

## IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY OF KASHMIR (A SPECIAL REFERENCE OF SOPORE)

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Two decade long Armed Conflict has a severe effect on the political, economic and social sectors of Kashmir. The implications have been found in micro as well as at macro level. The problems like social disruption, loss of service assets' impoverishment and civil and political violations has brought catastrophe to Kashmiri society. There has been a drastic reduction of capital, income and employment which is associated with a wide range of factors including physical destruction of agricultural resources and industrial plants, reduced investment and a mass displacement. Since, horticulture industry in Kashmir is one of the pivotal pillars of its economy; there has been huge impact on it, in terms of its reduced production and in appropriate marketing due to conflict. More than half a million kannals of land are under the illegal occupation of security forces as has been justified by the fact that 5.86 lakh Kannals of land is under the illegal occupation as per Union Defense Ministry. Among occupied land major portion of land is either agricultural or horticulture. Thus, it has been assumed that the horticulture industry in Kashmir has suffered a setback in terms of proportional decrease of cultivable horticultural land. In the light of the statement the paper tries to explore the impact of armed violence on various aspects of life and on horticulture in particular, it tries to understand the genesis of violence and impact on horticulture and the ramification thereof.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Armed Conflict is defined as the use of armed violence to resolve the local, national and /or international disputes between individuals and groups that have a political, economic, cultural and /or social (as opposed to interpersonal or criminal) origin. Armed Conflict is a mechanism of social transformation that may originate either in competing claim over resources or power or in conflicting cultural or social values, and is often aggravated by low levels of human security. The term Armed Conflict is preferred to that of war because its usage commonly encompasses a far broader range of circumstances and conditions, from violent political protest or insurgency to violence enacted by trained and organized military units and to genocide.

World has witnessed more than 250 Armed Conflicts and over 100 million casualties most of them being civilians. Among these, 23 million people have died in more than 160 wars up to 2000. The post-world war II has witnessed violent conflicts and wars against the humanities. Since world has observed different periods of war, every period has marked its turmoil to society at large. At many instances the periods of violence have been followed by periods of peace, but the instability effect has continued in the cyclic shifts. The cause of Armed Conflict are not unipolar in nature but generally, Armed Conflicts are attributed to control of economic resources such as oil, metals, diamonds, drugs or contested territorial boundaries. As the world moves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Armed Conflicts have grown in its complexity. Thus, at the international level inequality in the distribution of power and resources has become more pronounced coupled with structural inequalities between and within nation states. This disparity has led to more regional conflicts, as well as an escalation of international Armed Conflicts.

**Kashmir** as one of the states in northern territory of India has not been far from the Armed Conflicts of different natures. Conflict in Kashmir is very old and hence very complicated and at present has emerged as one of the nuclear flashpoints in South Asia. The roots of the Conflict in Kashmir are traced to the transfer of power between the two dominions that is India and Pakistan and subsequent signing of instrument of Accession of Kashmir with India. Since then, India and Pakistan have fought three full-fledged wars and some small battles. Both nation states have been claiming their rights over Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir state is actually having five parts among which three are under the India and two are under Pakistan.

The post 1989 era has witnessed a paradigm shift in the Kashmir conflict. It was the real beginning of the insurgency. There are series of events linked with initiation of insurgency in Kashmir with most of them being linked with economic and political reasons. Kashmiri youth took up arms against the government of India. It was in the January 1990 that hundreds of unarmed demonstrators were shot dead in Srinagar by Indian forces which escalated the problem and made it armed compatible war thereof. While at one end the people of entire state were shouting slogans of freedom on the other hand the frequent gun battles continue taking toll on human and material resources. The crackdowns, strikes, inappropriate arrests and armed battles were a daily routine, which led to the increase in settlements of armed forces across the valley of Kashmir. With two major parties in the armed violence the Kashmiri society has seen a huge impact to its socio economic aspects.

### **IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT IN KASHMIR**

The costs of the conflict have been increasingly unbearable for all involved. According to the official estimates, some 40,000 lives have been lost since the onset of insurgency in 1989, though other estimates put the toll much higher. Large-scale displacement from different parts of the state is an integral part of the Kashmir conflict

The impact is directly related with the range of factors like the frequency of armed violence, involvement of various parties and nature of conflict. At some instance it may lead to heavy human casualties, while at other instances it may disrupt the socio-economic facets of life. Kashmir besides being victim to former has also large scale impact on the later fronts.

