

Project Title: Rape is political 2016- ongoing

Rape is used as the controlling method or power dominance on indigenous communities/ ethnic minorities in South Asia. 'Rape is political' is a portrait series of Indigenous rape victims in Khagrachari hills area, which is near the complex borders of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. A conflict between the indigenous and state is continuing for years. At present, Indigenous women, girls and even children are being raped somewhere in the Chittagong Hills quite often. These 'rapes' are very political – being used by the state as a weapon to further repress the indigenous tribes/clans.

The attacks frequently occur where there are land disputes between an indigenous people and settlers. Virtually all of the state administrative machinery is used to protect the rapists. According to reports, most of the rapists are settler Bangali and State security forces are being involved as well. Doctors are now under pressure from authorities not to report rapes and to state, "No rape occurred.

The images are oval, the writings around the corners of the images are of the women in their own indigenous language. The form, the technique of the prints reminds us images of royalty in the subcontinent. But the photographs are created in present times; the sitters moreover are not royals or noblemen but the ordinary women or children of Khagrachari who have to stand up to violence and raids every single day. Their stories and the struggle are withering away from the heart of our Bengali state with the passage of each day due to media blackout and state censorship. These hard torturous stories, these stories of bravery shining in the middle of the catastrophe. The sitters in the portraits are staring at us but, can we see them?

According to the reports of the Kapaeng Foundation, 364 tribal women were stripped off their basic rights between 2013 and 2017 – of whom, 106 women have fallen prey to violence, 100 women have been raped and at least 66 of them having narrowly escaped attempted rape

This portrait series attempts an alternative way to talk about such alarming threats on humanity.

Project Title- Files of the Disappeared

2018-ongoing

Photography has the potential to play more than a photograph. It is time to explore that role in society. This project is an initiative to start a social movement to confront fear politics by state. More than 4,000 young people have been picked up randomly by the police in recent years. They were tortured in custody. Some came back, but they are not allowed to speak out. The photographs show the locations where the bodies were found after 'clashes' between the police and so-called criminals. The landscapes raise questions about the portraits and their associated reality.

This work is a collaboration with a group of professional psycho counsellor, a meditative documentation on the youth of my country who were falsely accused. Twenty-six years old Alif (pseudonym) was a labourer in Dubai for the last few years. He went back to visit his family in Bangladesh and was arrested the day after he arrived. He has no idea why, especially since he was not even in the country for so long.

My protagonists prefer to be photographed in their own space where they feel safe and comfortable with their dearest ones. In custody, different methods of torture are used, both psychological as well as physical. Though psychological torture results in more trauma to the person, it cannot be visualised, only the long-term effect is seen on the person. I try to take my protagonists through a meditative journey with the help of psycho counsellor. Which may allow them to investigate their own anxiety which they kept secret for so long. Illustrating personal emotion in one's own portrait is a process of healing. Stitching the photographs with golden thread is a symbolic representation of silence in custody. This entire photography process initiated to create that space where my protagonist can come back strong.

The disappearance of people by law-enforcement agencies is an alarming trend not only in Bangladesh or Southeast Asia, it's also a global concern. It is a threat to human rights and a challenge to law and justice.