

# Insurgency and Displacement: A Study of Kashmiri Pandits

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## Abstract

*The valley of Kashmir is known for hospitality, brotherhood, and harmony from ancient times. The minority sections like Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists were the counterparts of peaceful coexistence and cultural harmony known as Kashmiriyat. The identity of Kashmiriyat was distinct, neither part of India nor Pakistan because the culture and love among Muslims and Hindus were having the same taste, language, history, and tradition, which is still visible. The unity in diversity evident from the blend of various religious ideologies in the state made the advancement of cultural affairs rather than warfare- the breakout of insurgency. It was 1980's when the seeds of fundamentalism were sown with the help of foreign countries and added fuel to the fire of armed rebellion. The result was that non-state actors took the advantage of the distortion and targeted the Pandits for their ends and created an atmosphere of fear, insecurity and forced them to migrate the other states of India. It was not only Pandits, who suffered but it was also Muslims who became the victim of state actors in the conflict. This paper aims to look at the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits, rehabilitation, and the state response. Besides that, it would also highlight the nature of human rights violations occurring through the hands of the state and non-state actors.*

**Keywords:** Kashmiriyat, Kashmir Conflict, Insurgency, Displacement, Narratives and Rehabilitation

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## Introduction

Kashmir is a land of remarkable beauty, blessed by nature with breath-taking. The scenery and a glorious climate, a fertile, well-watered spot surrounded by high mountains, have been described with justification of heaven on earth, a produce-rich oasis, an area not noted for its abundance.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has acquired a unique geopolitical status in the Indian sub-continent. The state has contiguous boundaries with Pakistan and China that deserve constant vigil. It has made the

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<sup>1</sup>Tabassum, Muhammad Tahir. "Political situation in Kashmir and role of United Nations." *SCS Journal* 1, no. 2 (2012): 4-28.

state very important geographically, politically, economically, and from the military perspective.<sup>2</sup>

The post-1988 was the turmoil period in which Kashmir stood for self-determination and challenged the sovereignty of India. The state, which had 4% of Hindus (Kashmiri *Pandits*), formed an essential part of the Kashmiri nation. However, in 1990, there were killings of prominent personalities who supported Indian rule. Due to the administration's failure, many Kashmiri *Pandits* migrated to India and other parts of India.<sup>3</sup> However, questions arise about the consequences that forced only a single minority to migrate and how the ideology of *Kashmiriyat* proved unsuccessful. It is a fact that Kashmir proved the evidence of communal harmony even during the time partition.

Further to understand Kashmiri *Pandits*' displacement, there is a need to discuss the various aspects of political turmoil, *Kashmiriyat*, insurgency and counter-insurgency, and the state's failure. The political disorder in the Kashmir valley led to the displacement of the minority community (*Pandits*). Weak democratic fabric and the majority-minority dynamics are among the reasons responsible for the expulsion of around 3 lac persons from the Valley in 1989-1991. The majority-minority dynamics that is evident as most of the population of Kashmir are Muslims.<sup>4</sup> The atmosphere of fear and threat developed after the rigged election of 1987, which endorsed the sentiments of *Azaadi*. Even after two decades, the question of *Pandit* displacement is very much vibrant in the discourses on contemporary self-determination.

### 1.1 Displacement: An Overview

The term displacement means the forced movement of people from their environment, and it is happening due to the factors of conflict, famine, natural disaster, and so on. There are two types of displacement: one is internally displaced persons and the second one is refugees.<sup>5</sup> According to the United nation's guiding principles on internal displacement, defined as "A person or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or

<sup>2</sup> Raina, A. N. "Geography of Jammu & Kashmir State." *Radha Krishan Anand & Co., Pacca Danga, Jammu* (2002).

<sup>3</sup> Hassan, Khalid Wasim. *Migration of Kashmiri Pandits: Kashmiriyat Challenged?* Institute for Social and Economic Change, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Sawhney, Charu, and Nilika Mehrotra. "Displacement from Kashmir: Gendered Responses." *Sociological Bulletin* 62, no. 1 (2013): 83-99.