### **SOCIAL IMPACT**

The conflict has affected the entire social fabric of Kashmir. In a state of fear and uncertainty all the basic segments of society have got disrupted. The winds of mistrust / suspiciousness, disintegration of social participation, loss of sense of belonging, rampant corruption and insecurity of youth in terms of life and career have rendered the whole society in miseries the one way or the other. Restricted social interaction has disturbed the social ties in the society. The society has witnessed a new group of widows and orphans in very large numbers. With increasing intensity in the conflict their number has increased fast and their presence is felt seriously by the people of Kashmir. The women and children have emerged as a significant group numerically because of the direct effect of Armed Conflict. Hence, this section of society is living in miserable conditions with problems like accommodation, exploitation, harassment, discrimination, poor health, mass psychological cases and poverty. Some of the social environmental threats are like displacement from homeland, family dispersal, separation and discord, destitution, loss of service access and social interaction.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT:** The economy of Kashmir has received a terrible setback. The conflict situation has left behind a track of destruction danger and depression. The two decade long Armed Conflict in Kashmir has debased its economy and rendered the people poor. This can be seen by looking at the BPL ratio in Jammu and Kashmir with rest of the religious communities in the state. There was a direct impact on the developmental planning due to political instability, it can be inferred that only 1752.16 crores used to be per capita plan investment in 2002/2003 for Kashmir division which has now risen to 4060.48 crores in 2008-09. This reflects the pathetic condition of the planning for Kashmir during the last decade of 20th century.

Unemployment has emerged as one of the major challenges to economy of Kashmir. During the two decades large number of youths got education in general, higher, professional and technical education. However, less number of youths were employed by state leaving major skilled chunk of youths as unemployed. There are around 550000 youth unemployed in state at present, as registered in different employment exchanges or boards.

Two important sectors of the Kashmiri economy i.e Tourism and Handicrafts have all most crippled. The people attached with these two core sectors have faced economic depression from last two decades. The large section of the society which were related with these sectors are like *Hanji community*, Taxi transport operators, retail sellers, footpath vendors, handicrafts and other shop keepers.

There is a drastic reduction of capital, income and employment which is associated with a range of factors, including physical destruction of agricultural resources and industrial plants, reduce investment and mass

displacement. Other factors include the loss of breadwinner due to death, injury, *disappearance* or imprisonment, curfews and other mobility restrictions. The impact on Horticulture and Agriculture was directly due to the above cited reasons. Although there was no significant deterioration or loss but no improvement was also observed. There was no improvement in the production of agriculture, horticulture and floriculture rendering a downward trend of total production. One of the important reasons for this was forcible occupation of land by security forces in valley that did not allow local villagers to work on their land freely. Majority of these areas were considered as 'Grey Zones'. While the union defense ministry says that 5.86 lakh *Kannal* of land was occupied by security forces, the state government maintained that these forces had occupied 10.54 lakh *Kannals* of land. The concerned governmental departments were extremely busy with the threats posed by militancy and could neither get time nor feasible environment to enhance and improve the production in old fields and Horticulture Plantation. Due to this situation, there was large scale shift of Agricultural and Horticultural land for the construction of houses, settlements of security forces and other establishment. Though illegal, the role of government has remained dormant in these issues.

### **NATURE OF HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY IN KASHMIR**

India has a varied agro climatic conditions which leads to production of large number of horticultural products. Horticultural products occupy around 13% of India gross cropped area making India the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables. The total production of fruits has been estimated at 52.85 million metric tons from an area of 5.34 million hectares. A considerable focus has been shown on horticulture sector by government in its five year plans by timely increase of outlay in this sector. Popularly referred to as the valley of flowers, the Kashmir horticulture is one of the prominent economic sector of the state. Known for the wide variety of fruits and flowers, the horticultural sector forms the backbone of the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. The horticultural sector contributes around twelve hundred crores to the annual income of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The state government has declared the horticulture to be one of the most important economic sectors of the state that has contributed immensely to the strengthening of the financial condition of Jammu and Kashmir

Since, Jammu and Kashmir State has been one of the pivots in the Horticulture sector of country. It retains an important position in the farming system of state. Due to different agro climatic conditions there is a huge potential of growing fruits. It is estimated around 5.9 million hectares of land are under the cultivation of different fruits (*National Horticulture Board Estimates, 2005*). Majority of the area is under the cultivation of temperate fruits like apple, pear, walnut etc. Thus, about Rs2100 crore annual income is being drawn from fresh fruits. Apple occupies around 40% of total area under fruit and accounts for 90% of the total production of fruits in the state.

