CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Problem

People have been disappearing from the societies, disappearance can be a wilful act of a person to leave the social milieu or at times one is forced by natural calamities like earth quakes, floods and manmade calamities like war. Violence because of wars is a common feature of every society. Societies world over have been witness to violence. Violence anywhere is associated with human loss. The warring factions often resort to severe human rights violations like murder, Rape, torture and disappearance. The issue of disappearance of persons is relevant in a large number of contexts, with almost every contemporary conflict leaving significant numbers of families with no news of their loved ones. Similarly, the violence in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has also resulted in human sufferings and loss. The past 21 years of armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir has affected the entire society. The armed groups and the security personnel’s engaged against each other in the valley have resulted in unprecedented massive human rights violations which are continuing unabatedly. The Kashmir conflict not only continues to raise the spectre of war between India and Pakistan, but it also continues to produce serious human rights violations. The conflict in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has resulted in death of thousands of people as International humanitarian organisation, Amnesty international (2003) estimates that 44,000 people, thousands of whom are elderly, women and children, have been killed. However, some have suggested that the death total is closer to 80,000 (Khan, 2005). As far as disappearance is concerned, a large number of people have disappeared and official sources peg the number at 1017, unofficial figure are close to 10,000 (Parvez, 2005). But as far as number of disappeared is concerned the government has been giving the controversial figures as follows:

(i) On July 18, 2002, the then home minister of Jammu and Kashmir admitted in the legislative assembly that 3084 persons have disappeared in the state since the start of the insurgency.
On February 23, 2003, then chief Minister Mr. Mufti Mohammad Sayeed told the state assembly that 3744 persons are reported disappeared between the year 2000 and 2002.

On March 23, 2003, the then law minister informed that since December 1992, 3744 were reportedly disappeared of whom 135 have been declared dead and the number of disappeared could be more and more.

Abdul Rehman Veeri, then minister of state for parliamentary affairs informed the state assembly on June 21, 2003 that only 393 people have disappeared.

Thereafter, the official figures stated by the minister of social welfare in the state assembly on February 2nd, 2007, that there are 3654 widows and 11336 orphans in the state and thousands of people have been the victims of enforced or involuntary disappearances (Hafizullah, 2008).

This shows that the government is not yet able to have a complete number of disappeared persons, which is resulting in the lack of policy and programmes for their families.

No matter which of the parties to the conflict is responsible for the disappearance of people, but it is a fact that disappearance of people in the situations of armed conflict or internal violence has made countless families suffer great anguish when their loved ones go disappear and they make desperate attempts to find them. Very often the families of the disappeared persons are unable to overcome their pain and rebuild their lives again. The phenomenon produces anguish, fear and unspeakable sorrow for thousands of families. While the missing themselves are the direct victims, the families they leave behind are also victims. The impact on the missing persons' families cannot be generalized; assumingly it will depend upon their family circumstances, education and economic situations: they want an answer regarding the fate of the missing family member. With no information about the fate of their loved ones these families live in a state of ambiguity. It is a fact that the only conceivable proof of death is the body itself, the families continuously bears the
trauma of not performing the death rituals without this proof. These families continue
to suffer socially economically and psychologically. The problem takes a serious turn
if the disappeared person was an earning member of the family. Challenge of feeding
their families; with no economically active member, they are left with no alternative
but to beg for food. Families articulate their economic needs in terms of what they
cannot afford, and for most this prioritizes food, education and health care.

Another important aspect of the problem is the condition of wives of the
disappeared persons who face extreme stigmatization in their homes that has led to
their being ejected by their in-laws, leaving voluntarily or continuing to live there in
terrible conditions (Robins, 2009, p.6). Often termed as “Half wives”1 they have to
fight for her social status that can only restored to her when she is declared of her
social status. One needs to understand the fact that the Valley of Kashmir is
predominantly a Muslim dominated region and as per the Islamic law, if the son dies
during his father’s lifetime, the father may, but is not required to, give property to his
son’s heirs.

While deciding matters of inheritance, the disappeared sons are often counted
out as deceased and their children’s inheritance comes to naught (or at the best
remains undetermined till the grandfather’s death). The half widow thus often does
not receive economic relief from this quarter either and remains solely responsible for
supporting her children. In several cases, half widows leave or are forced to leave the
inlaws’ home. Then, in most of these cases, the maternal homes become the source of
shelter and food. However, once again, the half widow and her children are seen as
burdens; culturally, a daughter is not supposed to live with her parents once the
parents have fulfilled their duty of marrying her. However the government has put a
mechanism for relief to such women by it can only be provided to the women, who
apply only if it has been more than seven years since the disappearance.2

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1 Women are labeled ‘half widows’ when their husbands have been disappeared but not yet
   been declared dead.
2 For details of the order see, Government Order on Payment of Ex Gratia Relief for
   Disappeared Persons (on file with APDP):“In continuation of Govt order No. 723 GRGAD of
   1990 dated 10.7.1990 read with Govt order No. 173 GR of 1990 dated 19.11.1990, the
The situation is exacerbated for the half-widows. Such women face particular victimisation from both state and, in some cases, the family of their husbands. They continue to struggle with their life situations and mostly land up with psychological disturbances resulting out of inability to have a normal existence with the passage of time they suffer from different psychological and physiological disorders (Dabla, 1998).