<sup>5</sup> (UNESCO, 2017). *Learning to live together*. Retrieved from <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/displaced-person-displacement/>>

to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.”<sup>6</sup>

The Kashmiri *Pandits* have constituted a visible group of internally displaced persons in the region.<sup>7</sup> The state turned into armed conflict in the 1990s, resulting in displacement (particularly *Hindus*) from their homeland. The people forced into a conflict region are commonly known as internally displaced persons (IDPs). However, they are officially termed as ‘migrants,’ which is the terminology employed by the Government of India and Jammu and Kashmir to refer to displaced persons in the state. They are from the Brahmin community and are historically associated with the middle-class in Kashmir.<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 Background of the Kashmir Conflict

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is deeply rooted in the colonial history of the sub-continent.<sup>9</sup> The dispute of Kashmir between India and Pakistan is as old as the two countries themselves, dating back to the partition and independence from Britain in 1947.<sup>10</sup> At present, the parts of Kashmir, but China also occupied some parts. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a Muslim majority population and was variously ruled by central and west was originating Mughal-Afghan dynasties. In the nineteenth century, the Britishers took Jammu and Kashmir from Sikhs and sold them to Hindu Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh in the treaty of Amritsar for 75 lac rupees.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the Valley of Kashmir witnessed the Dogra rule from 1846- 1947. The people led miserable life and were treated as slaves. The imposition of heavy taxes, capital punishment, and the constant terror was created by the Dogra’s against Kashmiri Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

The origins of the conflict of Kashmir lies in the subcontinent’s partition in 1947 created the independent states of India and Pakistan. Hundreds of nominally independent princely states were absorbed into India and Pakistan. The Dogra ruler

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<sup>6</sup> (ICRC, 2010). *Internally Displaced Persons and International Humanitarian Law*. Retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/inamul%20haq/Downloads/internally-displaced-persons-icrc-eng.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Datta, Ankur. "Dealing with dislocation: Migration, place and home among displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and Kashmir." *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 52-79.

<sup>8</sup> Madan, Triloki Natha. "Family and kinship: a study of the Pandits of rural Kashmir." (1959).

<sup>9</sup> Ganguly, Sumit. "Avoiding war in Kashmir." *Foreign Aff.* 69 (1989): 57.

<sup>10</sup> Bose, Sumantra. *Kashmir: Roots of conflict, paths to peace*. Harvard University Press, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Kaul, Nitasha. "Kashmir: A place of blood and memory." *Until My Freedom has come: The New Intifada in Kashmir*, Ed. Sanjay Kak. New Delhi: Penguin (2011).

<sup>12</sup> Dewan, Ias Parvez. *Complete History of Kashmir*. Manas Publications, 2008.

Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir wants to remain independent and refused to accede to either nation.<sup>13</sup> In 1947, the Maharaja faced an armed revolt by Muslims from Poonch. The revolt then spread in other parts of Jammu and Kashmir. To stabilize the situation, the Maharaja signed a still stand agreement with Pakistan. In August/September 1947, the condition deteriorated, and Kashmiri Muslims revolted openly. The tribesmen from Pakistan's northwest frontier province also joined in the armed insurrection. By October 1947, the tribesmen captured several towns and massacred many civilians, and advanced to capture the capital of Valley.<sup>14</sup> To crush the rebels from the state, the Maharaja to seek the assistance of India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who agreed to send troops only if Kashmir formally acceded to India. On October 27, 1947, the Maharaja decided to sign the instrument of accession to India because Kashmir should be permitted to retain its constitution.<sup>15</sup>

In the same year, India and Pakistan fought their first war on the Kashmir dispute, and India took the matter before United Nations (UN). With the intervention of the UN, a cease-fire agreement was signed on January 01, 1949.<sup>16</sup> In 1965, both countries went to war over Kashmir and divided the old line of control (LOC) of Jammu and Kashmir into four political units.

- Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh (Indian occupied Kashmir).
- Azad Kashmir (Pakistan occupied Kashmir).
- Pakistan administers the northern area.
- Aksai- Chin, controlled by China

In January 1966, with the signing of the Tashkent Agreement between India and Pakistan, both countries decided to solve the Kashmir dispute through peaceful negotiations. In 1972, both countries signed the agreement after the war and decided to end their conflict and settle their differences through bilateral negotiations. This agreement came to be known as Shimla Agreement.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Gossman, Patricia. "The Human Rights Crisis in Kashmir Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights/USA." (1993).

<sup>14</sup> Hussain, Syed Rifaat. "Resolving the Kashmir dispute: blending realism with justice." *The Pakistan Development Review* 48, no. 4 (2009): 1007-1035.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Singh, M. Amarjeet. "Conflict in Jammu and Kashmir." *Bangalore: National Institute of Advanced Studies* (2011).

### 1.3 Kashmiriyat: A Unique Identity

Despite this, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was stranded for peace, harmony, and brotherhood. Historically, it was an institution of Sanskrit learning and the branches of Hinduism; Saivism found eloquent teachers in Kashmir. The word *Kashmiriyat* itself denotes Kashmiri-ness, which means the common identity and culture of the inhabitants of the Kashmir valley. The sharing of a common culture, identity, and peaceful co-existence have been named *Kashmiriyat*.<sup>18</sup>

According to Prem Nath Bazaz, *Kashmiriyat* is mainly derived from religious syncretism, particularly between Hindu *Shaivates* and *Sufi* Islam, which both draw upon Kashmiri cultural practices (1954). This view is further supported by Muhammad Ishaq Khan, who argues that, in Delhi Sultanate, Kashmir gave birth to the Islamic mysticism (*Tasawwuf*) in the *Reshi* Movement (a sect of Sufi movement) started by Sheikh-Nur-Ud-Din. The main concern of the *Sufi* movement was universal brotherhood beyond religion. The same teachings were also led by a Hindu yogini, namely Lalla Ded, and both of them laid the foundation of an ideology known as *Kashmiriyat*. However, the *Mughal* conquest of Kashmir in 1586 brought the decline of this cultural achievement.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.4 Emergence of Political Sentiments in Kashmir

After the Mughal occupation of Kashmir, there was a gradual rise of Kashmiri *Pandits* to crucial posts. The revenue collector of the Mughal Empire was mainly *Pandits*. After the Mughals, Kashmir was ruled by Afghans, and *Kashmiri Pandits* occupied the same titles. After the Treaty of Amritsar (1846)<sup>20</sup>, the *Kashmiri Pandits* welcomed the *Dogra* Rule, and they served as Prime ministers, Governors, and heads of the department. However, they lost the monopoly during the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh in 1925 (Snedden). The *Dogra* rule infuriated not only the *Pandits* but also Muslims in different ways. However, the scenario changed in the 1930s, when political consciousness emerged among the Muslims against the domination of the *Brahmins*. The emerging problems of religious and regional identities and interference in the culture laid

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<sup>18</sup> Puri, Balraj. "Kashmiriyat: The vitality of Kashmiri identity." *Contemporary South Asia* 4, no. 1 (1995): 55-63.

<sup>19</sup> Khan, Mohammad Ishaq. *Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions*. Gulshan Publishers, 1983.

<sup>20</sup> The treaty of Amritsar was signed on March 16, 1846 between the British and Gulab Singh Dogra. Under this Treaty, Kashmir came under the direct control of Dogra's from 1846-1947. This treaty is considered not only illegal, but it is immoral in nature. This treaty made Gulab Singh owner of Kashmir which was supported by British military (Baker, 1994:10).

the foundation of Kashmiri nationalism to respond to the *Dogra's* in Kashmir.<sup>21</sup> Initially, it was dominated by religion and, after its inclusion from various regions, transformed into one line of secularism by Sheikh Abdullah in 1939.<sup>22</sup> The expansion of Kashmiri nationalism necessitated the creation of *Kashmiriyat*, in which both Hindus and Muslims shared a common identity. Abdullah and his followers spread the ideas of *Kashmiriyat* through speeches, articles as well as religious sermons. In one of his political speeches, he says:

*“Like us, the majority of Hindus and Sikhs have suffered at the hands of the irresponsible government. They are also steeped in deep ignorance. We need to open doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs who like ourselves believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles from of an irresponsible rule”*<sup>23</sup>.

