EXTREMISM AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH ASIA

POLITICO-RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN SRI LANKA

Shyamika Jayasundara-Smits

2022

Politico-Religious Extremism and Violence against Women in Sri Lanka
by
Shyamika Jayasundara-Smits
2022

Shyamika Jayasundara-Smits is an Assistant Professor in Conflict and Peace Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Her main areas of research and teaching are on the inter-connections of Governance, Development, Violent Conflicts, Armed violence and Peace(building). South Asia, Europe and Sri Lanka are her main geographical areas of specialization.

Copy-editor: Bhavini Pant

POLITICO-RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN SRI LANKA

Shyamika Jayasundara-Smits

Despite enacting progressive national policies and becoming a signatory to numerous international conventions aimed at eliminating gender-based violence[1], recent reports and official statistics[2] confirm the steady increase of gender-based violence, especially violence against women in "post-war" Sri Lanka.

The evolving nature of politics around Sri Lanka's state-building process has generated dialectical relationships with its minorities—Tamils and Muslims. These relationships are partially enacted through gender violence which takes many forms—from physical and sexual violence to a national misogynistic polemic. Successive encounters further deteriorate these relationships, enhancing impunity and making violence more likely.

According to several reports, violence against women is increasing in "post-war" Sri Lanka[3]. Sri Lanka conducted the first official survey on women's wellbeing in 2018. The survey identified violence as "one of the most pervasive human rights violations that impacts the progression and wellbeing of women and girls." The survey found that one in four Sri Lankan women (24.9%) have experienced physical and sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner, and that two in every five women (39.8%) have suffered physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence including controlling behaviour by a partner. The upward trend of violence against women and girls has become more prominent in the estate sector, where one-third of women (37.9%) have experienced physical forms of violence during their lifetime.

The results reveal that the experience of violence varies across geographical locations and ethno-religious identities. According to recent studies, the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019[4] played an added role in escalating violence against women, further dragging down their quality of life and wellbeing[5].

Numerous studies investigating the causes of violence often bring our attention to local social and cultural norms[6]. Underlying patriarchal systems are responsible for exposing women to specific vulnerabilities and forms of violence such as kidnapping and sexual abuse.[7] However, these studies fall short of providing a deeper analysis of non-normative foundations. They do not illustrate the complex interaction of normative and political forces which underpins both visible and invisible forms of violence against women.

I consider the period of 2009 until date as a continuation of pre-war and wartime dynamics. In Sri Lanka, this 13-year period is now considered to be the "post-war" period. In this study, I have focused mainly on the "post-war" period.

The choice to focus on the "post-war" period is motivated by two factors. First, it highlights the most recent developments regarding violence against women in Sri Lanka. Second, it takes account of the rise of religious extremism and populist autocratic politics since the "end" of the war. Situating violence against women in the Sri Lankan context during the "post-war" period is an important choice: it reveals how feminist scholars—investigating the intersection of war, violence

and women's experiences—have consciously translated entrenched effects of past wars into the "post-war" period[8].

These studies have been useful to draw attention to specific structures, practices and effect of the war which have resulted in violence against women. Some examples of these are state and societal militarisation, war economies, (re)producing hegemonic, military masculinities and ensuring vulnerable subaltern femininities.

The rise and effects of religious extremists in the "post-war" period has been studied extensively, especially the contribution of religious extremists to "post-war" political dynamics (Holt 2016).[9] To conclude, the study hopes to illuminate how visible and invisible forms of violence against women within and outside their homes—inflicted by their family, the state and at a global scale—are intimately connected to specific political shifts observed in "post-war" Sri Lanka.[10]

SOURCES, METHODS AND ORGANISATION

This study mainly draws on secondary data gathered through desk-based research. They constitute both academic and grey literature. Grey literature includes reports and studies undertaken by international and local civil society organisations on violence against women and extremism. Where necessary, textual data is complemented with visual data gathered from newspaper reports on "post-war" communal violence. Publicly accessible Facebook pages of extremist Buddhist, nationalist organisations and citizen-journalist websites were also consulted.

Quantitative data from the Women's Wellbeing Survey 2018 and official statistics from the Sri Lankan Police Department were used to verify claims of increasing violence against women and to understand their nature. This material is complemented by my scholarly observations on the dynamics and challenges of Sri Lanka's state-building process, especially in the "post-war" period. I have used data from 20 semi-structured interviews of political and civil society experts and activists on the issue. The interviewees are Colombo-based, and the interviews were conducted in the second half of 2019 for another research project examining radicalisation and violent extremism in "post-war" Sri Lanka. That project received funding from Erasmus University, Rotterdam[11].

Although this study is concerned with Sri Lanka, I also consulted relevant global academic literature. This exercise helped to contextualise and identify convergences and divergences of violence against women across countries.

The rest of the study is organised broadly into two sections. The first part conceptually clarifies violence against women and religious extremism. The status of women, violence against women and women's empowerment in the post-independence period are reviewed. The next section discusses how violence against women and religious extremism are linked by drawing attention to their connecting mechanisms. This section considers Sri Lankan women from three different ethnic identity groups, and explores how religious extremists have factored in their identity to decide relevant strategies and positions of attack. The concluding section offers key findings which point to a larger picture of violence against women and its connection to politico-religious extremism in Sri Lanka.

DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXT

Extremism

In this paper, I apply the term "extremism" as a political term. Extremism is the behaviour or beliefs of people who try to bring about political change by using violent or extreme methods that are not in accordance with norms of the state, society and existing social order or are fully intolerant toward others.[12] Following this broad definition, I define religious extremism as a sub-category of political extremism, as a belief system that justifies structural violence against relevant out-groups, becoming an acute form of fundamentalism.[13]

In most cases, religious fundamentalism arises as a reaction to a "secular state" seeking to "secularize and delimit the domain of the sacred" but also as a response to seemingly more assertive and competing "religions and/or ethnic groups"[14]. Despite this, there are similarities in religious extremism in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Understanding how religious extremism works in Sri Lanka requires close attention to specific actors of violence, their targets, forms of violence, motivations and their justifications for using religion as a form of political extremism.

