

# Women and Armed Conflict: Stories of Resistance from Contemporary Kashmir

Urba  
Malik<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*The paper will primarily look into the crucial question of why a legal protest in a constitutional democracy fails to operationalize in a conflict zone eventually giving way to more radical ways of resistance by women. The question will be investigated by looking at the possible structures against which women in Kashmir are protesting. Analyzing the multilayered structure in the form of a state, patriarchy and religion in a conflict zone will help in understanding how such a structure penetrates into women's lives and questions their roles. This leads to the next part of the paper, which explores the potential such a structure offers its women- the power to protest by questioning the structure-sanctioned boundaries. However, a consequential question is how are women protesting against the structure and how different is the nature of protest from legal ways of protesting? Moreover, what kind of challenges are these protests posing to the state and community? & how these modes of resistance are different from the legal modes as far as the outcome of transforming the discourse on women is concerned. Lastly, what are the areas where the resistance by women has failed to subvert the structure?*

## INTRODUCTION

The paper traces the question of 'women's agency in conflict within the state and the patriarchal social structure'. Drawing from the case studies, I will be analyzing how women i.e. who have suffered loss on multiple planes in Kashmir, have encountered the structure, manifested in multiple layers. The manifestation ranges from fighting a conflict-ridden state to revamping the established norms

---

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D Scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi