

# Armed conflict in Kashmir: A socio-economic prognosis

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## Abstract:

*The aim of this paper is to identify how individuals, households and communities are affected by violent conflict. Conflict and violence affect the welfare characteristics and choices of individuals and households in conflict areas. There are many socio-economic consequences of armed conflict. The armed conflict has a direct effect on health and economy of a household. However, the disturbing consequence of armed conflict can also be seen in the degree of social participation. The conflict hit individual or household find it difficult to be in consonance with the aspects of its society, may it be the participation in social functions or the behaviour towards the society. Conflict hit individual or/and family live in some kind of self styled social isolation by not taking part in the various social and community roles, which was otherwise actively been participated into, before being the victim of conflict. The paper will confine its domain to the impact of armed conflict on three inter-related variables of health, economy and social participation. The paper will also analyze the decline of economic status due to conflict as the causal factor for lesser social participation of these conflict hit individuals and families. Overall, this paper is aimed to explore the relation between the variables of armed conflict, health, economic status and social participation. The relation seems of the type, that the armed conflict affects the health of an individual (loss of human capital) which in turn alters the economic status and hence leads to effect social participation. However, the relation is not generalistic as the armed conflict can affect any of the above variables directly without altering the others. It is pertinent to mention here that the data for the current paper has been collected only from those households who happen to be direct victims of conflict. The victimization was in the form of death of a family member, disappearance of a family member or physical or psychological disease of a family member.*

**Keywords:** *Armed Conflict; health; social participation.*

## 1. Introduction

Kashmir is famous for its beauty and natural scenery throughout the world. Its high snow - clad mountains, scenic spots, beautiful valleys, rivers and ice cold water, attractive lakes and springs and evergreen fields, dense forests and beautiful health resorts enhance its grandeur. The State of Jammu & Kashmir has acquired since 19th century a unique geo-political status in the Indian Sub-continent. It has contiguous boundaries with Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and Tibet that deserve constant vigil and as such it has made the state very important geographically, politically, economically and from the military point of view.

Kashmir, from its very beginning has been ruled by varied sects. Buddhists being the most ancient, Hindus, Afghans, Moguls, Sikhs and Dogras have also ruled Kashmir in different eras. In 1845, the First Anglo-Sikh War broke out. According to the Imperial gazetteer of India, 1908:

*"Gulab Singh contrived to hold himself aloof till the battle of Sobraon (1846), when he appeared as a useful mediator and the trusted advisor of Sir Henry Lawrence. Two treaties were concluded, By the first the State of Lahore (i.e. West Punjab) handed over to the British, as equivalent for one crore indemnity, the hill countries between the rivers Beas and Indus; by the second the British made over to Gulab Singh for 75*

*lakhs all the hilly or mountainous country situated to the east of the Indus and the west of the Ravi (i.e. the vale of Kashmir)".*

Following the war, in 1846 Treaty of Amritsar was signed between Gulab Singh and the British. After the Treaty, Gulab Singh paid 1 crore Rupees to the British of which 25 Lacs were later waived. Thus, he purchased the whole of Kashmir for 75 Lac Nanak Shahi Takas (Rupees) and founded the Dogra Empire.

Jammu and Kashmir came into being as a single political and geographical entity following the treaty of Amritsar between British Government and Gulab Singh. However, the Dogra rule is considered to be the most tyrannical in the history of Kashmir. It was too harsh for people to live under this rule and ultimately under the towering personality of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the general populace rose against the autocracy of Dogra Rule.

Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1947 was an independent country for all practical purposes. The maharaja who ruled the state had signed agreements with both Pakistan and India to remain neutral and not be part of either country. However, notwithstanding the agreement, Pakistan attacked the state forcing the Maharaja to flee to India for asking help to save his people from Pakistani raiders. He also agreed to make Jammu & Kashmir part of India. The then Prime minister of India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru accepted the accession to India and Indian troops were flown into Kashmir valley<sup>1</sup>. They managed to drive away most of the Pakistani raiders from the state. Pakistan still asks for a plebiscite in Kashmir under the UN. However, India is no longer willing to allow a plebiscite as it claims that the situation has changed a lot.

A number of movements have variously sought a merger of Kashmir with Pakistan, Independence for the region from both India and Pakistan, or granting of Indian union territory status to Buddhist Ladakh. To contend with these movements, confront Pakistani forces along the ceasefire line, and support the administrative structure of J&K state, the union government of India has maintained a strong military presence in the state, especially since the end of 1980.

