INTRODUCTION
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The growth of feminist scholarship has led to several detailed and well-researched studies on the position of women in India. Feminist scholars have unravelled the social, cultural and economic basis of women's subordinate position in various regions of the Indian subcontinent. Unfortunately, the region of Kashmir has not received the attention it deserves, and the preoccupation with the insurgency in the state has peripheralized issues concerning women and gender relations. The chief objective of my proposed theme of research is to fulfil the lacunae and construct a picture of changing position of women and gender relations in the region of Kashmir, since 1947. It is, of course, well-known that the region is disrupted by continuing cycles of violence, but in the shaping of women's lives and experience; violence is only one, if indeed a dominant, factor. Despite violence, women have developed social ties and affect social capital that have transcended its constraints and restrictions. At the same time, in studying the lives of women in Kashmir, the role of violence cannot be ignored either, and one of the concerns of my study is to examine the effects of the 'culture' of 'violence' on women's development in the region.
My study broadly looks into five major issues; they are;

1. To compare the position of women under the Dogra rule with their position in Post-independence period.
2. To examine the issue of women’s development since post-independence period, considering that there has been scarcely any work done on the issue.
3. To study changes in the position of the women since the resurgence of the militancy after 1980’s.
4. To examine the impact of violence on the lives of women.
5. To examine the role of the State in women’s development.
6. To examine the role of the women’s movement in Kashmir.

Literature Review:

Kashmir is indeed a neglected region, and if it has suffered from the neglect of politicians, it has also suffered from the neglect of scholars. Compared to the kind of sophisticated studies on the position of women and gender that we have for the other regions of India, the works on Kashmir are few and far between. One scholar who has extensively worked on women in Kashmir, within a sociological framework, is Bashir Ahmed Dabla. He has written several books on women in Kashmir, but the more important ones are: Gender
discrimination in the Valley\textsuperscript{1}, multidimensional problems of women in Kashmir\textsuperscript{2}, \textit{Domestic Violence Against Women In Kashmir Valley}\textsuperscript{3}, \textit{Widows and Orphans In Kashmir}\textsuperscript{4}, \textit{Sociological Papers on Kashmir Vol. 1 \\& 2}\textsuperscript{5}. A sociologist, Dabla primarily relies on field work for the collection of data, and since no other scholar has made such an effort, his work remains an pioneering one. His study reveals the existence of discrimination against women in education, availability of jobs, nutrition, health etc. All his studies are based on empirical investigation and detailed sample surveys. The data collected by Dabla on the organization of family in Kashmir reveals the deeply structured presence of domestic violence and wife-beating in Kashmir.

While one would want to compare the incidence of domestic violence in Kashmir with other Indian states, his findings suggest that it was still relatively lower than the Indian average. Dabla’s works are incredibly useful for the present study also because they cover a wide range of issues and through empirical data’s his work has credited the

