CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Living in the state of ambiguity and in the dark about the fate of the disappeared family member is harsh reality of thousands of families’ world over affected by armed conflict. It is a fact that world over, parents, brothers, sisters, spouses, and children desperately seek whereabouts of their loved ones with whom they have ceased to have any contact. With international rules of humanitarian law and human rights at place for the prevention of disappearance of persons, still large number of disappearances occurred in the event of armed conflict around the globe. The disappearance of a person from the society leaves the society in general and family in particular in a state of mind wondering whether the disappeared person is alive or dead. The condition often lands them in a situation which hinders their normal social functioning. The problems they face are multi dimensional, like psychological, legal, health, social and economical. These kind of problems affects their very involvement in the society which in turns undermines the relationship between the groups and peoples and contributes to the delay in their healing.

It is very important to understand that the disappearance can occur in highly diverse circumstances like, natural disasters, population displacement and many others, however in the present study the focused on the issue of disappearance of persons due to the armed conflict.

The persons disappeared in any armed conflict may be the members of the armed forces or armed groups without any means of identification after they die in action. It may also involve individuals who are captured or arrested and held in a secret and unknown place, without any information about their whereabouts to their families. Persons may also disappear following a mass killing. At times their bodies are buried or destroyed. Even people who are forced to migrate as a result of conflict can lead to long separation. Similarly, the children also disappear or get separated from their families. The fact of the matter is that the circumstances leading to disappearance of the persons is linked to a lack of awareness, lack of capacity,
negligence or lack of will on part of the state authorities. The armed conflict world
over has left thousands of families searching for their loved ones who went missing or
disappeared during the violence.

The armed conflict which started in the year 1989 in the state of Jammu and
Kashmir has claimed thousands of lives and has left a large number of families
searching for their disappeared family members. Such families have to deal with the
trauma of not knowing the fate of loved one forcing them to live in a state of hope and
despair. It has been acknowledged that the only way to control such disappearances is
to ensure that peace is achieved and concrete steps are taken to address the issue.

The present study titles “Disappearance Phenomenon in Kashmir Valley:
Impact on the affected Families and Social work Intervention” has been carried out in
respect of families of persons disappeared after the emergence of the armed conflict in
the year 1989 to the year 2007 in the Kashmir valley of the state of Jammu and
Kashmir. In case of this study the “Disappearance phenomenon” refers to the
disappearance of persons whose fate is unknown, regardless of perpetrator (if any)
and whose families remain without any news of their whereabouts. For those families
whose loved ones are missing as a result of the conflict are the research subjects of
this study.

The importance of the present study lies in the fact that practically no work
has yet been done in making an analysis of the impact of disappearance on the
families of disappeared persons in the Kashmir valley. The study has been undertaken
in the light of the following objectives:

The study has been undertaken in the light of the following objectives:

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 measure the social, economic and health impact of disappearance on the
   family members of the disappeared persons.
To explore the attitude and experiences and coping strategies of families of the disappeared person.

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.

In the present study the researcher has selected 300 families of disappeared persons of the district Baramulla of the Kashmir valley. From the selected families the impact of disappearance of a family member has been explored. The data thus collected is analysed in a specific chapter. The present chapter presents the results of the study. The findings and recommendations in the light of the results are proposed in the present chapter.

6.1. FINDINGS

6.1.1 Profile of the Principle Respondents

The sampled families of disappeared persons have an average family size of 5.68 with all of them having their own accommodation. This indicates the economic condition of the families and the average family size a factor contributing in it. Similarly with the majority of the families (80%) being the extended type and nuclear families comprise of only (14%). The major portion of which comprise of General category (92%). The reason for the majority of the families from the general category is attributed to the fact that in Kashmir valley there is almost no Schedule caste, but Schedule tribe population has a good presence which can be found in the present study that (6%) of the families belonged to his category. As far as the religion is concerned, all the sampled families are Muslim, which is quite evident as the largest minority of the valley, the Kashmiri Pandit’s was forced to migrate as soon as the armed violence erupted in the Kashmir valley. The principle respondents of the present study comprised of males as well as females, with majority of them being males (82%) and the rest (18%) were females. The major portion of respondents being males is evident from the fact that in the traditional social set up the decision making
of any family is in the hands of the males, as the principle respondents was to be the persons having the decision making power within the family therefore the majority of the males as the respondents is quite understandable. (Table- 4.1,4.4,4.6 &4.8)