In 1989, a wide spread armed insurgency started in Kashmir, which continues to this day. This was largely started by the large number of Afghanistani Mujahideen who entered the Kashmir valley following the end of soviet-Afghan war. This insurgency was supported by various native Kashmiris who took active part in this militancy. From mid 1989, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and other armed opposition groups led a popular movement and armed uprising for independence. This phase of the latent Kashmir imbroglio revived the 1947 bitterness and echoed the tyranny that this unfortunate land had witnessed under the Dogra regime. It is the post 1989 Kashmir that has witnessed the worst of blood shedding, loot and arson.

The real impact of the post 1989 conflict can be seen in the lives of the people who have survived the conflict. Families have been destroyed, communities have been broken up, and people have been displaced and impoverished. There is hostility, intolerance and animosity within communities. 'More than a decade of conflict has deeply affected people's livelihoods and living environments, their health, their eating habits, their work and their work places, their access to education and eventually their social participation.

Participation in social activities is an important element of people's well-being and their ability to socialize with others. Being socially connected with other people and with social institutions, such as clubs and organizations, fosters social interaction, helps increase people's sense of belonging, and provides balance in people's lives. Belonging to social networks can also provide a number of tangible benefits, including information, access to goods and services, and business contacts, as well as emotional support. Social Participation is engagement in a variety of roles with others. Social roles include domestic roles of home-maintainer and caregiver, interpersonal roles of friend and family member, major life roles as student, worker and volunteer, and community roles such as participant in organizations, religious participant, ceremonial participant and many more. Once being hit by conflict, that too armed this whole scenario of community roles and social participation gets altered. Conflict hit family takes no interest in participation of these roles, may be due to the economic constraint or due to sorrow and grief of being the victim of conflict.

### **1.1. Objectives**

The study is aimed at the effects and consequences of the post 1989 conflict period. The study is broadly designed to explore the effect of conflict on social participation. However, the two cannot be related directly, one as the cause of other, without looking at the other related variables. It is the series of eventual consequences of conflict that ultimately lead to alter social participation of an individual or household. The armed conflict has direct impact on

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<sup>1</sup> This is the Indian Version of the situation where it is said that Maharaja who ruled the state at that time had signed agreements with both Pakistan and India to remain neutral and not be part of either country.

health and economy of individual and / or household which ultimately determine the degree of social participation. Based upon such premise, the broad objectives of this study are:

- To analyze how the armed conflict affects health of an individual / household within the conflict hit area.
- To analyze how the armed conflict batter the economic status of the conflict hit individual and/or household.
- And finally to explore how this effect of armed conflict on health and economy ultimately alter the degree of social participation of the conflict hit individual / household.

## **1.2. Methodology**

The study has confined its universe to a part of Srinagar District. A sample of 60 households, where there is reported direct affect of conflict during past two decades was selected through snowball sampling. Here a household was identified, in the selected universe, where the victimization was prominent as some member of the household died due to consequence of conflict. The respondent of the same household identified some more victim household within that particular sampled area. Eventually the number increased and ultimately the desired number of 60 households was reached. The households which were taken as samples were identified in line with the occurrence of death or injury to the household member. Among the 60 selected households, 30 were selected by purposive judgemental sampling which was taken as the final sample size for study. The selected sample size was categorized into three categories on the basis of consequence of conflict. They were:- 1. Those households where there has been a death of a family member(s) due to conflict, 2. Those households where some member(s) has/have disappeared due to conflict, and 3. Those households where some member(s) has/have developed some psychological disorder or have become handicapped due to the conflict. Each category thus comprised of 10 samples. The survey was conducted from 19th October to 3rd November, 2012. Due to the sensitive nature of this research, it became important to build a rapport and gain ample trust with the respondent and her/his family. The study was as such conducted through unstructured / informal interviews. Procedure of the interview consisted of two steps which are elaborated briefly as:

1.2.1. *First step:* Elder member (present at the time of interview) of the selected household was asked permission to interview any member of the family or the person himself. The purpose of the study was described as the part of my M.phil programme and it was assured that the name or any personal details will not be reflected or published under whatsoever circumstances.

1.2.2. *Second step:* The next step was to conduct the interview and it was noted in the survey that one respondent represented one whole household. Average time for each interview was 20 – 30 minutes which sometimes extended up to an hour.

## **1.3. Defining the key terms:**

Let some of the important terms used in this paper be discussed so as to understand their situational meaning as for used in this paper. It takes into consideration defining the words like armed conflict, household, health, Economic status, social participation and human capital.

### **1.3.1. Armed conflict**

Conflict that involves the use of weapons and physical force organized by countries or other large groups is termed as armed conflict. Here the armed conflict will mean the conflict / violence going on in the State of Kashmir.

