Setting occupies an important place in a narrative. It can be integral and backdrop also. Its main components are plot, action, characters, theme and style. The setting presents a logical explanation about subject of the text or story where we express ourselves to characters and to their situation. This approach aptly determines narratives of reality and fiction that encourages reader to make aesthetic interpretation of the text. The time in which novels are set do matter a great deal. If we look at the way in which Mirza Waheed and Shahnaz Bashir has evaluated the societal life in Kashmir is a tangible proof of atrocities of military forces over the people of the land and realistic setting of the novel. Indeed, the characters of the novels are fictitious but the melancholic mood and pain of characters with which verses are bursting reveal a realistic account that dictates every person’s realistic tale, actually living there.

The novels are set in the last decade of twentieth century when the military oppression and armed insurgency crossed the limits of conflict in Kashmir. The social life, rapidly in 1990’s in Kashmir has faced the whole tendency of callousness of conflict especially towards those less unfortunate innocent Kashmiris who were suppressed, killed, disappeared, tortured, humiliated, and raped. But this callousness of the conflict victimized almost every Kashmiri native.

Everyone you see, there is death and destruction! Minor girls, your daughters and sisters are raped every day by filthy Indian soldiers… hundreds of us fall to the bullets of the oppressors, to the guns of the kafir every day. We die in hundreds, no, thousands … all across the land. The cruel infidel kill us, tortures us, insults us and treats us like dirt, and then throws us into jail if we protest. (Waheed, 32, 33).¹
The ruthlessness that we observe in the texts of both novelists towards the people of Kashmir is the result of heavy deployment of military forces in residential areas, in villages, in every city, every town, on the roads, highways, streets and colonies, and even in shopping market centers and on the tourist health resorts, almost everywhere in Kashmir. The oppression and military presence in huge amount still haunts the valley of Kashmir since 1989 to the present time. The daily tolls which the novelists revealed in 1990’s are still counting in the ongoing unrest between Indian military occupation and Kashmir natives.\textsuperscript{i}

On the conscious heads we consider the efforts carried out by the novelists with revealing characters grip claim to a national equilibrium of the state, Jammu and Kashmir. The armed unrest in Kashmir is seen as a sacred and national campaign for freedom against Indian domination over the state. The authors of selected novels being the contemporary natives of Kashmir are well acquainted about the conflict have seen and observed everything they have interrupted in the novels. By and large, the stories of the novels explore struggle of colonized people for their own identity and the existence of their own history.

The Indian armed forces are hated and looked at as occupiers. The Indian authorities cannot seem to understand that (or do not want to accept) and use a different strategy rather than armed oppression is beyond anyone’s imagination.\textsuperscript{iii}

The choice to take part in armed struggle against threatened, abused, harassed, assaulted, and violated behavior of military forces gave a rapid cause to young, children, and old for the safety of their sisters, mothers, daughters, and wives and for themselves too.
Realism gives us sympathetically an accurate account of way of life in which it recognizes problems of ordinary people and complications of social life that are unremarkable and overlooked. Howells referred to Realism as “democracy in literature.” Waheed and Shahnaz interestingly focus on human life at a particular time and place of their native land, however, they frequently linked their novels to the conflict that analyses and observes the tangled web of characters and circumstances that determine the history of conflict.

In the novels the existing history of the Line of Control is a reminder of political volatility and territorial dispute. The Line of Control is a controlling line in the state between India Side Kashmir and Pakistan side Kashmir. Both countries holding their power in their possessed regions since 1947, which followed three wars, 1947, 1965, 1999, and countless fluctuation of cross-firing and shelling at Line of Control between India and Pakistan. That always results the destruction and human loss from the both sides of Kashmir in the villages located near the line of control (LOC). The fighting between India and Pakistan army at the Line of Control seeks to control over their own occupied parts of the state rather to set a peace dialogue for the peaceful atmosphere for the surveillance of the people of the land.