Violence against Women

I apply the term "violence against women" to capture both direct and indirect forms of violence women are subjected to. I have assumed that both forms of violence share structural roots—that they are codified and expressed in power relations in the state, society, economy and politics—and that they mutually reinforce each other[15]. Deeply ingrained sexism, internalised misogyny and patriarchal views prevalent in Sri Lankan society are one of the many forms of violence against women.[16]

Further, this study deploys the term "violence against women" mainly from an intersectional, feminist perspective.[17] This intersectional view of violence helps to investigate how different forms of violence are enabled by the state's practices, and the circumstances in which they have emerged, become salient or even silenced—a highly relevant point to remember in the case of Sri Lanka.[18]

The Sri Lankan Context

Development and the Post-colonial State

Until the end of the 1970s, Sri Lanka was hailed as a model democracy among former British colonies. At the heart of this achievement lay the state's continued commitment towards social welfare which ran for three decades after winning independence in 1948. During this period, Sri Lanka implemented economic, health, education and food security policies which treated women and men equally. These policies were able to rectify some of the tensions and disadvantages brought on by dominant patriarchal values in Sri Lankan society and British colonial administration laws.[19]

One notable example was that the state made secondary and higher education available to all for free. As a result, in the 1960s, girls comprised more than half of all enrolments to senior secondary school. Compared to South Asia, Sri Lankan women were financially secure, enjoyed a high life expectancy (74 years), near-universal literacy and access to economic opportunities.[20] The aggregated outcome of such state policies was captured in the Human Development Index. Sri Lanka's impressive socio-economic achievements earned it the reputation of being an egalitarian society.

Sri Lankan women have been active participants in electoral politics since universal franchise was instituted in 1931. Jayawardena noted that although their participation as

candidates was limited, since the 1950s, women in Leftist parties began gradually increasing their presence.[21]

Cutting across class divides, both middle- and upper-class women took active part in politics. Women exercised political agency through organisations such as Women's Political Union and All Ceylon Women's Conference. In the 1950s and 60s, these women provided leadership to their comrades in regional political networks as well. In 1960, women's political activism and agency culminated with the appointment of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the first woman in the world to lead a government.

From the mid-1970s, however, this scenario began to change. In 1977, President Jayewardene introduced policies favouring a market-led, open economy. As noted in official reports, these economic policies were gender-blind; their passage marked the overt manifestation of violence against women in multiple directions—economy, politics, society and culture. President Jayewardene's economic liberalisation policies went hand-in-hand with widespread socialisation of patriarchal and masculinist values, leading to inequitable division of labour and worsening gender relations.[22]

In the 1980s and 90s, as part of the "good governance" agenda adopted toward developing countries, international financial institutions imposed external policies on Sri Lanka which progressively dismantled egalitarian social policies of the previous era. The previous era had kept violence against women—especially in structural forms—at bay. In Jayaweera's words, "in a low-income country with blatant socio-economic disparities, there is no level playing field as assumed by myopic experts and some members of the local elite".[23] Rolling out liberal economic policies in place of welfare policies manifested violently on marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities and women.

War and Violence against Women

Sri Lanka's civil war between Sri Lankan armed forces and Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam (LTTE) exacerbated the dangerous situation of women and ethnic minorities. This was particularly acute between 1983 (official beginning of the civil war) and May 2009, when the Sri Lankan army defeated the LTTE. The double blows dealt by the widespread civil war and liberal economic policies viz-a-viz rapid globalisation were keenly felt by ethnic minorities and women.[24]

Under the civil war and increasing militarisation, violence affected women's lives in many ways.[25] There was a stark increase in households led by Tamil and Muslim women in North and East Sri Lanka, where the civil war was at its worse.[26] The state neglected to address basic needs or provide any form of social or physical protection, leaving "war widows" to fend for themselves.

While much has been written about violence against Tamil women and their shared victimhood, Tamil women's empowerment and agency resulting from the conflict has been explored as well. One example was Tamil women's participation in LTTE as combatants and suicide bombers, since its beginnings in mid-1980s.[27]

Women's recruitment to LTTE was borne of many factors. One, they shared the aspiration to liberate the Tamil population from the oppressive Sinhalese-dominated state with their male militant comrades. Two, they saw their participation as a means to liberate Tamil women from male oppression within their own community. Three, they were

immediately concerned about protecting Tamil women from the Indian Peace Keeping Army's (IPKF) brutal weaponisation of sexual violence from 1987-1990.[28]

As Rajasingham-Senanayake notes, agency via combat and militarised violence sought by Tamil women LTTE members seems to suggest their "ambivalent empowerment".[29] On one hand, participation in combat enabled them to break out of patriarchal norms that confined women to domestic roles. On the other hand, women not only become captives of LTTE leader Prabhakaran's patriarchal nationalist project but also suffered under the oppression of the Sri Lankan military.

Sri Lankan women—across ethnic boundaries—also addressed the widespread violence with civil society activism. The Northern Mothers Front (1984), Women for Peace (1984), Women's Action Committee (1982) and Mothers and Daughters of Lanka (1989) played an important role in lobbying for a settlement to the conflict. Almost a decade later, Women's Coalition for Peace (1994) and the Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum (1994)—which comprised of women academics and activists—campaigned at the national level for legal and policy reform. The Sri Lankan Women for Peace and Democracy (2004) attempted to prevent the abrogation of the Ceasefire Agreement 2002 and ensured both the government and LTTE resumed negotiations.[30]

Buddhisization of Sri Lankan military

Continued militarisation in the North and East was an integral part of President Mahinda Rajapaksa's "post-war" project to build a Sinhala-Buddhist nation. On paper, the state's militarisation policy was projected as a secular, bureaucratic measure. Militant Buddhist monks close to the government gave their blessing and sanction to the process of militarisation—they routinely performed rituals for the military, messaging their tight-knitted symbiotic relationship to observers.[31]

These ceremonies were highly publicised, state-sponsored events broadcast on national television. They included *dhana* (offerings), *pin kama* (merit making), *puja* (worship), *adhishtana* (blessings), *bodi* (sacred tree), *pahan* (light), *perahera* (pageants). These ceremonies were conducted to bless the victorious military hero *(ranaviru)* and the ruling Rajapaksa family.[32]

Such state practices carried high symbolic value in the early "post-war" years. An example of the considerable effort put in toward the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist project was a bo-tree[33] plantation ceremony conducted in the presence of several Buddhist clergy. The tree was specially flown in from Colombo to Jaffna in 2011. This ceremony was presided by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, cementing the symbolic institutionalisation of Buddhism in Sri Lankan military. The public use of Buddhist symbols and ritualised interactions between military personnel and Buddhist monks indicate tight-knitted closeness of the two institutions.[34]

During the war, Buddhist monks frequently visited active military bases to bless soldiers and regiments, sometimes before large military operations were carried out. Some Buddhist clergy justified these religious interventions by expressing concern for the rebirth prospects of soldiers carrying out violent acts in the battlefield. However, the Sinhala-Buddhist community largely interpreted these interactions as the Sangha's endorsement of

a deadly war to annihilate the "enemy". This is in singular opposition to a foundational Buddhist doctrine: *ahimsa* (non-violence).