There are more than 13 types of fruits produced in Kashmir and almost all types of fruits are produced in district Baramulla. The district Baramulla being one of the biggest districts in Kashmir division of the state in terms of area accounts for 29125 Hectares of land under horticulture cultivation with the production of around 453959MT. Out of the 453959 MT the apple production is around 443825 MT accounting 24525 hectares of Land (*District Horticulture Board report, 2011*). The rank wise production of the different fruits in district Baramulla reveals that apple production contributes 84% of total fruit production. As depicted in the table 1.1 only apple production remains dominant in terms of production and acquired land under plantation. Thus, the major horticulture product that contributes immensely to horticulture industry of Kashmir continues to be Apple.

### **Rank wise Distribution of fruits in district Baramulla**

S.No	Name of Fruit	Rank in terms of production	Percentage of total production
1.	Apple	1.	84
2.	Walnut	2.	10.5
3.	Pear	3.	2.09
4.	Almond	4.	.91
5.	Cherry	5.	.71

6.	Apricot	6.	.41
7.	Olive	7.	.26
8.	Peach	8.	.19
9.	Citrus	9.	.06
10.	Grapes	10.	.03
11.	others	11.	.53

**Table 1.1**

The essence of horticulture industry has led to immense development in terms of utilizing modern practices and technology, which has tended to increase the production. The production has also got increased by other factors like, by increasing the land under plantation. The annual reports of horticulture department have revealed the increasing trend in terms of bringing the land under apple plantation which has marked increase in production as well. As inferred from table 1.2, the period 1989-1996 has witnessed overall increase of 147 Hectares of land under apple plantation. Hence, the period marks only 25 Hectares of annual increase of land brought under Apple plantation. It is assumed that the period 1989-1996 has witnessed violence in every corner. It was the time period when the intensity of the armed violence was increasing and state at the time identified the need to increase the security surveillance at community level. This promoted the inception of community based security settlements. It is the major factor that made different security agencies to occupy available apple orchid land at community level.

**Increasing trend of area in hectares brought under Apple cultivation from 1989-1996.**

S.No	Year	Area in Hectares
1.	1989-90	23280
2.	1990-91	23323
3.	1991-92	23383
4.	1992-93	23390
5.	1993-94	23390
6.	1994-95	23398
7.	1995-96	23427
<b>Total increase in area under Apple production From 1989-1996</b>		<b>147 hectares</b>

Table 1.2 (Source; Annual Performance Reports of District Horticulture Department, Baramulla)

As inferred from table 1.2 the total apple orchid area was 23280 hectares in 1989-90 which has risen to 23427 hectares in 1995-1996. This shows that only 147 hectares of area has been brought under apple plantation. The trend is meager as compared to the recent decade which reflects the mean increase in area brought under cultivation accounting for 75 Hectares /year, while as earlier time period has reflected marginal increase of around 25 hectares per year in whole district Baramulla. The Apple plantation are present in diverse areas of district Baramulla, the tehsil Sopore of district has remained most affected as can be inferred from the table 1.3. The tehsil Sopore has demonstrated harsh impact on every aspect of life. The horticulture industry being pivotal one to its economy had also setback. It can be reflected by the fact that number of security settlements in tehsil Sopore, prior to 1989 used to be only two, which was raised above 20 within the span of five years (1990-1996). The thirteen identified settlements have been established in 1990's in Apple plantation areas throughout the town, which are holding the total area of 147.63 hectares (table 1.3). All these identified areas are used as settlements by various security agencies. It is pertinent to mention that all these 13 areas were apple orchids, which have been now transformed into barren land and being used as security settlements. The impact is not only those 147.63 hectares of Apple plantation area is held which has led to reduction of Apples in Metric Tons, but it has also diverse range of impact on the adjoining Apple Plantation as well.