It is a fact that Abdullah played a prominent role in re-establishing the ideology of *Kashmiriyat*. However, it was also advanced by the writers and historians of the Valley. In addition, the relation of Nehru and Abdullah reached credence to *Kashmiriyat*. According to Nehru, “Kashmir represents an intellectual scene of the country from almost 2000 years.<sup>24</sup> The ideology of *Kashmiriyat* remained little use for the general public. However, it was popularised during the regime of Farooq Abdullah (Son of Sheikh Abdullah) in 1983 election by making an alliance with Muslim Conference. This era is known for communalism because the political parties divided the people on religious line. The national conference fought with Muslim card in Kashmir and Congress fought the election with Hindu card in Jammu. After winning the election, Farooq Abdullah’s slogan of *Kashmiriyat* was sounded as Muslim identity and the mere voice of composite culture was destroyed.<sup>25</sup> The result was the 1987 election, which was fought by Muslim conference separately on religious line. However, the rigidity of the election laid the foundation of armed insurgency in 1989.

<sup>21</sup> Khan, Mohammad Ishaq. *Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions*. Gulshan Publishers, 1983.

<sup>22</sup> Arakotaram, Karan. "The Rise of Kashmiriyat: People-Building in 20th Century Kashmir." *The Columbia Undergraduate Journal of South Asian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009): 26-40.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>24</sup> Puri, Balraj. "Kashmiriyat: The vitality of Kashmiri identity." *Contemporary South Asia* 4, no. 1 (1995): 55-63.

<sup>25</sup> Tak, Toru. "The Term "Kashmiriyat": Kashmiri Nationalism of the 1970s." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2013): 28-32.

## 1.5 Insurgency and Aftermath

Kashmir had a separate ethnonational consciousness that remained consistently strong among Kashmiri Muslims. In the late 1980s, widespread frustration among Kashmiri Muslims against some of their leaders and the policies pursued by New Delhi erupted into a full-blown secessionist movement. The rise of secessionism in Kashmir can be attributed to fundamental demographic, economic, and political developments. Due to demographic changes and the spread of modernization and communications over the past several decades, a relatively younger, educated, ambitious, and politically conscious generation had emerged in Kashmir by the 1980s.<sup>26</sup> The 1989 insurgency has its historical implications as the Valley is primarily ruled by the outsiders as *Mughals*, *Sikhs*, and *Dogra* rule from time to time. The long run of the Valley by different rulers facilitated them to be independent as they have a separate ethnic, political, and cultural identity.<sup>27</sup> It was in 1989 that an insurgency wrapped the whole Valley. The growth of an armed struggle participated by most locals began to develop through secessionist groups. The Valley witnessed popular support and slogans favouring *Azadi* (freedom) rose by the local population. The 1989 secessionist movement was launched by the youth demanding the right to self-determination.<sup>28</sup>

The immediate cause of the 1989 insurgency was based on three points (i) dismissal of the National Conference government in 1984 because of the defections induced by the Congress party. (ii) The Farooq Abdullah, leader of the National Conference, aligned with the Congress party. He was an opportunist and thus led to disillusionment about his government among the people.<sup>29</sup> ((iii) Lastly, in the 1987 legislative elections, a new political party Muslim United Front (MUF), came into being. A newly organized coalition of political groups contested in the 1987 election to fulfil their economic growth demands and achieve the primary goal of freedom through plebiscite opinion by reaching out on a political platform.<sup>30</sup> They fought against the National Conference. With the

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<sup>26</sup> Ganguly, Rajat. "India, Pakistan and the Kashmir insurgency: Causes, dynamics and prospects for resolution." *Asian Studies Review* 25, no. 3 (2001): 309-334.

