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## **Power Struggle In Kashmir: Representation Of Traumatized Damaged Self And Disconnections In Basharat Peer's Curfewed Night**

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### **Abstract**

The present research focuses on exploring the traumatic impacts of violence and coercion on the Kashmiris represented in the memoir *Curfewed Night* by Basharat Peer. The state of Kashmir has been facing bloodshed since the times of Gulab Singh in 1846 which reached its climax in the second last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Keeping that in mind, this study endeavours to explore how strategies of violence and coercion adopted by the Indian soldiers are represented in the memoir leading to traumatic memories, damaged self and disconnections. In this regard, a few characters and situations, representing the Kashmiri stance, have been analysed through the multitheoretical framework based on the power theory of Wrong (1995) and the trauma theories of Caruth (1996), Alexander (2012) and Herman (2015). The research claims due importance because it is an addition to the existing Kashmiri scholarship on the one side, and on the other hand, its novel theoretical framework may also provide guidelines to the future researchers interested in Kashmir or Trauma Studies. Globally, it will also be an eye opener for the international NGOs and Human Rights Organizations.

**Keywords:** Trauma, Violence, Coercion, Disconnection, Damaged Self, Army, Militants, Torture, Kashmir/Kashmiris

### **1. Introduction**

Kashmir, famous for its mesmerizing beauty (Nabi & Khan, 2014, p. 30; Khan, 2017; Sonia, 2016, p. 255) and picturesque landscape (Mridha, n.d.) has been transformed into a bloody zone. It has been the object of power struggle punctuated by violence since the times of Gulab Singh (Nabi & Khan, 2014, p. 32) in 1846. Till 1940, the Muslims in Kashmir were oppressed and kept at a margin from government offices. At the time of 1947s partition, the British colonizers advised princely states to join either of the newly born countries— Pakistan or India, according to their religious, cultural and geographical compatibilities.

Kashmir did not join either of the two and remained independent from August 15, 1947 to October 27, 1947 (p. 32). This very brief independence was devoured by Dogra Raj. The Kashmiris revolted “against Dogra monarchy of colonial India and the postcolonial Indian nation state” (Mridha, n.d.), as a result of which the Pakistani administrated Kashmir was established. The Maharaja sought help from Indian government (Hanif & Ullah, 2018, p. 1), and in November 1947, the first prime minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru promised that “the future of Kashmir [would] be decided according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people” (Nabi & Khan, 2014, p. 23). Afterwards there was a series of fraudulent elections which caused the uprising of insurgency in Kashmir. So the last years of 20<sup>th</sup> century proved more unfortunate to the state.

The election rigging in 1987 led to demoralization and atrophy (Khurshid, 2013), the independence was converted into a cult of violence (Butt, 2017), and the peace was metamorphosed into turmoil (Khan, 2017). The atrocities caused mass killing, chaos, conflict, beating, crackdown, frisking and disappearance of thousands of people. Such uncertainty brought about a sense of defeat, identity crisis (Gangahar, 2013, p. 35) and traumatic impacts not only on the victims but also on their families and the social connections. Sonia (2016) considers it the tyranny of time because people living in the valley “found themselves caught in a very crucial situation” (p, 255).

The writings on Kashmiri experience of bearing physical and psychological violence were not heard by the outer world. Agha Shahid Ali and his predecessors like Basharat Peer and many others brought into the global scenario the untold stories of Kashmir (Bhat, 2017, p. 166). Peer’s memoir *Curfewed Night* (2008) is one of the unforgettable, brave, honest and impartial stories of Kashmir struggling for its existence (Mridha, n.d.) during the most brutal conflict in the modern times (War, n.d.).

The existing scholarship on Kashmir is insufficient because of many reasons, one of them being the politics of publications. Hence the present research aims at analyzing the memoir *Curfewed Night*, the first hand story of Kashmir, through the multitheoretical framework based on the power theory by Wrong (1995) and trauma theories of Caruth (1996), Alexander (2012) and Herman (2015). The theoretical concepts of both the theories are hinged by the term violence. Traumatized Damaged Self and Disconnection theorized by Herman are of special concern whereas the other theoretical ideas are applied on specific situations and characters for more clarification.

The research intends to narrate and analyse the stories of violence experienced by the individual victims and survivors of Indian violent exercises. It also analyses the impact of physical and psychological violence on the victims portrayed in the memoir. Moreover, it investigates the interconnections among strategies of violence and coercion, and the resultant traumatized memories, damaged self and disconnections woven in the plot of the memoir.