\textsuperscript{1} Dabla Bashir Ahmad, Sandeep.K.Nayak, Khurshid –Ul-Islam(ed.), \textit{Gender Discrimination In the Kashmir Valley; a survey of Budgam and Baramulla Districts}, Gyan Publications, Delhi, 2000
\textsuperscript{2} Dabla Bashir Ahmad, \textit{Multidimensional Problems of Women In Kashmir}, Gyan Publishing House, Delhi, 2007
\textsuperscript{3} Dabla Bashir Ahmad, \textit{Domestic Violence Against Women In Kashmir Valley}, JAYKAY Publications, Srinagar, 2009
\textsuperscript{4} Dabla, Bashir Ahmad, \textit{A Sociological Study of Widows and Orphans in Kashmir}, JAYKAY Publications, Srinagar, 2010
\textsuperscript{5} Dabla Bashir Ahmad, \textit{Sociological Papers on Kashmir, Volume 1 and 2}, JAYKAY publications, Srinagar, 2010
other data generated by non-governmental organizations. His works give insights, to issues of gender conflated with militancy, modernization, culture and the politics and becomes an important starting point for carrying forward the further research. There are, however, two difficulties with Dabla’s method. For one, his samples are extremely modest. His research is narrowly empiricist, and fails to develop theoretical insights from the raw data collected by him. His work *Multidimensional problem of women in Kashmir* dealt with the questions over social (such as dowry), economic, educational, health and discrimination problems. His study suggests discrimination working at various levels such as work places and there is lesser authority than men in day to day life. One of his recent works *Domestic Violence Against Women in Kashmir Valley*, Dabla has attempted to identify major acts of violence against women in the Kashmir Valley in the domestic framework; and the extent to which they are experienced. The empirical data, based on 200 women respondents from all the districts of Kashmir, covers post-marital situations like the separation of a wife from husband and the consequent sufferings for women. Issues of wife-beating, torture/Harrassment, Dowry, Divorce (threats) have also been studied with the support of relevant empirical data. The study reveals that the
practice of wife-beating was not carried out by husbands only. In many cases it was done by the members of in-laws family too, and also the practice was carried out by both men and women.

Aneesa Shafi’s work on Working Women in Kashmir deals with the problems and prospects of employment of women in Kashmir. One of her important findings is that women are attracted to specific professions, in particular, school and college teaching. The title is misleading, for even though the book purports to be about ‘working women’, it is very vague about what she means by a working woman. She is actually only concerned with women serving in the service sector, and ignore from her study the waged women workers and women in the unorganized economy.

In Women, War and Peace in South Asia, a pioneering work in the field, Rita Manchanda examines Kashmiri women’s different experiences of conflict. The article titled Guns and Burqa-Women in the Kashmir conflict, shifts the focus away from the victimhood discourse (such as The Grieving Mother) and explores women’s agency for both peace and conflict. The book explores the ways in which women negotiate violent politics in their everyday lives.

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6 Aneesa Shafi, Working Women in Kashmir, Problems and Prospects, APH publications, Delhi, 2002
7 Manchanda Rita(ed.), Women, War and Peace in South Asia; Beyond Victimhood to Agency, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2001
Manchanda maps the women in the Kashmir conflict in two narratives. The first derives from a Human Rights discourse where women figure as victims of Direct (state) and indirect violence that transforms them into widows and Half-widows of disappeared or bereaved mothers of lost sons and children. The second centres on the conventional patriarchal ideology of the Kashmiri struggle in which women symbolise the grieving mother, the Martyr’s mother and the Raped woman. As she points out, women have innovated forms of resistance grounded in the cultural space of women, especially around mourning for example Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), which politicises traditional ‘motherist’ role by taking the private act of mourning into public space. Women’s ways of acting are increasingly challenging the notion of what political activity can be. Manchanda argues that while the dominant militant discourse is organised to direct community/individuals to violence, women have a more ambivalent and shifting understanding of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of violence according to the evolution of armed struggle.

Urvashi Butalia, in her study, Speaking Peace: Women’s Voices from Kashmir, communicates the voices of all the major communities that constitute the troubled State of Kashmir. Perhaps the first of its kind in

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8 Urvashi Butalia (ed.), Women’s Voices from Kashmir, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 2002
Kashmir, it documents the testimonies of ordinary and extraordinary women. It brings forth the complexities of a situation where women of Kashmir become victims of all the ‘others’. Batalia has shown in her work how women of Kashmir are targeted by the state agents, militants and also unfortunately by their own community, most of the times for none of their faults. Her work is an important departure for my work as one gets acquainted with the kinds of dilemmas for women and my work strives to find how they cope under such complexities and how dynamic these complexities remain over a period of time? It narrates the perspectives of women in Kashmir who reject the discourses of violence on women through moral policing. And also puts forward the dilemma’s of women who conform to these prescribed rules unwillingly.

