FEMINIST ENCOUNTERS
A JOURNAL
OF CRITICAL STUDIES
IN CULTURE AND POLITICS

lectito

Research paper

Living Amid Conflict: Lived Experiences of Non-Displaced Kashmiri Pandit Women in Kashmir, India

Avinash Koul * (ID), Shweta Sinha Deshpande (ID)

Symbiosis International (Deemed University), INDIA

***Corresponding Author:** avinash.koul@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Survival in conflict zones is often marked by constant exposure to violence and profound isolation. When individuals are stripped of the safety and support typically provided by their communities, feelings of solitariness and vulnerability intensify significantly, weakening resilience and the will to endure. While most people relocated to safer areas, others remain either by choice or due to constraints such as poverty, lack of resources, or a reluctance to abandon their homes. Much of the focus in conflict studies tends to be on displaced populations, while those who remain in conflict zones (non-displaced populations) often receive little attention. One such group is the non-displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir, India. Despite their continued presence in a region marked by protracted violence, their experiences remain underexplored. Moreover, gender remains underrepresented in academic literature and within the limited studies on non-displaced minority populations in conflict zones. We used a qualitative ethnographic design, utilizing semi-structured interviews with a sample of 20 non-displaced Kashmiri Pandit women aged 20 to 70. The findings of this study conclude that non-displaced Kashmiri Pandits have endured sustained violence and psychological trauma, leading to a slow but persistent form of displacement.

Keywords: living amid conflict, lived experiences, non-displaced, non-migrant Kashmiri Pandit women,

The heightened vulnerability of women and children in conflict-induced displacement is widely acknowledged. Indeed, it is a well-established fact that women and children constitute the most vulnerable population within this context (Carroll et al., 2022). In conflict zones, while the general populace encounters manifold difficulties, women experience challenges distinct from those faced by men, bearing additional burdens due to their societal position and gender (Mazurana & Carlson, 2006; McKay, 1998). This disparity aligns with the understanding of conflict as a "gendered activity," entailing differential experiences and varying access to resources and decision-making capacities for men and women (Manchanda 2005, p. 3). Although displacement and violence inflict trauma across the entire gender spectrum, women frequently encounter deeply-rooted patriarchal structures of authority (Jacoby, 2005). Furthermore, violent conflict often leads to the disintegration of women's individuality and identity, as they are perceived as victims and rendered unable to exercise self-representation (Manchanda, 2001). Existing scholarly investigations in contexts with conflict-affected regions demonstrate that despite the high intensity of violence, some people remain in conflict zones regardless of the grave threat to their lives and exposure to violence on an everyday basis (Koul & Deshpande, 2025; Melander & Öberg, 2006; Moore & Shellman, 2004). Among these non-displaced or "internally struck" are often the most vulnerable- women and children - those who can't relocate to a safe destination, often due to lack of resources or viable alternatives (Manchanda, 2005, p. 2). While the attention

of safety and care programs tends to focus on the displaced population, research indicates that non-displaced individuals in conflict zones experience higher rates of psychological problems as compared to the displaced population (Bendavid et al., 2021). Yet, the challenges experienced by non-displaced women, especially those from minority communities, remain largely overlooked in academic and policy discourse.

The primary objective of this study is to address this gap by examining the challenges and struggles of non-displaced Kashmiri Pandit women in Kashmir, India. The research was conducted in Kashmir, a conflict-ridden region left over from the sectarian conflict of the 1989-1990s, which led to the mass displacement of the Kashmiri Pandit (KP) community, leaving a minority non-displaced KP population in Kashmir. While the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) from Kashmir occurred more than three decades prior, the present study represents the first investigation into the challenges confronting non-displaced KP women who continue to reside in Kashmir, India. Furthermore, little research is available on non-displaced women in conflict zones, particularly those belonging to minority communities. Despite this fact, research on non-displaced women in conflict zones has been overlooked; the current study aims to fill this gap by providing valuable insights within the broader discourse on gender and conflict.

UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT CONFLICT AND NON-DISPLACED POPULATION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
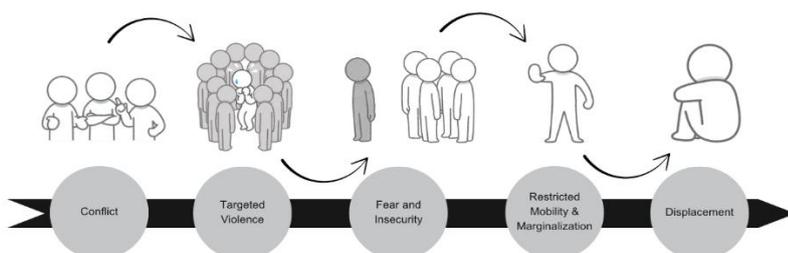
Conflict-induced displacement has a devastating impact on people as they flee violence, killing, and economic devastation (Collier, 2003; Hess, 2003; Imai & Weinstein, 2000). The displaced people encounter various social and psychological problems, and in some situations, remain in protracted displacement for the rest of their lives (Brunn & Gilbreath, 2015). Violent conflict is a reason for the displacement of millions of people from their homes. According to data from the Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 83.4 million individuals are living as internally displaced people (IDPs) (Internal displacement monitoring centre, 2025). Developing countries in the global south, particularly those in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, have evolved into breeding grounds (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2008) for IDPs. These regions are plagued with poverty, inequality, and political instability, which increase the risk of conflict. Moreover, conflict poses a threat to civilian populations, and it is appalling to note that the victims of violence are increasingly civilians rather than combatants (Meddings, 2001; Thompson, 2006).

The word "conflict" refers to a broad category, and within this category are many different kinds of conflicts that result in population displacement, for instance, civil war, a genocidal government, or a terror group that creates fear and mayhem in society to show control and dominance (Lischer, 2007). Myron Weiner was one of the earliest to conduct studies on conflict, elaborating four categories of conflict: displacement due to authoritarian and revolutionary regimes, ethnic strife, non-ethnic conflict, and interstate wars (including anti-colonial wars) (Weiner, 1996). Conflict is not merely related to armed battles between two groups, revolts, and wars; it is also about tensions, contests, competition, and disputes (Dahrendorf, 2019). It is a struggle between individuals or collectives over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources in which conflicting parties claim ownership of these resources over others. Further, violent conflict is exceedingly variegated, changing forms, involving various kinds of actors, and engaging with different social actors (Goodhand, 1999).