### **1.3.2. Household:**

The household is "the basic residential unit in which economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing, and shelter are organized and carried out". The term refers to all individuals who live in the same dwelling. The household may or may not be synonymous with family. In economics, a household is a person or a group of people living in the same residence. In our survey, the representational household is defined as victimized family whose family member has not survived the clinical definition of physical, mental and social well-being due to armed conflict ridden shocks. Deaths of the family member, physically handicapped, mental illnesses were primarily taken as the sample frame of representational household.

### *1.3.3. Health:*

It is the general condition of a person's mind and body, usually meaning to be free from illness, injury or pain. The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health, in its broader sense, as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

### *1.3.4. Economic status:*

It is defined as the household's purchasing power as per the present income factor, acquired wealth etc. which defines the relative economic status in a society. Economic status (ES) is typically broken into three categories depending upon the per capita income of the household namely high, middle and low income group. The sample household, in our survey, belonged to middle and low income group because of the loss of bread earner in most of the household.

### *1.3.5. Social participation:*

Social participation refers to people's social involvement and interaction within the paraphernalia of social norms. Activities such as volunteering, making donations, attending social functions, participating in sports, recreational activities etc. are all forms of social participation.

### *1.3.6. Human capital*

Economist Theodore Schultz invented the term in the 1960s to reflect the value of our human capacities. Human capital is the stock of competencies, knowledge, social and personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value.

## ***1.4. Impact of armed conflict: A Theoretical background***

War and conflict has an enormous and tragic impact on people's lives. It accounts for more death and disability than many major diseases; destroys families, communities, and sometimes entire nations and cultures; diverts limited resources from health and other human services and damages the infrastructure that supports them; and violates human rights. The mindset of war – that violence is the best way to resolve conflicts – contributes to domestic violence, street crime, and many other kinds of violence. War damages the environment. All these consequences directly influence the very health of the population of conflict area which in turn effect the economy of that area. Conflict threatens not only health but also the very fabric of the civilization (Levy and Sidel 1997). The main result is that conflict has a positive and statistically significant effect on economic growth.

Health is a key component of Human Capital, which in turn is an important determinant of economic growth. The role of health in influencing economic outcomes has been well understood at the micro level. Healthier workers are likely to be able to work longer, be generally more productive than their relatively less healthy counterparts, and consequently able to secure higher earnings than the latter, all else being the same; illness and disease shorten the working lives of people, thereby reducing their lifetime earnings. The causal relationship does not run in only one direction-from health to aggregate economic performance- and there is strong case for considering a reverse link, running from 'wealth to health'. Higher incomes potentially permit individuals (and societies) to afford better nutrition, better health care and, presumably, achieve better health. Several experts believe, however, that the causal direction from health to economic performance is stronger. As far as health impacts of conflict are concerned the mechanism through which conflict transmits itself into the health hazards are still not completely known. Apart from direct impact of the conflict in terms of death, destruction and injuries are also considered the ill effects of conflict. In places of armed conflict it is found out by many researchers that the population of that place experiences various forms of maltreatment which includes physical, verbal, psychological and sexual violence, Physical violence being the most prominent. It comprises of bullet wounds, death due to blast, cross firing deaths and injuries. (HiCN working Paper, 2010). Due to the implications of armed conflict, the health of the victim population has deteriorated which has in turn worsened the standard of living of the people ultimately leading them towards poverty, which itself become a symptom for psychological disorders.

The other key consequence of violent conflict has been the slow growth and subsequent perpetuation of low income. Globally, slow growth and low income are important risk factors making violent conflict noxious. Violent conflicts offer many analytical insights which affect a household's economic, political, and social surrounding.

Violent conflict is likely to affect human capital, namely education and health. During conflict, the households will tend to deplete their stock of human capital (Deininger, 2003) and increase economic and security risks (Shemyakina, 2006). Violent conflict is associated with the destruction of human lives due to violence against civilians, often children, women and the elderly (Dewhurst, 1998; Woodward, 1995) and push previously vulnerable households into extreme forms of poverty which may well become persistent if the household is unable to replace labour (Justino & Verwimp, 2006). Violent conflicts affect health of children, increase morbidity and psychological effects.

The insecure socio-economic conditions force vulnerable households into deprivation and distress and occurrence of violent conflict tend to increase insecurity further (de Waal, 1997). The violent conflicts are likely to have a considerable negative impact on individual and household's economic position due to loss of assets and disruption or loss of livelihoods (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2004). There have been breakdowns of customary rights and rules with predatory behaviour leading to resource depletion and environment degradation (Moser & McIwaine, 1999). During violent conflicts assets get lost or destroyed, homes and livelihoods got damaged, which have unaccountable impacts on livelihoods of individuals and households at micro level. The presence of conflict affects people's economic incentives. Some sectors of activity flourish, while others suffer. For understanding structural problems in developing countries and designing appropriate post-conflict reconstruction policies, it is essential to understand in what ways conflict affects the structure of the economy. Armed conflicts have killed people and caused extensive injuries, disability and psychological damage. The impact of reduction in households' economic and human capital may be long-lasting even after the end of the initial conflict (Ghobarah, Huth & Russett, 2003; Alderman et al., 2004; de Walque, 2006).

