CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter conceptualizes the study of adolescents living with political violence in Kashmir within the framework of resilience research approach\(^1\). Political violence has been theorized as an instance of social suffering and meanings constructed by children within such a context can explain their subjective experiences of stress. Figure 4.1 presents the research process beginning with a qualitative inquiry into construction of experiences by children, as the aim was to understand children’s experiences of living with political violence from their own point of view and in their own voices. Once these constructions were analyzed several processes were parsed out that served as resources for coping. Two culturally salient processes which seemed to influence children’s coping were religious and political beliefs. But the narratives could not provide any clear indication of how these belief systems influenced children’s coping process. Thus the present study was conceptualized to study interplay between risks, religious meaning systems and political ideologies and responses to political violence that lead children to resilience and/or vulnerability.

The present chapter will discuss the rationale for the study, the methodological paradigm, the research design that guided the research, and it will describe the process of data collection in Kashmir, and will end by describing the techniques of data analysis.

\(^1\) Described in chapter two.
4.1 Rationale

4.11 Resilience approach

Until recently, studies on populations living in stressful situations focused upon understanding the development of pathology. However, gradually there has been a growing interest in positive trajectories of resilience and growth. The resilience research approach is positive psychology’s attempt at focusing on mental health defined in terms of health and not in terms of mere absence of illness. The critique of adopting a PTSD model unquestioningly is another factor pushing the importance of positive psychology.

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2 See chapter one and two.
A critique of PTSD model was presented by Richman (1993), which attacked it for its bio-medical stance, lack of diagnostic specificity leading to difficulties in measuring the symptoms and its inability to offer clear guidelines for intervention because of the seemingly vast reactions following a traumatic exposure. Cairns and Dawes (1996) suggested that a shift in focus from severe or serious symptoms to adaptation might give a more accurate and complete picture of the emotional impact of trauma resulting from chronically violent environments. They strongly recommended an approach in understanding psychological suffering in non-West countries which does not rely only on counting symptoms, “…expression of psychological trauma in children anywhere and especially in children in non-Western societies is a complex phenomenon to which counting symptoms is but one approach” (p. 130).

Moreover, findings from traumatic stress literature shows that many of those who face life-threatening experiences or loss events fare relatively well, bearing few long term impairments (Norris et al., 2002). This group is comparatively less studied because they report few negative outcomes and are thus outside the purview of the clinician or clinical researcher (Morland, Butler and Leskin, 2008). Thus, adopting a resilience research approach is the need of contemporary stress research based on two observations. Firstly, reports of growth experiences far outnumber reports of psychiatric disorders (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004) and secondly, there is a growing impetus across a range of disciplines to move beyond a model of adaptation limited to vulnerability or deficit to one that encompasses successful adaptation (Morland et al., 2008). Therefore, instead of restricting the scope of the study to only children exhibiting PTSD symptoms or even considering PTSD as the only significant outcome of living in a politically violent context like Kashmir, the study looks albeit cautiously at resilience despite risks. Moreover the study does not define resilience in children living with political violence in Kashmir as absence of PTSD, rather the aim is to develop an understanding of what the community defines as resilience, because what resilience research needs now is a contextual and ecologically derived understanding of resilience, rather than measures of competence that may not make much sense to the community being studied (Freitas and Downey, 1998; Ungar, 2008).
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4.12 Kashmir

The presence of risk is presupposed in a study of resilience. Therefore the study had to be conducted in a setting that involved sufficient risks associated with political violence to allow resilience to emerge and Kashmir met all the requirements. Kashmir, over the last decades has become a metaphor for terrorism, destruction, conflict, struggle and a host of other less than optimal levels of survival (HRW, 2006). Its past splendour of natural beauty and adage of being the “paradise on earth” that used to evoke a sense of tranquillity stands in sharp contrast to its current South Asian nuclear flashpoint status. The chronic nature of internecine violence since 1989 has affected all the domains in a child’s life (Boyden et al., 2002).

Such difficulties have resulted in disruption of children’s behaviour as noted by mental health professionals in the Valley (Margoob as quoted by Sreedharan, 2001 and Rashid, 2004, Hussain, 2002, Khan and Ghilzai, 2002). The M.Phil. study also showed presence of fears and anxieties associated with exposure to the grenade explosion that created difficulties in children’s functioning even after three months of the explosion. The narratives reflected the insecurity of life with no assurance that a ‘person who leaves home in the morning will come back alive in the evening’ However, along with disruption and distress there existed an active attempt to cope with the difficulties and make sense of the experiences to accommodate it or assimilate it in the cognitive framework by developing new skills and worldviews. The positive changes perceived by the children included a sense of preparedness for violence, sense of confidence after having survived the blast, a stronger faith in God, a sense of empathy with other victims of violence and social support from friends and family in the form of humour, attention, empathy, care, etc.

Thus, Kashmir was a context where chronic adversities existed alongside adaptation, resilience despite risks, where over-politicization of social problems existed along with strong family ties and religious belief systems. The inherent nature of politics and social upheavals in Kashmir and the observable resilience in children made it the best possible setting for a research on resilience in children living with political violence.
4.13 Religious and political meaning systems

Resilience is the ability to do well despite risks. Previous researches identified variables associated with resilience in different contexts. The trend shifted to understand processes underlying resilience. The present phase in resilience research aims to identify cognitive mechanisms that govern resilient adaptation (Richardson, 2002) and role of religious and political ideologies have remained ambiguous because of mixed findings (Punamaki, 1996, Slone et al., 1999) though these processes are considered to be very important especially in a situation of political violence (Garbarino et al., 1991; Barenbaum, 2004). While discussing their findings, Slone et al. (1999) emphasised the need for more fine-grained and meticulous analysis of ideology on children’s psychosocial endurance and well-being. Thus the present study aimed to understand the role of two very significant meaning systems – religion and political ideology. Evidence of religion being used to make sense of traumatic experiences was noted in the narratives of children from Srinagar and the same group also constructed the political situation in two very different ideological veins. However, the study could not explore the relationship between religious meaning making and political meaning making and resilience (Dasgupta, 2006).

The focus on religion and political ideology in Kashmir has special significance because the present conflict is supposedly rooted in the division of India on religious lines after independence\(^3\). The basic contention fuelling the conflict in Kashmir has religion and politics intertwined in such a fashion that a matter like land transfer to a Hindu shrine board in Kashmir escalated into violent protests causing fatalities and causalities and secessionist sloganneering (Puri, 2008). Within this context, it is expected that religion and political understanding would also motivate children making sense of their experiences. Thus, keeping the context of Kashmir conflict in mind and the important roles of religion and politics in meaning making process and the fact that these processes haven’t led to any conclusive finding so far, we decided to understand their impact on an adolescent’s resilience in Kashmir.

