WRN INDIA

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
2018

KASHMIR, AND MADHYA PRADESH

LAUNCH REPORT
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PART I

THE LAUNCH OF THE MP COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
2018 – RESISTANCE REVISITED. THE CHUTKA ANTI-NUCLEAR POWER MOVEMENT IN MP.

1. Introduction

The MP CC launch was scheduled as a press-conference on the 18th of September, 2018. The venue for the launch was the Press Club of India, where WRN garnered media attention to the issue of the dangers posed by nuclear power plants, and the concerns that the indigenous people’s resistance movement raises against the proposed plant in MP. WRN India strongly felt that given the significance of the issue, while WRN seeks to amplify the voices of the community, it should not take away the epistemological standpoints that the community has to offer.

Thus, WRN decided to get local activists from the movement in MP to Delhi for the launch. The availability and presence of the local activists whose movement it actually is, was considered very important by the WRN India team, as our way of giving something back to the community. Since the activists were unavailable anytime before the 18th of September due to reasons of work related to the movement, or other cultural commitments, WRN India had to schedule its launch on the 18th. The launch brought together voices from the ground and of experts to discuss the relentless production of forcibly internally - displaced persons in the name of development and modernization thus violating and infringing the rights of the original indigenous communities, the rightful owner of the land.

The Opening Remarks was delivered by Rita Manchanda who introduced WRN, its work for regional peace and justice and the approach of Community Conversations. She also gave a brief background to the concerns relating predatory development induced displacement, in addition to why Nuclear power plants (NPP) are considered problematic in more ways than one. She referred to how those who spoke of the environmental and economic advantages of NPP turned out to be delusional, and what we are now faced with is the bitter
truth of the continuing adverse effects such plants have on the environment and the people living in its vicinity.

The launch had two sessions, while the first panel consisted of the activists from the Chutka Anti-Nuclear Power Plant and WRN India board member and prime researcher in this CC AbhaBhaiya, the second panel consisted of peace and anti-nuke activists, academics and environmentalists.

2. Voices from Ground Zero

Panel 1: Voices from ground zero - Activists from the Chutka anti-nuclear power plant movement in conversation with Abha Bhaiya, WRN Founding Member and WRN Board Member.
Speakers:
Mera Bai – Chairperson, Mahila Morcha, Chutka Parmanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti
Sona Bai – Member, Mahila Morcha, Chutka Parmanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti
Rajkumar Sinha – Convener, Bargi Bandh Visthapith Sangh
Navratan Dubey – Secretary, Chutka Parmanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti
Dadu Lal Kudape – Chairperson, Chutka Parmanu Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti

In the first session AbhaBhaiya was in a conversation with Mera Bai, Sona Bai, Dadu Lal Kudape, Navratan Dubey and Rajkumar Sinha. In her introductory remarks Abha Bhaiya iterated why WRN conceptualises this a quest for peace and justice. She articulated why predatory development induced displacement is a matter of grave concern in India, and what adds to the seriousness is the lack of due attention that this issue deserves from the citizenry, more so in a time when development has been coloured with distorted nationalistic fervours. Having laid the context of predatory development induced displacement and linking it to WRN’s earlier CC in Odisha (the anti-posco movement), Bhaiya gave a background to the location of the NPP in Chutka, the people’s struggle which developed indigenously and sustained through nine long years, and the significant role played by the women in this struggle. She emphasised what makes this movement different from other such similar movements is the non-instrumentalisation of the women in the
movement, and the leadership, and mobilising roles of the women in the movement. The women in this movement did not shy away from exercising their agency.

Through this conversation, AbhaBhaiya and the grassroots activists from MP brought forth to the press the ground realities in Chutka, the plight of the ordinary citizens there, and the arbitrary measures employed by the state in contravention to the laws meant to protect these very communities. Mera Bai and Sona Bai explained how the women were self-motivated enough to play an active part in the struggle, how in due course of time, they have overcome fear of the officials and authorities and can stand up to challenge them. Describing the many hardships they endured to sustain the movement, the women leaders from the movement expressed that it saving their land is more important than saving their lives.

"They are taking our land, they are taking our water bodies. We are shouting hoarse, but who is listening to us?!" - Mera Bai.

The activists from Chutka explained their strategies of the struggle and why they focused on Gandhian and non-violent means as best way to state their concerns and demands. Mr.Dubey and Kudape explained in details why the community is protesting against the proposed NPP, how they have already faced the wrath of displacement twice before, and how they continue to be adversely affected by big developmental projects along the river Narmada, which has dried up the river, and this NPP will add to the existing woes. They reiterated that Madhya Pradesh already has several hydroelectric power plants and 19 thermal power plants and has an electricity surplus. This brings one to the basic question, they said, as to why the government felt the need to build a nuclear plant – with potential human and environmental costs – despite people’s protests.

Navratan Dubey, explained how, while 600 families living in Chutka, Tatigath and Kundla villages face displacement due to land acquisition for the power plant, a total of about 70,000 people in 54 villages would ultimately have to leave since there is an exclusion zone of five-kilometre radius from the centre of the nuclear reactor. He said a paltry compensation of Rs 41 crore has been earmarked for land acquisition at the rate of Rs 1.50 lakh per acre while about Rs 200 crores have been marked for rehabilitation. But, he said,
no one wants to give their land or wants the nuclear power project to come up anywhere close.

“\nThe Samiti members had also visited other nuclear power plant sites and interacted with villagers residing close to them. We learnt that water pollution, malnutrition, disease and deprivation of fishing or farming rights had taken place everywhere.” - Navratan Dubey

Dadu Lal Kudape, said the government and the administration have turned deaf ears to the protesters who want the project to be scrapped and allowed to live peacefully with their land, water and forests. “We had also fought for rehabilitation, but the administration did nothing,” he said.

Rajkumar Sinha said what needs to be remembered is that people of the region, who comprise a large number of Dalits and Adivasis, were primarily engaged in agriculture and yet there were no suicides of farmers reported from this area. “What we are doing is depriving them of their land when they possess no other skill except farming and this would force them into only taking up professions like pulling rickshaws.”

3. Development-Induced Displacements: Sites for Disaster

Panel discussion 2
Name: Development-Induced Displacements: Sites for Disaster
Speakers:
S.P Udayakumar - Co-Director, TRANSCEND: A Peace and Development Network; Founder, People’s Movement against Nuclear Energy (PMANE)
AsmitaKabra - Professor, School of Human Ecology, Ambedkar University Delhi
Sandeep Pandey - Co-Founder,Asha for Education; Professor, Jaipuria Institute of Management.
Chair – Soumya Datta - National convenor, Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha; Convenor of Climate & Energy Group - Beyond Copenhagen collective; Founder member, India Climate Justice Platform.

The launch also saw peace activists, environmentalists and scientists turning out in support of this movement. S.P. Udayakumar narrated his experience while being a part of a similar
movement in Kudankulam, the role of the women in the movement, the demands and recommendations as put forward by the people to the state.

Soumya Datta, provided key inputs regarding development-induced displacements and also how people living in a large area around such nuclear power plants end up getting displaced due to the existing laws. He also articulated that his experiences of engaging with the people’s movements against such lopsided developmental projects have shown the salient changes in societal structures that come along with these movements. He quoted examples from his interventions in similar movements in Haryana - one of the most patriarchal and chauvinist states in India, where women went from being indoors and veiled, or sitting at the back in public hearings, to participating in long-marches and showing their faces.

“But why do we talk of NPPs as disastrous only in terms of fear of accidents or leaks? Given the processes involved in mining, building, and running their operations, and the consequent continued adverse effects on the environment and the people, they are ticking disasters as it is!” - Soumya Dutta.

