



## WOMEN UNDER MILITARISM: LOOKING THE WORLD FROM KASHMIR

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### Abstract

Why women are in such condition in a militarised zone? What makes them inferior? How does it differ from women's condition of a 'peaceful', non-militarised place? This paper argues that, it is Militarism, which puts women in such condition. The first segment of the paper explains what militarism is? Under this question it brings the theoretical debates regarding militarism and masculinity. And then, that debate has been contextualised in Kashmir. Secondly, the discussion goes from place to place; gets an account of women's condition where militarism prevails or was prevailing. It enlists the major crises that women face under militarism. Along with that, it takes some facts from Kashmir which is one of the most militarised zones of the world: Militarism is an ideology while militarisation is a process. Based on this understanding, this paper explains, in a militarised zone, how militarism penetrates the day to day life of the people. Simultaneously, the facts have been generalised in the world. The role of religion in shaping militarism has been explained from grounded examples of Kashmir. The study has also examined the most painful and enduring sufferings of women's lives under militarism which begins at war time but lasts for indefinite periods even in peace time under the heading of social cost.

**Key Words:** Militarism, Militarisation, Masculinity, Social Cost, Conflict, Armed Peace.

### Introduction

The quarter of a lakh of the Army deployed in the areas (once called Nagam Pargana now Alaqai Charar-e-Sharief) demonstrated its entry in the manner in which a victorious army enters the defeated enemy territory. With the loud claim to flash out a few dozens of militants, they behaved as if they had to flash out the dead bodies of the populace of the area. Ghulam Hassan Shah did dare to ask a J.C.O the reason for this particular behavior. He advised the officer to behave as ambassadors of goodwill from India to Kashmir. To this the officer replied, 'see, what Pakistan Army has done with the Muslim of Dacca (Dhaka)'. It is unfortunate that when a Kashmiri girl accuses a soldier or an officer of rape, that gets justified by equating the soldier with an ex-soldier of Pakistan (Gauhar 2001: 184-85).

This is how crimes against women in particular and crimes against humanity in general are being justified by the countries and nations relating with the other's impunity. In this way militarism prevails at its highest degree in a zone of conflict. Well known that, gender constitutes both male and female of Human society. So, people might question why the title is focused on only women and why not to the men. A precise answer is, evidently men are experiencing at least some degree of constructed 'supremacy' comparing to the women counterpart of the society in almost every dominant part of the world. In a zone of war and conflict where military plays the most vital role women are always subjected to an unsecured situation. Similarly any place which is not in a full-fledged war but in a war like situation or where, a 'low intensity war' goes on also gives the same social treatment to the society.

Why women are in such condition in a militarised zone? What makes them inferior? How does it differ from women's condition of a 'peaceful', non-militarised place? This paper argues that, it is Militarism, which puts women in such condition. The first segment of the paper explains what militarism is? Under this question it brings the theoretical debates regarding militarism and masculinity. And then, that debate has been contextualised in Kashmir. Secondly, the discussion goes from place to place; gets an account of women's condition where militarism prevails or was prevailing. It enlists the major crises that women face under militarism. Along with that, it takes some facts from Kashmir which is one of the most militarised zones of the world: 'in 2009, the Guinness Book of World Records declared Kashmir as the 'planet's largest militarised territorial dispute (Umar 2013)'; 'The total estimated number of forces to be varying between 656,638 to 750,981 (Iqbal 2015)', and examines the fact by qualitative means. Newspapers, Books, internet sources and experiences of the authors during their academic activities in Kashmir University have been taken as sources of this exercise.

### Militarism

Militarism is an ideology which has the basic value of using 'power over the others'. It is a sense of using force to solve a problem. It believes on 'violence as a method of resolving conflicts'. It can be state or it can be non-state. As we see many nations of the world are not recognised as nation-state but they do have a deep feeling of nationhood. As in Kashmir we see, a sense of 'Kashmiri Nationhood' which was thought to be 'freed' or 'protected' from 'invasion' or 'oppression' led to an 'armed struggle'. Though the 'armed groups' were non-state actors but militarism was the basis within them. Use of force