\(^3\) See chapter three for a discussion of the historical genesis of the conflict in Kashmir.
4.2 Deriving the research questions and objectives

4.21 Ontology and epistemology

The present study was based on a constructivist realism ontology (Cupchik, 2001) that aimed to dovetail richness with precision. This ontology aims to bridge the gap between the two contrasting conceptualization of reality espoused by positivism and constructivism by accommodating the best of both. Constructivist realism ontology believes in finding the correlates of people’s construction in the lived world of a representative sample of the people who constructed those realities. This ontology accepts that reality is both subjective and objective. Therefore it moves beyond the epistemology of behaviourism and positivistic psychology and includes contextual realities in its ambit. The Positive psychology movement, described in chapter two, aimed to bring this change in psychology’s tendency to isolate the individual from her/his context. In this sense the constructivist realism ontology accepts that there can never be an absolute match between prediction and a result and that there are multiple factors involved in social phenomenon which can rarely be studied completely.

According to Cupchick, constructivist realism is a position that acknowledges that:

1. Social phenomenon exists independently of the researcher. This real world can be approached either emphatically or sympathetically. Our qualitative study was an emphatic understanding of what is real for children in Kashmir. The present study aims to now explain this reality as abstracted through the children’s constructions. Therefore, it is not a complete picture but a picture that is limited by our understanding of children’s constructions.

2. The purpose of this ontology is to study social realities in such a way that richness and precision complement each other. In Cupchick’s words, “... if our abstract concepts do not account for patterns in the lived-world then our theories lack in value, however they are derived. But if the in-depth examination of a phenomenon helps clarify patterns that lie within it and these patterns are formally described, then the qualitative and quantitative
approaches will have done their duty; richness and precision will have complemented each other” (2001, ¶ 31). The purpose of the present research was to understand and explain the social realities of adolescents living with political violence through the lens of theory generated from the context as well as from various other settings.

3. The main aim of social science research is to study processes that underlie social phenomenon. The first step is to develop intersubjectivity between the researcher and the researched, so that there is a common ongoing reference point. This was achieved through living in the context, i.e. Kashmir for an extended period of time and understanding the subjective accounts of experiences through the qualitative study. Quantitative methodology inculcates this intersubjectivity into an “evocative stimuli design” presented to relevant groups and “the resulting statistical interactions help tease out the underlying processes” (¶ 31). The three main variables in this study – resilience, religion and political ideology were based on the intersubjective reality garnered from the context. The conceptual framework described in the next section would present the models for understanding statistical interaction through which in this study we have explained resilience in adolescents living in Kashmir.

4.22 Research questions and objectives

The research questions of the present study emerged out of the qualitative study that showed a presence of resilience among young survivors of a grenade explosion in Srinagar. The results also confirmed that a child’s construction of self, family and political ideology had an impact on the child’s experience of stress and coping. Going backwards from the findings that showed a presence of resilience, we asked why and how does political violence create risks for adolescents living with it? Moving further into understanding the risks, we also wanted to know whether the risks were same for everyone living in Kashmir or it differed depending on certain attributes present in the child or the child’s environment. Finally, we wanted to understand the mediating mechanisms of meaning making processes involving religion and politics. Therefore, the
basic question guiding the present research was *what are the processes underlying resilience in children living in politically violent Kashmir?*

Thus, the study of resilience in children living with political violence in Kashmir aims:

1. To understand how the community defines resilience in Kashmir.
2. To understand children’s experiences of political violence and identify the risks associated with exposure to political violence.
3. To understand ways in which children consolidated their knowledge of religion and politics to develop religious meaning systems and political ideologies.
4. To study the nature of resilience and vulnerability in adolescents.
5. To identify factors associated with resilience and vulnerability.
6. To develop a model explaining the role of religion and political ideology in fostering resilience amidst the risks associated with political violence.
7. To suggest guidelines for preventive interventions for children living with political violence in Kashmir.

### 4.3 Conceptual framework

The study was conceptualized in terms of the resilience research approach that guides studies of resilience in different settings. As explained by Freitas and Downey (1998) and Boothby (2008) resilience research needs to adopt a more ecological framework to study the phenomenon and one needs to study the organization of factors which are associated with resilience, rather than concentrating on identifying individual factors which by themselves fail to explain the dynamic process that resilience is. According to Boothby (2008) an ecological framework studies the ecologic shock or destabilization caused by armed conflict and studies the culture of violence that damages child protection and support at multiple, interacting levels. The ecological perspective serves as a model that seeks to understand processes of risk and resilience in the lives of adolescents living in specific societies. The three essential components of this approach to resilience are: (a) context, (b) psychological mediating units, and (c) focus on how psychological mediators are organised in relation to one another and to relevant features of the context (Freitas and Downey, 1998, p. 268).
Figure 4.2 Conceptual framework

The context is defined by risk and protective capacities of people and systems that surround the child and it also includes the features of the community life that may be particularly protective or harmful (Boothby, 2008). Figure 4.2 shows risks and protective factors define the context of adversities for a particular child. Living with adversities subsequently can culminate into vulnerability or resilience depending on the presence or absence of protective mechanisms. A protective or harmful mechanism is basically the way psychological mediators are organized in relation to each other and to other features in the context.
4.31 Context

The risks define the context for children living in Kashmir. Risk has been conceptualized from an ecological perspective by assessing the school, family and community context along with the child’s personal characteristics (Hixson and Tinzmann, 1990). According to this conceptualization an adolescent is at risk if one of the areas is not functioning optimally and is not compensated by the other areas. In the present study community context is being studied by taking two different geographical and socio-political locations, family and school contexts have been merged under the heading of “socio-economic conditions” reflected in the type of school attended by the child and child’s age and gender are also being considered as potential risk factors. Apart from age and gender an adolescent’s exposure to politically violent incidents is another category of risk. All of this taken together forms the broader ecology of conflict that includes various power dimensions that may have an impact on the way political violence
is experienced by various groups differing in social class, gender, ethnicity, etc (Boyden, 2003).

Therefore, violence proneness of the area in which the child lives, the child’s own experiences of political violence, the socio-economic condition of the child and her/his age and gender are features of the context that define living with political violence in Kashmir. The unidirectional arrows in figure 4.3 from the risks to living with political violence in Kashmir indicate that we aim to understand –

How does living in areas differing in violence proneness define living with political violence in Kashmir?
How does exposure to violence define living with political violence in Kashmir?
How does socio-economic condition define living with political violence in Kashmir?
How does the child’s age and gender define living with political violence in Kashmir?

The double arrows connecting the risks indicate that these features are interacting with each other and therefore they answer the question –

How do these factors interact with each other while defining living with political violence in Kashmir?

4.32 Psychological mediating units

The two psychological mediating units that are being studied here are religious meaning systems and political ideologies of children. These psychological mediating units are constructed within the context of living with political violence in Kashmir. The unidirectional arrows in the figure 4.3 from living with political violence in Kashmir to religious meaning system and political ideologies therefore indicate that these mediating units are influenced by the context, which is defined in terms of the risks. Garmezy et al.’s (1984) immunity versus vulnerability or protective factor model was used to interpret the effects of these factors.

