr. Rajiv Gandhi seconds before his death, was stopped by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi himself stating "Relax, baby" which helped

Dhanu move closer to her target (The Outlook, 2005). This incident proves that women suicide bombers have the knack, stealth and sagacity to achieve their mission with relative ease than their male counterparts.

Women suicide bombers have become the de facto “Brand Ambassadors” for their associated group. A women suicide attack attracts widespread media attention for the incident and the group as well which could instill fear among the population and also act as a recruitment drive. In Palestinian conflicts, women suicide bombers are given more media attention than their male counterparts (Issacharoff, 2006:43). Terrorists are intelligent enough to use media particularly the Western media to highlight their terror acts committed by women suicide bombers (Pierce, 2011:60). Employing women suicide bombers in traditional societies where gender specific norms are prevalent helps generate widespread media coverage and sympathy for the group (O’Rourke, 2009:689). Pierce (2011) argues that without the media coverage of the terrorist acts, the terrorists will not be able to create an all round impact.

Women suicide bombers are meant to increase the popular support base of the terror group. The cause of the group would appear genuine or more acceptable to a fence-sitter or a mild sympathizer, if women were to play a suicidal role in a terror group. LTTE’s and FARC’s survival have been attributed to the influx of women in its ranks. (Hulan, 2011:2; Hudson, 1999:107). The PKK recruited women to undermine the state and project the military as ruthless despots (Zehni, 2008:38).

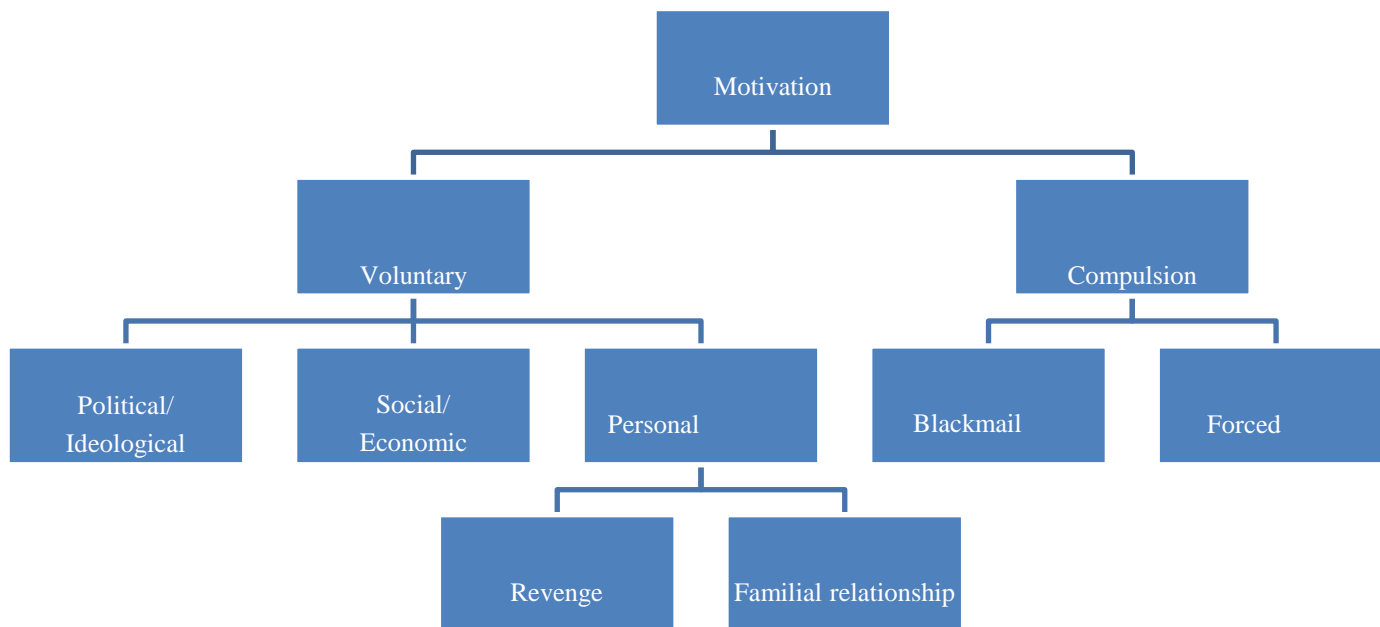
On account of these factors, the need for women suicide bombers had gone up and there is race among the various groups who are fighting in the same space and for the same cause. A classic example would be FATAH’s suicide bomber attack in 2002 which was denounced by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (the spiritual leader of the rival HAMAS). In 2004, realising the advantages of having female suicide bombers and for the fear of losing out to rivals, forced HAMAS to change its stance and launch its first female suicide attack. The Sheikh Ahmed Yassin showered praises on that incident. Hence, peer pressure among terror groups also drives these groups to look out for female suicide bombers. It is believed that popular reaction from Palestinian population forced groups to change their doctrines of not employing women suicide bombers (Freidman 2008:51). At the end of the day, it is the woman who decides to join a particular group and she does so either voluntarily or because of compulsions.

