Introduction

Journey as a structural and organizational principle has been employed by different writers right from the beginning of literature, whether oral or written, to reflect the mental, physical and emotional events in their lives. The term “Journey” is a Middle English word which means the distance travelled in one day. Every person has to undertake various journeys during his lifetime in which he encounters with various dimensions of self discovery: the personal, the inner, and the mental. According to Longman Advanced English Dictionary, journey means, “an occasion when you travel from one place to another, especially when there is a long distance between the places” (774).” But in a piece of literature the motif of the journey has a distinctive idea or a theme with an effective metaphor that manifests a process the protagonist experiences.

Suffering is a natural phenomenon which causes pain. One may forget one’s pain and suffering one has encountered during the journey of one’s life but once this pain and suffering is put into black and white it can neither be forgotten nor kept hidden from the world. When pains, pangs and sufferings are registered in words it forms a literature which has journey as one of its themes is filled with pathetic and poignant details. Usually the journey undertaken is not so much as physical one as emotional. The reader finds himself sympathizing with the characters in the piece of literature. In such novels, the protagonists recall their memories from the past and tell a story based on their experiences tracing a journey of the wounds suffered by them. It helps to put the protagonist in a specific socio-cultural frame to which he has a vital connection: he comes to life within it, he helps to perceive it, and he is also affected by it. The movement of the protagonist within his journey defines the scope of the novel, opening a vista from where the readers get to see and understand the novels from the perspective of the novelist. The physical movement is complemented by the changing thoughts of the protagonist. There is a juxtaposition of the landscape in the backdrop within which the protagonist moves and his introspection on the various thoughts which keep interacting with each other throughout the novel.
History is abounded with various instances showing how the civilization that suffered first and then produced commendable literature is the reflection and expression of their real journey of wounded image of their souls. The literature becomes a canvas on which writers attempt to paint the experiences which they have experienced during the journey of their life. Many freedom-fighters like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru etc. have written about the sufferings borne by Indians during British regime. Literature did a tremendous job to delineate the savagery of British rule in India. Works in different languages were published narrating stories of terror and grief. A legion of Hindi and Urdu writers like Munishi Prem Chand, Hasrat Mohani, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Sadat Hassan Manto, Upinder Nath Ashq, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sudhir Ghosh and others produced the literature which mirrors the agony, pathos and wounds faced by them.

The history of any conflict zone is always filled with gloomy, ambiguous and unresolved stories which are the outcome of violence. The violence of such conflict zone has serious ramifications on the common masses, who are the silent victims of such conflict. Among such conflict zones is Kashmir, a stoic witness to the tragedies that it has experienced at the hands of brutal invaders and greedy conquerors which oppressed the hapless and gullible Kashmiris by their inhumane and tyrannical oppression century after century. Kashmir has gone through a tumultuous history through its existence as it has passed from ruler to ruler and empire to empire. The historical tragedy of Kashmir conflict dates back to 16th century when the last ruler of Kashmir, Yaqub Shah Chak, was dethroned by the Mughals and the state became the part of Mughal Empire in 1586. Mughals ruled Kashmir for 166 years under different rulers ranging from Akbar to Aurangzeb. During the Mughal rule, the economic and political conditions of the people of Kashmir improved. Some of the Mughal governors were benevolent, merciful and conscientious who took measures to improve the economic and political conditions of the Kashmiris, but there were others who proved merciless despots. During the reign of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb Kashmir experienced religious intolerance and fanaticism. Hindus and Shais were persecuted. Taxes were imposed on the people. Victoria Schofield, a British author, biographer, and military historian in her book, *Kashmir in the Crossfire*, asserts:
The memory of Aurangzeb’s rein is tarnished by his persecution of the Hindus and Shias. Unlike Akbar, Aurangzeb was intolerant of other religions. Aurangzeb’s governor, Iftikar Khan tyrannized the Pandits. . . .

Under Aurangzeb’s successors the administration deteriorated and disorder spread. Rebellion, murder, lootings, arrests and assassinations were all common occurrences. (23)

After the death of Auranzeb the Mughal Empire declined. The Afghan ruler, Ahmed Shah Abdali took advantage of the power vacuum thus created and sent one of his generals Abdul Khan Isk Aquasi to attack Kashmir in 1753. Abdul Khan was successful in defeating the local ruler and establishing his sway over the area, beginning a phase of Afghan rule. This phase was one of despotic rule and the sole aim was to squeeze the people of whatever they could part with. The 67 years of Afghan rule was the worst phase of the Kashmiri people as they suffered every possible kind of humiliation, torture and deprivation. Religious intolerance was at its worst:

The Afghan rule proved the worst of all the despotisms that the Kashmiris had suffered in their long history. By stealing the last pennies from the pockets of the poverty stricken people and by inventing diabolical methods to torture them, the Pathan subedars made themselves the most despicable of rulers. . . .

The victims of the Pathan ruthlessness were Kashmiris without the distinction of religion or caste, but the particular objects of torture were the Pandits, Shais and Muslim Bombas of the Jhelum Valley. (Bazaz 8-9)

Afghan rule ended with the victory of the Sikh forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, when one of his generals Misser Dewan Chand defeated the last Afghan ruler Jabbar Khan in 1819. The Sikh rule lasted for 27 years. The Sikhs, however, proved no better than Afghans, their sole aim being the collection of highest possible taxes from the region. During this period in Kashmir’s history the Hindus were somewhat luckier than the Muslims who suffered religious persecution at the hands of the Sikhs:
The Pathans were followed by the Sikhs in 1819 when at the invitation of Kashmir nobles headed by Birbal Dhar, Ranjit Singh succeeded in annexing the Valley to his expanding dominions. . . . . The Kashmiris pinned great hopes on the Sikh rule; but they were mistaken. . . . . That relief never came nor did any change of system occur under the Sikhs. (Bazaz 9)

The Dogras were the last to rule Kashmir before the state acceded to India. This change of rulers was the result of an act of valour and service to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, rather than due to the overthrow of the Sikhs in Kashmir. Gulab Singh, a Dogra general in Ranjit Singh’s service, won important and difficult victories in 1819 when he defeated the Yusafzai tribes which resulted in the capture of Peshwar. As a reward for this successful military campaign Gulab Singh was granted Jammu as part of his estate. Ranjit Singh also granted Gulab Singh the title of “Raja.” This enabled him to commence securing neighbouring regions into his domain. The conquests finally climaxed when one of his generals Zorwar Singh lead a courageous expedition into Ladakh with a view to capture it. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the British Empire set its sights on the Sikh territories. In the ensuing battle, in which the opposing sides seemed equally poised, Gulab Singh deviously sided with the British, fully realising their imminent ascent on the Indian political scene. The resultant defeat of the Sikhs culminated in the signing of the “The Treaty of Amritsar” on 16 March 1846. In accordance with the treaty, Kashmir was ceded to Gulab Singh for a consideration of 75 lakhs of rupees in return for his acceptance of British suzerainty. Thus commenced the rule of a Dogra dynasty over Kashmir till it acceded to India in 1947. Gowhar Fazili, a socio-cultural and ecological activist writes:

. . . It leverages dates like 16 March 1846, When the Amritsar Treaty was signed, and Kashmir was sold by the British to Maharaja Gulab Singh for 75, 00,000 Nanakshi rupees. (And in addition to this, six pairs of pashmina goats and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls annually). This is followed by excessive taxation to recover this money. . . . (Kak 214)
Dogra rule did not bring succor and respite to the people of Kashmir. The state machinery under the Dogra kings was inept at handling crises and natural calamities and the influence of the British increased, as they were able to handle the same. The Dogra rulers were staunch Hindus and there was a perceptible bias in their dealings with their predominantly Muslim subjects of the Kashmir valley vis-à-vis the Hindus of the Jammu region. It was not only the religious bias of the rulers which were a cause of worry for the people, it was also the rulers’ feeling of being outsiders in the valley and considering it a conquered land meant for their exploitation and pleasure. As P. N. Bazaz writes, “The Dogras have always considered Jammu as their home and Kashmir as their conquered country. As we shall presently see they established a sort of Dogra imperialism in the State in which all non- Dogra communities and classes were given the humble places of inferiors” (qtd. in Chadha 42).