## 2. Literature Review

Kashmir has become an unfortunate land since the times of Gulab Singh in 1846. Conflict and violence, write Hanif & Ullah (2018), are still in practice even after the establishment of imaginary border LoC between Pakistan and India in 1972 (p. 2). Kashmir is the paragon of struggle, with a long history of oppressions, killings, rapes, displacement, and murder mystery (Muzamil & Hassan, 2015; Bashir, 2016). These atrocities inspired the writers to display the hidden, distorted and pathetic picture of Kashmir lucidly before the outer world. Such pictures were presented by either those who loathed the Indian violence or those who justified its legitimacy or those who themselves underwent the violent events (Butt, 2017). The literary struggle against the Indian violence began with Agha Shahid Ali's famous poem A Country without a Post Office depicting "a surreal world of nightmare, fantasy, incongruity...pain, suffering and hope...tortures, disappearances, [and] killings..." (Khurshid, 2013, p. 1). After Agha Shahid Ali (Bashir, 2016), Basharat Peer, Mirza Waheed, Shahnaz Bashir (Bhat, 2017, p. 166) and Nayeema Mahjoor are the most resonant voices loathing the Indian violence but at the same time presenting the Kashmiri perspective. It is a note-worthy fact that Basharat Peer proved himself the torch bearer who showed track to the writers like Mirza Waheed, Siddhartha Gigoo, Rahul Pandit and many more (Allaie, 2017, p. 172).

Kashmir is the first hand witness (Muzamil & Hassan, 2015) of violence (Butt, 2017; Muzamil & Hassan, 2015), bloodshed, death and brutality that is being presented by the writers with sensible responsibility and sensitivity (Hanif & Ullah, 2018, p. 3). The writings by Kashmiri writers are not mere documents of propaganda rather they voice the Kashmiri traumatic experiences. Many sources record that violence in Kashmir began in late 1980s (Butt, 2017) when certain militant and activist groups initiated the struggle for the liberation of Kashmir (Hanif & Ullah, 2018, p. 2). Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night* (2008) is a memoir and first hand story of the prevailing situation in Kashmir during 1980s. It is an ordinary story (Sheikh, 2014, p. XXX) in terms of lucid content and technique understood and owned by all Kashmiris whether they are in offices or at barber shops (p. XXX). In this regard, Sonia (2016) declares it an unforgettable tale of Kashmir.

The *Collaborator* by Waheed (2011) and *Curfewed Night* by Peer (2008) are very active and revolutionary works on Kashmir that created ripples in the literary world (Khurshid, 2013, p. 2). Both the works share many themes out of which the anguish of Kashmiris is the most forceful. The story of *Curfewed Night* is indeed dedicated to the missing boys who never came back to home (Afshan, 2020, p. 475). It is very like the story of *The Collaborator* by Waheed (2011) in which the unnamed narrator talks about his four friends who crossed the borders to Pakistani Kashmir and never came back. The memories of those friends are mixed with the present scenario shown in the novel. Peer also writes about the young men's metamorphosis from innocence to militancy but according to Sheikh (2014) he does not express why the youth was attracted towards militancy (p. XXX). On the other hand, Rao (2011), Bashir (2016) and Afshan (2020) point out that Peer has

quoted how Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) were established as resentment over the political circumstances from 1953 to 1987. Peer has presented the youth as “a commodity ready to be indoctrinated by various agents and agencies. Rao (2011) and Gangahar (2013) link this point with the story of Yasin Malik, supported by JKLF, who kidnapped the daughter of a Kashmiri unionist leader Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

Curfewed Night by Peer, drawn from the lines of Agha Shahid Ali’s poem A Country without a Post Office (Sonia, 2016, p. 256), is a literary effort to portray “the Kashmir Valley, its culture and customs, trade and tradition, economy and commerce, life and death, pupil and people, situation and circumstances etc.” (Mir & Mohindra, 2015, p. 21) whereas Pallavi (n.d.) writes that this memoir is a collective presentation of political powers affecting the social lives of the people of Kashmir (p. 145) by developing a historically powerful narrative dissecting the heart of the conflict (p. 146) in the valley. On the other hand, Chatterji (2014) sums up by writing that the memoir is a love song sung for the lost paradise of the author’s childhood. In fact, it is about the tale of a man’s love for his motherland, the pain of leaving (Sonia, 2016, p. 256) mass exodus and insurgency, disappearance, torture and tragic survival (p. 257).

