

ONE YEAR AND VOICES HEARD

With this issue, *Voices Unheard* completes one year of its publication. It is a great occasion for us and we feel elevated. In year 2003, the first volume of the quarterly *Voices Unheard* was launched. The name *Voices Unheard* we believe has lived up to its expectations, as it has become the voice of many voiceless women in Kashmir. This newsletter has served as platform from where women have dared to reveal their stories of unending pain and saga. It has paved way and provided space for women's voice, which was the need of the hour. The publication has been objective in its reporting about atrocities committed to women by any agency may it be security forces as in most cases or militants and other factors of the conflict. We have reported objectively. This is one of the reasons that our information has been sought by the international agencies and our website is widely surfed.

The credibility and authenticity of information has compelled the journalists from India and abroad to reach out to us. It gives us immense pleasure to see our information and reports valued. The *Voices Unheard* team often visited the spots where atrocities were committed. We tried to be everywhere with an emphatic voice. We hope to carry the work forward with the support of our dear readers. It is open secret that women are vulnerable here. It is also a bitter truth that much attention has not been paid to their plight by society and institutions. It was therefore in this context that Kashmiri Women's Initiative for Peace and Disarmament (KWIPD) decided to bring out this publication so that plight of women could be highlighted as pen is mightier than sword.

KWIPD in the last one year did lot of work especially in the field of self help group formation. It is already imparting training to girls from Srinagar and from Kupwara in order to make them self-reliant and setting up of centers in their respective areas. As the victims of human rights abuses are mostly from lower income group, a need was felt to make them self-reliant to earn a livelihood. In this regard efforts are on. KWIPD will continue with its endeavor to strive for peace and disarmament.

Besides self help group, the members of the KWIPD have discussed judicial matters affecting women like Women Amendment Bill and accordingly, a debate has been generated so that women could be mobilized to take respective position.

Due to ongoing conflict for the last 15 years younger generation has developed so many psychological disorders as its aftermaths. So, lot of women resorted to drugs and the J&K is in the state of drug menace. KWIPD in its efforts has been trying to prevent women to take to such discourses.

From January 2003-04, nothing has changed in terms of atrocities committed to women in this highly 'dangerous' zone of the sub-continent in South Asia.. In fact it would not be improper to say that there has been an increase in the human rights violation in general. More and more cases of custodial killings, enforced disappearances, torture and harassments are being reported. The present PDP government led by Mufti Mohammad Syed has failed in its promise to put an end to the human rights violations in the valley. On the contrary they have shown manifold increase.

Civilians are being used as human shields as in case of Chittibandi Bandipora where five civilians were used as human shields by security forces. It adds to the cumulative graph of ever increasing number of widows and orphans with no means of livelihood for their sustenance. If we look at it from humanistic angle it means shattering of five more families.

Poverty leads to many immoral activities. In Feb 2003 police unveiled a sex scandal where naive girls from valley were duped into prostitution. All the five girls belonged to poor families and were lured to a job prospectus in New Delhi. But it was a ploy and soon the girls were taken in as sex workers. It was only when one of them managed to escape from the clutches of her tormentors, the story came to light. Though few arrests were made but later all of them were released and some are still absconding.

It is the responsibility of a State to raise the standard of living of its citizens. To make its citizens live in abject poverty is the worst form of human right violations by a state, which later gives rise to subsequent problems. It, therefore, becomes imperative for the concerned citizens of the society to think and devise means of liberating women from falling prey to such elements. The culprits should be punished so that it serves as curtain raiser.

Last but not the least we at *Voices Unheard* believe creating space for the betterment of society in general and women in particular. In conflict zones women are more vulnerable than in normal circumstances and therefore women should be encouraged to be self-reliant.

Circumstances demand that confidence has to be instilled in women who have been victims of rape, torture, molestation and widowhood so that they can rethink and restart their lives with a new spirit. We will continue with our efforts.

Srinagar Jan 12: Police arrested seven persons involved in trafficking of three Kashmiri girls to other states for flesh trade. The arrested persons include Syed Irfan Ahmad Syed and Shanawaz Ahmad sons of Syed Sajad Hussain of Hagarpora Magam, Manzoor Ahmad Khan s/o Ghulam Ahmad Khan of Chattabal, Hilal Ahmad Bhat s/o Muhammad Ibrahim of Narwara and Showkat Ahmad of Lal Bazaar. The key accused, Syed Sajad Hussain is absconding. The search for the gang pin has been intensified. The arrests were made after one of the girls managed to escape from a hotel in New Delhi, only after being physically abused a number of times.

A resident of Magam, Budgam, while speaking to the local news agency furnished the following details, “four months ago, Syed Sajad Hussain of Hagarpora, Magam came to our residence with a non-Kashmiri man accompanied by a woman named Julie in a Maruti vehicle. The non-Kashmiri introducing himself as a judge claimed to be working for welfare of downtrodden. We are four sisters. Our father is a mechanic. Our economy was worse and the person offered job while promising monetary help at the time of sister’s marriage”. Lured by the job she was allowed by her parents to move out. Initially, she was lodged in a house at Qamarwari. She met two girls one from Bodibugh, Magam and the second one from Tujjar Sharief Sopore who too were offered jobs.

Next day, the girls were taken to Delhi, where Julie verbally assaulted them. The girls were given a haircut and made to wear trousers and low cut dresses. **Then they were assembled at a hotel. At that very moment the girls could smell something fishy in the whole game. When the girls tried to resist, they were thrashed. Their bodies bore the marks of torture.** The victim further added, “after a Week, we were shifted to Hotel Vikram, where middle aged men raped us every day. Last week, I managed to escape from the clutches of my tormentors. A Sikh driver from Acchama, Beerwah met me and brought me home. When the news of my return and my plight reached the villagers, they were

enraged”. The victim was taken to Magam hospital for check-up where no lady doctor was present. The trader’s federation of Magam has demanded stern punishment against the perpetrators. The SP police Budgam, Ramesh Kumar Jalla has said the accused will be sternly dealt with.

Voices Unheard team went to Magam to look into the matter. The police station Magam was not very helpful, as the SHO was not present there. The person in charge of the duty refused to reveal any information or data or FIR No: to the correspondent. Locals very reluctantly gave the addresses of the girls who had been abducted. First we visited the girl’s house who had managed to escape. The family members were reluctant to talk about the incident. Mother of the victim said that her daughter was not at home and neither did she want to talk about the episode.