Dogra rule lasted for 100 years in Kashmir under four maharajas, Gulab Singh (1846-57), Ranbir Singh (1857-85), Pratap Singh (1885-1925) and Hari Singh (1925-47/52). In the case of Hari Singh, for all practical purposes his rule ended with the accession of Kashmir to India although he continued as maharaja of Kashmir till hereditary rule was abolished in 1952. It is the rule of Hari Singh which witnessed the most turmoil and political activity. During his rule also, Kashmiris felt highly alienated thus giving rise to the movement known as “Kashmir for the Kashmiris” encouraged by educated class of Kashmiris. Soon voices from different segments of the society were raised against the policies of Maharaja Hari Singh. Prominent among these was Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah, an Aligarh educated Kashmiri. This was the time when political unrest in the valley was beginning. He joined Reading Room Party and became famous as “Lion of Kashmir.” Later Abdullah founded a political party, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932. By this time the people of Kashmir stood up for the first time and protested against the atrocities of Maharaja Hari Singh. Agitations started against the Maharaja’s rule and a demand for basic political rights was put forward. Maharaja took efforts to crush the Muslim uprising. This period was characterized by the resentment of the common people. On 8 May 1936 the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference organised Responsible Government Day, in which minority Sikhs and Hindus were also invited to participate. In the year 1939, the Muslim Conference
changed its name to the National Conference, “secularization became inevitable and the conversion of Muslim Conference to National Conference easily followed” (Bazaz 34). National Conference adopts the “Naya Kashmir” (New Kashmir) resolution, which calls for radical socio-economic transformation and full citizenship rights for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah’s adherence to nationalism brought him closer to Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian Congress Party with its promises for a secular India.

Since then Kashmir has witnessed a series of tyranny, rebellion and bloodshed under the rule of various rulers. Of all the traumas and brutalities Kashmir has witnessed, the phase of early 90s was the worst and continues to be so. The seeds of the conflict were sown with the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, when partition divided India into Pakistan and secular India. It was Indian Independence Act of 1947 which provided for the creation of the two independent Dominions of India and Pakistan. Paramountcy was not transferred to the successor governments but was terminated on August 15, 1947, “They could accede to one or the other Dominion or could live as independent states by making suitable political arrangements with their more powerful neighbouring Dominions” (qtd. in Mangrio 255). Lord Mount Batten, the then Viceroy of India gave some suggestions regarding the criteria for deciding which of the two dominions a Princely State should join. He said, “Normally geographical situation and communal interests and so forth will be the factors to be considered (qtd. in Azami 38).” Subsequently, the states which were contiguous to India having a majority of non-Muslim population acceded to India with Hyderabad and Junagadh being the exception. While states, contiguous to Pakistan with a majority of Muslim population, acceded to Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, then the ruler of Kashmir, was given choice as to whether he wanted Kashmir to become a part of India or Pakistan, but with the split between his own heritage and that of his subjects, he couldn’t make up his mind. Maharaja of Kashmir wishing to be independent could not decide immediately. Meanwhile when the invaders from Pakistan, which is now Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunwala province, invaded Kashmir, Singh in order to drive them away sought India’s assistance and in order to receive military assistance from India, he was obliged to accede to the Indian Dominion by signing “The Instrument of Accession.” According to this instrument India’s
jurisdiction only extended to external affairs, defence and communication. Vivek Chadha remarks:

Kashmir’s ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, was at the time desperately hoping for his state’s independence . . . when reports of Pakistani tribal raiders invading Kashmir were received on 22 October 1947. It was then that Maharaja Hari Singh finally realized the full gravity of the situation...

In the meantime the Maharaja had also asked for assistance. . . . However, the legal problem of accession was still a stumbling blocks, as Mountbatten intervened to remind Pandit Nehru that legally assistance could not be given unless J&K formally acceded to India . . . the Maharaja to accede to India temporarily, till the wishes of the people of the state on the subject could be ascertained. . . . (58)

On October 27, the Indian army enters Kashmir. Pakistan subsequently disputes the accession as illegal and the first war over Kashmir broke out. In 1948 India took the case to the United Nations. The United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan passed a resolution providing for ceasefire, withdrawal of Pakistani troops and tribals followed by Indian troops and Plebiscite but it never took place.

In 1948, Maharaja Hari Singh resigned as Prime Minister of Kashmir and Sheikh Abdullah was installed in his place. In 1950, the Constitution of India came into effect. Article 1 proclaims the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir as a part of the territory of India, and Article 370 gives a special status to the state, corresponding to the terms of the “Instrument of Accession.” In 1951, the first post-Independence elections were held in the state. The UN passed a resolution to the effect that such elections do not substitute a plebiscite, because a plebiscite offers the option of choosing between India and Pakistan. Sheikh Abdullah won; mostly unopposed. He had not given up on the idea of Kashmir’s independence. He pursued this cherished goal surreptitiously, secretly negotiating with US leaders to gauge the level of international support for, and the feasibility of, his proposals. On 8 August 1953, Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and arrested when Pandit Nehru got information, “Pir Maqbool Gilani had established contacts with Pakistan and
that an emissary was on his way to Tangmarg [near Gulmarg] to meet Sheikh” (Mullik 45). Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed replaced him and was sworn in on 9 August. Part of Bakshi’s brief was to finalise the details of Kashmir’s accession to India.

Sheikh Abdullah’s forthright but imprudent utterances led to his deposition, arrest and imprisonment on 8 August 1953 at the hands of his unscrupulous lieutenant, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, who became the second National Conference supporters Prime Minister. Along with Sheikh Abdullah hundreds of his supporters including cabinet minister, Mohammed Afzal Beg, and some other prominent leaders and legislators were consigned to prison. (qtd. in Bazaz 68)

In 1954, the Constituent Assembly formally confirmed the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. On 26 January 1957 the state of Jammu and Kashmir approved its own Constitution, modeled along the lines of the Indian Constitution. In March 1957 elections were held and Bakshi was elected as prime minister. After over four years in prison, Abdullah was released in January in 1958. Soon afterwards he issued a statement to the press, in which he began to talk once more about the plebiscite and the right of self-determination for the people of the state. The Indian authorities regarded his provocative statements as the result of contacts with Pakistan, by whom they alleged he was being financed. After only four months of freedom, Sheikh Abdullah was arrested in April and detained for six more years. Under Bakshi’s rule general elections to the State legislature were held twice in the year, 1957 and 1962, “on both occasions the elections were rigged and by hook or by crook Bakshi got his hand-picked men declared elected to the legislature” (Bazaz 71).

On 3 October 1963, Bakshi resigned under the terms of the plan put forward by K. Kamraj. Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq took over him on 29 February 1964 after a brief period of rule by Khwaja Shamsuddin. Shortly before his resignation, Bakshi had announced that the head of the state would, in future, be called Chief Minister, which would conform to the other states of the Indian Union and that the Sadar-i-Riyasat would be known as Governor.
Under the compelling circumstances Union Government consulted safety of the States in bidding Bakshi to behave properly. Shamsuddin Ministry was asked to step down and hand gres the reins of the Government to Sadiq and his band of differentives. This opened a new chapter in Kashmir history since from the one through which the people had passed over October 1947. (Bazaz 75)

On 8 April 1964, Abdullah was honourably acquitted of all charges and released. In 1965, Indo-Pakistan war broke out after Pakistan sent infiltrations across ceasefire line in August. The war ended in a ceasefire on 23 September. In 1966, India and Pakistan signed the “Tashkent Declaration.” Although a peace agreement, it does not contain a no-war pact or any measure to reduce guerilla warfare in Kashmir.