The story, tracing back the history of conflict (Bharat, 2013, p. 79), is profoundly linked with the traumatized memory of the writer. The valley of Kashmir known for its scenic beauty is suddenly caught up by the political uncertainty and is transformed into an abhorred scene of bloodshed and violence as has been described in the previous discussion. This all pelts the bad impact on the minds of the Kashmiri natives especially on those “who experienced dreadful events of chaos, conflict, killings, crackdown, beating, [and] frisking” (Khan, 2017) by the soldiers. The unrestricted gun-fires also aroused considerable anxiety and emotional reaction.

Alienation, violence and crisis are the other issues prevalent in the memoir by Peer. The story is a fight against the oppression and an endeavor to reconstruct the socio-political history and identity of Kashmir (p. 475). Violence in Kashmir is in actual the result of power conflict between Indian administration and the Pakistani interests (Banerjee, 2019, p. 104) but her criticism misrepresents the history of Kashmir struggle as:

The idea of the Kashmiri common people being churned in the struggle for authority between Indian and Pakistani governments; between the Kashmiri militants, trained in the Pakistani occupied area of Kashmir, returning in an endeavor to accomplish their dream of Azad Kashmir and the Indian Army which is supposed to shield its motherland from the clutches of the Pakistani intruders is delineated throughout the text” (p. 104).

Banerjee’s perspective is quite different from the perspective described by Peer in the memoir. The memoir is neither in favour of India nor in favour of Pakistan, rather it is in the favour of Kashmir and Kashmiri masses who are the real objects of violence and for whom being a Kashmiri means identity crisis and bewildered uncertainty (Gangahar, 2013,

p. 35). The same issue has been elaborated by Mridha (n.d.) through the frameworks of postcolonial marginalization and otherization, and by Ghosh (2019) through a theoretical trajectory based on the theories of Foucault, Agamben and Mbembe. She analyzes the story through Foucault's concept of biopolitics that shifts to Agamben's concept of Homo Sacer, which is again advanced to Mbembe's theory of necropolitics (p. 3). This study illustrates,

How deathworlds emerge in the Kashmir politics and how one can understand Kashmir within the framework of politics of death, emerging from biopolitics and bare life, These theoretical shifts are, therefore, present to show a unique postcoloniality within Kashmir... A curious concentration of idea of biopower and necropower constructs the Kashmiri space that moves beyond the figure of the homo sacer to the focus on dead bodies and their effect on this space... (p. 3).

The above discussion provides us an insight into the matter that the critics have presented their researches on physical violence, postcolonial otherness, and discourse and Kashmiri identity. The psychological impacts of trauma have been rarely analyzed and this is the starting point of the present research.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

Power is both a social issue and intellectual debate which is comprehensively summed up as a social relationship between power actors whose role is determined by their resources. Wrong (1995) like Wartenberg (1988) considers it a capacity, an ability or a skill to control and modify the other's actions or behavior. Wrong's (1995) theory of power is rooted in the concepts of Hobbes and Russell. According to Hobbes, Power is based on "man's present means" (p. 2) whereas Russell conceptualizes it as a "process of intended effect" (p. 2). The concept of power is, then, the intention oriented influence. It means if the intention to exercise a certain type of power is fulfilled, the power actor is successful. So, power is a chance of a man or a group of men to realize their own will in a social action even if the power subjects are resistant against the powerful (p. 21).

Wrong (1995) equalizes power with influence which is of two major types—intended influence and unintended influence. He divides influence into sub-categories—Force, manipulation, persuasion and authority which are the major agreed upon forms of power. However, in the present research, we are concerned only with force and coercion (a mode of authority). He conceptualizes Force as psychic and physical. Further, physical force consists of violent and non-violent types of force. He theorizes many key points to describe violent force. Primarily, Force of violence focuses on creating physical obstacle restricting the freedom of a power subject. It also strategizes its power by inflicting injury, pain and loss of life on the power-subject. Another common strategy to influence the others is to frustrate one of the basic biological necessities of life. This type of violence is the denial of basic necessities like food, sleep or rest. He also describes that confining some power-subject among the four walls or removing one from the scene also typifies violence.