<sup>27</sup> Chowdhary, Rekha. "Understanding Political Alienation in Kashmir." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* (2001): 159-178.

<sup>28</sup> Hilali, A. Z. "Kashmir: Emerging Nuclear Threat in South Asia." *Perspectives* 16 (2001): 34-56.

<sup>29</sup> Chowdhary, Rekha. "Understanding Political Alienation in Kashmir." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* (2001): 159-178.

<sup>30</sup> Tremblay, Reeta Chowdhari. "Kashmir's secessionist movement resurfaces: ethnic identity, community competition, and the state." *Asian Survey* 49, no. 6 (2009): 924-950.



expectation of mass support by the people, Congress had failed to win the number of seats expected by the leaders, which created crises in Farooq's government's state and a breakdown. There was no law and order in the state.<sup>31</sup>

An armed struggle led by the Kashmiri youth under the banner of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)<sup>32</sup> appeared. Most of its members were educated and enjoyed mass support by the Kashmiris. JKLF's objective was the independence of Kashmir with a secular and democratic state as it was before 1947. On the other side, the most prominent separatist group was Jamaat-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir (JIJK) since 1952 with its Islamic reformation practices. The JIJK also decided to take to arms and came into existence with a separate group in the form of *Hizb-ul-Mujahidin* (HM). However, *Jamaat-i-Islami* Jammu and Kashmir, with its armed wing HM differ from the objective of JKLF as they wanted accession with Pakistan.<sup>33</sup> There was anger among many Islamic militant groups during the insurgency. The number of *Pandits* (*Kashmiri Hindus*), approximately two lakh, fled away, and about four lakh Indian army and paramilitary forces have deployed to the Valley to control the insurgency.<sup>34</sup>

## 1.6 Displacement of Kashmiri *Pandits*: Different Narratives

There are different narratives regarding the displacement of Kashmiri *Pandits*. Most of the Kashmiri *Pandits'* displacement occurred due to the atmosphere of fear created by Muslims, demanding the right to self-determination. The slogans like *Ae Kafiroo Ae Zalimoo*, *Kashmir Hamara chhod do* (you infidels' you tyrants, leave our Kashmir) and *Asi Gache Pakistan, Batav rosti batnev san* (We want Pakistan, inclusive of Pandit women and exclusive of Pandit men) disturbed and compelled us to leave the place.<sup>35</sup> Warning of death from the militant outfit was even carried in local newspapers like *Alsafa* and *Srinagar Times*.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Chowdhary, Rekha. "Understanding Political Alienation in Kashmir." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* (2001): 159-178.

<sup>32</sup>This organization is the key course of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. It was headed by Amanullah Khan and now Yasin Malik. After the release of Yasin Malik from jail in 1994 declared that his organization should struggle continuously for freedom of Kashmir by adopting the non-violence method (Swami, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Sikand, Yoginder. "Changing course of Kashmiri struggle: from national liberation to Islamist jihad?" *Economic and Political Weekly* (2001): 218-227.

<sup>34</sup> Ganguly, Sumit. "Explaining the Kashmir insurgency: political mobilization and institutional decay." *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 76-107.

<sup>35</sup> Hassan, Khalid Wasim. *Migration of Kashmiri Pandits: Kashmiriyat Challenged?*. Institute for Social and Economic Change, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Akbar, M. J. "Kashmir: Behind the Vale, New Delhi: Viking." (1991).



The displacement of *Pandits* happened without any communal incident, burning, looting, and misbehavior of women. It came as a setback to the harmony that Kashmir proved from ancient times. It was a tragedy for both Muslims and Hindus; one was tagged as migrants, and others were considered terrorists. The exodus of Kashmiri *Pandits* from the Valley defamed the whole Muslim community. Manohar Nath Tickoo narrates that my Muslim neighbors did not allow me to leave Kashmir, but there was a fear created by unknown elements, which forced us to leave. The fact is not a single Muslim forced us to leave.<sup>37</sup> It is also a fact that there are Kashmiri *Pandit* families who did not migrate from the Valley. However, their narrative is different from those living in Jammu, Delhi, and other parts of India. The association of *Pandits*, who stayed in Kashmir, namely Kashmir *Pandit Sangarish Samiti* (KPSS), narrates that in the early 1990s, there were threats from the militant organization. Still, a typical Kashmiri Muslim was not against us.<sup>38</sup>