After lot of coaxing and cajoling, she asked her son to call his father. Meanwhile, she narrated the following story, “some persons from a nearby shop called ‘open hearts’ came here with somebody and said that we will give you work outside Kashmir. Since we are poor my daughter got lured. A lady accompanying them kept insisting upon my daughter to come to Delhi and work. Today’s children take their own decisions and my daughter insisted on sending her out. **We had inhibitions but she was persistent. As we are very poor, we got lured to job offer. I have 4 daughters and 2 sons. To run a big family with meager income is difficult, so we succumbed to temptations. We sent her away, as we came to know many other girls of the area were also going there. But after a month or so she returned back and narrated the trauma, we were shocked. Since that incident happened, neighbors taunt us. Shahzada was engaged, but the groom broke down the engagement. Her life is ruined, who will marry her”.**

Naaz her younger daughter who was sitting besides her mother says, “I will be getting married soon, both I and Shahzada were engaged to be married soon, but after the incident her

engagement has been broken off, it is a pity". Mother-daughter duo explicitly were not comfortable in giving the details and patiently waited for the victims father to come and talk to us. Victim's father said, "our daughter came back in a very depressed state, thanks to a Sikh taxi driver who helped her getting here. He was a *messiah*, when he came here with my daughter. He almost beat me as he said, how could I allow my daughter to go to an alien place. It was he who lodged FIR and the matter became public. We were deceived by our temptations and grave poverty. She used to give a call sometime but it

was cut amidst so that their secrets would unveil. There are other girls from this area and Tujjar Sharief, Sopore. Few arrests were made here but they are moneyed people and bailed themselves out, we are poor people but yes we will fight for our dignity. Many times those people threatened us not to talk about it but we are not afraid .Our daughter's life has been ruined but we will continue in our fight to punish the culpable."

Living in extreme poverty, the family saw a ray of hope if their daughter earned something, but they never anticipated such catastrophe was awaiting them

FOUR GRADUATES IN THE VILLAGE ABOVE THE AGE OF 34 AND ALL UNEMPLOYED

By Aasia Jeelani

January 28, Kralpora: Kralpora block of Kupwara district constitutes of 37 villages including the much-hyped Dardpora. Agriculture is an important source of livelihood for the natives, with rice grown as the chief crop. During harvesting and sowing season the villagers find lot of work but for the rest of the time, they have no other means of employment except doing odd jobs and labor. Like rest of other villages of Kupwara, Kralpora has been hit badly in the last 14 years of political upheaval. Apart from the massive killings, the economy has been shattered to a large extent. The inhabitants of the area are Kashmiri speaking unlike their counterparts in Dardpora who are *pahari* speaking. Locals feel that human right violations in the area have gone unnoticed as compared to Dardpora, which has got unusual attention by local as well as international media. According to them there are more than 600 widows in the Kralpora block and orphans double that number.

A team of KWIPD visited the village and spoke to the native villagers running a trust for widows, orphans and other poor sections of the society. During the past one year the trust is virtually non functional. The *Gabbas* (Kashmiri blankets) manufactured by the groups being outdated find no buyers. As a result the workers are void of a stipend of Rs100 per month. The centre once under the patronage of Yateem Trust today finds itself in dire strait. A member of the delegation from the centre visited the KWIPD (Kashmiri Women's Initiative for Peace and

Disarmament) and apprised about the pathetic condition of the widows working in Kralpora. KWIPD went to Kralpora to assess the situation and to see how a self-help group could be organized besides other human rights violations as claimed by its inhabitants. While speaking to Abdul Kahliq Mir one of the trustees he said, "Our village has been marginalized, and this is a deliberate attempt. Dardpora has been much hyped, whereas we have hundreds of orphan girls who have attained marriage age but are in no position to bear the expenses. All NGO's visit Dardpora and provide them financial assistance. They are *paharis* and speak Urdu language, which gives them an advantage to convince outsiders about their condition. Being *Gujjars* they live in unhygienic conditions, which is at times misleading. Dardpora has many educated people; there are many lawyers, doctors and dental surgeons. One Dr Ghulam Rasool Mir has done a lot for upliftment of his people and area. Here we have no such eminent person. We have only four graduates in the area, above the age of 34 and all are unemployed. People of Kralpora both men and women live in self-esteem, they want to be self-sufficient rather beggars. We were once rich but because of the conflict life took tough turn. We had framed this centre for these widows and orphans, with the help of Yateem Trust but for last many months they are not granting funds owing to which we are facing tough times. All these girls are from very poor families, their fathers or husbands were militants

killed in encounters or innocent civilians caught in cross firing.

Khalida is one such victim. Her father Abdul Khaliq Khan was a militant. He was martyred in 1992 along with 8 other militants. He left behind wife and 15 years old daughter Khalida, too shy to speak; her face reflects the helplessness of an orphan. She is sitting with a group of girls who work in the centre. All girls have been orphaned by the turmoil and rest are widows. It is a group of 12 who are trying to fight for securing better life but Rs100 per month was too little a sum to mitigate their financial crisis. For the lack of funds all hopes have been quashed." Assadullah Malik another trustee added, "These widows refuse to re-marry, often we try to motivate them to remarry but in their heart of hearts they are attached to their lost husbands and surviving children. They want to live and die for their children. Once I saw a young woman of hardly 22 years old begging in the street. Her husband crossed over the LOC and got killed just few months after her marriage. She was left with no support. That day we held a meeting to try and convince such women to re-marry. Such widows want to be financially independent rather than re-marry. It is not their fault to be averse to the idea of re-marriage. They are very young mostly in

20's and often old men seek their hand for marriage, and they are disgruntled. Social attitudes have to change and young men must come forward to participate in this social process. Strife has left no one untouched. I have lost two nephews in the ongoing conflict. We got no relief and no one present here has received help from any quarter. This incident has in fact given me an inspiration to work for widows and orphans. I wish other people also feel so strongly for them and come forward to work and help them."

The village elders are also concerned about the ex-gratia relief received under SRO 43 and employment (Rehber-e- Taleem (RT) scheme) given to inhabitants of the residents of Dardpora. As Abdul Khaliq puts it, "all our miseries have brought about these three things. Under SRO 43, employment is given to the kin of any civilian killed in firing and an ex-gratia amount of Rs one lac. Youth of our area are graduates yet unemployed. My son is 34 year old and graduated long time back. He is still unemployed. RT scheme where the government pays Rs 1500 to teachers has also proved a futile exercise for us. Nobody in our area ever got any ex- gratia or SRO 43 benefit. The MLA's in the area manipulate things and get their blue-eyed boys to get all the benefits.