Prof. Sandeep Pandey shared very pertinent concerns regarding the effects of ionizing radiation. He spoke of the government’s denial of the harmful effects of ionizing radiations, and studies by scientists proving how harmful these actually are. Drawing examples from scientific studies done by physicists in other parts of India (Rajasthan and Jharkhand), he said it is now evident there is no “safe” level of radioactivity, and generally it is the women and children who are the worst affected. For example in Rawabhatta, Rajasthan (a site for another NPP) there are increasing issues of Untoward pregnancy outcomes, higher number of miscarriages, still births, deaths among newborn, congenital deformities. 50 congenital deformities in 45 children near plant, 14 deformities in 14 children in control villages. There are deformities in those above 18 years of age, of which 5 are from the plant vicinity and 4 away from plant. There have been instances of infants dying within a weeks of birth,
and still-births in villages near the NPP, and also in some control villages. The authorities continue to claim it is because of poverty, malnutrition and unsanitary living conditions even though those near the plant have more income and those away from plant use more pesticides.

4. Concluding Remarks and Messages in Solidarity with WRN

The concluding remarks summing up the discussions and interventions of the day was given by Saumya Uma (WRN India Core member), who raised some pertinent questions regarding the so-called green energy of nuclear power, the situation of unequal citizenship in the country or the population that actually benefits and the section which suffers disadvantage from such predatory development models, for the audience to ponder on as an ending thought.

The launch and this particular initiative also witnessed support from Admiral Ramdas and Lalita Ramdas who sent across their messages in solidarity, even if they could not be present in person. Lalita Ramdas stated in her message that “It is true that the fight to retain land, and resist [multiple] displacements is an emotive force which inevitably brings people out in protest, hitting as it does at the basic source of survival and security. And it is always the most powerful factor in uniting communities around a common threat. However
the reality is that we live in times and under regimes driven by corporate-capitalist development paradigms and agendas. They care little for the ecological or human tragedies of displacement and destruction. And in order to give the struggles in Chutka, or Jaitapur or Koodankulam, [and indeed elsewhere], the correct context, it is important to locate and name them as part of a resistance against Nuclear Energy – Nuclear power plants – and Nuclear weapons. **Let us not forget that every nuclear power plant is a potential nuclear bomb factory too!**

Admiral Ramdas reiterated “It stands to reason that we should find and implement renewable energy alternatives to meet our demands and needs in the forseeable future. This will mean educating our people regarding conservation and more efficient utilization of our existing power plants.”

5. **Media Coverage**

The media coverage that this launch received can be found in the links below:


https://thewire.in/rights/in-election-year-campaigners-against-proposed-nuclear-plant-in-mp-hope-to-be-heard

The Panelists and WRN India Team (with volunteers)
The launch of the Kashmir Community Conversations 2018 – “NOT EVERYONE PICKS UP STONES!” PLURAL FORMS OF RESISTANCE AND WOMEN'S AGENCY IN KASHMIR.

1. Introduction

The WRN 2018 Kashmir Community Conversations was launched at the India International Centre on September 24th, 2018. For this CC, the WRN India team of researchers felt that given the complexity of the Kashmir conflict and everyday situation in Kashmir, it would be better to present it as an work-in-progress in front of those who were interviewed as a part of this research (i.e. those of whom who were in Delhi at the time of the launch), academic and research experts, human rights and peace activists, and other civil-society experts who have engaged and continue to engage with the Kashmir issue in different ways, so as to ensure that their interventions and feed-back find a way back into the report to make it a more poignant research.

The Opening remarks for this launch was delivered by Abha Bhaiya (WRN India Board Member) who introduced WRN’s vision, core values and purpose, and its distinctive work through the Community Conversations. Linking this Kashmir CC to earlier CCs and also the most recent work done by Bhaiya herself on the anti-nuke movement in MP, she stated how each of these issues bring forth a different aspect of a quest for peace and justice. This was followed by Rita Manchanda and Anuradha Bhaisn's presentation on the Kashmir Community Conversation 2018.
Rita Manchanda and Anuradha Bhasin showcased WRN's work-in-progress documenting the varied and innovative voices from the ground.

“Not Everyone Picks up Stones!” Plural Forms of Resistance and Women’s Agency in Kashmir. - A WRN India Presentation

Section - A

Images & Sounds from The Ground in Revolt

Often when an action research study is proposed, it is asked ---What more is there to understand about India's best known violent conflict, Kashmir? So familiar are the visual optics of Kashmir valley, especially in its three decade long insurgent phase -- massive militarized oppression and militant armed resistance, and the side show of the 'proxy war', the routinized
‘ceasefire violations’ of Indian and Pakistani soldiers firing lethal volleys across the disputed border. There is the mirror image of two nationalisms confronting each other Indian and Kashmiri. It is the longest running international conflict in the UN Security Council. The Kashmir conflict seems to defy a solution and holds hostage peace and cooperation between two nuclear powers and in South Asia as well.

We in ‘India’ hold fast on to our truths derived from images of our soldiers returning in coffins, hugely squandered resources; the betrayal of our trust by anti-national proxies of a hostile neighbouring power. And in Kashmir, they hold on to their truth of betrayal of trust over an accession yet to be legitimated by a promised plebiscite, denial of fundamental freedoms and the refusal to acknowledge that there is a political problem. That gulf has become wider over these 70 years. Alienation, moral indignation and resistance are at one end. A mirror alienation, but also the arrogance of power armed with doctrines to militarily crush and control are at the other.

Paradise or some *hoors*
I didn’t see any
when the impartial bullet
in a perfect symmetry
found its way through
my weak chest.
The only fear however
that gripped me was
that the tomatoes I had bought
from the market for home
were all smashed, when I fell
with a thud on the ground,
Tomatoes and the blood
it was all red,
mixed syncretically!
Now who would tell the mom
not to wait for tomatoes
and learn to eat without me

- Rumuz [Hina Khan]

But new defining images are crowding the public space enacted quite as much in the virtual reality of social media as in the urban streets, and the hills and valleys of Kashmir. The coming of age of a wounded generation that has grown into political consciousness in the last millennial decade, the children of the *tehreek* (*movement*) are producing an outcrop of competing and plural images of resistance that is challenging the distorting optics of a binary visual politics of militants against the state forces. The young who have cut their political teeth on the tumultuous disruptions of 2008 (Amarnath land grab\(^{ii}\)), 2009 (Shopian double rape, murder\(^{iii}\)) 2010 (Machil fake encounter of civilians\(^{iv}\)) and 2016 (killing of new age digital militant Burhan Wani\(^{v}\)) are subverting the hegemonic linear narrative of the last three decades. They are demanding attention to the ground in revolt against ‘Indian occupation’ - a phrase rarely used before. A refrain that finds many echoes is that “resistance has become mainstream”. Tasneem, a post graduate student of Anantnag and a committed leader of public protests asserted,
“Before it was only the militants confronting the Indian army, today we all come out.”

Stone Pelters: Non-Violent Aggression?

Centre stage is held by the morally indignant stone pelters, most persistently students in urbanized areas joining pitched battles in the streets confronting fully armed security personnel with a stone in hand. Seemingly, fear and foreboding seems to have been sublimated by moral indignation, the desperate compulsion to shrug off the passivity of despair and hopelessness, and embrace the glory of shahdat (martyrdom), a ‘meaningful death’. As a Kashmiri woman media professional explained, “In Kashmir the battle is not between the idea of life and the idea of death; it is about existence and a right to live with dignity in our own land. Everything loses meaning when our civilian population is surrounded by 700,000 armed forces.”

“Living amidst bullets and pellets made people think that life is not so important. Deaths were so common. The child I would play with in the morning would lie in a pool of blood in the evening. Search operations were on….”

Nighat Sahiba, poet, Anantnag

Unstoppable are the driven youth, men and women who come out in protest rallies and fight pitched battles armed with stone in hand against fully armed security forces. This is despite the state forces unleashing a violent muscular repression, indiscriminate volleys of pellets, tear gas and live bullets –blinding, and killing protestors and bystanders, often children. Hundreds of minors have been arrested under anti terror laws, Public Safety Act. Undaunted, thousands of men and women are mobbing funeral sites in a ritual of glorifying martyrdom of militant and civilian killed. Violent encounter sites are flocked to, so as to disrupt military operations and enable the militants to escape at risk of fatal personal risk.

