

THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE, CAN IT RULE THE WORLD?

Crimes against women in war are not new. Every conflict sees women being intimidated by various crimes committed on them by the oppressor and the oppressed. Crimes against women in war are also committed to intimidate enemy. Women have been used as a tool since times immemorial. In the last few months many cases have come to light where women have been pressurized by the army or unidentified gunmen to work with them as informers. Many women who have refused to obey the orders have met the fate of 16-year-old Kulsoom who was shot dead by army. Although in newspapers it was written that unidentified gunmen killed her but her family and friends claim that army was forcing her to work for them and when she refused she was killed. Or of Akhtar Bano from Doda who was strangulated to death by unidentified gunmen dubbing her as an informer.

In other incident two girls from Badgam, Zaheeda and Nuzhat were shot at. First the girls were dubbed as militant aides and then forced by the security personnel to work for them and when they refused, they were shot at but miraculously they survived. Mahmooda Akhtar was arrested in September 2003 on the grounds of being a militant and subsequently she was released. Now she is torn between two sides with militants accusing her of turning into a army informer and on the other hand security forces still haunting her and suspecting her links with militants. The army on the pretext of having links with militants arrested Sakeena from Bandipora. The army even claimed recovery of weapons from her possession, a claim, which was strongly refuted by police. Already the people of this land are living in virtual fear, in a land where men cannot raise their voice against subjugation, how will naïve Sakeena prove her innocence? The nexus between women working for army and militants has shown an increase in the recent times. Newspapers reports are filled with news about women killed by unidentified gunmen. Who are these identified gunmen is never known with some saying they are security forces and some militants. Sometimes militants take responsibility of the killings but army as such has never come up with admission of their crimes that is understood of course. Are all women forced to work for security forces and unidentified gunmen or is it that some are lured by the booty that comes along. In rural areas atrocities are unreported and people are illiterate. Often women in remote areas are pressurized to work as informers or face consequences. Women often compromise for the safety of their children and family. Poverty coupled with miseries sometimes lead women to compromise as the threat to life is tough to resist for any soul.

Dilshada Bano stands ideal case. It may be recalled that Dilshada was mysteriously shot dead by unidentified gunmen in June this year. Her husband had been disappeared in custody and she was contesting the case in State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and was a member of APDP. People in her native village said that she was an informer and that is why she was killed. Village being a small place and if a woman is seen several times moving around she is suspected of having links with army or militants and often both sides view her with suspicion. The present conflict has seen a considerable loss of male members and it is left to women to follow the cases of *ex-gratia* & SRO 43. These women have to visit various security camps to ascertain death of the killed or whereabouts of disappeared. The army personnel take undue advantage and make them do the regular rounds and sometimes force them to work for them, as was the case with Dilshada who had once confided that renegades were forcing her to work for them. Even in the regular offices where women pursue these cases, they have to face humiliation from lower to higher ups in bureaucracy. Often these women are young and men look lecherously at them. It is not only that poor section of women are sometimes lured, cases have come to light where girls from affluent families in Baramulla and Sopore are seen visiting security camps at odd hours, reasons best known to them. Recently police exposed a nexus between soldiers and local girls.

Informer of security forces or not, sympathizer of militants or not women always suffer and are stigmatized. It is she who is stigmatized like Mahmooda was, like Akhtar was and like Kulsoom was. Women are vulnerable and are an easy prey for the predators. Hence we see an increase in the number of killings of women in the guise of militant sympathizers or army aides. Women are stigmatized and the brunt of which she bears even long after she is gone. Crimes against women will continue as long as the crimes committed on them go unreported and unlamented and as long as certain sections of women are willing to compromise. *The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world* goes the maxim but definitely not true at least not true for women living in war zones.

Peace a word with so many connotations and concern for the entire globe. Every part of the world is witnessing conflict in some form. No doubt efforts are on in almost every part of world to resolve conflicts amicably. One such effort was made by the Netherlands based NGO, Inter Church Peace Council (IKV). They had organized a conference in Amsterdam and invited all its partners including Kashmir. The participants were from different conflict regions, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Balkans, Caucasus, Iraq, Palestine, Israel and others.

The four-day conference started from 6th October up to 10th October. The four-member delegation led by Parvez Imroz arrived in Amsterdam on 2nd October. During their stay the delegates comprising Zaheer-ud-Din, Bashir Ahmad, Parvez Imroz and Aasia Jeelani had interactions with many people in Netherlands. One of the interactions was with an organization, lawyers without borders represented by Hans Gees. The meeting proved to be very fruitful as the lawyers felt it was necessary to visit Kashmir and assess the human rights situation there. A meeting with the European diplomats was also held and the Kashmir imbroglio was discussed. One of the diplomat said that election in Kashmir was a window of opportunity and things have improved after it. He also said Kashmir was not on International agenda and only a major incident which could escalate tension between India & Pakistan and bring them on a brink of war would bring Kashmir back on the agenda. There was also an informal meeting with a lady lawyer who was contesting the case of two Dutch nationals killed in Kashmir by the security forces in January 2001.

A meeting was also arranged with Ewoud Plate from linking solidarity. The issue of humanitarian intervention and the negligible role-played by international organization like ICRC and MSF were discussed at lengths. Mr. Evans expressed the limitations of such organizations in any conflict regions.

An informal meet was also held with *Medicine Sans Frontier* (MSF) project coordinator on Kashmir who also felt that lot was needed to be done in Kashmir especially in the area of mental health which is deteriorating day by day owing to the political situation in the valley.

All these meetings were informal and proved very fruitful. The actual conference started on 6th October at De Glind (Amersfort) some fifty kilometers away from capital Amsterdam and ended on 10th October.

The conference began with the introduction of participants. The issues discussed thread bare were Humanitarian and military intervention, Islam and fundamentalism, inter religious reconciliation and peace building measures. The highlight of the conference was the debate on Kashmir titled "what is it in For Kashmir," at the Asian centre of studies in Amsterdam. All throughout the conference, Kashmir issue was discussed and even the other participants said that Kashmir issue has dominated the conference.

WOMEN ACTIVISTS IN CONFLICT ZONES:

There were number of women activists from different conflict zones especially from Caucasus and Balkans, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kosovo, Macedonia. In these countries women have played a very important role not only working specifically for women issues but other aspects of conflict as well. They have played a very important role in the political situation of their countries. It was heartening to see women play an active role in conflict unlike in Kashmir where women have maintained a cool silence.

Like the rest of the participants in the conference these women activists were not aware of the real problems in Kashmir. They believe Kashmir is a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan while many were not even aware of the situation in Kashmir. It is indeed ironical that in today's world when we are speaking of globalization and the shrinking of world, people do not know what is happening in other parts of the globe. But conflict is conflict and women are women, the suffering binds them together. The reasons of the conflict may be different like in Kosova where there is a war between Serbs and Albans, although a ceasefire was announced yet the fight is far from over. In Georgia numerous sufferings are inflicted on women or there is Azerbaijan where the trouble still persists even after their breaking free from Russia. The causes may be different but the repercussion the same. One of the aim of attending this conference as women activist was to have interactions with women from other conflict regions and see the way they work. And the feeling of

isolation that we experience would be to an extent be surmounted. The IKV conference proved to be the much-needed pedestal from where to launch a movement of interactions.

Alliance building is very important to segregate the feeling of isolation and that is what the aim of KWIPD activist was as it sought alliance with its counterparts in other conflict zones. A need was felt by KWIPD to build alliances with women in conflict so as to see and share their experiences and expertise.

