

Abstract

This thesis explores the position of Kashmiri women within the ongoing political conflict in the Anantnag District of the North-Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, various patterns of their victimization, impact of victimization on status of women and to assess the role of state and civil society in addressing their issues. The researcher has traced the political trajectory of the state since Maurya period till the beginning of political conflict in 1989. In addition to changing political debacles, the changing status of women and their role in politics has been strongly emphasized. Present study unravels the social implications of the political conflict on women. It investigates the impacts on development in general and development of women in particular. Growing sense of political conflict within state has profound implications for both society and women in particular. Human and gender dimensions of political conflict are exemplified by increased number of widows, half-widows, victims of sexual abuse, psychological disorders, reproductive health issues, forced marriages and issues related to purdah and mate selection. Women have been denied political space and are the victims of patriarchal culture. This thesis ventures to understand the nature of victimization of women in situation of political turmoil like issues of widowhood, half-widowhood, sexual abuse and challenges faced by mothers whose sons have been either killed or disappeared in political conflict and to explore the impact of victimization on present social positions of women in society. Sample for the present study largely included women from common civilian population and also the women relatives of Indian security personnel. While scholars have been trying to understand the nature of violence in strife-torn Kashmir, they have made very little effort to unravel the impact of violence on women. My work makes a small effort in that direction, and seeks to reveal how the incessant and ever-increasing violence in Kashmir has changed the lives of women forever. It also makes an effort to draw out the experiences of the female victims of violence in the state- their pain, sorrows and sufferings.

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