“When encounters happen in neighbouring areas, and we hear of them, we all go there to throw stones…….The entire neighbourhood goes,”

This was voiced by the sons, daughters and the cousins of a lower middle class family in Anantnag, many of whom have pellets still embedded in their bodies, several of whom have been jailed for protest. In Pulwama, south Kashmir, our animated conversation with some recent college graduates was brusquely disrupted. A message –an encounter of a local militant was happening 30kms away. Minutes later they sped away to the site. Dreams of post graduate studies in Jamia University (Delhi), a government job fast fading in the midst of uncertainty. Peer pressure, anxiety about being ruthlessly targeted by the police as an ‘overground militant worker’ or its reverse, suspected as an informer. When anyone can be killed and you have so little control, the rage and desperation to shrug off passivity,
to assert dignity of choice. “Stone pelting give meaning to their lives by giving them a sense of control”, says a legal researcher with APDP.

In Hawoora, Shopian district, there is Andleeb (13). She rushes out of school towards her cousin Shakir (17). Just moments before he was earning merit weeding the graveyard. The security forces on a random patrol were restively massed outside the college/school gates to deter or provoke stone pelting. A movement, they turn and see him walking towards the gates. He is shot. Andleeb in school rushes out towards her bleeding cousin. She is shot and lies in a pool of her own blood. Her sisters are fired at as they run out to take Andleeb to hospital. That evening there were three small coffins.

**Women Performing Resistance: Social Acceptance of Dark Agency?**

Amidst these violent, masculine militarized spaces is the high visibility of women and girls in performing aggressive resistance. In particular this generation of girls has grown into consciousness surrounded by the massive and tumultuous public protests and the extreme violent reprisals of 2008, 2009, 2010 and in 2016 and the killing of the new militancy, Burhan Wani. The everyday resistance of Kashmiri women had been an integral part of the decades struggle and constituted the backbone of the resistance --of managing survival --during the protracted months of unending curfews. In the rural areas women used to come out, armed with kangris and chilli. But this was a first –the appropriation of a masculine aggressive language of protest. College girls spilling out into the urban /rural streets were voicing a new language of assertive aggression.

“That I will be in a protest here is a given. When the event with Burhan saeb happened... the next day I heard a woman call out “Nara-e-Takbeer!/Allah is the Greatest!” in the streets... I went out. From two, we were 2,000 women...”

“I also made announcements in the mosque at the Main Chowk. In no time a sea of women gathered. We told the police, this is a peaceful protest. They wouldn't allow us to move further than the Chowk. I told one it is you who lecture us on the merits of peaceful protests but they started shelling tear-gas at us. During the shelling, the
women dispersed... some left behind their veils... others their purses... still others their footwear...”

“Later, I gave a bag full of stones to boys from our neighbourhood....I picked up one for myself and hurled it at the police. A large group of women-police came hurtling towards me. God! how they beat me but I too must have gotten a few punches on them [laughs]. I was bed ridden for the next 40 days. My leg was broken. Even then, though my parents would bolt the door from outside, I would clamber out of the window to join the protest, supporting my limp leg with my hand...”

An Mphil Student, Shopian

In the early days of the movement for aazadi in the 1990s, mothers and school/college girls did assertively march, shouting slogans in 20,000 strong protest rallies. Later they retreated in the face of brutal state repression and alienation from a corrupted and appropriated ‘foreign’ (proxy) militancy. In a departure from that period, today there is an expansive number of women massed at funerals, joining tens of thousands of men desperate to get a glimpse or touch the local militant and civilian become ‘martyr’. Gender redlines are being crossed that restrict women’s presence at funerals.

My mother walked 9 kilometres all alone from our village to attend the funeral of local militant Sameer Tiger (Pulwama: South Kashmir)... “None of the male members from our family went but she did,” said her son.

On May 8, the mother of Saddar Padder stood adjacent to her slain son’s body and pressed the trigger of a gun held by a militant to give her departed son a gun salute.

Kashmiri Mothers, within the logic of motherhood politics in a patriarchal discourse, have reached out to sons at encounter sites to persuade sons to surrender. But there are instances of a Mother strengthening the resolve of her son not to give up at the penultimate moment of choice -- ‘martyrdom’, or surrender, arrest and coercion to become collaborator. ( Both narratives are enacted on the social media in a competing propaganda war with state agencies).

Militancy which had been contained has revived. Young well educated Kashmiri men and young boys are slipping away to join militancy, despite the often certain knowledge that ill trained, poorly armed their chances of survival are at best a few months. With elan these ‘new age militants, now unabashedly unmasked, announce their arrival on the social media armed with an AK47 or its variation. The Kashmir struggle does not have women
militants, but in the enveloping atmosphere of anger and assertive aggression, some young women determinedly spoke of the likelihood. If “they (the boys) allow”. That is, if there would be social approval. In 2010, college girls who joined the street protests were mocked – “so now girls are protesting for azaadi, sure now we’ll get azaadi”.

An inter-generational shift is discernible. The image of a young women in a street battle angrily kicking an armoured vehicle, or aggressively confronting a soldier or pushing armed police immediately, goes viral and is approvingly shared by the young. There are many such stray anecdotes. A young women who because of her brother’s association with violent resistance, is targeted by the police, and tortured for her sympathies. Earlier she would have been disowned by a prospective marriage match. Her would be fiancé reportedly said that he is proud of her and wants to marry her. In Shopian, a man who is regularly arrested and tortured by the police, explained he was ready to quit his involvement with the struggle, but his wife would never agree. She had become a hardened resister when in prison with Asiya Andrabi (who is accused of being a terrorist).

There was some social acceptability for older women coming out of homes in the rural areas. But the novel phenomenon of young girl students coming out from colleges and their homes has provoked a debate, and even a backlash among older men. Some university colleagues were reported as saying it was un-Islamic. At an FDG with young women professionals in Srinagar, opinion too was divided. Young men were said to be encouraging girls appropriating a language of aggression in public space. It resonated with their politics of protest. An educationist pointed out that her male colleagues would often taunt “you see men dying every day. You people talk of equality, now where are you? Have you heard of any girl dying?” But now, because girls are coming out, I have seen those men approvingly say “ok, now you’re coming out”. Backlash or encouragement, girls are coming out in ever larger numbers. Indeed the security agencies are raising three new companies of women to deal with this new unexpected phenomenon.

A young Srinagar based young feminist author and rights activist, Rubina, was not alone in appreciating these young women breaking out of gender stereotypes and exercising agency. She believes these women are exercising their own choice in a much better way than their brothers entrapped in values of aggressive masculinity. Men are entrapped in performing masculinity in Kashmir’s context of war. Kashmiri Pandit poet, Amit Bamzai defensively states, “The pen pushers are not considered masculine in a war which is fought in the streets with stones and bullets.”

The possibility of women’s dark agency in violent projects seems sharply discordant with the feminist politics of rejection of militarism and feminist understanding of the role of gender in producing violence in everyday relations and in violent conflict. "Ambivalent
Agency” is where much of feminist scholarship has halted when grappling with the contentious issue of the scope and desirability of women's agency in militarized, hierarchical and authoritarian political movements (Rajasingham 2001). Are gender dynamics in Kashmir today unsettling these gender stereotypes, i.e. the essentialisation of women as peacemakers and as instruments or ‘cogs in the wheel’ in violent movements. The Kashmir tehreek has been a male dominated narrative with women as bit players of victimhood. Even resistance was seen as incidental, predicated on women’s relationship to ‘missing’ or killed husbands, sons and brothers. Has that narrative shifted? Are women speaking for themselves as autonomous political subjects and not kin dependent subjects?