"I AM WAITING FOR THE DAY MY HUSBAND WILL BE PRONOUNCED DEAD BY LAW"

A KASHMIRI WOMAN'S INITIATIVE FOR SURVIVAL

By Aasia Jeelani

This story is of a Kashmiri woman whose struggle for existence has made her more realistic than before.

Going through the thicks and thins of life, she knows, it's jungle rule of "survival of the fittest in strife torn state of J&K.' Is Shameema a widow or half-widow, her status remains confused? Seven years back her husband was kidnapped and till now nothing is known about him. His death has not been ascertained and Shameema waits the day when her sufferings would ease. Today Shameema is struggling to provide food and education to her five children; she finds the going tough indeed. Life was not always bed of thorns, there were roses too when her husband shouldered the responsibilities.

Abdul Rashid Wani s/o Abdul Khaliq of Safapora Phalpura district Baramulla was working as an SPO when unidentified gunmen kidnapped him. Seven years past there are no whereabouts of him being dead or alive. "He is dead", says his wife Shameema, "seven years back at the time of sowing season of rice, five gunmen came to our house and took him. Later close sources said that he was killed, as the gunmen were actually militants", she said hesitantly. Quite apprehensive about the whole matter she admits, "HM militants were active in our area. They had warned him before to give up the job of SPO but he had not agreed. **He was working as an (Special police officer) SPO for only one month; in fact he had not received**

even his first salary when he was kidnapped. In that month seven persons were taken and later it was known that all of them have been killed, but nobody's body was given except one girl who was shot at her house. Before working as SPO, my husband was a laborer. Had I known that the job he has taken would spell death, I would not have allowed him to take up the job. I was happy he was in job oblivious to the dangers associated with that job. The militants accused him of being an informer

Since his body was not handed over to us, we were not entitled to the ex-gratia. An FIR was lodged in Baramulla police station but authorities refused to provide us any ex-gratia or job under SRO 43. They claimed that as his body could not be found, therefore, Rashid could be declared dead only after a period of seven years. *I am waiting for the day, he will be declared dead.* This declaration would bring life to my children.

From the last seven years, life has become virtual hell with financial constraints playing havoc in our lives. I am left with five young children to sustain, four daughters and one son. My eldest daughter Mahjabeen is 17 years old; she quit her studies after completing 10th standard because of financial problems. Next to her is my only son Parvez, 15, studying in tenth, Then Rukhsana in seventh standard, Shabeena in 6th and Zahida the youngest. Teachers tell me Parvez is a bright lad and shows lot of promise, but how long will I be able to bear his educational expenses I don't know.

I do menial jobs and earn about Rs 50 per month, but with five kids the going is tough. I went to charitable organizations and orphanages so that they could help me, they have promised to bear the expenses of my elder daughter's marriage. In June this year, seven years will be completed and government will declare my

husband dead, then I will get relief and things will improve. As of today life is very tough, the whole burden has fallen on my shoulders and I find it tough to cope with the additional responsibilities that destiny threw on me. But there is nothing one can do, in frustration I feel like putting an end to my life. I can't do that, I have nubile faces in front of me, and I can't betray them. If I was alone then I would not have shied away from death, but as June comes I will get money to bear life and its expenses. Without money life is full of hard and cumbersome.

Shameema is awaiting the verdict of declaration of death of her husband. For seven years it has been a rocky journey for Shameema and she impatiently awaits to hear her husband being pronounced dead. It is very hard and agonizing to be declared a widow but financial matters will ease for her that would spell life for her and her children; it would bring the much-needed moolah. This is Kashmir, in normal circumstances a woman would have prayed to see her husband alive; she would have impatiently waited for the news that her hubby is fine somewhere. If the body was not found she could have safely assumed he was alive and lived in bliss and hope, but that is not practicality. Fourteen years of war have taught women here to be practical. And that is what Shameema believes, whether her husband is dead or alive, that only time will decide. She has waited for seven years, she believes in truth and the truth is hungry stomachs cannot be fed on illusions and hopes. They need food and food can come by her husband's proof of death. Today she would prefer to be widow of a soldier entitled to help from government rather than half-widow entitled to dreams and sufferings. This is a Kashmiri woman's initiative for Survival...

THE ONLY WOMEN'S POLICE STATION IN VALLEY GUARDED BY MEN??? **FIVE FIR'S REGISTERED IN THE YEAR 2003 INCLUDING HUSBAND-WIFE'S TIFF AND PICK POCKETING**

By Aasia Jeelani

In a state where studies after studies are being churned out about the increase in the violence and crimes against women, the only women's police station's figures defies those theories and research work conducted by local,

'national' and even international groups. Constituted in the year 1998, the authorities made tall claims that the police station being one of its only kinds in valley would bring respite to the suffering women of Kashmir. The cell generated

hopes among women as well. But between 1998 and 2004, the cell has not achieved any milestone. Although there are women constables and inspectors stationed there but men guard the only women's police station.

Voices Unheard team went to this lone police station at Rambagh to check the records of crimes against women in the year 2003-04 but to our dismay only five FIR's had been lodged in the year 2003 comprising of pick pocketing, of Husband-wife's tiff and two of rape and one Fir for the year 2004 has been filed for dowry harassment. Inspector Masarat Jan while speaking to *Voices Unheard* said, "I was posted here in 1998 and in 2001 I was transferred and in 2002, I was again posted here. Between 1998 and 2003 there has been a sea change, in 98 nobody visited here but today I see considerable number of women frequenting this place. Women have become stronger and fearless and are raising voices against subjugation." When asked if women had really become so fearless then how come, only six FIRs have been lodged in the last two years? Replying to the question she said, "Actually most of the cases that come to us are tiffs between couples or in-laws or dowry harassment. In most of the cases we counsel them, call the two parties and try to work out a solution and reconciliation, which is successful. No high level investigations take place as matters are solved on lower levels. Only in certain cases harsh action is taken." when pointed out that crimes against women were skyrocketing don't they get complaints of harassment by troops. "No", pat came the reply adding, "During my tenure we received no such complaints of rapes or harassment by security personnel's". Did they not receive the complaints or were the complaints nor entertained? "No no, I told you no such thing has come to our light."

The recent scandals of prostitution going galore in the city, did they receive any complaints? "no not in recent times but in 1999 a matter had come to light and the then in charge officer Shazada had raided and arrested several people in this connection."

Masarat finds police service very exciting and suggests women to join the service, as it is safe. Her husband who is doctor supports her in her endeavor. She says she devotes her spare

time to her children and family. "My parents and then my in-laws are supportive, I am lucky and happy with my job".

