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Jammu Massacre: What it meant to be a Muslim woman in Jammu in 1947



By **Arshi Javid**

Posted on November 7,
2017



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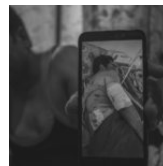
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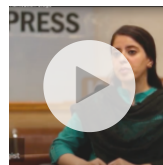
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**Modern his
documente
that report
2.3 lakh M
Jammu by Nov 1947 is
tailed by countless
stories of ravaged lives.
Hearing those stories fed
childhood memories of a
Kashmir-born JNU
scholar. Here she
attempts to recreate
some of her
conversations spanned
over the years with
women survivors of the
massacre.**

Known for wearing
fashionable overcoats,
symbolic of her modern
outlook, Shafqat had passed
the middle examination and
was hoping to be the first
matriculate woman of the
family. But then November
1947 happened and Shafqat
and her younger sister were
taken away.

Not a single male member of
the family had survived who
would have gone to look for
them. Their mother's sole
priority had been to salvage
her younger daughters, hiding
them at places and then
changing the hideouts.



2019



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By the time the sisters were recovered, the state committee formed for recovery of abducted women, they were ravaged.



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Shafqat returned pregnant. And terminating the pregnancy was not a possibility. Both the sisters were married off to men who had come forward to accept them despite their plight. While the marriages were far from any semblance of happiness, the pressure of 'forgetting' owing to societal configurations was not any less daunting.

There was no time to negotiate with the trauma as forgetting was the only way to resuscitate the leftover 'honour'. Even inter-generational transmission of the knowledge pertaining to events in 1947 was not encouraged.

The year

cataclysmic

of Jammu and

terms of its s

Though the m

consequence

protracted conflict and

prolonged bloodbath,

however, history of violence

has not been addressed in

totality.

In case of Jammu, our

memory traces the tragic

Muslim massacre and the

state complicity associated

with it, but hides many other

aspects beneath the political

debris.

There are no real records for

the number of families

separated, the fields of crops

left to rot, homes destroyed,

and the perilous journeys

undertaken by people as they

fled to safer places. The

survivors don't know whether

their kin were buried or

cremated or just left to rot

through the impending

winters. The long silence does

not recompense the loss,

trauma and the grief.

My own interest in Jammu

sparks off from personal

conversations with some

survivors that have formed as



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staple of my
the survivors
had migrated
valley, escalat
in 1990s bro
idea of living
same fears, b

experience of seeing them live
through 2008 Amarnath land
controversy that brought
home to me, what it meant to
be a Muslim and especially a
Muslim woman in Jammu in
1947.

The first realisation was that
this calamity is also fraught
with the certain sense of
gendered calamity. There is
no denial to the fact that
uncanny violence sponged off
the majority population, but a
blanket of silence descends
upon the cases of abduction
and rape. Thus absence of
committed social analysis and
half remembrance of events
exhume the entire context. In
many cases, men were the
main targets, while women
were left behind to take on
the business of putting lives
together.

Rabia was a teen aged
daughter of the local Imam
in one of the violence affected
Mohallas of Jammu city.
Though the family to this day
denies there ever existed any
Rabia, yet the acquaintances



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inform that I
abducted by
Jathas and t
districts near
border. Her
her back after
the family re

back. Left with no other
option, she returned with the
abductor and had to marry
him.

Significantly, this act of
forgetting of Rabia's complete
existence and in Shafaqat's
case of her abduction and
pregnancy has to be placed
with a political and historical
framework as to how society
has engaged with the violent
sexual trauma. The edifice of
our political memory having
always rested on the hyper-
masculinised domain
differentiated between
normative and non-normative
reality.

Paradoxically, no attempts
were made ever to engage
with this reality, which was
clashing with the established
morality. This allows an
insight into how violence is
prioritised and categorised as
'worth remembering' or 'not
worth remembering'. Also
how memories of violence
particularly sexual violence
are simultaneously located
within the ambiguities of



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concealment
indispensable
operations of
internal and

The half-remembered
spanned through
of everyday life and changed
out cognitive and emotional
responses rife with
contradictions. In effect,
remembrance should have
been able to bring cultural
and moral understanding
back into the ambit of the
people at large. This would
also mean absence of
disruptive implications for
the nexus of state, nation and
culture at critical historical
junctures given the futuristic
imagination of a community
or the question of
nationhood.

Fatima's family was a
staunch Muslim
Conference supporter. Given
her background, she got to
meet Muslim Conference
leaders like Chaudhry
Ghulam Abbas, Allah Rakha
Sagar, K.H Khurshid very
often. A smile ran through her
lips when she told me, "Our
families were on cordial
terms."

She recalled how her father
being a Muslim Conference
sympathiser was targeted



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cousin who c
from ground
stampede wa
the feet.



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In the lives of
the different geographies did
not make any difference. The
journeys they made were
fraught with same struggles,
providing succour to the
remaining families and
making comprises for
escaping the male gaze.

In that chilling carnage of
1947, Hajra lost 17 male
members of her family in
Udhampur. Running to save
her brood of children, she
took shelter in the tiny hamlet
of Reasi. She had delivered a
baby boy a night before the
killings happened.

**While she
made an
arduous road
journey, she
realised that
the infant in
her arms had
turned
lifeless and
ice-cold. Lack**

of food
shelter
away
more
of her
coming
weeks.



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Leaving for Pakistan was not an option for her as there was no male escort and she did not want to land in the whirlwind of unfamiliarity. She instead made way for Srinagar where she could start a new life with her children. Though she found some state and social support to reconstruct her life, but yet could not evade the male gaze.

Still in her twenties, Hajra decided to remarry a man thirty years elder to her, to gain some sense of security. But this also meant Hajra had to additionally provide for one more person as her new husband was not employed. In fact, the burden of the sense of security was inter-generational as later Hajra's children had to provide for the foster father.

Since these events had myriad resonances, it becomes

extremely violent
that 1947 was
flashpoint of
subsequently
under the de
voltage polit



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*Names of the victims have
been changed in order to
respect their privacy.*

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