The fact of the matter is that the families of the disappeared persons have to face numerous challenges which are attributing to the long-term effect of the disappearance. The families of the disappeared also suffer at the hands of society in which they live. There are many reported symptoms consistent with the impact of trauma, with a minority of members disabled by mental illness. Chronic physical symptoms that are attributed to the long-term effect of the disappearance are also widely reported, presumably somatic. These factors indicate that family members may be subject to various depressive and anxiety disorders (Robins, 2009). The disappearance on one hand has affected the lives of the families thereby making their survival extremely difficult and on the other hand has severely affected the social fabric of the Kashmir society producing more, orphans, destitute and women often termed as “Half widows”. As far as the state mechanism in place for people suffered due to the disappearance or precisely the families of disappeared persons is not adequate and falls short to address the issues of families. Despite its wide extent, the phenomenon of disappearances in Kashmir valley is not officially recognized by the government, which leads to several challenges for the families of disappeared persons. The things turn more difficult for those families whose disappeared member happens to be a government servant as according to the Service Law, a public servant can only be terminated from service if he willfully remains absent from duty.

following norms may be kept in view by the concerned while recommending the cases for grant of ex gratia relief to persons who are reportedly mission or his body has not been identified.

3 For details See Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations (Classification Control and Appeal) Rules, 1956.)
While a disappeared person is not willfully absent, he is treated as such and his employment, benefits, and pension are accordingly terminated. Administrative remedies fall short of providing due relief to the families. While the government has created relief systems (ex gratia relief⁴ and compassionate appointment⁵), these are available only in cases where the death is certain and can be proven (e.g., a copy of the death certificate must be produced). Also, relief is contingent on the deceased not having been involved in any militancy-related activities. In disappearance cases, the death is not ascertainable.

Against the above background, a modest attempt has been made to carry out a study in Baramulla district of Kashmir valley of Jammu and Kashmir state titled “Disappearance Phenomenon in Kashmir Valley: Impact on the affected families and social work interventions”. The affected families for the purpose of this study refer to families of the disappeared persons from the year 1989 to 2007, who are affected according to their relationship to the disappeared persons.

The present study will emphasize on the families of persons disappeared, and the unit of analysis of this study will be the family, rather than the individual. Hence the present study has been launched to achieve the following objectives.

### 3.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the socio-economic profile of the families of disappeared persons.
2. To examine the reasons for disappearance of persons in the area of study.
3. To explore the social, economic and health impact of disappearance on the family members of the disappeared persons.

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⁴ For complete order, See Government Order No.723-GR of 1990 dated 10-7-1990 the exgratia relief shall be payable in respect of persons killed permanently/partially disabled or to those persons whose houses got damaged as a result of violence attributable to the breach of law and order or any other form of commotion.” Website of Office of Divisional Commissioner, http://kashmirdivision.nic.in/about/services/exgratia.htm, retrieved on 20 June 2011.

⁵ For full details, See Website of Office of Divisional Commissioner, http://kashmirdivision.nic.in/about/services/sro43.htm, accessed on 20 June 2011. “Any person who happens to be an NOK of the deceased who dies in subversive/militancy related incidents can apply for issuance of the certificate under SRO 43. Provided he/she fulfills the other conditions like age/qualification/PRC etc.”
4. To explore the attitude, experiences and coping strategies of families of the disappeared person.
5. To explore various Social work interventions for the families of the disappeared person aimed at addressing the issues arising out of disappearance of their family member.

3.3 Research Design

Research design stands for advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in view the objectives of the research (Kothari, 2004). The Present study is exploratory cum diagnostic, based upon primary, secondary and tertiary sources. Exploratory in the sense that the researcher is trying to explore the social, economical and health impact of disappearance on the families of the disappeared persons, and coping ability of the families in case of any impact affecting their lives. It is diagnostic in the sense that, based upon his field experiences and observations from different sources the researcher will find the reasons behind various problems faced by his samples in the area of study and will consequently suggest the remedial measures in terms of possible intervention required by them within the broader frame work of social work practice.