The family member who were selected as the principle respondents were dominated by father of the disappeared person (74%) followed by the wives (16%), brothers (6%) and mothers with (4%). It can be seen that father of majority of the families have the decision making power within the families, while wives/female members have a very less representation and were only selected where there is no male member above the age of the wife within the family. Another fact that comes to forefront is that not a single respondent was sister of the disappeared person, which again shows the state of involvement of females within our family systems (table-4.3).

Educational status of the respondents shows that majority of them (82%) were illiterate while only a small portion of them was literate (18%). Among the literate (76%) of males were literate while only (24%) females were literate, which shows that literacy rate is still very less among the females as compared to males (table-4.1).

As far as the marital status is concerned the majority of the respondents were married (98%) followed by only 2% of them widows. The important revelation that comes to light is that the wives of the disappeared persons don’t consider themselves as widows as they are constantly living in the state hope about the return of their husbands. Also few number of female respondents can be also due to the very nature of society of baring women from involving in any activity other than household. The majority (40%) of the respondents are having agriculture/farming as their occupation, while government servants comprised of almost one-third of them (24%) followed by labours (14%). Business seems to be less attractive for the respondents as only 12% and 10% are into carpet weaving. The majority of respondents involved into agriculture, is due to the very fact that the district of Baramullah is predominantly a rural and is having a considerable population involved in agriculture and allied activities. With majority of the families living in the rural areas the agriculture providing the living, business is often the last option when there is some difficulty in
earning appropriate through the agricultural activities that seems to be the reason the only (12%) of respondents are into business. As far as the carpet weaving is concerned it is a very common profession among the females of the villages of the district (Table- 4.2,4.5 & 4.7).

6.1.2 Profile of the Disappeared Person

The important finding of the present study is that majority i.e., 63% (190) of the respondents are the residents of rural area, while urban and semi urban comprise of only 37% (38, 72) of them. This can be attributed to the fact that the violence during the two decades of armed conflict has been mostly reported in the rural areas, with more and more concentration of terrorists and security forces resulting in various forms of violence perpetuated by both. (Table-4.2)

The valley of Kashmir having predominantly a Muslim population is quite clearly reflected in the present study, as all of the disappeared are Muslims and a large part of them belong to the general category 276 (92%) followed by 18 (6%) of them belonging to the scheduled tribe category and none from Scheduled caste. However 6(2%) were from other backward classes category.(Table- 4.6 & 4.2.7).

As far as the marital status of the disappeared is concerned, total of disappeared persons 192 (64%) of them were unmarried while 108 (36%) were married. It shows that majority of the victims were unmarried at the time of their disappearance (Table- 4.2.9).

One of the most important information that has come to the forefront is that all the disappeared persons are male which depicts that male have been specifically been disappeared or have disappeared during the armed conflict. The fact that all of the disappeared are males should be viewed in the background of the very nature of armed conflicts world over where the one who directly are involved are usually males and are often involved with either of the parties to the conflict. This has a direct bearing on the economic condition of their families as a majority of them 216 (72%) of them were between the age group of 15-30,followed by 60 (20%) belonging to the
age group of 31-45 also only 18 (6%) of them were below the age of 15 years while only (2%) were more than 46 years of age. With majority of the disappeared belonging to the age group of 15 -30 years, which means that majority of them were youths. Its pertinent to mention here that the families were deprived of the member of most reproductive age which must have a devastating effect on the overall economic status of their families. While looking at the educational status of the disappeared persons it is seen that almost one-third of them i.e, 108 (36%) have studied up to the 12th standard followed by those who have studied up to middle level 60 (20%) while 48 (16%) are primary pass 36 (12%) of the disappeared have studied up to 10th standard and the same number of them have studied up to graduation level. With only 12 (4%) of them being illiterate it can be said that majority of the disappeared were literate (96%) (Table- 4.2.1,4.2.2,4.2.3).