Buddhist extremists, therefore bear the responsibility for the continued violence, including incidents against Tamil women. Everyday practices of the state, society and social institutions—especially practices of Buddhist religious institutions close to the regime—depict a "continuum of violence". According to Peuchguirbal, this includes continuation of violence against women in relatively peaceful times.[35]

"Post-war" violence has been linked to a renewed belief in militant Buddhism and the state's militarisation project. Connecting violence against women in the "post-war" period to religious extremism will require investigating the complex matrix of interrelated violence, its actors and multiple technologies used to exert it. Such an investigation will also illustrate the cyclical nature of violence from war to times of peace, tracing the patriarchy underlying militarised masculinities and religious institutions.[36]

Manifestation of violence driven by politico-religious extremism

In Sri Lanka, the relationship between politico-religious extremism and violence manifests itself in many ways. From visible forms of violence (physical and structural) to invisible forms of violence (cultural and emotional)—many of these are the result of over three decades of civil war and its toxic legacy, which has persisted since 2009 throughout the "post-war" period.

Militarisation

In May 2009, Sri Lanka's armed forces defeated the LTTE at a terrible cost. The number of casualties is estimated at around 1,00,000—including at least 40,000 civilians who lost their lives during the last few months of the war alone.[37] The war also devastated Sri Lankan economy, adversely affecting production, exports and the flow of foreign direct investment. It also lowered the country's long-term growth rate.

For over three decades, Sri Lankan women—particularly Tamil women—faced grievous physical and sexual violence. A few examples are forced prostitution, domestic and international sex trafficking[38] and sexual assault, especially of single mothers and widows. Sexual violence was also prevalent during clean-up operations "after" the war, sponsored and operationalised by the Sri Lankan state.

Some researchers have noted that forcing Tamil women into prostitution—particularly those belonging to the war-ravaged areas of North and East Sri Lanka—was a form of psychological warfare, waged to humiliate the resident Tamil community. In 2010, there were about 89,000 war widows and 40,000 women managing households in the former war zone.[39] Between 2009 and 2013, the number of sexual violence-related police complaints increased by 34%.[40] The Judicial Medical Officer of Jaffna Hospital stated that 56 cases of rape and severe violence against women and minor girls were recorded within the first three months of 2012 itself. This was an alarming increase compared to 102 incidents reported in 2010 and 182 incidents in 2011.

Local and international organisations often stated that the military had a central role to play in using sexual violence against the Tamil community. Women and minor girls—particularly those struggling with internal displacement—were their main targets. Regional patterns of violence against women suggest that since 2009, at least five incidents of rape

have occurred in North and East Sri Lanka, every day. Since most cases are not reported, official figures are suspected to be much higher.[41] The Organisation of Women for Rights highlighted that many sexual violence victims were allegedly perpetrated by the Sri Lankan armed forces. In 2013, Human Rights Watch reported that the military employed sexual violence to obtain information about Tamil fighters.[42]

A significant number of sexual crimes were reported from Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kurunegala and Monaragala, districts adjacent to the war zone. During the war, these areas were major recruitment hubs for Sri Lankan armed forces. In these areas (especially in Anuradhapura), brothels held sex-trafficked women and minors. According to the United States' Department of State, these establishments could be linked to military presence in the region since they were designated transit points for Sri Lankan armed forces headed north.[43]

According to De Votta, an estimated 35,000 military personnel stationed at Jaffna (Northern Province's "post-war" capital) could have had a stake in sexual violence.[44] The Sri Lankan army has also been suspected of carrying out "grease devil attacks"—naked or semi-naked men smeared in grease sexually assaulting women in the North and East.[45] Many cases of abductions and "disappearances" of women from these regions were also reported. Some researchers claimed that during the "post-war" period, a person "disappeared" or was abducted roughly once every five days.[46]

The Sri Lankan government enacted "post-war" development policies which displaced and stripped Tamil women and men of their land and livelihood. The government sponsored new business ventures undertaken by military personnel. The military also forcibly occupied fertile land using the logic of national security.

In addition to violence inflicted by the military and the Sri Lankan government, Tamil women also experienced an increase in intimate partner violence.[47] Women were particularly vulnerable to violence as they attempted to navigate a rabidly militant, patriarchal "post-war" landscape.[48] While Tamil men lost their livelihood and were unable to provide for their families, Tamil women continued paid work outside the home while managing domestic affairs.[49] The sudden shift in gender roles, the Sri Lankan government's relentless anti-Tamil polemic and aggressive militarisation resulted in Tamil men targeting women in their vicinity. As Giles and Hyndman argue, "post-war" violence inflicted by women's families is indicative of broader social, political and economic processes embedded in state policies, public institutions and the global economy.[50]

To date, the Sri Lankan army has not been held accountable due to draconian laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, enacted to protect them from legal prosecution.[51] In fact, the military has enjoyed near-total impunity due to support from the ruling Rajapaksa regime and Buddhist extremist monks—in the form of blessings and silent assent—proving claims of an unholy nexus between the two.

In Sri Lanka, violence against women and men (particularly from the Tamil minority) has followed a vicious cycle—empowered by the state, blessed by Buddhist religious extremists and inflicted by the Sri Lankan armed forces.

Populist politics and Islamophobia

In the "post-war" period, politico-religious extremism was also manifest in populist politics and institutionalised Islamophobia. Buddhist extremists targeted Muslim women with physical and psychological violence, curtailing their civic and religious freedoms. Anti-Muslim attacks were partly premised on misleading accusations like special legal status of Muslims, religiously inspired personal laws and an "excessive" freedom to practice their religion, believed to encourage Islamic extremism.[52]

Beginning in 2010, groups of powerful Buddhist extremists led a series of anti-Muslim hate crimes. Some examples of these groups are the *Bodu Bala Sena* (Buddhist task force) or BBS, *Sihala Ravaya* (Sinhalese Roar) and *Ravana Balaya* (*Ravana* Power). According to some reports, BBS actively sought to expand its network by forming an alliance with Myanmar's 969 movement, a Buddhist ultra-nationalist movement aimed against Myanmar Muslims.[53] Although BBS failed to connect with Indian extremist groups such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, they harbour long-term ambitions beyond the shores of Sri Lanka.[54]

Buddhist extremists justified their anti-Muslim violence by evoking the global narrative of Islamophobia.[55] Numerous reports found that extremist Buddhist groups not only received political patronage and silent endorsement of law enforcement, but were also funded by the Sinhalese-Buddhist diaspora living abroad. Sinhalese business-persons facing intense competition from their Muslim counterparts were believed to have mobilised funding for such groups.