4.33 Organization of psychological mediators in relation to one another and to relevant features of the context

This is the crux of the conceptual framework and is depicted in the figure 4.3 in terms of unidirectional arrows joining the context and the psychological mediating units with responses to political violence. The other unique feature of this ecological
framework is that resilience is not defined in terms of absence of disorder; instead it is defined in a culturally salient manner in terms of those features that define resilience in adolescents living in Kashmir from the perspective of the community. Resilience was conceptualized as a dynamic process defined by indicators considered adaptive in the context of Kashmir by the community. Developing culturally salient definitions of resilience is a way to avoid the constrain created by the arbitrariness in selection of outcome variables and the challenge of accounting for social and cultural context in which resilience occurs (Ungar, Liedenberg and Brown, 2005). Moreover, the framework (figure 4.3) also includes vulnerability, which lies at the end of the continuum, because adaptive or maladaptive behaviour are not separate categories. They differ in terms of the dimensions and extreme deviation towards resilience would indicate excellent adaptation and extreme deviation towards vulnerability would indicate severe maladaptation. This dimensional conceptualization of responses reflects the fact that resilience does not mean invulnerability (Luthar, 2005).

The organization of mediating units and the context were studied by variable based and person based approaches discussed in chapter two. The variable based approach studied the moderating and mediating effects of religious meaning system and political ideology with respect to the relation between the risks as predictors and resilience and vulnerability as outcome measures. The models have been discussed next.

**Moderator effects**

According to Baron and Kenny (1986) a moderator is a variable that affects the direction and/or strength of relation between the independent and dependent variable.
Figure 4.4 Moderator model

The above model explains whether exposure to political violence leads to resilience or vulnerability differently depending on the child’s religious meaning system.

Path $a$ in figure 4.4 represents the impact of exposure to political violence on responses to political violence, path $b$ represents the impact of religious meaning system on responses to political violence and path $c$ represents the impact of interaction between these two variables. The moderator hypothesis is supported if Path $c$ is significant.

**Mediation effects**

While a moderator explains when certain effects hold true, a mediator explains how and why such an effect occurs. A variable intervenes between the predictor and outcome variable in such a way so as to mediate the impact of the predictor variable on outcome variable.

Figure 4.5 Mediation model

There are three causal paths in a mediation model, denoted as $a$, $b$ and $c'$ in the figure 4.5. The mediation hypothesis holds true when it satisfies the following conditions with respect to the paths:

1. Path $a$ is significant that is variations in predictor variable significantly account for variation in mediator. That is if political ideology varies significantly with gender.

2. Path $b$ is significant that is variation in mediator (political ideology) significantly accounts for variation in outcome (responses to political violence) variable. That is if resilience and vulnerability significantly varies with respect to political ideology.
3. When path $a$ and $b$ are controlled, a previously significant relation between independent and dependent variable, path $c$ is no longer significant, or when path $c'$ is not significant. That is when political ideology is controlled, the relation between gender and resilience and vulnerability is no longer significant.

Since there are multiple mediators in psychology an acceptable condition denoting mediation in this field is a significant decrease in the strength of path $c'$ rather than it being totally eliminated.

According to Shrout and Bolger (2002) indirect effects of $X$ on $Y$ through the mediator $M$ is simply the product of $a$ and $b$. When the indirect effect, $a \times b$ equals the total effect $c$, it signifies complete mediation. However when the indirect effect does not equal the total effect, but is smaller and of the same sign, the effect of $X$ on $Y$ is partially mediated by $M$ and in this case the path $c'$ (effect of $X$ on $Y$ controlling for $M$) is a value other than zero.

**Person based analysis**

The person-based approach to understand the mediational mechanism would divide the sample into four groups based on their risk and resilience levels as follows:

1. High risk-high resilience
2. Low risk-high resilience
3. High risk-low resilience
4. Low risk-low resilience

These groups would be then compared with respect to the meaning systems and political ideologies.

### 4.4 Variables

Since this was a non-experimental correlation study, the variables were termed as predictor instead of independent and outcome instead of dependent (Frazier, Tix and Barron, 2004).

**4.41 Predictors**

Violence proneness of the area
Exposure to violence
Socio economic condition
Age
Gender

4.42 Moderators and mediators

Religious meaning system
Political meaning system

4.43 Outcome variables

Responses to political violence:
Resilience
Mental health

4.5 Operational definitions

Child Any person below eighteen years of age has been defined as child according to the article 1 of Child Rights Convention (Child Rights Convention, 1989).

Adolescent Any person between 10 to 19 years of age according to the working group on adolescents for the tenth five year plan. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the study.

Gender The biological state of being a boy or a girl and the socio-cultural meanings attached to it. The assumption was that boys and girls would differ in the way they processed their experiences because of gender socialization.

Political violence “All collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors – including competing political groups as well as incumbents – or its policies” (Gurr 1970, p. 3). In the present study the nature of violence perpetrated by the armed forces and militants in Kashmir and any demonstration against the ruling government demanding independence by civilians was considered to be political violence.

High violence area and low violence area In their study of ideological commitment as a protective factor, Punamaki (1996) compared children from a “high tension area” and “low tension area” and differentiated the areas in terms of whether they had been

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4 The rational for using these terms interchangeably has been explained in chapter one.
subjected to enemy shelling and attacks. Garbarino and Kostelny’s (1996) study based on the risk accumulation model divided the Israeli occupied West Bank into “high” and “low” violence areas by ranking all cities and villages by the rate of Intifada related deaths, injuries, curfews and house demolitions occurring in 1988 and 1989. Areas ranking in the top 20% were categorized as high violence areas and those in the bottom 20% were categorized as low violence areas.

In Kashmir the nature of violence ranges from cross-firing, targeted killings of political activists or government officials, destruction of private and/or public properties, IED and RDX attacks and grenade attacks (Bose, 2002). The Ministry of External Affairs, India, website shows that the 4522 total incidents of violence (there is no information about what is meant by incidents of violence) resulted into loss of life of civilians, armed forces and militants in the year 2001 and 274 incidents resulted in destruction of private and public property in the same year (Ministry of External Affairs, 2002). For the present study, high and low violence area was identified through the frequency of the following politically violent incidents occurring in the areas over the past one year (these events were based on data collected by the police in Kashmir):

- Deaths of civilians, armed forces and militants
- Encounters and cross-firing
- Demolitions of public and private properties
- Injuries to civilians, armed forces and militants
- Curfews/protests/hartals

**Exposure to violence** Studies of children living with political violence have operationlized exposure to violence in terms of number and type of exposure. Most traditional understanding of exposure to violence followed an effect indicator model, according to which political violence was considered as an underlying active force causing indicators such as witnessing killing, being injured, etc. However, Netland (2001) argued for adopting a causal indicator model to measure exposure to political violence. According to this model “objective real life events of political violence to which the person or significant others have been exposed, determine the construct exposure to political violence” (p 317). According to this conceptualization exposure to political violence should be treated as a composite variable with causal indicators instead
of a latent variable with effect indicators. For example, “bereavement” is caused by death of father, death of mother, death in family, etc. and these incidents are not effects of bereavement but are caused by either armed forces or militants (see figure 4.6).