The dispute since 1947 has faced many resolutions and bilateral talks between India and Pakistan but never produced any normal and fruitful resolution for the state. The regime of both states, India and Pakistan, ironically highlighted their constitutional links over the state, Jammu and Kashmir. The political regime of the divided territory especially in India occupied Kashmir seems untrustworthy, which is not honest, loyal, and faithful and protective to the people of the land. It is best explained in Shahnaz Bashir’s novel, *The Half Mother*, when the protagonist, Haleema, pleads for her son’s return to the states Chief Minister and his response to
Haleema (the Protagonist) is griever, he gives an unfavorable response that is nuance that proves helplessness of our Protagonist in the hands of military occupation and also states political situation of Kashmir. Where the people who need political help to find out their loved ones are ignored. This represents helplessness of all those who met with such problems in the conflict and tried to confront the problem from their every possible ways.

‘I have gone through the same madness myself,’ he said. ‘My wife is in America. My son is in America. My daughter are here and there. My family is scattered am here. I keep no trace of my family. I am like you. Actually we are all the same. We can’t do anything. I can just pray for you.’ (Bashir, 151).

The Kashmir Line of Control in the novels of both novelists carries a communication of difficulty and apprehension of fearfulness and trepidation. The environment of mountain passes near the Line of Control is contrasted lethal and antipersonnel life. Whereas, the environment in the plains of valley in villages, towns, and cities is also horrifying and disturbing, not even a single portion of valley is safe or peaceful or free from military occupation. The rapid growth and extreme diversity of conflict combined with a concern of political exploration to provide a common focus depicted the evils of colonialism.

The setting of the novel does not take readers into the world of fiction, rather, it takes us to the reality of dispute where people are living and suffer in a war like situation. *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed is set in Indian Administered Kashmir in the early 1990’s when the war has covered the whole valley. The novel is the demonstration of a village, Nowgam, near the Line of Control mountain passes. The
novel represents anguish, fear, rape, killing, torture, repression, enforced disappearance, humiliation, and destruction of the whole valley of Kashmir.

_The Collaborator_ is a great effort by Mirza Waheed that brings Kashmir conflict into the realm of world literature. The structure of the novel as Mirza Waheed conceives comprises the movement towards the apprehension of conflict. Waheed has introduced two major places in novels that demonstrates Kashmir in every respect in the conflict. In his first novel _The Collaborator_ he has introduced a village Nowgam, near the Line of Control and the line of control passes to Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The concept of Line of Control takes us to the region or territory that has been separated into the parts, but the parts constitute a single territory in past. The demonstration of military forces follows the concept of conflict that arisen due to the parting. While as, on the other hand, _The Book of Gold leaves_ demonstrates Kashmir valley from the middle, where the central Kashmir suffers with the same trouble that suffers the area of Line of Control in the valley.

In the retrospection of protagonist in the novel somehow gives us an account of dreaming valley with its golden forests and flowing streams and rivers. The demonstration of valley within the valley is author’s brilliant observational attempt he introduced in the novel despite living life in the conflict. Protagonist’s narration of the past is the best way to analyze the situation before the placement of military forces in Kashmir which demonstrates some peaceful moments of protagonist and the valley, when military forces were not there to bother them. He narrates a long, long time ago when they were children before 1989, when they (narrator and his friends) were growing up in a small valley surrounded by mossy docile-looking hills and a long ridge that connects two opposite hillsides behind which there are rows and rows of mountains that reflect innumerable shades and the rows of peaks that are shining,
some are white and some are brown, like layers of fabrics that hide secret tracks into the another part of Kashmir, Azad Kashmir (Pakistan occupied Kashmir).

It is not difficult to explain conflict that reflects the expression to relate things from fiction to truth. The novelists from the conflicted regions produce different from that of other novelists who hail from peaceful and prosperous regions. Though, it has a great unity of purity and truth that conflicted literature demands to be revealed, to give voice to the voiceless people live in the conflict. The authors significantly on the verge of unrest and on the ways as readers think the immoral outlook of military forces characterized by violent attempts to subjugate and destroy Kashmiris spiritually and physically through the maintenance of army domination for which India is responsible for the highest heaps of corpses in Kashmir. Many texts since the unrest describe distinctive versions and styles of the conflict. Of particular interest in the selected novelists the stories focuses the ways consists not only territorial conflict but brings to mind hatred between Kashmir and India.