A workshop was organized on 7th October in which women activists participated and shared their experiences. Activists from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Kashmir participated in this workshop. The workshop was opened by speech from the Kashmiri activist who enlightened the other participants about the situation in Kashmir, the problems faced by the women in Kashmir as armed conflict started and the leash of reign of terror that was consequently lashed by the Indian security forces to suppress the popular up rising. From the last 14 years Kashmir was suffering men, women & children being killed for no fault of theirs. Women are raped and molested and the international community has paid no heed. The pleas and cries fell to deaf ears and blind eyes. A strong voice was needed to agitate **A need was therefore felt to form alliance so that women in conflict did not feel isolated and suffer in silence. Therefore in this regard KWIPD sought alliance with their counterparts from rest of the world and to work in tandem with them. It was decided to be in continuous contact and exchange literature and other material and also to organize workshop in conflict areas.**

In the meeting the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (1979) was discussed. It was held that the Kashmiri women could successfully file a complaint with the United Nations if the Indian government is not acknowledging or violating their rights.

Women activists from different countries also shared their experiences and the problems they face. A activist from Georgia said that in spite of the war like situation being over, things are far from better. Women are raped, killed and always intimidated. Living close to borders has always been a source of trouble for women in Georgia. All the women are suffering. Sajida from Azerbaijan said that they are trying to involve women in politics so that at least 50% of the women are elected to parliament. In Georgia also there is gender inequality, only 12% of women are represented in the parliament. Women are molested and raped in Armenia the activist from Armenia said. Peace activist in Armenia meet with other conflict areas and try to establish a dialogue at grass root. In Azerbaijan there are at least forty women organizations. Valdete Idrizi from Kosovo said there is this turmoil between Serbs and Albans. Idrizi who is working in Kosova says that they trained women in villages to journalism and the batches have been completed. Some of them are already working in the field she added. Idrizi said that the humanitarian and military intervention in Kosova was late, a lot of damage had been done by that time and she said such interventions have problems of their own. She pleaded that the International community should intervene in conflict region at a right time so that many precious lives could be saved. The workshop was very fruitful and was ended on a note of optimism that women activists in all the conflict regions will continue to help each other in their common endeavor to put an end to violation of women's right in any conflict zone.

On 9th October a debate in Amsterdam University in the department of Asian Studies in Amsterdam (ASIA) was organized. The debate titled 'what is it in for Kashmir' was attended by many people especially students and was very lively. The conference ended on 10th October and it was decided that efforts would be made to bring peace in every corner of the globe.

DARDPORA— A VILLAGE OF PAIN AND MISERY

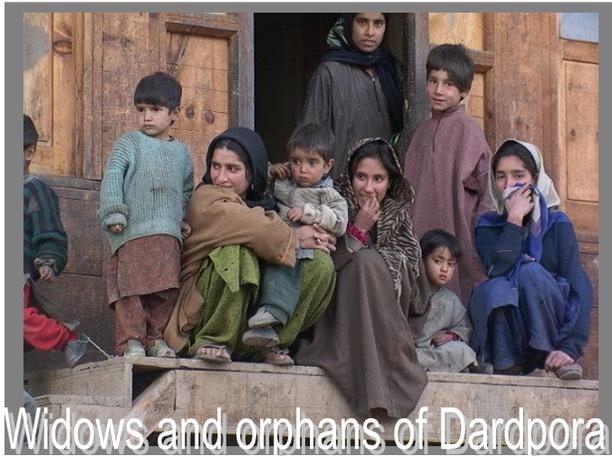
AASIA JEELANI

The word *Dard* in Urdu means pain and *pora* means area. Indeed true to its meaning Dardpora is a village where misery and pain is a part of the life of the inhabitants. Remotely located it is about 120 kms from Srinagar. The village Dardpora, Patimaidan, Sathboen, falls in north of Kashmir, and is devoid of water and electricity. In this era when the world has been revolutionized by technology, this village defies the theory of respite brought about by technology. Dardpora is divided into two belts, upper Dardpora and lower Dardpora. The lower one known as Kashmiri Dardpora, and upper one as Pahari or Gujjar Dardpora, whose inhabitants claim to be of Pakistani origin.

The geographical position of this village makes it live in dark ages. Difficult terrain makes this village highly inaccessible. Being extremely close to the borders it is heavily infested with army and militants and has seen a

considerable loss of human life in the past fourteen years. Agriculture is a source of livelihood but crops like wheat and maize, which require fewer water supplies, are sown, as there is always acute scarcity of water in this area. People are dependent on rainwater as the only source of irrigation.

Dardpora has hogged many headlines in newspapers. *The village has witnessed innumerable death of the youth and the village has about 122 widows and almost 300 orphans. Most of the killed were militants shot dead in encounters and some died due to internal rivalry within militant groups Al- Barq & Hizbul Mujahideen. Most of the widows choose not to re- marry but are living in utter misery due to financial constraints with no help coming from government or any NGO. This village has almost become a guinea pig where people within & outside the state keep pouring in for various research and survey work. They make tall promises but to this day the villagers say they never came back after their research was over.* The story of Dardpora's widows found stories in many newspapers but that was it.



A team of KWIPD visited the village with the aim of assessing the situation in the village and to look for a means of setting up some self help group. But the villagers are so wary of outsiders that they do not trust them and do not want to talk about themselves. They can hardly be blamed as many a times they have spoken their heart out with the hope that something would be done to improve their lot but each time they were let down. It took a lot of time to convince them about our intentions. We then met a lot of widows almost every household has one or two widows and orphans with no source of financial help. One such widow is Rafiq Bano whose husband died in the year 1990. He was severely injured in military firing. Army took him to a hospital but after one month brought him back in a morbid state and after 20 days he breathed his last. Rafiq Bano was left with two daughters Nusrat and Shafiq Bano. She did not receive any relief from the government, she manages herself and her two daughters as she is a teacher getting a meagerly sum of Rs 1500. She has no family support from her in laws and lives separately.

Tahir is blind in one eye and vision of another eye is very bleak. In 1997, his father Abdul Rehman Shiekh was killed by army in a cross firing. His mother remarried soon after and Tahir now lives with his grandfather. Shiekh was a militant with Al-barq. Few years back, Tahir was once operated in his eye but the surgery was not successful. Tahir's grandfather says, "Doctors say he should be taken to Chandigarh for the operation, but I am poor and cannot afford the expenses, and Tahir will have to resign to his fate of darkness."

Almost all the household in this village has loss one family member or more. There is Dilavar Khan's family; his two sons Mohd Ashraf Khan & Mohd Rashid Khan embraced militancy in the early 90's, and went to Pakistan administered Kashmir (POK) for arms training. Both were associated with Al Barq. In 1998 on 15th July, army in an encounter killed Ashraf Khan. Dilavar did not see his elder son alive after he came back from POK; he just saw his dead body later in a forest. Rashid his second son came back form POK in 2001 and one month later he surrendered before the army. For the next nine months he worked with the army and later quit it. Rashid says he joined army for momentary gains for more than anything else, "I thought I will get good

Samad Khan's story is about the damage that torture can inflict on a normal human being. His neighbor Dilavar Khan who himself lost his son says, "Samad Khan died due to the brutal torture by the army, he was arrested a subsequent number of times and tortured. All this affected his mental set up and he turned insane, four months back he was taken to the psychiatric hospital but to no avail and he died soon after. He was very poor, in fact when he died there was no money for his shroud all the villagers contributed Rs. 50 each for his shroud and burial. In his disturbed state of mind Samad often used to say that army was responsible for his miseries and pain, and would shower lot of abuses on them. In the end he went to a mountain and jumped from it putting an end to all his miseries"

money and other facilities but later I was fed up and felt there was nothing in it. There are no militants here, we want peace, people want peace, there has been enough loss to life here."

Naseema Bano is another widow. Her husband died a year after his marriage. In 99, a year after marriage her husband crossed over to POK, he came back and was killed in encounter. Naseema has no children and stays with her parents. "I don't want to marry again, once was enough, she says", or there is Sarwar Jan w/o Safudin Khoja. Saif was killed seven years back by unidentified gunmen. She has six daughters and one son. Her three children are studying; she has been paid the ex-gratia relief of Rs one lac and is therefore able to continue her children's education.