With most of them having the extended families 240 (80%) while 42 (14%) percent belonged to nuclear and a small portion 18 (6%) to joint families, it clearly shows that the kind of support and strength the extended family provides has a significant impact on the coping ability of the respondents. With this kind of family setting it often provides a strong economical and psychological support to the families. This background of the families can be the reason that all of the families have their own and Pakka or concrete houses (Table- 4.2.3 to 4.2.5).

As far as the occupation of the disappeared persons is concerned it is found that agriculture and farming forms the major part of the occupation with 66 (22%) of them were involved with this occupation at the time of their disappearance followed by 48 (16%) who were in the government service and 42 (14%) is the number of those who were students at the time of their disappearance. Similarly, the disappeared also involved people who were involved with carpet and shawl weaving 42 (14%) as carpet and shawl weaving is very much taken as an occupation by the people living in the villages of Baramulla district. Furthermore, 24 (8%) of them were labourer followed by 18 (6%) who were doing their own business at the time of their disappearance. A large number of those who were unemployed at the time of their disappearance constituted 48 (16%) which is a sizeable population which includes
usually those who were affiliated with militant organisations, as their families had no answer for their occupation.

It is also found that majority of the disappeared, 216 (72%) are civilians, followed by 66 (22%) were militants and 6 (2%) each were the members of security forces and political parties. It is very important to understand that majority of those disappeared, 228 (76%) were those who were not event the part of the warring factions according to the families. (Table- 4.6.2)

While looking at the perpetuators or persons/groups responsible for the disappearance of the persons according to the families, Unknown persons and unidentified gunmen are found to be the main perpetuators of disappearance of persons as it is revealed that 228 (76%) were made disappeared by them only, followed by 54 (18%) by security forces and 12 (4%) of them by the militants. Renegades or those gunmen who were under the direct control of the security forces have disappeared 6 (2%) of them. It is very important to understand that unknown and unidentified persons can be militants as well. (Table- 4.6.1 & 4.2.8).

As far as the number of persons disappeared during the course of conflict, it is seen that there has been a continuous number of disappearances up to the year 2004, with the highest number of disappearances happing in the years 1992 and 2001 with (16%) and (15.33%) respectively. There has been a decrease in the numbers after the year 2003 (Table- 4.6.3)

The financial contribution the disappeared was making to the family that majority of them 218, (72%) percent had been contributing to the family and were the earning members of their families and their disappearance must have an impact on the economic status of the families (Table- 4.2.13).

6.2. Impact

Based upon the analysis made in the impact chapter 4th with regard to the impact on the families of the disappeared persons, the following findings have been made:
6.2.1 Social Impact

The disappearance of any of the family member has a pronounced impact on the social well being of the family within the broader frame work of our society. The families reported diminishing marriage proposal for their children and increase in the delinquency among children. Similarly child labour and tension or unhappiness along with social isolation and financial problems have been reported by the families to occur after the disappearance of their family member and above all the impact on the education of children has also been reported by them, and children have been the only suffers of this. It is also found that education of the children has been greatly affected and has its impact on the increased number of children involved in the child labour. It is found that all of those families who have experienced an impact on the education of their family members have it on their children who have been forced to drop out because of lack of resources in terms of financial support. Although the families are supposed to earn the sympathy of the society but practically the situation is very different for them. Although, a majority o families reported that they did not experience any negative impact on their relationships with the neighbours. However, the issue of social isolation is a matter of concern and does not reflect well on the kind of support the families are getting from their society. While looking at the kind of impact families have experienced in the kind of relationships the families share with their neighbours is the completely not visiting or decrease in the intensity of their visits. This kind of impact is perceived to be very bad in our traditional societies where visit by a neighbour is often regarded as a sign of sharing good relation and is the reflection of one’s concern for his neighbour. The very important fact which has come to the forefront is that all the families think that they have not been ignored by their society. This has been a great source to them in their struggle to overcome the issues arising out of the disappearance of their loved ones. It goes contradictory to the fact that some of them felt impact on their relationships with the neighbours. It clearly indicates that for families of disappeared persons the concept of society does not include the immediate neighbours whom with they share and expect a special bond.
All these problems faced by the families have had their effect on their social functioning and status. A very important finding that has come up in the present study is that not a single one of those who are working in government sector among the family members of the disappeared has been forced to drop out from the services. (See Table- 4.3.1 to 4.3.6)