Art as Resistance

Turning to the comfort zones of feminist politics, is young women and men performing resistance through art. There has been a dramatic renaissance of creative expression, of culture as resistance. Alongside the gun and stone, young women and men are claiming the word, paint-brush, pen, camera, movement or sound, anything that can be used to articulate their alternative politics. “Not everyone picks up stones, Umair Bhat, a young poet from Lolab Valley, explains. “And if you don’t pick up stones and go into the streets, you write.” Nighat Sahiba, called the successor of the legendary Kashmiri poet Haba Khatun, is more explicit, “You don’t just choose your politics, you also choose your medium”. There has been an explosion of cultural outpouring, following in the wake of Basharaat Peer’s Curfewed Nights with digital platforms making possible a crowd of narratives of ‘occupation’ and graphic novels. Kashmiri poet in exile Agha Shahid Ali, the icon of resistance poetry, today is joined by a mass of young poets, women and men, who have found voice through social media. Arguably, the Islamic metaphor is less evident in these poetic expressions which are driven by their life encounters with the reality of ‘occupation’ in which collective loss and grief predominate. (In contrast the militants confronting a path to certain death embrace, especially post recruitment, an Islamist ideological fervor).
Kashmiri Muslim and Pandit, men and women performers are claiming ‘hip hop’ as their medium of politics. Rapper MC Kash brought the protest movement to music. His 2010
song, ‘I Protest (remembrance)’, was adopted as a protest anthem. Young musicians like Ali Saifuddin in the film In the Shade of the Chinar says,

“Someone like me in the '90s would have picked up a gun; 20 years later I picked up a guitar with the same ideology — to resist”. Ali saifuddin, hip hop musician.

Contestations over the space for music in Islamic societies persist, especially when intersected with gender and public performance. That exhilarating moment of the coming out of an all girls band Pragash, was soon snuffed. But others like the hip hop artist Minem have carved a niche for herself.

Graffiti, photography, paintings, calendars, installations, cartoons, performance art, songs: traditional and hip hop, films, social media blogs and videos are building an alternative public memory that articulates loss and lament but also rage and anti-militarism, and above all, loss and lament. Art as dissent subverts the official narrative of Indian state agencies ‘protecting’ Kashmir, while ‘othering’ its people, who are projected as violent and barbaric and therefore expendable.

One dies
The other is born
They only give us numbers
But poets hate numbers
And in our country we are all poets
of loss
of memory
of madness
We know the pain of erasure.
We, the poets of persistence.
We, who outran our destiny.....
- Uzma Falak

Personal memory and experience interacts with the conflict in various ways, paving way for collective political responses and producing myriad ways in which different women turn grief and victimhood into agency. Sana Mattoo’s innocent school girl world crashed in 2010 when her cousin Tufail Matto (17) returning from tuition was hit by a tear gas shell that split open his skull. She is compulsively driven to document in powerful photo studies post encounter sites, haunting images of loss and lament, memorializing life interrupted.

Graffiti has sprouted anew on the walls and closed shop fronts of Kashmir, especially since 2008 and again in 2016, screaming out they make a powerful declaration of resistance, making the passerby stop. Not only the young, but a middle class 46 year old
businesswoman, aided no less by her Mother, is one of the graffiti writers in Anantnag. For the Indian tourist visitor to Kashmir it makes for a pause in the ‘nationalist’ consumption of the paradisiac beauty. As an innovative young crafts person, law student and insightful observer Mahum Shabbir said, “the trope of nationalism is tied to the consumption of things Kashmiri without seeking to be reflexive about the experiences of the people who produce such things or the role of such a consumption in providing a filter through which to tour a place with the proverbial rose-tinted glasses.”

When Mahum began learning the art of the famed Kashmiri papier-mâché, she had a strange feeling that the miniature flowers, leaves and branches (of its paradisiacal beauty she was drawing were all dead…. Together with Mir Suhail Mir, the newspaper cartoonist, she developed an online shawl business — Crafted-in-Kashmir. Instead of blossoming branches, barbwires run through the Pashmina shawls, skulls take the place of chinar leaves, guns and paisleys face each other, and flowers in the colours of spring are imprisoned in loops and tangles of barbwires. Motifs inspired the world around them. “People usually only show interest in Kashmiri objects like shawls, but don’t care about the people or the violence” said Mahum, now a student of law at Harvard University.

"Art is the only way to channel my anger and frustration….I can’t say art heals, but, yes, it makes you calm. Through it, you become aware of the little things happening around you, you know how to react."Qazi KhytulAbyad

Khytul, the daughter of the assassinated spiritual leader of south Kashmir was among the many students in the campus of Kashmir University who gathered around a fallen Chinar tree to create a unique oasis of cultural as resistance. Students gathered around that ‘free wheeling’ space painting on the log and installing murals. The film ‘In the shade of the fallen Chinar’ records the memory of analternative narrative of a section of youth through their sketches, lyrics of the song or beautiful photographs “marked a landmark in the countless pages of the history of Kashmir where the notion of permanent peace still strikes as an unfulfilled dream.”

New Momentum in Forms of civil resistance

When the state is at war with the lived memory of the people, APDP (Association of Parents of the Disappeared) memorializes enforced disappearances through the ritual enactment of grief and the cry for justice in public vigils. In 2012 art students joined in using body art to create sepulchral images on the commemorative Day of the Disappeared. The annual Calendar of the Disappeared keeps memory alive beyond the kin circle.

“Primarily, it is the parents who keep waiting for their children. There was a threat that the issue of the enforced disappearance will fade out from the
collective memory as older parents of the victims were dying,” says Parveena Ahanger, chairperson of APDP.

Iffat Fatima’s poignant documentary *KhoonDiyBaarav* (Blood Leaves Its Trail) is an elegiac bearing of witness of the ‘half widows’ of enforced disappearances, their struggle of memory against the state’s double violation in enforcing erasure – “did they vanish in thin air”. A new generation of poets memorializes loss

Revealing their star-faces, to us by the evenings — Where did they go?
Dazzling the hearts of this light-starved city — Where did they go?
Those snatched by the bullets, are safe in their graves
Sleeping those were, by their mother’s side — Where did they go?

*Nigha Sahiba*, translated from Kashmri :GGeelani

Human rights crimes and betrayal of governing institutions in 2008, 2009 and 2010 produced massive campaigns of civil disobedience in Kashmir. A conscious shift in the forms of resistance to Indian rule in the valley, as more Kashmiris turned to non-violent protests. Struggling earlier civil society interventions gained new vigour. JKCCS (Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Societies (APDP/ITJK), one of the singular few civil society platforms for research and advocacy on justice for egregious human rights violations, brought out comprehensively documented exposures of mass graves, ‘Buried Evidence’, exhaustive case documentation of Shopian rape case and ‘Structures of Violence: the State in J &K’. JKCCS inspired and mentored a new generation emerging into the political awareness of ‘occupation’. This included a collective of young women who challenged the Indian state in the reopening of Kashmir’s paradigmatic case of systematic and pervasive use of rape in conflict as documented in, *Do you remember KunanPospara?*

One of JKCCS’ most effective interventions was the convening of *Haqeeqat-e-Kashmir* (2013) . Here art in public space was used as an expression to challenge occupation and also to prove that Kashmir is not a radicalized society opposed to art and music. It was a spontaneous and exceptional coming together of multiple and discordant groups, individuals and above all artists. The assertion of a counter political narrative to the high profile hosting in Kashmir of the event *Jashn-e-Kashmir* with the internationally acclaimed Zubin Mehta conducting a German orchestra. With the international media present, *Haqeeqat-e-Kashmir* challenged this state patronized attempt to portray a ‘normal’ Kashmir.

However the failure of politics and governance to respond to the cry for justice, intensified these tumultuous protests of 2008-2010. Overwhelmed by the public outrage at the killing of the social media militant Burhan Wani in 2016, the security agencies unleashed the
pellet war, horrifyingly injuring blinding and killing thousands of civilian protestors and bystanders. It produced an explosion of artistic and poetic expressions and social media narratives to tell the story. Government agencies were conflating civilian protestors (stone pelter and Facebook dissenter) with militant, arresting, maiming and killing. Many of the young women we spoke to expressed genuine bewilderment at the Indian response.