One of the most extensive and profound effects of the armed confrontation was the breakdown of community structures. Obligatory mechanisms of "participation," such as the "civil defense patrols" — paramilitary groups supported by the army, whose objective was to combat incursion of guerrillas into the communities — were imposed over ancestral practices of social participation promoting local development in rural indigenous communities. Local indigenous authority no longer rested with a council of elders but rather with the head of the patrols (paramilitary forces), who were permitted to use violence, often aimed at families and leaders of their own communities. These fractures affected systems of authority, norms in community relations, and even elements of identity.<sup>2</sup>

Another negative effect of the armed conflict was the climate of generalized terror that gripped the population. Victims of the conflict have reported experiencing intense feelings of fear, despair, mistrust, and insecurity that they could not explain or attribute to any particular "culprit." Carlos Beristain, a Spanish physician and psychologist who spent many years in Guatemala, suggested that these reactions occurred because the mechanisms of repression created a "phantom" that disoriented the population and made them feel high levels of insecurity.

Recent surveys of citizen participation reveal that overall levels of political and social participation are low and that people generally do not trust political and social institutions. These views are in part a result of the violations of human rights during the internal conflict and the history of violence that helps to explain the difficulty in consolidating the rule of law in the current democratic era.<sup>3</sup>

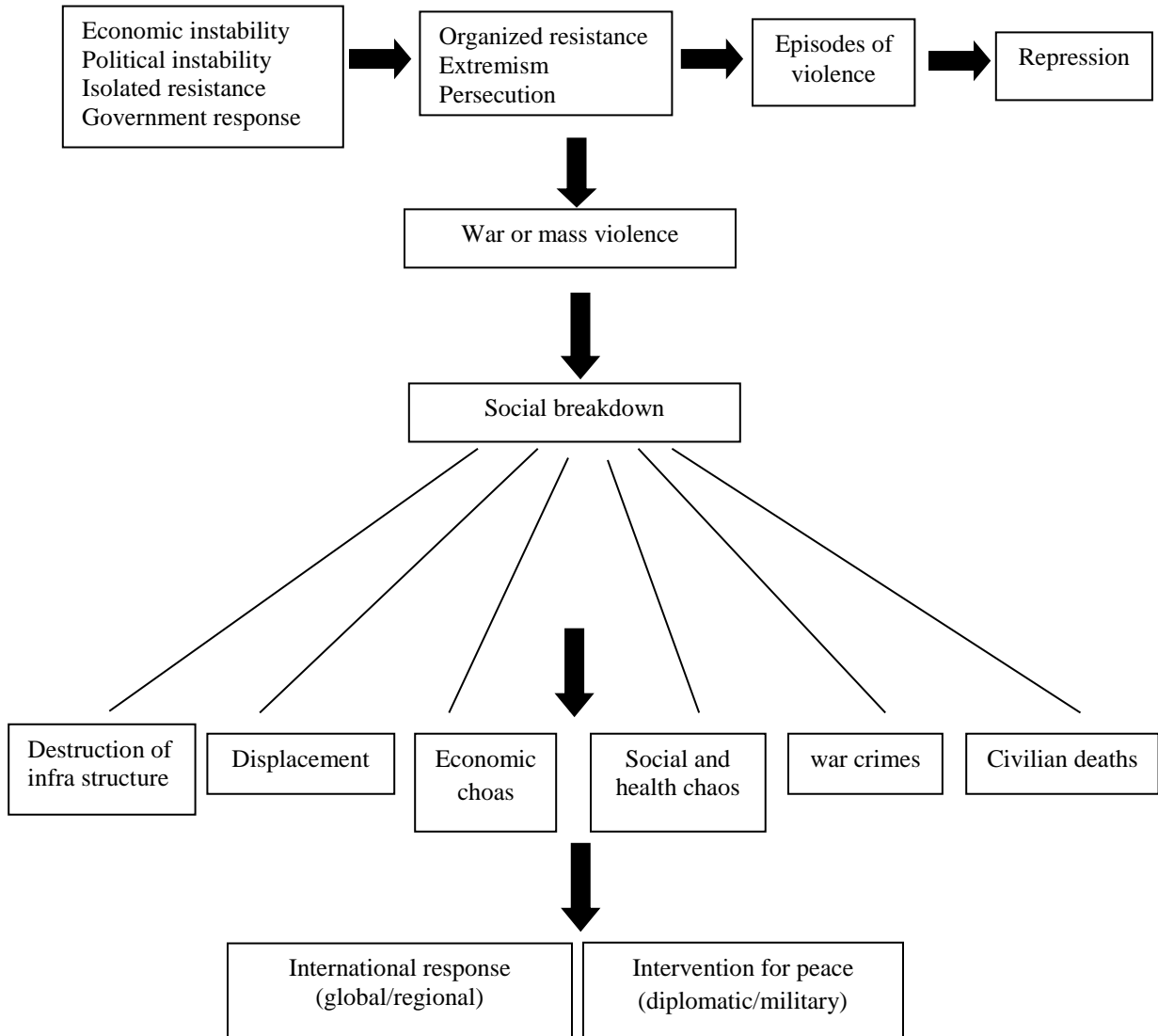
As far as the theoretical basis of social breakdown or impact on social participation as a result of conflict is considered there is very less literature available on the same, however the works of Laurel E. Fletcher and Harvey M. Weinstein (2002) were the significant in shaping out the model of social breakdown due to conflict. They proposed a schematic model to illustrate this process which we refer to as "social breakdown." Their description of social breakdown, although similar to the concept of breakdown theory was not intended as an explanatory model, but merely to encapsulate the processes that emerge as a state descends into chaos. This perspective sets the stage for an examination of how the rebuilding of a social system may be supported. They suggested a three-stage model of social breakdown as illustrated in figure-1. In the first stage, social breakdown, a society undergoes a sequence of destabilizing events leading to a second stage characterized by war or mass violence. In the third stage, cessation of the violence is achieved through diplomatic, military, global, or regional interventions. Although the causal factors that initiate the process of social breakdown may vary, in the first stage, economic or political instability is often at the root of its evolution. A cycle of resistance and government response leading to extremism and persecution often