While looking at the financial contribution that was made by the person disappeared, it is found that majority of the disappeared persons were in their prime youth at the time of their disappearance, educated and were the financial contributors to their families by way of earning their livelihood through their involvement in various occupations as majority of them were civilians. The most important fact that has come up is that all of the disappeared persons are male, who are the traditional bread earners in Kashmiri society with majority of them unmarried, which means less number of dependents. Their absence is bound to create economic issues for the families however this has not come up as an issue for majority of the families, probably due to the fact that majority of the families are the extended families who are in a position to address their economic needs. But nevertheless, their absence is felt more socially than economically by the families. (Table- 4.2.1 to 4.2.3,4.2.8,4.2.9,4.2.13 & 4.6.2).

6.3 Impact on Health

As far as the impact on the health is concerned which involves mental health and physical health of the families it is found that the state of mental health of the families has been affected by the disappearance and is very poor. Almost half of the families could be regarded as suffering from psychological distress based on the responses to the Self Reporting questionnaire. This result is high when compared to other studies carried out in India (Jaswal, 1995). The present study has found that majority of the respondents are suffering from the illnesses, which are indicative of high levels of somatisation. Problems like inability to take decisions, frequent crying, sleep disturbances and feeling nervous or tense were reported by the majority of respondents. Similarly many respondents reported anxiety and unhappiness, with a
substantial number have entertained thought about ending their life. The findings are in line with Margoob, Singh and Ali (1997) findings which reported high suicide rates in this region particularly. With all the families being Muslim and thought s and acts of suicide is considered a great sin, the very idea and expression of these thoughts by the families is a strong indicator of despair among them.

The findings on coping mechanisms used by the families in the event of tension or stress, it was found that majority of them Pray/Meditate and visiting a shrine which indicates that religion plays a very important role in our lives as it is found to be the first important coping mechanism used by the families of disappeared persons. Further the gravity of the suffering of the families can be gauged by the fact that a large portion of them isolate themselves and become aggressive which reflects the kind of coping mechanisms which are clearly dysfunctional. However a small number of families seek help within the families, which shows that very fewer families believe in their own capacities and potential to be used to overcome the stress. (Table-4.4.1 & 4.5.1)

The relationship between peoples traumatic experiences and their health problems Physical and mental is well established (Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes & Nelson, 1999; Solomon, Laor, & McFarlane, 1996). The present study appears to confirm this relationship. It is found that the disappearance of a family member has its toll on the health of the family members with majority of them the women mainly comprising of mothers of the disappeared followed by sisters and wives. Wives are found to less in number because of the fact that majority of the disappeared persons were unmarried. Likewise, it is also seen that even a small number of families involved all the members to be having an effect on their health. The illnesses reported by the respondents which the family members are experiencing, it can be seen that more than half of the families suffer from the illnesses which is reflective of the fact that they are the outcome of stress under which they spend their lives.

A substantial number of families reported that their work and daily activities have been suffered by the health problems encountered by them. Nearly half of the
respondents reported that they had to postpone their daily activities or work for three to four days due to the various illnesses in the past 30 days. It is very important to mention that all the respondents reported that they had to postpone their daily work ranging from 1 day to 8 days due to various illness in the past 30 days. While looking at the illnesses reported more than half of the respondents reported the illnesses which correspond to the result of stress among the family members.

While looking at the ability of the respondent to do any work during the last 30 days, it was found that almost one-third of them reported that they were completely not able to do any work for 5 to 6 days during the mentioned period. Again it is found that all the respondents reported that they were completely not in a position to do any work ranging from 1 day to 20 days. While it is found that almost half of the respondents reported the illnesses which are indicative of somatisation, responsible for their inability to do any work. (Table- 4.4.2 to 4.4.7)

6.4 Economic Impact

It is found that majority of families have overcome the economical effect of disappearance of a family member and have are now able to address their economical needs. The reasons being majority of them live in extended family settings.