The setting of these novels is clearly realistic in which historical elements of the conflict have been introduced. With its contemporary setting the verses explore the theme of the conflict that converted the so called paradise into the manmade hell. The novels prove bloodbath upheaval in a truthful account. Mirza Waheed and Shahnaz Bashir, both have develop the characters in such a way that captures history of past, the tales before military occupation in people dominated areas (villages, towns and cities) but the tales that came after 1989 are bursting with fear and terror of military forces. In an interview with a citizen belongs to the middle state of India ‘I like everything of Kashmir, after all, that (Kashmir) is known as paradise on earth but the thing that I dislike the most in Kashmir is the presence of Indian military force, I found Kashmiri people less than Indian Army and even on the way from Jammu to
Kashmir the vehicles of civil passengers too I found lesser than army and even we have had to stop on the way to let them cross first, and I am scared of a serious patient or of a pregnant women, on the way, what will happen to them, they may die before they reach to hospital’. The story describes the lives of troubled people in a contemporary armed conflict that perceived bloodshed of innocent people and to the complexities of persecution of military forces.

The characters in The Collaborator are reflective of people in mountain passes near the Line of Control along Indian administrated Kashmir whose livelihood is exploited by relentless shelling between Indian and Pakistani forces. The attempt by Mirza Waheed is to display the melancholies of his native land so as to attain widespread interest on the global stage. The novel represents a situation where range of existing conflict has separated and trampled social life. The green gold (forests) of Kashmir is vanished in the blood of its own inhabitants, Waheed demonstrates them as dead mountains.

In an interview with an Indian military soldier (name withheld due to security reasons) who’s posting these days is in South India in Chennai, the army convoy from Kashmir to Jammu, what the convoy have in big trucks look empty, there are not even soldiers in these vehicles, they are wasting wealth of their nation by consuming huge amount of petrol. They, especially officers, drive forests of Kashmir to decorate their houses similar as decorated in the valley. For which Arundhati Roy in her second novel illustrates Indian Army in Kashmir ‘well-timbered army.

The narrator along with his friends while playing cricket in the small valley (valley within valley) surrounded with colored mountains, where the fundamental aim of game is to enjoy or entertain the players of the game as well as the spectators of the game. With this, the picture of colorful mountains where the sole aim is to amaze the
souls of people. But here, the picture of these colored mountains and the game, narrator plays along with his friends, is destructive due to the presence of India and Pakistan military forces. The mountains which Nyla Ali Khan called green gold of Kashmir\textsuperscript{xii} are depleting in shelling between Indian and Pakistani military forces. Narrator’s friend Ashfaq curses both countries, India and Pakistan, when they are pelting shelling’s over the Line of Control destruct green diamond of the valley and the houses of the people living near to the Line of Control. \textsuperscript{xiii}

*The* Collaborator facilitates rural treatment on the surface tool that is based on the assumptions upon which the factual existence of past and present is counterproductive proposal. At times, the seclusion of Kashmir between India and Pakistan in 1947 is a counterproposal of author in the entities the novel has been structured. By a kind of unchanged it turns to the past of coherent of the territory. Although there has been little attention focused on this point but has given comprehensive proof of its existence.

The narration of Shaban Khatana, who lives across the hills, high in mountains along with his wife and a son. He belongs to a Gujjar community, whom often live in far flung areas in forests or mountains. Shaban Khatana whom narrator called Shaban Chacha and whose son guides Kashmiris across the mountains over Pakistan, for the reason that the Gujjars who live in the mountains know the passes which connects Indian administrated Kashmir to Pakistan administrated Kashmir. The subject here is to point out atrocity of division and rule over the terrain.

The narrator’s eagerness to meet his friend, Hussain, introduces the character of Shaban Khatana and his family where the family’s depiction in the mountain also bring to us past of these forests when there was peace in the forests and also in the
valley, but, it is now only due to the heavy military occupations these green and colored forests are changed into the graveyards for Kashmiri people.