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2. H. D. Suárez, "Aplazados y desplazados, violencia, guerrilla y desplazamiento: El transcurso cultural del destierro y la exclusión: Destierros y desarraigados" (presented at the II International Seminar on Displacement: Implications and Challenges for Governability, Democracy and Human Rights, Bogota, September 4, 2002).

3. C. M. Beristain, "Guatemala: Nuncamas," *Forced Migration Review* 3 (1998), p. 23-26; and C. M. Beristain, "Resistiendo la impunidad en Guatemala: La dimensión psicosocial en un proceso político-judicial," *Revista Nueva Sociedad* 17 (5) (2001), p. 43-58.

results in episodes of violence and repression. Isolated violence escalates, leading to stage two, in which the country becomes engulfed by war or mass violence. In this stage, the violence destroys the physical, economic, and social infrastructure creating mass dislocation and undermining societal order and stability. As constraints on appropriate behaviour are loosened, war crimes and mass human rights violations may become the visible by-products of breakdown. The final stage is demarcated by the termination of armed conflict. Frequently this occurs when the international community becomes engaged actively in diplomatic or military interventions to restore and maintain peace.



*Fig. 1: The Process of Social Breakdown*

The above figure illustrates the model of the process of social breakdown. It depicts how the various segments of a society interact in the process of breakdown.

### 1.5. Impact of Armed conflict in Kashmir

Kashmir has been racked by insurrection for many years. To understand the daily violence one has to delve deep and discern the structural violence built inside the economic, political and social structure of society. Structural violence in Kashmir has led to secondary violence—gross human rights violations including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, rape and torture have become endemic. Like Manipur and other north-eastern states of India,

many non-derogable rights have been violated by security forces under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958.

Many a times, it has been reported that the places where armed conflicts are prevailing, death rate piles up on an increasing rate. If we take Kashmir conflict into consideration, there are many reports concerning this issue. One of the report quotes that according to Ministry of Home affairs of Jammu and Kashmir total of 780 persons including 309 civilians, 76 security forces 395 alleged members of Army Opposition Groups (AOG's) were killed in the year 2006 as against the killing of 868 persons including 393 civilians, 70 security forces, 405 alleged members of AOG's in 2005 (Annual Report 2006-07, Ministry of home affairs). According to another report 1224 youth have been killed in fake encounters since 1995 to 2008 (Amnesty International, 2011). The report also quotes that hundreds of the people have gone missing in the state since the internal armed conflict began in 1990s. On 25 March 2003, Minister for law and finance of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Muzaffar Hussain Beigh stated in the state assembly that a total of 3744 persons had disappeared in the state from 1990 to December 2002 and 135 of them had been declared dead up to June 2002. However according to the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) more than 8000 person have disappeared during the past 16 years of turmoil (The statesman, 13th March 2006).It has also been reported that almost all the Kashmiris face verbal threats, abuses, insults etc. With all this happening around, it has deeper impact on the minds of the people which lead them towards psychological disorders. There are hundreds of reports by governmental organization and NGO groups which relate to the mental health needs of the people which are on the rising trend. It is evident that when insecurity through physical violence is experienced by the victim population it has a deeper impact on their minds which ultimately leads to mental health problems.