The role of Aththe Gnanasara—BBS secretary general—in anti-Muslim violence during 2013-14 did not go unnoticed.[56] It is widely believed that his hate speech on 15 June, 2014 in Aluthgama was directly responsible for an anti-Muslim rampage that killed four people and destroyed several Muslim businesses in the region.[57]

Hate speeches by senior members of the government often led to mob violence and arson attacks on Muslim places of worship. The Rajapaksa regime encouraged them by remaining silent.[58] Udaya Gammanpila, a high-ranking Rajapaksa government official was accused of inciting rivalry between the Sinhalese-Buddhist majority and minority Muslims. Gammanpila belongs to Jathika Hela Urumaya, an extremist Sinhala-Buddhist political party.

Social media has been used as a powerful means of disseminating Buddhist extremist propaganda. Campaigns online were constructed around xenophobic narratives—that Buddhists will soon be vanquished by a fast-growing Muslim population, forced religious conversions to Islam and expansion of Muslim economic activities against Sinhalese businesses.[59] In 2018, social media was rife with rumours that a Muslim doctor performed procedures to sterilise Sinhalese women.[60]

Buddhist extremists levelled moral charges on specific aspects of Muslim culture such as their call for prayer, festivals, display of religious symbols, marriage and inheritance laws, halal stipulations and slaughter of cattle. These accusations were propagated daily in mainstream and social media.[61] Buddhist extremists also targeted human rights activists, moderate political elites and religious clergy who condemned the violence and advocated for religious harmony.

In his most recent term from 2015-2019, President Sirisena took some measures against hate campaigns such as a temporary shut-down of Facebook. In response, ultra-

nationalist extremist groups launched a media campaign attacking him. They portrayed Sirisena as "feminine" in contrast to the violently "masculine" Rajapaksa brothers. While they were out of power, the Rajapaksa brothers ensured Buddhist extremist violence against Muslims was at its highest. In 2018, the Sirisena government had to declare emergency and impose a three-day curfew to stop a Buddhist rampage targeting Muslims[62].

In April 2019, a radical Muslim group carried out the Easter Sunday bombing, killing 269 people and injuring 500 civilians. This was a turning point for anti-Muslim violence in Sri Lanka.[63] A month after the attack, Buddhist mobs targeted Muslim neighbourhoods in the north-west with support from the army and police.[64]

Gotabaya Rajapaksa won the elections in 2019, effectively ensuring that Islamophobic violence and hate speeches were carried out with total impunity. Reacting to the Easter Sunday bombings, the Rajapaksa government banned *burqas*. Buddhist extremist groups launched a comprehensive media campaign targeting Muslim women. Instances of Buddhist extremists trying to forcibly remove head scarves in public spaces were reported.[65] Kirama Vimalajothy, President of BBS also launched a campaign against the long dress worn by Muslim women, known variously as the *abaya*, *burqa* or *pardah*.[66] According to Vimalajothy, this dress was a symbol of danger—an opinion shared by law enforcement agencies. Buddhist extremists and the state justified the *burqa* ban by citing similar policies imposed by countries in the West.

Months after Gotabaya Rajapaksa's election, the Public Administration Ministry issued a circular stating that women employees and visitors could only wear saris or *osaris*, ostensibly to ensure security in office premises.[67] On 3 June 2019, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka wrote to the Ministry Secretary that this violated fundamental human rights and restricted Muslim women from accessing public services.[68]

Curtailing personal, civic, religious, reproductive and economic rights of Muslim women in particular was key to Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony in "post-war" Sri Lanka. BBS clamoured that the government ban Sri Lankan women from working in the Middle east, ostensibly to prevent them from being abused by Muslim employers. This demand exemplified their notion of the dangerous Muslim man, accused of seducing and converting Sinhalese women to Islam. One Buddhist extremist claimed that Muslim men were turning their Sinhalese spouses into "Fathimas and their babies to Mohammeds".[69] Other charges included Muslim businessmen insulting Buddhism by selling female undergarments with Buddha images, selling food items to sterilise Sinhalese women.

Buddhist extremists also targeted Muslim women's reproductive rights. They repeatedly stated in public that in order to save the Sinhala-Buddhist nation from being wiped out, women's reproductive functions needed regulation. Hate speeches descended to obscene levels, comparing Muslim women to "breeding pigs".[70]

Overall, the Muslim community responded to this long history of violence by following more orthodox strands of Islam such as Wahhabism and Salafism. As Milhar observes, this manifested in Muslim women's increasing inclination to wear clothes typically seen in the Middle-east. She notes this was also a reaction to "post-war" militarisation when minority women's bodies became increasingly vulnerable.[71]

Wahhabi and Salafi influences also entered Sri Lankan Muslim society from those returning from the Middle-east. Muslim women were directly and indirectly urged to view the *abaya* as a means of protection and to gain respect within the community. Tablighi Jamaat encouraged women to use traditional Islamic clothing to challenge the Sinhalese-Buddhist hegemony.[72] With the Middle-east funding mosque constructions, there was little room left for women to negotiate changes on their own terms.[73]

On the other hand, the secular male Muslim elite pressurised women to wear traditional clothing, i.e., specific non-religious attire that women wore before the rise of Islamic orthodoxy in Sri Lankan society. This was possibly a reaction to the fear-mongering by Buddhist extremists, who projected women in *abaya* or *pardah* as a threat to national security.

Growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Sri Lanka led to occasional violence between orthodox and more secular traditions such as Sufism. Their conflict heightened public attention on women's bodies. Orthodox Muslims claimed they represented a more authentic Islam. In pursuit of a "purification project", they actively curtailed Muslim women's choices.

Reformation of Muslim laws governing marriage and divorce further polarised the community along radical and moderate lines. While several South Asian nations managed to usher in progressive changes to Muslim law, hardliner groups such as the All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama vehemently opposed any reform.[74] In turn, this fuelled Buddhist hardliners, claiming to be "saviours" of Muslim women from their regressive society.

Both Buddhist extremists and more radical elements within the Muslim community inflicted violence on women in "post-war" Sri Lanka. Cultural violence by the latter was structurally imposed in the form of Islamic schools, madrasas and other financial and social institutions. According to one study, Muslim women returning to the North said that unlike before, they were pressured by members of their own community to wear head scarves.[75] Muslim men were forced to publicly identify more closely with Islam.

