

- At present in Sri Lanka, the legislation does not permit termination of pregnancy even if it occurs from rape. This is a serious issue if the victim is a child.
- Often the regulations such as the PTA which are said to “curb the terrorism” most often create conducive situations for sexual violations against women. In most cases the violence occurs during search operations, at check-points and during detentions.

In this regard, we, Suriya Women’s Development Center, put forward the following requests.

**Take necessary steps to implement the suggestion made in the section *Women and Armed Conflict in the Beijing Platform of Action, as agreed.***

- Activate and strengthen women’s activism against war, militarization and the culture of violence.
- Work towards changing the laws that are against women’s rights and human rights, that enable harassment of women.

- Appoint a commission to study and change/abolish the procedures regarding arrest, custody and checking of women that make room for sexual violence.
- Identify and enforce institutional and social supportive systems that enable survivor/women to seek for legal remedies and equal social status.
- Identify the violator and declare it as a crime.
- Create a violence free, peaceful society where women and others can live peacefully.

We request that the state and other concerned people who believe in social justices should take our call and demands into serious consideration.

Through this statement we also require women’s organizations to form a network on this issue (war-time violence) to act continuously. ■

**Suriya Women’s Development Centre  
Batticaloa.**

## WOMAN

Jayshree Misra

I, Woman,  
*Stree-jati*,  
 Symbol of my Land,  
 Bound, yoked to be  
 Selfless, unassuming,  
 Velvet glove in callused hand.  
 Silent, always, grieving, seething,  
 Suppressed desires, intangible hopes.  
 Unable to take a stand,  
 Or question, reason,  
 Patriarchal discussions;  
 Such secure governance,  
 By this august band  
 Of oppressors, descendants of Manu.

I, Woman, weary, unalluring,  
 Scarred body, soul and mind,  
 Wrapped in ancient mummy-cloths,  
 That defy beauty, scrutiny.  
 Fluttering strands of hair escape  
 From my fettered head.  
 Solitary tendrils flee my *pallu*-covered  
 head,  
 Tenuous independent movements.  
 A feeble transient display of freedom  
 In the shifting scenes  
 Of sanctioned bondage.

From *The Sorrow of Unanswered  
 Questions*, ICES, 2001