

JUDICIAL INJUSTICE

Women are at the crossroads of violence. Apart from the domestic violence, the impact of any crisis situation is colossal and momentous. Ever since the inception of conflict in Kashmir, there has been proliferation of the issues concerning women. This situation has been compounded by the bungling social, political and judicial system, which falls short to provide justice to the numerous unaided women sufferers of violence.

The judiciary and legal system has not delivered justice to the women victims in Kashmir. It is very rare for women to approach the legal system for redress because they are not educated about their rights and options in the army-dominated peripheral regions of the state; most women are deterred solely because they want to keep their rape confidential to avoid the social shame. Even in situations where women have dared to come up and narrate their miseries in spite of the social ramifications, they have been left at the mercy of their destinies without any justice. In many cases women pleading for Justice have been outcaste and brutally harassed to death by their families for bringing disgrace upon them, although they have no role to play in it. This has been a main reason for women victims to withdraw their cases. There are many examples where women attempted to seek justice but in vain. In some of the most public and infamous report cases - namely, Kunan Poshpora, Chanapora and Wavoosa - there has been no action taken by the judiciary to punish the culprits. There are many reports of police stations been reluctant to register FIR's against the military despite the unassailability of the evidence.

Out of the several incidents, which point out to failure of judicial system in Kashmir, one exemplary case could be of Army Captain Ravinder Singh Tewatia who was found guilty in a general court martial of raping two women in the area of Banihal. He was sentenced to seven years of imprisonment and was removed from service. However in an unprecedented move, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court quashed the proceedings of the court martial. Such instances have eroded the public faith in the judicial system to provide redress. In a widely documented case of a 1994 mass rape in Kangan, the police refused to file FIR because they did not want to be an "annoyance to the army" despite detailed affidavits clearly indicting army members on the charges of rape.

A frightening trend in Kashmir is the abuse of an ineffective judiciary by the executive to commit blatant crimes and avoid punishment. Munira Begum was gang-raped by 16 Rashtriya Rifle personnel in the mid-90s and when she tried to lodge FIR, the police refused to cooperate and notified the Rashtriya Rifles. They filed an FIR against her and concocted a case accusing her of harboring militants; no charges were ever brought against the 16 men because they denied any such incident. A woman named Salima who lives in Pulwama was detained under the Public Safety Act (PSA) and abused under the charge of harboring militants. The High Court dismissed the accusations and released her in the court. Soon after she was arrested again by the security forces on the concocted charges of possessing arms and is currently undergoing trial.

In the recent acts of dishonor and mortification at Baderpayeen, Lolab and Pahalgam, in spite of the enormous media publicity and protest nothing came out. All the investigation and probes ended up in mere denial of the actual facts, thereby giving a free license to the accused. These incidents are all witness to the fact that tells upon the inability of the judicial system and their puppetry existence. It has been not there for the first time, that in order to boost up the morale of the forces government has divulged and distorted the facts and evidences. It's further not just the first time that DNA has been fudged; we have past experience in hand. Once again murderers of human dignity were given liberty and edge to continue their misdeeds.

The situation in Kashmir and the passage of draconian laws has enabled the executive the usurp power from the judiciary and obliterate any semblance of judicial independence. Uncertain over getting justice, failure of judiciary to punish culprits in spite of substantial evidences and infinite time span involved have forced many people to withdrew their cases.

Just 5-6 kms away from Line of Control (LOC) at the hillside, is the village Dardi Haji in Handwara area of Kupwara district in the North of Kashmir. Away from the hustle and bustle of city, life in the village is hard. The main occupation of the villagers is farming, apart from working as labourers.

Haneefa (65) is a mother of 7 unwed daughters, one missing son and a wife of an ailing husband. With no financial support, Haneefa begs for living. At times, villagers help her by collecting the rice and flour for her.

Tragic stricken, she is unable to express her feelings. Seven years before, her only hope her son Mushtaq Ahmed Peer (20) s/o Ahmed peer got disappeared. He left behind a 3 months old daughter Shazia and wife Anara Begum. Later his wife remarried, leaving her daughter with Haneefa.

Destiny may have separated her only son from her, but he is alive in her memories. Haneefa awaits the day when he will return back and their condition will change for better. Her life is a litany of wishes to see her daughters well settled in life.

Stammering and shivering, she fails to give words to her feelings. Living her life in extreme poverty, she makes every possible effort to make her ends meet. But there are so many un-certainties in her life. The most painful aspect of her life is that she knows nothing about her only son's whereabouts.

“ Since 7 years, I have been waiting for his return. So that he could see his 3 month old daughter grown up and going to school. Her seven unwed sisters await his return. Since Mushtaq disappeared, his father is ailing” sobs Haneefa.

Shazia who has never seen his father wants to see him once. Like any child she wants her father besides her. Occasionally she becomes sad to see her friends father pampering their daughter and wish for her father's return. “ I have never seen him, but I still want him back. All my friends have parents. I envy them whenever they talk of their parents and show me things they had brought for them. I don't want things I just want them to be with me,” says Shazia with tears in her eyes. “We can live in poverty but the only thing we want is that our dear once should be close to us. What else we want. We are not asking for money or any help. I just want my son back. Am I asking for more?” say's Haneefa

Earlier Mushtaq was associated with militancy and had crossed line of control. Returning three months later, he remained active for six months and then left it. “ Does that mean he should be killed or disappeared? Does it give any one authority to kill the person? No person on earth can kill a person or subject to enforced disappearance. We poor people don't have much needs and demands. We should be left alone so that at least we can live our lives peacefully” laments Haneefa.

It is tough to narrate her woes. In a state of imbalance not knowing as what to reveal and what to hide, her mental and physical condition is deteriorating. Suffering from amnesia, she repeats one sentence many times forgetting what she said earlier.

But she is not alone victim of such condition. The conflict in Kashmir has left many women psychologically unfit, thereby enhancing the suicidal rate.

Accompanied by a neighbour to KWIPD's office, Haneefa is hopeful that something will be done to find her lost hope -her son. The frozen look on her face surrounds strange calmness.

The irony of fate is that despite these people living in extreme conditions of poverty and backwardness, they also are the worst victims of the present situation. Neither they know where to go, nor whom to address their sufferings. These people are not even in a position to lodge FIR. The people feel it useless to approach the judicial system as they have lost all hopes in it. The innocent people are caught between devil and the deep sea. Living with lost hope and lost dream, that is what their life is.

Tears roll down Zahida's cheeks as she strives to recapitulate the past reminiscences. Amidst sighs and sobs, she struggles to somehow emotionally balance herself. A few silent moments and then again she burst out hard crying uncontrollably. Sitting on the pavement of the court, she seems lost, vague and frozen. For five years she has been visiting courts and human right defenders to grant her justice.

An employee of Rural Development, Zahida d/o Muhammad Sidiq Ahanger r/o Gojwara got married to a businessman Sheikh Noor-ul-Hassan s/o Sheikh Noor-ud-din r/o Hyderpora on Oct 6, 1996. Initially all went well at her in-laws place. They were compassionate, sociable and would care for her like their own daughter. It was all nice for her except the strange behavior that Noor-ul-Hassan exhibited at times. "Occasionally he would impish me by saying that I will marry somebody else. I took it flippantly," recalls Zahida. Expecting baby, Zahida for some complication was advised bed rest. Spending six months at her In-laws place, she went to her maternal home.