There is also an intimate reciprocal relationship between ‘actual exercise of power’ and its ‘intended threat’ i.e. coercion. If at some point, coercion fails, the actual power modes are exercised. This exercise invigorates the impact of coercion over those power subjects who are resistive (p. 26). Coercion is actually the hegemonic concept that establishes the ideological “future credibility of the power holder’s willingness” (p. 27). Wrong (1995) lists certain strategies of coercion as: physical and psychic punishment deter men from repeating certain acts in future; rebellious acts are suppressed; prisoners are tortured in the captivity; the offenders are removed by confinement or death. These all strategies are to set example for the others.

Violence punches the psyche of a survivor in the long term. According to Public Health Agency of Canada (2018), the trauma and violence informed approaches study the impact of violence on the well-being of a person. Trauma, according to Caruth (1996), is a connecting force between the past violence and the ongoing violence (p. 8). This is “an injury inflicted upon a body... in Freud’s text, the term trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind” (p. 3). Trauma of others may be observed and felt as one’s own. According to Lay Trauma Theory of Jeoffery Alexander (2012), a trauma experience occurs when a traumatizing event interacts with human nature. If a negative event undermines the human needs like security, order, love, and connection, consequently the people get traumatized (p. 8).

Human needs—security, order, love and connection are interlinked. Connection either domestic or social is the over-arching phenomenon. Connections are broken by the traumatic events (Herman, 2015, p. 52) that “confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror and evoke the response of catastrophe (p. 33). The traumatic events breach the relationships of “family, friendship, love and community” (p. 52). Trauma shatters not only “the psychological structure of self but also the system of attachment” (p. 52), the binding force between the individuals and communities.

#### **4. Analysis**

Curfewed Night by Peer is a frontline memoir (Banerjee, 2019, p.103) of Kashmir that grips and moves the readers emotionally. It is not a propaganda tale rather it narrates the traumatic experiences of the Kashmiris. It provides the readers with the historical details of militancy in Kashmir exercised by the Indian political and armed institutions and freedom fighters, so the story according to Dahl’s (1957) theory is a power struggle between the power actors whose role is determined by the sources they possess (p. 213). In this entire context, violence and coercion become the reason of disappearances, killings, displacement and disconnections producing traumatized memories.

The first chapter of the memoir prologues the story of violence and the resultant disconnections. In this part of the memoir, apart from the cultural and religious activities and festivities, the author has objectively described the historical events leading to the Indian rage. He details how the people cheered the militant activities of Yasin Malik and his fellow young guerrillas. He also describes how the cheers for Pakistani cricket team (Peer,

2008, p. 11), and demand for Azadi(Palavi, n.d.) brought troubles to the Kashmiris and the “news on radio became the news of defiance and death”(p. 16). Death and protestors started chasing each other and “almost every Kashmiri man was a Farhaad, ready to dig a stream of milk from the mountains for a rendezvous with his Shireen: freedom” (p. 17). Moreover, the narrator memorizes the Indian atrocities as:

The Indian government ... deployed hundreds of thousands of troops to crush the rebellion. Almost every day the soldiers patrolled our village, walking in a mixture of nervousness and aggression, their fingers close to the triggers of their automatic and semi-automatic machine guns. Military and paramilitary camps sprouted up in almost every small town and village (p. 18).

As a reaction to this violent situation, the youth started to cross the borders to Pakistan. The Indian state, writes Gangahar (2013), started strategizing to crush revolt, reaction and any other opposition through brutal force that further led to “alienation and organized popular violence” (p. 36). It was because of the power struggle among the Indian administration, Pakistani interests and local militants (Butt, 2017). It also brought about a new understanding of the political scenario and the new violence informed terms arrests, torture, frisking, search, bunker, crackdown etc. to the author.

The modes of violence described by Wrong (1995) are interconnecting and overlapping, befitting to the situations of the story. Physical obstacles (Wrong, 1995) supported by the excessive armed resources has been described very vividly in the memoir. All negative events comprise violence, coercion and trauma. In the memoir, the physical obstacles, a strategy to display one’s own power and authority is not exercised only by the Indian soldiers of BSF rather it is also done by the freedom fighters of JKLF and HM. In this way, instead of any Hindu or Muslim perspective, Peer is impartially (Pallavi, n.d.) presenting only Kashmiri perspective that was adversely affected by these power actors.