We were told that this police station has another branch at Nehru Park, but a visit there proved futile. Although this police station has all women force but it is not confined to crimes against women. It is a general police station and covers all crimes falling in their jurisdiction. The inspector Police station Naseem Chowdhary had this to say, " I am afraid to say this is not a women's police station, a false notion has been spread. Many times I have clarified in the media but the notion persists. Just because this police station has majority of women force people get this idea. We do not deal with specific crimes against women, if we get any complaints we refer them to Rambag police station." She also declined to comment on any complaint received against armed forces. "I have received no such complaints. I told you we deal with general cases and all women related cases are transferred to Rambag". Naseem also shared her counterpart's view that police job was great for any woman and it gave her enormous powers.

There seems to be confusion somewhere, if the personnel at Rambag guided us to another branch of police station in Nehru Park, then why did the person in concern deny? If the confusion between the two is not clear within themselves, how come the so-called In-charge will solve the confusion of other women. Their roles need to be defined. The women in charge may feel elevated with their job, they may feel powerful but they were not created to be powerful only, they were created with imparting sense of power and confidence in women. It is impossible to believe that they have received no complaint of violation by armed forces; it seems obvious they have orders not to entertain such complaints. If the only women's police station in valley cannot ensure the fight for justice, what could be talked of further rights? When the stepping-stone for justice will falter, the whole system will collapse. During the past 15 years crimes against women in the form of molestation, rapes, defaming them have reached alarming proportions but the story at women's police station in Rambag is different, their statistics is a mockery of crimes against women. After all in 15-year-old conflict crimes

against women cannot be limited to pick

pocketing and couple feud.

MEDDLING WITH INTERNAL MATTERS: SECURITY FORCES FORCE WOMAN TO REMARRY

By Aasia Jeelani

March: Facing abuses from security forces were enough for women in villages just to face additional problems of troops interfering in their personal lives. It is the army who in far off villages dictate terms to women and decide who will marry and who will stay single? Mubeena from Dangerpora Budgam faces one such ordeal. Her husband was a militant with Hizbul-Mujahedeen. He was killed by the army. His death started series of painful episodes for her. She was left with one child to fend for herself.

Left with no source of livelihood she went over to her parent's house to stay but misfortunes followed her there soon. Not satisfied with her husband's killing, army was now forcing her to get married. Her brother who was working for army was killed by them on the allegation that he was a militant, army killed their comrade and helper. They said that since his brother-in-law was a militant, he was closely working with him. His death came as shock for the family more from the fact that he was killed by troops. Even during the time he was alive he along with his family members was harassed by the army on some pretext or other.

Mubeena had to face many hardships after her husband's death and the subsequent death of her brother. Her major worry is the enormous pressure on her and her family members by army to get married. Once army took her and detained her in the camp from 6A:M to 9: 30 PM and kept forcing her to surrender arms. She was released after her family paid Rs16, 000. Living on a razor's edge Mubeena's life has become a bundle of problems. Talking to "*Voices Unheard*" a visibly upset Mubeena says, "army and Task force are always threatening me. They tell me 'we will kill you sooner or later'. After my husband's death they are forcing me to remarry. I don't know what they stand to gain by it? They have put enormous pressure on my old parents who are already suffering so much. Army comes here and misbehaves with us and says I am a militant informer. They came few days back and broke

down all the doors and windows, and again threatened me. My parents don't leave me alone in the house, as they are afraid. I feel guilty as I am causing them so much grief. Already I am dependent on them along with my son, then my brother who was killed has left behind 4 children and my younger brother is suffering from fear psychosis. Every time he sees uniformed men he shivers and stammers. He says," they will kill me". He is also suffering from a heart ailment owing to these anxieties. We don't sleep in our house as we fear troops will come and kill us. My parents are so worried; we have no financial support and a large family to support.

Even the villagers blame me, but tell me where my fault lies? My husband was a militant and they killed him for that crime if it is really a crime. But what about my brother? He was working with army. why was he killed and why are they forcing me to remarry?. Where will I go, there is no rule of law, even the police side with army. Army roosts the rule and poor people like me suffer. It should be my prerogative to decide to re-marry or not. But the irony is that even such decisions are imposed on victims like me. Recently during a raid at our house my father was taken out and my mother was also not there. My cousin was there, an army officer tried to drag me inside a room but I resisted the attempt and shouted for help. My cousin was there so I escaped; otherwise, their intentions were not noble. They tell me your name is Kulsoom and you have 3 children, where have you hid them?. What will I say, world knows I am Mubeena and I have only one kid. Where will I get two more? My life has become hell"

Mubeena's father Ghulam Nabi Shiekh sitting close by says, "tell me can I thrust my daughter upon someone?. Will I force or beg people at streets to marry my daughter just because army is forcing me to remarry my daughter. She is a widow. Who will marry her at an instant?. These brutes don't understand. They just come here and harass me and always ask me

to marry my daughter or otherwise, threaten to kill me. I am helpless due to my circumstances. I have so many tensions; my young son was killed by troops in spite of the fact that he worked with them. I have certificates to prove it and then they killed him on the pretext of being informer. His wife and 4 children stay with me and I take care of them.

My younger son is sick and fears army. He tells me to stay somewhere else. My widowed daughter stays with me. What will I do? Security forces have destroyed our house. At nights we don't sleep in this house and take refuge in neighbors' or relatives' house.

Few days back the troops harassed us for all night and threatened to kill us. Early in the morning police came and we were set free. It was on the behest of SHO that they stopped harassing us. He also convinced them that marrying off their daughter is the internal matter of the family.

I want to leave this place and settle somewhere else but where will I go? The authorities refuse to file our cases making an excuse that cases of militants are not entertained. Now my worry is Mubeena, they are after her, I don't dare to let her alone for a moment, I fear they will harm her as they always threaten to do so"

Ghulam Nabi sheikh is a worried man; his worries are his family members and their security. Their safety and welfare are his prime concerns. But the situation at present makes him think that their lives are in constant danger, yet there is no place he can flee to. He may shift form his village temporarily but what is the guarantee that another place will have no such problems. After all, whole Kashmir is in the grip. Meddling with personal matters in the name of myopic patriotism and national interest is making lives tough in Kashmir here and Mubeena's case stands an ideal example.

WOMAN SUCCUMBS

Feb 18: A woman who was severely injured in police thrashing on 16th Feb while protesting against killing of a civilian at Narbal succumbed to her injuries today.