One needs to understand the fact that the traditional contributors to the economy of family are men. Absence of an earning member of the family not only affects family economically but it also has its spell on the social well being of the family indirectly. As almost all of them were contributing financially to the family, their absence is bound to have an impact on the economic condition of their families. Similarly, those who were not earning anything would have been supporting economically their respective families at this point of time. Keeping in view the gender of disappeared persons all of them are men who are the traditional bread earners in the Kashmiri society. One needs to acknowledge that these were individuals who had families and were at their most productive age in terms of supporting the family. Keeping in view the economic or financial contribution the
disappeared was making to the family it becomes quite clear from the study that majority of them (72%) percent had been contributing to the family as it can be related to the fact that the 16% of them were unemployed and 6% were less than 15 years of age at the time of disappearance. Therefore, there disappearance had affected the financial wellbeing of the families. (Table- 4.2.2,4.2.13)

However, it is found that as far as the present financial position of families is concerned a considerable number of the families (44%) are of those who have more than 15 thousand rupees earning per month, which can be attributed to the fact that a majority of these families (80%) are extended families and the income may be contributed by many other members of the family.( Table- 4.2.10.)

Similarly it can be seen that 30% families are those who have a monthly income of 10 to 15 thousand rupees and 22% comprise of those who earn 5 to 10 thousand rupees and only 4% are the families who earn less than 5 thousand rupees per month. Similarly, when we make a comparison between the present income of the family and the income prior to disappearance of the family member one can see that there is a huge difference between the two as it looks that the income has increased but one needs to acknowledge the fact that the large difference in the span of time and the value of money has its role to play into it. (Table- 4.2.10 & 4.2.11)

When one looks at the source of income of the families, it clearly shows that majority of them are earning their livelihood through working the government sector with 40% saying that they get their earning working in government sector, which could be also a reason in the increase in earnings of the families. Similarly 36% families are involved in farming and allied activities. The table further reveals that by doing labour 12% families earn their living followed by 8% depending on business and only 4% living on other sources of income. Considering the concentration of disappearance more in rural areas and Baramulla district being predominantly a rural area, the farming is obvious to be a main source of income.(Table- 4.2 & 4.2.12 )
However service being a major source of income has to do with the earnings one gets in cash from it, as general farming is not taken into account even though it contributes to the food requirements of the families. Another factor with regard to the less number of families involved in business is that people develop a general tendency of opting for government job in valley considering the continuous turmoil in the valley which did not allowed any of the business to flourish with the time.

6.6 Attitude of families and Rehabilitation

It is found in the present study that all the families have received the aid from different sections of the society. Majority of the families have received aid from the community followed by individuals, NGOs and then Government. As far as the aid provided by the NGOs it was found that they have been providing aid in terms of legal aid, money, kind and job. Half of the families received legal aid from the NGOs. The legal help was provided by way of helping the families to access the judicial machinery by way of helping them with their legal expenses. Aid provided by way of kind and money is provided to approximately half of the families and a small number is provided with a job. The study shows that majority of the families are not satisfied with the aid they received from the donors. The reason put forth by the respondents for their dissatisfaction about the aid was that they considered it very less, while some believed that it was not as per their needs and similarly for some it was not given at the time when it was most needed.

It is also found in the present study that for all the families, the whereabouts of the disappeared persons happen to be the only aid required by them followed by a small portion of them who believe that both whereabouts and government job is the aid they require. Almost all the families are aware about the governmental efforts to rehabilitate or address the issues of the families of disappeared person. For those who are aware they only know that it is the legal aid, that is being provided by the government. According to them, legal aid involves lodging an FIR and investigating the case.
There are NGOs working in the Kashmir valley on the issue of disappearance. It was found that almost all the families are aware about the fact that there are NGOs working in the Kashmir valley on the issue of disappearances. The majority of them know about the names NGOs working on the issue. It was further clarified by way of asking about the role of these NGOs and it was found that more than half of the families know exactly about their role. However, it was found that that these NGOs who have been working on the issue of disappearance of persons have provided help to almost all the families, which can be clearly understood from the fact that, majority of the families are aware about their work. The study shows that NGOs have been in constant touch and majority of the families have been helped by them. The findings suggest that the NGOs have maintained a very close association with the families of disappeared persons, by way of helping them in their legal fight to search for the disappeared person, by providing them money and kinds in addition to this they have involving them in their various activities aimed at addressing the issues of these families..(Table-4.7.2 to 4.7.11)

