



Women in Conflict: A Study of Kashmiri Women and their struggles for Controlling Homes.

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Abstract

The stunningly picturesque Valley of Kashmir has long been a haven for introspection, intellectual progress, and religious variety, all of which coexisted peacefully in a climate of tolerance. This similar variety, which can be seen in the state's mix of Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, has turned it into a battlefield rather than a place of cultural progress in the contemporary geopolitical period. An uprising in the valley in the late 1980s posed a serious threat to the region's stability, as well as to international peace and security.

Key words: Kashmiri, Women, Conflict, Struggles, Homes etc.

Introduction

Kashmir is home to the world's largest concentration of militaries. During the siege, women are confined to their homes, which restricts their access to necessities like medical treatment. The capture and detention of children is allegedly rampant, with the result that many go missing with no one knowing about it. Post-abrogation has resulted in the absence of education for 1.5 million Kashmiri youngsters.

The many faces of violence in Kashmir

The situation in Kashmir¹ has worsened over the last three decades, with insurgency and increased militarization interfering with daily life. There are many direct consequences of the battle, such as the emotional anguish of living in a war zone in addition to obvious physical crimes, such as numerous rape accusations against the Indian Armed Forces and murders of militants and civilians.

Women's reactions mirror the conflict's complexity, as well as the daily difficulties that go along with it. Assertive participation in political arenas by women who seek civil and political rights may be an expression of their identity. In the meantime, others are compelled to play new roles they don't want to play (such as the half-widows who are unexpectedly thrust into the public sphere of conflict to play unconventional roles), and for others, even going out to their orchards alone is too risky because the crisis of accountability in rural Kashmir is even worse.

Leading a decent existence may be a great struggle for the half-widows of Kashmir (husbands disappeared/taken away by security forces or militants). The identity of a woman in traditional Kashmiri² culture is entwined with that of her spouse. An unmarried lady is no longer the man's duty until she is married off. This puts a lot of these women

¹ "Crawford, B. and Lipschutz, R., The myth of "ethnic conflict": Politics, Economics, and "Cultural" Violence: "Cultural Conflict in India: Punjab and Kashmir", by Nirvikar Singh, United States: University of California, 1998."

² "Dabla, Bashir Ahmad (2010): "Suicides in Kashmir Valley 1999-2000" in Sociological Papers on Kashmir, Vol 2."



(many of them are half-widows) and their children in a precarious position since they have no income. "The absence of closure in their life makes their existence miserable," says Nyla Ali Khan, a scholar and the great-granddaughter of Sheikh Abdullah. Even yet, it is precisely their fragility that unites and promotes the development of solidarity in places where people are linked by sorrow, struggle, and states of resistance. Goldie Osuri is the name of the character. Even if the image of women looking for and waiting outside of military camps and police stations in hopes that their sons, brothers, or spouses will be freed is heartbreaking, it also exposes women to the worst aspects of public life in a traditional and heavily militaristic culture. Because they've been accused of spying for the government, these women are also subjected to harassment by the male-dominated bureaucracy. Additionally, the large number of Indian soldiers, which the locals see as an occupying army, causes anxiety among women and their families, resulting in limited freedom of movement for women in public places. It has also led to the over-control of women and their bodies throughout time.

Role of women in the conflict

In 1989, Kashmiris' satisfaction with India sparked the use of terrorism and militancy in the Kashmir dispute. Several militant organisations have waged war against India and its security forces ever since. Many militants moved to politics when public support for the insurgency waned; nevertheless, the voices of women have been denied their proper place in discussions about the Kashmiri³ war and politics. Despite the fact that women have suffered disproportionately in the war and have played critical roles in separatist and the armed insurgency in Kashmir, their contributions to these movements are seldom acknowledged in popular accounts of the region's militancy. Even while the notion of female Kashmiris becoming involved in militancy raises some eyebrows, the media quickly declares or defends any such charges levelled against them.

Kashmiri woman challenges state's 'discriminatory' property law

If a Kashmiri woman who is a permanent resident marries someone from another state, she loses her right to possess property in Kashmir⁴, and her children lose their title to the property as well. Nevertheless, even when married to a non-permanent resident, a Kashmiri permanent resident may possess property and leave it to his offspring. "The legislation creates a scenario where Kashmiri women are discriminated against and deprived in their own state," WaliKhanna remarked. There is a question mark over her Kashmiri heritage and she is denied her rights as both an Indian citizen and a woman, she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Supreme Court ordered central government to answer petition on August 1st, which was given last week. She claimed WaliKhanna, whose family left the state decades ago, has been to visit many times for holidays. A few years ago, she contemplated buying a purchase in that area.

³ "Akhtar, Shahzada (2011): Kashmir: Women Empowerment & National Conference (Srinagar, Kashmir: Jay Kay Books)."

⁴ "Asif, Mohammad (2011): "Sopore in Shock, Kashmir Wants Answers", Conveyor, Vol 3, January-February."



Although she could have applied if she were a permanent resident, authorities claimed she would be denied since she is married to a non-Kashmiri national.

Challenges to Empowerment of Women in J&K

J&K has seen a dramatic increase in violence against women. People's illiteracy or ignorance is a barrier to women's⁵ emancipation. In many J&K areas, young girls are still married, which has a larger impact on their entire development. Inability to make decisions due to a lack of power Many societal norms and cultural practises limit women's ability to take charge of their lives. When their girls reach puberty, many parents opt out of sending them to school. Women's underrepresentation in politics Women are poor and have low status, and a high percentage of women are illiterate. Absence of knowledge Lack of sufficient and structured health care delivery system Underemployment and unemployment resulting in poverty

Conclusion

Women in Kashmir have suffered on many levels as a result of the war, both directly and indirectly. Social connections are harmed and made more difficult for people when they are involved in conflict. Women who get caught up in a chaotic scenario face a slew of challenges. After Article 370 was revoked, hostility, mistrust, and attempts to use security as a weapon in Kashmir⁶ grew rapidly, creating social rifts among the people. To settle personal scores, one party provides false information to accuse the other, resulting in the overuse of severe security regulations for small scuffles. The conflict's toll on Kashmiris living inside the state is clear to see. It may not be as apparent outside of Kashmir, but the ramifications are just as destabilising. Even those who attempt to restart their lives by moving away from Kashmir (particularly to other parts of India) are met with conflict. After Article 370 was repealed, friends urged a Kashmiri girl studying at a renowned Delhi University institution not to wear a headscarf to avoid being recognised. She was terrified by the rhetoric used by a Hindutva brigade that came to her dormitory handing out sweets following the abrogation. As a Kashmiri girl, she has been frequently compelled to seek treatment due to the combined effect of her life in Kashmir and outside the region.

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⁵ “Bashir, Aliya (2011): The Date, The Deed, Kashmir Life, 01-07 May.”

⁶ “Kashmiri Women’s Initiative for Peace and Disarmament (2004): Voices Unheard, a newsletter of, Vol 5, January-March.”



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