The President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India agreed that both sides will exert all their efforts to create good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan in accordance with the United Nations Charter. They reaffirm their obligations under the Charter not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means. . . . The Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan have agreed that all armed personnel of the two countries shall be withdrawn not later than February 25 to the positions they held prior to August 5, 1965, and both sides will observe the cease-fire terms and the cease-fire line. . . . (Bazaz 121-122)

In 1971, Indo-Pakistan War took place resulting in the secession of East Pakistan, and the creation of new state of Bangladesh. A year after the war, in 1972 India and Pakistan recognized the ceasefire line as the Line of Control (LoC). In July both countries signed the “Simla Agreement,” which has a clause that the final settlement of Kashmir will be decided bilaterally in the future and that both the sides shall respect the LoC. The defeat of Pakistan during 1971 war with India brought Centre and Sheikh Abdullah closer to reconciliation. This finally resulted in a mutually beneficial agreement, which was signed on 24 February 1975, between G. Parthasarthy and Mirza Afzal Beg called the
“Kashmir Accord.” The Accord gave continuity to 370. However, it gave the Centre certain powers necessary to curb secessionist activity in the state.

Although Kashmir’s special status, enshrined in article 370 of the Indian Constitution was retained, the state was termed ‘a constituent unit of the Union of India.’ The Indian government was able ‘to make laws relating to the prevention of activities directed towards disclaiming, questioning or disrupting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India or bringing about cession of a part of the territory of India from the Union or causing insult to the Indian national flag, the Indian national anthem and the Constitution.’ (Schofield 217)

After the death of Sheikh Abdullah in 1982, power was handed over to Dr. Farooq Abdullah. In 1984, Farooq Abdullah was dismissed as chief minister and replaced by G.M. Shah. Shah, the man responsible for Farooq Abdullah’s dismissal in consonance with Jagmohan, did not last long, his government was also dismissed, and this was followed by the imposition of Governor’s rule in the state. In 1986, Farooq Abdullah was brought back as interim Chief Minister as a prelude to elections being held in the state, “Elections were subsequently held on 23 March 1987, and there were suspicions of rigging by Farooq Abdullah’s National Conference” (Chadha 96). These elections in 1987 exhausted all hopes that the people had held, of their will being respected by either the Centre and/ or the state, resulting in disillusionment and anger. It also provided an ideal atmosphere for Pakistan to step in and fan the flames of discontent, harnessing the anger of the common people perpetuated violence. An overt form of armed insurgency started in Kashmir against India and gathered momentum in 1989. India retaliated against this insurgency by employing military and paramilitary forces who employed brutish treatment to maintain order of the state. Open guerilla warfare, daily police firings, and total collapse of the local administration, a cycle of militancy and repression set in from which the state has still not recovered.

The years since 1989, when the uprising against Indian rule first began, have been bloody for Kashmiris. The militancy, initially armed and
supported by Pakistan, was quick to draw the full weight of the Indian sledgehammer. For Kashmiris, the insurgency, and the counter-insurgency that was unleashed to flatten it, ended up shredding the everyday fabric of life. The sheer force of India’s massive military commitment may appear to have overwhelmed the armed militancy, but twenty years of this presence has resulted in a deeply militarized society. (Kak x)

With over twenty years of bloody insurgency Kashmir has become a state under siege, caught between the twin evils of militants and Indian security forces. In this bloody duel running for over twenty years now almost every house hold has lost a person, many have disappeared and then labeled as “missing” and yet many more have fallen victims to custodial atrocities. There appears to be no end to their sufferings. Almost every house has a near one consumed in the conflict to mourn. Barbed wire litters the environs needlessly and graveyards in the last twenty years have swollen to unbelievable proportions. This perpetual state of armed conflict where civilians are caught in the violent battles joined between terrorists and the security forces, an eerie and strange melancholic state of affairs has come to be established among the local communities. Although Kashmir has been in the news ever since the insurgency broke out in 1989, it has largely been ignored by the world outside. In the ensuing armed confrontation between the Indian security forces and the militants the entire Kashmir has become a territory where death and destruction are a manifest reality of daily life.
At the vortex of the whole process is the individual and in a larger context the group or community that is formed of more than one individual. The individual who represents the ‘victim’ receives ‘victimhood’ through a cycle of ‘process’ that is facilitated by ‘content’ that includes the prevailing conditions in the society and the environment that enables it. In the context of Kashmiri society the long years of insurgency leads to incarceration, human rights abuses, fear, hurt caused to self-esteem,
violence and related evils, which are all part of the content of that process. Once the content alters the environment around the individual, the ‘social self’ changes for the worse. Trauma sets in making their journeys wounded, which thus leads to the victimhood.

Kashmir is a proud owner of rich tradition of various literatures like Kashmiri, Urdu, and Persian. English being a universal language has been lately adopted by many indigenous writers to give an effective voice to Kashmiris. The process of resurgence and revival in the English literature of Kashmir offers a glimpse of hope in the darkness surrounding Kashmir. The English era of Kashmiri literature commenced with Agha Shahid Ali, who has put Kashmiri talent on the international forum through his poems and makes the world of the plight of people of Kashmir. He being a keen observer of the turmoil and pains inflicted upon Kashmir, described wonderfully and succinctly the agonies suffered and endured. He, the first ever ambassador from Kashmir to the world of literature, broke the long Kashmir silence with his sumptuous work *The Country Without Post Office* and effectively narrates the deplorable tale of his burning land to the world. Ali wrote poetry in both free verse and traditional forms, experimenting with verse forms such as the sestina and canzone. He is credited with introducing and popularizing the Ghazal form in American poetry. Ali’s poetry is autobiographical with allusions to exile and Ali’s identity as a Kashmiri. His work melds the landscapes of Kashmir and America, along with the conflicted emotions of exile, immigration and in his later works, loss, illness and mortality. Ali’s voice is lyrical, reflective and at the same time elegant, enhanced by the repetition of words, half rhymes and culturally specific imagery.

The phase of 90s was the most horrendous period which triggered many people to delineate the brutality and savagery of events of that period in literature and the literature produced during that stage mirrors the pathos and sufferings of the common people of Kashmir. The yoke of recording the suffering, pain, agony, torment, pathos and miserable plight of innocent people of Kashmir has been taken by the writers of this age like Basharat Peer, Mirza Waheed, Tej Nath Dhar, Siddhartha Gigoo and Shahnaz Bashir. They have attempted to bring before the world of the plight of the people of Kashmir through their work’s like Peer’s *Curfewed Night*, Waheed’s *The Collaborator*, Dhar’s
Under the Shadow of Militancy, Gigoo’s The Garden of Solitude, and Bashir’s The Half Mother. Their works have helped to unravel the sufferings, tragedies, fear, violence which the natives of the valley have experienced in the past few decades. They embarked upon writing with a purpose of giving voice to the suppressed people of Kashmir and have awakened the eyes and the heart of the literary world to Kashmiri literature in English which is filled with human side of stories. Their works make a complete distinction from that of their predecessors like Walter Lawrence’s The Valley of Kashmir, Tyndale Biscoe’s Light and Shade, Justine Hardy’s In the Valley of Mist, and M.J Akbar’s Beyond the Vale which are either the outsider’s account of Kashmir or the historical accounts. The chosen works portray that the protagonist is deeply affected by the turmoil that occurred in Kashmir during 1990s, they have to move within it, think about it, and reflect on it. Their thinking and reflection provide the basis of their understanding of what has happened and is happening there. Their works which, of course are the reflections of their own wounding journeys provides a platform for analyzing the agonized Kashmir.