Deaf and dumb Zaytoon's story is a story of pain and anguish. Her husband Samad Khan died in Aug 2003 and has left behind three children, two daughters, Shakeela 11 years old, Parveena 3 and Farooq 5 years old. Shakeela, the eldest holding her siblings in her lap says, "my father died due to the incessant torture by army, every time he was arrested, he was tortured brutally and one day he turned insane and finally he died. ; Death may have relieved Samad from pain but his family of wife and three children continue to live and suffer, Zaytoon begs for a living.

Fatima yet another widow, her husband Ghulam Mohidin was killed in November 1992, she has three daughters and one son. The army killed her father-in-law Mangta Ram and her brother-in-law also. First Mangta Ram and her Brother in law were killed, they were beaten to death by the army and two years later her husband was killed in the clash between Al-barq and HM. The tragedy is that they have no male members in the family and again the same story of helplessness and poverty. Dilavar Khan says although no case of Rape or molestation has been reported but torture of village men is a common routine.

Today Dardpora is immune to pain as Dilavar Khan says those who die in encounter (militants) with the army, their bodies remain there, and they are not buried. The scavengers feed on them. Some of the militants of the area are buried within the periphery of the village and others from Pakistan like Rashid Khan s/o Gul khan r/o Faisalabad killed on 19th July also rest in peace there.

The upper Dardpora inhabitants claim their ancestors of Pakistani origin had migrated here for greener pastures for their cattle. But the grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence and the progeny of Pahari Dardpora seem to have learnt it the hard way. Dardpora brought only *dard* or miseries in their lives.

DARDPORA BLOT ON HUMANITY

BY ASSABAH-UL-ARJAMUND KHAN

Tornado within tornado outside swept like violent storm as we reached the hilly terrains of the village, long ago forgotten by the outside world. Condition of the road and the jerks, which we felt in the vehicle, had a story of their own to tell. Winters chill had much wetness preserved in it as it was the month of December, but the sullen and motionless faces had nothing to offer except expressions of bewilderment. What else could we expect in a village, where lived more than two hundred widows and orphans almost double their number? Yeah it was Dardpora, the name itself conveying the meaning. Everywhere, we found pain & grief. The unending saga of tails of woe had no panacea. I was part of the team of Kashmir Women's Initiative for Peace and Disarmament (KWIPD). We dropped at a place called Patti Maidan Sathbuon, Dardpora.

We entered a mud walled house supported by wood. In the room, I found the poster of Abdul Gani Lone and it was written 'Martyr of freedom', all of a sudden, the room got crowded with women and children. To my surprise, I discovered in no time that most of them are widows. I spotted a girl in the crowd. She was hesitant to talk to us. Much reluctantly, she agreed to converse with us, "My name is Shakeela" she said. Shakeela had this story to tell. "My grand father Mangta Khan was beaten to death by Indian army on 3rd June 1990. I am fifteen. I have two sisters. Syeda is eighteen and Safeena is ten. My Brother Mohammad Iqbal Khan is studying in 10th standard and is sixteen years old". Shakeela pointed out to a woman in the crowd and said, "she is my mother Fatima, my father Ghulam Mohiuddin was militant of Albarq, his code name was Amjad Khan. On 13th November 1992, there was an encounter between Albarq and Hizbul Mujahideen and my father got killed". "While Shakeela was narrating her story, the poignant pain in Fatima's eyes almost turned ruthless, psycho-

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analysis of Fatima's mind definitely revealed that she had flash backs of her husband's memory in her mind. The moments of joy and sorrow which they shared together sparkled like candle flame before her eyes. "Even if I am given riches of this whole world, they cannot be substitute to my husband", said Fatima with endless tears falling from her eyes. Tears fell from her eyes, so fell the oozing, suppressed emotions, which she had hid from the world so far. This was not all, besides Fatima there sat a stoic figure Reshma. Reshma was Fatima's sister in law, bony face, ogled eyes, wretched condition of physique, had a sorry tale. "I have a daughter and my son is reading in tenth standard. My husband Ghulam Hassan Khan, was sleeping in a house, in Jhanipora, Banjar. There were three men sleeping in the house, one was Lal din Khatana, another Dilawar Khoja. During night Indian army cordoned the house. Army till dawn beat all three of them mercilessly. All three of them succumbed to the injuries. It was the ugly night of 10th August 1993. In the morning villagers went to the spot and discovered their dead bodies". Reshma could not control her emotions while narrating her tale. No relief ever reached the family and life was as miserable as the crown of thorns.

We visited the spot where Mangta Khan and his two sons Ghulam Hassan Khan and Ghulam Mohiuddin were buried. On the way of the rocky terrain, we found Shakeela's brother Iqbal and he accompanied us to the place where his father, uncle and grandfather were laid for the final rest. We met there the last pearl of the bead, Shakeela's grandmother. She had come to offer prayers at her husband's grave and perhaps the grave of her two sons as well. This was the spot where lied the most valuable possession of life, which nobody could return to her. I asked, "Grand Ma how is life?" in feeble old voice, she said, "Life for me is tornado within and tornado outside as well. It sweeps like violent storm, like these hilly terrains, we (widows) have become hard rocks and tides of time have not been able to torment us in anyway".

TEENAGE SISTERS SHOT AT ACCUSED OF BEING MILITANT AIDES

Aasia Jeelani

Dec 22: According to newspapers report two teenage sisters were dragged and shot at by soldiers Sunday night in Poshker Budgam. The sisters are battling for life in SMHS hospital here, both having received multiple bullet injuries. Zahida 16 and Nuzhat 19 were dragged out of their house by hair and shot at. The troops were reportedly looking for a Hizbul- Mujahideen militant Hameed Sheikh whom the family denies any knowledge. The incident has led to wide spread condemnation.

KWIPD went to the SMHS hospital Srinagar to meet the sisters. Both of them were undergoing treatment and were badly injured in the shoot out. The two were lying in beds close to each other and both having drips attached to them.

Amidst the pain, the two sisters spoke to us and fear still haunted their nubile faces as they revealed their horrifying tale of torment. Nuzhat the eldest of the two, nineteen years old, is studying in 11th standard, last year she gave her Tenth class examination and had to reappear in one subject on 5th of January 2004. But her condition of now will not permit her to do so. In a feeble voice she narrates her story, "On Sunday 21st Dec, troops came along with a major and said militants are hiding in this house, they searched the entire household. Irritated by the fact that they found no militant, they said 'send your brother to the camp.' Our brother Tajamul is only 12 years old, we refused to do so. **Then at evening when we were about to have dinner, there was a loud bang on the door, before we could open it; it was broke open by the troops. They asked for Tajamul, my mother hid him behind her, when I questioned the major as to why he was asking for Tajamul, he became angry and started abusing us. I was angry and caught his collar, shocked by my daring attitude; he pulled me by my hair and dragged me outside to a neighbor's Assadullah's house. When my younger sister Zaheeda tried to intervene she was also pulled by hair and then the major first shot bullet on my right knee, and then left leg, see the bandages (she lifts the blanket to show the wounds) and my sister was shot on the chest and hands.** While leaving one of the jawans saw us and he cried to the villagers who had been assembled that they are alive save them, but his counterparts dragged him along, says fear stricken Nuzhat. Her face wears a pale look as she speaks in low whispers about the incident. Zaytoon, their mother who was sitting close to her daughters says, "I am sure they wanted to kill all of us, but somehow I raised a hue and cry, after that the villagers took them to local hospital and later brought them here for treatment. Now I am worried about my daughters' future & safety. I don't want to go back to our village, I will live here (in city) and rent a house, already my husband is very sick, he is suffering from a very serious ailment and past

few years he is bed ridden, he can't even walk. I have to feed him myself. He was working in the Jammu & Kashmir police but in 1996, he fell seriously ill and has not resumed his duties thereafter. Added to all the problems is this new episode. I will file a case against the major, he should be punished severely."