**Community wise Distribution of Apple Orchard Area under occupation of different security agencies.**

S.No	Name of settlement under occupation of Security Agencies in Sopore	Occupied Area in Acres	Occupied Area in Hectares	Estimated loss of production in MT
1.	Amargarh A	30	12.14	13354
2.	New lightColony	05	2.02.	2222
3.	Industrial Area	40	16.18	17798
4.	Down Town	36	14.56	16016
5.	Mazbugh	155	62.72	68992
6.	Town Hall	10	4.04	4444
7.	Chinkipora	06	2.42	2662
8.	Adipora	15	6.07	6677
9.	SidiquiColony	06	2.42	2662
10.	Seer Sopore	08	3.23	3553
11.	Sangrama	04	1.61	1771
12.	FruitmandiSopore	40	16.18	17798
13.	AaramporaInternal	10	4.04	4444
<b>Total</b>			<b>147.63 H</b>	<b>162393 MT</b>

**Table 1.3**

**Estimated total loss of production from the period 1989-2010 in Tehsil Sopore.**

a)	Total hectares under occupation of different Security Agencies	<b>147.63</b>
b)	Average number of boxes yielded/ hectare	<b>700</b>
c)	Total loss of production in boxes A x B	<b>103341</b>
d)	Average rate per box Rs	<b>500</b>
e)	Total loss in Rs per Year C x D	<b>RS 62004600</b>
f)	Total loss for two decades in Rupees	<b>124 million approx.</b>

**Table 1.4**

Violence has created a direct impact on important sources of livelihood such as agriculture, horticulture, and the handicraft industry. These sectors have become the survival mechanisms for the local people but are not flourishing. However, the conflict environment has prevented people from maximally utilizing this gift of the nature. The horticulture industry has also suffered directly as well as indirectly due to conflict situation. The impact on the horticulture economy can be assessed by the fact that approx. 124 million rupees loss has been faced by tehsil Sopore in district Baramulla (table 1.4). Apart from the direct impact, there has been indirect impact on the adjoining Apple plantation around these armed force Settlements, which is due to following factors.

**LESS SURVEILLANCE OF ORCHIDS BY OWNERS**

The adjoining apple orchid under the occupation of different security settlements lack security and surveillance by owners. In order to retain the productive capacity of orchids it is necessary that the owners take proper care and protection of their orchids. There has always been a risk factor involved in care and protection of these orchids which is due to the fact that security agencies keep these adjoining areas on high alert and on sensitive lines. The 1990's witnessed more intensity in impact of armed violence, which had adversely effected the apple production.

### **INADEQUATE FREQUENCY IN SPRAY OF CHEMICALS MANURES**

Due to sensitivity of these adjoining areas there has been inadequate spraying of different chemicals which has direct impact on the production of Apples. The presence of security settlements has altogether disturbed or interrupted the schedule of spraying different chemicals, which forced the owners of these apple orchards to be non-responsive to the deteriorating condition of their orchards. The different chemicals like fungicides, pesticides, insecticides and manures are important for good production and absence of these is not only hampering the production but, is also reducing the productive capacity of plantation throughout.

### **FREQUENT MILITANT ACTION**

In 1990's all the security settlements were targeted through armed actions by militants. Most often the militants were using the adjoining areas for these armed actions, which rendered all these adjoining orchards unsafe for movement hence rendering the plantation as unproductive.

**Inadequate Irrigation supply of Apple plantation:** There has been a direct impact on the irrigation supply of different apple orchards, which has adversely affected the production. Due to the reduction of working hours farmers could not attend their farms during night hours.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is an immediate need of shifting the Security Settlements from the productive zones and horticulture production areas. Secondly, the entire fields under occupation need to be revived. The shifting of the Settlements will not only create the land available for apple plantation but will also help in promoting and reviving the adjoining Plantation. This may lead to barrier free horticulture practices in affected areas. The revival plan will also try to change the mind-set of the people who were affected. It will account them to be more purposeful in utilizing their capacities for the upliftment of the horticulture industry.

1. Banks should come forward and provide loans to the farmers who were directly linked with the horticulture industry.
2. There is also need that concerned departments should step up in order to provide help and support to such farmers in devising the mechanism for revival. The necessary resources should be supplied to such farmers by the concerned departments.
3. The horticulture industry should set up Export promotion zone to promote the export of selected fruits.
4. Private investors should be encouraged.
5. The government should lay emphasis on research.

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