### **Motivation to Become a Suicide Bomber**

Historical studies have quoted political or ideological factors as the primary motivation for women joining terror groups. During the 1970s, as is evident from Table 1, groups with left wing ideology had women members whose main objective was for a political change by violent means. Therefore, it is natural for any member including the women members to be driven by a political ideology. Women members in all these groups donned frontline roles. On the other hand, instances of women becoming suicide bombers belonging to either religious groups or nationalists are a recent phenomenon. A woman taking up suicide bombing role is a far divergent and more dangerous one from their traditional activity of playing logisticians, recruiters or even a frontline role. It is that observed that women enlist in rebellions for multiple reasons like ideology, tribal or family solidarity, friendship, a desire for change, or are compelled to serve against their will (Herrera & Porch, 2008). While the women suicide bombers in Chechnya known as “Black Widows” have taken up suicide bombing to avenge their husband’s death, the women suicide bombers in SriLanka’s LTTE have been driven by multiple reasons like fear of



being tortured and victimised, a sense of women’s emancipation, nationalist beliefs, revenge and familial connections (Wang, 2011).Hence, the motivational drive need not be the same in different groups across the entire spectrum. In order to understand the factors which motivate, drive and transform women as suicide bombers in groups where they have served earlier much softer and safer roles is represented in the following figure (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2: Motivational Factors for Women to Become Suicide Bombers**

Contemporary terrorism in the 1970s which was mostly driven by leftwing ideology attracted its members who were like-minded. This holds good for women members also. Gudrun Ensslin and Ulrike Meinhoff were active players in the socialist and communist circles. Gudrun Ensslin was an active member of the Socialist Students Union (SDS) before coming into RAF, whereas, Meinhoff was editor-in-chief of a Hamburg periodical run by her communist husband and financed by East Germans communists (Becker, 1981:127,129). Many of the Arab women suicide bombers who had failed and were captured claimed in interviews that they were driven by the desire to oust Israel from its occupied territories and propagate nationalist messages (Schweitzer, 2006b: 39) For women in Islamic groups that participate in Jihad, protection of the nation became an extension of protecting the home and family (Dearing, 2009: 66). In case of the Chechen “Black Widows”, it was also for a noble cause aimed at Chechnya’s independence (Alcott).

Apart from performing the role of a suicide bomber, women have also adopted softer roles. Indian women have joined Maoists ranks for ideological reasons aimed for political and leadership change though no cases of Maoist suicide bombing have been reported till date (Khan, 2006).A group named Dukhtaran-e-Millat (DeM) consisting fully of women members has been

active in India's Kashmir playing a supporting role in the religious militancy (Srivastava, 2003) aimed at gaining independence from India.