In the retrospection of narrator, when he visits down to the valley for the new arrivals of militants from Pakistan, for him and for Kashmiri’s, freedom struggling heroes, the extract, he presents there is immensely hideous which interrupts an account of killings of Kashmiri people in 1990’s along Indian side line of control. The village street that ascends to hillocks and then falls into the small pass to the valley, on the way to valley in this pass he finds bees hum over his head and then go to the flower to pollinate them though they could grow. This is a symbolical element after the deployment of forces which Waheed uses to indicate the environment of mountain passes that are spate with the blood of Kashmiri young, old and Children.

Bees hum along the way, circle briefly over my head and then go back to their flowers… …What do I smell of? Dead people, soap, hunger, mother’s silence, bad dreams, my fever, lost friends, father’s looks Kadian’s whisky, tea? (Waheed, 45)

However, the characters in The Book of Gold Leaves are the reflection of the central Kashmir. Protagonists, Faiz and Rohi are representative of the youth twisted in the web of compulsions to face daily humiliation and are unable to do anything of their own will, except, either to join armed rebellion movement or to watch their own miseries or to die of many deaths like cowards. The youth who do not want to die of coward deaths, prefer to join militant ranks to defend their land as though the rest of the people shiver and vibrate with fear of death which is inevitable at any step by the hands of military troops. Curfews, Cordons and Search operations, suspected killings, disappearances, rapes, and other humiliating acts in the valley do occur at any time by
the military forces that tear emotions and feelings of the native people. The trauma of Schizophrenia has cramped the whole valley, what is about to happen later. xv

Curfew had been declared. Srinagar was locked down.

Security was being put in place for the funeral procession for the people who had been killed over the weekend, which would rage through the streets the next morning. There were shoot-on-sight orders. (Roy, 219)xvi

Mirza Waheed’s second novel The Book of Gold Leaves is set in central Kashmir that interprets the picture of valley and roams to Nepal’s capital city Kathmandu and to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and also to the other states of Pakistan. the novel in the beginning shows mesmerizing Kashmir like lacks, streams, and gardens, and the shrines of Kashmir where people often tie-threads for their wish to come true and promise some amount of money or material to donate to the shrine that is worthy for them. The novel is about art, about artist’s (Protagonist) love story, about an artist who loses his godmother, about his restlessness on older brother’s torture and godmother’s death, about compulsions of artists that made him a militant or an armed freedom fighter, and above all it is about Kashmir conflict that reveals what lead armed movement in Kashmir.

The novel is set at outskirts of Srinagar, in Natipora, home town of the author. The milieu of the novel is quiet unpleasant, melancholic like The Collaborator, whereas, The Collaborator is more awful and melancholic rather, The Book of Gold Leaves. Time and action is contemporary of both novels but the setting differentiates them from each other, such as, The Collaborator is set in North Kashmir in a village in mountains near the Line of Control (LOC) in Indian administrated Kashmir.
Whereas *The Book of Gold Leaves* is set in central Kashmir, in the capitol city of the valley Kashmir Natipora, Srinagar. Although, the focus of the both novels is to put forth a realistic account of Kashmir armed dissidence. Both the novels have same subject and motive, as well, to put the conflict in the realm of literal world, to let people know, what the reality of Kashmir armed insurgency is.

*The Book of Gold Leaves* construes the best concern that why the people of Kashmir chose to join armed groups and what is the actual reason behind armed insurgency which is best explained in chapter five ‘Instigation: Civilian to Militant’ of the thesis. The novel in every respect is realistic in setting and milieu, although it comprises an accurate understanding of the armed treason against Indian rule and Indian paramilitary forces. The whole narration of the novel blames Indian administration and Indian military forces for the unrest and killings in Kashmir. It also lays out in the best comprehensive way for what reasons they, armed groups, are fighting against military forces.