Since then none of her relatives came to see her. Soon they came to know that Noor-ul-Hassan in connivance with his family members disrepute Zahida accusing her of being dissipated and wicked.

"They accused her chastity and that she had illicit relationship with a non Muslim who is a very close friend of Zahida's father. They further alleged that the babies in her womb were illegal. It was all farce and absolutely erroneous. I could not see my daughter bear the accusations silently. She would cry whole day clinching her belly hard as to what future did her unborn twin children belong. Seeing her dying a silent death, we approached her in-laws but they refused to even talk about her and asked for divorce," says anguished Sidiq.

On 9th Oct 1997, one year later after her marriage she got divorced in spite of the several attempts by her family to reunite them again and clear the misconceptions. It was decided at the time of divorce that the children only after performing DNA test would be taken by their father, however if negative both would be retained by their mother. On 11 Oct 1997, Zahida gave birth to two twin boys. As per the rules mentioned on the divorce papers, divorce committee came to the hospital along with Zahida's in-laws.

"They didn't allow the DNA test of babies and took the babies saying that their facial appearance matched with the parents. But later on they rumored that they had taken the babies on humanitarian grounds and they still claim them illegal. But at that time we were concerned about Zahida as her condition kept on aggravating. However later we asked for one of the child from them to which they refused replying that she should think she gave birth to still babies," said Sidiq.

For two years, Zahida's condition remained unstable. Unconscious, she was bedridden in a half dead condition and unfit to carry on any domestic as well as professional activity. Following this condition and false accusations, Zahida had to leave her job.

Regaining senses, in Aug 2001 Zahida filed her first writ petition in the lower court questioning the legality of his twin sons. To this, Noor-ul-Hassan affirmed his custody.

Zahida filed another writ petition in 2002 asking for her children's custody or grant her visitation rights. For two years the case proceedings continued under justice Kirmani. After Kirmani's transfer, Justice Imtiaz took charge of the case. However he soon transferred the case to Budgam session court on pretext that the case didn't come under his jurisdiction. In 2003 she was again sent to the Srinagar High court, from where she was sent back to Budgam. Since then the court proceedings are on.

On 6th March 2003, she went to British school to see her children. Coincidentally, Noor-ul-Hassan came there, abusing her and brutally thrashed her leaving her unconscious. Since then the school authorities never allow her to meet their children on Noor-ul-Hassan's directions. "Since that day, I went

several times to meet them but every time in spite of my pleads they refused me to meet them. How can I stay away from my two sons. One of my son is deaf and dumb he needs me more than the other one. How can I be happy?" bawls Zahida.

Six month's after divorce, Noor-ul-Hassan remarried. This time Zahida filed case for guardianship, however Noor-ul-Hassan rejected the appeal asserting her immoral and vagrant. Zahida since the day has been offered several marriage proposals that she refuses, as she believes would end in a similar note.

"My husband and his family left no stone unturned to defame me. Even if I am married, they will doubt my honesty and chastity. Since the incident my whole family and relatives have to bear the brunt of this accusation. Especially the female folks who are married are taunted bearing my name. One of my cousins had to change place of his shop following the irrational comments on my character by the people in the neighborhood" grumbles Zahida.

Talking further she says, " Noor-ul-Hassan soon remarried after divorce, what will happen to my children in case her new wife doesn't adjust with them. If they are thrown out who will take care of them. If I remarried would they take them up. Subsequent to all these thoughts, I have decided never to marry again".

Conscious of the life ahead, Zahida on several occasion forced her parents to go to Noor-ul-Hassan's house and ask for forgiveness even without any fault of hers. " She forced me to go to their place and request them to take her back even if as a maid for her children. But they rebuked me and out rightly refused to take her back even if her position as a maid" grieves Sidiq.

Afterwards Zahida's parents never went to Noor-ul-Hassan or his family. Once Zahida saw Noor-ul-Hassan waiting for her outside court. He asked Zahida to board his vehicle. Hopeful of some reconciliation, Zahida boarded the vehicle, but to her disappointment, he mocked at her helpless state. Since then she saw Noor-ul-Hassan several times sardonic at her helpless state.

The incident has completely changed her forever. Her social life has affected. Except for case proceedings, she never moves out. Zahida's incident also bores its repercussions on her family life. Her mother is grief stricken and ailing. She stays indoors and refuses to meet anybody. Her father is psychologically unfit.

All her relatives who accuse Zahida and abuse her vehemently have blindly accepted all these allegations.

Zahida feels depressed and dejected. All these years she has stood up strongly against all odds and she will continue her struggle till her last breath. Amidst all pain and suffering she is hopeful that at the time of her death she wont be alone, but she will have her own blood besides her to give support to her coffin and only then she will be able to die peacefully.

WITHERING LIVES AWAIT HIS RETURN

BY: TABASSUM ISHTIAQ

55 year-old Atiqa Begum is still hopeful of her husband's return. Amidst all odds, she is determined to find him someday and only then she will be able to die peacefully. " I believe he is alive and would return one day" throttles Atiqa.

Sniveling and stimulating with emotions, Atiqa gapes at the door while serving food for her husband in a hope that he will come back someday. This she has been doing for a decade now. On every occasion she lays out food for her husband as she had been doing till 29th May 1990 when 16-Dogra regiment cordoned the whole area and started searching three houses asking for Nazir Mir, Atiqa's husband. During the identification parade, the cats accompanying the army identified Nazir from his middle finger that had been cut during wood sawing. The cats alleged him to be a militant.

Identifying Nazir, he was bundled in a wanton along with two other persons despite several rescue attempts by his family members.

“ We kept pleading his innocence and that he was not a militant. But they didn’t listen and took him. Since then his whereabouts are not known” sighs Atiqa.

Lineman in Power development department (PDD), while, Nazir was detained, the other two were released within days. However, some unidentified gunmen killed one year later one of the released person.

Having no male other than her old ailing father Abdul Ahad Dar, Atiqa could do little to locate her husband. Yet realizing the gravity of the situation, Atiqa’s father went to lodge FIR in Zogiyar police station, Sheer Baramulla, which police refused to file.

Since then Abdul Ahad Dar looked for Nazir everywhere. Shortly, it came to fore that 16-Dogra unit had detained Nazir. To find out Nazir’s whereabouts, Dar went to meet the 16-Dogra regiment but to his disappointment, he found that the 16 Dogra regiment had been replaced by another regiment.

Talking to the “Voices Unheard’ team, Atiqa said, “Nazir was an innocent person. His only fault was that he was a People’s conference volunteer and used to take part in their demonstrations”.

In 1990, Abdul Ahad Dar filed a case in the High court, in which SRO 43 has been sanctioned besides a job to Nazir’s eldest son recently. However Atiqa’s quest for justice is not over. Her struggle will continue till she is able to find her husband. Atiqa wishes to go to Pakistan and search for her husband. She is hopeful that she will be able to find him there.

Atiqa mothering two sons and two daughters has to move out often for cases she has filed in the State Human Rights Commission regarding Nazir’s disappearance. This has caused a lot of embarrassment to her. Her neighbors harass her and question her chastity.

