

Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict in Anantnag, Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Kashmir Valley has been since long trapped in an armed conflict between Kashmiri insurgents and Indian security forces. The direct consequences had been many social economic and political problems for the whole State and more particularly for the Kashmir Valley. Same is true about the health related problems and more particularly the Psychological problems arising through the daily conflict and trauma in the Kashmir. Hence the study analyzes the psychological impact of armed conflict in one of the main districts of Kashmir i.e. Anantnag also known as Islamabad, which has been more involved in the armed insurgency than other areas or districts of Kashmir and has thus faced more atrocities at the hands of armed conflict in Kashmir. The study has randomly selected 200 respondents who had faced any traumatic incident/incidents in their lives because of armed conflict and hence analyzes their psychological impact by collecting information through interview schedule.

Keywords: *Kashmir Conflict, Armed Insurgency, Armed Conflict, Killings, Disappearances, Detentions, Torture, Molestations and Psychological Impact*

At the time of Indian independence from the British rule in 1947, there were more than 562 princely states in India. Soon after independence, the division of India resulted into two new Dominions, Indian Dominion and Dominion of Pakistan. Hence the princely states were asked to join either of the Dominion or to remain independent. Most of the princely states either joined India or Pakistan with the exception of three i.e. Junagadh, Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir was the largest of the princely states. Later the Junagadh and Hyderabad acceded to India but the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir (Hari Singh) didn't join either of the Dominion. The Jammu and Kashmir was Muslim majority state, while its ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh belonged to Dogra (Hindu) dynasty. But being the Muslim majority state, the Muslims were thrown at the background by the so called Dogra Maharaja. The condition of Muslims in all respects was very pitiable.

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Before the Indian independence and its subsequent partition into India and Pakistan, there were strong reactions shown against the ruthless anti-Muslim policies of Dogra Maharaja among the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir. One such attempt was the creation of All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1931 for the protection of rights of Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir. Later on there was split in the Muslim Conference which resulted in the formation of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Both Muslim Conference and National Conference were aimed at immediate securing of respectable position of the Muslim Community in J&K and the ultimate liberation of the State from the Dogra rule, however, the Muslim Conference was more fundamental and close to the Indian Muslim League, while the National Conference was more secular and close to the Indian National Congress. Till 1946, various programs were organized against the atrocities of the Dogra rulers towards Muslims of the State, of which the 'Quit Kashmir Movement' of National Conference and 'Direct Action Programme' of Muslim Conference are worth mentioning.

During the Maharajas rule, there was a revolt in Poonch against the ruthless tax policies of the Dogra rule. The revolt was started by the Poonchis, who had returned from the World War II and were about 60,000 in number. The Maharaja tried his best to crush the rebellions but failed in doing so. In the meanwhile, the partition of India and subsequent migration of two new dominions took place, which resulted in the communal killings from both the parts. Since Kashmir Valley remained safe from these communal uprisings, but the Jammu region was worst hit of it. In Jammu region, communal killings of around 600,000 Muslims took place at the hands of Hindus, Maharajas forces and the neighboring Punjabis and around 200,000 Muslims disappeared. With that Muslims, who in the Jammu region were majority community were reduced to mere minority.

Meanwhile, the tribals from the North Western Frontier Provinces (NWFP) invaded the Jammu and Kashmir State in order to help their Muslim brothers against the Hindus. Maharaja Hari Singh finding himself in a trapped situation, called the India for help. The India got ready to help the Maharaja against the tribals but on the condition of State's accession with India, which Maharaja accepted. In the meantime the Indian forces arrived and were successful in pushing the tribals up to the region which now constitutes the Azad Kashmir, and lead to the division of State into two parts, one under Indian administration called Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK) and Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK). But India made a promise that after the peace and order will be restored in the State, the people of State will be left with choice of joining either dominion, but never did that promise was fulfilled and no such plebiscite was held which thus gave rise one of most controversial and long dispute in the history of United Nations i.e. Kashmir Dispute.

The history of State under the Indian administration is full with the episodes of biased and rigged elections. One such episode was the rigged election of 1987, in which all the Muslims political parties got united to contest the election under the name of Muslim United Front (MUF) against

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the other political parties of the State like National Congress and National Conference. In this election, there was a mass scale rigging against the Muslim United Front. The Muslims while finding themselves in a situation where they could not peacefully alter their fate hence took arms. India retaliated by sending more forces to crush the militancy in the State and hence resulted in the beginning of armed insurgency and the armed conflict in the Valley.