was the best way for them to solve the problem. According to realist discourse every nation/state has to have a 'military' to protect its territory from 'the others'. Even violence is legitimate under that. Countries of the world follow this discourse. So, almost all countries of the world are 'militaristic'. Under Nationalism the peoples are classified as 'us/ours' and 'them/others'. When nationalism is linked to militarism, the 'other' becomes the 'enemy' (Burke 2012: 2). So, gender and peace activists explain, the institutions of the military and its material and ideological manifestations tell these are the institutions based on power and oppression (ibid: 4). Now the question is does militarism prevail only in men's psyche. Are all women anti-militaristic? A huge debate is available among the feminist academics in this regard. Burke says, 'war and fight are considered to be 'men's work' so patriarchy is the central character of militarism' (Burke: 1). On the contrary, *bell hooks* thinks, arguing male as synonymous with strength and female as synonymous with weakness may be stereotypical norms. According to Burke's description, 'militarism' does not keep confined only in a state's characteristic. It remains deep rooted into the society and its constructions. She argues,

Society constructs men as aggressive, powerful and responsible for protection. In the contrary, women are socialised as weak, passive and in need of protection. The masculinity of war depends on the myth that women must be protected. As it often the case with patriarchal assumptions about women, there are 'good' women (wives, mothers and 'sweethearts') who need protection, and 'bad' women (prostitutes and enemy women) who are expendable. This distinction is very clear in the militaristic mind and explains the fact that a soldier who is fighting for the freedom and honour of 'his' women can rape and murder 'their' women. Thus, militarism opposes equality between the sexes because it relies on the degradation of women and the denial of their subjectivity. Women exist only in relation to men as victims in need of protection, or as sexual objects deserving exploitation (Burke 2012: 6).

So, one view shows Militarism is 'inherently masculine in nature'. It explains and symbolises 'nation' or 'country' or 'territory of a group' as mother (women) who is to be protected by the 'sons' of the nations (men). That means motherhood itself can become militarised what Ximena Bunster called 'patriotic mothering' (Chenoy 2002: 3). But, all men may not be militaristic. There may be men who fight war for a nation but they are not militarist. As *bell hooks* explained with reference to her family experience,

'All men do not glory in war, all men who fight wars do not necessarily believe that wars are just, that men are not inherently capable of killing or that militarism is the only possible mean of safety' (Hooks 1995: 59).

She further explains,

'By equating militarism and patriarchy, feminists often structure their arguments in such a way as to suggest that to be male is synonymous with strength, aggression, and the will to dominate and do violence to others and that to be female is synonymous with weakness, passivity, and the will to nourish and affirm the lives of others. While this may be stereotypical norms that many people live out, such dualistic thinking is dangerous; it is a basic ideological component of the logic that informs and promotes domination in Western society' (ibid).

In many societies it has been examined that, not only men but women also have this psyche. Women as mother act as the 'primary socialising agent' for a child who socialises the child under this notion of 'militarism'. So, that mother (women) may also be militaristic. For example: *Saira*, a Kashmiri widow whose husband lost his life in fighting, lets her 10 years old son to play with a toy gun, tells proudly, 'the child of a freedom fighter will be a freedom fighter' (Choudhury & et al 1994: 1). Haneefa Begum, a retired teacher of 67, mother of a pro-freedom activist who was killed by the state force, said, 'I gave both sons for Kashmir cause, will sacrifice everything for it' (Greater Kashmir 2015: 1). Kashmiri Literature too constructs such. Akhtar Mohiuddin wrote in 1990s when Kashmir was in a high conflict, in a short story, *Aatankwadi* (Terrorist), that, a little child while walking in the street with his mother started crying seeing the armed soldiers. The army officer thought the child might have been terribly scared. He affectionately said to the child not to be scared. The mother replied, 'Hell, scared! My son is crying because he wants your gun'. The army officer reacted, 'terrorist, bastard!' (Handoo 2005). Qualitatively, this is how child of a conflict zone is grown up with militarism and literature beautifies that. Same was manifested in Palestinian *front liners*, Algerian freedom fighters and in many parts of the world. As we get Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian's account 'the US media's portrayal of Palestinian women as 'bad' mothers who 'could not care less' for any of their losses, or who encourage 'terrorism', support extremism, and generally promote violence (Kevorkian, 2009: 2). May be the words stereotypically used by US media are negative but it gives a reality that, many of the Palestinian women justify violent-fighting of their 'men' for their 'nation'. Similarly, Professor Chenoy explains in South Asian Context, 'in many instances women become carriers of the ideology of militarism without being conscious of it and in the process they act as 'agents' of the state (2002: 3). While talking to the female students from Kashmir, these researchers also experienced, large number of Kashmiri women feel that their men have sacrificed their lives and women have lost 'dignity' for the sake of nation and still



they are fighting for their rights and it is justifiable. One of the students named anonymous explained, 'we lost a lot, now nobody may support violence against violence, but fighting should be continued in other ways'.