As *Pandits* were forced to leave Kashmir, then why some stayed or returned, and who are solely responsible- Kashmiri Muslim or state administration. According to Vijay Dhar, the Pakistan factor is the root cause of the exodus because Pakistan fully supports the insurgents in the Valley. In early 1990, a pro-Pakistani organization like *Jamaat-i-Islami* and pro-Independence organizations like Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) considered the Kashmiri *Pandits* as traitors and agents of India. Their furious speeches, pamphlets had impacted the literary community, who sought to act with violence and chanted the slogan *Raliv, Chaliv ya Ghaliv* (Mingle or leave, otherwise face the wrath of death) forced the other communities to leave.<sup>39</sup> B.G. Varghese states that the displacement of Kashmiri *Pandits* was a political turmoil and is apart from religion (1991). The Valley remained a ray of hope, and there is no single evidence of communal riots.

### **1.7 State Machinery: A Failure**

The rigid elections of 1987 prevented the Kashmiri people from electing their representatives through democratic means and created antipathy towards the majority section. The people lost

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<sup>37</sup> Hassan, Khalid Wasim. *Migration of Kashmiri Pandits: Kashmiriyat Challenged?*. Institute for Social and Economic Change, 2010.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Bhat, G. R. "The exodus of Kashmiri Pandits and its impact (1989–2002)." *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences & Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2012).

their faith, and their grievance was seen through the lens of anti-national. The frustration from decades automatically turned to radicalized political Islam. On the other side, the Indian administration appointed governor Jagmohan (1984-89 and 1990), who played an essential role in the state.<sup>40</sup> According to Pankaj Mishra, the policies of Jagmohan were pro-Hindu.<sup>41</sup> The Governor of the state revised the 1927 policies of Hari Singh, dismissed the government twice, recruited Muslims in the administration, and non-Muslims were encouraged. He sought to impose the Hindu-modernity on the state by allowing the use of alcohol but forbidden the slaughter of animals in the state.<sup>42</sup> According to Schofield, there was a widespread feeling about Jagmohan being anti-Muslim and played an essential role in the Hindus' migration to crush the pro-Pakistani elements.<sup>43</sup> It is further supported by the argument of Patricia Gossman, who argues that the government of Jagmohan assisted the *Pandits* in leaving the Kashmir valley for camps in Jammu and New Delhi. However, after one week, the paramilitary troops opened indiscriminate fire on unarmed protestors.<sup>44</sup> The popular perception of displacement of *Pandits* stands against the state machinery. According to locals, Jagmohan represented the hate figure and was particularly send to Kashmir to evacuate *Pandits* and suppress the pro-Pakistani people in the Valley.<sup>45</sup> After January 19, there start the bloodbaths of Muslims within no time. Below are details of the massacres that occurred in the year 1990.

S. No	Date and year	Place	Number of Causalities
01	20 January 1990	Gaw Kadal	53
02	22 January 1990	Alamgiri Bazar	10
03	25 January 1990	Handwara	26
04	01 March 1990	Zakura & Tengpora Bypass	33
05	21 May 1990	Islamia College	60

Source: JKCCS (2012) & Ahmad (2017)

<sup>40</sup> Kaul, Nitasha. "Kashmir: A place of blood and memory." *Until My Freedom has come: The New Intifada in Kashmir*, Ed. Sanjay Kak. New Delhi: Penguin (2011).

<sup>41</sup> Mishra, Pankaj. "The birth of a nation (Kashmir)." *NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS* 47, no. 15 (2000): 32-37.

<sup>42</sup> Kaul, Nitasha. "Kashmir: A place of blood and memory." *Until My Freedom has come: The New Intifada in Kashmir*, Ed. Sanjay Kak. New Delhi: Penguin (2011).