It is found that a majority of the families do not know or have heard about the United Nation convention for the protection of persons from involuntary Disappearance. This could be in the background that more emphasis of NGOs and government is on the provision of aid and help while very little effort is made to make these families aware about international conventions and treaties and their rights within those legal frameworks.(Table-4.8.1)

6.7 Community Role

While commenting on the role of community to address the issues of families of disappeared and to contribute towards their welfare, almost half of the respondents believe that community can play a role in the welfare of families of disappeared persons, by way of providing the social support to the families, which is desired by almost half of the respondents. Similarly, contribution in terms of money found almost one-third of the respondents and kind as a way to contribute towards the welfare of families was given by less number of respondents.(Table- 4.8.1 & 4.8.2)
For improving the condition of the families of disappeared person, all the respondents believe that it is only the whereabouts of the disappeared person which can improve the condition of the families, which seems to be the main requirement to bring happiness back to the families. However more than one-third of the respondents believe that whereabouts along with financial support to the families can improve the condition of families. Similarly job to the other member of the family is also prescribed by the respondents. A small portion of respondents found that punishment to the perpetuators should be punished. Almost all of them believe that their loved one is alive while few say that he may have died. The reason for their belief that the person is alive was found based on their tendency to deny any possibility which includes death of the disappeared person. Perhaps it could be a sought of denial mechanism adopted by the families to live in the state of hope. It can be said that almost all families do not have any valid reason to believe that their family member is alive but still they have not lost hope.

While it is found that the families have knowledge about the legal assistance provided by the government as almost all of them have lodged an FIR in the police station reporting the disappearance of their family member. Acknowledging the fact that it is the first step which is taken by these families in their search for the disappeared person. But surprisingly almost all of them said that they did not get any positive result from this assistance, which was found due to the slow pace of investigation taken by the Police and surprisingly a small portion of families showed no faith in judicial system (Table- 4.8.1 to 4.8.8)

6.8 Researcher’s Observations

The very crux of interview in the social work is that one has to be alert and receptive to the information provided by the interviewee and try to explore the non verbal and non spoken needs and issues of the respondent as far as the observations of the researcher is concerned it is concluded that the basic concern for the families of disappeared is the information about the fate of the disappeared. This need of the families have made them move from pillar to pillar in their struggle to know about the
whereabouts of the person disappeared. One very important observation is that the families have not lost the hope of the return of the disappeared and believe that he might be alive.

This condition which makes the family believe that he may be dead and behave as if he is alive often poses a great psychological challenge for them. One more important finding is that, there has been a demand for government job and financial help by the families as most of the families are apprehensive about their future in wake of continuous disappearance of the person. One needs to understand the other side of the trauma which reflects upon the inability of the families to perform various rituals for the disappeared as they are unsure about his fate. This ambiguity results in a continuous journey of trauma and pain for the families. With all the families interviewed approached the judiciary in their struggle to seek justice it is surprising that almost all of them have lost hope in judiciary and are not at all willing to continue their cases in the court of law but still go on, baring few of them. The families also seek punishment to the people who are responsible for the disappearance of their family member, but the basic thing still remains for all of them that they want his whereabouts. Lastly, the families have fed up with number of surveys carried out by government and NGOs which they feel were futile and unfruitful for them. However, the support from media and civil societies was not ruled out by many families in their struggle.