![Diagram of causal indicator model operationalizing exposure to political violence](image)

Figure 4.6 Causal indicator model operationalizing exposure to political violence

It would be erroneous to consider child’s exposure to political violence to cause death of father instead death of father causes the child’s nature of exposure. Similarly, being separated from father, mother, family causes the construct of “separation” and not the other way round. In the context of Kashmir exposure to political violence would be measured as a composite of various types of exposure like witnessing violence, victimization due to violence, etc.

**Socio economic condition** Family’s socio economic status is usually determined by father’s and mother’s educational level (primary, secondary, graduate, post-graduate), father’s and mother’s employment status (unemployed, employed in government sector, self employed, daily wage earner, professional) and income. Field experience in Kashmir showed that children were not sure of the socio-economic indicators mentioned above resulting into arbitrary guesses or duplication of responses. Thus, an alternative to socio-economic status was considered in the form of the type of school attended. Similar categorization of children as lower or middle SES was done by Muldoon and Trew (2000) in Ireland. In that study schools were categorized as low or middle SES on the bases of information about the percentage of pupils whose parents received income support. Such indices were not available in Bandipore or Uri especially in the government schools. Thus considering government schools as representing lower socio-economic condition and private schools as representing higher socio-economic condition was based on the following points:
Private school education (except the Fallah aam trust schools) was more expensive than government school education, thus only those who could afford it would send their children to private schools.

The syllabus of private schools was tougher than that of government schools, thus parents or families with an ability (educated parents or able to afford private tuitions) to cope with the higher level syllabus would send their children to private schools.

Private schools are not present in far-flung and interior villages, thus children living in such areas would have to go to government schools. Far-flung and interior villages are often hideouts for militants and thus witness higher numbers of counter-insurgency incidents like crackdowns, cross-firings and grenade attacks.

The above information was gathered from school teachers and administrators that reflected perceptions of children’s socio-economic condition in the lack of any other statistical data. It was understood that children of well to do families could also attend government schools in certain areas, in that sense attending government school or private school was not just about status but about condition. Thus the method aimed to understand socio-economic condition as one that went beyond just income indicators as it had components of lifestyle and social milieu.

**Religious meaning system** Since the present study was based on Muslim children living in Kashmir, religious meaning system was operationalized as beliefs about how the world works according to Islam.

**Political ideology** Political ideology referred to the cognitive framework based on beliefs of a child about the nature and cause of the Kashmir conflict, the extent to which she/he legitimized the use of violence, formed attitudes towards the conflict, militants and the state forces and imagined the future of the conflict.

**Resilience** The ability to do well despite adversities. The meaning of what doing well refers to in the context of Kashmir was based on the following three questions posed at people in the community:

- What are the biggest challenges youth in this community face?
• What are some of the common things that help youth cope with the challenges they face?
• What do people in this community think helps children cope with challenges?

**Vulnerability** The presence of somatic (headaches, poor appetite, digestion and sleep), depressive/anxiety (frightened, cry, unhappy, worthlessness) and cognitive/decreased energy (can’t think or make decisions, work suffering, can’t enjoy daily activities) symptoms.

**Levels of resilience** Children exhibiting high behavioural indices defining resilience in the context of Kashmir and low mental health difficulties would constitute a high resilience group, while exhibiting fewer resilient behavioural indices and high mental health difficulties would constitute a low resilience group.

### 4.6 Hypotheses

The hypotheses were derived from literature review and results of the qualitative study. They describe propositions of how risks of living with political violence, resilience, vulnerability and meaning making processes relate to each other.

#### 4.61 About living with risk

**Violence proneness of an area will be positively related to vulnerabilities and negatively related to resilience.**

Violence proneness is an important variable as repeated experience of violence and chronic violence involving multiple traumas makes children vulnerable to negative outcomes (Nader, 1989, Macksoud and Aber, 1996). Children from high violence area may also be disadvantaged by a lower socio economic status (Garbarino and Kostelny, 1996). In Srinagar, people had begun moving away from the main city area and were constructing houses with tall boundary walls in the outskirts in order to distance themselves from the violence prone downtown areas (Dasgupta, 2006). This was done because they perceived higher risks and vulnerabilities in the congested and heavily guarded downtown areas. Thus, only those who could not afford to move away remained in the “high violence area” within Srinagar, making the area not just violence prone but also socio-economically backward.
High exposure to violence will be positively related to vulnerabilities and negatively to resilience.

Among children in Srinagar, the nature of fears and anxieties following the exposure to the grenade blast depended on the severity of injuries sustained. The hypothesis arrived upon on the basis of the qualitative data was that children with very serious injuries would experience marked changes in beliefs and attitude as compared to children with moderate or no injuries (Dasgupta 2006). There are many studies documenting the ill effects of exposure to violence, studies have also shown that the proximity, frequency of exposure, type of exposure and familiarity with the victim are dimensions of exposure that seem to predict the outcome. Loss of someone close and threat to life are the most potent stressors (Macksoud and Aber 1996) as indicated by the results from qualitative study as well. However, differences exist as reported by Even-Chen and Itzhaky (2007), who found that children from low violence area reported higher levels of violence. This could mean that children from chronic exposure areas were coping better and/or low exposure adolescents experienced events as more traumatic since they were not exposed to them on a regular basis and/or professional intervention was more in high violence areas thus making the population more resilient.

Vulnerability and resilience will differ significantly with age and gender.

Findings related to age and gender differences in trauma reactions have been non-confirming thus making generalizations difficult. Schaal and Elbert (2006) feel that gender differences in exposure to trauma, type and frequency may produce such differences in findings. Girls and older children showed greater signs of distress in their sample of Rwandan orphans who had survived the Genocide in 1994 though this had a contextual reason behind it, which may not be same for other places. Even among the Srinagar children gender and age related differences did not emerge, instead the difference in perception of experiences were related to perception of self as either outgoing, reserved or mixed (features of both outgoing and reserved). Thus, we have a non-directional age and gender hypothesis.

Socio economic status will be positively related to psychosocial functioning.

As mentioned earlier, socio-economic status and vulnerability to exposure to violence tend to be associated in these contexts. The qualitative study showed that
children living in “high violence” downtown areas had more socio-economic constraints than those living in areas away from the downtown. These children living in the downtown perceived their families as not very close and they perceived relatively more distressing stress reactions and changes following the grenade blast than the other children. The significance of socio-economic status is such that studies have shown that military violence involving dramatic scenes of shooting, danger to life, and death are less salient for children’s coping strategies than family and economic adversities (Punamaki, Muhammed and Abdulrahman, 2004). Thus, one can expect over representation of children at risk of behavioural and psychological maladaptation in lower SES groups (Muldoon and Trew, 2000) making higher SES a protective factor.

4.62 About meaning systems and ideologies

The relation between risks and vulnerability and resilience would be moderated and mediated by adolescent’s religious meaning system.