Cultural purification in the "post-war" period

Sinhalese women experienced structural and cultural violence as well. They were pushed to be bearers of the nation's cultural and ethnic authenticity. One means to achieve this was by enforcing the parochial ideology of a "golden family", *raththaran paula*. Sinhalese women were wholly responsible for raising "good" children and ensuring their husbands were satisfied and behaved well.

Modern social and political systems control, supervise and manipulate populations as well as individuals by instituting state policies restricting women's sexual and reproductive choices.[76] This was evident in Mahinda Rajapaksa's first election manifesto, *Mahinda Chinthana*, where women were firmly enclosed within the domestic arena:

> *A woman provides a solid foundation to the family as well as to the society. She devotes her life to raise children, manage family budget and ensure peace in the family…. I will arrange to increase the number of nominations of women to a minimum of 25% of the*

Five years later, women's participation in public was limited to community development,[77] despite clauses on treating women equally. This brings to mind De Mel's views that toxic patriarchal notions view men as "the author and subject of the nation while the female stands for the nation itself, in need of male protection, the reproducer and nurturer of future generations and transmitter of cultural values".[78]

Buddhist extremists went to the extent of strongly urging Sinhalese women to bear more children and dedicate themselves exclusively to childcare to save the "vanishing" Sinhala race. This cultural violence led to subtle changes in familial norms of Sri Lankan society.

The Rajapaksa brothers' openly populist and autocratic terms (Mahinda Rajapaksa: 2005-2010, Gotabaya Rajapaksa: 2019-present)—and their dangerous symbiosis with Buddhist extremists—has been instrumental in rebuilding the "post-war" state of Sri Lanka on violent masculinist values. The combined effect on ethnic, class and religious minorities— especially women—has been severe.

In 2013, a minor female childcare provider, Rizana Nafeek was executed in Saudi Arabia for the death of a child in her care. The Rajapaksa government reacted by enacting a law which made it mandatory for women seeking employment abroad to get signed approval from their spouses. The law also banned women with children below 5 years of age from employment abroad, and women with older children were required to demonstrate adequate plans for their care. Men were allowed to migrate at 18 years, and married men did not require their spouse's approval before migrating.[79]

Predictably, this law led to a sharp decline in women employed abroad. Women in war-torn areas of North and East were particularly affected, as many supported their families with income earned as domestic workers in the Middle-east.[80] Cultural violence in the form of toxic ideologies such as the "golden family" ideal had taken hold—this regressive law was also supported by some women working in the government and NGOs, who stated that it was important for women to protect their children.

As some groups pointed out, the law violated Sri Lanka's Constitution and the government's commitment to UN Conventions. In a letter to the Sri Lankan government, the UN stated that the law discriminated against women—it held them wholly responsible for childcare and blamed them for domestic strife and "misbehaving" spouses left at home.[81]

The Rajapaksa government positioned the law as a protective measure for women and children. However, it increased their vulnerability to human trafficking. The United States' Department for Combating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) releases an annual report which identifies how governments around the world are dealing with the issue. The Department added Sri Lanka to its Tier 2 Watchlist—which comprises countries falling below the minimum standard—for eight years in 2011, 2013-2016 and 2019-2021.[82]

In 2016, two urban Christian boys' schools insisted that mothers coming to pick their children comply with a conservative dress code[83]. Although this might seem like an isolated

example of religious conservatism, it represented cultural transformations spreading across the country under the wings of populist politics. Later, responding to criticism from parents, the Education Ministry banned public and private schools from imposing dress codes on parents (Ministry of Education: 2016).[84]

Around the same time, Colombo's Catholic Church Cardinal publicly opposed Buddhism being displaced from its constitutional position.[85] The country's political climate was reminiscent of the 19th century when Buddhist-Sinhala cultural revivalists challenged Christian values. Given this historical context, these two events could be the result of Christian institutions feeling insecure; it could be their symbolic acceptance of Sinhalese-Buddhist hegemony to protect Christians from the threat of violence.

In December 2016, the Sri Lankan Parliament banned women officials from wearing certain attire to work. Ostensibly targeting middle-class Sinhalese women, this decree resulted in several women officers not being able to discharge their duties during important Budget debates conducted at the time. As one vocal newspaper reported:

> *Sri Lanka's parliament, which can be identified as one of the most uncivilized places in the country where insults are traded and even filth being used by male Parliamentarians, has instead of disciplining the MPs clamped down on what and what not women should wear to Parliament.*
>
> —*Colombo Telegraph*, 27 December 2016[86]

Putting clothing choices in the spotlight drew attention away from issues and focused it on women's bodies instead—especially on social media. On one hand, Buddhist extremists demanded Muslim women wear "less" and that Sinhalese, Christian women wear "more", exposing the hollow hypocrisy of toxic masculinity.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine how extremism and violence against women manifest in Sri Lankan society, and its impact on women—especially those belonging to minority groups. Key findings indicate that Sri Lanka's reputation as an egalitarian society—where women enjoyed relatively equal status in the state and society—took a turn for the worse in the late 70s. War, followed by extensive militarisation of society and the rise of populist politics has resulted in the rise of Buddhist extremism and violence against women.

To understand the complex and dynamic ways in which politico-religious extremism and violence against women are connected in Sri Lanka, one must trace political transformations since 1977. The shift to authoritarian populist politics under the two Rajapaksa presidencies were instrumental in forging a dangerous symbiosis between religious extremism and violence against women. Bolstered by the public endorsement of Buddhist extremists, the Rajapaksa regimes renewed their pursuit of the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony. Although this study has focused on Buddhist extremism's role in escalating violence against women, I argue that both the clergy and citizens (following orthodox beliefs), and Muslim extremists are culpable for inflicting violence on women across ethnic, class and religious boundaries.

Endnotes

[1]See UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1981, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1991

[2] Department of Census and Statistics (2020) Sri Lanka Women's Wellbeing Survey – 2019, Findings from Sri Lanka's first dedicated National Survey on Violence against Women and Girls, Final Report, Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka Police, Grave crime abstract for the year 2020 for whole island from 01.01.2020 to 31.12.2020

[3] Maduwage, Shihara (2020) Findings from Women's Wellbeing Survey 2019 is only the tip of the iceberg, Violence against women in Sri Lanka (Saturday, 12 December 2020), Equal Ground.
Department of Census and Statistics (2020) Sri Lanka Women's Wellbeing Survey – 2019, Findings from Sri Lanka's first dedicated National Survey on Violence against Women and Girls, Final Report, Sri Lanka
World Health Organization (2018) Country profile of gender-based violence in Sri Lanka, Country Office of Sri Lanka; Colombo

[4] According to official statistics, there have been 662,559 cases and 16,489 deaths reported from Sri Lanka since early-2020 https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/sri-lanka/