**Recommendations**

The families of disappeared persons face the double burden of living with the ambiguity about the fate of the person and the challenges which are posed by the absence of the family member. The present study has allowed the researcher to present a series of recommendations to further the addressing the needs of the families of the disappeared person. The impact of disappearance of the family member on their families in the present study requires that, the fundamental and primary responsibility of the authorities is that to prevent the disappearances, ascertaining the whereabouts of the person and support families. Therefore, a comprehensive and effective legal
mechanism or framework is required at a national level to address the issues of the families as the victims who have rights to be supported. It must also include the mechanism to ascertain the status of the disappeared persons also. The present study provides a picture of families striving to cope with the impact of the loss of their disappeared relative. The difficulties faced by the families are numerous and interlinked, and affect various aspects of their lives. As a result of the present study’s findings the series of recommendations are made so as to address the issues concerning the families of disappeared persons.

The study shows that the families have lost faith in the state ability to respond to their issues and are mainly concerned about the whereabouts of the disappeared person. The inability of the state has made these families move away from the state in seeking justice and information about their disappeared relative. It is recommended that, there is a need to develop an administrative mechanism by the state which is empowered with a mandate to address a range of issues pertaining to the disappearance phenomenon.

Furthermore, this administrative entity should have the authority to coordinate the state response to the issue of families. It should also be in a position to investigate the circumstances with regard to the disappearance of the person so as to provide the answer to the questions seeking whereabouts and cause of disappearance of the person posed by the families.

In the present study it is found that the state does not have a detailed list of people who have disappeared in the Kashmir valley since the eruption of the armed conflict in the year 1989, this has led to the uncertainty regarding the exact number of persons disappeared in the valley, which in turn affects the very response of the state to the issue of disappearance. It is recommended that the state authority formed should also develop a comprehensive list of persons disappeared and centralize the whole information for the use of various stake holders who are working on the issue of disappearances in the Kashmir valley. In addition to this the state authorities should speed up the judicial process to address the cases of all those who are disappeared,
whether civilians, militants or members of any of the groups. It is found that there is a
gap regarding the information sharing with the families of disappeared person. The
families reported that they are not informed about the way law enforcing agencies are
investigating the cases of disappearance and the information about the way
investigation is carried out and result obtained. It is recommended that the families
should be regularly informed about the investigation carried out and results achieved.
This will make families develop a sense of belief in the state. This state body should
have basis in law and empowered to set appropriate measured and take steps to clarify
what has happened to the disappeared person. It should also be able to establish the
status of the person without distinguishing between the disappeared persons affiliation
and recognize the rights of their family to receive social, economical other benefits.

It is recommended that the special status of disappeared person should be
granted to the individual concerned and acknowledging the problems or challenges
faced by their families and allowing the families to access legal, social and economic
benefits which are provided to the families of dead. The state authority while giving
access to the families to the judicial mechanism will help tracking down and ending
the impunity enjoyed by the perpetuators of the crime thereby developing the families
to build their trust in the state institutions. The state should include in its domestic
legislations a wide range of measures to prevent people from disappearing during the
armed conflict and protect the rights of the families of disappeared persons.

There is a need to have a national policy to consider the challenges faced by
the families. The policy must contain the provisions regarding the educational needs
of the children, who have been found in the present study to be mainly affected by the
disappearance of the family member. Similarly, livelihood needs of the families
should also be taken care of in addition to the health care for the families, as majority
of the families are reported in the present study to be having an impact on their
psychological and physical health. It should be ensured that the government’s interim
relief reaches all families.
The impact on the physical and mental health is alarming. A substantial number of families suffer from psychological distress. It is recommended that the physical and mental health systems should be further strengthened. A comprehensive and strong community based psychosocial services should be set not only in cities but in rural areas as well. With a large number of families struggling with the stress in their lives, the need for psychological support including counselling is essential and should be provided with basic psychiatric support, including medication at primary health centre level. Also the specialised training in unresolved grief counselling and establishment of special need support groups and specialised self help groups for families of disappeared persons. The formation of support groups of victims can be encouraged to help the victims fight isolation and self stigmatization.