On closer introspection, Nuzhat revealed an angle to the story, which had triggered off the entire episode. "There was this boy Sajjad, he was studying with us, he was a militant with Hizbullah outfit. He used to come home often, six months back, he was arrested in Gagarpora, later he surrendered before the army and then started a period of trouble for us. He told them everything including the fact that he used to come to our house, which led to a raid on our house. During a raid, troops cordoned our house and found the weapons



ZAHIDA & NUZHAT UNDERGOING TREATMENT

hidden in our back yard. It miserably, after that there were searches at our house. Two Sidhu, was posted in the for us, he raided our house are the weapons', we said we abused us. Then he said you militants in the area. Recently a shop 'Jan studio' in Beeru Major accused us of being his alongm m with your sister him. We denied and he get a proof, then I will show you'. He said Sajjad has told me everything and I am just waiting for an opportunity to arrest you. In our area the army always harasses people, the Major calls the young boys to his camp and then beats them mercilessly. I had to take up my exams on 5th January, but how can I study, I will have to miss my exams", she says with a sigh.

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Lying next to her on another bed is her younger sister Zaheeda just 16 and studying in 10th class, she has been injured more seriously as she shows her injuries. Bullets were sprayed on her chest, on her knees and also on left arm. She wears a ghastly look on her face and in a low tone murmurs, "I tried to save my sister, but then the major caught hold of me and beat me and fired on me. After that I fell unconscious and now I find myself in a hospital. I feel lot of pain especially during the night. It is terrible" and saying this she closes her eyes as if to shun that memory.

Sitting close to her is her second sister Naheeda, who was lucky enough to escape the wrath of the major as she was not sprayed with bullets, just kicked off. Naheeda is an enthusiastic talker and was willing to share all the information of the event. She shed light on some additional information that added yet another dimension to this incident. Looking at sleepy Zaheeda she says, "Actually they wanted to harm me and Nuzhat, poor Zaheeda just got hit out of the blue. Ever since Sajjad was arrested, our troubles began and when the arms were recovered from our compound, it became worse. In the month of June his year, STF raided our house and took us, me & Nuzhat to a camp in Magam in the early morning at 6am. There we saw a woman who was brutally tortured. One of the STF men, Reyaz from Kupwara told us, 'tell them where you have hid the militants otherwise they will torture you in a similar way as the woman here' and pointed towards the woman who was in bad shape. At about 2 :0 clock there was a mine blast in the area, and they let us go after that. We were not molested, but while leaving they said you should come here again, actually they wanted us to work as informers for them which we refused, and hence all this torture. **There was another thing Major Sidhu was after one of our friends Kulsoom, he said 'she is very beautiful, I want to marry her, you should help me in this'. When we returned we told Kulsoom about it. Worried she and her family kept her in hiding for a long time, but the day troops shot my sisters, the same day Kulsoom was killed by the STF & army. Although in newspapers it was written that unidentified gunmen killed her, but we for sure know that it was the handiwork of the same Major. She refused to go by his whims and fancies and that is why she was killed on the day of her sister's engagement. Somehow major always had knowledge of her whereabouts.** Her death has shattered us and we fear for our lives also. We don't want to go back to our village, but our father is there and he is very sick and right now, neighbors are taking care of him."

As she narrated the story Dr Sajjad and his wife Dr Gulshan paid them a visit. The couple is distantly related to the girls and was instrumental in getting them to hospital and treating them. Dr Sajjad had this to say, "when I saw them, they were half dead, blood was oozing out and loss of blood could have killed them, their pulse was very feeble, but luckily we managed to get them here on time and save their lives". The condition of the sisters is stable of know but the danger is far from over. They have managed survival. Within the confines of hospital they feel safe but they shudder to think what the world outside the hospital holds for them. May be the worst is over or may be worst is yet to come.

SUFFERINGS TRADED

AASIA JEELANI

In today's world everything sells, you just need a buyer and there are plenty around. Gone are the days when basic commodities of life would sell like hot cakes now people trade human sufferings. Already the people of Kashmir are suffering here. And some unscrupulous elements are out to en-cash on their sufferings. Some quacks posing as *peers* (saints) and sages cheat the gullible people especially women who are more susceptible to exploitation being very emotional. In the ongoing conflict women in the form of widows, half widows, mothers and sisters suffered as they lost their dear ones. Many women whose dear ones disappeared still live in the hope that their loved ones will return one day. This hopes although their lifeline has always made them vulnerable to exploitation. Often people who know about their tragedy deceive them promising them that if they pay a sum of money sometimes huge amount, their dear ones will return back. Or if they perform certain rituals for which they charge money their work will be done. But in spite of all the things their dreams remain dreams and the disappeared never ever come again. But that does not stop them from pursuing these means.

Trading on people's suffering has become so common that people come up with brilliant ideas and strategies to cheat the victims. Recently news came into our notice that a man who gives his name as Mohd Shafi perhaps a fictitious one has devised a unique way to cheat the relatives (especially women) of disappeared persons. This man has read the two volumes of book, "Did they vanish in thin air" by Zahir ud

I am from CID, posted in military unit at the airport". He told her that your husband is fine and gets seven rupees a day and told her that he does not need money. But he added he has asked for clothes and shoes. He further said soon he would arrange for a meeting with him. Naturally the family was delighted to hear the news and immediately they shopped for new clothes and shoes which cost them about Rs. 5000. Taking the clothes he told Jana that he would deliver it at the earliest and told her when you meet him you give him the money yourself. After that he bid *au-reviour* and promised to come back soon. But the postman never rings twice and Jana still awaits the sound of doorbell.

din which documents the cases of disappeared persons in Jammu and Kashmir. All the details about their past, their professional & personal details including the date of disappearance, the arresting agency, the place, the time, venue and all the necessary information about the individual and his family is given in the book. In short an insight into an individual's life. This man Shafi came up with an idea why not to make a fortune from the sufferings of the relatives. So in all his might and with this book (second volume) in his hands, he embarked on a journey of deceit.

The first unwitting victim was Jana from Rawalpora. Jana's husband Manzoor Ahmad Dar was running a chemist shop when in the year 2001 he was arrested by the troops stationed at the airport. Since then his whereabouts are not known. This man chose his family members as his victims. He went to Jana and said, "I am from CID, posted in military unit at the airport". He told her that your husband is fine and gets seven rupees a day and told her that he does not need money. But he added he has asked for clothes and shoes. He further said soon he would arrange for a meeting with him. Naturally the family was delighted to hear the news and immediately they shopped for new clothes and shoes which cost them about Rs 5000. Taking the clothes he told Jana that he would deliver it at the earliest and told her when you meet him you give him the money yourself. After that he bid *au-reviour* and promised to come back soon. But the postman never rings twice and Jana still awaits the sound of doorbell.

The next victim he chose were the naïve villagers in Bandipora District Baramulla (north Kashmir) At Bandipora he reached the house of Habla Begum Her husband too had been disappeared few years back after he was arrested by security forces. Habla lives with her aged mother –in-law and a teenage son & daughter. The man went there and told him his name and used his *modus operandi*. He told them all the details that he had read and said he knew where her husband was detained. He asked them to give him Rs 1414 and he would get him released. The family was thrilled, they had almost given up hope but this man came like a messiah and rejuvenated their dying hopes. They arranged a feast for him and cooked all the delicacies and asked him to stay for the night. As he went to sleep he kept the bag he was carrying with Habla's daughter for safe custody. Curiosity got the better of her and she along with her brother opened the bag. Inside the bag there was a diary with the name Mohd Shafi Wani (CIB) and many telephone numbers. One was of the Rawalpura his previous prey. They noted down the numbers. The book on disappearances was also in the bag. They showed the bag to their mother. But she did not suspect any foul play. In the morning the man asked her the address of one Haja Appa of Vangam Bandipora. Habla accompanied him there. She promised to pay him the money once the meet was arranged. Then both of them went to Haja Appas house. Haja's story is very traumatic. She had three sons; two died in cross firing and third disappeared in custody. She lives in abject poverty with no source of livelihood. The man again churned out his run of the mill story. As he told her he knew the site of his son's detention and that he was safe. Haja was over whelmed with emotions. For a moment she was dumbfounded, she could not believe her ears and soon the news spread in the entire village and all villagers assembled in her house. In spite of her grave poverty Haja gave the man Rs1500. She would have even given her life to see her disappeared son whom she believes is alive somewhere. The man had the audacity to give her Rs100 back as he said only 1414 were required and the remaining 14 Rs he would pay from his own pocket, noble gesture indeed. While leaving he told both Habla and Haja to meet him on 18 th Dec at Pattan police station and there after he would take them to destination much awaited. His next victim for a change was a man, Abdul Khaliq from Pattan. But Khaliq proved a hard nut to crack, though he was happy to know what the man had to say but he did not prepare food, nor he gave money or clothes to him. He declined to pay the required sum of 1414 saying once the meet was arranged, he would pay the sum perhaps even more. He was also told to come to the Pattan police station.

