

WOMEN WAITING, WOMEN SEARCHING:
EVERYDAY STRUGGLES AND THE NARRATIVES OF
KASHMIRI HALF-WIDOWS

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Since the onset of the insurgency in Kashmir in 1989, women have been both direct and indirect victims of the armed conflict, subjected to constant physical, psychological, cultural, and economic violence. The conflict has given birth to a new group of women known as half-widows, women whose husbands have disappeared with no proof of whether they are dead or alive. In rural areas of Kashmir, where most of the enforced disappearances have taken place, women have followed a consistent pattern of life for centuries and are usually confined to the private space of their home. After the enforced disappearance of their husbands, the women are forced into unfamiliar public spaces as they attempt to verify their marital status and earn money to support their children. Half-widows may also be ostracized by their families, and suffer from a lack of closure in not knowing what has happened to their husbands. Through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with twenty half-widows, we explore the everyday challenges and struggles along with the loss and grief faced by half-widows that starts from the day their husbands disappear and perhaps never ends.