In reaction to the rebellious insurgency created by the militants and the border crossing, the series of Indian atrocities spread across Kashmir specially Srinagar that was once the city of seven bridges which later on has become the city of bunkers (Peer, 2008, p. 211). The army establishes camps (pp. 58-61) in reaction to the guerrilla attacks. The schools were converted into army camps and the temple complexes were taken over by the military and paramilitary troops (p. 201). These spaces became the torture cells where the actual militants and the suspected supporters of the militants were brought for tortured investigation. The story of the schools of Anantnag (p. 60) that was no more safe, and the establishment of army camp in Ashmuqam School and “the cries of the prisoners” (p. 59) describe both the physical force and the coercive strategy to set example for the others. In other words, it is the process of intended influence through the resources (Wrong, 1995, p. 2) possessed by the Indian army to make the power subjects i.e. Kashmiris avoid resisting against Indian administration. The rich and the poor parents smelling the danger of losing their children, started sending their children to Europe or America and the other cities of India respectively. This migration caused disconnection that according to Herman (2015) produced the damaged self of a person in the wake of violence (pp. 52-53). This

disconnection also snatched away the sense of love, security, order and friendship which became a permanent traumatic thing for the author and the other characters. The author has woven many stories of individuals in the plot of the memoir. The story of migration of Kashmiri Pandits is very important. The violence at the hands of the militants forced thousands of Pandits leaving Kashmir. The region, in terms of trauma of disconnection, remained no more “hospitable to human life” (Herman, 2015, p. 51). Peer narrates this painful issue as:

I was struck by some empty chairs... [My classmates] have left,' someone said. ...Five of our Kashmiri Pandit classmates were not there. Along with killing hundreds of pro-India Muslims ranging from political activists to suspected informers for Indian intelligence, the militants killed hundreds of Pandits on similar grounds, or without a reason. The deaths had scared the Pandits and thousands, including my classmates and their families, had left the Valley by March 1990 for Jammu, Delhi, and various other Indian cities and towns (2008, p. 22).

The author also craved to visit some of the missing Kashmiri Pandit persons i.e. his old school teacher Kantroo and his friends Vinod and Vikas. His wish of reconnection as a recovery of traumatic psychological injuries brought him to Jammu after travelling eight hours through the hilly zig zag ways. In the same way, by chance he came across a lost family friend who claimed herself the sister of Peers’s father. On the other hand Kashmiri identity caused a lot of problems for those who migrated to the other cities of Kashmir or India as refugees, students or professionals. They confronted with a new problematic life and identity. In fact, they had lost love and caring connections with their own folks and community (Herman, 2015, p. 51). The author being a Kashmiri was denied any tenancy in Delhi. It was the only Kashmiri Hindu old woman (who migrated to Delhi) who offered him accommodation. It was a sort of reconnection. On the other hand, some Muslim Kashmiri students are stabbed and disappeared by a frenzied group of karsevaks (Peer, 2008, p. 66). This all destroyed “the fundamental assumption about the safety of the world” (Herman, 2015, p. 51).

Crackdowns are another type of physical obstacle employed to prevent the people from doing any rebellious acts against the Indian government and army. Like *The Collaborator* by Waheed (2011), *Curfewed Night* also narrates the story of a crackdown that was in response to an insurgency in the valley. The loudspeakers of the mosque announced the crackdown and within a few minutes all the people had gathered in a big ground outside the village. The men were walking in two parallel lines with hands up going forward to be identified by “a masked mukhbir” (Peer, 2008, p. 52), a Kashmiri man who had sold his loyalties to the Indian intelligence. The Kashmiri mukhbir also denotes disconnection from one’s own community, and signifies the lost trust. Herman (2015) sums up such situations as:

The damage to the survivor’s faith and sense of community is particularly severe when the traumatic events themselves involve the betrayal of important relationships. The imagery of these events often crystallizes around a moment of



betrayal, and it is the breach of trust which gives the intrusive images their intense emotional power (p. 55).