Armed conflicts create enormous upheaval at the personal, family, societal, and national level. The conflict in Kashmir caused immense pain, both physical and emotional. The notion of home as safe refuge was challenged during this period. People had to face constant humiliations during search operations at homes and in check points. Armed Conflict has made both physical and social impact on society.

#### 1.5.1. Health

Let us start our discussion from effect of conflict on health. Almost all the respondents reported occurrence of face verbal threats, abuses, insults etc. With all this happening around, it has deeper impact on the minds of the people which lead them towards psychological disorders. There are hundreds of reports by governmental organization and NGO groups which relate to the mental health needs of the people which are on the rising trend. It is evident that when insecurity through physical violence is experienced by the victim population it has a deeper impact on their minds which ultimately leads to mental health problems. Physical violence raises many issues into consideration like prolonged illness, handicappness due to injuries from bullets or blasts, killings due to cross firing, blasts, custodial killings and disappearances. There are many disorders present besides these and sometimes the victim population is not even able to cope up with the daily hassels of life.

**Table 1 (Effect of various ways of physical violence)**

Nature of Physical Violence	Frequency N=30	Percentage
Killing in Cross firing	6	20
Killing in Blast	4	13
Injury (Bullet)	3	10
Injury (Blast)	7	23
Custodial Killing	0	0
Disappearance	10	33

Source: Field Survey

From the data collected and the references quoted we find that overall violence is at its peak in Kashmir valley. Physically and verbally, people are prone to violence. In most cases, injuries have led victims to the woeful psychological illnesses. In many cases killing of a bread earner has left the household in a devastated condition and most households find it difficult to make their two ends meet. Sufferings are inflicted in the form of injury from bullets, blasts and in many cases of death. Moreover to define someone's longing, which has more painful

consequences than death, is beyond explanation. One of the respondent's mother, a woman of late fifty's started to have severe headaches and fainting spells after her daughter and son got killed by the army. She had high blood pressure and mental problem for which she has to be in medication throughout her life.

In this survey, I have worked to establish a causal relationship between the conflict and health. During the field survey I came across many revealing facts about the consequences of conflict on health. Ranging from injuries and distress to amputation and mental rupture, the list goes uncounted. As has been detailed in the above discussion the conflict affects health in varied ways. Physical, Verbal and Psychological ways of violence are having a direct impact on the health of the victim population. In the instant survey, it is found that the level of impact of the violence varies from household to household depending upon one or the other reason within a conflict area. In most cases physical impairment has been seen on high as compared to other forms. However, many of the households have been seen to be the victim of all forms of health impairments (Physical, verbal and Psychological) at different epochs of the conflict period. In this study, almost all the sampled households reported one or the other form of health impairment as a result of ongoing conflict. It is evident that when insecurity through physical violence is experienced by the victim population it has a deeper impact on their minds which ultimately leads to mental health problems. In whole and as is evident from the data above we can say that conflict has been the chief cause of the deteriorated health condition in Kashmir. No doubt the deterioration has taken place in all forms but psychological consequences of violence are of major concern.

### 1.5.2. Economy

Household savings are an important determinant of household economic activities. They determine its long term investment potential in both social and physical infrastructure. However the impact of repeated violence through armed conflict on this determinant of household welfare which in turn determines the welfare incompetency of this economic unit in terms of investment in education, health and other financial assets being deteriorated exponentially. The magnitude with which household savings increase or decrease within an environment of violence and conflict, (providing some control mechanism for other determinants of household savings) can be a path breaking area of research area. Indeed, some work has found that the mere expectation of conflict is associated with lower personal savings rates, which typically corresponds to lower investment. The explanation for the same comes from the fact that the psychological impact of violence includes changes in behaviour from reductions in productive life length (such as decreased investments in human capital and health), reduced savings and investments in physical capital, and, therefore, reduced long-run growth. Shorter expected life horizons reduce an individual's incentive to take actions that generate long-term benefits and short-term costs, such as investing in education and saving for the future.

S. Brock Blomberg and Gregory D. Hess concluded war, whether external or internal, large or small, is a costly endeavour. Loss of life, loss of close friends or family, and the destruction of material possessions all play a part in the costs of war. Remarkably, even these pure economic welfare losses from conflict are quite large.

