



# Mass Disabilities as a Result Pellet Guns in (IAK) Indian Administered Kashmir-An Opinion Paper



Navshad Ahmad Wani\*

Department of Psychology, Government Degree College Baramulla, India

\*Corresponding author: Navshad Ahmad Wani, PhD, Head, Department Post Graduate, Department of Psychology, Government Degree College Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir, India

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## Opinion

The horror of pellet guns in the Indian Administered Kashmir from 2016 in mass people uprising has rendered a huge population blinded both partially and completely. The independent sources put forth a figure of 800 to 1200 completely blinded and around 10000 people partially blinded in such mass usage of pellet guns in the widespread unrest of Kashmir valley. The use of deadly pellet guns in addition to tear smoke shells and other riot control measures by Indian forces have proven very fatal in the socio-political context of Indian Administered Kashmir because of its large scale psychological significance in the context of disability studies. The affected people are mostly young boys and girls who are participants of street protests. The protests are being witnessed in IAK-Indian Administered Kashmir since the mass armed uprising started in 1989 with the outbreak of violent militancy yet the use of pellets is a new phenomenon.

## Context

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has been the source of age old animosity between India and Pakistan since 1947. The disputed territory of Kashmir which got bifurcated in 1947 following the partition of Indian Sub-continent and a major part of Kashmir went under illegal control of India. The people of IAK have been demanding 'Right to self determination' from Indian control. It is also imperative to mention that half of the Kashmir has been under the illegal occupation of Pakistan also who happen to be the party to the conflict as there are numerous United Nations Organizations' resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir. With the violent outbreak of militancy a large section of Hindu minority known as Kashmiri Pundits have also left the valley for security to the other division, a Hindu dominated Jammu division. The Kashmiri population has been the victim of unending political hostility between India and Pakistan. Thousands of people have died, jailed and even rendered disable over the thirty years of death and destruction. The resistance from the Kashmiri people has changed many shapes since 1989; the recent one has been the street protests with occasional stone pelting on armed forces, which usually have protective equipment in comparison to the protestors.

The protestors become easily the victims of the measures taken by the government forces. It is also pertinent to mention that in IAK-Indian administered the use of tear gas deadly pellet guns and even live ammunition has been used to control the unarmed protestors. There has been no use of water cannons, rubber bullets or other less deadly arms.

The use of pellet guns has serious psychological consequences. The serious concerns have also been raised by Human Right groups both locally and internationally yet there have been no effect on the ground as the young people are being continuously rendered blind due to the use of pellet guns. The Wikipedia makes a reference to the pellet guns, "a pellet gun is a non-spherical projectile designed to be shot from an air gun". Indian popular newspaper, 'The Hindu' in its news report by Vijaiyta Singh of 21 July, 2018 has explained that the pellet guns are a form of non lethal crowd control methods used by police in addition or in special cases of riot control through water cannon, pepper spray, taser guns etc. are also popular in hunting". She also reports that these guns are intended to injure individuals and cause pain and can be effective over short ranges up to 500 yards but when fired from close quarters can be highly lethal". The pellets penetrate soft tissues when hit and if hit at a very close range above the waist height can prove fatal by penetrating deep into the vital organs of the body. This has been the case with most of the pellet injuries in Kashmir which are mostly above waist height and that become the reasons for such widespread blindness of youth due to pellets.

## Psychological Consequences

The rampant use of pellet guns may have a prime concern to induce a fear among the masses but its continuous use has different consequences too. The pellet guns have rendered a large section of population disable physically but the psychological scars are far more dreadful and annoying. The suffrage of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder due to the exposure to the pellets and such direct confrontations seem to be cause of many mental disorders usually caused by the exposure to violent conflicts. The trauma exposure, depression, anxiety, chronic anhedonia and most importantly

body dysmorphic disorders among affected youth resulting out of the loss of eyes and other vital parts of body due to the pellet guns among young Kashmiri people is a matter of serious concern. A lot of research is required to know as to how pellet guns have rendered many people disable.

### Scope for Rehabilitation and Psychological Intervention

A famine, a deadly disease or health vulnerability may be the focus of much international attention but the silent suffering of the people of Kashmir in the form of mass disabilities as a result of use of pellet guns remains unnoticed. Due to such havoc provoking

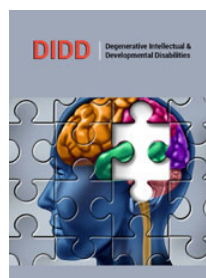
circumstances in Kashmir there is a lot of scope for research on such new and challenging psychological areas of interest in the context of disability studies for researchers who are interested in Rehabilitation Psychology or the Psychology of Conflict. There is scope for a separate naming of such a disability which results as an induced disability due to pellet guns. The rehabilitation psychology has a lot of scope in this context and more specifically in this part of globe. I am hopeful of a serious interest from the researchers to address and focus on such issues. Further a lot of insights are required into the specialized intervention strategies for the professionals in the field of counseling and psychotherapy.



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