The people are terrified of interrogation because “the anticipation of interrogation is worse than the interrogation” (Peer, 2015, p. 54). During the crackdown, the author himself like Manzoor, another village boy and many other people were pointed out by the mukhbir, and was taken into the investigation cell. Although the author was freed after interrogation, his freedom was followed by the stories of torture narrated as:

Then suddenly, loud cries and shrieks from the rooms next door startled me. Over and over I heard the words 'Khodayobachaav' (Save me, God!) and 'Nahinpata, sir!' (I don't know, sir!). They were torturing the men and the boys who were taken away after the mukhbir had pointed them out. I thought of Manzoor... How would his thin-as-a-reed body endure anything? ...Manzoor was released; he was limping. Later, when the crackdown was lifted, my friend from school was released as well. He came limping towards me (pp. 54-56).

Through this strategy, the Indian forces “inflict[ed] injury [and] pain... on the power subjects” (Wrong, 1995). This situation delineates not only violence but also the coercive power that influenced the other Kashmiris to avoid repeating insurgent activities against the Indian power. Such coercive power, according to Wrong (1995), as physical and psychological punishment might deter the Kashmiri subjects from doing certain acts in future.

The coercive strategy—torture in the captivity is exercised to suppress the rebellious activities. Rebellious activities are, no doubt, controlled by the violent operations by the Indian troops. This violence also forced the youth to cross the borders, Tariq of *Curfewed Night* (2008), like Hussein, Mohammad, Gul and Ashfaq of *The Collaborator* by Waheed (2011) also crossed the borders to Pakistani Kashmir. His going across the borders is preceded by various rumors like “[He] was arrested on the way border... he was killed on his way back” (Peer, 2008, p. 34). He also left his family in psychological lurch. The family is suffering from his separation and disconnection from their son. This was the common story of all Kashmiris in those days. The desire for reconnection made Shabnam and his family listen to the Muzaffarabad based *Sadaa-e-Hurriyat* Radio (p. 33). When Tariq came back to his homeland, the mother of another martyr (who crossed the border like Tariq) visited Tariq to inquire about his own son’s well-being which Tariq replied by telling a lie that he was all fine and was waiting for his turn to cross the borders (p. 38). The mother was also desirous getting recovered from her trauma of disconnection, but the homecomings were not so simple and safe, and it also brought misery to the families. The sufferings were multiplied for Tariq’s family after his coming back from Pakistani Kashmir. The soldiers frequently visited his home as they visited Gul’s home (Waheed, 2011), “looking for him, beating his father, his brothers, seeking information about him, telling them to ask him to surrender” (Peer, 2008, p. 38). Ultimately, Tariq was killed by the Indian security forces (Peer, 2008, p. 212), hence causing trauma of disconnection again. These examples, once

again refer to the coercive power strategies—removal of offenders by confinement or death (Wrong, 1995).

Following Alexander's (2012) view point that trauma of another may be observed and felt as one's own (p. 8), the author narrates the stories of others' trauma at certain situations. He interviews the survivors of Papa-2, one of the notorious jails and torture cells where the Kashmiris are captivated and tortured. This signifies both the strategies of violence and coercion at the same time, as we have already discussed with reference to Wrong (1995) in the part of theoretical framework. The traumatic stories of Sayeed, Shafi, Irfan and Ansar are the absolute pictures of violence, pain and loss. Torture is a strategy, writes Wrong (1995), of coercive power to crush the rebellious and to set examples for the others. Peer narrates how as a punishment for being a member of JKLF, Shafi was sent to two different jails KotBalwal and TalabTilloo (Peer, 2008, p. 144). He was released after two years and then rearrested by BSF when spotted by a Kashmiri collaborator. Initially, he was kept at BSF camp for a week where he was "interrogated, beaten with fists, feet, batons, guns" (p. 144) to cooperate with the power masters. Later, he was shifted to Papa 2 which has been described as:

'It was hell,' he said, fumbling ... He was thrown into a room crowded with twenty men. The floor was bare. Smears of blood blemished the whitewashed walls...The blankets were full of lice ... A corner of the room was their toilet. The prisoners ... urinated into polythene bags in that corner; they then threw the bags into a dustbin... prisoners slept laid out like rows of corpses (p. 144).

Then he talks about the methods of torture. He was made to stare at very bright bulbs without blinking his eyes. Apart from it, another example of physical torture has been narrated as:

They made you sit on a chair, tied you with ropes. One soldier held your neck, two others pulled your legs in different directions, and three more rolled a heavy concrete roller over your legs. They asked questions and if you didn't answer, they burnt you with cigarettes.' (p. 146).