On Tuesday Feb 17, she along with hundreds of people were protesting against the killing of Abdul Rashid Bhat s/o Ghulam Mohiddin at Suziath Narabal. The pro government militants, allegedly killed Bhat a close relative of a Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) militant and father of seven, after kidnapping him from his house on the evening of Feb. 16. His killing evoked a strong protest and people took to streets to protest. They were raising slogans against the present regime.

Relatives of Ayesha accused that police used brute force against the protestors and subjected them to severe thrashing," she died because police had beaten her up harshly and severely," when the body of Ayesha was brought to Narbal, people took to streets and lodged massive protest. As if Rashid's death was not enough to the series of killing, as yet another innocent fell to the vicious circle.

When people of the area came to know about Abdul Rashid's killing, they were irked and men, women, children took to streets to protest. Soon the crowd became bigger and turned into a procession. People took out the body of Rashid on a cot and shouted slogans

Why it happened to us?" Oh! Why did it happen to them? Why does it happen to others or anybody in Kashmir, Why? There are hardly answers available to these poignant queries.

Police swooped on protestors, they cane charged the mob and fired several tear smoke shells to disperse the protestors. The police action left several persons including one woman injured. They were taken to hospital where Ayesha w/o Abdul Ahad Bhat succumbed to her injuries on Feb 18.

against the government and security forces at Suziath Narbal. Police swooped on the crowd firing tear gas shells and *lathi* (cane) charging the crowd. During the police action many people were injured and one of the injured women Ayesha Begum w/o Abdul Ahad, later succumbed to her injuries at Soura hospital.

A visit to late Ayesha's house revealed the grief that was writ all over. *Voices Unheard* team

spoke to Ayesha's husband and to her daughter. Her husband Abdul Ahad recalling the fateful day said, "People of the area were protesting against the killing of Rashid. As soon as the news of his death spread in the area, people took out massive protest; they refused to bury Rashid until the authorities did not punish the guilty. There was a crowd of about 10,000 people. Suddenly, police smoked tear gas and *lathi* charged the mob. People ran helter-skelter. Ayesha was also injured by the police action and fell down in a river nearby, she was taken out and rushed to hospital but she died there. Doctors said her lung had been ruptured."

The family has not lodged any FIR and is awaiting the death certificate. Shakeela 16-year-old daughter of Ayesha says "all of us were here but mother was out, when we heard the gun shots we went out to look for her but could not find her in the crowd. The police were beating people, we came back and later somebody informed that our mother was injured and has

been taken to hospital but by evening her dead body came".

The family has been left with no caretaker; Ayesha's death is a big blow to the family. She has left behind seven children. Her eldest daughter and son are married, while the youngest one is 8-year-old Shani is studying in 3rd standard. Unaware of the tragic loss of her mother, she keeps on asking for her, "where is *Boba* (mother) she cries out?"

The eldest of the sibling who is married and was there at the time of the incident says, "mother's death is a big blow for all of us especially for our younger siblings, they have been orphaned and there is nobody to take care of them. They have to do all the work and have to study also. Who will look after them? I am worried for them. Why it happened to us?". Oh! Why did it happen to them? Why does it happen to others or anybody in Kashmir, Why? There are hardly answers available to these poignant queries.

DRIVEN TO BEGGING, THE MISERIES OF A WOMAN WHO LOST HER HUSBAND

Jameela is virtually living off by begging. Every Friday she goes to Mosque and begs for a living and manages to feed her three children and old aged mother. But Jameela's failing health has barred her from even taking up this insulting profession. At the time of talking to the *Voices Unheard*, Jameela was scheduled for a hysterectomy (surgery done to remove uterus) the next day and it was some charitable institution to bare the expenses of her operation.

Jameela's once had a very happy family till circumstances threw challenges at her. Her husband Ghulam Mohammad Kumhar was a potter and earned well to sustain his family. They already had two daughters and now Jameela was expecting third time. All well it seemed for few days life offered to Jameela much more than expected. Jameela was admitted in Srinagar's maternity hospital Lall-Ded where she delivered a baby boy. She was happy and could not have asked for more. Her husband was there with her, but after the baby was born Ghulam Mohammad went back to his village Kralpora in district Kupwara, as his two daughters were alone in the house.

That was the last time Jameela saw her husband. Later she just heard about him. As she says, "I don't know what happened, I only heard about my husband's death from the villagers the very next day when she had come to village.

Early in the morning men in civvies cordoned off the village. They took the identity card of villagers and asked to collect the same from the camp. As identity card was essential for identification the villagers thronged the camp early morning. About 35 villagers including my husband had visited the camp at 9 am. Major Rathore had beaten all of them mercilessly. My husband had been beaten severely. Due to unbearable torture he finally succumbed to injuries to which 34 other villagers bear testimony.

According to witnesses the body was dragged from there and washed off immediately. The army wanted to conceal the matter. But due to presence of 34 other people witnessing the incident the matter could not be concealed. Villagers gathered and went to camp to ask for the body. Army at first refused and later handed it over to the villagers on the condition that they will bury him without any agitation or protest.

I was oblivious to the happenings and heard about it later. I did not see him nor his body, it was a shock. *Nine years have passed. This incident happened in the year 1995, and to this day police have not registered the FIR and I am still fighting to file it. The doctors who conducted the post mortem admitted that he died of torture but they were threatened not to disclose the reality. Even the police was afraid of lodging FIR against the forces. The army in their version said that he had fallen from the stairs. It is a lie 34 people are witness to his death. Look at the irony. Killers are so powerful that nobody dares to take action against them and they can get away with anything.* Since my husband's death, I am living a beggar's life, begging at every door. My children are young. My son is 9 years old and my daughters 14 and 12. My eldest daughter suffered a psychological trauma after her father's death. She was admitted in the hospital. Doctors said she was mentally disturbed, so I took her to psychiatrist. Although she is better now but she loses her temper often. She can't be blamed.

Even I am mentally sick which exhibits itself physically as well. I have to undergo hysterectomy and also there is a cyst on my gall bladder. I am ailing. I am worried what will happen to my children after my death? I have no one to support me. I don't have any brother or sister and even no body from my husband's side. I have three children and a blind mother".

Jameela says, she is 30 but miseries have aged her and she looks 50. Begging is not what Jameela would have ever imagined to be left with the option of surviving, but circumstances compelled her to do so she was left with no other option. Young children and failing health has made her life miserable. Jameela's only worry is if death takes her away what will happen to her children? Her death spells death of four naive individuals. She fears that her children might also be driven to begging, a legacy, which she never wants to pass on to her children.