The term 'violence' is frequently used by scholars as a synonym for conflict. However, it lacks conceptual clarity and is understudied. According to Brubaker and Laitin, "Violence is not a degree of conflict but a form of conflict, or a form of social and political action in its own right." (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p.425). Violence can be understood, therefore, not as similar to conflict but as a form of conflict often used to inflict fear among the population (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1

Cycle of displacement

Conflict · Targeted Violence · Fear and Insecurity · Restricted Mobility & Marginalization · Displacement

Displacement is an outcome of the sustained conflict and is a reaction to violent attacks and not a voluntary decision; families leave their native place to save their lives and protect their movable assets (Sirkeci and Cohen, 2016). The displacement of population is sometimes a war strategy and aims to hinder collective action, destroy social networks, and create fear among civilians (Ibanez & Velez, 2008). However, despite the violent conflict,

some people remain in the conflict zone, constituting the non-displaced population and raising significant questions that need to be investigated (Adhikari, 2013). One such example of a non-displaced population is KP women living in Kashmir, who are affiliated with the Hindu minority group in Kashmir despite the coerced displacement experienced by the majority of the community members.

It is evident that violent conflict leads to the displacement of the population; however, those people who remain during the initial spell of shock are less likely to leave (Melander & Öberg, 2006), even when there is a grave threat to their lives. When people are frequently exposed to violence, people still make choices under highly dangerous situations to stay in their native homes, mostly due to economic reasons (Davenport et al., 2003; Melander & Öberg, 2006; Moore & Shellman, 2004). The non-displaced population in the conflict zone is often poor and vulnerable groups that encounter a high risk of mortality from direct violence (Bendavid et al., 2021). Furthermore, women represent the most vulnerable population and encounter various atrocities such as rape, abduction, forced pregnancy, and sexual violence, which inflict severe physical and emotional trauma (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002).

The feminist approach highlights the nature of gender dynamics in a conflict zone, focusing on the lived experience of women who are often overlooked (Rigual et al., 2022). This perspective helps in understanding challenges and critical roles women encounter in the conflict zone, illuminating the intricate interrelations among gender, religious beliefs, and cultural practices. Such intricacies are observed in the experiences of girl soldiers and female suicide bombers in Sierra Leone (Alexander & Hawkesworth, 2008). (Enloe, 2004) argues that adopting a feminist lens is crucial to comprehending the conflict dynamics, because it reveals how gender-neutral political processes are deeply gendered in their causes, conduct, and consequences. Furthermore, Feminist analysis and research on the lived experience of women emphasize that temporal or spatial boundaries do not limit conflict; however, it is a man-made phenomenon, supported by the agents who shape the social fabric of reality (Cohn, 2013). Moreover, the feminist lens exposes how religious enmity and ideological differences masked by the patriarchal and misogynistic gender relation are the main reasons for the war, encouraging societies to engage in violent acts (Cockburn, 2013).

A study conducted by (Manchanda 2001) emphasizes that Kashmiri women have suffered the most during the prolonged conflict, enduring significant physical and psychological trauma. Following the mass exodus of KPs from Kashmir, non-displaced KP women were exposed to violence and targeted killings, including incidents of sexual violence by terrorists because of their religious affiliation (Manchanda, 1999a). Such violence against women serves as a tool to eliminate safe spaces and for ethnic cleansing (Wilbers, 1994). It is deliberately perpetrated on the women population that intends to destroy the culture of a community. Therefore, women are the tactical targets of special significance because of their cardinal roles within the family structure (Seifert, 1993).

Another study conducted by (Iqbal, 2021), points out that the greatest insecurity faced by non-displaced KP women is the loss of kinship support, which adversely affects their emotional and social well-being. Correspondingly, Bhat and Bashir (2023) observes that non-displaced KP women perceive their cultural identity as on the verge of extinction due to a rapidly shrinking population. The targeted killings of non-displaced KPs further triggered widespread fear and insecurity within the community (Pandit, 2022), prompting another wave of displacement (India, 2022). The continued killings of non-displaced KPs, combined with the targeted killing of a female Hindu educator, resulted in the forced displacement of the last surviving non-displaced KP woman from Chaudharygund village, Shopian district, a long-term resident of Kashmir through its most difficult years (Masoodi, 2022). Previous research on the impact of armed conflict on women in Kashmir (Gul, 2015; Jan et al., 2016; Qayoom, 2014; Qutab, 2012) has largely concentrated on the experiences of Kashmiri Muslim women. In contrast, the present study addresses a critical gap in the literature by focusing on non-displaced KP women. It examines the challenges faced by this minority group despite the displacement and violence perpetrated on their community.

VIOLENT CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT OF KASHMIR PANDITS IN 1989-2022

KPs are Hindu natives of the Kashmir Valley in the northern part of India. In the early 1990s, selective violence perpetrated by terror groups resulted in the displacement of KPs from Kashmir. As a result, the majority of the KPs have been living in protracted displacement over the past three decades in different states of India. According to the official government record on the relief and rehabilitation website, there are 39,868 registered Hindu families displaced due to conflict from Kashmir as of March 2022 (Government of Jammu & Kashmir). Numerous factors played a key role in the displacement of the KPs from Kashmir. Initially, the institutionalisation of land reforms by the state government, in which the lands of KPs were given to Kashmiri Muslims (KMs) without any compensation, was followed by a delimitation commission that isolated KPs politically (Bhati, 2005). However, these measures were not meant to target KPs in particular; nevertheless, contributed to the alienation of the KP community in Kashmir. In addition, political instability and rigging of the state assembly election in 1987 in Kashmir alienated KMs from the electoral process, which later led to calls from terror groups like the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) for secession from the Indian State (Ganguly, 1996). In addition, the commencement of open conflict in 1988 between the government of India and the Jammu Kashmir Liberation

Front (JKLF) seeking the secession of Kashmir from India (Santhanam, 2003), compounded by systematic violence such as threats, rape, and the selective killing of KPs, precipitated the expulsion of approximately 62,851 KP families by July 1990 (Kumar, 1996). The vast majority of the displaced people belonged to religious minority communities like KPs and Sikhs, due to the violence perpetrated by the various terror groups. Despite the ongoing violence from terror groups, some KPs chose not to migrate and continue to live in their homes in Kashmir, India. According to Sanjay Tickoo of Kashmiri Pandit Sangarsh Samiti (KPSS), an organisation advocating for the rights of non-displaced KPs, a limited KP presence persisted in the Valley even after the mass displacement of the early 1990s, with nearly 5,000 KP families remaining. However, this number declined sharply following the 1998 Wadhama massacre, in which terrorists killed 23 non-displaced KPs, including children (Sanjay Tickoo, interview, 2021)

During the prolonged conflict, approximately 1,300 KP families continued to reside in Kashmir due to financial limitations, emotional attachment to their homeland, and the belief that the violence would eventually subside (Trisal, 2007). Those numbers have significantly dropped to 808 families as of 2021 (Sanjay Tickoo, interview, 2021). More recently, targeted killings of non-displaced KPs in Kashmir by terrorists led to the displacement of additional 10 families from Shopian village of Kashmir, reducing the number of non-displaced KP families in Kashmir to a mere 798 as of 2023 (Press Trust of India. 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Pulwama district of Kashmir, India, and the qualitative data were gathered from 20 non-displaced KP women. The research participants resided in different villages within the Pulwama district, primarily from the rural areas of Kashmir, India. Five villages were selected for the study: Noopora, Tumlehal, Murran, Sirnoo, and Pampore. Among the 20 female participants, ten identified as homemakers (**Table 1**). Five were employed as schoolteachers, three were retired government employees, and two were working in the state Tax Department. We sought to gain critical and reliable insights into the lived experiences of non-displaced KP women and chose a qualitative methodology that necessitates a research design involving sustained personal interaction with participants (David & Sutton, 2011). Additionally, qualitative research design is relevant in the context of the present study, because the objective of the study is exploratory and aims to seek a preliminary understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 1998) and offers "rich and deep data" allowing us to get quality information from the participants (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014, p.323).