“It was already decided by Allah all mighty that this thing was to happen with me...no one could have changed that” is how a child described his severe injuries due to the grenade explosion in Srinagar. The narratives revealed that children made sense of the blast and the unexpected by turning to God and constructed it as God’s test of their belief in Him or God’s punishment for not offering Namaz, making religious beliefs a significant meaning making process following a traumatic event. However, the relation between these attributions and coping effectiveness was not clear in the qualitative study requiring further analysis. Nature of religious beliefs has been variously associated with effecting coping. A problem solving style that involves ‘collaboration’ with God is more effective than one that ‘defers’ the solution entirely to God’s wishes (Pargament, Kennell, Hathaway, Grevendgoed, Newman and Jones 1988). Religious coping activities have been associated with psychological distress cross-sectionally as well as longitudinally following the Gulf war (Pargament et al. 1994). However, the hypothesis about religion as a meaning system remains to be tested.

The relation between risks and vulnerability and resilience would be moderated and mediated by adolescent’s political ideology.

Political ideology as a meaning system is a less studied phenomenon. Links between understanding the political significance of the conflict and mental health have
however been mentioned in studies by Punamaki (1996), Hoffman and Bizman (1996) and Barber (in press). There were some initial indications that children who constructed the political situation in Kashmir as a result of lack of governance instead of a territorial issue could appreciate the political significance of the grenade blast instead of restricting their attributions to destiny and God’s will. How this understanding affects psycho-social functioning within a context of chronic political violence remains to be tested.

4.7 Research design

This was a cross-sectional survey study of resilience in children living in Kashmir.

4.71 Universe

The study was conducted in the Baramulla district of Kashmir as this was the largest district and with a large variation in violence proneness of areas falling within it.

4.72 Population

The population of the present study is boys and girls in the age range of 14 to 17 studying in government and private schools and living with their families in a high and low violence area of Baramulla, Kashmir.

4.73 Sample selection

Inclusion criteria

- Children living with their families and not in institutions like orphanages or hostels.

  Taking data from children living in institutional setups would mean adding more variables to the present study. In order to make the study feasible and with a sharper focus, it was decided that only children living in family setups would be considered.

Exclusion criteria

- Presence of congenital physical or psychological disability.

  The aim was to concentrate on risks produced by political violence, thus children with congenital disabilities were excluded because such conditions create a set of specific risks that would have confounded the results of the present study.

- Children studying in private schools run by the Fallah aam trust.
The *Fallah Aam* (For the common) trust run private schools in all areas of Kashmir. The reason we selected private and government school education as variables for the study was in order to compare children coming from different socio-economic milieu as explained earlier. However, children attending Fallah Aam private schools study on charity and are thus similar in their socio-economic status as government school children and therefore, in order to maintain the homogeneity of government and private school groups we excluded private schools administered by the Fallah Aam Trust.

### 4.74 Sampling

The purpose of the research was to study resilience of children living with political violence in Kashmir. The unit of analysis was a school going child and the sampling technique employed was a multistage sampling design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage one: Selecting high and low violence areas within Baramulla district</th>
<th>Sampling method: Rank the 8 <em>tehsils</em> within Baramullu according to the rate of politically violent incidents in 2007 and then select the highest and lowest <em>tehsil</em> to represent high and low violence area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage two: Selecting government and private schools within Bandipore and Uri</td>
<td>Stratified sampling method leading to selection of Bandipore and Uri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling method: A list of government and private schools in Bandipore and Uri was obtained from the Department of Education and schools were selected by drawing chits. Random sampling method leading to selection of 5 government schools and 4 private schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage third: Selecting boys and girls from 9th and 10th standard classes</td>
<td>Sampling method: The entire ninth and tenth standard classes from the selected schools were considered as a cluster and all the boys and girls from those classes were selected provided they did satisfied the inclusion criteria. Cluster sampling method to include entire class of boys and girls from the 9th and 10th standards of government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.7 Multi-stage Sampling Design
**4.75 Sample size**

Since the population was unknown it wasn’t possible to determine the sample size using the formula
\[ n = \frac{s^2}{SE^2} \]
where \( n \) = sample size
\( s \) = standard deviation of the variable under study
\( SE \) = standard error of mean

In this case, we used Roger Sapsford’s suggestion of having at least 40 cases for each independent variable that we wish to enter into the analysis (2007, p. 92). Therefore, comparing children from high and low violence areas would necessitate a minimum sample of 40, introducing type of school (government and private) the sample size would have to be \( 40 \times 2 = 80 \). Further, introducing years of education (9\(^{th}\) standard and 10\(^{th}\) standard) would make the sample size \( 80 \times 2 = 160 \) and finally introducing gender (boys
and girls) would require a sample size of $160 \times 2 = 320$. In order to keep a provision for non-response and lost cases we decided to collect data from a sample of 400 children.

4.8 Tools for data collection

Data were collected with the help of a questionnaire comprising of six subsections. The consent form and questions regarding the socio-demographic profile of the child and the child’s family. The other five subsections covered various variables under study and have been discussed next. The Religious Meaning Making Questionnaire and Children’s Political Ideology in Kashmir Questionnaire were constructed by identifying items from the narratives of the qualitative study. For example, “I have not read the Koran fully though my family tells me that I should. My father tells me that He will ask you when you go up that why didn’t you listen to my word” and other similar instances in the narratives gave way to one of the items in RMMQ like, “If I don’t behave according to the Koran, God will not be pleased”. Thus, an initial list of items measuring religious meaning making and political meaning making was made, reviewed, and modified to develop a working questionnaire, which was finalized by following the steps described in the International Resilience Project Manual (this has been explained in detail in the data collection sub-section ‘finalizing the questionnaire’).

4.81 Consent form and socio-demographics

The consent form included one page introduction to the purpose of the research and the researcher’s affiliation and contact details. Consent was sought in writing after spelling out the ethics of research, that guaranteed confidentiality and other rights that the participant had (see Appendix I). Though we did not include parent’s education, occupation and income in our operational definition of socio-economic condition, our questionnaire included these open-ended questions in order to check if we got any substantial data. The socio-demographic also asked for the child’s date of birth and ethnicity.

4.82 Exposure to Violence in Kashmir Questionnaire

This was a 32 item yes/no, coded 1/0 scale with seven subsections measuring varying types of politically violent experiences, adapted from The Childhood War
Trauma Questionnaire presented in Macksoud and Aber’s (1996) study of children in Lebanon. The items were modified according to nature of political violence in Kashmir, identified through qualitative interviews with children and adults living in Srinagar and Baramulla.

A score of 0 meant that the incident never occurred while a score of 1 meant that the incident had occurred at least once in the life time of the child. A total score indicated the number of politically violent incidents experienced irrespective of the type of incident experienced. There was no justification to calculate an internal consistency score for this scale as there is no theoretical rationale to expect consistency in exposure to discrete political experiences as noted by Slone et al. (1999) and Netland (2001).