Social causes strongly motivate women to take up frontline roles. Women cadre in the LTTE which has a significant numbers of women, including suicide bombers, stated that they joined LTTE to get freedom from cultural restrictions placed on women by the Government of Sri Lanka. The LTTE, it was felt, gave them a sense of liberation, the reason they are referred to as "Freedom Birds" (Gunawardena, 2006). LTTE recruited women cadres on an equal footing with men, and since both men and women were trained and treated alike, there arose with the cadres, the concept of gender equality. Women members of The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) joined the outfit for attaining emancipation. Women's liberation is one of the main narratives for liberation of Kurdistan (Dryaz).

It is possible that economic conditions also push women towards playing frontline roles and a chance for them to escape poverty and ensure financial stability. Women members of FARC joined the outfit for attaining financial stability (Graham, 2008: 207). FARC offered US \$ 350 as salary for women members which was more compared to the US \$ 250 salary offered to Colombian army conscripts (Hudson 1999:106).

Revenge is perhaps the strongest motivator for a woman to take up the role of a suicide bomber. The desire to avenge either personal suffering or loss of family can be a prime cause. In many cases, such deviant women are victims of rape, physical abuse and torture. Chechnya's "Black Widows" are a prime example for this phenomenon. Women who have lost their husbands in the civil war have conducted suicide attacks to exact revenge for their husbands' death (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006). Widowhood in traditional societies like the ones in Chechnya will sever women from the open society thus leaving them unproductive (Bloom: 128).

Familial links play an important part in women pursuing terrorism. There are two variants under this aspect. The first one is about women taking to terrorism by the virtue of their familial association with male terrorists members who could be their husbands, fathers and brothers. There are instances of women Maoists in India getting married to male members of the same outfit. This familial relation also ensures that women have to necessarily lead an underground life. Women leading underground life will slowly move up the ranks to participate in frontline operations (Deshpande, 2009). It is also established that women members of the Spanish ETA came in contact with the group through friends and family members (Hamilton, 2007:136). On the other hand, the more compelling variant of women taking to terrorism is to seek revenge for their slain family members. For instance, women cadres (black widows) of Chechen separatists are spouses of slain male members.

Coercive measures like emotional blackmail or forced recruitment are also main reasons behind women joining suicide ranks. There are reports of forced recruitment of women in terror organisations around the world. LTTE reportedly forced women to don frontline roles (South Asia Terrorism Portal). Ethnic conflicts like that in Sri Lanka can force women to take up fighting for fear of falling victim to either of the warring parties.

Emotional blackmail has been followed by Palestinian recruiters to coerce women into terrorism. It is reported that a young woman was coerced and blackmailed into suicide terrorism after she became involved in an illicit affair (Israeli Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2002a). To avoid social stigma, young women, often victims of rape and exploitation are blackmailed into suicide bombing roles. It is also believed that, deliberate attempts to seduce young women and blackmail them later are currently in practice (Israeli Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2002a). To avoid exposure

and to avoid being a social outlaw within their society, these victimised souls commit to the unthinkable.

## **Conclusion**

Late 2000s witnessed increased women suicide bombings in Iraq perpetrated by Al Qaeda linked groups (Niva, 2008). While some scholars argue that lack of female emancipation, religious intolerance in conservative societies like Afghanistan would not be conducive for growth of women suicide bombers at a faster pace (Dearing, 2009; Reuter, 2011), conservative regions in Iraq have already contributed women suicide bombers (Eisenstadt & White, 2005: 8). This growing trend of using women suicide bombers in asymmetrical warfare should be a cause of concern for strategic planners as the use of women for suicide bombings is likely to increase in future (Sutten, 2008:20 ; Zedalis,2004:17)

To conclude, women take to terrorism due to various factors like economic, political, psychological and social issues. The same differs from groups with different ideological ilk. While majority in LTTE joined for a nationalist cause, women in religious groups like the ones in Chechnya joined due to personal factors. Notwithstanding the above factors, terror groups and the society they live in across the spectrum have exploited women and coerced women to take up arms.