Table 1

Summary table of participant demographic of non-displaced Kashmiri Pandit women (N=20)

Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
Age	25-35	5	25
	36-45	6	30
	46-60	9	45
Occupation	Homemaker	10	50
	School Teacher	5	25
	Retired Govt. Employee	3	15
	Tax Department Staff	2	10
Marital Status	Married	14	70
	Unmarried	3	15
	Widowed	3	15

To further guide the research process, a qualitative case study method was adopted. Case studies are considered appropriate and have the optimal potential for theory building (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). This method is administered when a researcher examines a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, 1981), as was the case in the present study. In the current study, the case study method will facilitate an understanding of the challenges encountered by non-displaced KP women through the participants' experiential lens, providing a ground-up perspective. It enables an understanding of the circumstances and the causes that have encouraged non-displaced KP women to remain in the conflict zone, as well as their viewpoint on life as a minority community in the region from a gendered perspective. While majority of the KPs resides in the Srinagar district of Kashmir, it is pertinent to mention that they are not the original inhabitants of Srinagar district. KPs primarily reside in rented accommodations in Srinagar due to professional considerations. In contrast, the KP population in Pulwama district maintains permanent homes, having remained in the region throughout the period of mass exodus. According to the 2011 census, Pulwama district comprises 327 villages and a total population of 560,440 (Pulwama District, 2025). The demographic composition of Pulwama district is characterized by a Muslim majority, alongside roughly 50 non-displaced KP families, constituting a small yet resilient non-displaced population.

Additionally, snowball sampling method was employed to find research participants for data collection. It is a type of purposeful non-probability sampling strategy that, while not ensuring total representation, is effective when the population is far and difficult to reach, as is the case in the current study (Valdez, 1998). The majority of the KP population has been forcibly displaced, leading to a less geographically concentrated population of non-displaced KPs, which has contributed to the neglect of this minority group. Further, there is a strong sense of distrust and scepticism among the non-displaced KP population for outsiders. However, since the interviewer belonged to the non-displaced KP community, this was mitigated. Conducting research with a micro-minority community demands a sense of trust in the researcher for access to personal information that includes their experiences, which may be politically and culturally sensitive. A snowball sampling strategy served as an ice breaker that lessened the likelihood of mistrust, as the interviewer is connected to participants in the study through known and recognized references (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary data collection method, while field notes and participant observation served as supplementary tools. This approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews with predetermined broad questions and open-ended inquiries, allowed for flexibility in the interaction between interviewer and participant, fostering a conversation focused on capturing the lived experiences of the study participants (Creswell 1998; Merriam 1998). In essence, semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to ask additional questions that add depth to the interview and help record quality data from the respondents.

Furthermore, since the interviews were conducted by a male researcher, "researcher sensitivity" towards female interviewees was taken into account. This sensitivity enables interviewers to employ "strategies and tactics of interaction, largely rooted in fostering friendly rapport to enhance cooperative disclosure and facilitate a productive search for mutual understanding (Douglas, 1985, p.25). The interviewer's sensitivity is a methodological approach that assists male interviewers in acknowledging the unique dynamics present during their interviews with women (Trevino, 1992). This sensitivity requires the interviewer to comprehend his interviewees in relation to himself, fostering an awareness of the social distance between himself and his female interviewees. In the current study, we employed some methodological initiatives that helped us to reduce the social distance from female interviewees. We attempted this in two ways: (a) by accompanying the female respondents previously interviewed to new potential female participants (b) by sharing our personal information and stating that the interviewer is part of the same community.

To establish the credibility and validity of the data, a triangulation method was used. Triangulation occurs when multiple sources of information confirm the consistent presence of certain patterns and themes. This confirmation serves as evidence that the process of data collection and the data are efficacious and dependable, offering credibility to the research (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). In addition to the standard research design parameters, we recognized the highly sensitive context of the study, conducted within a community affected by displacement, violence, and targeted killings. Considering that non-displaced KP families continue to live in the conflict zone, interviews were conducted with utmost prudence and ethical rigor. As a member of the non-displaced KP community, the interviewer was well known to the members of his village, and for the participants from other villages, meeting the interviewer for the first time, efforts were made to build and establish a rapport. The interviewer's initial visits were not meant to collect data, but to establish a friendly relationship and gain trust with the participants, which is essential for a qualitative study. Following the ethical code (Kelman, 1972), the interviewer introduced himself and the research being undertaken before seeking consent from participants.

In essence, the researcher, being an insider of the community, was conscious of the potential for bias which could influence interviews, methods, analysis of the data collected from the respondents, and interpretation of findings (Kacen & Chaitin, 2006). Reflexivity was adopted as a strategic tool to navigate these tensions between the researcher's engagement and the detachment from the research participants as means to enhance ethical and methodological rigor (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Gemignani, 2011). This process is viewed as ongoing internal discourse and critical self-assessment of the researcher's positionality along with the recognition, this position perhaps will influence both the research process and findings (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Pillow, 2003; Stronach et al., 2007). There were certain techniques in which reflexivity was maintained in the study. The researcher answered all the questions that were intended for the respondents, so his preconceived notions regarding his own personal experience should not impede the research process. Also, since the researcher belonged to the same community, he refrained from sharing his own experiences with the participants so that his experiences wouldn't influence the research process. Further, the researcher followed a prepared list of questions, which he asked himself to remove any potential bias as is suggested by Soedirgo and Glas (2020) for reflexivity, for instance, what factors are likely to influence our interactions before we meet? How will I know if my assumptions played out in practice? These approaches helped to remove the insider bias in the study and created awareness not only regarding the positionality of the researcher but also in interrogating the pre-conceived notion we make of those effects, and to do so continually throughout the research process. Recorded Informed consent was obtained from all participants

included in this study. Ethical approval was obtained from the Symbiosis International University's Independent Ethics Committee, with approval number SIU/IEC/905.