**Table 2 (Savings and borrowings during conflict)**

Source: Field survey

Direction of change in savings/borrowings	Savings		Borrowings	
	Frequency (n = 30)	Percentage	Frequency (n = 30)	Percentage
Increased	0	0	20	67
Decreased	25	83	0	0
Constant	5	17	10	33

The present study tried to look into the armed conflict and its consequent impact on the household welfare (defined within the framework of pure economics). The findings of the study reveal that conflict has a negative impact on the saving capacity of the households; it depletes their resources and makes them vulnerable to the vagaries of the market. On borrowings impact of violence is somewhat mixed. With some households reporting increase in borrowings over the conflict period reiterates the negative impact of the phenomenon on the earning capacity of the household as an effective economic unit. Those of whom, who report a increase in borrowings over the same period, are the ones who witnessed a break down in social capital- trust, community relationships, kinship etc. Most of the participants said poor were most affected by the conflict; they had to bear the brunt of poverty, torture, humiliations and at times even death.



**Table 3 (Economic status of households)**

Source: Field survey

<b>Change in economic status</b>	<b>Frequency (n = 30)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Increased	0	0
Decreased	20	67
Constant	10	33

Another feature of economy came from the comparison of the relative economic status of the three categories of households which were taken for study. The households where there has been death of a family member reported somewhat less decrease or no change at all in their economic status. Nevertheless, the economic status decreased at the time of the death of the family member but was restored with the course of time. However, this was not the trend for all such families. It was reported that the economic decrease was much higher in those households where the death of the lone bread earner has took place. The economic decrease in such households was that remarkable that their economic status has even decreased to Below Poverty line.

In contrast, there is a general trend of decrease in economic status of those households where some family member has gone missing or developed some psychological or physical disorder. The reason cited by the respondents was that there is diversion of economy as the same is spent on tracing the missing and for the medicines respectively. This expenditure continues from victimization and is continuing till date with increasing rates. The overall effect is that the economic status of these households is decreasing day by day.

### 1.5.3. Social participation

As already discussed the direct effects of armed conflict on the household include changes in household composition due to killings, injuries, changes in the household economic status due to the direct destruction of assets and effects caused by forced displacement and migration. Indirect effects include changes in households' surrounding institutions and environments such as changes in social networks and changes in local institutions. However collectively all such effects have directly influenced the degree of social participation of the household. Emphasizing our domain of analysis to the variable of social participation, it has been already discussed what actually social participation means. It is simply the engagement in a variety of roles (social and community) with others. Social roles include domestic roles of home-maintainer and caregiver, interpersonal roles of friend and family member, major life roles as student, worker and volunteer, and community roles such as participation in organizations, religious participation, ceremonial participation and many more.

**Table 4 (Change in the degree of social participation)**

Source: Field survey

<b>Degree of social participation</b>	<b>Frequency (n = 30)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Increased	0	0
Decreased	23	77
Constant	7	23

On field, there seems a marked impact of conflict on the degree of social participation. Respondents were very affirmative of the impact of conflict on their social participation. Almost all the respondents reported that there is some intention of keeping away from the society due to the grief and sorrow they are living with. The decrease in economic status is yet another factor which hinders their participation in social ceremonies and functions. It was already mentioned that those of whom, who report a increase in borrowings during the conflict period are the ones who witnessed a break down in social capital- trust, community relationships, kinship etc, depicting there in, a decrease in social participation. One of the respondents, a lady in late 40's, was very peculiar in elaborating on that aspect and which, I cannot omit to narrate here said "this conflict took the life of my husband, my father-in-law and my brother-in-law here in this house one after the other. I was alone here with my few years old son, without any male member to take care of us. How can I go to participate in marriages and other social functions with this kind of sorrow and grief within me? I am alive just for my son, to take care of him. He is 18 now; it has been 10 years of solitude, away from society but within society. No one can understand what I have been through". Likewise there were other reports where the death of a family member has made that family to remain isolated from the rest of the society due to one or the other reason, grief and sorrow being the foremost.

Physically Handicapped or disappearance of a family member due to armed conflict are the factors among others that cripple a family from being an active social participant. Respondents of this category reported an overall decrease in the social participation. I remember a line from a respondent who himself was a victim of armed conflict

and was bed ridden for 7 years as he got some spinal injuries in a blast here in Srinagar. He said, *“It is better to die than to live in this condition. It is not only me who has been suffering on an individual level since the day of occurrence, but my family has been paralysed since then. They don't go anywhere, they have isolated from the society as they can't leave me alone. I am totally dependent on them. Due to armed conflict my whole family is handicap in a way. This is what armed conflict has given us.”* There were many such incidents where such reports came and there was a general trend of decrease in social participation.