“What can a stone do even when thrown with strength. More often than not it doesn’t reach. But look at how they the Indian forces respond”, a legal volunteer with APDP in Srinagar remarked.

Tear gas shells were thrown not up in the air but aimed at -- shattering a young boy returning from tuition, Suhail Mattoo. The wanton and indiscriminate firing of rounds of pellets that have blinded and injured.....Physicians for Human Rights.....xiv NYT called the unprecedented flood of victims with eye injuries -- ‘Epidemic of the Eye’. xv Not used for crowd control anywhere else in India, and withdrawn in Israel and stigmatized for their use in Egypt, the Supreme Court has allowed pellet gun use in Kashmir. It was another exception in a territory where anti-democratic laws such as AFSPA and PSA deny fundamental freedoms in a climate of impunity {Blood Censored}.

Poetry and art communicated powerfully and importantly, ambivalently in a time when you could be arrested.

Moral Indignation at indiscriminate blindings is mutely voiced in the Kashmiri doctors’ one eyed protest holding placards, ‘Why kill and maim Kashmiris? Where is humanity?’ Cartoonist Mir Suhail lampooned it by digitally adding eye bandages to famous paintings, hoping to draw attention to the abuse of pellet guns. At the Kochi Art biennale (2016) a shawl symbolic of warmth and comfort was embedded with pellets and using it as an oppressive prop a Kashmiri art student in a pellet dance communicated subversive horror. A Kashmiri art educator and artist explained, “Art creates an immediate emotional connect.... (It) conveys and documents ‘brutality and violence’ as well as ‘dissent and memory’. “It isn't as easy as throwing a stone. Once it is thrown, it is over....”

However this effulgence of creative expression of culture as resistance aimed at communicating within and beyond Kashmir to the international community, ironically is unable to reach out. It gives the impression of Kashmiris talking to each other within a reinforcing ideological echo chamber. Sonia a businesswoman from an influential family in Anantnag had reached out to a social group in an effort to bridge the Kashmiri Muslim-Pandit faultline. SaarlySamavAkseyRaziLamav sought to recover the social history of a composite Kashmiriyat to oppose the religious divide of conflict. She cynically reflected on her excitement that there were 2000 followers, the multitudinous world outside the social
media group. We argue that unlike the Palestinian culture of resistance which communicates outwards especially through the widespread international diaspora, Kashmiri cultural resistance ends up becoming inward looking, leaving little impression on the indifferent Indian national and global psyche.

**Plural Forms talking to each other?**

What was the conversation between these plural forms of resistance? Was there oppositional tension or a hierarchy of effectiveness between them? For poet Nighat Sahiba, "the stone only enhances brutality and the memory of brutality". Some confronting the lifelong tragedy of thousands of youth, pellet blinded and maimed for life, understood the unbearable necessity of validating and socially legitimating the rational of their sacrifice. Faakirah, a law student explained “They have seen civilians losing vision (due to pellet guns). This generation of Kashmir has fought against injustice with politics, peace, stones and guns. We can’t blame them. These boys are a product of a deteriorated system called conflict,” she said. A particularly astute observer participant, author and activist Nilima told us,

“Someone like Essa Fazili (B-tech student turned militant in Nov 2017 and killed in March 2018) whose stories we keep hearing – his experiences were different and he chose a different path. A lot of people chose different paths of resistance. But whether you talk of picking up arms, or some women pelt stones or someone choose to write about it on Facebook or twitter – everywhere it’s just different modes of expressing your resistance towards the Indian state. And I think, we need to understand why it has become mainstream."

Responses to violence and every day brutality vary and contested, shaped by personal and collective experiences. There are no clear binaries in the forms of resistance women and men choose. A policewoman officer’s daughter speaks about insecurity due to military barricades, a separatist’s son opposes violence as a means of resistance and talks of Gandhi. In Shopian, the daughter of a Kashmiri political activist, who has been in and out of jail since 1990s, opposes violence and dreams of escaping to Jamia University, away from the relentless cycle of harassment and torture because of her father’s separatist politics. But at the same time she is drawn to the journeys of militants and their ‘shahadat’ which crowd her smart phone. The romanticizing of death has become obsessive after her beloved cousin died in an encounter in Shopian in March.

What form resistance will take will depend upon the Indian state’s willingness to loosen its repressive grip, allow ‘non-violent’ assembly, avenues of expression, and accountability. In Kashmir this generation of conflict has grown up living their absolute ‘truth’ of occupation,
of freedom violated, trust betrayed and frustration over India’s denial that there is a political problem not a law and order one. ‘India’ as stated above too has its exclusionary truth of own sacrifices and betrayal by an ‘anti national’ people and the failure of its national project of integration. These mutually excluding echo chambers lie in closed silos. It logjams the possibility of a political dialogue, and even the necessity of a humanitarian one.

Rita Manchanda, Anuradhi Bhasin and Padmini Ghosh supported by WRN (Women’s Regional Network) undertook this research for advocacy to break these silos. It focused on the off-centre images and sounds of a ground in revolt as evoked by young women and men in Kashmir. It seeks to understand the implications of ‘resistance becoming mainstream’ for the social legitimacy of the Kashmir struggle. If there is a tipping over into full blown militancy, will there again be a popular withdrawal as the culture of the gun gets mired in contentious ambiguities. Will this intergenerational social rethinking of gender relations and women’s equal assertion retreat? Will the collective identity mobilization around a militarized political struggle alter self-identity under an Islamist identity (Sonpar 2008)?

The crucial determinant is the response of Indian state agencies which itself will depend upon whether politics will be in control or a military response. Inevitably it is a partial listening and seeing. The off centre images and sounds of the hegemonic Indian narrative need to be unpacked. For the present, our act of seeing and listening is aimed at creating an opening for skepticism about facing and hearing exclusionary truths both within Kashmir and outside. It is an appeal for empathy and humanity imperative for Kashmir and India’s intertwined destiny.
Section - B
why Should WRN focus on women and Resistant Politics in Kashmir?

WRN's feminist politics, knowledge production and advocacy have been deeply invested in countering political violence and militarization in the region. Its work has contributed to unpacking the critical role of gender in the production of violence and women's participation in the social legitimation and de-legitimation of violent politics and war. WRN, also has an abiding commitment to “amplify the voices of unheard, marginalized women, and with them address the interlinked issues of peace, militarization, security, justice and governance in South Asia” \(^{xvi}\).

WRN's first India Community *Unequal Citizens: Women’s Narratives of Resistance, Militarisation, Corruption and Security* (2013) in its four segment study, included a focus on Rajouri&Poonch (J &K) “My fields are the nation’s killing fields!”

In this third round of India CCs, WRN reprises its advocacy research on Kashmir, focusing on the Kashmir valley to explore ‘when resistance becomes mainstream’. It examines the contextual reality of women/girls' multifaceted involvement with resistance politics. The women are witness and participants in the struggle for peace with freedom and justice, including the pull of violent ideologies in this tumultuous phase of the phase of the movement.

WRN argues that the persistence of gender stereotypes distorts the contextual reality of women’s complex and non-linear participation in resistance struggles. For instance there is the ‘truth’ of the gendered assumption of the significance of motherhood in patriarchal cultures, and the effectiveness of a Kashmiri Mother appealing to her son to leave militancy, and return home. Equally, there is the ‘truth’ of a Mother who grieves but does not stop her son, and even celebrates his martyrdom, offering a gun salute at his funeral! There is the ‘truth’ of girls joining in collective action defined by a masculinized aggressive mode- stone pelting, reinforcing militarism. But there is also the ‘truth’ of a young Kashmiri woman activist analyzing the involvement of young women as an assertion of ‘anti militarism’, and significantly that “it’s about empowerment”. \(^{xvii}\) There is the truth of *hijab* wearing young girls pelting stones, and the hijab itself becoming a symbol of resistance. There is also the truth of a far greater mass of young urban educated Kashmiri girls wearing the *hijab* reflecting a noticeable trend towards asserting an Islamic identity and faith. Radical Islamist, Asiyah Andrabi hijab wearing politics were once resisted, today she is held up for her sacrifice as a symbol of resistance as she stands behind bars in Tihar jail.
Methodology

The Community Conversations use field based research which leans on feminist methodology, ethics and standpoint analysis. The CCs use qualitative analysis and draw upon participatory observation research and ethnographic tools. The Kashmir CC draws upon epistemic frameworks developed for understanding similar resistance phenomenon e.g. in Palestine.