Since Nazir’s disappearance, army on several occasions raided their house asking for arms and ammunition, which they accuse that Nazir had hidden. This has become another major problem for Atiqa who feels insecure following constant threats from her neighbors and army.

However, this has not deterred her spirits. Amidst all these upheavals, Atiqa seems to emerge stronger than ever before. Her eyes speak of the conviction she has grown over the years. Every time she is asked to console herself that Nazir is no more she becomes violent and starts crying.

Talking to “*Voices Unheard*” team Atiqa protests “ how can he die when I pray for his long life every day. God cannot be so cruel to me. My prayers for him all these years won’t turn vain. He will come back, he has to come back for all the withering lives he left behind”.

SHAMEFUL ACT REPEATED

BY: SHAIQ NAZIR KHAN

Any act that violates women dignity is condemnable and offensive. Especially in conflict areas, women are prone to lot of harassment and disgrace. Five consecutive rapes in a year, it seems that security forces aim to punish and humiliate the entire community.

On Sunday evening of 19 Dec 2004, two persons of 3RR stormed the house of Muhammad Sadiq Shah in Sheikhpura, Sallar area of Islamabad district and raped his sixty-year-old wife.

The family was preparing for the dinner at that time. Suddenly the front door flung open. As Sadiq Shah got up to hold the lantern, one among the two force personnel kicked it. Sadiq and his two sons were pushed and locked in the kitchen, while another son was kept in adjacent room, after being assaulted by rifle butts. After that Hakima begum w/o Sadiq Shah, was dragged to the room opposite the kitchen and raped. The duo fled after the act. Later Hakima was carried to the Police Station in a half dead state and a complaint was lodged there. Afterwards, she was taken to the hospital.

The rape incident surfaced at a time when the court martial proceedings have been initiated against the army major accused in the infamous Baderpayeen rape of minor and her mother.

However, Police and Army authorities do not agree with the reports of rape and gave guarded statements regarding the incident. Police though negate the act of rape but have registered an FIR 116/2004 on the receipt of complaint and started investigations. The army spokesman agreed to the fact that joint investigations have been initiated with the Police to ascertain whether there is any conduct of misbehavior by the troopers, though they denied the allegation of rape. It is pertinent to mention that it is a second incident of rape in the constituency of Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed of J&K after a previous one at remote Mattan village.

“The army is trying to shield the culprits and the officer at the camp has offered me a bribe of Rs.40,000 to retract from my statement. Can anyone sell the honor of one’s wife”? Questions Sadiq. The villagers fear reprisal from the army after they protested strongly against the misconduct and many families have temporarily migrated from the area.

On Dec 28, the army dismissed non-commissioned officer Lance Havaldar Krishen Bahadur and awarded him one year rigorous imprisonment for ‘misbehaving’ with 60- year old Hakima Jan. The defense communiqué that had earlier dismissed the incident as an attempt to malign the reputation of the army said that he has been tried in a court martial under army law and would be handed over to Police at Central Jail Jammu for the execution of sentence.

On Jan 2, army dismissed a rifleman from services for colluding with a soldier who misbehaved with an elderly Woman at Salar-Pahalgham. Rifleman Zuber Khan was dismissed after an enquiry found enough Prima facie evidence to prove his involvement with the main accused. The inquiry revealed that Khan was standing outside at the time of commencement of the act by his senior colleague. Thereafter Khan failed to report the misconduct of his senior to the army superiors after his return to the base. The communiqué concludes on the note ‘In keeping with the highest traditions of discipline and ethos of the Indian Army disciplinary action was initiated against the soldier for colluding with the main accused’.

Interestingly, the media followed the case after it showed a lukewarm response in reporting the incident soon after it happened. The protest demonstrations by the villagers were a catalyst for the authorities to react and media to report the incident days after it occurred. The army should act similarly in other cases of rape as well, involving its personnel and not to keep up the ‘reputation’ it boosts. The army should imbibe such an atmosphere for its personnel in which they will fear to outrage the modesty of Kashmiris, rather than award sentences in isolated cases after the rapes occur.

IN SEARCH, THROUGH THE NEW MILLENNIUM

BY SHAIQ NAZIR KHAN

World has entered the new millennium, but for people like Naseema time has stuck in the haunting memories of the last century. She cannot look forward to a new life for herself and for her five children. Since last fifteen years she is in search of the answer of one question, which has put a big question mark on her life itself. What happened to her husband Mohammad Ramzan Wani?

Ramzan, a tailor by profession in the border village of Tikipora, Lolab in Kupwara district was picked up by B.S.F party of 132 BN stationed at Batargam in presence of several villagers on 4th Sep 1990 and till date his whereabouts are not being disclosed to the tormented Naseema.

Her quest for truth brought her in touch with the ‘Voices Unheard’ team and she expressed her feelings in these words, “If Ramzan would have died, I may have learnt to live with that reality and concentrated on the well being of my children and may be I would have remarried. But from that date till now, I have died every moment, felt the pain and it has become a part of my being. I do not know how my children have grown up and what there future will be”.

After Ramzan was picked up by the B.S.F, Naseema went to the Police Station Lalpora, to register a complaint, but the Police refused to file the complaint at that time. Naseema then went to

District Magistrate's (DM) office and requested the DM for help. It was only after the District magistrate's intervention that Police filed an FIR under no.8/93 dated 25/01/1993 under 365 RPC.

The FIR mentions various dates and references regarding the history of the case. It also carries the comments made by the DM Kupwara and Police Officials throwing light on the various aspects of the case. Some of the text of the FIR clearly depicts the severity of the case and the trauma suffered by the wife of the victim.

According to the FIR the Dy. SP had written to the S.H.O stating therein, that the lady namely Naseema Bano had made an application regarding the disappearance of her husband. The Dy. SP directed the S.H.O to go through the contents of the application and take necessary action. The officer expressed his anguish that the application moved by Naseema Bano was enough to file an FIR under Sec 365 RPC but that was not done. The S.H.O was directed to send a report to the D.M Kupwara as directed by him. The inquiry of the Police district headquarters had already been recorded according to the FIR and the same discloses that the B.S.F personnel had picked the husband of the applicant whose whereabouts are unknown up to date. He directed that the case be registered. The Dy. SP in a letter to D.M Kupwara also submit that the husband of the applicant was apprehended by B.S.F on 4th sep 1990 from his house during a raid. Naseema has also filed a writ petition in district court Kupwara and the case seems to be dragging on without any ray of hope for the time being.

FAMILY LOSES A CARING HAND

BY: SAFIYA LONE

Even in her brief lifetime, she had stood like a sentinel, enduring all the pain and the gloom surrounding the family. A mentally challenged sister, an abandoned son and an unhappy brother, she had nurtured hope in everyone and given them reasons to live. Until **Thursday** when two bullets smashed her head, three others pierced her nape and shoulder. Her body lay still for eternity, only to be collected by her brother hours later.

A dispatcher in the Srinagar deputy commissioner's office, Afroza was an embodiment of sacrifice and love; at least this is how her family, relatives and friends remember her. A divorcee, this 30-year woman would betray all the melancholy surrounding her life, when she would catch up with acquaintances. For them she after all was a woman next-door who would fight the upheavals of life with a smile.