It would also come as a surprise to many that women members in terror groups of male dominated or male chauvinistic societies like in Palestine, India and Sri Lanka enjoy better standing over the male members in terror groups and at the same time are better off than their female counterparts in the civil society. The irony is that, most of the time, it is the male domination in societies that drives women to join the ranks of terrorists and move further as suicide bombers. While gender equality is a factor for a normal women cadre in terror organisations, to analyse the reasons for transformation in playing the role of a suicide bomber from a soft role can be quite a conundrum which has got more to do with the individual thought process of the women members.

Regardless of the gender imbalances in some terror groups, women have equaled or in some cases, outperformed men in terror groups (O'Rourke, 2009: 15). It is also observed that gender equality in some terror organisation is as complete as in any developed country of the world. May be this is the only redeeming feature in the role of women in terror groups. Terror groups have realised the importance of women and given them their pride of place. Nation states fighting terrorism should understand and learn from the self centered broadmindedness of terror groups, though used for negative purposes, in understanding the importance of women in our societies. One useful lesson imparted by terror groups to normal societies is that

### **Violence against women in conflict zones leads to violent social movements driven by women.**

It is this victimisation of women which has been exploited by terrorists to their advantage. For instance, the membership of Maoists in India is skewed in favour of women compared to their male counterparts who outnumber them in the ratio of 3:2. So much so that, most of the members of the decision making authority called Central Committee (a collective decision making group of key Maoists leaders) are protected by women cadres only. In Srilanka, the participation of women LTTE members known as "freedom birds", in frontline duties has been symbolic of their

liberation from their stereotype roles. These women cadres who constitute approximately 30 percent of the total LTTE membership, are trained equally like their male counterparts and mount separate all women operations against Srilankan army formations. This emancipation has in some way erased the caste barriers prevalent in Srilanka. However, this is the most worrying factor as the facts demonstrate that more and more women increasingly participate in acts of terrorism in patriarchal societies compared to western social system. This certainly points to the psyche and mindset prevalent in such societies where there is a bias against women's ability and drive.

The equal footing in terror groups for women has not changed anything for normal women in civil societies. The transformation or progression of role of women witnessed in a terror group from a backstage player to a pivotal game changer though looks quite appealing to certain sections who advocate women's emancipation; it actually points to the fact that more and more women are used as expendable assets to serve terrorists group nefarious agenda. This particular tribe of women who become expendable assets are a by-product of gender specific norms prevalent in traditional societies complemented negatively with their personal issues. Paradoxically, these are the same issues some of the terror groups claim to fight. Some consider the alleviation of women in modern terrorist groups as a progression of their presence and their position in that organisation. However, their role as suicide bombers where they transform themselves from home makers to home breakers, slots them in the path of regression in the eyes of the larger society. In the end, women suicide bombers make a tremendous statement by their misdeeds, communicating the issues and problems which drive them to their suicidal end.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Regular, A.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton, C.

<sup>3</sup> Graham, S.

<sup>4</sup> Herrera, and Porch, D.

<sup>5</sup> In the shining path of struggles and sacrifices Women Martyrs.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003b)

<sup>8</sup> Gunawardena, A.

<sup>9</sup> Gunawardena, A.

<sup>10</sup> Graham, S.

<sup>11</sup> Dryaz, M. S.

<sup>12</sup> Ozcinar, Z.

<sup>13</sup> Regular, A.

<sup>14</sup> Speckhard, A and Akhmedova, K.

<sup>15</sup> Davis, J.

<sup>16</sup> The first *Intifada* is a Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories from December 1987 to 1993. The second *Intifada* is a period of intensified Israeli–Palestinian violence, which began in late September 2000 and ended around 2005

<sup>17</sup> *Nom de guerre* – a war name used by terror groups

<sup>18</sup> Military wing of HAMAS

<sup>19</sup> Regular, A.

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