Anyway all of them met at the appointed place and rest is history. Nobody turned up. All the queries by the relatives proved futile. There was no such man working there.

This is not the first time for them. Such form of exploitation in various forms is common in their lives. Heartless people like Shafi come in various forms and shapes & sizes. Shakeela is half widow whose husband disappeared and has 4 children with no financial support from any quarter. Recently a man came to her house and told her that her husband owed him one lac Rs. Shakeela was aghast, her husband had never told her anything about it and she raised an objection. She asked the man to produce any proof regarding his claim. Enraged the man started abusing her, her children were so scared that they started to weep and one of her child said, "our father is lost and now our mother will also die". Shakeela was left with no other option other than to file an FIR in the Pulwama police station. The matter was later taken up with the village heads and the village elders gave her deal to bargain with. They asked her to pay them Rs ten thousand to resolve the matter. Another lady Shaheena whose brother Fayaz Ahmad disappeared and another one Mushtaq was killed by security forces is receiving anonymous calls from Jammu, the caller asks for Fayaz and claims Fayaz is supplying them military uniforms. This could well be another tactic to exploit the emotions.

Suffering people are already vulnerable & these quacks easily exploit their softness. The families are already under financial constraints yet they spare no opportunity or effort to search their dear ones. Peer, fakirs, saints... visiting them has become a part of their lives. Years have passed but nothing has come out of it. But that does not deter them falling prey to frauds. One of the women has only a cow left in her possession and she has made a vow to sacrifice it the day she finds her loved one. Hopefully some cheat should not trade her cow and her sufferings.

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Mahmooda Akhtar was arrested in the year 2003 in the month of September by the army on the charge of aiding and abetting militants. Her larger than life photographs with a face full of vengeance were splashed on the front pages of every leading Indian newspaper. The photograph showed a lady with hatred in her eyes and fire on her lips. The caption in Times of India reads, 'Face of terror.' After being in captivity for 11 days she was released as nothing incriminating was found against her. But this time the news was not much hyped. Then nothing more was heard of her until recently one of the newspaper reported that Mahmooda had attempted suicide by poisoning herself and her three children as she was fed up with the continuous harassment meted out to her by the Special Task Force (STF). Reports said that ever since her release, the STF personnel were harassing her and her family members that led to an attempt to kill herself and her family members. To find the facts KWIPD visited Mahmooda's native village Bandgam, in Budgam district. The village has tough terrains and is extremely backward. Mahmooda's house is located on a hilltop. As we asked the way to Mahmooda's house every body had a strange smile on their faces and all knew her house. It seemed she was a well-known figure in the area and why not after all she had been arrested on the allegations of being a militant.



Mehmooda's Photo in Times of India

Inside her house to our dismay she was not there. Because of the continuous raids on her house Mahmooda has fled it leaving her husband Ghulam Mohidin Parray and three children, one daughter Sabiya 17 and two sons Sajjad 16 and Zuber 7 behind. According to family members she has taken refuge in her brother's house in Handwara. Her 17-year-old daughter Sabiya was there with her grand parents. She spoke to us about the entire episode. "My mother was arrested by the army (HMT) camp on September. They accused her of being a frontline militant of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen outfit. Actually before her arrest, the militants kidnapped her. Mummy was in her father's home when she was kidnapped. Unidentified gunmen killed my maternal grand pa he was a political activist. Some say militants killed him & some say STF. My mother had gone there and after four days of my grandpa's death, two men came and took her away with them in a Tata Sumo. They kept her in a house in Shopian about 40 kms from here and when finally she managed to escape from their clutches she was arrested by the RR. At that time she was in Shalteng about 13 kms from here. After 11 days she was released on bail after i filed an FIR at Parim Pora police station. During her custody i once met her and she was brutally tortured. **But even after her release things did not improve it was the start of another era of problems. As soon as she was released a STF team came here and asked for her. Then militants wanted her. It was very taxing for her. So she decided not to come to this place. She is torn between militants and security forces both claiming she is working for the opposite camps. And both are making her life miserable.**

We are all suffering. When my mother was taken by the militants the STF used to raid our house often and torture me, they used to force to tell them the whereabouts of my mother. Recently a week before the STF from Magam, came here and told my father to come to the camp. He went there and there they told him to bring Mahmooda. He said she is afraid but they told her to get her. He is scared. Even before this my father was tortured. When she was in militant captivity they took him to camp many times and beat him up. With the result he almost turned insane, not speak or eat or sleep; now the block office and my mother department but because of all have been spoilt. My life has study in 12th class but I have Students taunt me and tell me you are informers. I feel all eyes are on me so I prefer not to come out of the house. At home I have to do household work and look

My life has been adversely affected. I study in 12th class but I have stopped going to school. Students taunt me and tell me you are militant's daughter and some say you are informers. I feel all eyes are on me so I prefer not to come out of the house. At home I have to do household work and look after my brothers also.

he wandered in fields and did he is recovering. He works in also works in the education this our otherwise happy lives been adversely affected. I stopped going to school. you are militant's daughter informers. I feel all eyes are on of the house. At home I have to after my brothers also. If

mummy would come back I can study but of know I find it impossible to concentrate on my studies. My mother was so frustrated she once said that i will poison myself and my children. Somebody overheard it and reported it in the newspaper. I talk to her on the phone. Our lives have been scattered. My mother is caught between the two warring sides. She has become a scape goat, a victim who has been further victimized”.

As Sabiya is narrating her story, seven-year-old Zuber comes and look at his sister. He only answers in yes or no. Young Zuber longs to see his mother but things have reached a stage where it is like a dream. His grandparents are sitting next to them. His grandfather Ghulam Mohd Parray seems to be somewhat angry with his daughter in-law, as he spills the beans, “we don’t know where she is at present and also where she was in the past. We know nothing about our daughter in law. Her children are here and we take care of them. Our son is mentally disturbed. I work hard to educate my grandchildren. We have all sorts of people coming here militants, unidentified gunmen, army and asking for Mahmooda. Our plight is bad.” His wife Raja begum sitting next to her husband says, “My son’s life is ruined, he is our only child, after many years of marriage god granted him to us. We married him off and he has three children, we were living normal life until our daughter’s in- law episode. Now we fear for our lives, we do not dare to sleep in this house lest those people come and trouble us again”.