But two days ago when she was pulling along or perhaps searching for solutions for life, she became yet another victim of crossfire between militants and security forces. Her friends say she has fought all battles alone and won, but this time she lost she couldn't fight death.

" She was hit by 7 six bullets, she lost her life", sobs Hamida Akhter, her elder sister refusing to believe she is no more. Akhter said on **Thursday** she left for office in the morning and melted into the narrow alleys of Mujahid Manzil, a downtown neighborhood, not to return forever. " We don't know whose bullet's hit her. Security men or *Fidayeen*. But what do they get by killing innocent civilians? She said fighting back tears.

Family members say that Afroza was married 4 years ago but it did not last longer because her in-laws were not compatible. When thing did not work, her husband divorced her after two years and she returned to her parents house along with son Dilnawaz. Her parents already dead. Afroza stayed with her elder brother and a mentally challenged younger sister. Gradually she started to pick up pieces of her life and now she wanted to take care of her son and sister Mumtaza.

"As her marriage did not work, she was now concentrating on the future of her son," says rosy, her childhood friend.

Appetite woman, Mumtaza is inconsolable. Her eyes sunk she is in total shock and disbelief and keeps looking towards the door as if Afroza would walk in " Mumtaza has lost her mother a second time, Dilnawaz a doting mother, the family a caring person. Who will fill this void, " Laments Rosy?

In an adjacent room, her brother too is drum struck on the fateful day, it was he who retrieved Afroza's body. Not caring about his life, he had got inside the DC office complex after a policeman told him that a woman was lying on the ground.

Minutes later when he found Afroza's lifeless body heaved on him. The body was taken to the PCR for post mortem and later handed over to the family. A large number of relatives had poured there and the neighborhood immediately plunged into grief.

Said a woman: " who will now light the lamps in the house? Who will wipe the tears of her son and sister? This family has lost a caring soul. It is ruined now

IT'S NOT JUST JAIL-TERM, IT'S ALSO STIGMA

BY: AFSANA RASHID

SRINAGAR, Mar 7: Women prisoners in Srinagar jails seem to pay a greater price for the crimes they are charged of. Not only do they find themselves in the four walls of the jails, they also suffer a life long trauma of being disowned by their family members, especially those accused of murder.

The total number of female detainees in Srinagar's Central jail may be as low as 12, which is a negligible number in the face of a total of 402 detainees. But the women, unlike their male counterparts, seem to serve two sentences at one time - not just the time they spend in the jails but also separation from family members including children.

Despite, the yearning to meet them, most of these detainees, who are illiterate or semi-literate, maintain that their family members do not come to see them. "We miss our family badly. We want to meet them but most of the time they do not turn up. Even our children do not come to see us. That is the harshest punishment we face", narrated most of the detainees. They are facing charges of domestic violence and murder; though some of them have also been detained under Public Safety Act.

Twenty- two years old Rafia (name changed) from Srinagar charged with her husband's murder has two children (of three and four years) in custody of her old mother who is a widow. Another detainee, Gulafroz (name- changed) from Bijbehara again booked under the same charge has four children in custody of her cousin brother- in-law. Nighat (name- changed) from Dooru, Shahabad accused of murdering her sister- in-law too has four children. Firdousa (name- changed) from Lalpora, Chatlam (Pampore) also has four children. All of them miss their children. Their worries revolve around their children and how they are being taken care of. When asked if they repent what they have done, their heads swung down and with tears in their eyes they said, "We are paying a huge price. There is no big punishment than to be away from your children". However, some even refuted the charges under which they are booked and blamed their fate. However, they all wished to come out of the four "huge" walls of the central jail.

A twenty- year old woman, Hafiza Bano (name- changed) hailing from Baramulla, who is likely to be released in few days, is eagerly waiting for that day. She longs to see her near and dear ones. But she is not sure whether she would be accepted or not. She is fully conscience of the fact that once having been to jail means the society makes it hard for an individual and that too for a woman to survive. "I know I will face problems but at least I will breathe in open", remarked Hafiza Bano.

Shamima (name changed), another woman- detainee from Baramulla had some conflict with her daughter - in- law and was charged with her murder. She along with her sister has been lingering in the jail for the last four years.

"There is a provision for their families to visit them but they usually do not come. Some do come and these detainees feel relaxed for a while but otherwise they become tense. Sometimes there is a problem to manage them and with great difficulty, they have to be motivated", informed Dr. Mohammad Sultan Lone, Superintendent Central Jail Srinagar.

He mentions that several non- governmental organizations come-up with schemes to work for the detainees, take details but later they never turn-up. "There are many to provide training to the detainees but none to organize", commented Dr. Lone, Superintendent Central Jail, Srinagar.

Special study center of IGNOU is also functioning within the jail-premises. "There is no provision of fee-remission in the study centre as reported by the concerned officials. And that is the only problem we face", said superintendent central jail, Srinagar.

The female detainees, however, alleged that they lack regular medical facilities, proper sanitary facilities and other necessary itineraries essential for survival. "There is only one bathroom and that does not suffice our requirements. We also run short of toilet goods that are must for hygiene purposes. There is unsafe drinking water- supply. Lack of warm clothes and medical facilities add to our problems", complained the detainees.

They further wanted regular health check-ups to be held by lady-doctors as they complained of suffering from certain ailments. "We have much time to spare and usually get bored. We do some work as well but usually sit idle thinking about our families. Then, we get depressed. We wish a television-set could be arranged for us so that we could spend our time smoothly and get deviated from our tensions and anxieties. It is very hard to express how we spend the time behind these four walls. We do have radio- sets but they run out of batteries and we have to spend from our own pockets to purchase fresh ones," submitted the detainees at the Central Jail, Srinagar.

Despite Social Welfare Department, All India Handicrafts, Women Development Corporation etc. claiming to provide lot of schemes, aid and grant-in-aid to its beneficiaries, such institutions have been left out where they otherwise have a lot to do, like for instance the jails. The female-detainees are ready to take- up the work, provided their labour is respected. "We are familiar with various crafts and are working even at present. But, we want our wages to be improved otherwise we think it is a waste of time", said the female- detainees.

"IS IT A SIN TO BE A WOMEN"

BY: NAZOORA HAMID

WOMEN... A pride.
WOMEN...An Evolution.
WOMEN...A Strength
WOMEN...A revolution

Then, Why? WHY is it a sin to be a woman, to be a daughter, a sister, a mother or a wife?... ..

... Her frail crumbled hands knocked every door, but doors remained shut. Her besieged voice pitched loud only to fall on deaf ears. Her searching eyes look for sympathy and her crumbled soul beg mercy, but alas! No one to hold her. Looking through the glass of spite, people fail to understand her agony and plight. Sunken eyes and the deep lines raving across her face are all to speak of the pain and misery that Mahin Jan has went through. 35 years, life seems to have moved really fast for her and her physical appearance approves of it. Ragged and devastated, life is not a bed of roses but thorns for her.

Mahin Jan d/o Late Abdul Salam r/o Nigeen near REC Hazratbal endures a life with thousands of unfilled dreams. Nine years back, she got married to Mushtaq Ahmad Mir S/o Ghulam Hassan Mir R/o Umar colony Lal Bazar, who worked in Delhi, based industry C.I.E. Initially all went fine with Mahin. However, five months later the clouds of fear, chaos and grief spread over Mahin's life when her in-laws demanded heavy dowry. Ever since, Mushtaq would come home late all drunk and start ruthlessly beating her. In the meantime, Mahin gave birth to a baby boy. Unfortunately, the whole situation was getting averse each day and Mahin's in-laws were desperate to send her back to her maternal home. "They started pressuring Mushtaq to leave me. Even once they expelled me out and it was on Mushtaq's sister's intervention that they allowed me to stay there," weeps Mahin.

One-day, Mahin suddenly came to know that her husband was leaving to Delhi. "I wanted to go with him but my in-laws didn't allow me to go with him. I spoke to Mushtaq but he assured that after going to Indonesia, he will call me, which he never did" says Mahin.

After her husband went, Mahin's in-laws began to make her life hard and miserable. They began to beat and torture her. Mahin bore all silently. "One day I asked for jewelry which my in-laws had kept with them. This irked them and they forced me out," says Mahin with buried hope and hidden tears in her eyes. Thereafter they send me to my maternal home.

Mushtaq's return revived her lost hope. She went back to her in-laws. He came at Mahin's place, met his baby and left. Since then Mahin has lost all contact with him. During their meet, Mushtaq kept his location and job profile hidden. He however, assured would come back after one year and then we take Mahin with her. But regrettably, years passed without any news of Mushtaq's return. Maheen knocked so many doors, but as usual doors remain closed for Maheen.

Today her son is 8 years old and he has never seen his father, nor he understands the meaning of the "word father". But there is a Question in his innocent eyes i.e., in this entire duel of relationships where lies his fault.

Her ailing mother and a cardiac patient brother who provides sustenance to the whole family support Mahin. With large family expenditure and meager resources, Mahin has been left out but to work. She has also filed maintenance and a disappearance case regarding her husband. Today Mahin toils her blood and sweat hard together to somehow contribute to her family and bear the case expenditure; despite the fact that the lawyer perusing her case charges her nominally.

YOUNG WIDOW WAITING JOB FOR SINCE 95

Jan 4: Shakeela Akhter, 27 of Nayana Batpora was just 18 when she lost her husband Muhtaq Ahmed Tak, 20, a shopkeeper in crossfire between militants and army in 1995.

Though government paid her ex-gratia relief (amount given to the kin of the persons who die at the hands of army, militants or in a cross fire) of Rs. 1,00,000(\$ 2000), she is yet to get a job that government promised her even though nine years have elapsed.

Shakeela didn't remarry, as she has two handicapped daughters from Mushtaq. "I was of the opinion that with government employment, I will be able to raise them without much effort. Further I fear that they will get neglected if I remarry," she says.

Her two daughters Farhana, 11 and Irfana 9 were only two years old respectively when their father got killed. Although the government has sanctioned an ex-gratia relief of Rupees one lakh to the family but Shakeela is yet to receive the compassionate appointment under SRO 43 for the rehabilitation, a provision by the government in the state.

"I appealed to government nearly 10 years ago, that those who filed applications for similar cases much later than me have got the jobs, while I have been kept waiting," Shakeela said. There is hardly a week in a month she doesn't visit the Deputy commissioner's office and make enquiries about the progress of her case.

"For God's sake tell me where should I go with my disabled daughters," she said.

From 1995 onwards she remembers the names of all the Deputy Commissioners that have been posted in Pulwama, but no one she says helped to break the red tape.

The officials had given her sleepless nights when they misplaced her case file some years ago till she got it done afresh.

Then superintendent of police Pulwama in his letter to DC Pulwama wrote, "Mushtaq was not linked or involved in any subversive activities," meaning his wife was a fit case for the \$ 2000 'bloody money'.

Last year Shakeela's father in law died making her situation grimmer. " Till Aba was alive he used to make rounds of the offices but his death has broken me" She said.

NC LEADERS ASSAULTS WOMAN CANDIDATE

Srinagar, Feb 1: Police have registered a case against senior National Conference (NC) leader Ali Mohammad Sagar for allegedly misbehaving with a women candidate.

Police said that case was registered at Nowhatta police station after the candidate lodged a complaint that Sagar misbehaved with her.

Police added that the case is being investigated. Earlier a local news agency had reported that Sagar after catching hold of woman candidate, Arifa severely beat her up and then forced her to the ground.

WOMAN ACCUSES SHO OF MOLESTATION

Feb 6: A woman of Handwara accused a police officer of molesting her, when she was detained at the police station for a day in December last year. However police denied the charges as baseless.

According to sources, Raja Begum of Timpora, Handwara on Feb 5 accused then Station House officer (SHO), Handwara of molesting her when she was locked up in the police station in a 'theft case' two months ago.

Raja w/o Ghulam Muhammad Bhat said police dragged her from her residence in Timpora Handwara to the police station on the morning of December 21. During the day she alleged the SHO, Muhammad Yasin molested her.

" He tore my clothes and..." Raja said bursting into tears before trailing off her incomplete sentence.

Ten hours later she said the SHO released her when she managed to grease his palms with seven hundred rupees he had allegedly demanded from her.

" I asked my mother in law to get seven hundred rupees from the saving bank of my children because we had no other money," Raja- a mother of four told a local daily.

Raja said her family in July last year, had a duel with their neighbor and relative who had filed a case against the family.

" Although my arm was broken, he (Other party) filed a case against us by paying the SHO rupees 15,000," She alleged.

" Later when the court granted bail to my brother in law (who was accused in the case), the SHO re-opened the case and started threatening us," she added.

Raja said she gathered courage to reveal it before media only when her husband who works as a shawl peddler in Rajasthan reached home some days ago.

" I had no money to come to Srinagar," she added. Moreover she complained that someday-ago SHO again started threatening her of dire consequences.

When contacted the *Munshi (Clerk)* of the police station said that Raja's charges of corruption and molestation were baseless. *Munshi (Clerk)* said Raja was one of the four accused in a case filed under FIR no 86/ 2004.

He said she was accused of burgling a shop that she had jointly owned with the other partners. While other three accused have got bail, she hasn't. The *Munshi* said charges against Muhammad Yasin, SHO were baseless.

"Yasin Sahib took the charge of the police station two months after the case was filed. This is untrue she wants to make it a political issue," he added.

BSF DETAINS 12 YEAR OLD BOY

Srinagar Feb 3: The Border Security Forces posted at Chanapora bye-pass on January 31 arrested a 12-year boy after he failed to produce his identity card and released him after three days.

The boy, Sheraz Ahmad Mir Chadoora told a local daily that the BSF troopers at Chanapora bye pass took him into the custody on January 31 at 9.30 am. " They asked me to show the identity card and when I failed to produce it, they took me into custody", Mir said adding he was severely thrashed on the first day of detention.

He said in the detention, he was forced to break hard coke. He said he was released when he told them his brother was in police. " The BSF contacted the SHO Chadora for verification and then released me", he added.

He said another boy is still in their custody. " His name is Imtiaz Ahmad and he is from Baramulla", he said. The family members of Imtiaz have no knowledge about his arrest, he said.

WOMAN ARRESTED AND DETAINED FOR NO-FAULT

Police arrested and detained a young woman identified as Razia Sultana d/o Raja Ali Maradan Khan r/o Booniyar Bali Islamabad at Rambagh police station for three days.

Talking to the "Voices Unheard" Razia stated that for long she has been persuaded by different intelligence agencies in Uri to work with them, which she refused persistently. Even she was persuaded to contest the assembly and parliamentary elections held in 2002, 2004 and that in of recently held civic poll elections.

Recently some Jammu and Kashmir police official forced Razia to marry him, which she out rightly rejected. To this the police official responded by suggesting her to participate in the elections, which was also refused by Razia. This infuriated the official who arrested her and detained her for three days at women's police station at Rambagh. It's pertinent to mention here that Razia has not been booked under any FIR nor wanted in any case.

DEAD BODY OF A MINOR RECOVERED

Panic gripped the Noor Bagh on Tuesday, when people recovered a beheaded body of a 4-year-old kid at Pamposh colony Palpora area. According to police, the body of the child was wrapped in polythene. The identity of the child is being ascertained. The residents of the area took to streets and demonstrated against the killing. They demanded immediate action from the police.

RESIDENTS ALLEGE ATROCITIES ON WOMEN

Srinagar March 4: Facing one of the toughest army sieges for the past five days, the residents of Matribugh, Shopian alleged that several women were dragged by troops into a freezing stream triggering off violent protests. Thousand of people from several adjacent villages joined the protests against the siege and no state government official visited the area during the crisis.

The irate protestors burned the Tehsil office and six of them were wounded when police beat them up. One of the wounded men has been admitted to hospital. A 12-year-old boy died in stampede caused by the protestors chased by police.

Thousands of people from Tekipora, Zipora, Chakoorah, Ratnipora, Kanihama, Landoor and Hajipora villages assembled in Shopian and demonstrated against the troops, who according to them

were committing atrocities on the besieged residents of Matribugh, particularly the women folk. The resident alleged that some women were dragged into a nearby stream in Matribugh this morning. Seeing the abject plight of some residents of Matribugh, who had managed to escape the siege, the protestors were enraged over the inaction of government because no top official from civilian administration visited the area over the past few days.

Matribugh village was cordoned after Hizbul Mujahideen militants abducted and killed a junior commissioned officer and a soldier during an encounter some days ago. Three soldiers were also wounded in the incident. The village has been under siege since Feb 28. The protestors, wishing to convey their concern about the siege were on their way to the Tehsildar Shopian when police stopped them triggering off pitched battles. Protestor's pelted stones on the police, wounding constables Muhammad Ayub and Nisar Ahmad. Police tried to disperse the protestors and charged them with bamboo canes. In the melee, hundreds of protestors entered the office of Tehsildar and set it ablaze.

Protestors didn't relent and the highly agitated protestors stoned the additional reinforcements of police that were sent in to restore order. The reinforcement ruthlessly beat up the protestors. Police fired hundreds of tear gas shells and fired hundreds of rounds of fire in air. Six protestors were injured, with one Hilal critically, who was later shifted to Srinagar. Many sustained splinter injuries. Meanwhile the troops of 9 RR, 17 JAKLI and 90 battalion of BSF, for the fifth day searched the houses in Matribugh. The searches haven't yielded forces either the militants or the arms during these days. Major Joshi, the spokesman of Victor force, the command headquarters of counter-insurgency troops in south Kashmir denied allegations of atrocities. He said " wireless intercepts of conversations between militants indicate that they are still caught up in the village and they were inciting the residents of the villages in the vicinity to stage protest demonstrations so that they could escape from there". There was thin attendance of people in mosques on Friday the March 4 because of tension. In their Friday sermon, the preachers condemned the siege and asked government to lift it immediately. Alleging that police ruthlessly beat up the protestors, especially the women folk, the preachers demanded a probe in to the police action.

The superintendent of police Pulwama said the situation was tense. He said record of Tehsil office was saved. He also denied that protestors were wounded by police fire.

ALLEGATIONS OF MOLESTATION BY BSF SPARK PROTEST IN HANDWARA

SRINAGAR, Mar 8: Tension griped the Kulangam township of Handwara Tehsil in district Kupwara over the alleged molestation of mother- daughter duo by BSF personnel. Police has started investigation into the matter.

Reports said that the residents of the Kulangam town in Kupwara today protested against the alleged molestation of Bilqees Bano, 16, and her Mother Farida during a cordon and search operation of the area on March 7, morning. This infuriated the people of the area and they protested against the incident demanding a probe into the matter.

People said that the BSF personnel of the 112 battalion, during the search operation of the house of Farooq Ahmad Bhat, son of Habib Bhat of Kulangam, claimed that they had seized some weapons from his house which the inmates said, was a stage-managed show since they could not find any weapon during search of the house.

They said when Farooq resisted this "fabricated allegation"; the BSF personnel beat him to the pulp and molested his sister and mother. They further said that when Farooq raised an alarm, the villagers noticed the incident and came to the house and caught hold of BSF personnel and raised slogans against the action.

However SP Handwara Nitish Kumar claimed that the matter has been blown out of proportion, but he hastily added that police has started investigation to know the exact details about the case. "We are trying to ascertain the matter and we have authorized the SDPO to conduct the investigation. But let me tell you that the incident has been blown out of proportion... there was a routine search followed by some resentment shown by the inmates ", said Nitish.

PEOPLE PROTEST AGAINST MOLESTATION

Srinagar March 10: Hundreds of people held protests in front of the state Congress President and Rural Development Minister Peerzada Muhammad Sayeed against the alleged molestation of a girl by troops at Kandiwari Kokernag in North Kashmir.

According to media sources, troops of 36 Rashtriya Raffles (RR) on March 8 night barged into the residence of Muhammad Yousuf and molested his daughter Haseena (22). Quoting locals the sources said the troops also harassed the inmates and ransacked the goods.

After the incident, the agitated people on Wednesday (March 9) morning came out on street came out on streets and shouted slogans against the troops.

The Deputy commissioner Islamabad Baseer Ahmed Khan and Senior Superintendent of police (SSP) Ashiq Hussein Bukhari who reached on the spot met the commandant of 36 RR. After meeting with troops commandant, the official later met the people and inquired about the incident.

The SSP Islamabad later told media persons that FIR has been registered against the troops for ransacking the goods while the molestation allegations leveled by the troops are false. Meanwhile, when the Peerzada Muhammad Sayeed reached the area to assess the damages done by the recent snowfall, the people of the area held demonstrations and shouted slogans against the Congress president Peerzada who fled away from the spot after witnessing the agitated crowds.

KANGAN ERUPTS AGAINST BEATING, MOLESTATION OF WOMEN

Mar 12: Fifteen persons including five women were injured when troops severely beat up hundreds of protestors in Theevan village of Kangan area in district Srinagar. The protestors were demonstrating against the molestation of women and beating of people by Rashtriya Rifles (RR) soldiers during a search operation.

Police has filed a case against the accused soldiers, and government has ordered a magisterial probe into the incident.

The protestors said the troops of 24 RR led by major Chauhan early March 12, morning cordoned off the village and asked men to assemble in the ground. During the operation, troops without any provocation beat up many people especially women triggering off the protest by the besieged villagers.