Basharat Peer, a Kashmiri was born in Seer, Anantnag in 1977. He belongs to a Muslim Peer (Priestly) family with an academic background. His father Ghulam Ahmed Peer is a retired bureaucrat, mother a retired school teacher and grandfather also a retired headmaster of a school in Kashmir. His family helped shaping up his educated and literary environment. His encounter with the works of William Shakespeare, R. L Stevenson, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling and Daniel Defoe inclined him towards literature. Growing up in the idyllic atmosphere of Himalayas provided him with blissful childhood. But the winter of 1990 turned his placid world upside down, when he was just thirteen. He was a teenager when the turmoil struck Kashmir valley in 1989 and his idyllic world was shattered. In order to save him from trouble and death ridden valley, he was sent away from Kashmir as soon as he finished matriculation. He continued his education in Aligarh. After finishing his college education he joined journalism in Delhi and started his career as a reporter at Rediff and Tehelka, news organizations. Before moving to the Columbia school of journalism, U.S.A on a fellowship he worked as a reporter for many reputed publications including The Guardian, Financial Times, New Statesman, The Nation, N+1, Columbia Journalism, and Foreign Affairs, where he was
an assistant editor. *Curfewed Night* is his maiden novel published in 2011. It would not be wrong to say that *The Curfewed Night* is one of the novels which gained Kashmir a global attention. People from different parts of the world read it, appreciated it, and became aware of the suffering and agony of the people of Kashmir. It even won him Vodafone Crossword Book Award in 2008.

London based Kashmiri novelist, Mirza Waheed was born and brought up in Srinagar, Kashmir. As a teenager, he closely witnessed the peak years of the separatist militant uprising and the brutal military insurgency in Kashmir. He did masters in English literature from the University of Delhi. After completing masters, he worked as a journalist and editor in the city for four years. He went to London in 2001 to join BBC’s Urdu services, where he now works as an editor. He also attended the Arvon foundation in 2007. He has written for *Kashmir Observer, The Guardian, Granta, Guerniea, Aljazeera in English* and *The New York Times*, and BBC’s Urdu and English websites and appeared on BBC radio and television as a commentator. *The Collaborator* is his debut novel. It won him all sorts of awards and recognition. It was shortlisted for Guardian first award and Shakti Bhatt Prize and on the longlist for Desmond Elliott prize. It was also selected by Waterstones as a part of its big literary debut promotion. His latest novel, *The Book of Golden Leaves*, was published in 2014 and was critically acclaimed too.

Tej Nath Dhar, born in 1944 in Kashmir, is a well-known writer and critic. He did M.A in Economics from Agra University in 1962 and in English from Jammu and Kashmir University in 1965. He obtained Ph D degree from Banaras Hindu University in 1975. He received many scholarships like UGC Junior Fellowship from Banaras Hindu University, a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship from California and Indian Institute Advanced Study Fellowship from Shimla. As a professor of English he served at various universities like University of Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh University and Asmara University of North East Africa. His numerous critical essays and book reviews have been featured in leading Indian newspapers and journals. His areas of interest are American Literature, Indian Writing in English, African Novel, Canadian Novel, and

Delhi-based Kashmiri born writer, Siddhartha Gigoo was born on March 20, 1974, in Nawakadal, Srinagar. He belongs to an educated Pandit family. His father, Arvind Gigoo is also a literary figure and was a lecturer in a college in Srinagar. His family provided him an educated and literary environment. He did his schooling from various schools in Srinagar; one among them was The National School in Karan Nagar, in the valley along with his other Pandit and Muslim friends. He had a literary bent of mind since his childhood. He was a voracious reader and loved to read poems, short stories and essays. Suddenly he found himself caught in the whirlpool of political tumult and insurgency. Gigoo was a teenager when he along with a swarm of Kashmiri Pandits had to flee his ancestral homeland, Kashmir due to political tumult which befell Kashmir during the period of 90s. Gigoo found a new dwelling place in Udhampur, a small town on the outskirts of Jammu. He found it very difficult to get accustomed to the new life there. He got his formal education from the camp school as a private student. During his free time in the evenings, he learnt Hindustani Classical Music. Music became his passion and so did writing poetry and short stories. He also wrote a column titled ‘Looking Glass’ for an English daily published from Jammu. He pursued masters in English literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. In the year 1997, he joined Tata Consultancy Services as a trainee editor in New Delhi. For many years he lived and worked in Finland, USA, and England. Presently he lives in Delhi with his wife and daughter, Amia. He has written two books of fiction, *The Garden of Solitude* (2011) and *A Fistful of Earth and Other Stories* (2015). His short story “The Umbrella Man” won him the commonwealth short story prize 2015 for Asia. He has also written poems which got published in his two books, *Fall and Other Poems* and *Reflections.*

Shahnaz Bashir was born on 30th July 1980 in Kashmir. He did masters in Mass Communication and journalism from the University of Kashmir and was honoured with university gold medal. He was also awarded Shameem Ahmed Shameem Memorial *Kashmir Times* Award in 2007 for excelling in Media Studies. Presently he teaches Creative Journalism, and Narrative and Literary Reportage at the Central University of
Kashmir, where he is coordinator of the post-graduate Media Studies’ programme. He has worked as an intern in the Srinagar Bureau of Sahara Samay—a 24-hour national news channel from November-December 2005. He has also worked as a sub editor in the leading English daily Greater Kashmir and presently he works as an editor for the magazine, The Kashmir Walla. He is a member of many statutory bodies like member of the Academic Council in the Central University of Kashmir, Srinagar, member of the School Board of Department of Convergent Journalism at Central University of Kashmir, member of the Board of Studies of Department of Convergent Journalism at Central University of Kashmir, etc. His very famous memoir, ‘Crackdown in Natipora’ was anthologized in Of Occupation and Resistance- Writings from Kashmir (2013). The Half Mother is his maiden novel. It, a critically acclaimed novel, has won him the Muse India-Young Writer Award 2015. In 2016 he published a collection of interlinked stories, Scattered Souls.

The foregoing review of literature and criticism on the works of five Kashmiri writers writing in English, Basharat Peer, Mirza Waheed, Tej Nath Dhar, Siddhartha Gigoo and Shahnaz Bashir shows that only some specific aspect of their writings have been the subjects of critical discourse, some of them being only shorter academic studies in journals, in spite of the global fame that has come to them spontaneously, they have not yet been explored.

Manish Gangahar in his book Kashmir’s Narrative of Conflict: Identity Lost in Space and Time (2013) has talked about Curfewed Night as a true representation of Kashmiri people, filling the gap between representation and reality. The narrative portrays the ground reality in Kashmir by drawing a harrowing portrait of 90s of Kashmir.

Kamila Shamshie in a book review, “Curfewed Night: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir by Basharat Peer” in The Guardian (5 June 2010) remarks that Curfewed Night is an extra ordinary book of Peer’s experiences of returning to Kashmir and seeking out the stories of others affected by the conflict. It brings out the
Kashmir conflict out of realm of Political rhetoric between India and Pakistan into the lives of Kashmiris.

Qaisar Bashir in an article, “Conflict Literature from Kashmir: A Study of Curfewed Night and The Half Mother” in The Criterion (2016) writes that Basharat Peer, a Kashmiri journalist, penned a faithful account of the war of 1990s in Curfewed Night. As an eye witness to happenings that led to the uprising, the author captures the factual incidents accurately and chronicles the every possible detail that occurred. Peer, renders reliably every detail that he saw during the uprising. Day in and day out, encounters between militants and Indian army shuddered and paralyzed the life in Kashmir. Hearing crackdown calls became a routine.