VIOLENCE AS A TOOL OF DISPLACEMENT: FEAR AND INSECURITY FOR NON-DISPLACED KASHMIRI PANDIT WOMEN

The non-displaced population in conflict zones is vulnerable and encounters a high risk of mortality due to the widespread violence (Heudtlass et al., 2016; Ribeirinha et al., 2024). The women affected by armed conflict experience anxiety, insecurity, and detrimental health effects (Bendavid et al., 2021; Giles & Hyndman, 2004). In a conflict-ridden region, widespread brutalities are committed against the women population to create fear and displacement, as women are the "purveyors of group identity" (Manchanda, 2004, p.3). In particular, Sexual violence against women is employed as a war tactic and deliberately perpetrated to displace the targeted population (Seifert, 1993; Deiri & Burkhard, 2025). In case of KPs, the terror groups have used violence on KP women, viewing them as symbolic representations of KP identity. KP women have been used as scapegoats to displace the KP community from Kashmir (Sawhney & Mehrotra, 2017). The KP women encountered incidents of sexual violence perpetrated by terrorists and were labelled as Mukhbirs (informers) for the Indian army, particularly due to their religious affiliation (Manchanda, 1999). This deliberate targeting was not solely intended to instill fear in the KP population, but also to undermine their cultural fabric, by attacking women who are often seen as custodians of tradition. Violence was used against non-displaced KP women to destabilize and undermine the social fabric of the community, making them a focal point of terror tactics. The selective targeting of the women population is manifested by opposing ethnic, religious, or political groups, mirroring the fault lines of the broader conflict or crisis (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2017).

A non-displaced KP woman reflects on that chaotic era, emphasizing the extensive atmosphere of fear and insecurity that plagued the region. She recounts that terror groups freely roamed the streets, specifically targeting KPs, narrated:

"It was not a safe environment for KP community, I stayed inside my house for six months. I remember telling my husband that we should shift to government quarters in Srinagar as it was considered secure. Everyday there was news of KPs being abducted or killed. My relatives quietly left the area without even telling us. Imagine the kind of fear we lived under".

According to Liddell et al., separation from family can have a lasting impact on an individual's psychological well-being, resulting in feelings of constant fear, insecurity and disruption of social ties (Liddell et al., 2022). The non-displaced KP women were subjected to violence and target killing, which created fear and psychosis, restricting them from leaving the safety of their homes and preventing them from communicating with relatives and community members. Consequently, few families relocated their female members to stay with displaced KPs outside of Kashmir, retaining solely the male members in their place of origin. Such efforts were undertaken to ensure the safety of their female members and shield them from associated risks. The non-displaced KP women endure profound traumatic experiences, violence, and significant personal losses. These conditions result in an increased prevalence of psychological disorders leading to anxiety and depression, particularly in women and ethnic minority groups (Amsalem et al., 2025; Akter & Hossain, 2026).

Violence against KPs was not confined to the early 1990s; rather, there were multiple massacres which were perpetrated on non-displaced KPs, for example the Sangrampora massacre in 1997, Wandhama massacre in 1998 and the Nadimarg massacre in 2003 (Koul & Deshpande, 2025). Research participants shared that target killings are persistent on KP community in Kashmir and such violence continues even today. Recent incidents of violence included the assassination of a KP female schoolteacher, thereby exacerbating feelings of fear and insecurity (Times of India, 2022). The non-displaced KP women from Pulwama region shared that, there are days when they are informed by the police that there might be an attack on their families, advising them to remain vigilant. During such warnings by police, family members often remain confined to their homes, curtail movements, and avoid public exposure. These attacks highlight that violence is used as a tool to displace KP population and even those KPs who stayed back despite the adverse conditions were subsequently subjected to attacks. One of the women participants expressed that she believed both the safety of her family and her personal well-being were at risk when KPs were killed.

"We are given security when the targeted killings of KPs started in Kashmir. Police also installed CCTV cameras on our main door. My husband was also asked to install an app on his mobile phone and if there is an emergency to report it immediately. I feel fearful when my husband comes late from office and if my son is outside, I tell him to come home before sunset".

In a conflict zone women are prone to stress due to the fear of loosing their immediate family or relatives to violence, resulting in a profound sense of loss and isolation (Amsalem et al., 2025). In context of non-displaced KPs, women still live under fear that they might be attacked. This fear is perpetuated by the increased incidence of targeted killings of non-displaced KPs by terror groups. These attacks by terror groups are strategic attempts to terrorize the non-displaced KP community, compelling the last few hundred families to consider displacement as a means of survival. The narration shared by research participants made it clear that while staying behind in the

conflict zone, the non-displaced KP women encountered isolation, insecurity, fear, and violence, unlike the displaced population, which faces different sets of challenges like housing, healthcare, schooling, and food shortages (Jacobsen, 2002).

LOSS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The significance of community support is evident even in societies plagued by violent conflict; community responses play a cardinal role in reducing the displacement of the affected population due to the collective decision-making process (Krakowski, 2017). Moreover, coordination between community members enables a holistic civil resistance that halts displacement (Kaplan, 2013). For example, community responses develop a safety net for members, such as creating and developing neighbourhood watch schemes, and self-defence groups are well-documented in civil wars in Liberia and Afghanistan (Sawyer, 2005). Furthermore, In the event of an external shock, such as displacement and natural disasters, individuals frequently seek assistance and support from their fellow community members (Koul & Deshpande, 2025; LaLone, 2012; Norris et al., 2008).

The community ties offer social support that goes beyond reciprocity, providing access to substantial resources that help with daily life opportunities and reduce uncertainties (Kadushin, 2004; Kurniasih & Anjani, 2025), for example, social support, including information support (e.g., advice), instrumental support (e.g., problem-solving assistance), and emotional support (e.g., reassurance). In context of non-displaced KP women, losing kinship support and the displacement of community members were the biggest insecurities (Iqbal, 2021). Strong kinship support provides emotional, social, and economic assistance, protecting against external challenges and offering essential support for women, especially during crises (Malia, 2006). This support system was eroded among the non-displaced KP women due to the displacement of their community members, disrupting social relationships, which undermined their sense of belonging and is essential for surviving in a society (Távara & Cueto, 2015; Walsh, 2007). The absence of social support has been recognized as a major predictor of anxiety and post-traumatic stress, underscoring the importance of strong community support systems (Calhoun et al., 2022). Consequently, studies show that social isolation can heighten feelings of loneliness, that are particularly harmful to psychological well-being, especially for women (Rohde et al., 2016). The displacement of the KP community has plagued the social networks of the non-displaced KPs that traditionally gave access to emotional, instrumental, and practical support. The non-displaced KP women experience a situation where typical support sources, such as extended family networks and community organizations, are either reduced or absent. One of the respondents who works as a schoolteacher shared her experience.

"We don't have our community members around us. If anyone is sick in my family, I can't call my relatives, neighbours, or my siblings for help because they are displaced from Kashmir. When I have a problem, I am on my own; there is no support.