The setting and the milieu of the novel also takes us to Nepal and Pakistan where characters are doing their rightful duty for the protection of their motherland. Ibteda Andrabi, who is in Kathmandu, a representative communication tool between the youths in Pakistan, who get training there to fight against military forces in Indian administrated Kashmir, and their relatives in Indian Administrated Kashmir. In doing so Ibteda feels pride as doing a good job for his motherland. He drives the letters from Indian Administrated Kashmir to Pakistan administrated Kashmir and from Pakistan-Kashmir to Indian Kashmir while carrying the Nepal postmark.

He also divulges an oppressive environment of Kashmir when he opens a letter from a father to his son to Pakistan that was not sealed properly, on which he feels himself guilty, the letter was too long in which the father prefers an absent but
alive son rather to a dead one with him in home. He (Ibteda) wondered what the son had written in response whether he would have insisted his father on coming home to fight against the military oppression for the cause he had crossed the LOC (Line of Control) or not. xvii

In 1987 after the failure of an election when, people began to come out on streets and roads in huge demonstrations in favor of Muslim Union Front (MUF), the political unrest run for two years after which In 1989 when the Central Government of India placed thousands of thousands paramilitary, military forces into the residential areas of Kashmir, the political unrest in Kashmir took a rapid change, it turned into, for Kashmiris, an armed resistance movement, and an armed insurgency for India. And for the literal realms what Kashmiris call it ‘resistance’. After the placement of paramilitary, and military forces in residential areas and their oppressive behavior towards people insisted them to cross the LOC (Line of Control) to Pakistan Administated Kashmir for armed training. For this perception Mirza Waheed presents a Pakistani character in the novel who probes the intervention of Pakistan when he, Mustafa Kamal, narrates to Faiz, that they didn’t insisted them to come to Pakistan for armed training, while as they have come on their own will. He assumed as a role of trainer of Faiz and other Kashmiri people in the camp where they are trained in Pakistan.

So, my dear friend let me say this to you. Do what you are asked to do. Everyone you see here is from some far-off place, away from home, but they are here for a purpose. And remember one thing. We didn’t force you to come here, did we?’ ‘No sir’. (Waheed, 161). xviii
Pakistan possess a landmark history in the Kashmir conflict since the partition of the subcontinent between India and Pakistan.

*The Half Mother* covers unexplored issues into a coherent and unified entity of conflict. Shahnaz Bashir’s *The Half Mother* and Mirza Waheed’s *The Book of Gold Leaves* have same location, Natipora, both the novelists expound Kashmir conflict in the narratives. Whereas Shahnaz Bashir expounds the enforced disappearance of people in which he captures unending pain of those families whose relatives have been picked up by military forces just to disappear them from their relatives. The novel further displays the journey of disappeared people’s families in their unending search, and the problems they face in the process to search them and their disappointment when their searches prove fruitless.

Haleema, the protagonist of the novel is the representation of every family who likely lost their loved once in the ongoing conflict. Haleema loses her son who is kidnapped in late night, when major Kushwaha raided her house from where he kidnapped him. Not only this that her son is disappeared but her father, Gh Rasool Joo, whom she called Ab Jan is also killed by the same army major, Kushwaha, without any cause. The novel presents atrocities over Kashmiri people who are subjected to suppress by Indian military forces. The pitiless terror of military forces over Kashmiris terrorized the minds and hearts of Kashmir population. The narration of almost every character in the novel is panic. Not only Joo’s family is victimized in the conflict but the narrative of the novel reveals whomsoever the protagonist visits is victim or victimized by the atrocities of military forces.

Shahnaz Bashir gives an account of those people in the conflict who are sentenced to a lifelong restlessness. He, to some extent, exposes how armed conflict began in the valley, in search of disappeared ones the characters of the novel suffer
from the beginning to the end. The story of a mother who lost her son in the wake of enforced disappearance depicts the picture of thousands of mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, and wives of the valley of Kashmir. Haleema, Protagonist of the novel, for her son’s search, visits everywhere where she could but all in vain. The portrayal of Jammu, Delhi and Rajasthan where she visits to the jails to find her son is the representation of all those who toiled to search their sons almost in every Jail in North India.
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