Armed conflict in Kashmir has serious consequences for the whole Valley and for the whole inhabitants of the Valley irrespective of their age, gender, caste, religion or occupation. All have felt the impact of armed conflict in Kashmir, though at varying degrees. All aspects i.e. social, economic and political have got affected to a great extent due to ongoing armed conflict in Kashmir. Same can be said about the health aspect of the society and more particularly the psychologically the health has deteriorated to a great extent due to the armed conflict in Kashmir. Armed conflict has created many new social groups like Half-Widows in the Valley. Since the beginning of armed conflict in Kashmir, the toll of human lives that it has taken in Kashmir has reached to 94,565. The total detentions have reached to 139,017, while the structures arsoned or destroyed are 107,581. Besides that the armed conflict in Kashmir has left 107,593 as orphans and 22,827 as widows, while at the same time has left 10,793 women as gang raped or molested. All these incidents have left a drastic influence over the psychological well-being of the people in Kashmir.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1. To analyze the psychological Impact of Armed Conflict in Anantnag District of Kashmir.

Hypotheses

H₀ There is no significant variations in the level of psychological impact of armed conflict in Anantnag.

H₁ There is significant variations in the level of psychological impact of armed conflict in Anantnag.

Sample of the Study

Although the whole society in Kashmir has psychologically got affected by the armed conflict, however, the worst hit had been presumably those people who are the direct victims of the conflict i.e. victims or their close relatives. Hence the sample comprised the victims themselves or their close relatives, if the victims are not alive. The present study consists of 200 randomly selected respondents from different areas of Anantnag District. Interview schedule was thus used for the collection of primary data.

Tools and Techniques Utilized

The study utilized the tools like SPSS 20.0 package and MS Excel for the analyses of data. The techniques utilized were frequency, t-test and ANOVA.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1: Demographic Details of the Respondents

Sample Size (N)	Gender Composition	Age Range	Family Income	Education	Marital Status
200	Male = 85 Female = 115	Younger = 101 Elder = 99	Low = 65 Average = 66 High = 69	Illiterate = 65 Literate = 135	Married = 44 Unmarried = 125 Widows = 31

Source: Primary Data

The table 1 reveals that the dominant majority of the respondents i.e. 115 were Females, while the Male respondents for the study were 85. Further, the dominant respondents among the Age group were Younger i.e.101 as compared to Elder respondents who were 99. Further, the respondents as per the Family Income group Low, Average and High were 65, 66 and 69 respectively. Further, the majority of the respondents were literate i.e. 115, while the Illiterate respondents were only 65. Besides that, under the Marital Status group like Married, Unmarried and Widows, the respondents were 44, 125 and 31 respectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study regarding the Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict in District Anantnag as enquired from the respondents are given below in the tabulated form.

Table 2: Incident Occurred in the Family

S.No	Incident	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Killed	68	34
2	Missing	21	10.5
3	Detained	27	13.5
4	Physically Disabled	11	5.5
5	Injured	24	12
6	Molested	15	7.5
7	Physical torture	23	11.5
8	Property damaged	11	5.5
Total		200	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents i.e. 34 per cent have witnessed the incidence of killings in their family. About 10.5 per cent of respondents have their close ones missing during the conflict in Kashmir. A total of 13.5 per cent of respondents have either got detained at some times or had their close relatives in the custody. About 5.5 per cent of respondents have either themselves got physically disabled or had their close relatives faced the physical disability because of armed conflict. Around 12 per cent of respondents have got injured during the conflict, while 7.5 per cent of respondents have faced molestations at the hands of conflict in Kashmir. Besides that 11.5 per cent respondents have been physically tortured and 5.5 per cent of the respondents have found their valuable properties destroyed or damaged due to the ongoing armed conflict.

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Table 3: Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict

S.No	Psychological Problem	Yes	%age	No	%age	To some Extent	%age
1	Often headaches	100	50	100	50	0	0
2	Poor appetite	66	33	134	67	0	0
3	Sleep disturbances	200	100	0	0	0	0
4	Easily frightening	167	83.5	22	11	11	5.5
5	Feeling nervous, tense or worried	156	78	22	11	22	11
6	Trembling of hands	32	16	168	84	0	0
7	Poor digestion	31	15.5	157	78.5	12	6
8	Trouble in thinking clearly	85	42.5	93	46.5	22	11
9	Feeling unhappy	131	65.5	11	5.5	58	29
10	Crying more than usual	120	60	34	17	46	23
11	Difficulty in enjoying daily activities	87	43.5	55	27.5	58	29
12	Daily work suffering	56	28	80	40	64	32
13	Unable to play a useful part in life	85	42.5	58	29	57	28.5
14	Lost interest in Things	96	48	22	11	82	41
15	Feeling worthlessness	96	48	33	16.5	71	35.5
16	Feeling about ending your life	54	27	69	34.5	77	38.5

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows the frequency of different psychological problems faced by the respondents at the hands of armed conflict in Kashmir Valley.