When a substantial number of KPs gradually displaced from Kashmir, the non-displaced KP women faced a lack of community support, resulting in social isolation (Qi & Terry, 2025). Additionally, the target killing of KPs in Kashmir has restricted the mobility of the non-displaced KPs, leading to diminished social relationships within the community (Koul & Deshpande, 2025). While mobility is a fundamental human right linked to social freedom (Roos, 2017), targeted killings have confined non-displaced KP women in rural Kashmir to their homes. This environment of fear and insecurity has led to a significant reduction in their social interactions and community participation, which has exacerbated their sense of vulnerability and insecurity. Additionally, non-displaced KPs are a minuscule minority in Kashmir, scattered across various regions, which further leads to a lack of community cohesion. This geographical dispersion makes it difficult for community members to maintain regular contact, hindering the establishment of a strong, unified community network and leaving women isolated. As a result, the ability to organize collective activities and share resources is significantly diminished among the non-displaced KP women. One of the respondents shares how the geographical distance has led to the deterioration of the community ties of non-displaced KP women. She says.

"Our community members live far from us…. Before migration, we had KPs as neighbours, but now there are very few who live here in Kashmir". Another respondent who described how the lack of community cohesion due to geographical distance is impacting their relationships within the community, "we are not well connected anymore… the KPs in Kashmir do not visit each other frequently, perhaps twice a year or when there is a funeral to attend or celebration in the family".

The women respondents emphasised that the geographical distance between non-displaced KPs has become an obstacle to meeting regularly and arranging frequent gatherings with their relatives and friends.

Distance and restricted mobility, particularly for women, have led to isolation among dispersed members, who struggle to stay connected. Currently, 798 non-displaced KP households reside in Kashmir, spread across 20 districts in both rural and urban areas. This physical and social separation not only hinders mutual support but also undermines cultural practices and traditions that reinforce community identity.

IDENTITY AND SECURITY

Violent conflict often leads to the reinforcement of identity markers (Chandra, 2013; Kalyvas, 2008; Nair & Sambanis, 2019). In a conflict zone, categorizing the population is crucial, as it is used to identify sides and distinguish between allies and enemies. Labels based on religion, ethnicity, nationality, and belief system are invoked to categorise the "we" and "they" of the battle line (Anderson & Wallace, 2012). Furthermore, propaganda takes on various forms, reinforcing these labels by assigning the weight of goodness to the "we" and "they," with that of badness to the opposing sides.

Exposure to armed conflicts is correlated with a higher incidence of anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder among children and women (Lim et al., 2022). In addition, Women from minority communities are particularly vulnerable and may face persecution based on their gender and religious beliefs (Pérez-Madrid, 2024). Similarly, minority ethnic groups are known to face higher risks for adverse mental health outcomes after exposure to major traumatic events (Mayer et al., 2024). In Kashmir, women are restricted by cultural norms and conflict dynamics that exacerbate their vulnerability, limiting mobility and access to resources (Sarvesh, 2024). These challenges are exacerbated for women belonging to minority communities that have experienced persecution and sustained violence. According to the research participants, KPs were displaced from Kashmir due to their religious affiliation. Since KPs were affiliated with the Hindu community, acts of violence were strategically perpetrated against the women of the community, which was intended to accelerate the displacement of the community. It is widely acknowledged that women are perceived as the custodians of group identity; if their security is compromised, the dislocation of the community will ensue expeditiously. Furthermore, the non-displaced KP women narrated that they felt singled out from the predominant Muslim population, as the terror groups issued threats specifically to the KP population to leave Kashmir, manifesting the "Othering" of the KP community. Since KPs were targeted based on their religious affiliation, the non-displaced KP women in Kashmir concealed their identity, living in continual fear of being attacked by terror groups.

The identity of Kashmiri Pandit women encompasses various elements, such as wearing a visible 'tyok' (a red dot on the forehead), 'Nirivan' (a red cotton thread on the right hand), and 'dejhur' (long golden ear-pendants) (Madan, 1981). While certain aspects of their identity may not be immediately apparent to others, distinct markers like the 'tyok' and 'dejhur' are prominently visible. Due to continuous attacks by terror groups on the KP community in Kashmir, displaying these visible markers becomes a source of anxiety, particularly for KP women in rural areas. The constant fear of being attacked for their identity forced many non-displaced KP women to alter their appearance or hide their religious symbols to protect themselves. A non-displaced KP female respondent shared how her identity has become a source of fear in Kashmir:

"I fear showing my identity in Kashmir. When I am in my neighbourhood, I wear tyok and dejhor because people in our area know that I belong to the KP community, but if I go further away from my locality, I don't wear them as they clearly show my identity".

Another non-displaced KP woman respondent, who works at a public school and was recently transferred from Pulwama to Srinagar district due to the targeted killing of KPs in Kashmir, shared her experience.

It was very frustrating and fearful for me to live in such an environment, especially when I was taking public transport to my school, which was far from my home. I knew that I was putting myself at risk of getting killed. After the recent targeted attacks on Hindus in Kashmir began, I stopped applying tyok.

Visible minorities are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues, largely due to the stress associated with their visibility in society (Jasperse et al., 2012). This visibility often subjects them to discrimination, stereotyping, and social exclusion, which can lead to chronic stress and mental health issues. Minority ethnic groups are known to face higher risks for adverse mental health outcomes after exposure to major traumatic events. For instance, non-displaced KP women frequently experience fear and insecurity stemming from targeted killing, compelling them to conceal their identity to avoid potential harm. In addition, visible signifiers such as Tyok and dejhor are essential representations of KP women's identity; however, due to targeted killings, non-displaced KP women desist from wearing their traditional ornaments, particularly in the rural regions of Kashmir. This pressure on the non-displaced KP women to hide their identity not only undermines their sense of self-worth but also exacerbates feelings of isolation. Even after the three decades of exile of the KP community from Kashmir, the non-displaced KP women are still living in an environment of insecurity and fear due to their identity. The fear and insecurity experienced by KP women are not without justification, Intelligence alerts confirmed credible threats from terror groups targeting Kashmiri Pandits (India, 2022). The findings of this research gain further salience when considered in light of the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, India, wherein 25 Hindu tourists were killed (Vijaita Singh, 2025). This tragic event underscores the ongoing vulnerability of individuals identifying as Hindu in the region and highlights the particularly precarious circumstances of non-displaced KPs and other cultural minority groups residing in Kashmir, India.

CONCLUSION

This study provides the first scholarly attempt to document the lived experiences of non-displaced KP women after the mass displacement of their community members in the early 1990s. Conducted 35 years after the initial displacement, this research aims to record the challenges faced by minority KP women, who have endured targeted violence, social isolation, discrimination, identity suppression and various forms of conflict-related trauma within the region. The results show that violence was used strategically to target KP women to expedite the community's displacement, and KP women face an ongoing psychological burden of being both visible minorities and gendered targets in a hostile environment. With a large KP population displaced from Kashmir, non-displaced KP women were left without community support and experienced isolation. The gradual displacement of KPs obstructed access to even basic emotional support, further isolating non-displaced KP women. Moreover, the inter-community relationships of non-displaced KP women have deteriorated due to physical distance and underpopulation, culminating in a lack of community cohesion and the disintegration of social networks.