Thus, militarism is 'masculine in nature which tells 'our' nation, symbolised by women, to be protected from 'others' by using power' but it is not exclusively a nature of men or exclusively of women. Many of men and women can have militarism as their ideology consciously accepted or unconsciously constructed in their minds; some may not have so. But, it is prevalent and dominant.

The debate on militarism is not only confined in men and women but it goes into the international power polarisations as well. Marxist and other critical theorists argue militarism has its strong manifestation in 'capitalist' societies. Defense contractors have a personal interest in the expansion of military production and exert pressure to the government to pursue aggressive foreign policies (Chenoy: 10) which clearly refers to Aysha Siddiq's 'milibus' (2007) model of Pakistani military. In Iraq and Bosnia it was evidently seen that military contractors have been involved in women trafficking and prostitution. But, Soviet theorists of militarism submitted that while all states have military forces, all are not militaristic (Chenoy: 11). In fact, Marxists and others have used a concept of 'just wars' against colonial and oppressive regimes. But, in cases like Angola, Zaire military dictatorship took its way after freedom (ibid: 9-10). In case of Algeria, the independence war (1954-62) can be a 'just war' which was fought by 'National Liberation Front (FLN)'. There women were told they would gain equality by fighting for a country. They fought; they received attention in the global media but later, after the independence, women's state of inferiority continued (Leonhardt, website). These debates explain that the impacts of militarism are enduring. In this context, feminists argue, it is masculinity rather than capitalism that connects with militarism (Chenoy: 17).

**Militarism and Militarization:** Scholars say militarism is an ideology while militarisation is a process. Church commission on international affairs explains militarisation as 'material aspect' and militarism as 'ideological' (1982: 2). Prof. Chenoy thinks militarism as a 'demonic system behind wars' and militarisation as 'a process which leads to war, defends the ideology of war and civil strife, and extends the power of the state into civil society' (Chenoy: 2). So, militarisation is the extended manifestation of militarism. As Cynthia Enloe explains militarisation can occur during war and peace (here peace is armed peace). According to her view, virtually anything can be militarised-- toys, scientific research, motherhood and the school curriculum (ibid: 17).

The entire theoretical debate will have no sense if social features of Kashmir are not brought in this debate as, *bell hooks* contextualised debates of militarism between white and black women. She explains statements like 'women are the natural enemies of war' and 'men are for war' as a 'distortion of woman's reality, not a clarification, not a redefinition. Often the women who make such assertions are white. Black women are very likely to feel strongly that white women have been quite violent, militaristic in their support and maintenance of racism... The more rights for white women would better enable them to support U.S. nationalism and imperialism.' This indicates that militarism may vary from society to society, place to place, even race to race (black to white). It also indicates that the degree of militarism in women's psyche may vary from society to society. Coming back to Kashmir, it is seen that religion is deep rooted in the entire society and the conflict over Kashmir has also emerged from an agenda which has high degree of religious connection. So, to examine the women's condition under militarisation, rather militarism, in Kashmir the stake of religion in the society has to be looked into. 2011 census data says Kashmir Valley has 98% Muslim population. It has been usually claimed that, Indian Army in Kashmir is a 'Hindu Army in Muslim Land'. So, the construction of Kashmiri Nationalism (in fact militarism which came up as an armed struggle) was accelerated by the sense of protecting 'Muslim Land' and 'women' from Hindus. Adding to that mostly people of Kashmir love Pakistani and Afghani Muslims far more than the Pandits of Kashmir who are ethnically and linguistically Kashmiris. Sociologist B A Dabla's research on women's response regarding religion tells the same thing. Responding to the question 'do you feel discriminated by religion in inheritance?' 62.16% women said 'no' (Dabla 2007: 171). Thus, in Kashmir, very less people can question religion. Such faith on religion gives an easy way to use religion to justify militarism. So, women and men irrespective of gender supported a non-state militarism (armed resistance) against the state militarism. As Haneefa Begum, a retired teacher of 67, after the death of her second son, explains, 'I have prepared my beloved son for this day. I am proud of his martyrdom (death for God)' (Greater Kashmir 2015: 1). This is how, religion plays important role in shaping 'patriotic mothering'. Another distinctive fact is, when a man sacrifices for the nation he becomes '*Shahid*', his family is to be respected but when a woman is raped or molested she becomes unacceptable. When a woman is killed after being raped her family is stigmatised which religion does not say. Here, interpretation and social practice of religion becomes one eyed, it becomes patriarchal. On one hand people have deep faith in religion and on the other hand the interpretation of that at many places is deeply patriarchal and weighed on the basis of societal laws.