Level of exposure was calculated by considering ±1 SD criterion. That is those above 1 SD were considered to have high level of exposure and those below 1 SD were at a low level of exposure and those between ±1 SD were the medium exposure group.

4.83 Self reporting questionnaire (SRQ20)

The SRQ20 has been derived from four psychiatric morbidity instruments from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds (Harpham et al., 2003). It was developed by Harding et al. for a WHO collaborative study to screen for common mental disorders in primary health care (as cited in WHO, 1994). The WHO has recommended the use of SRQ20 in its 1994 manual, which also reviews a number of SRQ20 studies and reports its validity and reliability (WHO, 1994). This questionnaire has been used with samples comprising of adolescents and adults in a number of studies mentioned in the WHO user’s guide (WHO, 1994). The questionnaire indicates probable cases of mental disorder that cannot be substituted for a clinical diagnosis. Instead, it can be used as a screening instrument. It reflects the multidimensional nature of “mental illness” as factor analyses identifies three factors: somatic, depressive/anxiety and cognitive/decreased energy (Harpham, et al. 2003). The SRQ 20 has been adapted to the Indian context previously. Jaswal (1995) established the cut-off score of 7/8 through an empirical study of reproductive health in Bombay. Similarly, Nasir (1997) established a cut-off score of 11/12 for the Kashmiri translation of the SRQ20 in his study of widows in Kashmir. Succeeding studies of Kashmiris have considered the 11/12 score (Sharma, 2003,
Average cut-off scores in other countries have been in the range of 5/6 to 7/8 as mentioned by Harpham et al., (2003).

The SRQ20 has 20 yes/no questions and the cut-off score for the present sample was 11/12. A score above 12 would indicate probable cases of mental disorder. Those above the cut-off are referred to as caseness and those below 11 are referred to as non-caseness. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the test for the present sample was .79, which indicated very high internal consistency.

**4.84 Child and youth resilience measure (CYRM)**

The CYRM is an instrument developed by an international team of researchers taking a culturally sensitive approach to understand how youth around the world effectively cope with the diverse challenges they face. The International Resilience Project (Unger and Liebenberg, 2006) developed the instrument and collected data from over 1500 children in 14 communities worldwide. As part of that research in India, data were collected from Manipur, a State where children have to cope with problems of poverty, insurgency and violation of human rights.

The instrument had 28 global items and culturally relevant site-specific items were added to these by following the qualitative methodology described in the Manual of the International Resilience Project (2006). The final version of CYRM used in Kashmir included 41 questions (26 global items and 15 site specific items) asking children “to what extent” the questions applied to them and giving them a choice of five response categories starting – 1 (not at all), 2 (a little), 3 (somewhat), 4 (quite a bit) and 5 (a lot). A mean score closer to 5 would indicate greater presence of resilience in dealing with political violence in Kashmir. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the total scale was .82, indicating very high internal consistency.

**4.85 Religious beliefs Questionnaire**

The questionnaire for religious beliefs was a five point Likert scale ranging from Not at all true (1) to Very true (5). It consisted of 30 items drawn from interviews with adolescents as well as the advisory committee from the community. The questionnaire was designed in such a way so as to measure two things – how children defined religious concepts, and how children made sense of religious concepts. Their responses reflected beliefs about self and the nature of the world and their interrelations with respect to
Islam. Descriptive beliefs were reflected in the items where children’s definition of concepts were measured and motivational or prescriptive beliefs were reflected in the items measuring how children made sense of religious concepts. The items were such that for each concept three explanations were available and the respondent had to choose how much they agreed with each of the explanation. For example, item 3 “I pray because …” had three explanations –

“That is the only way to make God help me”,
“I feel close to God” and
“Others would disapprove of me if I did not”.

The respondent had to mark her/his level of agreement with each of these explanations. The reason why children were asked to indicate how much they agreed with each of the explanation on a five point scale was in order to avoid forced choices that would represent only one aspect of a belief system. We believed that religious belief systems would include several dimensions so that when a child who prayed because that was the only way to make God help her, she could also be praying because she felt others would disapprove of her if she did not. These propositions were not ‘either or’. Types of religious meaning systems were identified after data collection and the Cronbach alpha coefficients for the sub-scales have been mentioned in chapter six.

4.86 Children’s Political Beliefs in Kashmir Questionnaire

The interviews conducted with adolescents and the advisory committee in Kashmir yielded data on the general trend of political beliefs held by adolescents there. These beliefs centred around political choice, explanations for the problem in Kashmir, role of army, government and attitude towards use of violence as a means to achieve political ends. These themes were converted into questionnaire items and pilot tested. The political ideology questionnaire included 39 items and adolescents had to indicate their perception, opinion and attitude on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Not at all true (1) to Very true (5). Since the items concerned political beliefs in Kashmir, there was a presence of differing ideologies within these belief systems. However we also realized that ideologies were not within air tight compartments and the one wanting Independence may also to some degree want to be part of Pakistan and to some degree be part of India. Thus like the Religious Beliefs questionnaire here too the respondents were expected to
mark their level of agreement for each option. For example, item 8 “if I had to choose, I would choose …” the options were -
“Pakistan”,
”India” and
“Independence for Kashmir”

The respondent had to mark her/his level of agreement with each of these explanations. Types of political ideologies were identified after data collection and the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the sub-scales have been mentioned in chapter six.

4.9 Process of data collection

The data collection began in August 2007 and lasted until December 2007. The entire process was divided over several steps described next.

4.91 Dividing the area according to violence proneness

The first step according to the sampling design was to identify high and low violence areas. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is divided into two divisions, Kashmir and Jammu. The districts falling under the Kashmir division are:

Srinagar (Summer Capital)
Budgam
Anantnag
Pulwama
Baramulla
Kupwara
Leh
Kargil
Bandipore (from April 2007, formerly part of Baramulla)

The initial idea was to rank the districts based on frequency of violent incidents over the last one year. I approached the District Police Headquarters in Batmaloo, Srinagar for data on politically violent incidents occurring in all districts of Kashmir. However, the application to the police headquarters failed to bring forth any information about the rate of violence in each district of Kashmir. After waiting for almost two weeks
without any results I had to conduct an informal survey of police officials and other professionals (newspaper, human rights, government) for their perception of violence proneness of various districts in Kashmir. From that survey, I found that Baramulla was considered the most violence prone district followed by Kupwara because these districts included the LOC neighbouring Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and had dense forested areas that made good militant hideouts. Because of such features, these areas were highly populated with the armed forces, which led to more skirmishes between the public and armed forces, more fear and more protests. All respondents stressed that since Baramulla was the largest district in Kashmir the violence proneness in it varied from very high to very low. Each district was divided into several tehsils, which differed in their violence proneness. Thus, an entire district could not be considered homogenous in terms of violence proneness making it prudent to compare tehsils within districts instead. Thus, instead of comparing two districts in Kashmir, we narrowed down to comparing two tehsils within Baramulla.