Javeria Khurshid in an article, “Literary Responses to the Catastrophic 90s in the Un-Silent Valley: The Comparative Study of Agha Shahid Ali, Basharat Peer, and Mirza Waheed” in an International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, Galaxy (2013) remarks that Curfewed Night is a brave and remarkable piece of literary reporting that reveals the personal stories behind one of the most brutal conflicts in modern times. Since 1989, when the separatist movement exploded, more than seventy thousand people have been killed in the battle between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Born and raised in the war-torn region, Basharat Peer brings this little-known part of the world to life in lingering, vivid detail. Peer tells stories from his youth and gives gut-wrenching accounts of the many Kashmiris he met years later as a reporter.

Romina Rashid in an article, “Reconstructing the History of Nineties of Kashmir in Basharat Peer’s Curfewed Night” in International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies (2015) writes that Curfewed Night is an outcome of Peer’s account of early life spent in Kashmir and his journalistic experiences. Peer’s Curfewed Night is his remembrance about the valley that used to be a real heaven on the earth, serene, simple and stunning a few decades ago, where all of a sudden everything changed resulting in gloomy history.

Manish Gangahar in his book Kashmiri’s Narrative of Conflict: Identity Lost in Space and Time (2013) has remarked that Mirza Waheed through his novel, The
Collaborator has offered another dimension to the story of Kashmir. The Collaborator is fictional but very close to what people in Kashmir have seen and gone through in the last twenty years.

Basharat Shameem in an article, “Approximating History and Experience through fiction: A Study of Mirza Waheed’s The Collaborator” in Research Journal of English Language and Literature (2014) writes that The Collaborator has re-drawn the map of reality, and re-defined political fiction by approximating history and experience. The fictionalized stories in the novel flow from the creative pen of Mirza Waheed’s lived experience in the Kashmir conflict.

Tasleem Ahmad War in an article, “The True Literary Voices of Kashmir: A Study of Curfewed Night and The Collaborator” in The Criterion (2011) writes that Waheed’s biggest achievement is that he continues the journey Peer (and in many ways, Agha Shahid Ali) began. Between them they have successfully paved the way for resident Kashmiris, too many of whom feel numbed by the conflict, to yet again hope in the power of words, in stories and song, to find the first outlines of redress. Importantly too, Waheed reminds that Kashmir has a voice of its own. It is a voice that is framed independently of Pakistan and India.


A. N. Dhar in Kashmir Sentinel pays rich tribute to Tej Nath Dhar’s Under the Shadow of Militancy and writes that Prof. Dhar’s book is a welcome addition to the literature of exile that has steadily grown up in bulk in recent years and is now engaging the attention of many critics and literatures, especially those from among the Kashmiri Pandits. It lays bare the psyche of the sensitive and thoughtful narrator, who as well performs the role of protagonist. It is a sad story of the displaced Kashmiris presented in the fictional garb.

Basharat Shameem in an article, “Displacement, Memory, and a Longing for the Lost Paradise: A Study of Siddhartha Gigoo’s *The Garden of Solitude*” in *Humanicus* (2015) writes that *The Garden of Solitude* brings to the fore many perspectives that represent the Kashmiri Pandits’ realities and thinking consequent to the rise of militancy in the valley. The novel delicately underlines a long-neglected human story which comprises of myriad tales of betrayal, displacement and suffering. Nowhere does the narrative lay claim to depict reality in its entirety; rather, its strength lies in giving voice to multiple dimensions of the conflict. In a major way, this novel offers a deflective narrative trajectory that veers away from the official dominant narratives, giving voice to common Kashmiris who have lived through enormous suffering, who have been denied their due place by history, and whose very identity is in danger of extinction.

Ghulam Mohammad Khan and Basharat Shameem in an article, “The Plight of Kashmiri Pandits Beyond Conflicting Political Narratives in Siddhartha Gigoo’s *The Garden of Solitude*” in *Subalterspeak: An International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (2015) writes that a Gigoo would have developed yet another obscure narrative, had he taken the contending political narratives as the central motif of his book. These narratives have unfortunately led to the birth of an equally ambiguous political consciousness among Kashmiri Muslims and displaced Kashmiri Pandits. Gigoo excludes this consciousness and mainly focuses on the hard times of a scattered community.

Usha Jain and Faroze Ahmad Chopan in an article, “Psychic Trauma of a Bereaved Mother: A Study of Shahnaz Bashir’s *The Half Mother*” in *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research* (2015) writes that Bashir through the character of Haleema depicts a heart breaking story of one of the thousands grieving mothers, who had lost their children in the ongoing conflict, whose children disappeared and are not located till date. These mothers are in a dilemma that, are their children still
alive or dead, are they still mothers or not, so those mothers are termed as Half Mothers by Shahnaz Bashir.

Qaisar Bashir in an article, “Conflict Literature from Kashmir: A Study of Curfewed Night and The Half Mother” in The Criterion (2016) remarks that Shahnaz Bashir, so evocatively and profoundly, tells the tale of one woman’s battle for life, dignity and justice that tears roll down the eyes and one does not help but reads the story irrespective of other considerations and engagements till the last page.

Gazi Tareq Muzamil and Nuzhat Hassan in an article, “An Expedition from Utopia to Pandemonium: A Study of Curfewed Night and The Half Mother” in International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Research (2015) writes that both the novels are relevant to Kashmir’s current state of affairs. Both the novelists have highlighted the condition of people of Kashmir, the monstrous military oppression, mass killing, torture, sexual harassment, struggle, political and bureaucratic corruption etc.

Every writer is obsessed with a theme or an idea and that idea is expressed through his writings. These writers are no exceptions. They are didactic novelists with a social purpose. The theme of sufferings of common masses of Kashmir is the major recurring theme in their novels. They are keen about exploring the ugly realities of the conflict of 90s in Kashmir. A faithful picture of various aspects of the conflict of 90s is presented. However, their novels are not only the photographic records of social and political life of the people, but at the same time an imaginative picture of life. The novels of these writers deal with the theme of suffering by making a close study of the social concerns of the society. These writers use art to make the world aware of Kashmir’s profound human stories. In their novels, we find that these writers deal with socio-political history and reality of Kashmir to give voice to the pangs and pain of the people of Kashmir during the period of 90s. The theory of all these contemporary writers is also one of the important factors which is responsible for the portrayal of theme of suffering of the common people depicting their wounding journeys. They disregard the dictum of purposeless art and also ridicule the dictum of ‘art for ark sake’ and believe that literature has social value and relevance.
The representation of literary works fundamentally involves the trouble of applying a critical method. The liberal literary criticism exhibit an impressive layout of critical approaches—viz, the formalist, the mythological, the psychological, and the post-structuralist deconstruction with a fairness that excogitate the patient pluralism of large-minded democracy various methodologies suffer from a common enfeebling characteristics in trying to comprehend literature in terms of its own laws or in trying to cut down it into universal structure. Literature is a social creation, and its understanding must therefore depend upon an adequate sociology. The study of literature has moved from mere evaluation of novels, poems, and plays. It is the study of ideas and difficulties that arise in any literary text. Graham Howe, a conservative critic and so a spokesperson of the liberal school says, “Criticism should be able to give some intelligible account of the relation of literature to the social order. To think on this subject at all requires some applications of Marxism” (57).