And of course, in Kashmir, as state has more power of destruction they did so and that followed by the non-states. That has resulted huge violence, death and human sufferings and that caused an enduring, chronicled 'social cost' for the women. And it is yet to put an end. Ex-chief justice of Jammu and Kashmir Bahauddin Farooqi remarked, 'there are three kinds of violence—tyrannical violence used by the tyrant who want to retain power against the will of the people. This breeds violence on the other side—revolutionary violence which is self-defense. The tyrant responds to revolutionary violence by repressive violence' (Choudhury & et al: 34). We can term this phenomenon as Johan Galtung's 'structural violence'. Mahmood-ur-Rashid remarks, 'in a conflict zone where visible and invisible structural violence have deep foundations, a sudden surfacing up of a newer form of violence is always expected' (Rashid 2015). There abnormality seems to be normal. The situation is always in decay what Henrik Vigh calls as 'persistent decline'. One male student of Kashmir once remarked honestly that, I have born in and brought up in conflict since 1992. For me this is a normal situation. I have no idea of the situation where there is no military and no conflict. So, if now the militarisation ends in Kashmir, what would be my behavior? How would I act there with my mother, sister or any other women? This question makes us clear that, militarisation may end but, militarism as an ideology is spread into the day to day life of people and that goes deeper into the society beyond the conflict.

Shortly, three outcomes of the whole debate on militarism can be enlisted in Kashmir context. First, militarism is experienced in Kashmir both state and non-state forms. Secondly, religion and its interpretations have 'stake' in formulation of militarism. They shape the social constructions that tell women also to be militaristic, give impunity of 'women abuses' committed by 'our' men to the others women. And, there is a culture of denial of violence against 'the other' community and dignifying the loss of 'our men' but of 'women'. Thirdly, as the conflict in Kashmir has turned into a low-intensity war, the militarism manifests into the day to day life of the people. From the battle field it moves into the families, houses and everywhere.

After all, the final fact is, women are being affected, raped, molested by this or that group irrespective of all identities. As Nayeema Mahjoor has written about the case of Hanifa, who were left 'unprotected' during the conflict in Charar-E-Sharif, in 1995.

Her house was burnt, parents killed, brother absconded and fiancé disappeared, she was left to live at the mercy of neighbours who left her at the mercy of 'Azadi Pasand' who then left her at the mercy of mainstream who then left her at the mercy of social welfare, ultimately kicked out for being supporter of this group or that group. Our boys were killed, maimed, jailed or tortured that was not the punishment 'Hanifa(s) of Kashmir' were rewarded. There is a half population of 'Hanifas' in this state... (Mahjoor 2015).

Our final understanding is, from whatever perspective we look into the militarism, it gives a picture of sufferings of women with an inferior status in the society both in war and post-war (armed peace) time.

### **Impacts of Militarism on Women**

The common impact of militarism on the women is already explained to some extent. But, that is not only in one aspect it has manifold layers of impacts upon women. Some of them are enlisted bellow.

**Women's Body as a Separate Battle Field and as a Powerful Weapon of War:** Defaming other's women is referred to the defaming of others nation. And, at the same time it gives 'pleasure' and 'fun' to solders who are in fight as Lu Chuan depicted in his film 'The City of Life and Death (2007)' how troops were singing after their 'enjoyment' with female refugees who were forcefully taken in Army Camp and then raped. The film Guerilla by Tareq Masud depicts how a Pakistani army officer tells, 'I have never *tested* a Hindu (enemy) women' (2011). In Kashmir, the incident of Kunan Pospura (1991) has been discussed highly in many parts of the world. Militarism tells 'others' women should be raped and defamed. Raping other's women symbolises rape of others 'nation'. By doing so, one military demoralises others. So, to rape a woman is also a weapon of war to defeat enemies. Human right watch reported in 1995, 'Rape is used as a means of targeting women whom the security forces accuse of being militant sympathisers; in raping them, the security forces are attempting to punish and humiliate the entire community' (HRW 1995: 56). Such reprisals have occurred frequently after militant attacks on security patrols. In one such case, on October 1, 1992, a BSF patrol returning from a crackdown in the village of Bakhikar, in Handwara district, came under attack by militant forces. One member of the BSF patrol was killed. Following the ambush, BSF forces rampaged through the nearby village of Battektut, killing ten people and burning houses and grain stores. After Battektut, forces entered the village of Gurihakhar and raped a number of women' (Ibid: 68).