" They were furious and entered into our homes and dragged the women out. They tore off the clothes of several women and that was enough," said Fayaz Ahmed, a villager.

The besieged and battered villagers defied the cordon and took out a protest march and came onto the Srinagar- Leh highway. In the meanwhile nearly four thousand persons from Kangan area in buses reached the spot and joined the village protestors.

The protestors shouted slogans against Mufti Government and the troops, the villagers said. " Mufti should be ashamed of defending and saying that normalcy has returned," said Fata Begum of Theevan.

As the protestors were unrelenting, the soldiers beat them up injuring 15 persons including five women. The condition of two injured Ghulam Hassan Najar and Naseema Akhter is stated to be critical.

The protestors marched towards Kangan town shouting anti troop, anti India and anti government slogans. They were also shouting slogans against Major Chauhan, whom they accused of molesting the women. The protestors blocked Srinagar -Leh Highway for several hours seeking stern actions against the "erring troops".

They stoned many government offices including the Tehsil office. Many protestors tried to set ablaze the Tehsil office, however some elderly men restrained them.

For several hours they refused to take the critically injured persons to the hospital.

"Let the ministers visit the place and see what we are going through," the protestors said. He told the protestors, "I see that your protest is genuine and the women who were roughed up are like our sisters".

The SP also assured the villagers that a police party led by a sub-inspector would be deployed in the village to ensure "that no one would harass you".

Meanwhile, Deputy commissioner Srinagar, Shailendra Kumar has ordered an inquiry into the incident and appointed Sub Divisional Magistrate as the enquiry officer. According to sources, the DC has directed the Brigadier of the camp to take action against the Major. "If army doesn't punish the accused, then we will punish them," sources said quoting Kumar. He said, he has directed police to register FIR against the troops.

Defense spokesman Colonel RK Sen. denied the allegations of beating and molestation of women. He told that when troops cordoned the area, the villagers resisted and in the ensuing fight with the troops "a villager slipped and got wounded".

"Women and men started demonstrations and tried to snatch video camera from the hands of a soldier," he said.

GIRL MISSING

Srinagar: In Kahribal area of Islamabad district, a girl named Zulekha d/o Makhan Lal Gujjar went on missing on March 3. Her parents have filed report in police who are looking for the girl however till date nothing is known of her whereabouts.

WOMAN ARRESTED

Srinagar: The Special Operation Group (SOG) of Police arrested a woman, Saleema Rasool, in South Kashmir's Pulwama district on March 16.

Reports said Saleema, d/o Ghulam Rasool, was lifted from her house at Ratnipora after a firing incident took place between the militants and the troops there.

Saleema, reportedly working with a human rights group, has already served a yearlong detention.

TRAL PROTESTS OVER ALLEGED MOLESTATION OF WOMEN

Srinagar: Many people were injured when police used force to disperse the people protesting against the alleged molestation of women by troops at Tral on March 17.

According to CNS the police fired many tear smoke shells and baton charged the protestors demanding action against the erring troopers. The news agency said that troopers of 138 BN BSF on

March 16 cordoned off the Rajpora area of Tral and started combing operations when people were observing Urs.

The troops according to CNS asked the men to move towards a nearby camp and later on barged into their houses and tried to molest women. The men according to the inhabitants were kept in isolation according to a well-devised plan so that the troops can enter the houses without any resistance.

The people of the area staged a huge demonstration against the incident that suspended vehicular traffic for many hours. The agitated protestors also chanted slogans against BSF. The residents of the adjoining areas who also expressed resentment over the incident against the personnel involved also joined the people.

Quoting witnesses, CNS Said the police fired many rounds of ammunition in air and also fired tear smoke shells to disperse the agitated protestors. The Protestors also severely thrashed some of the demonstrators injuring many of them. Educational institutions and business establishment also remained closed following the incident.

The BSF on March 19 refuted the news "Tral protests alleged molestation of women" carried in this paper on March 10.

According to the BSF statement, the search operation was done as a routine check and in professional manner.

FOUR WOMEN INJURED IN PROTESTS AT KANGAN

March 18: Four women were injured, two of them seriously when police hurled stones at them and beat them up with bamboo sticks while protesting against the arrest of more than two dozen youth from Kangan.

The protestors alleged that the DSP of the Kangan heckled and abused the women who were demanding the release of the detained youth. In the afternoon the protestors alleged that a policeman lobbed a grenade on the protestors, which fortunately didn't explode. The said the police whisked the accused policeman away from the spot.

Police has arrested more than two dozen youth during the past week on the charges of attacking and damaging Tehsil office when protestors from Theevan village (15 Kms from Srinagar) were demonstrating against troops and state government against alleged rape, molestation and atrocities by the Rashtriya Rifles troops stationed in the village.

Police has released five detained youth but according to the protestors it is hounding many others. "Some innocent youth were released after their families paid ransom. We can't afford to pay," said Khatija. People accused police of falsely implicating the youth.

Till 4 pm no official from the administration visited the area despite protests and agitated situation in the past ten days. The protestors chanted anti- government slogans and blocked the Sonmarg - Srinagar road. On the morning of March 18, when protestors assembled in the village and demanded release of the arrested youth, police resorted to *lathi* -charge to disperse them.

They beat up men and women mercilessly. They swooped on women. On the protestors they hurled stones, mud and whatever they could lay their hands on. Stone hit me hard on my head, arms and legs," said one of the four women wounded in police action.

The other injured women are Raja w/o Abdul Rehman, Zeba widow of Abdul Ahad Wani, Jana widow of Ghulam Ahmed Mir, Zeba and Jana were hospitalized.

Hundreds of women were standing face to face with policeman some hundred yards away from the police station shouting slogans against the DSP and the state government.

“ This government is supposed to take action against the soldiers who did the wrongs in Theevan Village. Instead they have terrorized the civilians in this town and arrested our youth,” the women said.

COP MOLESTS WOMAN, POLICE DENIES

March 18: A woman was allegedly molested by a sentry at police chowki Bagyas in Chattabal Srinagar on March 18 evening when she visited the chowki to drop food for her son detained by the police. However police denied the charges terming them as baseless and without any substance. Shafeeqa, 40, (name changed) of Chatabal had gone to police chowki to see his son Javaid Ahmed Dar arrested by police few days ago.

“ They have detained my son for the last five days and were denying us to meet him ”, She said, adding on March 18 evening when she went to the chowki, Cops there accepted the tiffen but refused to let him talk to me. She pleaded to see her son, which infuriated a sentry who according to her tried to molest her. She said the sentry without any provocation assaulted her and tore her clothes. Frightened by the assault, the mother ran away. Her wrist and nose were injured while revisiting the ‘assault’.

“If my son has committed some crime, it doesn’t mean police can take any liberty with us and attack our dignity” said her husband.

“ I am worried about my son, but I won’t let those people go scot-free who tried to molest my wife,” he said.

Police however denied the charges terming them baseless and without any substance. “ She had visited the chowki with her husband and there is no question of molestation or assault “, police said, adding the chowki is on a busy road and people are always around.

“Charges were leveled to malign the police force,” an official of police chowki said.