Other types of torture narrated by Shafi were removing the prisoner's clothes, putting their heads into a "ditch filled with kerosene and red chili powder" (p. 147), tying their pants near the ankles and "putt[ing] mice inside" (p. 147), and burning their legs and arms with cigarette butts until they answered their questions and cooperated with them. Another very heart rending type of torture was giving electric shocks (p. 148) and its next stage was to penetrate a wire through the penis and give electric shocks (p. 148) that could destroy the lives of the men, even many "could not marry after that" (p. 148). Shafi, Ansar and Hussein also underwent this process. Ansar, like many other tortured boys had three unsuccessful operations on his testicles (p. 148). Many of the victims lost their kidneys after going through the electric shocks (p. 149). Shafi also began losing his eye sight because of flashing excessive light in the eyes during torture. The doctors recommended him an operation but he could not afford it (p. 145). So, all these persons left the militant

activities accepting the future credibility of the power masters (Wrong, 1995, p. 27), hence losing “their trust in themselves”, and suffering from “damage to the basic structures of self” (Herman, 2015, p. 56). According to Hussein, nobody could bear this series of torture and had to admit that they were going to cross borders (Peer, 2008, p. 150). In this way, the Indian torture cells succeeded to influence the lives of the captivated torture subjects, hence damaging self image. Except it, denial of basic human need i.e. food has also been described by the author through the words of Shafi. He says that he is unable to forget what type of food the prisoners were given in Papa-2. The food thrown on the prisoners was not even accepted by the cows (Peer, 2008, p. 147). This way of giving food is a type of psychological torture too (Caruth, 1996, p. 3).

Psychological torture aligned with the physical torture (Caruth, 1996, p. 3; Wrong, 1995) is also one of the strategies of coercive authority. In the memoir, Shafi shares his own experience that “the worst part [of torture at Papa-2] was the psychological torture” (Peer, 2008, p. 146). For example, the prisoners were forced to say Jai Hind denying of which invited cruel beating. On the other hand, anything related to Pakistan or Islam was strictly forbidden. For instance, the traditional name of Anantang was Islamabad which was not allowed to use because it was also the name of Pakistani capital (p. 49). If one did so, one was beaten by the paramilitary forces. Another scene depicting such psychological torture is when the author’s aunt is suffering from maternity pain and the gun fire outside upset his uncle who was walking in and out of house nervously while the author’s mother was consoling his aunt, and the grandfather was praying for her safety (p. 48).

The psychological torture caused by sexual violence bore by Mubeena Ghani has been paralleled with the torture faced by a raped woman in one of Manto’s stories. The woman raped repeatedly has been presented with a reiterating phrase ‘khol do’ (Open up). The phrase is associated with the rapist[s]’ command to undress. The same is happening with Mubeena who was raped by the Indian soldiers when her wedding procession was on way to her groom’s residence. Her trust in the intimate relations was shattered, and herself was damaged (Herman, 2015, p. 55) which brought about shame, guilt and a sense of inferiority (p. 56) that Mubeena wanted to escape from. After that accident she always shivered at the sight of a uniform and the night lingered around her like a ghost (Peer, 2008, p. 159) in terms of Caruth’s (1996) trauma theory according to which trauma connects past violence with the present violence (p. 8). In the present situation of Mubeena, it looks as if traumatic event had intensified her “need for protective attachment” (Herman, 2015, p. 56).

## **5. Conclusion**

The memoir provides a deep understanding of the impacts of violence and coercive powers on the human physiology and psychology. One occurrence triggers the other where latent memory plays a key role. The memoir looks like a picaresque novel in which the hero moves from one place to the other to collect the stories of violence. The violent activities becoming a coercive strategy restrict the people physically and psychologically from repeating the rebellious acts against India. In this regard, we have observed through the stories of Tariq, survivors of Papa 2, Mubeena Ghani and the others, whose claim for

their right of freedom destroyed their selves, hence legitimizing and ensuring the future power of Indian Forces.

The story also proves that trauma is not associated only with the Holocaust or 9/11 or such like negative moments faced by the Super Powers but also with the violence of human rights in Palestine, Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq, Syria and Rohingya at the hands of power possessors. Trauma of Kashmir due to the continuity of violence is more damaging than the trauma of those peoples who had to face negative events just for once or twice throughout their national history. Feeling the pain of Kashmir as the replica of their own traumatic damages, the resourcefully powerful counties should come forward to help Kashmir in reconstructing its damaged self.

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