These contemporary writers are social realist and believe that art has a functional role in the society. They succeeded in their attempts to bring about a harmonious fusion of their social concerns of artistic values. In fact, their novels appear to be a study of sociology or sociological novel—broadly speaking as sociology is study of the nature and development of human society, of human behavior in groups. A work of art cannot be created in vacuum; it is the work of the author fixed in the time and space, answering to the community of which he is an important and articulate member. The sociological approach treats the work of art as the product of man living in a concrete society. The sociological method rests upon the conviction that artist relation to the society is vitally important and a necessary one.

It has been proved more than once that the relations between literature and society is vitally important, and that the investigation of these relationships may organize and deepen one’s aesthetic response to a piece of literature. A literary work involves a creative interaction between the writer and the social milieu. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the precise nature of interaction, as Harry Levin suggests that the relation between literature and society is reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social
causes; it is also the cause of social effects. Literature is a social product and its interpretation must depend upon an adequate sociology.

Hence Marxism is the only way for the proper understanding and interpretation of literary work. It viewed life as a representation of concrete reality, which is structured, corresponds to the various phase of the modes of production. It is these structured entities, which increases the consciousness in all its several forms. Marxism holds that matter is primary and idea or consciousness is secondary. As Marx stated in his *Selected Works* (1977) that both art and society are correlated. “It is not consciousness of men that determines their being; but on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness” (300). The assertion that art is a social order does not solve but only introduces the problem of the relation between the literature and the society. The real problem is to show how literature is to be rooted in the society, without being reduced to specific social conditions. Thus, the main problem of the sociological criticism is to identify the manner in which the social conditions determined form and content of a work of art.

Marx stresses about the dialectical relationship between society and literature and emphasized that various forms of social consciousness— including artistic creation actively influence the social reality from which they emerged. A true Marxist analysis of history takes a comprehensive view of various factors that characterize a particular society. Also, the relationship between society and the literature manifests itself through the persistence of specific structure in the work of an author. It is now widely recognized in sociological criticism that the relation between society and literature is formed by various themes, ideas, emotions, attitudes and values, which the author has imbibed from his milieu.

It was Terry Eagleton and Lucien Goldman who further refined Marxist theory of literature by pointing out the relationship between literature and society which manifests itself in the reoccurrence of specific structures of values, emotions and ideas that an author has imbibed from the milieu. Viewing in this light, therefore, it is plausible to accept that literary works are reflections of social structures of society where a writer
lives and produces his work. Lucien Goldman has designated these structures as the “categorical structure” to designate those shared categories which inform apparently heterogeneous works, and shape the consciousness of the particular group or class which produces them. He explains, “by categorical structure, then, I seek to identify the inner ideological structure of work and to expose its relation both to what we call literary form and to an actual history” (4). This concept of categorical structure is used by Terry Eagleton in his book *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontes* and defines it as a recurrent ideological structure of roles, values and relations which form a crucial nexus between history and literature.

Categorical structure in a nutshell can be called as a byproduct of an author’s biographical experience interacting with social history which is transformed into works of literature. The concept as evolved by Goldman is the means of an essential mediation between literary text, social consciousness and historical forces. What Goldman designates as the ‘categorical structure’ and Terry Eagleton calls it as ‘inner ideological structure.’ Both of them actually, suggest a structure of sentiments, “The literary artist, no less than a social scientist imbibes beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and values from his social ambience, of which he may largely be conscious. These assumptions about the nature of the reality form the infrastructure of the world now which embodies in his works” (Rampal 4).

The biographies of these writers interact with the period of great historical significance in Kashmir’s society. It was a period of armed conflict in Kashmir that led to the sufferings of common masses of Kashmir. People were killed, arrested, tortured, abducted, displaced etc. Every individual whether a Muslim or a Hindu suffered equally. A serious study of the works of these writers reveals that these writers have witnessed the transition of Kashmir from calm to calamity and their experience in their hometown sensitized them to the sordid, subtle realities of life in Kashmir. The literary works of these writers are reflections of social structures of society where they live and produce their work.
Each historical period generates the social consciousness which is determined by that specific social condition of that era. Such social consciousness, in the finally analysis, comes as a result of the clash of values, beliefs and interests of the antagonist social classes whose conflicts characterizes the historical nature of that age. Goldman approach to the sociology of literature is highly idiosyncratic, fusing structural analysis, with historical and dialectical materialism in his book *The Hidden God*. His argument is that all great literary and philosophical works have a total coherence and that the structures which make up the text have a meaning only in so far as they give a complete coherent picture of the overall meaning of the work. Literature is a totality that gives a world vision:

What I have called a ‘world vision’ is a convenient terms for the whole complex of ideas, aspirations and feelings which links together the members of a social group . . . there are exceptional individuals who either actually achieve or who come very near to achieving a completely integrated and coherent view of what they and the social class to which they belong are trying to do. The men who express this vision on an imaginative or conceptual plane are writers and philosophers, and the more closely their work expresses this vision in its complete and integrated forms, the more important does it become. (17)

Georg Lukacs, a noted Marxist propounds that a literary work must capture the true nature of the individual in relation to the development of the socio-historical reality. Lukacs’ concept of realism is precisely the category of totality expressed in *History and Class Consciousness*. He advocates the “Theory of Reflection” whereby art reflects a totality of historical process rather merely documenting mechanically surface details of the world which are accidentally related. Art brings real historical reality to the forefront. There is no incompatibility between history and literature; history presents realism, accuracy, rigour, whereas the novel provides representation of history through its characters as it is always microcosm of macrocosm. The goal for all great art is to provide a picture of reality in which the contradiction between appearance and reality, the particular and the general, the immediate and the conceptual etc., is so resolved that the
two converge into a spontaneous integrity in the direct impression of the work of art and provides a sense of an inseparable integrity. The work of art must therefore reflect correctly and in proper proportion all important factors objectively determining the area of life it represents. It must so reflect these that this area of life becomes comprehensible from within and from without, re-experiencable, that it appears as a totality of life.

The literature of realism, aiming at truthful reflection of reality must demonstrate both the concrete and abstract potentialities of human beings, in extreme situations of kind. . . .

Abstract potentiality belong wholly to the realm of subjectivity, where as concrete potentiality is concerned with dialectic between the individual’s subjectivity and objective reality. The literary presentation of the later thus implies a description of actual person in habiting a palpable, identifiable world. . . . For the identification of abstract and concrete human potentiality rests on the assumption that the objective world is inherently inescapable. (Brooker 40-41)

Fredric Jameson, a famous Marxist critic considers literature to be central to Marxism as it is the supreme form of narrative. He considers it to be a socially symbolic act, especially if the narrative in question gives a social and historical in totality. He in his book *The Political Unconscious* stresses the priority of the political interpretation of literary texts. Certain texts have social and historical, sometimes even political resonance. He asserts that the historical past and its intrinsic relation to the present can be conceptualized only in the form of texts. He calls for theorists to always historicize texts, to always place literary texts in their various historical contexts when engaging in any act of interpretation. He argues that texts and narratives of all types and forms structure our experiences of the past. He contends that Marxist perspectives on literature can serve to restore and recapture ideals and concepts during times of political and cultural repression:

. . . this is because such master narratives have inscribed themselves in the text as well as in our thinking about them; such allegorical narratives in
the text as well as signified are a persistent dimension of literary and cultural texts precisely because they reflect a fundamental dimension of our collective thinking and our collective fantasies about history and reality. (19)

Louis Althusser’s most influential contribution to the Marxist Theory of Ideology was his essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” comprising extracts from a longer work on the reproduction of production relations. In Marxist theory the state is thought of first and foremost as the ‘State apparatus’, that is, as the sum of the institutions by which the ruling class maintains its economic dominance- the government, the civil service, the courts, the police, the prisons, and the army, and so on. He claims that the State apparatus in fact consists of two overlapping but distinct sets of institutions. On the one hand, he argues, it consists of all that Marxist theory has so far recognized as part of the State apparatus- the repressive institutions through which the ruling class enforces its rule as such. He calls this the ‘Repressive State Apparatus’. (RSA) It consists of the government, the administration, the army, the courts, the police, the prisons, etc. On the other hand, he argues that the State also consists of ‘Ideological State Apparatuses’. (ISA) These are apparently distinct and specialized institutions such as The religious ISA (the system of the different churches), The educational ISA (the system of the different public and private schools), The family ISA, The legal ISA, The Political ISA, The Communication ISA (press, radio and television etc.), The Cultural ISA (the literature, the arts, sports etc.). The RSA performs its social function, namely, maintaining the economic dominance of the ruling class or class alliance, through force or immediate threat of force. It functions primarily by violence. On the other hand, the ISAs perform their social function through ideological discourse. Both the elements i.e. RSA and ISA work together to maintain the order of the state.