COP BOOKED FOR MOLESTING GIRL

Islamabad: Police on March 22 registered a case against constable Muhammad Sidiq khan s/o Ali Muhammad Khan of Sherbagh police division Islamabad for “outraging the modesty” of a girl who has been sent to hospital for a medical examination to confirm charges of rape’. On the direction of SSP Islamabad, a case (78/2005) has been filed against the accused.

BANDIPORA RESIDENTS WANT ARMY CAMP SHIFTED FROM SCHOOL

Srinagar: Hordes of angry residents gathered outside the Nadihal High School at Bandipora in North Kashmir on 26th March and demanded immediate shifting of an Army camp of 14 Rashtriya Rifles stationed in one of the school buildings.

The people were furious following the death of a student in a blast within the school premises on March 25th. While no militant organization claimed the responsibility, the Jammu and Kashmir police said a hand grenade was thrown towards the school building, resulting in the death of the student. Eight others were injured in the incident.

However a defense spokesperson claimed that the deceased student carried an explosive in his school bag, which exploded killing him on the spot and injuring others. The deceased was identified as Mohsin Sarwar (15).

Refuting army claims, villagers hold the army responsible as soldiers man the only entrance of the school. The injured schoolboys say that they were coming out of their class when a blast took place.

“Our classes ended at 1 p.m. and we were rushing out of our class. Suddenly there was a big bang and we fell down,” said Firdous Ahmed Bhat (16), a class 10- student who was hit by splinters in his legs, thigh and abdomen. “ I saw Mohsin lying in the mud. We were scared and it started firing so we ran back inside.” He said a group of angry troops came inside the building and beat them. “They (Army men) were very angry. They hit us and accused us of carrying a grenade,” he said.

The officers of 14 Rashtriya Rifles, who had rushed to the school immediately after the blast, too believed that a schoolboy was carrying a grenade. The police, in fact, claimed to have recovered the lever of the grenade too. But nobody could explain how the boy sneaked a deadly grenade into the school. “ We don’t search the schoolboys,” said Lt Col A.K Verma. “ The militants are using innocent school –children and giving them deadly explosives.”

The Students say they used to be frisked but not for the last two days. “ We had been requesting them to vacate the school premises for a long time,” a village elder said. “ We always apprehended something ugly like this is going to happen.

MOTHER SEEKS WHEREABOUTS OF HER SON

Srinagar, Mar 20: Naseema Bano of Peer Bagh Humhama said that her son Shabir Ahmed Wani had left home for Delhi few weeks ago for a job. She said after reaching Delhi he was regularly in touch with the family. “Then suddenly someone identifying himself as Assistant Commissioner of Police Delhi started calling our house intimidating the family and asking for whereabouts of Shabir” she said, adding that since the person started calling her house, her son got disappeared.

The lady said in the meanwhile police picked up Shabir’s father and detained him for 12 days. “Police told us Shabir has run away with a girl”, she said, adding the family has no knowledge about it. She expressed concern about well being of her son. “We have no communication with him and are concerned about is well being,” she said.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN KILLING

DATE	DETAILS
Jan 8	Police has arrested a CRPF man Muhammad Shafi Mughal Batapora Kupwara who had kidnapped Zareefa Bano of the same village four months ago. The kidnapped girl was also recovered in a raid in Jammu. The villagers had filed an FIR against the CRPF soldier under no.332/2004. The girl was handed over to her parents after medical examination, while the soldier has been put behind bars.
Jan 10	A class 10 th student Mudasir Ahmed Wani son of Muhammad Anwar of Kelam, Devsar Kulgam was killed in the encounter.
Jan 12	55-year-old Atiqa w/o Muhammad Maqbool Naik was killed in an encounter between the security forces and the Let at Pratabpora Shopian.
Jan 15	One Sayeeda begum r/o Islamabad was killed when two unidentified gunmen entered the house of the Government gunmen Gowher and fired several shots at him. While Gowher killed on spot, his mother succumbed enroute hospital.
Jan 26	One women Parveena (20) d/o Muhammad Goursi was injured in an encounter at Pulwama.
Jan 29	Suspected militants on January 27 night barged into the residence of Gouri Sahnker s/o of Munshi Ram of Ranthal Bagla Dharamsal Rajouri and opened indiscriminate fire on the inmates killing Shanker’s wife Kanta Devi and injuring his son Raj Kumar. The injured has been hospitalized.
Jan 29	Militant’s shot and injured People Democratic party candidate Shante Akhter w/o Muhammad Amin of Dhobi Muhalla Pampore. The grievously injured Shante was later hospitalized.
Feb 1	Unidentified gunmen killed four members of a family including three children at Nathale Bhagwa Doda. According to reports assailants barged into the residence of Abdul Aziz and hurled grenade killing four persons identified as Naseema Begum (55) w/o Abdul Aziz, Rubina Akhter (10) and Rehana Akhter (5) daughters of Abdul Aziz and Khursheed Ahmed (15) s/o Abdul Aziz. The house owner and his 4-year-old daughter Safia

	Bano who were injured in the incident have been shifted to hospital.
Feb 6	One women and 10m month old baby was killed by their father a VDC member
Feb 9	A beheaded body of a 4-year-old kid was recovered at Pamposh colony Palpora area. According to police the body of the child was wrapped in polythene. The identity of the child is to be ascertained. The residents of the area took to streets and demonstrated against the killing demanding immediate action from the police.
Feb 14	Five women were injured among 22 when unidentified gunmen lobbed a grenade on the patrol party of 2 Para military personnel at Jamia Masjid Shopian Bazaar Pulwama on February 13 afternoon. The injured were identified as Sakina Akhter d/o Ali Muhammad of Ratnipora, Saja w/o Sonallah Lone Resh Nagri Shopian, Nissara w/o Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Sheikh Shopian, Mst Khurshi w/o Abdul Samad Dar, Gulshan w/o Muhammad Yousuf Malik Mohalla Shopian.
Feb 17	Militant's shot at and injured Mubeena at Drangbal Pampore. She was immediately moved to the hospital where her condition was stated to be critical.
Feb 18	Unknown armed men killed 18-year-old Shafeeqa after forcing the entry inside her house at Ahsan Batapora Kulgam in Anantnag. She died on the spot and the assailants escaped immediately.
Feb 24	A woman was killed in violence related incident
Feb 28	A class 10 th student was killed in Vrinag.
Feb 28	Police recovered the body of Maroof Ahmad of Sangla Surankote from the same area on February 27. According to a police communiqué, Maroof a class 10 th student was abducted by unidentified gunman from his house on February 21. Police has registered a case.
March 18	A 10 th class student Mohsin Sarwar was killed in a blast at Nadihal Bandipora on March 18.
March 26	Unidentified militants entered the house of a surrendered militant Muhammad Shabir Gujjar and gunned down his mother Guky, wife Shamshad Begum alias Kali and his infant daughter.

WOMEN / CHILDREN KILLED

Date	Women Killed	Women injured	Children killed
January 10	-	-	1
January 12	1	-	-
January 15	1	-	-
January 26	-	1	-
January 29	1	1	-
February 1	1	-	3
February 6	1	-	1
February 9	-	-	1
February 14	-	-	5
February 17	-	-	1
February 18	1	-	-
February 24	1	-	-
February 28	1	-	1
March 10	-	-	1
March 26	2	-	1
Total	10	2	15

Kashmiri Women's Initiative for Peace and Disarmament

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