Life has become tough with continuous raids. Army along with Mahmooda’s brother Shaukat took Zubair the elder son of Mahmooda. Sajjad was released but Shoukat was tortured brutally. Sabiya says, “I feel villagers are also behind our ordeal, they pass the information of my mother’s whereabouts to STF or militants. They were jealous of us, as both my parents were in government job. **But all this has to stop otherwise my mother has two options either to kill herself or join the STF.”**

Though Sabiya says militants kidnapped her mother but neighbors tell a different story. According to villager Bilal, “Mahmooda was a militant working for Hizbu-ul-Mujahidden. Actually her father was National Conference worker and militants always threatened to kill him. Her younger sister Ruqqiah joined militancy. But in spite of all this, Ruqqiah committed suicide no body knows the reason behind it and after four months of her death her father was also killed. Shocked by the incidents Mahmooda was told by many that it was STF who killed her father. To avenge her fathers death she joined militancy and subsequently was caught by army but since her offence were not serious she was released but later it was said that she was an informer of army and now both army and militants torture her.” A view also endorsed by Mahmooda’s brother Shaukat, “my sister joined militancy as she was told that STF had killed our father. But it is not true; actually militants killed him as he was working for NC. My younger sister Ruqqiah also worked with militants to save father but she died. I often told Mahmooda to surrender and when she was about to do so, she was arrested. Actually she was no militant she just boasted of being one. She just used to roam with them. Now her life is in mess and it is her own doing, both STF and army harass her. She lives with my brother Dr Farooq in Handwara. She is afraid to come here.”

Police says Mahmooda was a militant. Although police records say that Ruqqiah died under mysterious circumstances but sources say Ruqqiah was killed by her family as she was going around with a militant, a relation which the family never approved of and hence she was poisoned. And perhaps to avenge her death her father was also killed.

Mahmooda story is that she is caught between two warring sides. Switching off loyalties or not. Mahmooda is a militant or not, she is an army informer or not. But she is a human being and committing mistakes is human nature. Mahmooda is caught between two sides she is nobody’s friend. All efforts to contact Mahmooda proved futile. Fearing for her life she has gone into hibernation. Is this ‘face of terror’, wish the newspaper would clarify?

SNIPPETS

* KWIPD INTERACTS WITH ACTIVISTS FROM DODA

Six women activists from Doda had come to Srinagar on 28th Dec to attend the Robert Thorp award ceremony and debate on ‘National Heroes on Kashmir’. The group had an interactive interaction with executive members of the KWIPD.

KWIPD sought alliance with the activists working there. The activists working under People’s Forum for Peace, Doda showed interest in getting aligned with KWIPD. During the course of interaction it was decided

that we would work in tandem with each other and they would provide us with the information of gross human right violation taking place there. A team of KWIPD will also undertake a trip to Doda in the month of May and build alliance with the other women's group working there.

*** AWARD FUNCTION**

J&K coalition of civil society organized a debate on the National Heroes of Kashmir and also an award named after Robert Thorp who laid down his life for Kashmir cause. The award was unanimously chosen by the executive board of civil society and was conferred to Patricia Gossman of Asia Watch. Patricia was not able to come personally to accept the award as Indian government has barred her entry to Kashmir. A Japanese researcher Takahashi received the award on her behalf. Gossman had sent her video message about the acceptance of her award and thanked the coalition and hoped that this would be a beginning in bringing peace and security to the people of Kashmir. Patricia has done a lot of work regarding human rights situation in Kashmir.

*** SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME**

KWIPD organized a scholarship programme for two girls in advanced course in cutting, tailoring and embroidery. The training programme is of one-year duration after which the girls will start work and train some activists of APDP and other women who are in need of means of livelihood. KWIPD also hopes to impart short-term courses to other down trodden women so that they are well equipped with the latest trends in cutting & tailoring.

A SISTER'S STRUGGLE TO FIND HER DISAPPEARED BROTHER

AADIL NAZIR

Yet another ordeal unfolded by a sister of a youth who was picked up by the Border Security Forces (BSF) from his residence in the year 1999, and subsequently his whereabouts were concealed. She along with her relatives knocked every door from police high ups to ministers but all in vain.

Zoona, a 36-year-old woman disappointed and disillusioned from every quarter, facing the worst, which she never ever thought of. The disappearance of her brother not only ruined her parental house but also her husband deserted her.

Zoona was very eager to reveal her and her family's pathetic condition to make it public, as she believes the public awareness can mount pressure on those behind the disappearance of her brother.

She says, "People have words to translate their miseries but I have no words to express my condition. The pain and ordeal I along with my family is going through, is tough to narrate, nevertheless, I will try. Everything was going well. My younger brother Abdul Ahad Sheikh, 20, son of Mukhti Sheikh r/o Tujghari Mohalla, Sheikh Colony-Nowhatta, Srinagar was working at Pathankot as a rickshaw driver since 1998, and used to come home after every two months to see the family. But when he came last he had never anticipated that it would be his last visit.

It was the night of 11th April 1999; a BSF party 63 BN then camped at Nowhatta conducted a raid at my parental house and picked up my brother without giving any reason. He had been a militant and was arrested and served a term in the jail for about 3 ½ years. After his release he left militancy and started working as a laborer to shoulder the growing responsibilities of his family.

Next day, we went to Nowhatta police station to file FIR regarding his arrest & disappearance but police refused to file a report. We searched for him in every nook and corner of the state but found him nowhere. I along with my cousin searched every jail of the state including Kot Bhalwal, Hiranagar and Udhampur jails. In Udhampur jail some of prisoners told me that he was shifted either to Teli Talab or Hiranagar Jammu jails. We immediately visited both the jails but all visits proved futile.

Disappointed and dejected we approached Crime Branch, SSP Srinagar. But he did nothing except giving hollow assurances. We even met PDP president Mehbooba Mufti who told us that she could provide a job or *ex gratia* relief, which we refused categorically. Then she assured us in securing his release from the captivity of the forces but nothing has been done so far.

Now it seems that we are hoping against hope. But we will never give up his search even if it takes years. Our suffering are not only his disappearance, we have to face wrath from people. After 15 days of his arrest two more youth in our area were arrested and their families blamed my brother for it.

Right after the arrest of my brother, my husband deserted me as I was pursuing my brother's case in the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and used to visit different jails of the state, which he never approved off. He forcefully married off one of my daughter Hafeeza who is only 13 years of age for the sake of money. My younger sister is only 22 years of age. She turned almost blind due to cease less weeping and to save her eyes she was operated two years back. All our savings went into her operation.

Again on November 2003, another blow struck us when my father died. My brother's disappearance was too much for his heart to take and he finally died of a heart attack. My mother Fazi is already in extreme shock and always crying for her son. We neither want any job nor any relief but only the whereabouts of Ahad".

To sustain her senile mother and ailing sister Zoona is doing menial jobs and other laborious work. Despite all the hurdles she has decided not to give up her struggle for justice for she believes justice is hard to come but it does come.

REPORTED INCIDENTS OF ATROCITIES COMMITTED AGAINST WOMEN IN THE MONTH OF OCT-NOV AND DEC

It is pertinent to mention here that these are the reported incidents, there are many cases especially in far-flung areas where atrocities against women are committed on a large scale but they go unreported and unlamented.

SOLDIER RAPES TEENAGER

Oct 4: In a bizarre incident a teenager girl was allegedly raped by an army man who was on leave in Talsieri village of Nowshera tehsil of district Rajouri. A medical check up of the victim has been conducted and police has launched a search to nab the accused.

Official reports revealed that a teen-age girl Bimla Devi was on her way to provide lunch to her parents who were working in a field outside the village. The girl while passing through an isolated place was overpowered by the accused, identified as Ramesh Kumar. She was raped by the soldier till she was unconscious; police added that the accused fled from the spot leaving the victim in a pool of blood.

When the girl regained her conscience, she rushed to her parents and recounted the whole incident. The police was informed and the girl was taken for medical checkup. A police officer said that the accused who was posted in Reasi area of Udhampur district was still absconding. However, a manhunt has been launched to trace him.

SOLDIERS BEAT GIRL

Oct 31: Police lodged an FIR against army personnel who reportedly thrashed a girl in Kokernag Islamabad Friday.

Eyewitnesses said army soldiers at Kokernag road near Badern village beat one Nazir Ahmad Sofi s/o Aziz Ahmad Sofi as Sofi's little son had ignored their call and had ran away. After severely thrashing him for his son's fault, the soldiers asked him to get them tea. Unable to bear the humiliation of her father, Sofi's daughter, Maroofa, asked him not to oblige the army men.