The State Apparatus (SA) contains: the Government, the Administration, the Administration, the Police, the Prisons, etc. which constitute what I shall in future call the Repressive State Apparatus. Repressive suggests that the State Apparatus in question ‘function by violence’— at least
ultimately . . . the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology. . . . (Ferretter 83-84)

With the description of various philosophical and theoretical positions taken by the noted creative writers and thinkers, as mentioned above, it will be in the fitness of the situation to come to the study of the main theme of the thesis, i.e., wounding journeys with reference to five Kashmiris novelists, Basharat Peer, Mirza Waheed, Tej Nath Dhar, Siddhartha Gigoo and Shahnaz Bashir. These writers are of humble origins and have spent their early lives experiencing socio-political conditions during insurgency through which the people of Kashmir have gone through. The present study however is confined to a sociological analysis of these writers’ creative response to the tragedy that befell Kashmir during 90s and its people creating a distinctive consciousness. These writers aimed to acquaint the readers with their tragic stories, which may be tales of the past but retain freshness simply because readers have not encountered before such authentic voices.

Basharat Peer’s *Curfewed Night* published in 2010, is set against the backdrop of 90s of Kashmir when chaos and violence ruled the whole valley. The focus is on the lives of the people of the valley who by choice or by circumstances stayed to witness and endures the horror of their state. Peer manages to present to its reader different forms of sufferings borne by the people of Kashmir— psychological, physical, and spiritual. Peer’s account is almost entirely populated by the victims of tragedy. Their tragedy is to live their life under the constant threat of militancy and military.

The book opens up with the narrator’s peaceful childhood surrounded by a loving family and tight knit community in the arms of Himalayas. The narrator commences his odyssey in winter when the atmosphere of brotherhood, peace, calmness prevailed in the valley, which was later engulfed by the age of insurgency turning Kashmir into dark abyss. The whole population came under the grip of fear and paranoia. He narrates different incidents of massacres by Indian army during protests and funerals. The innocent natives of Kashmir suffered a lot at the hands of the army and the militants. Kashmir became a place of protests, cave of killings and mud of massacres. He also gives
us a fair record of how militants killed hundreds of pro-Indians Muslims ranging from the activists to suspected informers of Indian intelligence and hundreds of Pandits. During this phase young men fascinated by the freedom movement crossed the border to get armed training in Pakistan. Driven by this movement he too dreamt of joining some militant group but to his dismay his parents revolted against his firm desire. The novel is full of barbaric, cruel and non-humanistic actions of state machinery and militants which made the life of people living there traumatic. Peer reveals to the world the depths of unhealed wounds, multitudes of miseries and frightening face of death and loss mixed with small ray of hope and resilience in the lives of people of Kashmir. The novel finds a beautiful ending with the introduction of a new bridge across the Line of Control symbolizing an attempt to bridge the gap between two nations.

Mirza Waheed’s *The Collaborator*, published in 2011 is a critically acclaimed novel that is fictionalized account of Kashmir conflict. It is set against the backdrop of anti-India armed insurgency in the early 90s in Kashmir. As he himself has experienced and witnessed the dark period of 90s’ he is successful in portraying the dark shades of the conflict in his novel. The horrific cycle of violence, brutal repression, massacres, torture gripped the lives of the people of Kashmir. Through his novel, he brings to the forefront the reality of the conflict by attempting to foreground the humane aspect of the conflict. In *The Collaborator*, the chief emphasis of the writer is on the people of Kashmir who had been persecuted in all kinds of contexts: they suffered both at the hands of vast military machine and militants. With his medium of art, he tries to bring to fore the plight of the lives living amidst war-torn zone.

The novel traces the journey an eponymous narrator, a nineteen year old Gujjar (nomadic) boy. The protagonist’s childhood consists of relatively peaceful time preceding militancy. He spends an enjoyable childhood with his four close friends. But soon their beautiful and peaceful world is turned upside down with the coming of florid moulvi in their village. The moulvi radicalizes the villagers. His sermon apart from the religious teachings consists of political proselytizing on the subject of Indian atrocities done on the people in Kashmir, Islamic injunctions against such western delights as videos, music and make up. He portrays extremely ruthless and cruel picture of Indian
army. Apart from religious teachings, he uses religion as a bait to indoctrinate people. He conditions the minds of people and makes them believe his stories. And with this the distant cries of Azadi (freedom movement) starts echoing in the narrator’s village too. These things have great impact on the psyche of young boys and they start crossing the border into Pakistan for armed training imparted by various militant organizations. Narrator’s friends are no exception. The devastation that befell the village after their departure is like a nightmare. Arrest, encounters and crackdowns become routine for Nowgam’s resident. The people are arrested, tortured and even killed for their suspected links with militants. Fearing the reprisal and persecution of the soldiers, almost all the families in the village flee for their survival to the places outside the valley except the headman’s family. Compelled by the circumstances to stay on in the deserted village, the narrator has no choice but to enter into collaboration with the army. Waheed through his novel not only portrays the brutalities of the Indian army or the Indian state, he also takes a critical and sarcastic view of Pakistan and militants. The role of Pakistan in fomenting the armed struggle against India cannot be denied; it aims to engage India by means of a proxy war.

T.N Dhar’s *Under the Shadow of Militancy*, published in 2002 foregrounds the grim realities of the long conflict of 90s and its adverse effect on Kashmiri Pandits against the backdrop of political history of Kashmir. Through this novel he tries to bring out the wrath and the horror that the people of his community had to face in Kashmir at the time of insurgency. The novel has been composed of different narratives holding up single plot. There is one principal narrator who unites the various episodes concerning the life of Kashmiri Pandits during militancy. Due to Dhar’s historic sense he has skillfully portrayed the real incidents with the fictional characters in a way that has never been portrayed before so realistically. The principal narrator of the novel, *Under the Shadow of Militancy* is an unnamed Kashmiri Pandit who decides to reside alone in his home in Kashmir while sending away his wife and children to a safer place outside Kashmir for safety reasons. During his stay in Kashmir he becomes an eye witness to the brutal happenings of 90s. In order to keep record of the unfortunate events of that period he put those cruel and barbaric incidents in black and white. Through him we come to know about myriad horrifying tales of the innocent Kashmiri Pandits. They were subjected to
various tortures and violence perpetrated by the militants. The perpetrators used various methods to threaten them to leave Kashmir like letters, posters, notices, messages, pamphlets, slogans, telephonic calls, and ultimatums published in newspapers and advertisements in the press. These threats contained message for Kashmiri Pandits to leave Kashmir or they have to perish forever. The other weapon used by the militants to drive away the Pandits was killings and abductions. The novel abounds with numerous horrifying instances of brutal and barbarous murders and assassinations of the Kashmiri Pandits at the cruel and merciless hands of militants in the valley. In addition to pervasive killings, the conflict of 90s is also filled with the sufferings and miseries of women. It contains the story of rape, abduction and widowhood of thousands of women. Dhar’s main purpose of writing his novel is to make the world aware to the pain and sufferings of the members of his community. Under the Shadow of Militancy truly describes human experience of the conflict of 90s, an artistic fusion of personal and historical perspective.