The research team Rita Manchanda, AnuradhaBhasin and Padmini Ghosh conducted more than 50 in-depth interviews and focused group discussions as the basic tools for primary data collection. Conscious effort was made to interact with specific constituencies of young women and men, lawyers, university faculty and students of fine arts, media, political science and social work in Kashmir University, Srinagar, Islamic University, Anantnag, Central University, Pulwama. Young artists, cartoonists, poets, musicians and writers were talked to. Eminent civil society activists were interviewed. Focused field visits to the Kashmir valley were undertaken in April and July 2018 and included conversations in Srinagar, Shopian, Anantnag and Pulwama. Conflict affected families were reached out. In addition an extensive desk-based review was undertaken of published as well as ‘grey’ materials. Also, the co-authors built upon their long term journalistic, scholarly and activist involvement in Jammu and Kashmir. That long standing relationship made possible privileged, candid and intimate access. {Names of persons interviewed have been largely changed except where the conversation is already available in print.}

Section -C

The Historical Context

Kashmir has been the site of three India-Pakistan wars, the most contentious legacy of the unfinished business of the Partition of the British subcontinent and the emergence of two embattled independent states controlling their respective territorial halves of Jammu and Kashmir. But the Kashmir narrative is also one of a distinctive regional nationalism that competes and indeed ill fits with the ethos of Indian and Pakistani nationalisms (Varshney 1991). Above all the narrative is of the Kashmiri people and their collective memories of exploitation and oppression by successive alien rulers, including Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs, and Dogras. (Duchinski 2009:696)

For many Kashmiris, India’s post-1947 incorporation of Jammu and Kashmir is one more phase of occupation and colonization, premised on the instrument of accession which has not been confirmed by the promised plebiscite, though arguably confirmed by the holding of successive elections, albeit manipulated. The popular Kashmiri demand for
self determination or *aazadi* (freedom) amidst its panoply of meanings, from independence to secession, primarily has come to resound with the cry of freedom from militarized suppression and especially in the last two decades, freedom from oppressive ‘occupation’ and the denial of fundamental rights.

“How did India get here?” : The Politics of the Struggle

“How did India get here? How is it all right for a constitutionally democratic and secular, modern nation to blind scores of civilians in a region it controls? Not an authoritarian state, not a crackpot dictatorship, not a rogue nation or warlord outside of legal and ethical commitments to international statutes, but a democratic country, a member of the comity of nations…..” Mirza Waheed *The Guardian*

In addition to this setting of and describing the context of this Community Conversation, the report also delves into Questions of Women in Kashmir’s Struggle – a continuum or disruption?; the dark agency – feminism and hijab, islamisation of identity, and other notes from the filed of everyday resistance.
WRN had invited a very distinguished panel to deliberate upon “When Resitance Becomes Mainstream”, and facilitate a discussion to enrich WRN’s report with different perspectives.

Panel Discussion - “When Resistance Becomes Mainstream”
Chair - Meenakshi Gopinath - educationist, political scientist, writer; Director, WISCOMP
Speakers:
Seema Kazi - Researcher and author
RituMenon - Feminist Publisher, writer
Shobna Sonpar - Psychotherapist, researcher on psycho-social interventions in conflict areas.
Tapan Bose - award winning filmmaker, human-rights activist, author

The chair opened the session articulating the need to understand the patterns of “Re-story(ing) Kashmir”. The patterns are fluid, and simultaneously fragile and dynamic. The overarching question that needs to be asked is how does one enter the complex space of understanding the plural forms of resistance and women’s agency in Kashmir? Recognising that such patterns are interspersed with ambiguity, it works well to move away from an unilinear attitude to approaching such situations with humility.

Referring to the presentation, which showcased WRN’s work documenting how women are intruding militarised spaces and the “civilian” coming into the frame of barbed wires, bullets and military fatigue, it was pointed out that it is imperative to note how women negotiate, re-negotiate, resist and transcend boundaries in conflict zones. What constitutes the overt and covert voices of resistance for the women in conflict zones?

Following from the above, it also becomes important to question and problematize the “mainstreaming” of resistance? What does it mean when someone says resistance has become mainstream? How inclusive or exclusive is it? Does it support alternate or different voices? If it is about culture as resistance, then when we hear guns do we think of culture? And how do women negotiate between resisting occupation, and countering violent extremism in such situations.

Reiterating once again the complex positioning of women in conflict zones, she quoted Mamang Dai - poet, writer and journalist from Arunachal Pradesh (India’s North East and another conflict-affected zone)
“In the end the universe yields nothing except a dream of permanence.
Peace is a falsity.
A moment of rest comes after long combat:
From the east the warrior returns with the blood of peonies.
I am the child who died at the edge of the world, the distance between end and hope.
The star diagram that fell from the sky, The summer that makes men weep.
I am the woman lost in translation who survives, with happiness to carry on.
I am the breath that opens the mouth of the canyon, the sunlight on the tips of trees;
There, where the narrow gorge hastens the wind
I am the place where memory escapes the myth of time,
I am the sleep in the mind of the mountain.”
   - The Voice of the Mountain, Mamang Dai.

Seema Kazi responded to WRN's Presentation bringing in her own analytical understanding of Kashmir, resistance, and examining the complexities about women's agency. She pointed out how any feminist analysis needs to capture the events, occurrences and trends depicting women's agency in conflict zones from a historical perspective, and not merely as patch-work. What is remarkable in post-2016 Kashmir is the spontaneous “women-only” mobilisations – the scale and pervasiveness of which speaks of collective resistance. The significance of this lies in how this not only prompted other protests from different and hitherto considered apolitical communities, like students, but also served as a potent evidence that challenges, discredits and deligitimises the occupation, thereby embarrassing the state as it is. The proliferation of Kashmiri women writers then is in a continuum with this, where women are expressing what they are experiencing every day.

Ritu Menon located Kashmir's plural forms of resistance within the conceptual analysis of culture as resistance, drawing also on a comparative framework of analysis with the Palestinian context. Stating the similarities between the Kashmir and the Palestinian context of culture as resistance, she said that protracted nature of the conflict is bound to make resistance mainstream. But the questions that need to be asked in the Kashmir context is whether the issues are now being articulated differently? Are the women or the
youth asking what the movement has acquired thus far without them? Even though it is understandable that resistance will become mainstream in situations of protracted conflict, but it also needs to be asked what does mainstreaming resistance mean? Does it lead to conflict-fatigue, or revive national and international attention to the issue? Or bring attention to new issues? If it is reviving attention, how far is it reaching out or is staying within the same community? In the Kashmir context, one of the reasons why there is sporadic international interest and attention is because such expressions of resistance could not move much outside the valley, whereas for the Palestine situation, the diasporic population worked in tandem with the west bank. The acceptance of and admiration for violence marks another point of departure between the two situations. While the Palestinians no longer support all-out violence, and have only grudging acceptance of the Hamas, in the Kashmir context, acceptance of violence and young men taking to guns has seen a renewed acceptance. Questioning the indulgence of women in stone-pelting in Kashmir, Menon expressed that feminist resistance cannot be violent, though because of the everyday atrocities the slip may happen inadvertently, yet that raises questions on whether “mainstreaming resistance” is being subsumed within a masculine paradigm. Drawing from the Black women’s movement and intervention in national politics, Menon stated that when it comes to plural forms of resistance and women’s agency in conflict zones, what becomes imperative is where, when and how women enter the space of culture as and/or politics of resistance.

