

## Visiting a Traumatized Mother



28 Nov 2011: I read in Kashmir Times of 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011 a heart rendering story titled “Rajabegum’s Lonely Battle for Survival.” I decided to visit her, just to sit by her side. Though she lost her two young sons way back in 1993, at the height of insurgency, her story appeared now, keeping the memory of lost sons and mutilated motherhood alive, to keep our sensitivity alive. I rang up a good friend and member of our core group from Jammu, Editor of Kashmir Times. She deputed one of her staff of Srinagar edition to take me to Rajabegum.. Imran, a photographer with KT is a neighbour of the lady, a family friend and playmate of the younger son of Rajabegum, 14-year-old Yaqoob. Yaqoob, totally innocent, was dragged from the house and killed by the security forces before her eyes; and after 21 days, till the wound was oozing, her elder son Shakeel, 23 of age, was similarly dragged and killed at an another spot in the same small by-lane. He had turned a militant, which the parents did not know at all.

I sat for half an hour. She was spinning pashmina wool. She welcomed me, asked me for tea, and appreciated that I visited her. She told me that her two son-in-laws and daughters are looking after her. Fortunately, she got good son-in-laws. She said Mahatma Gandhi was a great soul and she greatly respected him. Imran took me for a cup of tea. Recalled harrowing stories of his own experience and the ones he witnessed in his neighbourhood as a growing boy.

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