[5] Ministry of Health & Indigenous Medical Services, WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT, Vol. 47 No. 42 10th–16th Oct 2020, Colombo: A publication of the Epidemiology Unit Ministry of Health & Indigenous Medical Services
Meegaswatte, Thilini (2021) The Balancing Act: Employed Women Navigating the COVID-19 Lockdown in Sri Lanka, South Asian Survey 28(1) 157–171
Gamage M. and R.Tummodara (2021) A Study on The Rise of Domestic Violence Against Women in Sri Lanka During the Lockdown. Colombo Telegraph
Jayasekera, Prashanthi, Prashani Dias and Avindi Perera (2021) Care work, critical during COVID-19 pandemic, is undervalued and unequally shared in Sri Lanka, UN Women Asia and the Pacific
https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2021/05/care-work-ritical-during-covid-19-pandemic
https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/a-study-on-the-rise-of-domestic-violence-against-women-in-sri-lanka-during-the-lockdown/amp/, accessed 15 February 2022

[6] Pinto-Jayawardena, Kishali and Kumari Jayawardena (2016) (eds.), The search for justice: the Sri Lanka papers, New Delhi: Zubaan
UN Women, 'Why we need feminism in Sri Lanka' https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2021/06/why-do-we-need-feminism-in-sri-lanka
Meegaswatte, Thilini (2021) The Balancing Act: Employed Women Navigating the COVID-19 Lockdown in Sri Lanka, South Asian Survey 28(1) 157–171
Department of Census and Statistics (2020) Sri Lanka Women's Wellbeing Survey – 2019, Findings from Sri Lanka's first dedicated National Survey on Violence against Women and Girls, Final Report, Sri Lanka

[7] UNFPA (2022) Gender-Based Violence, https://srilanka.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-based-violence-13 (Accessed 29 March 2022)

[8] Kurtenbach, Sabine & Angelika Rettberg (2018) Understanding the relation between war economies and post-war crime, Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal, 3:1, 1-8, DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2018.1457454

[9] Schonthal, Benjamin and Matthew J. Walton (2016) The (New) Buddhist Nationalisms? Symmetries and Specificities in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, Contemporary Buddhism, 17:1, 81-115, DOI: 10.1080/14639947.2016.1162419
Imtiyaz, A., and A. Mohamed-Saleem (2015) Muslims in Post-War Sri Lanka: Understanding Sinhala-Buddhist Mobilization against Them, Asian Ethnicity 16, no. 2: 186–202. doi:10.1080%2F14631369.2015.1003691.
Minority Rights Group International (2013) Living with insecurity: Marginalization and sexual violence against women in north and east Sri Lanka, United Kingdom

De Votta, Neil (2018) Religious intolerance in post-civil war Sri Lanka, Asian Affairs, 49:2, 278-300, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2018.1467660

De Votta, Neil (2021) Ethnoreligious Nationalism and Autocratization in Sri Lanka, in Sten Widmalm (ed.), Routledge Handbook of Autocratization in South Asia (1st Edition), Routledge

[10] Enloe, Cynthia (1990) Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics. Berkeley: University of California

[11] Fourth round of Research-intensive Fund (RIF) for *Understanding Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Post-War Contexts: Comparative Analysis of BiH and Sri Lanka*

[12] Soltar, Andrej (2004), Some Problems with a Definition and Perception of Extremism within a Society in Gorazd Mesko, Milan

Pagon and Bojan Dobovsek (eds.) 'Policing in Central and Eastern Europe: Dilemmas of Contemporary Criminal Justice', Slovenia, the Faculty of Criminal Justice, University of Maribor

[13] Ramakrishna, Kumar (2021) Deconstructing Buddhist Extremism: Lessons from Sri Lanka. Religions 12: 970. https://doi.org/10.3390/ rel12110970

[14] Almond, Gabriel A., R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan (2003) Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms Around the World. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press

[15] Johan Galtung, Johan. (1969) Violence, peace and peace research, Journal of Peace Research, 6:167–91

[16] De Costa, Merinnage Nelani (2021) Gendering abuse on social media; A study of cyber violence against women on Facebook. Available at http://ssrn.com/abstract=3808961

Jayasekera, Prashanthi, Prashani Dias and Avindi Perera (2021) Care work, critical during COVID-19 pandemic, is undervalued and unequally shared in Sri Lanka, UN Women Asia and the Pacific https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2021/05/care-work-ritical-during-covid-19-pandemic

Groundviews, 'Technology-related Violence Against Women and Girls in Sri Lanka: Key Trends' (15 January 2018) https://groundviews.org/2018/01/15/technology-related-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-sri-lanka-key-trends/

[17] Crenshaw, K. (1991) Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1241-1300

[18] Yuval-Davis, N. (2004) Gender, the Nationalist Imagination, war, and Peace. In Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (eds.) Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones. University of California Press; Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: pp. 170-189

[19] Asian Development Bank (1999) Country Briefing Paper: WOMEN IN SRI LANKA, Asian Development Bank, Available at https://www.adb.org/documents/women-sri-lanka-country-briefing-

[20] Asian Development Bank (1999) Country Briefing Paper: WOMEN IN SRI LANKA, Asian Development Bank, Available at https://www.adb.org/documents/women-sri-lanka-country-briefing-

[21] Giles, W. (2003). "The Women's Movement in Sri Lanka: An Interview with Kumari Jayawardena", In Feminists under Fire. Exchanges across War Zones Wenona Giles, Malathi de Alwis, Edith Klein, Neluka Silva (eds.) Toronto: Between the Lines, p. 199-210

[22] Asian Development Bank (1999) Country Briefing Paper: WOMEN IN SRI LANKA, Asian Development Bank, Available at https://www.adb.org/documents/women-sri-lanka-country-briefing-

[23] Jayaweera, Swarna (2000) 50 Years of Independence and changing gender roles and relations in S. T. Hettige and M. Mayer, Sri Lanka at Crossroads: Dilemmas and Prospects after 50 Years of Independence, Delhi: Macmillan

[24] Bandarage, Asoka (1988) Women and capitalist development in Sri Lanka, 1977-87, Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, 20:2, 57-81, DOI: 10.1080/14672715.1988.10404449
Rajasingham-Senanayake, Darini (2003) Beyond Institution and Constitution Building: Linking post/Conflict Reconstruction and Deep Democracy in Markus Mayer, Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake and Yuvi Thangarajah (eds.) Building local capacities for Peace: Rethinking conflict and Development in Sri Lanka, India: McMillan