INCIDENTS JAN - FEB & MAR

*** LABORER RAPED BY BSF**

Jan 3: To the outrage of the scores of UP laborers working in the BSF camp at Singhpora Baramulla, one Manki Bhaj wife of Pos Ram of Palas Uttar Pradesh was allegedly raped by Rampal- a BSF personnel (191 regiment) on Friday 2nd Jan. Finding Manki alone, Rampal overpowered her and raped her in a nearby ditch. The husband and wife have lodged a complaint at Baramulla, police Station.

*** MILLITANTS KIDNAPPED GIRL**

Jan 3: Militants allegedly kidnapped a 16-year-old girl in Rajouri district of Jammu provision. Official sources confirmed that 16-year-old girl identified as Zakiya was kidnapped by the militants from Kaakote area in Rajouri district. Police launched a massive hunt to trace the girl.

*** GIRL KIDNAPPED**

Jan 5: A teenaged girl was allegedly kidnapped by some unidentified persons on December 31, 2003 while returning along with her family to her native village of Changer in Nowshera.

According to reports, the entire family in the wake of Pakistani shelling migrated to Lamberi Migrants' camp but after ceasefire and truce on borders, the family decided to return to their native place. The girl identified as Ushma Lata, 17, still remains untraced.

*** 4 KIDS INJURED IN IED BLAST**

Jan 11: Four children including three brothers were injured, two of them critically when IED exploded in the backyard of Shadara-e- Sharief shrine at Nagbal Wani today at around 2:30 pm. Sources said the children were playing in the field, when the blast occurred. Those injured in the blast have been identified as

Mohammad Idris (10), Safer Ahmed (13), Naseer Ahmad (8) sons of Mohammad Sadiq and Mohd Yaseen (13) son of Mohammad Lateef. The condition of Mohd Idris and Safer Ahmad is said to be critical.

*** SOLDIER, 3 GIRLS HELD**

Jan 13: On Monday Police took into custody a soldier of Rashtriya Rifles and three girls from Ganderbal Hotel. Sources said police party raided a hotel in Ganderbal on Monday and arrested Omkar Singh s/o Manohar Singh of Rajasthan along with three girls of Rangril, Nagbal Ganderbal. The soldier lured the girls to the hotel with a promise of a job after identifying himself as employee of Education department. Police recovered a pistol and a wireless set from the soldiers and registered case against him. The search for the gang pin has been intensified.

*** TROOPS KILLS WOMAN**

Jan 26: A 46-year-old Ashraf Tib w/o Mohammad Bashir of Paghla, Surankote, Jammu was allegedly killed by the troops.

Reports said that at around 8:30 pm personnel from 45 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) in civvies disguising as militants forced their entry inside the residential house of Mohammad Bashir and shot dead his wife without giving any reasons. The inhabitants when came to know about the incident took to streets staging a protest against the killing. The demonstrators alleged the killing at the hands of troops and also accused the forces of creating havoc in the area.

However, the troops of 45 RR denied the allegations and claimed that the women had died in the cross firing.

*** MASSIVE PROTESTS OVER WOMAN'S KILLING BY TROOPS, MILITANTS SHOOT WOMEN TO DEATH**

Jan 27: Security forces killed a woman in the village named Malhan of Surankote, which

triggered massive protest. The people blocked the road and raised slogans against the security forces, demanding an immediate probe into the incident. They also demanded ex- gratia relief for the kin of the deceased. The deceased has been identified as Atra Bi W/o Ghulam Hassan. Security forces refuting the claim said that a woman and an Army jawan have been killed in an encounter with militants. The local people, however, alleged that she was shot dead by the troops. Due to the protest the vehicular traffic was disrupted on Surankote – Poonch road for at least 4 hrs. Later Police and other high-ranking officials visited the spot.

In another incident a woman was shot dead by militants in Niyara village Dharmshal of district Rajouri yesterday evening. The deceased has been identified as Nazir Bibi W/o Faqir Mohd. According to reports two unidentified gunmen entered the house of Faqir Mohd and fired upon his wife killing her on the spot.

*** SOG ARRESTS SIX INCLUDING MOTHER OF FOUR FROM NISHAT**

Jan 28: The Task force personnel Tuesday raided several houses in Nishat and took 7 persons including mother of 4 into custody. The rest have been identified as Bashir Ahmad Hafiz s/o Ghulam Muhammad, Bilal Ahmad Hafiz s/o Muhammad Sultan, Abdul Hameed, Abdul Qayoom Bhat s/o Ghulam Rasool, Muhammad Ashraf Bhat s/o Ghulam Mohd Bhat, Abdul Majid Hafiz s/o Gulam Mohammad and his wife Atiqa Bano, into custody.

The people of the area protested against the arrest and staged a demonstration. 10 persons including 4 women were injured when police resorted to cane charge and fired several tear smoke shells to disperse hundreds of protestors demonstrating the arrest. The protestors, who were shouting slogans against the Task force and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), (ruling party led by Mufti Mohammad Syed) said the personnel terrorized people

during the raids. "They dragged Atiqa, a mother of four, by her hair and subjected her to worst kind of humiliation," said one of the protestors. The protestors also alleged that the task force personnel during the raids beat up the women folk and took away valuables from the houses.

*** NISHAT PROTESTS- FOLLOW UP**

Jan 29: SOG had arrested six persons including Atiqa mother of four from Nishat area on Wednesday. They today released Atiqa and Bilal Ahmad who were half-dead. Meanwhile people continued their protests against the arrests for second consecutive day. The area also observed a complete shut down.

*** COP HELD FOR KIDNAPPING A TEENAGE GIRL**

Feb 6: Police has taken into custody Bashir Ahmad Mir s/o Abal Mir of Khushipora-HMT, Srinagar for abducting a teenage girl, who was recovered after seven days from the custody of the boy by the police. However reporter of Urdu Press club alleged that Bashir who works as a traffic cop, was one of the accused in inter-state sex trafficking scandal, which surfaced last month in which seven persons were arrested

The press club reporter accused the police of shielding him by not producing the medical examination report of the abducted girl. "The cop has accumulated huge property and is involved in various cases related to drug trafficking of girls", the girl alleged. However, the police officer Parimpora said this case had nothing to do with the racket.

*** 4 DIE IN SHOPIAN**

Feb 7: Unidentified persons hurled a grenade in a crowd of civilians in Shopian on Monday. 4 soldiers and 26 bystanders were injured. In retaliation, the security forces killed four civilians. One Saba Akhter died on the spot, while others succumbed to their injuries later.

Militants gunned down, Zahoor Baba, a senior commander of *Ikhwan*, a militia formed in 1994, of turncoats, in Islamabad.