The findings of this study highlight that non-displaced KP women face a range of threats that severely affect their security, freedom, and identity. These include discrimination based on their ethno-religious identity and sporadic incidents of violence, often perpetrated by terror groups, which serve as a constant reminder of their vulnerability in the region. These vulnerabilities have created fear among the KP women, compelling them to refrain from expressing their traditional identity to avoid being targeted, further eroding their cultural expression and reinforcing their marginalization. This study also underscores the sociopolitical invisibility of non-displaced KP women that have largely remained excluded from academic discourse and any state and/or central policy framework. The absence of data and scholarly attention also emphasise the marginalization and lack of recognition of the challenges faced by this specific group within the larger context of the Kashmir conflict. The study calls for urgent scholarly and policy intervention both at the state and central levels of the Indian government to acknowledge and address the realities of this micro-minority group.

Ethical statement

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Symbiosis International University's Independent Ethics Committee, with approval number SIU/IEC/905. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and ethical procedures were strictly adhered to throughout the research process.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Author contributions

Avinash Koul is conceptualization, methodology, data collection, writing—original draft, and review & editing. Shweta Sinha Deshpande is conceptualization, supervision, writing—review & editing.

Data availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI disclosure

No AI-assisted tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

Biographical sketch

Avinash Koul is pursuing his PhD at Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, India, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. His primary research fields include conflict studies, ethnography, and minority

rights. His key research interests focus on gendered experiences in conflict zones, social resilience, and minority communities in India. avinash.koul@yahoo.com .

Shweta Sinha Deshpande is currently Director (Associate Professor) at Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts, India. Holds a PhD in Anthropology. Primary research fields include gender studies, conflict and displacement, and cultural identity.

Disclaimer/Publisher's note

REFERENCES

Adhikari, P. (2013). Conflict-induced displacement: Understanding the causes of flight. *American Journal of Political Science, 57*(1), 82–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00598.x

Akter, S. H., & Hossain, S. (2026). Translation and adaptation of psychological well-being scale (PWBS) and its psychometric validation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education and Society, 14*(1), 2. https://doi.org/10.20897/apjes/17905

Alexander, K., & Hawkesworth, M. E. (Eds.). (2008). *War & terror: Feminist perspectives*. University of Chicago Press.

Amsalem, D., Haim-Nachum, S., Lazarov, A., Levi-Belz, Y., Markowitz, J. C., Bergman, M., Rafaeli, A. K., Brenner, L. A., Nacasch, N., & Wainberg, M. L. (2025). The effects of war-related experiences on mental health symptoms of individuals living in conflict zones: A longitudinal study. *Scientific Reports, 15*(1), 889. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-84410-3

Anderson, M. B., & Wallace, M. (2012). *Opting out of war: Strategies to prevent violent conflict*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781685850517

Bendavid, E., Boerma, T., Akseer, N., Langer, A., Malembaka, E. B., Okiro, E. A., Wise, P. H., Heft-Neal, S., Black, R. E., & Bhutta, Z. A. (2021). The effects of armed conflict on the health of women and children. *The Lancet, 397*(10273), 522–532. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00131-8

Bhat, N., & Bashir, A. (2023). Conflict-induced migration in Kashmir: A phenomenological study of lived experiences of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 93*, 101778. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2023.101778

Bhati, A. (2005). *Kashmiri Pandits: Problems and perspectives*. Rupa & Co.

Bigio, J., & Vogelstein, R. (2017). *Countering sexual violence in conflict*. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/report/countering-sexual-violence-in-conflict

Bradbury-Jones, C. (2007). Enhancing rigour in qualitative health research: Exploring subjectivity through Peshkin's I's. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 59*(3), 290–298. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04403.x

Brubaker, R., & Laitin, D. D. (1998). Ethnic and nationalist violence. *Annual Review of Sociology, 24*(1), 423–452. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.423

Brunn, S. D., & Gilbreath, D. A. (2015). *The changing world religion map: Sacred places, identities, practices and politics*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9376-6

Calhoun, C. D., Stone, K. J., Cobb, A. R., Patterson, M. W., Danielson, C. K., & Bendezú, J. J. (2022). The role of social support in coping with psychological trauma: An integrated biopsychosocial model for posttraumatic stress recovery. *Psychiatric Quarterly, 93*(4), 949–970. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11126-022-10003-w

Carroll, M., Delay, C., Sundstrom, B., & Gjelsvik, A. (2022). 'Our darkest hour': Women and structural violence under Ireland's 8th Amendment. *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics, 6*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.20897/feminist-encounters/11412

Chandra, K. (2013). Attributes and categories: A new conceptual vocabulary for thinking about ethnic identity. In *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics* (pp. 49–72). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199893157.003.0003

Cockburn, C. (2013). War and security, women and gender: An overview of the issues. *Gender & Development, 21*(3), 433–452. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552074.2013.802054

Cohen, N., & Arieli, T. (2011). Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling. *Journal of Peace Research, 48*(4), 423–435. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311405698

Cohn, C. (2013). Women and wars: Toward a conceptual framework. *Women and Wars,* 1–35. https://books.google.co.jp/books?hl=id&lr=&id=AQ2xAAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Cohn,+C.+(2013).+Women+and+wars:+Toward+a+conceptual+framework.+Women+and+Wars,+1%E2%80%9335.&ots=edM-fdIYfm&sig=Uw5PEm0Gx8YYoq-gJLm8X3zWeaE#v=onepage&q&f=false

Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics, 2026, 10(1), 27

Collier, P. (2003). *Breaking the conflict trap: Civil war and development policy* (No. 41181). World Bank Publications. https://doi.org/ 10.1093/oep/51.1.168

Dahrendorf, R. (2019). Class and class conflict in industrial society. In *Social Stratification, Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* (2nd ed., pp. 105–111). Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/ Social-Stratification-Class-Race-and-Gender-in-Sociological-Perspective/ebook

Davenport, C., Moore, W., & Poe, S. (2003). Sometimes you just have to leave: Domestic threats and forced migration, 1964–1989. *International Interactions, 29*(1), 27–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620304597

David, M., & Sutton, C. (2011). *Social research: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Deiri, Y., & Burkhard, T. (2025). The "then" and "now" politics of fear: A multilingual intimate duo-ethnography at the crossroads of language, religion, immigration, and education. *European Journal of Education & Language Review, 1*(1), 6. https://doi.org/10.20897/ejelr/17648

Douglas, J. D. (1985). *Creative interviewing.* Sage.

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(1), 25–32. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.24160888

Enloe, C. (2004). *The curious feminist: searching for women in a new age of empire.* University of California Press.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E., Loescher, G., Long, K., & Sigona, N. (2014). *The oxford handbook of refugee and forced migration studies.* Oxford University Press.