*Between Democracy & Nation: Gender and Militarisation in Kashmir* by Seema Kazi, contextualises the past two decades of militarisation in Jammu & Kashmir, exploring the involvement of both Kashmiri militants and Indian military forces. In addition, however, it also critically highlights the conflict but largely overlooked gender dimensions. Based on personal narratives of

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*Kazi Seema, Between Democracy and Nation-Gender and Militarization in Kashmir, Women Unlimited, New Delhi, 2009*
people, Kazi had met and interviewed, the author explores Kashmiri women’s political experience of militarisation, demonstrating how the struggle for freedom “centres on women’s conventional role as mothers, wives and sisters”. While Kashmiri women actively participated in the movement for Azadi through public protests and as couriers, supporters and nurses, while also providing other logistical and moral backup, there have been no women in the decision-making bodies of the separatist parties to date.

In *Women Islam and violence in Kashmir*, Nyla Ali Khan, investigates the effects of nationalist, militant, and religious discourses and praxes on a gender-based hierarchy. The book analyzes the development of the Kashmiri crisis through literature, history, and ethnography while foregrounding the status of women.

My effort here is to explore the impact of violence on women’s development, and the complex entanglement of the culture of violence with the disempowerment of women. Under this broad theme, my study makes an attempt to make a qualitative estimate of the scale of violence in Kashmir, and the extent to which violence constrains women, and prevents their development in the region. The study attempts to uncover women’s voices that have experienced violence, and to develop a framework to analyse the culture of violence within a

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gendered, sociological framework. It has been argued by historians working on partition violence, that violence against women is always met with silence. Women who are victims of violence are never allowed to express their grief and suffering, and one of the efforts of my study is to lend a voice to their silence, to provide, as it were, spaces for the articulation of their experiences and agency.
Method:

The present study is a sociological and a feminist study, which has been carried out by combination of both qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. In my filed survey I have followed the methodology of field work laid down by Aan Oaklay who argues that there is a feminist way of conducting interviews which is superior to a more dominant masculine model of such research. Oaklay points out;

‘feminist methodology requires further, that the methodology of ‘hygiene’ research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instincts of data production be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias—it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives’.

Confirming to the method prescribed for a feminist Researcher, I have kept in view the Standpoint epistemology, and refused to see the ‘facts’ or ‘data’ as separated from the realm of experience. Standpoint epistemology being an innovative approach of knowledge building breaks down boundaries between academia and activism, between theory and

practice. This approach has been followed throughout the work. Feminist Standpoint Scholars such as Abigail Brooks, argue that women, as members of an oppressed group, have cultivated a double consciousness - a heightened awareness not only of their own lives but of the lives of the dominant group (men) as well. She has further argued that Women are tuned in to men's activities, attitudes and behaviours and to their own.

This approach, as viewed by Abigail Brooks, not only takes women seriously as knowers but also attempts to translate women's knowledge into practice, so that apply what is learned from women's experience be applied towards social change and towards the elimination of the oppression not only of women but of all marginalized.

Indeed, in collecting information, it was assumed that there is no single/unilateral version of truth, and our subjective experiences and social locations determine our perception of truth or falsehood. At the same time, it is understood that certain experiences of women are gender specific; emerging from their exclusions they suffer by virtue of their sex.

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14 Ibid p-63
15 Ibid p-66
16 Ibid p-76
Kulgam in 2007 stood at 2917 sq. km and consisted of the district of Jhelum Valley. The area under the district after carrying out sectoral analysis in the southern and northern parts of Kashmir, Anantnag District is in the southern and Srinagar in the northern part of Kashmir. Anantnag is in the southern and Kashmir Districts. I have selected two districts in Jammu and Kashmir Province in Jammu and Kashmir State. I have selected the unit of analysis for my research was the Kashmiri society inhabited.