3.4 Universe of study

The researcher has selected Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir state for his study “Disappearance Phenomenon in Kashmir Valley: Impact on Affected families and Social work intervention”. The affected families for the purpose of study refer to the families of the disappeared persons, who disappeared as a result of the armed conflict in the Baramulla district of Kashmir valley. The district is the largest in the entire Kashmir valley both in terms of area and population. During the time period considered for this study it was a single entity till year 2007, when the district was split into two, with Bandipora carved out as a separate district. Therefore the Pre-division data is provided about the district. According to Census of (2001) the district
is spread over an area of 4588 square kilometres and has a population of 11, 69,780. The male comprise 614,816 and females 554,964. The sex ratio of the district is 903 females per 1000 males. The rural population is 9, 73, 458 and urban population is 1, 96,322. The district has a literacy rate of 45.41 percent as compared to the states literacy rate of 55.52 percent. For males it is 57.11 percent and for females it is 32.28 percent. Here the gender gap in terms of literacy is quite visible at 19.83 Percent. The district is administratively divided into eight administrative units or officially called as Tehsils, namely Bandipora, Baramulla, Sopore, Gurez, Pattan, Gulmarg, Sonawari and Uri. There are sixteen Community development Blocks. The district has major three towns namely, Baramulla, Sopore and Bandipora, with a population of 61,380, 52,852 and 25,795 respectively. It is surrounded by Kupwara in the north, Budgam and Poonch in the South, Srinagar and Ladakh in the east and Line of control in the west. The vast majority of the people of the district are agriculturist. The district has for ages been the natural passage to Kashmir valley for travellers and invaders. Being very close to the Line of control, the district has been witnessing high rate of violence since the eruption of armed conflict in the valley. Since 1990 till 2007 a total of 5106 persons were killed in the district. Similarly the district has a large number of persons disappeared during the period (Jammu and Kashmir Coition of Civil societies [JKCSS], 2007).

3.5 Sampling and Sample size

In a social research sampling forms the most important and crucial stage. It helps the researcher achieve maximum precision and avoid bias. Various factors like efficiency, time limitations, and restricted financial resources make it very important for any social researcher to pass through the sampling procedure, which should be more precise and appropriate for his research (Laldas, 2000, p.59). The sample is a small portion of the total set of objects, events, or persons which together comprise the subject of our study. The total set from which individuals or units of the study are chosen is referred to as population. It is presumed that results obtained from the sample are true to the population as a whole but largely depends on the way sample is
selected (Kidder, 1981). In the present study population or universe comprised of families of all the persons who are disappeared because of the armed conflict in the Baramulla district of Kashmir valley.

The first and foremost job of the researcher was to ascertain the exact number of disappeared persons in the district Baramulla. The researcher in the field observed that the exact number of disappeared persons and allied information was not available with the government officials, which is quite evident from the fact that state government ordered a survey to identify the exact number of disappeared persons in the Kashmir valley (Fazili, 2007). While as, some information though scanty and scattered was available with the police authorities. This created a problem in sampling. In order to overcome this limitation, the researcher sought the help from key informants like Police authorities and NGOs, particularly of Association of parents of disappeared persons (APDP) and Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of civil societies (JKCCS) in identifying the families of disappeared persons of the Baramulla district. The researcher was provided with a list of persons disappeared in the district Baramulla as a result of the conflict, drawn up by Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of civil societies through a three-year door-to-door survey in District Baramulla, it revealed 337 cases of disappearances and published immediately prior to the start of data collection (JKCSS, 2007). This list contained the names of persons whose families Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of civil Societies staff had met and who had confirmed that their relative was indeed disappeared. The information provided by these organizations was counter checked with the police records by the researcher in the field during the meetings with the families which were arranged with the help of an organization namely Association of parents of disappeared persons and was found to be correct. To achieve a non biased sampling it was clear that families must be visited, rather than allowing some self-selection by research subjects through an invitation to a meeting.

The universe under study being finite, and on the basis of information obtained by the researcher, the whole sampling frame also known as source list of the
population was formulated by the researcher which was comprehensive, correct, reliable and appropriate. A probability sampling method, i.e. the simple random sampling was adopted by the researcher to arrive at a desired sample i.e. \( n \), where \( n \) is the sample size. This method gives each element in the population an equal chance of being included in the sample (Kothari, 2010). The list of all the elements of the population was assigned the numbers from 1 to \( N \), where \( N \) is the population size. The researcher assigned the number to each of the elements in the sampling frame. The first person was numbered 001, the second 002, and so on. In order to chose a sample of 300 randomly the researcher referred to the random number table (Grinnell, 1981). Three columns of individual numbers were used so as to look for three digit numbers between 001 and 300, inclusive. Beginning with a randomly selected point in the table and read off three digits at a time vertically. Every time the researcher came to such a number, the person with that number was included in the sample. However the number coming up exceeding the sample size was ignored. After one set of three columns exhausted the researcher would move to the one columns right or left to the next set of three columns (Grinnell, 1988).This process continued till the desired sample size of 300 was achieved. This process provides almost no opportunity for human bias to manifest itself and the selection is done without the knowledge of respondents (Bryman, 2009). It was also found that all the sample families have not more than one member disappeared. Therefore, the number of disappeared persons was also equal to the required sample size i.e. 300.