Fukuda-Parr, S., Ashwill, M., Chiappa, E., & Messineo, C. (2008). The conflict-development nexus: A survey of armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa 1980-2005. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, 4*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2008.700972482539

Ganguly, Š. (1996). Explaining the Kashmir insurgency: Political mobilization and institutional decay. *International Security, 21*(2), 76–107. https://doi.org/10.2307/2539071

Gemignani, M. (2011). Between researcher and researched: An introduction to countertransference in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry, 17*(8), 701–708. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800411423192

Giles, W., & Hyndman, J. (2004). *Sites of violence: Gender and conflict zones.* University of California Press.

Goodhand, J. (1999). From wars to complex political emergencies: Understanding conflict and peace-building in the new world disorder. *Third World Quarterly, 20*(1), 13–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599913893

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(2), 261–280. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403262360

Gul, S. B. A. (2015). Women and violence: A study of women's empowerment and its challenges in Jammu and Kashmir. *Online Submission, 2*(7), 1–9. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED555394

Hess, G. D. (2003). *The economic welfare cost of conflict: An empirical assessment.* https://hdl.handle.net/10419/76398

Heudtlass, P., Speybroeck, N., & Guha-Sapir, D. (2016). Excess mortality in refugees, internally displaced persons and resident populations in complex humanitarian emergencies (1998–2012) – Insights from operational data. *Conflict and Health, 10*(1), 15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-016-0082-9

Ibanez, A. M., & Vélez, C. E. (2008). Civil conflict and forced migration: The micro determinants and welfare losses of displacement in Colombia. *World Development, 36*(4), 659–676. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev. 2007.04.013

Imai, K., & Weinstein, J. M. (2000). *Measuring the economic impact of civil war.* CID Working Paper No. 51. Center for International Development, Harvard University. https://imai.fas.harvard.edu/research/files/cid.pdf

India, P. T. of. (2022). 10 Kashmiri Pandit families leave village days after killing of community member by terrorists. *The Hindu.* https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/ 10-kashmiri-pandit-families-leave-village-days-after-killing-of-community-member-by-terrorists/article660558 30.ece

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2025). *Global report on internal displacement 2025.* Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. https://doi.org/10.55363/IDMC.XTGW2833

Iqbal, S. (2021). Through their eyes: Women and human security in Kashmir. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, 8*(2), 147–173. https://doi.org/10.1177/23477970211017483

Jacobsen, K. (2002). Livelihoods in conflict: The pursuit of livelihoods by refugees and the impact on the human security of host communities. *International Migration, 40*(5), 95–123. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00213

Jacoby, T. A. (2005). *Women in zones of conflict: Power and resistance in Israel.* McGill-Queen's University Press.

Jan, G., Mir, S. H., & Malik, A. H. (2016). Women and conflict situation in Kashmir post 1989: A sociological study of District Anantnag. *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities, 6*(4), 361–367. https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7315.2016.00064.2

Jasperse, M., Ward, C., & Jose, P. E. (2012). Identity, perceived religious discrimination, and psychological well-being in Muslim immigrant women. *Applied Psychology, 61*(2), 250–271. https://doi.org/10.1111/j. 1464-0597.2011.00467.x

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Sage Publications.

Kacen, L., & Chaitin, J. (2006). "The times they are a changing": Undertaking qualitative research in ambiguous, conflictual, and changing contexts. *The Qualitative Report, 11*(2), 209–228. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol11/iss2/5

Kadushin, C. (2004). Too much investment in social capital? *Social Networks, 26*(1), 75–90. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2004.01.009

Kalyvas, S. N. (2008). Ethnic defection in civil war. *Comparative Political Studies, 41*(8), 1043–1068. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414008317949

Kaplan, O. (2013). Protecting civilians in civil war: The institution of the ATCC in Colombia. *Journal of Peace Research, 50*(3), 351–367. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313477884

Kelman, H. C. (1972). The rights of the subject in social research: An analysis in terms of relative power and legitimacy. *American Psychologist, 27*(11), 989–1006. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0033995

Koul, A., & Deshpande, S. S. (2025). An exploratory study on bonding and bridging social capital among the non-displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir, India. *Journal of Population and Social Studies [JPSS], 33*, 596–610. http://doi.org/10.25133/JPSSv332025.032

Krakowski, K. (2017). Resisting displacement amid armed conflict: Community-level conditions that make people more likely to stay. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, 12*(3), 68–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2017.1370387

Kumar, D. (1996). *Kashmir: Return to democracy*. Siddhi Books.

Kurniasih, D., & Anjani, M. C. (2025). Social Welfare of Rural Communities as a Function of Social Workers' Empowerment. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies, 12*(1), 124–140. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2350

LaLone, M. B. (2012). Neighbors helping neighbors: An examination of the social capital mobilization process for community resilience to environmental disasters. *Journal of Applied Social Science, 6*(2), 209–237. https://doi.org/10.1177/1936724412458483

Liddell, B. J., Batch, N., Hellyer, S., Bulnes-Diez, M., Kamte, A., Klassen, C., Wong, J., Byrow, Y., & Nickerson, A. (2022). Understanding the effects of being separated from family on refugees in Australia: A qualitative study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 46*(5), 647–653. https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.13232

Lim, I. C. Z. Y., Tam, W. W. S., Chudzicka-Czupała, A., McIntyre, R. S., Teopiz, K. M., Ho, R. C., & Ho, C. S. H. (2022). Prevalence of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress in war- and conflict-afflicted areas: A meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 13*, 978703. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2022.978703

Lischer, S. K. (2007). Causes and consequences of conflict-induced displacement. *Civil Wars, 9*(2), 142–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240701207302

Madan, T. N. (1981). The ideology of the householder among the Kashmiri Pandits. *Contributions to Indian Sociology, 15*(1–2), 223–249. https://doi.org/10.1177/006996678101500113

Malia, J. (2006, September). Women's roles and strengths in times of family and community stress. In *Forum on Public Policy: A Journal of the Oxford Round Table* (pp. NA-NA). Forum on Public Policy.

Manchanda, R. (1999). Women, war, and peace in South Asia: Beyond victimhood to agency. (*No Title*).

