

## Motherhood in Conflict: Navigating Trauma, Resilience, and Gendered Violence in Jammu and Kashmir

**Nayema Nasir**

Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

### **Abstract:**

This paper explores the complex interplay between trauma and resilience in women who were sexually abused by armed forces during their childhood in the conflict zone of Jammu and Kashmir and later navigated the challenges of motherhood. Focusing on gender-based violence in armed conflict and crisis, the study examines how these women confront their past traumas while striving to fulfill societal expectations of motherhood in a patriarchal and militarised society. Drawing on in-depth interviews, feminist theory, and trauma-informed frameworks, the paper reveals how the psychological scars of conflict-related sexual violence resurface during critical moments of motherhood, such as childbirth, caregiving, and child-rearing.

The analysis highlights the compounded stigma faced by these women due to societal silence around sexual violence, as well as the structural neglect that denies them access to mental health and social support systems. Despite these challenges, the paper also uncovers narratives of resilience, where survivors navigate their roles as mothers by breaking cycles of violence and advocating for safer environments for their children. This study underscores the urgent need for gender-sensitive post-conflict policies, trauma-informed maternal healthcare, and community-based interventions to empower survivors in their dual roles as individuals healing from trauma and as mothers shaping the next generation. By centering the lived experiences of these women, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions about the long-term impacts of gender-based violence in conflict and the transformative potential of survivor-led resilience and advocacy.