*** RENEGADE RAPES YOUNG GIRL**

Feb 12: A pro-government militant allegedly raped a young girl who is believed to be his sister-in-law's daughter at Lal Pora-Kupwara. Police has registered a case against the accused Maqsood Ahmad but has not arrested him as yet.

*** WOMEN'S COMMISSION WITHOUT A CHAIRPERSON**

Feb 13: The state commission for women (SCW) continues to be without a chairperson for the last one year. The post of the Secretary is also vacant with the affairs of the commission being run by a handful of clerks.

The commission's former chairperson Dr Girija Dhar relinquished her charge after her term expired one year ago. But till date no decision has been taken to fill the post leaving the body without a full-fledged head. The commission has not been requisitioned and no new members appointed thus adversely affecting the working of the commission. Rita Jitendran is the only member on the board but sans any powers.

On administrative level, the commission is without a secretary and few clerks are running the affairs of the commission. The charge of the secretary is with Chandra Gupta, additional secretary in the Social Welfare Department. She is short of time to probe into the matters of the commission. A large number of women who want to seek guidance and counseling from the centre return empty handed. *Voices Unheard* visited the office at Boulevard. Office has been shifted to Jammu due to Darbar Move (Shifting of Administration to summer/ winter capital for 6 months).

*** GIRL KILLED**

Feb 19: Unidentified gunmen shot dead a girl at Beerwah. Armed persons Tuesday night barged into the house of Abdul Gani Najjar at Arwah, Beerwah in Budgam and opened fired on his daughter Haleema 18 in the courtyard of the house. Police has lodged an FIR and the body has been sent for post mortem.

*** KID KILLED IN TRAL BLAST, 4 INJURED**

Feb 23; Suhail Ahmad Bhat (11), S/o Bashir Ahmad was killed while Raees Ahmad (12) S/o Abdur Rashid, Mukhtar Ahmad (14) S/o Muhammad Ramzan Mir, Gowhar Ahmad Bhat S/o Abdul Ahad and Owais Bhat S/o Ghulam Mohidin were critically injured when a hand grenade they were fiddling with went off at Tral in Pulwama district today. The injured have been admitted in Soura medical Institute.

*** 2 SOUTH KASHMIR WOMEN REMAIN UNTRACED**

Feb 24: Police have failed in tracing two ladies reportedly missing in mysterious circumstances from Pulwama district. Although FIR 's have been lodged but so far there has been no break through.

Last week, a Kashmiri Pundit woman went missing from her home Achan. Mother of three kids she is yet to be traced. It is interesting to mention that a minority pickets of the state police guards the Kashmiri pundit families staying in Achan village. In an incident reported earlier a mother of three grown up kids Aisha w/o Ghulam Rasool Bhat has been untraceable since Feb 5. Resident of Wasaymarg in the Khairagam belt of Pulwama. Aisha had gone to Pahkharpora to see a doctor according to

reports. She did not return home. The area is very remote. Though the disappeared lady's husband Ghulam Rasool Bhat has approached the police at Keller and registered an FIR, there has been no outcome so far. Aisha's 16-year-old daughter Dilshada is suffering from frequent bout of unconsciousness. Reports said since village is perhaps the last village in the Pulwama district and the lady got missing in neighboring Budgam district, the communication gap between the two police stations might have prevented a break through.

*** WOMAN KILLED**

Feb 28: Unidentified gunmen today shot dead Naseema w/o Muhammad Maqbool Shah in her house at Masward Rajpora in Pulwama District. Killing is shrouded in mystery as no reasons could be cited for the killing and circumstances in which the incident happened.

*** KIDNAPPED MINOR RECOVERED ACCUSED HELD ON RAPE CHARGES**

March 4: Nagrota police recovered a minor girl who was allegedly kidnapped by a youth from village Shiba in Nagrota at least 20 days ago.

Police has also arrested the kidnapper and recovered the girl from Lal Bazar area of Srinagar. The kidnaper has been identified as Satar (20) S/o Ghulam Hyder of Lal Bazaar. The sixteen-year-old girl after medical examination was resorted to her family members. The girl alleged that she was repeatedly raped by the accused and kidnapped on the bait of getting a job in Srinagar.

A rape and kidnapping case has been registered against the accused.

* DEFAMED WOMAN ENDS HER LIFE

March 8: Following the appearance of defamatory posters against some persons in Balhama. Panzla of Rafiaband here, a woman ended her life today. Sources said Tasleema wife of Mohd Yaqub Khan ended her life after consuming some poisonous substances in reaction to a poster that had branded her as "lecherous". Police has registered a case and started investigations. Unidentified persons had pasted posters in which some men and women of the area labeled as immoral and lecherous.

* IKHWAN/RAPES 16-YEAR-OLD, VICTIM COMMITS SUICIDE

March 9: A teenage girl of Naidkhai, Sumbal who was allegedly abducted and raped by an Ikhwani indulged in self-immolation, a day after her abduction. She succumbed to her injuries at SMHS hospital yesterday. Her death sparked violent protests.

Reports said, protestors carried the body of the deceased girl to Divisional Commissioner's office and demanded the arrest and prosecution of the accused. However, police resorted to *lathi* (cane) charge and use of tear gas to disperse the protestors. Police took the body of the girl in their custody and didn't allow the protestors to meet Divisional Commissioner. Police said that 16 year old Rosa Bano d/o Ghulam Nabi Dhar of Tengpora, Naidkhi set herself on fire after putting kerosene on herself on Feb 29.

According to the family a notorious *Ikhwani* Manzoor Ahmad Dar alias Cobra abducted Roza on Feb 28 and released her next day. After release she set herself on fire. The family insists the girl was raped by the accused. Post mortem is awaited. Police is looking for the accused who fled along with his family members to some unknown place.

* SECURITY FORCES ARREST WOMAN

March 9: Security forces apprehended a woman allegedly said to be a militant sympathizer from Keran sector of Poonch district. Troops alleged to recover a wireless set and some incriminating documents from her possession. She has been identified as Hameeda Begum R/O Pakistan. After brief interrogation by the army she was handed over to the Poonch police.

* WOMAN'S NOSE CHOPPED OFF

March 11: Masked gunmen on the intervening night of 9-10 March chopped off the nose of a woman in Awura village of Kupwara in south Kashmir.

The husband of the woman suspects that *Ikhwani* (pro-government gunman) carried out the assault. The woman named Shamima, w/o Hakam Din Khatana of Manwan, Awura in Kupwara district was abducted by *Ikhwani* Mohammad Shafi Payar three months ago. The abductor took her to Rajasthan where police recovered her and handed over to her husband. That night three masked gunmen entered the house of Shamima with a knife and chopped her nose. She was taken to a Srinagar hospital. Her husband suspects the pro-government gunman Payar and his accomplice are behind the attack.