Overall, it can be said that armed conflict has deterred the social participation to a very high level. It was not only the physical consequences but the psychological one also which has limited the aura of social participation. The breakdown of community relationship, societal relationship and kinship relation have all been on the rise during armed conflict. Moreover, the health and economic conditions that altered during the conflict period affected the social participation scenario.

During the field survey, there also came one more dimension of the impact of conflict that was the suspicious nature of the respondents. It was reported by many that trust level amongst people within and beyond community has been shattered due to armed conflict. They get suspicious of every new face they see. They are very curious to learn about the person's background. Unlike before they do not extend their Kashmiri hospitality, they do not want to talk, provide shelter, food, even water to any stranger. Conflict has brought major change in the value system of people who believed in 'Atithi Deva Bhawa' which basically means guest is god and should be well treated. But people had to face grave consequences for trusting both neighbours and strangers during conflict that they are not willing to take risks. Many have been prosecuted or killed for being, helping wrong person at a wrong place. The social harmony has been totally disrupted which will take tremendous conciliation effort.

## 1.6. Conclusion

A simple disagreement between two or more actors on some agenda, issue or idea to which all of them are a part gives rise to what in literary circles has been referred to “conflict”. This conflict at individual level has disturbed the peace of mind that has been eaten away by it completely and at the societal level it is a peaceful co-existence with the fellow individuals which is at risk. It is the latter dimension of conflict that this study was aimed to explore but taking into consideration the former one too. The present study was designed to look into the absence of peace and its consequent impact on the social setting in Srinagar, Kashmir. It was not possible to look and obtain data for all the parameters where the impact of armed conflict is visible. As such, this study was confined to explore the impact of armed conflict on three inter-related variables of health, economy and social participation. While in field, there were many other things which I thought to include in this paper, may it be the impact of conflict on education or other related issues. But it was not easy to obtain an in-depth data and handle all the variables at a time, given the short time period available for collection of data.

In this paper, I have worked to establish a relationship between the armed conflict, health, economy and social participation. During the field survey, I came across many revealing facts about the consequences of conflict on these variables. As has been detailed in the above discussion the conflict affects health in varied ways and so, it affects the economy and social setting. In the instant survey, it is found that the level of impact of the violence varies from household to household depending upon one or the other reason within a conflict area. Almost all the sampled households reported one or the other form of health impairment as a result of ongoing conflict. As already said, it is evident that when insecurity is experienced by the victim population it has a deeper impact on their minds which ultimately lead to mental health problems. As a result of all such things happening around the overall effect can be seen in the deteriorating health conditions of the people within the conflict zone. The same was the case with the economic status of the households, which happen to be the direct victims of armed conflict. There is an increase in the borrowings and decrease in the savings. As per the Human Capital Theory, any impairment to the human population will have a telling effect on the overall economy. Thus, armed conflict apart from having the direct impact on economic status of a household affects it further by impairing the health of the dwellers in that household. More so, the death or disappearance of the household member means departure of human capital which directly deters the economic status of the household. As a result the whole of the analyses is that the household economy in these households as a result of conflict is in a deteriorating position which signifies armed conflict as the viscous circle where the said variables aggravate each other towards inexorable worsening situation.

The impact of armed conflict on health and economy has touched one other dimension of society, what we call the social participation. Before the start of this paper it seemed that armed conflict has no direct impact on social participation, but during the course of the field survey it came to surface that social participation of the respondents has directly been altered by the armed conflict. However, the impact of armed conflict on health and economic status acts as a catalyst to deter the social participation. After conducting the survey and taking into view the

sufferings of the households one can say that armed conflict has deterred the social participation. It was not only the physical consequences but the psychological one also which has limited the aura of social participation. The breakdown of community relationship, societal relationship and kinship relation have all been on the rise during armed conflict. It can be said that the ongoing violence resulted in negative psychosocial effects among the population, including mistrust toward institutions and hence the low levels of social participation.

With the 20 years of conflict, there has been lots of positive and negative incidents and experience people went through. Many suffered unbearable losses and pains. Many are struggling to move on with their lives without their loved ones and social security. Many are facing both mental and physical problems. Many have migrated to other states and other countries in search of safety and employment. However, inspite of all the sufferings people have gone through, they still have positive hopes for future. They believe they have overcome most difficult situations during the conflict. People have hopes for a steady government without violent conflicts and insecurity for all. However, there is need to strengthen economic activities of these people to reinforce and sustain what they have gained in terms of awareness and self-confidence as the economic condition is still weak particularly in the sample groups. People have come to realize the importance and respect of human rights but there is ample need to restore the trust and economic status so that they can take part in the social setting as they used to be.

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