Similarly there have been some incidents of rape by militant groups where the victims or their families were accused of being informers or of being opposed to the militants or supporters of rival militant groups. In some cases, women have been raped and then killed after being abducted by rival militant groups and held as hostages for their male relatives. In other cases,



members of armed militant groups have abducted a woman after threatening to shoot the rest of the family unless she is handed over to a militant leader. The fact that local people sometimes refer to these abductions and rapes as 'forced marriages' gives some indication of the social ostracism suffered by rape victims (Ibid: 70). All the above cases indicate that, women in Kashmir have been targeted for rape and abduction as a weapon of war.

**Women as a Part of Military: A Dilemma in Feminist Perspective:** To deal with militarism what can be the proper way for women? Should women join the military and act as men do? Or should women go with the message of peace? This is again a debated question. Galia Golan has explained the case of Israel that,

In Israel Defense Forces (IDF), men are the only sex that can serve in combat positions. The reason most often given (though not officially) for excluding women from combat positions is that women might fall prisoner and be raped. This is an explanation that certainly exemplifies and reinforces the stereotypical view of women as vulnerable and in need of protection—ignoring the fact that men too may be subject to atrocities and indignities as prisoners (Golan 1997).

This situation is not only in Israel, but everywhere. In India, there are 26 schools (Sainik School) which are exclusively for boys. The academic curriculums of those schools are to make them fit for Indian Military Service. There is no such school for girls. Even if women join the military they are being trained with the 'attempt to masculinise them'. The message during military training is to 'kill the women in you' (Chenoy: 18). In this condition, should women join the military? Or should they avoid? Many people argue women can be the harbingers of peace. But, many tell, women should be represented every place whether it is military or whatever it is. In Kashmir context women was not seen as armed militants as it was seen in Algeria 1954 (which is also a Muslim society). But, the support for non-state militarism (armed fight for right) is higher in women. Women's initiative reported,

'In our eyes every Kashmiri women is a true 'mujahid', a fighter for justice. They provide a non-violent resistance that has sustained domestic life with courage, humour and active support to the dream of independent Kashmir... Kashmiri Women have been targeted brutally on the part of the Indian security forces, both as punishment for their support of the struggle, implicit or explicit, as well as a means of breaking the movement itself (Choudhury & et al: 21).'

**Women, Prostitution and Militarism:** In the case of Iraq war, several reports came explaining the reality of supporting prostitution by and for US forces. The prostitutes were transported from Kuwait to Baghdad in US armored car (Linkins, Huffington Post 2008). Complaints of sex-slave trade by US based private military company DynCorp in Bosnia was also came out in 2002 (ibid). DynCorp employees were caught trafficking women in Bosnia, and some indications suggest that similar acts may be taking place in Iraq (McNutt 2007). Military prostitution has long been seen around U.S. bases in the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and other countries. U.S. military deployments in the Gulf War, the Afghan War, and the Iraq War have reinvigorated prostitution and the trafficking of women in the Middle East (ibid).

After the Gulf War, harsh economic sanctions forced many desperate Iraqi women into prostitution. The sex trade grew to such an extent that in 1999 Saddam ordered his paramilitary forces to crack down on it in Baghdad, resulting in the executions of many women (ibid). McNutt also reported some Chinese, Filipina, Iranian and Eastern European women may also be prostituted to Americans and other Westerners within Iraq. Chinese women might also be prostituted in Afghanistan, Qatar, and other Muslim countries where it may be difficult for rings to find local women.

Two Chinese movies can be set here as examples that depict how women suffer in war. The Flowers of the World (2009) by Zhang Yimou shows, how teenager girls were forced into prostitution by the Japanese troops during the second Sino-Japanese war (1937). Another movie tells more brutal situation of the war. The City of Life and Death (2007), directed by Lu Chuan, depicts how Japanese troops advanced to the female refugees and raped, how the international community and peace keeping organisations were helpless, how safe zone of war became unsafe.