* MINOR KILLED, 5 OF A FAMILY INJURED IN MYSTERY BLAST

March 21: A four-year-old minor was killed and five others of a family including three minor girls and a minor boy were injured when a mysterious explosion took place in the house of Fateh Mohammad Gujjer R/O Tanka which comes under the jurisdiction of police station Banihal in Doda district.

During the intervening night of March 19th & 20th Mar, an explosion took place in the house of Fateh in which his minor son Arif was killed while another son Sadiq and three minor daughters Fatima (13), Marian (10), and Zahida (5) were injured. His wife Hazara begum was also injured in the explosion. All the injured were immediately rushed to Banihal hospital

Unconfirmed reports said that it was a hand grenade lobbed by the militants when the family was having dinner.

*** GIRL DIES IN EXPLOSION**

March 27: A 12-year-old girl died in mysterious blast at Marh Kullian village in Pargwal sector of police station Khour yesterday evening.

The deceased has been identified as Nishu Devi D/o Rattan Lal of Pindi (Domana). Sources said that the girl found a live shell in the garbage and it exploded when she started fiddling with it.

*** MINOR RAPED, TEACHER ARRESTED**

March 29: Police arrested a schoolteacher allegedly involved in raping a minor girl in the school premises. According to Bhola Shankar, Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Shaheed Gunj police station, the accused Ali Mohd Tak, 57 S/o Habibullah of Pursoo Shopian presently residing in Momminabad, Batmaloo allegedly raped an eight year old student in the premises of Raghunath Mandir school, Karfali Mohalla on Friday march 19.

The accused, an Urdu teacher according to police raped the victim during Friday prayers when most of the children and school staff were out. Tak, according to the police threatened the victim that her parents would die if she disclosed the incident to any body. The victim a 3rd standard student hailing from Islamabad and

presently staying with her grandfather at Karfali Mohalla Srinagar felt frightened and remained silent.

However, the police said the victim developed complication after a week and narrated the whole incident to her grand father, who went to school headmistress. But she failed to take any action against him. The victim's grandfather then filed a report in police station Shaheed Gunj on March 27, after which the police nabbed the culprit from his residence. Medical examination of the victim prima facie reveals the commission of offence but the final report is awaited police said. According to some students prior to the incident they had informed the head mistress about the sexual harassment done by the teacher, but she failed to take any action. The police have filed a case under section 376 RPC.

*** GUJJARS PROTEST' MOLESTATION' OF WOMAN**

March 30: Hundreds of Gujjars from Pichgam Nadgund area of Qazigund police station protested against the soldiers stationed in the area. The protestors alleged that soldiers tried to molest a woman Zuleikha and demanded action against the erring soldiers. The protestors alleged that soldiers made their lives hell and harassed them on different pretexts. Major Nagi of Victor Force while admitting that people might have faced some problem during search operation denied the allegation of molestation. He said Major Sinha today visited Qazigund and pacified the protestors. Major Sinha said strict action would be taken against troops found guilty of human rights violations.

*** MOTHER KILLS CHILDREN**

March 31: A poverty stricken woman slaughtered her three minor children and

later committed suicide after consuming some poisonous substance at Dhara Fatehpur village, under the jurisdiction of Mandi police station, about 26 kms from Poonch.

Sharifa Begum w/o Rukam Din reportedly killed her three children Saleem Akhtar (9), Taslima Akhtar (9) and Munni (2) at about 10 am today. She later consumed some poisonous substance killing herself too. Hue and cry created by the children attracted the nearby villagers. The residents rushed to the spot but could not manage to save the Sharifa or her kids. Some of the villagers later informed the police about the incident. The police shifted the bodied to sub district hospital Mandi where the post mortem report also revealed that the woman has consumed poison.

The neighbors said the husband of deceased was out of station at the time of incident as he worked in the nearby forests to earn livelihood. The locals said that the woman committed such act as due to poverty she often could not arrange meals for her children.

* WOMAN KILLED

March 31: Unidentified gunmen shot dead Nigena Akhtar D/o Ghulam Nabi Shah R/o Shahabad, Awantipora last night. A case has been registered. Two boys sustained injuries when an explosive device they were fiddling with exploded at Kathua. The injured were hospitalized.

| DATE | WOMEN KILLED | CHILDREN KILLED |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Jan 26 | 1 | * |
| Jan 27 | 2 | * |
| Feb 07 | 1 | * |
| Feb 19 | * | 1 |
| Feb 23 | * | 1 |
| Feb 28 | 1 | * |
| Mar 09 | * | 1 |
| Mar 21 | * | 1 |
| Mar 27 | * | 1 |
| Mar 31 | 1 | * |
| Total | 6 | 5 |

WOMEN – CHILDREN KILLED

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Jan 27: Security forces allegedly killed a woman in the village named Malhan of Surankote, which triggered massive protest. The deceased has been identified as Atra Bi W/o Ghulam Hassan. Security forces refuting the

claim said that a woman and an Army jawan have been killed in an encounter with militants. The local people, however, alleged that she was shot dead by the troops.

Feb 7: Unidentified persons hurled a grenade in a crowd of civilians in Shopian in which four soldiers were injured. In retaliation, the security forces allegedly killed four civilians including one Saba Akhter.

Feb 19: Unidentified gunmen shot dead a girl at Beerwah. Armed persons on Feb 18th night barged into the house of Abdul Gani Najjar at Arwah, Beerwah in Budgam and opened fired on his daughter Haleema 18 in the courtyard of the house. Police has lodged an FIR and the body has been sent for post mortem.

Feb 23: Suhail Ahmad Bhat (11), S/o Bashir Ahmad was killed while Raees Ahmad (12) S/o Abdur Rashid, Mukhtar Ahmad (14) S/o Muhammad Ramzan Mir, Gowhar Ahmad Bhat S/o Abdul Ahad and Owais Bhat S/o Ghulam Mohidin were critically injured when a hand grenade they were fiddling with went off at Tral in Pulwama district today. The injured have been admitted in Soura medical Institute.

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March 31: Unidentified gunmen shot dead Nigena Akhtar D/o Ghulam Nabi Shah R/o Shahabad, Awantipora. A case has been registered.

Meanwhile, two boys sustained injuries when an explosive device they were fiddling with exploded at Kathua. The injured were hospitalized.

Kashmiri Women's Initiative for Peace and Disarmament

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