Armed conflict often results in the disruption of welfare services particularly health services. The nongovernmental organizations can intervene in the areas of reproductive and mental health by providing adequate health facilities and psychosocial support services especially for the families of disappeared persons. The services may include psycho-social counselling, emotional support and empowerment, vocational training, special legal status.

The present study points out a number of areas of action which need to be addressed very effectively, involving coordination of various agencies. The need for effective and comprehensive support services for the families is very essential. The importance of family association is important and steps to assist family association should be taken, which will allow the families to meet together and ensure their participation in the overall process of searching.

Acknowledging the fact that the families are the secondary victims of disappearance when any member of the family goes missing, it is important that a great deal of attention is devoted to their needs so that the impact on the family is softened if not eradicated. In the present study it is found that the families are encountering problems which are multi dimensional. It is recommended that to address the issues of the families the involvement of families, friends, government
and nongovernmental organisations, researchers, policy makers, practitioners and media.

In the present study it is found that, the impact on the families due to the phenomenon of disappearance is complicated and multi dimensional which is social, health and psychological in nature, due to the combination of various aspects, therefore any intervention should not be approached solely from the political or technical point of view. It is recommended that an intervention is needed to be purely based on psychosocial point of view, which takes in mind the socio-political effect of the disappearance phenomenon as well as the traumatic impact that occur in the minds of the families who are disturbed by the disappearance of the loved one. Any intervention should be long term, thus avoiding short term which would create false expectations in the families which in turn will create a process of frustration. It is very important that one should understand that the impact of disappearance are social and psychological in nature and therefore demand social answers while acknowledging that each family that approaches the programme needs to be given the individualized attention to their necessities. This kind of organised work creates a positive effect on the mental health of the family.

There is a need for the development of social sustainable programmes by the organisations involved with the families of disappearance. The organisations should involve families and ensure that they are actively taking charge of any initiative to bring the change in their lives. The commitment of the families, their motivation, their doubts, dreams and fears should be integrated with the development of the scope and contents of the programmes. This will help them claim more ownership of the activities within a programme, which consequently will have a very positive effect on the mental health of families.

It is recommended that the research needs to be undertaken to explore the effectiveness of various programmes. It can be done to find the ways which can help in reduction or avoidance of the social and economical costs associated with the family needs to be addressed by the community, government, non-governmental
organisation. Furthermore, there should be the education and public awareness strategies to provide a better understanding about the issues of the families in the community. There should be the consultation with community and government organisations as very little information is available about their operation or effectiveness. A critical need for research, monitoring and evaluation to determine what is appropriate for the minimizing the impact on the families of disappeared persons.

It is pointed out in the present study that all the families are a part of the organisations of families of disappeared persons. It is recommended that the organisation should not project families as victims because this paternalist approach will be a source for new pains and also cause limitations in the development of action to overcome the challenges faced. They should be made to feel that they have an enormous potential of positive resources that can be harnessed. The condition of being a victim should instead be taken as an engine that gives an impulse to the personal and collective efforts to overcome the problems being faced by the families of disappeared. The programmes and policies designed should correlate with the commitment, motivation, dreams, and fears of the families. This will help in developing more and more ownership on part of the families in any programme aimed at rehabilitating the victim, which in turn will have a positive impact on the programme.

Furthermore, it is recommended that more and more International humanitarian organizations should be encouraged to play a part in the process of Documentation and survey of victims of armed conflict in order to assess the scale of the problems that affect families of disappeared Persons. The NGOs can be the effective vehicle to advocate for the rights and liberties of persons in armed conflict. They can provide legal education and representation to the individuals and groups working on rights of persons disappeared and their families. Not only in process of legal rights but NGOs should be encouraged to play an active role in promoting the restoration of peace in areas of conflict, as it is only after peace is ensured that welfare actions can take place.
Many of the families who are aware about the location of their family member, but are afraid to share with anybody because of fear may be contacted through social workers. Social workers can encourage such families to give information, if any they have about the disappeared family member. This will help state to get a clear picture about the number of disappeared in the Valley.

Also, the state should enact adequate national legislation to protect and assist families of disappeared, in particular be establishing, or ensuring respect for, their rights to land and inheritance; this in turn will lead to more belief in state machinery.