Table 4: t-test between Age and Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict

Dependent Variable	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig.
Psychological Impact	Younger	101	36.6931	6.65544	.66224	-.471	0.73
	Elder	99	37.1313	6.51317	.65460		

Source: Primary Data

Level of Significance = 0.05

Table 4 indicates the variations in the level of Psychological Impact between Younger and Older respondents, as an outcome of t-test. The results of this t-test show that the t- value of -.471 corresponding to the Psychological Impact is not found to be significant at 5 percent level. Hence, null hypothesis is accepted at 5 percent level of significance. The results thus suggest that the level of Psychological Impact is not varying significantly with the Age of respondents.

Table 5: t-test between Age and Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict

Dependent Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig.
Psychological Impact	Male	85	38.1294	5.95577	.64599	2.329	.194
	Female	115	36.0087	6.88055	.64162		

Source: Primary Data

Level of Significance = 0.05

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Table 5 indicates the variations in the level of Psychological Impact between Male and Female respondents, as an outcome of t-test. The results of this t-test show that the t- value of 2.329 corresponding to the Psychological Impact is not found to be significant at 5 percent level.

Hence, null hypothesis is accepted at 5 percent level of significance. The results thus suggest that the level of psychological Impact is not varying significantly with the Gender of respondents.

Table 6: t-test between Educational Status and Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict

Dependent Variable	Educational Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig.
Psychological Impact	Illiterate	65	36.9077	6.67487	.82792	-.003	.577
	Literate	135	36.9111	6.54772	.56354		

Source: Primary Data

Level of Significance = 0.05

Table 6 indicates the variations in the level of Psychological Impact between literate and illiterate respondents, as an outcome of t-test. The results of this t-test show that the t- value of -.003 corresponding to the Psychological Impact is not found to be significant at 5 percent level.

Hence, null hypothesis is accepted at 5 percent level of significance. The results thus suggest that the level of psychological Impact is not varying significantly with the Education of respondents.

Table 7: ANOVA test between Marital Status and Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict

Variable	Marital Status	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Psychological Impact	Between Groups	3608.539	2	1804.269	71.262*
	Within Groups	4987.841	197	25.319	
	Total	8596.380	199		
Multiple Comparisons					
Dependent Variable	(I) Marital Status	(J) Marital Status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Psychological Impact	Married	Unmarried	9.05782*	.88203	.000
		Widow	.71408	1.17990	.546
	Unmarried	Married	-9.05782*	.88203	.000
		Widow	-8.34374*	1.00960	.000
	Widow	Married	-.71408	1.17990	.546
		Unmarried	8.34374*	1.00960	.000

Source: Primary Data

**. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

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Table 7 demonstrates the variations in the level of Psychological Impact between the Marital Status groups of those who are married, those who are unmarried and those who are widows as an outcome of ANOVA test. From the results of this ANOVA test, it is found that F value of 71.262 corresponding to the level of Psychological Impact on each group i.e. married, unmarried and widow, are found to be significant at 5 per cent level. Hence null hypothesis is rejected. The results show it clearly that there are significant variations in the level of psychological Impact among different Marital Status groups. In order to show the exact variations between the groups, multiple comparisons have been made with LSD method.

The results in the table 7 hence show that the highest level of Psychological Impact has been felt by Married among the group. After that, the next highest level of Impact has been felt by Widows, while the lowest level of Psychological Impact may be attributed with the Unmarried group among the respondents.

Table 8: ANOVA test between Family Income and Psychological Impact of Armed Conflict

Variable	Family Income	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Psychological Impact	Between Groups	192.721	2	96.361	2.259
	Within Groups	8403.659	197	42.658	
	Total	8596.380	199		

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 illustrates the variations in the level of Psychological Impact between High, Average and Low Family Income groups as an outcome of ANOVA test. From the results of this ANOVA test, it is found that F value of 2.259 corresponding to the level of Psychological Impact on each group, are not found to be significant at 5 per cent level. Hence null hypothesis is accepted. The results show that there is no significant variation in the level of psychological Impact among different Income groups.

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of armed conflict in Kashmir Valley, resultant consequences had been felt by whole society altogether though in varying degrees. Various social, economic and political problems took birth along with the armed conflict in Kashmir. The people in Kashmir have faced many problems like killings, disappearances, detentions, harsh physical tortures, physical disabilities along with injuries and molestations at the hands of ongoing armed conflict in Kashmir since 1989. The resultant outcome has been the traumatic effect upon the mental health in Kashmir and has thus resulted in many psychological problems in general masses in Kashmir and more particular those persons who have faced any traumatic incidence in their lives arising out of the long going armed conflict in Kashmir. Hence there is an utter need to find an ultimate

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resolution to the Kashmir problem and an immediate attempt should be made to bring down the effects of armed conflict on general masses in Kashmir.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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