3.6 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

The study is based on collection of data from primary, secondary and tertiary sources. Primary sources are based upon structured interview schedule. Secondary sources include various report prepared by national and international agencies working on the issue of enforced disappearance, United Nation documents, Government reports and individual research studies etc. Tertiary sources include text books, journals and newsletters. The data collection made on structured interview schedule was developed and pre-tested by a pilot test. The shortcomings noted during
the pilot study were removed from the schedule. The member of the family who has the decision making power with the family was selected the principle respondent in the present study. The data thus collected from a sample of 300 families has been analyzed and statistically tested by using both parametric and non parametric tests in order to arrive at a definite conclusion. Apart from quantitative analysis of the problem, qualitative analyses based on the researcher’s observation have been prepared from the families of the disappeared in order to support and authenticate the results drawn by quantitative analysis.

This method helps because of its flexibility with respect to using methods for collecting data i.e. questionere, interview, observation, etc, (Black & Champion, 1976, p.91-92). The results and insights from field impressions, facts from key informants and informal discussions, have been used to overcome the limitation of limited statistical use.

3.7 Field Insight

Interacting with the families of the disappeared person was a wonderful experience for the researcher. Quantitative analysis hardly enables us to reach to the hearts of the people whom we intend to interview. When a member of any disappeared person family starts narrating the pain and trauma his/her family has undergone, the quantitative analysis seems to be sometimes less effective and unable to translate the experiences of the family. Though some of the respondents were very reluctant in sharing any information to the researcher because of non seriousness of various researcher in mitigating there pain. But most of the respondents were very keen to share their experiences with the researcher which could be inferred to the hope that they are carrying with them the disappeared person might be alive. It was this belief of them that they will repose trust in a stranger and reveal their experiences of life. It was not only the quantitative analysis that researcher relied he also relied on in-depth open ended interviews which were very helpful in gaining the insight in to their experiences. That way these informal conversations also become an important source for evaluation. Researcher applied the principle of full disclosure about himself and the purpose of his study as it is unethical to build trust with half truths.
A series of questions were asked to the respondents which included questions on themselves, their family and the disappeared family member in particular in addition to the society around them. It was only the rapport that researcher built with the respondents that allowed the free flow of information from the respondents to which a patient hearing was given by the researcher. More emphasis was laid upon empathetic approach towards the respondents. This approach was made by the researcher in view of his social work background. The qualitative analysis applied in the field helped the researcher in developing field impressions and also gave him a large dimension of human affairs.

3.8 Problems during the study

Reaching to the required number of samples was a tough job for the researcher. One of the main issues during the course of this study was the difficulty in reaching to the families of disappeared as they are scattered in the whole of Baramulla district starting from the city centre to the extreme end of the district touching the line of control. The location of the district and the sensitivity of being close to Line of Control made data collection very difficult for the researcher. A number of times researcher was stopped by government forces from going to the villages which are very near to the Line of Control on account of security. Many a times the respondents were not found at their homes, which would waste lot of time therefore it was decided to arrange a meeting with respondents as per their time and place. The researcher sought the help from an organization called Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons which organized the meeting of researcher and the respondents, as the organization often calls meeting to discuss various issues pertaining to the families of disappeared persons and such meetings are usually held at city centers. A very important problem faced by the researcher was that at times it was found that many of the respondents have no or little interest in getting involved with researcher for the research purpose. The reason for this attitude was attributed to the number of surveys conducted by various governmental and non-governmental organizations without any outcome desired by the respondents.
However such problems do occur in the course of research in the field. The researcher attended the entire exercise with patience and was finally able to get the information he required for his study.

3.9 Operational Terminology

Disappearance

“Disappearance” refers to the phenomenon of disappearance of persons following the emergence of armed conflict in the Kashmir valley of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and those whose fate is unknown, regardless of perpetrator (if any) and refers to the disappearance of all people from 1 January 1989 to 31 December 2007, and whose families remain without any news of their whereabouts.

Victims

Victims in the present study refer to the persons disappeared in Kashmir valley after arrested, detained or abducted against their will or otherwise deprived of their liberty since the emergence of the armed conflict since 1989 till 2007 by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, and also by the non state actors like political parties and terrorists organisation.

Families

Families in the present study include the immediate family or dependants of the persons who have disappeared in relation to the conflict in Kashmir valley of Jammu and Kashmir State during the period of 1989 to December 2007 and who remain without any information regarding the fate of the disappeared member of their family.

Rehabilitation

In the present study rehabilitation includes all the Judicial, economical and social and psychological help which can be provided to or required by the affected families to help them overcome the impact of the disappearance of any of their family member.