Nature of Data/Sources:
1.31% of the total area of Jammu and Kashmir State. As per 2001 census, the population of the districts is 7.34 lacs with 3.85 lacs males and 3.49 lacs females. The distribution of population between rural and urban stands in the ration of 80:20. The district consists of 393 villages, 01 Municipal Council and 10 Municipal committees. There are six Tehsils, viz; Anantnag, Bijbehara, Dooru, Shangus, Kokernag and Pahalgam. Srinagar district is situated in the centre of Kashmir Valley. As per 2001 census the district has a population of around 10.94 lacs with 6.4 lacs males and 5.5 lacs females. Srinagar district is spread over an area of 294 sq. Km. This study was carried out through interview Schedules, supplemented by official/unofficial data, archival records and also secondary works done in the relevant field. A detailed interview schedule composing 22 set of questions was framed (Appendix A). Since my respondents included illiterate persons, as well, their responses were communicated to me orally, and were then entered by me in the data sheet. The total number of respondents was 200 selected on the basis of the total number of population of women in the Valley. The sampling was done randomly.
and constituted only women respondents. Respondents were categorized on the basis of

I) Income:

a) Upper class (60 Respondents)
b) Middle class (80 Respondents)
c) Lower class (60 Respondents)

II) Residence:

a) Rural and b) urban.

As against a synchronic study, my work adopts a diachronic framework, and studies issues of women’s development in the context of changing political, social and economic developments. In other words, issues in women’s development are examined in their changing socio-economic and political contexts.

Over-view of Chapters:

While I do not wish to make comparisons with other Indian states here, my research would, hopefully, allow for such a comparative study, and enable interested researchers in comparing the position of women in Kashmir with their position in other states of India.

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Annual Family Income: Upper Class: 5,00000-10,00000 and Above, Middle Class: 1,50000 to 5,00000, Lower Class: Below 1,50000
The present study contains four chapters. Chapter I is entitled, ‘Women in Kashmir: A Historical Background’. I have attempted to examine the position of women under the Dogra rule. I have studied the position of women in general and the marginalized women in particular focusing all along the nature of their relations with the state. I have delineated the state’s alliance with the patriarchy through archival reports and other historical documents. One of the issues that I highlight is the appropriation of women’s bodies by the state. I have also looked at the nature of the participation of Kashmiri women in the struggle for independence against Dogra rule.

Chapter II, entitled ‘Women in the family and community life’ attempts to examine the issue of women’s development in the post-independent period. I have charted the Women’s development in Kashmir along the following main indices: family, education, property and health.

To study the matter I have made an effort to look at the lives and experiences of women in their families and community units. While the chapter is mainly based on my field work, I have tried to apply theoretical perspectives based on my understanding of the certain selected studies in the analysis of the data.
The chapter entitled, 'Women and the armed conflict in Kashmir' deals with the effects of insurgency on the lives of women in Kashmir. The chapter attempts to explore women's agency in Kashmir when faced with regular, routine violence. In ethnic conflicts, women are treated as markers of community identity, and are targeted to humiliate the community. The patriarchal forces within the community are no less severe on their own women, and control and discipline them in the name of the honor of the community. In Kashmir, one of the important consequences of the long decades of violence has been the emergence of female headed households. I also examine the nature of these households, in particular, their organization, distribution of affect and power. Violence, death and disappearances abruptly thrust upon these women positions of responsibility, forcing them to reorganise the household destroyed by the death of the bread earner. I have attempted to examine the consequence of the violence on the bodies of women during the conflict era in Kashmir, which still remains unabated. While one looks upon the violence as male dominated and male oriented, it becomes significant to study the social effects of such dreadful violence on women's lives so as to see how women situate themselves when their male breadwinners die or disappear. I have also looked into the issues
of women as cultural markers of their community identity, which makes them vulnerable to various kinds of policing. Further I have tried to see how women in Kashmir retained the fabric of the family and community despite repeated violence, deaths and encounters.