4.92 Features of Baramulla

Baramulla town is known to be as old as the Valley in Kashmir. The city of Baramulla was founded by Raja Bhimsina in 2306 BC and was the original gateway to the Valley of Kashmir before the Jammu-Srinagar roads were constructed. Because of its location as the gateway to the Valley it enjoyed religious and political significance. Hindu shrines, Sikh gurdwars, and shrines and mosques of Muslims were part of its landscape. The “gateway” status also made it prone to internal and external invasions and it was a regular battlefield for the Kings of Kashmir (Jammu and Kashmir, 2001).

The present day Baramulla is the largest district in Kashmir, spread over an area of 4588 square kilometres and with a population of 11,69,780 that is second highest after Srinagar (Census, 2001). The district is bounded by Kupwara in the north, Budgam and Poonch in the south, parts of Srinagar and Ladakh in the east and has the Line of Control in the west. It is divided into nine tehsils namely Baramulla, Sopore, Bandipore, Pattan,
Sonawari, Tangmarg, Gurez, Uri and Rohama. Kashmiri is the main language of the people in the district, Pahari and Gojari are also spoken in Uri and the areas near the foothills of Gulmarg and Bandipore and Sheena (Dard) is the local language in Gurez. The literacy rate of the district is 45.50% and the gender ratio is of 903. Agriculture and horticulture, especially apples is a major source of income. Total area under forests is 2690 hectares that is highest in Kashmir division. The present day Uri-Muzaffarabad road was the only all weather link that the Valley enjoyed with the rest of the world until 1947, after which this road lead to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and was closed for normal traffic. Recently the Government of India opened up this road by issuing special visas to allow people to visit family across the LOC.

**High and low violence areas within Baramulla**

Baramulla being a border town has been under heavy army surveillance because of easy access to infiltration and exfiltration routes ever since the beginning of militancy in Kashmir. A report titled “Dead but Not Forgotten – Survey of Death Toll in District Baramulla 1989-2006” by Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) gives a glimpse of the nature of impact in Baramulla. According to the report, 5106 people have been killed in Baramulla district between 1990-2007 with a disproportionately high number of 18-35 year old people in this statistic and mostly men (4908). Around 2508 killed were civilians who were farmers, labourers, artisans, government employees, businessmen, milkmen, blacksmiths, mechanics, engineers, etc. indicating that no section of the society remained aloof of the conflict. The militants killed were farmers, labourers, students and carpet weavers. Unidentified gunmen, militants and government forces perpetrated the killings in either cross firings, direct shootings or blasts. The unidentified perpetrators indulging in direct shootings were instances of targeted killings and are linked to the formation of Ikhwanis. Ikhwanis were renegade militants working under the tutelage of the Indian Army since 1994. The survey also shows that out of 2267 militants killed in Baramulla District, 1328 belonged to the Hizb-ul-Muhahideen (HM) group. With this background information I approached the district police headquarters in Baramulla to obtain data on the number of politically violent incidents in each tehsil to identify the high and low violence areas. Finally, this police department helped, but not
without a strong recommendation by my host in Baramulla who was a well known citizen. They furnished the data for all the tehsils except Sonawari as it was under police station of another newly formed district Ganderbal. The distribution of politically violent incidents in 2006-2007 across the tehsils in Baramulla is shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Incidents of political violence in Baramulla district in 2006-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Baramulla</th>
<th>Sopore</th>
<th>Bandipore</th>
<th>Pattan</th>
<th>Tangmarg</th>
<th>Gurez</th>
<th>Uri</th>
<th>Rohama</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encounter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossfiring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine/IED</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian injured</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police injured</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security forces injured</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilians killed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police killed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security forces killed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOs killed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>230</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data obtained from Baramulla District Police headquarters
The data indicated that Bandipore was the highest violence prone area and Gurez and Uri were the lowest violence prone areas. Bandipore and Uri were selected as sites of data collection since Gurez the lowest violence area was out of bounds because it is completely under army control with very few locals living there, and a special permission from the Army was needed to visit that place.

4.93 Finalizing the questionnaire

The aim was to make the tools as contextually grounded as possible and the steps recommended by the International Resilience Project were followed. The questionnaires measuring exposure to violence, religious and political beliefs and resilience were finalized by:

1. Understanding the setting and people living there
2. Getting local comment on the tools being used
3. Getting the tools and procedure of data collection reviewed for ethical considerations
4. Pilot testing

The first three steps were partly covered by the qualitative M.Phil. study and partly in the present study with the help of an advisory committee as recommended in the Research Manual of the International Resilience Project (Ungar and Liebenberg, 2006). The Advisory Committee (AC), comprising of four people from the community who had something important to say about children and family living in their community, was selected and a qualitative inquiry comprising of the following points was conducted with them:

1. Whom should we study?
2. What should we ask them?
3. What should we look at to learn about resilience?
4. How do we get participants interested in this research?
5. Where, when and how should we go about collecting information from people in the community?

The Advisory Committee (AC) comprised of two males and two females from Srinagar and Baramulla. The profile of the AC and findings from the interviews dealing with the meaning of resilience (questions 2 and 3) have been presented and discussed in
the chapter seven, here we discuss methodological inputs from the interviews with the AC, covered by question 1, 4 and 5.

**Whom should we study?**

According to the AC children going to schools were the best source of data as they could be accessed easily and it would be easier to approach them through a school rather than approaching them personally. After going through the questionnaire the AC also felt that it would be tough for the eight standard children to comprehend the questions, so data should be collected from older children. One of them suggested that government as well as private schools must be covered since both had two different sets of milieu giving rise to variations in socio economic status.

**How do we get participants interested in this research and when, where and how should we go about collecting information from people in the community?**

The AC suggested that approaching the school and getting the teachers to talk to the children was a good way of getting participants interested in the research. They also suggested that we should work at building trust as the questions were sensitive and children would not answer them sincerely until they were completely comfortable about it. The AC discouraged the idea of visiting each house and interviewing the mothers of the children. According to them, most mothers would not be comfortable talking to a stranger and children may not like to take the researcher home, as this would draw attention from several other people in the village and may not be safe for the researcher as well as the families visited.

Getting participants interested in the research was not a problem according to some members of the AC, though one of them felt that children especially adolescents would have reservations about the political ideology questionnaire. It was suggested that I must spend lot of time with the children and describe my work in as much detail as possible before handing out the questionnaires. The conflict in Kashmir has been of media interest for long; however, children are rarely if ever interviewed for their views. The AC suggested that building upon this point might help attract interest and attention from the participants. Since the entire questionnaire set was very lengthy, we also
decided that it must be administered in two sessions and children should be allowed to take the consent form home so that their family was aware of the study.

4.94 Ethical considerations

The tools and questionnaires were given to the AC as well as mental health professionals from Srinagar, NGO workers and Social science professors for ethical review. They were given the points on which they needed to review the tools and procedures. The points were as follows:

1. Can people be hurt in any way from taking part in this research?
2. Have people agreed to the research? Do they fully understand what they are agreeing to do and what happens to the information that they provide? Do they understand what the information will be used for? Do they understand that they can leave the study at any time?
3. Are there places where people can go if they feel uneasy or upset during the research? Who do they go to for support? Is there a local person may be on the AC who can speak to them confidentially?
4. What will be given back to the community and what can people expect will be gained from taking part in the research?