Shobna Sonpar unpacked the connections between “Occupation” Trauma and Resistance’, and the explanatory phrase ‘meaningful death’. Speaking of the plural forms and creative expressions of resistance, Sonpar stated that it is not that people from Kashmir are not expressing themselves through myriad forms but what is more pertinent is whether they are being heard. Referring to trauma studies, she spoke of the interplay of “Black-hole of
“Trauma” and “Written on the body”, i.e. the curious experience of both knowing and not-knowing that determine expressions of resistance. She brought forth the need to acknowledge that importance of emotion in our understanding of protest and resistance, especially when the evocative nature of Art serves as “a transport station for trauma.” She explained that often when subjected to trauma, it is not a matter of choice for the creator whether the trauma finds expression in the creation, rather it often flows/rises from the subjective lived experiences. Speaking from her experience as a psycho-therapist in Kashmir, she remarked on the striking difference in the emotional climate amongst the Kashmiri youth pre and post-2016. Instead of the earlier fearfulness, there was now anger, and a sense of confidence in place of the earlier helplessness. Developing on the imperative nature of emotions in understanding protest and resistance, Sonpar articulated the difference between Anger of hope, where anger can be channelised as a constructive emotion, and Anger of Despair - as being important markers of entering into any dialogue with the Kashmiri youth. The present upsurge of different expressions of resistance indicates toward anger of hope, but the question that looms large is how are these efforts received across the conflict-divide, and whether they are being tipped over toward an anger of despair?

Tapan Bose drew from his experience of engaging with the Kashmiri civil society and offered an analysis of the implications that the current situation in Kashmir has for politics, for democracy, and rights-based approach. Bose spoke of how politics of the state had played out to make the Kashmiri people feel that they were alone in their suffering. The Kashmiri civil society in fact plays a diverse and dynamic role to revisit memories, to corroborate citizens’ claims and to counter state narratives, to highlight lived experiences, to show what an “integral part of India” goes through on an everyday basis for years. These civil society initiatives do not hold anyone at gunpoint or hurl bombs or stones, rather they produce an understanding of the conflict from a human perspective, from the ordinary civilian perspective. However, the Indian civil society and/or polity on the other hand seems to have failed to extend a systematic support to the testimonies and recorded evidence generated by the local civil groups in Kashmir. Bound by narratives of national unity, they failed to extend a strong hand in solidarity with the Kashmiri people. This lack of questioning and/or courage on part of the Indian civil society compounded by insidious and implicating prime-time debates on national television makes one question that despite the Kashmiri civil society’s attempt over the years to reach out, does anyone even care to know? This of course makes Kashmiris feel abandoned. This led to an internalising of the conflict by the youth, so much so that even when a 16 or 17 year old picks up the gun in the valley, knowing that there is every probability that he will not be able to survive the wrath of and witch-hunting by the Indian state for more than six months, he feels that even his death will be an accomplishment if he brings down two soldiers from the Indian side with him in those 6 months. Speaking of the agency of women in this culture of resistance, Bose said that women have always been there. Earlier in the 90s, the women were drawn into the movement because of “relational imperatives” when someone’s brother/husband/son was injured, detained, killed or disappeared, which created a situation of ambivalent empowerment. However, now as is evident from the recent aggressive assertion of women, the process of ambivalent empowerment of the 90s is transforming over time.
transition toward overcoming of the fear has arrived, there is a conscious effort to shun fear, and it is being led by a new generation of people.

The discussion opened up space for deliberations on several concerns, however the ones that came up repeatedly were questions on women’s agency, mainstreaming resistance, and issues of bridging the impasse across the conflict divide.

Shweta Singh, Professor of International Relations at the South Asian University put forward whether we are looking at agency from a singular prism? Or, are we subsuming agency within a masculinised struggle?

Arshie, a research scholar on media, culture and governance questioned the mainstreaming of resistance - what exactly does mainstreaming resistance mean? Does it lead to creating a new hegemony of ideology?

Muzammil Jaleel, journalist with The Indian Express, articulated that the challenge really lies in bringing these voices from Kashmir to the rest of India.

Responding to questions on women’s agency, Anuradha Bhasin brought to the table further points for deliberation regarding the emergence of feminist narrative over time and its evolutionary nature. Also, who decides what is women’s agency? - is it defined by the academic framework, or is defined by the women themselves who feel that they are taking charge in some way? Referring to discussions from the fieldwork, Bhasin stated how the women in kashmir see a continuum in the multiple forms of resistance. This also related to the many shades that colour women’s agency in Kashmir, because while on one hand it is
difficult to deny the perpetuating of a masculine discourse of the struggle, there are also women who are recognising it and contesting it.

Summarising the discussion and deliberation of the session, the Chair’s concluding remarks will feed back into improving the CC report, regarding the crests and troughs of women engaging in resistance; the concerns over glamourisation of a warrior discourse and the hyper-masculinisation of the public sphere in culture as resistance.
Speaker Profiles

Launch of Community Conversation Report on
The Chutka Anti-Nuclear Power Plant Movement
Date: 18th September, 2018
Auditorium, Press Club of India, New Delhi

ASMITA KABRA is Professor and Dean at the School of Human Ecology, Ambedkar University Delhi, and heads the State SIA Unit of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. A development economist by training, she works on the interface of development studies, critical agrarian studies, political economy and political ecology, especially in the context of conservation displacement. She has worked since 1999 with two grassroots NGOs that she founded in central India, working on Adivasi livelihoods and school education.

SANDEEP PANDEY, a social activist by profession, has been visiting faculties of many premier institutes like IIM, Ahmedabad, NALSAR, Hyderabad, Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT, Gandhinagar, Departments of Chemical and Mechanical Engineering, IIT, BHU, Varanasi, Department of Humanities, IIT Guwahati. He was also the Member, Central Advisory Board of Education, MHRD, Government of India, 2004-05. Trained in engineering studies, he also has interest in various field like Education for underprivileged children, Human rights, Empowerment of marginalized communities, Struggles for strengthening of Democracy, Right to Information for Transparency and Accountability, Right to Food, Employment Guarantee Scheme, People's politics, Governance, Communal Harmony, Nuclear Disarmament and Peace, India Pakistan Friendship, Corporate Accountability.

Soumya Dutta - a well known energy and climate change expert in the CSO sector, associated with the group called PAIRVI, is the Convenor of Climate and Energy group of a multi-state network called Beyond Copenhagen Collective, is the National Convenor of the pan-India people's science campaign, “Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha”. He is also a founder member of India Climate Justice platform, was the national convenor of an all-India science communication body - NCSTC Network, and was the founder-convenor of the massive-outreach National Children’s Science Congress. He has written several books and many articles on these issues, edits & extensively contributes to a quarterly climate change magazine, contributed to numerous national, sub-national and UN level discussions on climate & energy issues, initiated and facilitated analysis, discussions on National & State Action Plans on Climate Change, national energy policy, and trained many higher school science teachers & science activists in 18 states of India, over the past 23 years. He has also extensively campaigned against nuclear fission based energy

1Asmita Kabra could not join the event as she had fallen ill, and had to back out two hours before the launch was scheduled to begin.
projects, with analysis, writings, lectures etc. He travels across the country and south Asia to build capacities of communities and people’s organizations in understanding environmental law, demystifying impact assessment procedures, democratizing knowledge and strengthening people’s capacities to respond to environmental violations. He is now a member of the Advisory Board of the UN body - Climate Technology Centre and Network CTCN.