Coming to the context of Kashmir, the cases are very tough to explain from reliable references. As the zone is disputed between India and Pakistan, the newspapers of both sides do not report the events in a same manner. Few cases of the military of Indian administrated Kashmir were reported in Pakistani media and some western media as well. The Daily Mail reported,

"The first battalion of Indian army that actually comprises sex workers, recruited from relict areas across India with the help of RAW and posted as Border Guards in the occupied Kashmir by Indian army in September 2009, with aims to provide 'fun' to soldiers in the area who were constantly committing suicide, is now reported to be suffering from



some serious medical problems due to unsafe sexual activities while at least 63 out of the total 178 female “soldiers”, posted under Northern Command in September last, are reported to have been tested positive in the pregnancy tests, carried out at military hospitals while many male soldiers have also been diagnosed with serious sex related diseases” (Daily Mail 2010).

In the contrary, Indian authority claimed it as fake reporting as telegraph covered, ‘The report which was published on the day the female unit was deployed in Kashmir has been dismissed as a propaganda ploy by Pakistan’s ISI intelligence agency, the ISI, to demoralize Indian troops’ (Telegraph 2010). Although there are doubts on the reportage but, we cannot deny the chance of enforced prostitution by the military. Aliya Bashir, a women right activist and journalist worked in Kashmir, has written, Military violence in Kashmir, in the 1990s, also forced numerous girls to become child soldiers or to become concubines for roaming military forces. Facing this and many other crimes, including rape, women had little power to report crimes committed against them inside the region (Bashir 2012). Due to conflict, many women are the only heads-of-household. This places pressure on the children to help their mothers financially (ibid). That means, this conflict plays as a push factor for prostitution and sex trafficking from Kashmir although the intensity of this fact cannot be explained until a quantitative research is done on this issue.

**‘Social Cost’ and Enduring Sufferings for Women-- Half Widow, Public Humiliation of Molested Women and Future for Orphans:** The consequences of conflict which are innumerable will be discussed briefly under the heading of social cost in this section. Here we can explain the most painful and enduring sufferings of women’s lives under militarism which begins at war time but lasts for indefinite periods even in peace time. The loss of *beloved family members* of millions of women was irrevocable in Bangladesh. In Kashmir, the women who lost their husbands might have got married but what can they ensure for her orphans. In 1992 Mohammad Amin (a hospital worker of age 23) was killed by forces whose wife was remarried by her parents leaving the two orphans with their old grandparents. Women like Munira who got widowhood due to her husband’s death was surviving by collecting and selling firewood and working as a field labourer herself (Choudhury & et al: 8). Nader Ali Khan, a 65 years old Gujjar: a hill living community, worked as a labourer, was burnt alive along with three members of his employer’s family when the house in Sopore was set ablaze by the force. His wife Marjan and five daughters are totally illiterate, and with no financial support, have been reduced to begging for livelihood (Ibid: 9). These cases are therefore examples of ‘feminization of poverty’. Many women are subjected to displacement, migration, refugee hood and in many other socio-economic crises.

The constant *humiliation and social negligence* crosses all limits in case of *molested and raped women* as we have seen the cases of ‘*Birangana*’s of Bangladesh. Similar were the conditions of the women of Kunan, a village in Kashmir, where around 30 (number varies in different reports) women were raped by 5<sup>th</sup> Rajputana Rifles (an Indian Armed force) on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1991 (Choudhury & et al: 10). Ridiculously the number has become a matter of debate. Press Council of India concluded their investigation saying that ‘no rape had taken place because the raped girls had been laughing’ (ibid). While, many reports say, the number is around 60. In reality the testimonies of these women are unimaginable, heart rending-

‘No marriage had taken place in the village in the next three year. All girls, raped and not raped, were single. All the married raped women have been deserted. After intervention by militants and elders, two husbands did take their wives back, one on the condition that there would be no conjugal relation, the other that he would live in the city away from his wife. *Sharifa*, mother of six children committed suicide, along with another raped women. Seven sisters who were gang raped have been left to fend themselves. A nine month old pregnant woman delivered a child three days after she was gang raped by eight *jawans*, the child had both arms fractured. Bano delivered a five and a half month dead foetus two weeks after she was raped’ (ibid: 11).