[25] De Mel, Neloufer, Kumudini Samuel, Champika K. Soysa (2012) Ethnopolitical Conflict in Sri Lanka: Trajectories and Transformations in Dan Landis, Dan and Albert, Rosita D. Handbook of Ethnic Conflict: International Perspectives, Springer US. Pp. 93-118
De Alwis, Iraj, Anishka De Zylva and Barana Waidyatilake (2019) Counter-radicalization in Sri Lanka: A Blueprint for Action in Mubashar Hasan, Kenji Isezaki, Sameer Yasir (eds.) Radicalization in South Asia: Context, Trajectories and Implications, India: SAGE

[26] Ruwanpura, Kanchana N & Jane Humphries (2004) Mundane heroines: Conflict, Ethnicity, Gender, and Female Headship in Eastern Sri Lanka, Feminist Economics, 10:2, 173-205

[27] Alison, Miranda (2003) Cogs in the wheel? Women in the liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam, Civil Wars, 6:4, 37-54

[28] Alison, Miranda (2003) Cogs in the wheel? Women in the liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam, Civil Wars, 6:4, 37-54

[29] Alison, Miranda (2003) Cogs in the wheel? Women in the liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam, Civil Wars, 6:4, 37-54

[30] De Mel, Neloufer, Kumudini Samuel, Champika K. Soysa (2012) Ethnopolitical Conflict in Sri Lanka: Trajectories and Transformations in Dan Landis, Dan and Albert, Rosita D. Handbook of Ethnic Conflict: International Perspectives, Springer US. Pp. 93-118

[31] Øivind, Fuglerud (2021) Militarization and impunity in Sri Lanka, in Sten Widmalm (ed.), Routledge Handbook of Autocratization in South Asia (1st Edition), Routledge

[32] Whitaker, M. P., Rajasingham-Senanayake, D., & Sanmugeswaran, P. (2021) Multi-Religiosity in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Innovation, Shared Spaces, Contestations. Milton: Taylor & Francis Group

[33] According to Buddhist tradition, Bo tree is under which the Buddha sat when he attained enlightenment and hugely symbolic to the Buddhists. Replica of the original tree is a common sight in any Buddhist place of worship.

[34] Øivind, Fuglerud (2021) Militarization and impunity in Sri Lanka, in Sten Widmalm (ed.), Routledge Handbook of Autocratization in South Asia (1st Edition), Routledge

[35] Puechguirbal, N. (2012) The Cost of Ignoring Gender in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations: A Feminist Perspective. Amsterdam Law Forum. 4. 10.37974/ALF.207

[36] Kostovicova, Denisa, Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic and Marsha Henry (2020) Drawing on the continuum: a war and post-war political economy of gender-based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, International Feminist Journal of Politics, 22:2, 250-272, DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2019.1692686
Cockburn, Cynthia. 2004. "The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace." In Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones, edited by Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

[37] Jayasundara-Smits, Shyamika (2018) Lost in transition: linking war, war economy and post-war crime in Sri Lanka, Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal, 3:1, 63-79, DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2018.1473046

[38] ICG (International Crisis Group). The Forever War? Military Control in Sri Lanka's North. March 25, 2014. http://blog.crisisgroup.org/asia/2014/03/25/the-forever-war-military-control-in-sri-lankas-north/

[39] The New Humanitarian, Women take over as breadwinners in north, (9th September 2010) https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/249274

[40] Jayasundara-Smits, Shyamika (2018) Lost in transition: linking war, war economy and post-war crime in Sri Lanka, Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal, 3:1, 63-79, DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2018.1473046

[41] ICAN. What the Women Say: Elusive Peace, Pervasive Violence: Sri Lankan Women's Struggle for Security and Justice. Brief 8: International Civil Society Action Network, 2013. http://www.icanpeacework.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/03/What-the-Women-Say-SriLanka-Brief-Spring-2013.pdf

[42] Human Rights Watch (2013) '"We Will Teach You a Lesson": Sexual Violence against Tamils by Sri Lankan Security Forces, United States of America https://www.hrw.org/reports/srilanka0213ForUpload.pdf

[43] United States Department of State. Trafficking in Persons Report – Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka, June 27, 2011.www.refworld.org/docid/4e12ee4832.html

[44] De Votta, Neil (2011) "Sri Lanka: From Turmoil to Dynasty." Journal of Democracy, no. 2 (2011): 130–144. doi:10.1353/jod.2011.0019

[45] ICG (International Crisis Group). The Forever War? Military Control in Sri Lanka's North. March 25, 2014. http://blog.crisisgroup.org/asia/2014/03/25/the-forever-war-military-control-in-sri-lankas-north/

[46] Goodhand, Jonathan (2012) "Sri Lanka in 2012: Securing the State, Enforcing the 'Peace'." Asian Survey 53, no.1: 64–72. doi:10.1525/as.2013.53.1.64

[47] World Health Organization (2018) Country profile of gender-based violence in Sri Lanka, Country Office of Sri Lanka; Colombo

[48] Jayasundara-Smits, Shyamika (2018) Lost in transition: linking war, war economy and post-war crime in Sri Lanka, Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal, 3:1, 63-79, DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2018.1473046

[49] Guruge S, Ford-Gilboe M, Varcoe C, Jayasuriya-Illesinghe V, Ganesan M, Sivayogan S, et al. (2017) Intimate partner violence in the post-war context: Women's experiences and community leaders' perceptions in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. PLoS ONE 12(3): e0174801. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0174801

[50] Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (eds.) Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones. University of California Press; Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: pp. 170-189

[51] Jayasundara-Smits, Shyamika (2018) Lost in transition: linking war, war economy and post-war crime in Sri Lanka, Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal, 3:1, 63-79, DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2018.1473046

[52] Mihlar, Farah (2021) Autocratization, Buddhist nationalist extremism and the Muslim minority in Sri Lanka, in Sten Widmalm (ed.), Routledge Handbook of Autocratization in South Asia (1st Edition), Routledge

[53] Colombo Telegraph (2014b) Full Text: Wirathu and Gnanasara Sign Agreement. Colombo Telegraph. October 1. Available online: https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/full-text-wirathu-and-gnanasara-sign-agreement/

[54] Walko, Zachary (2016) Interview with Dilanthe Withanage. The Diplomat. June 29. Available online: https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/interview-with-dilanthe-withanage

[55] Imtiyaz, A., and A. Mohamed-Saleem (2015) Muslims in Post-War Sri Lanka: Understanding Sinhala-Buddhist Mobilization against Them, Asian Ethnicity 16, no. 2: 186–202. doi:10.1080%2F14631369.2015.1003691