**DR. S.P. UDAYAKUMAR**, an active member of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) and the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), takes special interest in Futures Studies and Peace Studies. He is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Futures Studies* and *In Review*, and also one of the Co-Directors of TRANSCEND: A Peace and Development Network. He also runs the South Asian Community Center for Education and Research (SACCER) Trust in India to carry out educational and research ventures. He has taught conflict resolution, nonviolence and international relations courses at University of Hawai’i, Monmouth University, Hamline University, University of Minnesota, European Peace University, Lady Sriram College etc. An ardent academic and writer on various socio-economic and political issues, Dr. Udayakumar has also been significantly engaged with the people’s movement against a nuclear power plant in Koodankulam, TN and is the founder of the People’s Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE).
Launch of Community Conversation Report on
“Not Everyone Picks Up Stones!”Plural Forms of Resistance and Women’s Agency in
Kashmir

Date: 24th September, 2018
India International Centre (Annexe), New Delhi

Dr Meenakshi Gopinath - A Padma Shri awardee, an Indian educationist, political scientist, writer and a former principal of Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, Dr. Gopinath is first woman to serve on the National Security Advisory Board of India between 2004 to 2006 where she sought to mainstream gender and human security concerns. She is also the Founder and Honorary Director of WISCOMP (Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace) an initiative begun in 1999 to promote the leadership of South Asian women in the areas of international politics, peace, security and diplomacy. WISCOMP provides a unique space for collaborative action research and peace building networks in the South Asian region and works at the interface of theory and practice; academia and the NGO sector. She is a member of multi track peace initiatives such as the longest sustaining Track II Neemrana Initiative between India and Pakistan and the Pakistan India People’s Forum for Peace and Democracy. She has written extensively on issues of Gandhian thought, Security, Gender, Peacebuilding and Indian politics and given her thoughts on conflict zones. Gopinath also served on the Boards of Sarvodaya International Trust, Centre for Policy Research, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, Foundation for Academic Excellence and Access (FAEA), Centre for Peace & Conflict Resolution, Pradaan, Shri Ram School, Doon School and on the Indo-German Consultative Group among others. She has also been awarded several other accolades like Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi Award, the Rajiv Gandhi Award for Excellence in Education and the Mahila Shiromani Award and the Delhi Citizen Forum Award and Qimpro Platinum Standard Award for Education and Celebrating Womanhood South Asian Recognition Award for Social Harmony.

Shobna Sonpar - Shobna Sonpar has been a psychotherapist for 30 years. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (India) and did her post-doctoral internship in counseling (1985-86) from University of California. She was a lecturer in Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychiatry, Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal. In recent years she has been involved in psychosocial intervention and research in Jammu and Kashmir where she has worked on trauma and written a book “Violent Activism” profiling Kashmiri ex-militants.

Ritu Menon - Ritu Menon is a well-known publisher, writer, independent scholar and activist. In 1984, she co-founded Kali for Women, India’s first and oldest feminist press, after which she independently founded Women Unlimited, another feminist publishing house. Menon is actively associated with the feminist movements in India and South Asia. She has written extensively on women and religion; women and violence; women in situations of armed conflict; and on the gendering of citizenship, through her work on women and the nation. In addition to her many other significant work her book Borders &
Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition (1998) is a ground-breaking study in Partition historiography. She is a founding member of Women’s WORLD (International), an international free-speech network of writers working on gender-based censorship, worldwide. As part of the Core Group of Women’s WORLD, India, Ritu has co-edited Just Between Us: Women Speak About their Writing (Women Unlimited, 2004) and Storylines: Conversations with Women Writers (Women Unlimited, 2003). She has engaged with culture as resistance especially in the context of Palestine, convening an event around this theme in Delhi a couple of years ago.

Seema Kazi - Seema Kazi holds a PhD from the Gender Institute, London School of Economics. She has worked as an independent researcher and writer on Muslim woman and human rights with the Women’s Learning Partnership (WLP), Washington D.C and the Minority Rights Group (MRG), London. Her book Between Democracy and Nation: Gender and Militarisation in Kashmir (Women Unlimited, 2009) on women’s subjective experience of militarisation in Kashmir is a landmark work on the issue.

Tapan Bose - Tapan Bose is an award winning documentary film maker, human rights activist -- in the forefront of civil society efforts to visibilise human rights violations and the demand for justice n Kashmir as evidenced in such reports as India’s Kashmir War (1990) to the most recent 'Blood censored' (2018)
Program Schedules

Launch of Resistance Revisited - The Anti Chutka Nuclear Power Plant Movement, Madhya Pradesh WRN Community Conversations Report 2018

Auditorium, Press Club of India, New Delhi September 18, 2018

Program Schedule

3:00 – 3:10 pm – Welcome Address/Opening Remarks by Rita Manchanda, WRN Founding Member; Director – Research, South Asian Forum for Human Rights.

3:10 – 4:10 pm - Voices from ground zero - Activists from the Chutka anti-nuclear power plant movement in conversation with AbhaBhaiya, WRN Founding Member and WRN Board Member.

Speakers:
Mera Bai – Chairperson, MahilaMorcha, ChutkaParmanuVirodhiSangharsh Samiti
Sona Bai – Member, MahilaMorcha, ChutkaParmanuVirodhiSangharsh Samiti
Rajkumar Sinha – Convener, Bargi Bandh Visthapith Sangh
Navratan Dubey – Secretary, ChutkaParmanuVirodhiSangharsh Samiti
Dadu Lal Kudape – Chairperson, ChutkaParmanuVirodhiSangharsh Samiti

4:10 -5:10 pm - Panel discussion on Development-Induced Displacements: Sites for Disaster
Speakers:
S.P Udayakumar - Co-Director, TRANSCEND: A Peace and Development Network; Founder, People’s Movement against Nuclear Energy (PMANE)
AsmitaKabra - Professor, School of Human Ecology, Ambedkar University Delhi
Sandeep Pandey – Co-Founder,Asha for Education; Professor, Jaipuria Institute of Management.
Chair – Soumya Datta - National convenor, Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha; Convenor of Climate & Energy Group - Beyond Copenhagen collective; Founder member, India Climate Justice Platform.
5:10 – 5:20 pm – Closing Remarks by Saumya Uma WRN Core Member; Assistant Professor, Law and Legal Studies, School of Law, Governance and Citizenship, Ambedkar University Delhi.

5:20 -6:00 pm – High tea
“Not Everyone Picks Up Stones!” Plural Forms of Resistance and Women’s Agency in Kashmir

Outing Of
WRN Community Conversations Report 2018

Lecture Room (1), India International Centre (Annexe), New Delhi
24th September, 2018
2:30 pm- 6:30 pm

Program Schedule

2:30 - 2:45 – Welcome Address and Opening Remarks
Welcome Address: AbhaBhaiya - WRN Founding Member; FounderJagori Delhi and Jagori Rural.
Opening Remarks on WRN and Jammu & Kashmir: Sahba Hussain - author; WRN India Core Member

2:45 - 3:45 - WRN Presentation - “Not Everyone Picks Up Stones! Plural Forms of Resistance and Women’s Agency in Kashmir”
Rita Manchanda, - WRN India Founding Member, Director (Research), South Asian Forum for Human Rights
Anuradha Bhasin - WRN India Core Member; Executive Editor, Kashmir Times.
Poems: Padmini Ghosh, WRN India Coordinator.

3: 45 – 4:15 - Tea

4:15 – 6:30- Panel Discussion - “When Resistance Become Mainstream”

Chair - Meenakshi Gopinath - educationist, political scientist, writer; Director, WISCOMP

Speakers:

Seema Kazi - Researcher and author
RituMenon - Feminist Publisher, writer
Shobna Sonpar - Psychologist, researcher on psycho-social interventions in conflict areas.
Tapan Bose - award winning filmmaker, human-rights activist, author
Qazi Nisar, the founder of Ummat-e-Islami, was killed in 1994 by unidentified gunmen. He was the spiritual leader of South Kashmir.


Physicians ....

NYT

WRN Vision and Mission Statement: [www.womensregionalnetwork.org](http://www.womensregionalnetwork.org)

Anu ...Essar

a promise of plebiscite that has never been fulfilled....