Another woman from another village, *Marium*, was publicly raped by BSF after killing his husband in early 1993. She had a child (reported in 1994) conceived during the rape. She received absolutely no support from anyone from the village. The society itself also believes the values of militarism. They feel shamed and defamed after their women being raped. So, they deny accept the raped women. They deny recognise a new born baby conceived by rape committed by an enemy soldier. This is how women of a society went ‘unprotected’ and that society was reluctant to accept them as their own women with the same reverence. Girls were teased and taunted, even by the village men: ‘did you enjoy it? Want some more?’ None of the girls went outside the village (ibid: 11). By this way, women of a society face continuous humiliation under militarism. The Boys who go school and college are teased by their fellow students: ‘you are from the ‘raped’ village’ (ibid). This is how, raping a girl is perceived as rape of a land, rape of a village. By this way, the cost that women pay under militarism is beyond any measurement. Militarism goes on in both sides, one to protect women, other to affect women.



A large number of women, approximately 1500 (Kandwal, 2013), whose husbands were disappeared forcefully, called *Half widows* in Kashmir, have nowhere to go. They are still waiting for their husbands but nobody knows whether they are alive or dead. How many years they have to wait? They are also being constantly humiliated, defamed by the society. Religious leaders are yet to reach at a consensus about the question of their remarriage. '22 years after Kashmir's first custodial disappearance, clerics have ruled that they can remarry after waiting four years. But for many, the ruling has come too late' (Indian Express, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2014). According to Alzajeera report, there are around 10000 disappeared people (2013). In 1992, a pregnant woman of 25 years, Zoon, died in childbirth not being able to be taken into the hospital due to curfew. Same was the case for Khaleda, 21 years old, in 1992 (Choudhury & et al: 9). This is how under militarisation, which we explained as the highest manifestation of militarism, security of a human being goes unconscious under the notion of state security.

As now in Kashmir the conflict has gone down, despite the dispute over territory being unsolved, situation may be seen as better. But, still Armed Force Special Power Act (AFSPA) is prevailing there which gives the chances of impunity to perpetrators. The militarism, the notion of state security is still prevalent. A journalist in Kashmir explained there is increasing number of cases of domestic violence. Very few of them are being reported in newspapers. This researcher, asked to that journalist friend (10<sup>th</sup> June 2015) that the intensity of domestic violence and causes behind it (dowry, infertility, late marriage, divorce etc) should be brought out by the newspapers; why it is not being taken as a serious bit of reporting in Kashmir? The journalist replied, 'here conflict sales more, the follow up of public fight against state and state's action for its security are the major fact for reportage. Toll of death is important for constituting of news'. This may give us an idea that, how militarism keeps away all other issues regarding women. It is similar to the Golan's experience of Israel, 'characteristic of societies in a state of war: they have a particular set of priorities. Gender equality is not high on this list of priorities; women's issues are deemed less than secondary, certainly less urgent than the struggle at hand and, therefore, capable of awaiting solution (Golan, 1997)'.

### Conclusion

The billion dollar question is, as militarism has been deeply rooted in the state, in the society, in the religion, how to fight against it? *bell hooks* thinks in context of black and white women, 'to fight militarism we must resist the socialisation and brainwashing in our culture that teaches passive acceptance of violence in daily life, that teaches us we can eliminate violence with violence (hooks 1995)'. And as in Kashmir, half of the population, the women are continuously being raped, molested, killed and humiliated either under tyrannical violence or under revolutionary violence or repressive violence. It is a dilemma for the society. 'The more it suffers, the crueller it becomes. The more religious it becomes, the less humble it turns out (Mehjoor 2015)'. The state, the society, the religion, the culture everyone blames each other. State still feel threat for its security, despite the eliminated stage of militant outfits since 2000. So, the militarisation goes on. Militarism dictates the terms of state. The condition of women goes unchanged rather it is going from bad to worse. As the violence against women in home go unreported due to having less news-value. The everlasting 'social cost' of women seems to be a routine part of their life. In this persistent situation we recommend demilitarisation should begun immediately and human security has to be brought at the forefront of states agenda rather than traditional paradigm of security. Second, the peace process has to be 'engendered'. Women must be engaged there. Then only, the long lasting 'positive peace' can come in the region. Women can act as harbingers of peace. They can be the best 'third side' (Uri 2000).

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