Once the reviewers felt the tools were ready to be administered they were translated into Urdu and again one of the AC was given the translated version to check whether it would be suitable for adolescents. Necessary changes were incorporated and final Urdu version was back-translated into English.

4.95 Getting local comment on the tools – pilot test

Before beginning the actual data collection, we decided to pilot test the tools because of the sensitive and complex nature of the research and because it was important to get comments of children as they were the ones who would be using the questionnaires. A short pilot study was done by administering the questionnaire on 40 boys and girls from ninth standard, private school in Wagoob, Baramulla. The aims and findings of the pilot test were:

*Check the time taken to complete the questionnaire to keep the entire procedure within one and half hours*
The time taken to answer the questionnaire over two sessions was between one and half to two hours. Giving the questionnaire in two parts was a good idea as the children felt that completing the entire questionnaire at one go would have been boring.

**Remove ambiguities and modify the language where necessary**

Certain items from the questionnaires were removed, as they did not make much sense to the children. For example, one of the items in CYRM “do you eat enough most days” did not make sense to the children and most of them replied in extreme positive. Another item in CYRM “is getting an education important to you” (M = 5, SD = 0), produced responses without any variation. Some of the site-specific items included in the CYRM were also removed for lack of clarity or applicability and at times because they were not acceptable. “Can you laugh at your problem while dealing with them”, “has your faith in other people become less because of the turmoil”, “do you think you can get back to your routine after a violent incident”, “do you think everyone in Kashmir has been affected by the violence”, “do you feel you become nervous or violent because of the current turmoil”, “do you try to behave normally for the sake of your family despite your inner tensions” and “do you believe in surrendering yourself to God” were removed. Some items were modified to improve their meaning. For example, in the Religious Meaning Making Questionnaire, the item “if I don’t behave according to the Koran it is okay” was found to be objectionable thus this was changed to “if I don’t behave according to the Koran I feel something bad will happen to me”.

**Get comments from the school authorities and children about the questionnaire, its importance and interest levels**

The pilot study showed us that the questionnaire was quite interesting and informative. Most school teachers felt that the items covered issues that were relevant to everyone living in Kashmir. Discussions with children showed that the questions I intended to use would not cause them emotional pain or unsettle them. They in fact liked being asked such supposedly “grown-up” questions. I don’t know whether they believed me when I assured them about the confidentiality of their responses but the fact that teachers were not present during the process seemed to bolster their confidence in this regard.
Gauge the reaction of children and their families about the study and have a list of frequently asked questions before the final data collection.

Overall, the reaction of children and their families was positive to the study, though this does not mean that there were no rejections. A couple of children did not want to participate in the study because they felt the questions did not concern them and some were unsure of the purpose of the study. Most frequently asked questions were about response categories, as this was the first time the children were using a Likert type scale. Other questions were specific to certain items, like the question of date of birth, since most of them were not sure of the date. They also were not sure of the meaning of Ethnicity and required explanation.

The pilot test was extremely helpful in modifying the tools as well as the communication skills required to collect data from school children in a class-room setup. It also added to my confidence. The modifications made, the AC. once again reviewed translations of the final tool.

4.96 Final survey

The final survey began after incorporating the changes in the questionnaire after the pilot study. Following the inputs received from the AC, school authorities, usually the Principal of each school (selected through random sampling) were contacted. They were explained the purpose of the research and shown the questionnaire and permission was taken from them and class teachers to conduct the research during school hours. Time-tables for collecting data were arranged with concerned teachers and the first introduction to the class was made by the class teacher. While seeking permission, I requested to be allowed to administer the questionnaire by myself without the presence of teachers in the classroom. The class teachers therefore, introduced me to the class and explained the purpose of my visit before leaving the class to me.

After spending considerable time building rapport with the students, the actual data collection took three days. Consent forms were given out the first day. Those agreeing to participate in the study were then given the first half of the questionnaire followed by the second half the next day, in order to avoid fatigue-effect setting in. The questionnaires were in Urdu but since I cannot read Urdu, I was carrying a Hindi
translation of the Urdu version in order to read out the words or at times explain the meaning in case of confusions. A rounding-up discussion followed after the completed questionnaires were collected. These discussions usually centred on what I would now do with the data and what else I planned to do in Kashmir. The children were also curious about life in Mumbai, especially because of its famous film industry. Children took around 1 hour to complete the first half of the questionnaire and took around 40 minutes to complete the second half. The discussions lasted for an average of 15 minutes.

4.10 Data analysis

The data were entered into an SPSS 15 software programme. Following statistical tests were conducted, and the $p$ value had to be at least less than .05 to be accepted as significant result.

**Cross-tabulations and Chi square analysis ($\chi^2$)**

The categorical data were analyzed by cross-tabulation and chi square analysis.

**Analysis of variance, t-tests and Sign test**

Scores were compared by ANOVA and $t$-tests. In case of many outliers the Sign test was conducted.

**Pearson’s correlation**

Pearson’s correlation test was used to identify direction and strength of associations between variables.

**Hierarchical regression**

Multiple hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test the relative predictive power of each predictor variable after controlling for all other predictors. This method was also used for testing the moderation analysis. The effect size ($r^2$) was classified according to the table presented in Kinnear and Gray (2008, p. 433) –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect size ($r^2$)</th>
<th>Size of effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;0.01 (&lt;1%)</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.01 to .20 (1-10%)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;0.10 (&gt;10%)</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Bootstrapping method**

This method was used for testing the indirect effects for the mediation analysis. An SPSS macro prepared by Preacher and Hayes (2004) was used for conducting the analysis.

**Principal components analysis (PCA)**

This is an exploratory factor analysis method. It was used to explore, summarize and describe relationships among variables in order to identify categories based on common characteristics. This method was used to analyze the data obtained through Exposure to Violence, and Religious and Political Beliefs questionnaires. Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization that only includes items with Eigen value 1 or more than 1 was utilized. Several conditions were tested to identify items from the questionnaires that were suitable for factor analysis. These conditions were (Pett, Lackey and Sullivan, 2003):

1. The determinant of the correlation matrix should not be equal to zero or close to zero, in case it is so, the matrix will have to be checked for redundant items (check those with correlations greater than .80).

2. Bartlett’s test of sphericity would test whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, larger values of Bartlett’s test would indicate greater likelihood that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. If the matrix fails this test, it cannot be factor analyzed.

3. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) is a measure of sampling adequacy that compares the magnitudes of partial correlation coefficients and can range between 0 and 1. The criteria for the KMO values were - above .90 is marvellous, in the .80s is meritorious, in the .70s is just middling and less than .60 is mediocre, miserable or unacceptable.

In case these conditions were not met, those items with low individual Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) coefficients (less than .60) were removed and the tests rerun. Therefore, not all items in the questionnaire were found to be adequate for the PCA.