At this, an angry army man slapped the girl. The girl responded in kind. Shocked, two personnel pounced on her and beat her severely.

While leaving the spot, the personnel fired several rounds in air. The residents lodged a strong protest and demanded stern action against the errant soldiers. Police later registered an FIR, 129/2003 RPC, 354, 341

ACID ATTACK

Nov 6: Islamabad, unidentified persons threw acid on two teenage girls in Lal Chowk Islamabad Wednesday afternoon. The victims were identified as Shazia Sofi of Dewa colony and Usma Najar of Mohalla Mehman. Shazia was referred to Srinagar hospital for treatment.

WOMAN ARRESTED, MOLESTED

On the night of 7th November personnel of 14 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) raided the residence of Bilal Ahmad Baba and allegedly molested his daughter. Army claimed recovery of arms but police contradict the army statement.

Army personnel from Sunnerwani camp raided the residence of Bilal Ahmad Baba nearly 3 km from the camp and alleged that his daughter is affiliated with militants. The male inmates were directed to go out side, however, Bilal's daughter Safeena, 25, was taken in a separate room where she allegedly was molested by the Major Sangram Singh on the pretext of having links with militants. She raised hue and cry, which dragged the attention of neighboring women and they rushed to rescue her from the hands of troops. The siege, (which continued for an hour) at Bilal's house was lifted on the intervention of police. The army claimed the recovery of arms from Safeena's possession during raid and denied the charge of molestation.

The concerned SDPO talked to Safeena, she said that she was taken in an isolated room where the Major molested her on the pretext of having connection with the militants and she categorically denied her links with any militant outfit. Police took Safeena to women police custody where she was kept for two days.

Irked by the raid and subsequent arrest of Safeena, inhabitants of the area went on streets to protest against the army. The shops of the area remained closed for a day.

However, police has contradicted the troop's claim of recovery of arms and filed an FIR against the army in this connection.

MINOR RAPED IN A POLICE OFFICERS HOUSE

Nov 12: In the holy month of Ramadhan and seemingly secure residence of a police officer lawyer couple at political residential quarters. An eight-year-old girl working as a domestic help in the house was raped by a teenaged domestic help of the same household. The incident is however shrouded by suspicion with allegations of a cover up over some of the aspects.

Police said the incident took place at police inspector Nighat's residence in police residential quarters, Bemina Monday afternoon, "when both inspector Nighat and her husband advocate Reyaz were out on duties. Maqsood the 18 year old domestic help from Handwara raped her in the house" Parvez Ahmed, SHO Parimpora police station said. Initially the victim tried to hide it from her employers. But when she started bleeding profusely she disclosed it to Nighat who immediately rushed to medical shop to get some medicine, but later she brought her to Lal Ded hospital" the SHO said and added that the accused was being detained at Paimpora police station after confessing to the crime. Inspector general of police K Rajendra told a news paper that SP south was handling the investigation. The case is much more serious as it happened at a police officers residence," he said. However, according to some observers and paramedics at Lal Ded hospital, the doctors are trying to cover up some facts regarding the case under the influence of police. The parentage of the girl in out patient department admission is given as Reyaz Ahmed and residence as Kupwara instead of Doda. However, an official in record section of the hospital said that Reyaz approached him Tuesday morning and wanted to change the parentage to Ghulam Mohd. Besides, Reyaz told doctors that the girl hailed from Varmul but named Doda as the residence of the girl to the police station. The concerned medical assistants on condition of anonymity said in the preliminary medical examination it was found that the girl has a cervical tear, which cannot be caused by a teenager. The doctor examining the patients refused to comment

GIRL TORTURED AND KILLED

Nov 19: A young girl was brutally tortured by unidentified gunmen in her house and later killed at village Tatagon under the jurisdiction of Gandoh police station in Doda district. She has been identified as Akhtar Bano, 18 daughter of Nazir Ahmed Magray. Police said two unidentified gunmen carrying weapon with them entered into the house of Nazir Ahmad Magrey and took his daughter, Akhtar Bano to another room where she was dubbed as an informer of security forces and tortured. As the gunmen left, the people found girl's body lying in the room tied with a rope. Police party visited the spot for investigations.

RADNAG RESIDENTS ALLEGE HARASSMENT

Nov 19: The troops from local camp of Rashtriya Rifles at Radnag, Lolab in Kupwara district have asked more than a dozen of persons of the village including women to attend the camp daily, a delegation of residents from the village alleged.

The delegation said the troops harass men and women without any provocation and cordon off the area every other day. Walking into the house on the pretext of search operations has become a routine for the troops the delegation alleged.

The civilians including women who are regularly called to the camp are Salima w/o Ghulam Nabi Shiekh, Shahmali w/o Shah jahan, Ghulam Mohammad Ganie s/o Rustam, Ghulam Rasool s/o Abdul Rahman, Abdul Rashid Mir s/o Mohammad Sultan and Ghulam Hassan Bhat.

The delegation said that the residents had brought the issue to the notice of police station Lalpora and senior superintendent of police Kupwara adding that authorities have failed to play any role.

KILLING OF A GIRL LEADS TO MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION IN KULGAM

Dec 1: According to reports 9 RR cordoned the area of Zangal Pora Kulgam and during the search daughter of Abdul Aziz Kasai daughter accidentally poured water from the window, as soon as the troops stationed below saw the girl from window they immediately fired on her due to which 16 year old Naseema, died on the spot.

Soon after the protested against the and anti security observed strike spokes person in a there was an militants and Pora Kulgam and in

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY ORDERED

Dec 3: District magistrate Islamabad AH Samoon has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the circumstances that led to the killing. Additional district magistrate Islamabad A. Lateef -ul- Zaman Deva has been appointed as inquiry officer with the instructions to submit the report within 40 days to the district magistrate.

and an personnel was also injured but the locals strongly refuted the claim. They said the RR had cordoned the entire area on the tip off that a Hizbul Mujahideen militant was present in his brother in laws home and as soon as they saw somebody from the window throwing something, they immediately fired on her killing her on the spot.

residents of the area killing and raised anti India forces slogans and also against the killing. The RR official statement said that encounter between security forces in Zangal the cross firing a girl died

HOUSE RANSACKED

Dec 6: The personnel of Special Task Force and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) allegedly ransacked the house owned by Tasneem Akhtar at Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar. The posse thrashed her brother, son and even security guards.

KILLING OF A WOMAN SPARKS PROTEST

Dec 22: Alleged killing of a woman by the security forces triggered massive protest demonstration in Thanamandi where the protestors blocked Thanamandi - Rajouri road for at least two hours demanding stern action against the erring jawans and compensation to the next of kins of the victim. The protestors alleged that security forces barged into the house of Gulzar Hussain over ground worker OGW, and her wife who was ailing from the last few days intervened. She had a scuffle with the army jawans and later died.

The deceased has been identified as Naseem Akhtar, wife of Gulzar Hussain of upper Pangai. Army authorities on the other hand said that the woman was found dead when the troops entered the house. The troops became suspicious when they saw Gulzar moving under suspicious circumstances outside his house. The army sources said that the woman died due to illness/ SHO Vijay Singh Choudhary rushed to Thanamandi to pacify the protestors. He said that the probe would be ordered into the incident.

PROTEST OVER KILLING OF WOMAN IN PULWAMA ENCOUNTER

Dec 30: The residents of Aarihal Pulwama today staged protest against the alleged atrocities of troops and killing of a woman. Troops reportedly destroyed a residential house during the encounter and brought the residents of the area out of their homes during night in sub zero temperature. They gutted down a house and

also fired due to which a woman lost her life. The people of the area protested saying that the killing of the woman was unwarranted.

Sources said the troops of 1 RR and personnel of Special operation Group, on a tip off cordoned off the house of Abdul Rashid Dar s/o Ghulam Mohidin Dar where the militants were reportedly hiding. This triggered off the long encounter. The troops forced the local residents to come out of the house during the night in sub zero temperature asking them to persuade the militants to surrender. Locals said they were harassed throughout the night.