[56] Secretariat for Muslims, 2014. Imtiyaz, A., and A. Mohamed-Saleem (2015) Muslims in Post-War Sri Lanka: Understanding Sinhala-Buddhist Mobilization against Them, Asian Ethnicity 16, no. 2: 186

[57] Imtiyaz, A., and A. Mohamed-Saleem (2015) Muslims in Post-War Sri Lanka: Understanding Sinhala-Buddhist Mobilization against Them, Asian Ethnicity 16, no. 2: 186–202. doi:10.1080%2F14631369.2015.1003691 Colombo Telegraph. (2014a) Unedited Full Video: BBS Gnanasara's Pre-Riots Speech. Colombo Telegraph. June 19. Available online: https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/unedited-full-video-bbs-gnanasaras-pre-riots-speech/

[58] De Votta, Neil (2021) Ethnoreligious nationalism and autocratization in Sri Lanka in Sten Widmalm (ed.) Routledge Handbook of Autocratization in South Asia, London: Routledge

[59] Mihlar, Farah (2021) Autocratization, Buddhist nationalist extremism and the Muslim minority in Sri Lanka, in Sten Widmalm (ed.), Routledge Handbook of Autocratization in South Asia (1st Edition), Routledge

[60] De Votta, Neil (2018) Religious intolerance in post-civil war Sri Lanka, Asian Affairs, 49:2, 278-300, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2018.1467660

[61] Mihlar, Farah. (2018) Coming out of the Margins: Justice and Reconciliation for Conflict- affected Muslims in Sri Lanka, Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies

[62] Violence was spreading fast in the hill town of Kandy and nearby towns

[63] Samuel, Ria (2021) The Current State of the Freedom of Religion or Belief in Sri Lanka in Shreen Abdul Saroor (ed.) Muslims in post-war Sri Lanka; Repression, Resistance, and Reform, Alliance for Minorities

[64] Mihlar, Farah (2019) Religious change in a minority context: transforming Islam in Sri Lanka, Third World Quarterly, 40:12, 2153-2169, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2019.1632186

[65] Tegal, Megara 'Sri Lanka's face cover ban has nothing to do with protecting citizens – its only goal is to punish Muslim women' in Independent

Tuesday 30 April, 2019. Available at https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/sri-lanka-burqa-ban-niqab-muslim-islamophobia-church-bombing-a8891656.html

[66] Mihlar, Farah (2019) Religious change in a minority context: transforming Islam in Sri Lanka, Third World Quarterly, 40:12, 2153-2169, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2019.1632186

[67] Kadirgamar, Niyanthini (2019) The perils of being a woman and a Muslim in Sri Lanka, The Hindu (1 August 2019) https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-perils-of-being-a-woman-and-a-muslim/article28775384.ece ICG (International Crisis Group). The Forever War? Military Control in Sri Lanka's North. March 25, 2014. http://blog.crisisgroup.org/asia/2014/03/25/the-forever-war-military-control-in-sri-lankas-north/

[68] Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (2019) https://hrcsl.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/circular-on-dress-code_English.pdf

[69] De Votta, Neil (2018) Religious intolerance in post-civil war Sri Lanka, Asian Affairs, 49:2, 278-300, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2018.1467660

[70] De Votta, Neil (2018) Religious intolerance in post-civil war Sri Lanka, Asian Affairs, 49:2, 278-300, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2018.1467660

[71] Mihlar, Farah (2019) Religious change in a minority context: transforming Islam in Sri Lanka, Third World Quarterly, 40:12, 2153-2169, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2019.1632186

[72] De Votta, Neil (2018) Religious intolerance in post-civil war Sri Lanka, Asian Affairs, 49:2, 278-300, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2018.1467660

[73] De Votta, Neil (2018) Religious intolerance in post-civil war Sri Lanka, Asian Affairs, 49:2, 278-300, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2018.1467660
Mihlar, Farah (2019) Religious change in a minority context: transforming Islam in Sri Lanka, Third World Quarterly, 40:12, 2153-2169, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2019.1632186

[74] Ada Derana, 'ACJU 'strongly opposes' changes to Muslim Personal Law' (November 11, 2016) Available at http://www.adaderana.lk/news/37807/acju-

[75] Kadirgamar, Niyanthini (2019) The perils of being a woman and a Muslim in Sri Lanka, The Hindu (1 August 2019) https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-perils-of-being-a-woman-and-a-muslim/article28775384.ece

[76] Foucault, M. (1979) Discipline and Punish. New York, NY: Random House Inc.

[77] Mahinda Chintanaya. 2010. http://www.motr.gov.lk/web/pdf/mahinda_chintana_vision_for_the_future

[78] De Mel, N. (2001) Women and the Nation's Narrative: Gender and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Sri Lanka. Social Scientists' Association

[79] Gamburd, Michele R. (2020) "Migrant emplacement: Gendered subjects, state regulations, and the discursive erasure of elders in Sri Lanka." in Caring for Old Age. Perspectives from South Asia. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 8. Edited by Roberta Mandoki and Christiane Brosius. 185-211. Heidelberg University Press

[80] ICAN. What the Women Say: Elusive Peace, Pervasive Violence: Sri Lankan Women's Struggle for Security and Justice. Brief 8: International Civil Society Action Network, 2013. http://www.icanpeacework.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/03/What-the-Women-Say-SriLanka-Brief-Spring-2013.pdf

[81] Gamburd, Michele R. (2020) "Migrant emplacement: Gendered subjects, state regulations, and the discursive erasure of elders in Sri Lanka." in Caring for Old Age. Perspectives from South Asia. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 8. Edited by Roberta Mandoki and Christiane Brosius. 185-211. Heidelberg University Press

[82] Asia Pacific Migration Network (2 July 2021) Sri Lanka remains in Tier 2 Watch List for third consecutive year in 2021 U.S. report on human traffickinghttps://apmigration.ilo.org/news/sri-lanka-remains-in-tier-2-watch-list-for-third-consecutive-year-in-2021-u.s.-report-on-human-trafficking

[83] St. Peter's and St Joseph's College in Colombo. It is common for government schools to demand mothers wear the traditional sari when visiting

[84] Ministry of Education (22 September 2016), Circular Number 21/2016, 'Attire of the Parents Entering Schools', available at https://moe.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2016-21e.pdf

[85] Weerasinghe, C. Archbishop Rejects Secularization Ideology, Daily News, 26 July 2016, http://www.dailynews. lk/2016/07/26/local/88604

[86] Colombo Telegraph, Parliament becomes fashion police; Bans women from wearing sleeveless blouses, (27 December 2016) https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/parliament-becomes-fashion-police-bans-women-from-wearing-sleeveless-blouses/