In Chapter four my purpose has been mainly to find out the motives behind women’s organization’s support to the ideologies of militant organizations. Here, I have noticed that women’s movements have had ‘complex and contradictory’ roles to play in Kashmir. While there have been women’s political organizations that have, supported militant organizations, there have been several others who have courageously confronted them, as well. Looking at the activities of women’s movements in Kashmir, one is visibly struck by the level of their political consciousness, and wide social support.
APPENDIX-A

*Interview Schedule*

Date: ________________________________

Place: ________________________________

Name of the respondent: __________________(optional)

Religion: ____________________________

Age: ________________________________

Status:

a) Earning

b) Non-earning

If your answer to the above question is (a), Specify your means of earning

a) Full time employment

b) Seasonal / part time employment

c) Domestic handicraft employment

d) Any other (specify)

Family income (annual):

a) 10,00000 and above     b) 500000-100000

c) 150000-500000       d) Less than 150000

Place of residence: Rural/urban

Size of the family: ____________________________
a) total members: 

b) no. of children: Boys _____ Girls _____

c) Other members (specify):

Nature of Family: Joint Family / Nuclear family

1. Do you take help of a maid in your household chores? Specify the type of labor.

   a) Always
   b) Never
   c) Sometimes

   ____________________________________________________________

2. Does your spouse help you in your domestic chores? Specify the frequency and the type of work?

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. As a woman, were you discriminated against in matters of:

   (a) Education Yes/No
   (b) Health Yes/No
   (c) Choice of Career Yes/No
   (d) Sports and Outdoor activities Yes/No
   (e) Food and nutrition Yes/No
   (f) Love and affection Yes/No
4. How often do you take part in the discussions in the family concerning property, finance and the future of the children?
   a) Never
   b) Frequently
   c) Sometimes

5. Does your spouse beat you
   a) Never
   b) Frequently
   c) Sometimes
   d) In the past (but not in the present)

6. Does your family restrict your movement
   a) Never
   b) Very often
   c) occasionally
   d) always

7. You see your spouse as a:
   a) friend
   b) partner
   c) master
   d) guardian
8. Do female members in your natal family have a share in property?  
   YES/NO

9. Did you inherit property from your parents?  YES/NO

If your answer to the above question is positive, then what is the  
proportion of your share to inherited property?  ----------------------------

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10. Which profession does your family favour for your daughters?  
    a) Teaching
    b) Medical doctor
    c) Lawyer
    d) Any profession
    e) Nurses
    f) none

11. Did your spouse and/or in laws torture you for not bringing a  
    handsome dowry?  
    a) physically
    b) emotionally
    c) both
    d) none
12. Have your husband or in laws derided you for giving birth to a female child? YES/NO

13. Specify your kind of marriage:
   a) Arranged
   b) Self selection approved by family
   c) Self selection without the approval of your family
   d) Forcible

14. Do you observe purdah:
   a) Yes
   b) No

15. If your answer to the above question is (a), what is your perception of purdah:
   (a) Covering of head (with dupattai)
   (b) Veiling of face (burqa)
   (c) Covering the body with a sheet (chadar)

16. Did you observe Purdah before marriage?
   (a) Always
   (b) Sometimes
   (c) Never
17. What has been the impact of the militant dictats on *purdah*?

(a) *Purdah* has become almost mandatory, and more and more women are forced to practice it.

(b) There has been no impact of the militant orders on purdah

(c) Covering of heads in public spaces has almost become mandatory.

18. Did your spouse instruct you to observe *Purdah*?  Yes/No

19. How has the militancy in Kashmir changed the dress of women

(a) Increasingly, women have discarded western dresses.  Yes/No

(b) Increasingly, women have discarded *sarees*.  Yes/No

(c) Women cannot wear clothes that reveal their bodies.  Yes/No

(d) Women are forced to cover their heads and wear *abaya* in public places.  Yes/No

19. Have you ever suffered sexual harassment at the hands of armed forces?  Yes/No

20. Did you ever suffer eve teasing by armed forces?  Yes /No

21. Do you know of any instance of sexual harassment by military or militant outfits in your neighborhood?