A woman Khadija wife of Abdul Gani Ganai, was critically injured in the fire which continued for the whole night at intervals. She was rushed to Soura Medical Institute where she succumbed. Muhammad Ayoub Bhat, the SPO of local police station was also critically wounded. Troops also destroyed the house of Abdul Rashid Dar with mortar shells from which bodies of two-suspected militant were recovered. However, the dead persons are reported to be locals.

WOMEN PROTEST YOUTHS' ARREST

Dec 31: Several women were injured when troops used force to disperse procession of women protesting against the torture of youth by the forces stationed at Chowgam in Shopian.

Militants had attacked an SOG camp followed by an attack on the army camp in the area last night. In the morning troops went berserk and laid siege around the whole area and thrashed people including women and elders. Women were made to stand bare footed on frozen snow. Troops also held at least 20 youth who were taken to the local camp where they were allegedly undressed, given electric shock and kept in cold. When women came out to protest the alleged atrocities, demanding release of youth, troops used force to disperse them, injuring many.

DATE	WOMEN KILLED	CHILDREN KILLED
Oct 13	1	1
Oct 15	-	1
Oct 17	1	-
Oct 28	-	2
Oct 29	1	-
Oct 30	-	1
Nov 1	1	-
Nov 4	2	-
Nov 8	2	-
Nov 10	1	1
Nov 14	2	-
Nov 15	1	-
Nov 16	1	1
Nov 17	-	1
Nov 21	1	-
Dec 1	-	1
Dec 3	1	-
Dec 11	1	-
Dec 13	-	1
Dec 15	1	-
Dec 21	1	-
Dec 22	1	-
Dec 26	1	-
Dec 29	1	-
TOTAL	21	10

WOMEN – CHILDREN KILLED

IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

Oct 13: A woman and her minor son was killed when a rocket allegedly launched by militants towards the BSF's 102 Bn camp in Chaklas area at Mahore in Udhampur district missed the intended target and exploded in the residential house of Tej Ram.

The deceased have been identified as Shankri Devi, 25, wife of Tej Ram and her son Bablu, .

Oct 15: A five-year-old girl was killed allegedly by Pakistani shelling near Line of Actual Control (LoC) in Nowshera sector. The identification of deceased has been confirmed as Sepra Devi daughter of Jagdish Chander.

Oct 17: Unidentified gunmen forced their entry inside the residential house of Ghulam Ahmad Wagay and opened fire indiscriminately upon the inmates, which resulted in the killing of his wife on the spot.

Oct 23: A woman succumbed to her injuries after being injured in cross border shelling at Jhangar area of Nowshera on 15th Oct. She was identified as Kailash Devi, 25, wife of Jagdish Kumar of Jahangar, Nowshera district Rajouri.

Oct 28: Two children were killed and their mother injured when a holed up militant allegedly opened fire inside the MES and GREF quarters at Aknoor, Jammu.

The deceased were identified as Aman Kumar, 10, alias Babu and his sister Anisha, 8.

The injured lady succumbed to her injuries on 29th Oct. Her identification has not been ascertained.

And on Oct 30, another child identified as Ankit son of Kasturi Lal of Hoshiarpur succumbed to his injuries received during the cross firing.

IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Nov 1: A woman was killed when an alleged Pakistani artillery shell exploded outside her house at village Tad near Line of Control (LoC) in Karnah sector of Kupwara.

The deceased was identified as Sharbat Begum of Kupwara.

Nov 4: Two women were killed when they allegedly became the target of a Pakistani artillery shell at Chuntiwari near Line of Control (LoC).

The deceased were identified as Khatija, 35, w/o Nazir Ahmad Tantaray Miamoona Akthar daughter of Abdul Rahim.

Nov 8: Two women were killed by unidentified gunmen in separate incidents in Rajouri district..

Gunmen whose identity was not ascertained shot dead Khalida daughter of Mohammad Latief inside her house at Ghambir, Mughal, Manjakoot in Rajouri district.

Another woman identified as Bago Begum was shot dead by unknown gunmen at Morha, Kotranka in Rajouri later in the evening.

Nov 10: A minor boy of 15 years old lost his life when he accidentally stepped over a landmine at Chui Drahman village Marwah area reportedly planted by militants to target troops. The deceased was identified as Bilal Ahmad son of Sultan Ahmad of at Chui Drahman.

* A woman identified as Neha, 30, w/o Kasturi Lal of Punjab succumbed to her injuries received in Akhnoor shoot out.

Nov 14: Dead body of a woman who was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen on 13th Nov while she was on her way to the hospital. The deceased have been identified as Tasleema w/o Abdul Hamid Bhat of Chakporu, Shopian.

Meanwhile, one more dead body of a woman was recovered by the Nawgam police from fields of Chake-e-Arsenal in Nawgam village of Chadoora district Budgam.

Nov 15: Gunmen reportedly forced their entry inside the residential house of Abdul Rehman son of Ghulam Rasool of Singpora, Pattan and opened fire indiscriminately. This firing killed Abdul Rehman on the spot, and his daughter Romai later succumbed to her injuries.

Nov 16: A woman and her son died in an explosion inside their home at Lolaab when they were fiddling with it. The explosion was brought to home by the owner Ghulam Mohammad from a forest mistaking it as toy. Ghulam Mohammad's son was identified as Mohammad Ashraf, however, his wife's name was not been ascertained.

Nov 17: Unidentified gunmen strangled a teenager girl to death at Tanatagon area of Gandoh area of Jammu provision. The deceased have been identified as Akthar Bano, 17, daughter of Nazir Ahmad.

Nov 21: A woman at Dawar area of Gurez, Baramulla lost her life when Indo Pak soldiers exchanged cross border shelling. The deceased has been identified as Afroza Bano.

IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

Dec 1: A minor girl was allegedly shot dead by security forces at Zangal-Kulgam while she was coming out of her house for some work. However, the defence spokesman claimed the killing of girl in cross fire between militants and troops. The deceased has been identified as Naseema daughter of Abdul Aziz Bhat of Zungalpora, Kulgam.

Dec 3: Farida wife of Bashir Ahmad got killed when holed up militants and security forces exchanged fire at Kasloo village at Handwara tehsil of district Kupwara.

Dec13: A minor succumbed to his grenade injuries received on December 10 at General bus stand Poonch.

The deceased has been identified Mohammad Yousuf son of Faiz Mohammad resident of Bandi Chichian, Poonch.

Dec 15: A woman was allegedly killed by the troops when she intervened while the troops tried to pick up her husband at Thanamandi, Rajouri.

The deceased has been identified as Naseem Akthar d/o Gulzar Hussain r/o Uper Pangai, Rajouri.

Dec 21: A woman along with her husband was allegedly killed by unknown gunmen after they barged inside their residential house at Darakchi, Tangmarg in Baramulla district.

The deceased have been identified as Sharifa and her husband Ghulam Rasool Lone.

Dec 22: Unidentified gunmen killed a girl after forcing their entry inside the residential house of Ghulam Rasool War at Tarhama, Tangmarg in north Kashmir.

The deceased has been identified as Kulsooma daughter of Ghulam Rasool War.

Dec 26: A woman was killed when militants allegedly detonated an IED to target a vehicle of troops at Singpora, Pattan, Baramulla in north Kashmir.

The deceased has been identified as Shahzada, 22, daughter of Ghulam Nabi of Singpora, Pattan.

Dec 27: A woman Khadija w/o Abdul Gani Gania was allegedly injured in cross fire between militants and troops at Arihal Pulwama and subsequently succumbed to her injuries in the hospital.

However, the locals alleged that following a tip of presence of militants army cordoned off the house of Abdul Rashid Dar son of Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Dar & resorted to unprovoked firing and subsequently destroyed the house with mortar shells, which resulted into the death of Khadija.

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