Manchanda, R. (2001). Redefining and feminising security. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 1956–1963. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4410690

Manchanda, R. (2004). Gender conflict and displacement: Contesting 'infantilisation' of forced migrant women. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 4179–4186. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4415535

Manchanda, R. (2005). Women's agency in peace building: Gender relations in post-conflict reconstruction. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 4737–4745. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4417360

Mayer, Y., Shiffman, N., Bergmann, E., Natoor, M., Khazen, S., Lurie, I., & Enav, Y. (2024). Mental health outcomes of Arab and Jewish populations in Israel a month after the mass trauma events of October 7, 2023: A cross-sectional survey of a representative sample. *Psychiatry Research, 339*, 116042. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2024.116042

Mazurana, D., & Carlson, K. (2006). The girl child and armed conflict: Recognizing and addressing grave violations of girls' human rights. *Florence, IT: United Nations.* https://sangam.org/taraki/articles/2006/11-02_Girl_Child.pdf

McKay, S. (1998). The effects of armed conflict on girls and women. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 4*(4), 381–392. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327949pac0404_6

Meddings, D. R. (2001). Civilians and war: A review and historical overview of the involvement of non-combatant populations in conflict situations. *Medicine, Conflict and Survival, 17*(1), 6–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/13623690108409551

Melander, E., & Öberg, M. (2006). Time to go? Duration dependence in forced migration. *International Interactions, 32*(2), 129–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620600574873

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education. Revised and expanded from "case study research in education".* Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED415771

Moore, W. H., & Shellman, S. M. (2004). Fear of persecution: Forced migration, 1952-1995: Forced migration, 1952-1995. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 48*(5), 723-745. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002704267767

Nair, G., & Sambanis, N. (2019). Violence exposure and ethnic identification: Evidence from Kashmir. *International Organization, 73*(2), 329–363. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818318000498

Nazir Masoodi. (2022). Last Kashmiri Pandit in terror-hit village, a woman, migrates to Jammu. *NDTV*. https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/targeted-killings-last-kashmiri-pandit-in-kashmir-a-woman-migrates-to-jammu-3468980

Norris, F. H., Stevens, S. P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K. F., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2008). Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 41*, 127–150. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9156-6

Pandit, M. S. (2022). Kashmiri Pandit killed in Jammu & Kashmir, 7th since 2020. *Times of India*. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/kashmiri-pandit-killed-in-jammu-kashmir-7th-since-2020/articleshow/94887361.cms

Pérez-Madrid, F. (2024). Mujeres perseguidas por motivos religiosos. Vulnerabilidad e interseccionalidad. *Anuario de Derecho Eclesiástico Del Estado, 40*, 239–267. https://doi.org/10.55104/ADEE_00025

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16*(2), 175–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635

Pulwama District. (n.d.). *Official website.* https://pulwama.gov.in/

Qayoom, F. (2014). Women and armed conflict: Widows in Kashmir. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 6*(5), 161. https://academicjournals.org/journal/IJSA/article-full-text/EF6D9DA51205

Qi, Z., & Terry, A. N. (2025). Venturing into the Heartlands: Comparing Trauma-Informed Spaces in Urban and Rural Jurisdictions through Field Observations. *American Journal of Qualitative Research, 9*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/15876

Qutab, S. (2012). Women victims of armed conflict: Half-widows in Jammu and Kashmir. *Sociological Bulletin, 61*(2), 255–278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038022920120203

Relief and Rehabilitation (M), Government of Jammu & Kashmir. (n.d.). https://rrcm.jk.gov.in/

Ribeirinha, T., Baptista, M. and Correia, M. (2024). The Impact of STEM Activities on the Interest and Aspirations in STEM Careers of 12th-Grade Portuguese Students in Science and Technology Curriculum. *European Journal of STEM Education, 9*(1), 21. https://doi.org/10.20897/ejsteme/15830

Rigual, C., Prügl, E., & Kunz, R. (2022). Gender and the micro-dynamics of violent conflicts. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 24*(3), 345–367. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2022.2083652

Rohde, N., D'Ambrosio, C., Tang, K. K., & Rao, P. (2016). Estimating the mental health effects of social isolation. *Applied Research in Quality of Life, 11*, 853–869. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-015-9401-3

Roos, C. (2017). Freedom of movement in the EU and welfare state closure: Welfare regime type, benefit restrictions and their implications for social mobility. In *Welfare State Transformations and Inequality in OECD Countries* (pp. 267–289). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51184-3_12

Santhanam, K. (2003). *Jihadis in Jammu and Kashmir: A portrait gallery.* Sage.

Sarvesh, T. (2024). Impact of protracted conflict on women in Kashmir: Tracking multidimensional exclusions within social and political institutions. *Politics, Groups, and Identities, 12*(1), 45–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2022.2106877

Sawhney, C., & Mehrotra, N. (2017). Displacement from Kashmir. *Democratisation in the Himalayas: Interests, Conflicts, and Negotiations*, 186. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4415535

Sawyer, A. (2005). *Social capital, survival strategies, and their potential for post-conflict governance in Liberia* (WIDER Research Paper 2005/15).

Seifert, R. (1993a). Rape in wars: Analytical approaches. *Minerva, 11*(2), 17. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156500002971

Seifert, R. (1993b). *War and rape: Analytical approaches.* Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Geneva.

Sirkeci, I., & Cohen, J. H. (2016). Cultures of migration and conflict in contemporary human mobility in Turkey. *European Review, 24*(3):381-396. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798716000119

Soedirgo, J., & Glas, A. (2020). Toward active reflexivity: Positionality and practice in the production of knowledge. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 53*(3), 527–531. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096520000411

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Sage.

Stronach, I., Garratt, D., Pearce, C., & Piper, H. (2007). Reflexivity, the picturing of selves, the forging of method. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13*(2), 179-203. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406295476

Távara, M. G., & Cueto, R. M. (2015). Sense of community in a context of community violence. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 43*(4), 304–319. https://doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2014.973305

Thompson, M. (2006). Women, gender, and conflict: Making the connections. *Development in Practice, 16*(3–4), 342–353. https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520600694976

Times of India. (2022). J&K: Migrant Kashmiri Pandit teacher shot dead by terrorists in Kulgam district. *Times of India.* https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/terror-attack-in-jk-teacher-shot-at-in-kulgam-district/articleshow/91907479.cms

Trevino, A. J. (1992). Interviewing women: Researcher sensitivity and the male interviewer. *Humanity & Society, 16*(4), 504–523. https://doi.org/10.1177/016059769201600405

Trisal, N. (2007). Those who remain: The survival and continued struggle of the Kashmiri Pandit "non-migrants". *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies, 5*(3), 99–114. https://doi.org/10.1300/J500v05n03_06

Valdez, A. (1998). Reducing selection bias in the use of focus groups to investigate hidden populations: The case of Mexican-American gang members from South Texas. *Drugs and Society, 14*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1300/J023v14n01_15

Vijaita Singh. (2025). Pahalgam terror attack: Terrorists asked name and religion of male tourists, shot them, says survivor. *The Hindu.* https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/terrorists-kept-firing-for-25-30-minutes-recalls-pahalgam-eyewitness/article69483296.ece

Walsh, F. (2007). Traumatic loss and major disasters: Strengthening family and community resilience. *Family Process, 46*(2), 207–227. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2007.00205.x

Watts, C., & Zimmerman, C. (2002). Violence against women: Global scope and magnitude. *The Lancet, 359*(9313), 1232–1237. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)08221-1

Weiner, M. (1996). Bad neighbors, bad neighborhoods: An inquiry into the causes of refugee flows. *International Security, 21*(1), 5–42. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539210

Wilbers, M. T. A. (1994). Sexual abuse in times of armed conflict. *Leiden Journal of International Law, 7*(2), 43–71. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156500002971

Yin, R. K. (1981). The case study crisis: Some answers. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 26*(1), 58–65. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392599