Siddhartha Gigoo’s novel, The Garden of Solitude, published in 2011 is a socio-realist novel which assesses the historical phenomenon of forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in the beginning years of the troubled period of 90s and its impact on the lives in exile. The complex saga of conflict and the tragic stories that emanate from the conflict is sensitively brought out by Siddhartha Gigoo, a Kashmiri Pandit. Gigoo, with a swarm of other Kashmiri Pandits had to flee the ancestral land, Kashmir and migrate to different parts of India due to the political tumult which befell Kashmir and its people during the period of 90s. In the novel Gigoo creates his self portrait, Sridar as to address the lost history and a macabre experience of exile of Kashmiri Pandits. Through the character of Sridar the novelist delves in a wounding journey through the tumultuous times that saw an entire community rendered homeless and identityless. Gigoo recreates the conditions that led to the forced exile of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir and its painful effect on their lives.

Before the start of insurgency Sridar is shown enjoying his peaceful life in his ancestral home in the downtown area of Srinagar with no sign of communal division between Pandits and Muslims. Both the communities shared a cordial and ideal relationship with one another. But as the wheel of time revolved, violence pervaded the
whole atmosphere of Kashmir and the people who lived for centuries together turned hostile to each other. The beautiful childhood of Sridar took an ugly turned where everything was caught in terror and violence. The fearful wind of frenzied atmosphere changed the historic harmonic atmosphere of Kashmir. Notices, messages, letters and ultimatums published in newspapers were used by militants to warn Pandits of dire consequences of staying back in the Kashmir. Targeted killings, abductions, rapes and massacres of Kashmiri Pandits were being carried out by the militant organizations. Through these methods militants wanted to create an atmosphere of terror and fear to warn Pandits to abandon their home land. The novel is abounded with the incidents of killings of Kashmiri Pandits by militants. Fear and insecurity ruled the Pandits. The old harmonies between the Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims shattered in an atmosphere of suspicion. Kashmiri Pandits perceived threat in the looks of Muslims, and Muslims began to distrust Pandits for being ‘informers, agents and kafirs.’ In the growing atmosphere of menace and fear, Kashmiri Pandits fled their homeland. Soon their flight grew into giant wave and engulfed Sridar’s family too. Sridar’s family, like many Pandit families migrated to Jammu. After leaving their native place, the displaced community got refuge in tents, cowsheds, barns, dilapidated dark rooms, camps and other makeshift arrangements made by the government. In order to accommodate the displaced families many government schools and buildings were converted into camps. The camps conveyed the tale of miseries and sorrows that these lives encountered inside the cramped camps. Gigoo through his novel presents the realistic picture to the world of the struggle of Kashmiri Pandits to survive and adapt to the new, hostile surroundings. For him, literature has the power to reflect the truth of the society.

Shahnaz Bashir’s *The Half Mother*, published in 2014 is set against the backdrop when Kashmir was witnessing the transition from tranquility to cataclysm during the period of 1989-1990. The conflict of 90s had taken a massive toll on the lives of this unfortunate land rendering thousands of youth missing and dead. During 90s enforced disappearances used to be a common measures to curb the armed rebellion. People of any age and background were being taken up by the army and put into detentions never to return mere on the basis of suspicion. In *The Half Mother*, Bashir has addressed the issue of enforced disappearances, one of the ugliest realities of the conflict of 90s in order to
make the world recognize of all those mothers of Kashmir whose sons were whisked away by army.

_The Half Mother_ revolves around its central protagonist, Haleema, who has been sufferer in all respects of life, is the only child of Ghulam Rasool Joo, Ab Jaan and Boba of Natipora, an area located in the outskirts of Srinagar, Kashmir. Her first encounter with the misfortune is the untimely death of her mother. The second misfortune which Haleema endears is her failed marriage to a medical assistant. This marriage proves to be the lynch pin of the whole story. It is this marriage which bestows Haleema with her only son, Imran. As she is living a peaceful life with her father and son, the events in Natipora take an ugly turn. The insurgency begins to overthrow the political order which in turn proves catastrophic and disturbs the calm of the Valley turning it into a land of mass destruction. Haleema’s life too is affected by the political upheaval and armed insurgency which spreads to every nook and corner of Kashmir. Soon the militant attack on the army contingency in her locality changes the dynamics of the whole locality which culminates into tragic and merciless murder of Ghulam Rasool Joo by a Major Aman Lal Kushwaha. The death of her father comes as a jolt to Haleema leaving her broken and shattered. As Haleema is mourning the death of her father, she is struck with another tragedy which shatters her life forever. After three months of her father’s death, Imran gets arrested during night raid on the pretext that he shares the name with a militant from his locality.

The mysterious disappearance of Imran leads to an ingenious and dark story of a mother’s quest to track down her only son. She embarks on a long interminable and wounding journey of the unavailing endeavours of trying to find out the whereabouts of her only son. Bashir delineates the account of Haleema’s desperate and futile search for her disappeared son. In this process she runs from pillar to post trying to seek even a smallest piece of information concerning her son. Her search takes her to army camps, torture centers, police stations, jails, and approaches social leaders, journalists, bureaucrats, NGOs and courts only to find no trace of Imran. Clue after clue is being traded but the truth remains lost in the shadow of war. The mystery regarding the sudden disappearances of Imran is never revealed, the truth is never disclosed. As the days are passing and there is no sign of Imran, she loses both her physical and mental health. She
reaches the brink of madness, talking to walls and things belonging to Imran, crying and wailing all the time. Finally unable to bear the agony of separation she dies without seeing the return of her son.

The narratives of these writers capture the bitter truth of Kashmir during 90s by presenting a true picture of the horrors of violence when the whole valley was shrouded under the dark cloud of militancy and military. Through their wounding journeys they have given voice to the pain and anguish of the people of Kashmir regardless of their religion, class, creed, and sex. These writers have coalesced in their literature, the originality and social responsibility of their scruple. Their social awareness permeates through their voice in the fiction and they have maintained their scrupulous objectivity in assessing and presenting a genuine picture of Kashmir’s social reality free from bias and prejudice. Being the novelists of transition period in Kashmir i.e. socio-political era, their writings clearly prove to be a product of their age. Though all the five writers live outside Kashmir but the common link among these writers besides their sharing the same roots is their deep concern for their Kashmir and its native; both residing and migrated ones. They try to console themselves as well as Kashmiris with their writings. Their shock, lament, and grief over loss of beauty and serenity of Kashmir along with loss of many Kashmiris who are either tortured or killed in one way or the other by the merchants of death is visible through their novels. The sufferers are the innocent people of Kashmir who have always been wishing for harmony, brotherhood and peaceful environment but are caught in the web of tumultuous conditions that has engulfed valley. Inspite of all this there is a common note of hope, resilience, revival of innocence and beauty in Kashmir with which every novel ends.

Thus, it is evident that the novels of these writers explore closely the social as well as political realities of life in Kashmir during period of 90s. These realities lead to the sufferings of the people of Kashmir. The vision of life of these writers is affirmative, positive and humanistic. Their themes and characters embody their value for humanistic stories and in their works they explore the miseries of common masses. The literary works of these writers bring out the tragedy and angst of the people of Kashmir. They have spotlighted the intricate subjects like individuality, exertion, travails, endeavour and persecution which were normally missing from the narrative thought of Kashmir.