<sup>43</sup> Kak, Subhash. "kashmir in the crossfire." *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* 4, no. 3/4 (2000): 181.

<sup>44</sup> Gossman, P. "Kashmir and International Law: how war crimes fuel the conflict." *The Crimes of War Project* (2002).

<sup>45</sup> Hassan, Khalid Wasim. *Migration of Kashmiri Pandits: Kashmiriyat Challenged?*. Institute for Social and Economic Change, 2010.

## 2. Measures of Rehabilitation

There is a wide-ranging catalogue among the *Pandit* community regarding their displacement. Some call their departure as exodus, exile and some call themselves refugees in their homeland. This reference indicates the Indian state first not protecting them within their land and then neglecting them outside. Some radical organizations like *Panun Kashmir* termed their displacement as genocide, ethnic cleansing, or holocaust. In 1991, the organization demanded 'Homeland Resolution' with full integration with India through a common constitution. They figured that seven lakh *Pandits* live in exile, while the actual number ranges from one lakh to one lakh forty thousand.<sup>46</sup>

The displaced *Pandits* faced a lot of problems in terms of socio-economic as well as cultural issues. The distinct culture, food, and climate conditions made them uneasy. The government also did not provide them the basic facilities. The majority of the people had to take shelter in tents.<sup>47</sup> Most of the affected were women and faced violations in the Valley, but the people outside Kashmir did not welcome them. They meet isolation socially and economically rather than politically or ideologically. According to Haley Duschinski, the Kashmir *Pandits* faced double displacement, from Kashmir to Jammu and later on from Jammu to Delhi (2007). The UPA regime announced a package for the return and rehabilitation of Kashmir *Pandits* with the assistance of 7.5 lac. However, the state government responded with the proposal of 20 lakh per family for reconstruction.<sup>48</sup> In 2015, the union minister plan to set up composite townships for Kashmiri *Pandits*. The idea was resisted by the people of Kashmir, referring to it as a wall between the blended cultures of the Valley. The BJP-PDP alliance had mentioned the rehabilitation of Kashmiri *Pandits* in their typical minimum program. The Prime Minister of India announced 80,000 crore packages to Jammu and Kashmir in November 2015 and cleared to provide 3,000 state jobs and 6,000 transit

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<sup>46</sup> Rai, Mridu. "Making a Part Inalienable: Folding Kashmir into India's Imagination'." *Until My Freedom Has Come: The New Intifada*. New Delhi: Penguin (2011): 250-78.

<sup>47</sup> Kak, Subhash. "KASHMIR IN THE CROSSFIRE." *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* 4, no. 3/4 (2000): 181.

<sup>48</sup> Matoo, J.A. (June 14, 2014). Return, rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pundits. Srinagar: Greater Kashmir. Retrieved from <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/opinion/return-rehabilitation-of-kashmiri-pandits/172091.html>.

accommodations for the rehabilitation of Kashmir *Pandits* at the cost of 2,000 crores.<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that the displacement of Kashmiri *Pandits* was the most decisive blow to the Kashmiri ethos of Hindu-Muslim communal harmony and on the notion of *Kashmiriyat*. The Strong feelings of bitterness and suspicion developed between the two communities, which continued and crystallized over the last two and a half decades. However, a fair degree of mistrust and disbelief existed, simmering underneath a harmonious society before 1990. It is true that during the freedom struggle, a few *Pandits* were targeted, killed, abducted, and threatened by armed militants based on suspicion. The displacement of Kashmiri *Pandits* was not the religious or communal hatred campaign, but it was the political turmoil.

The displacement from the Valley to other parts of India had negatively impacted the relationship and torn the ethics of *Kashmiriyat*. No doubt, there have been differences in terms of socio-economic and political issues. Still, it never led to the confrontations on a scale that would make one community insecure and a refugee in their homeland. It posed a threat to the secular fabric of *Kashmiriyat*. Living away from the motherland changed the narratives of the *Pandits*, and they looked at the Muslims through the prism of Islamic identity rather than Kashmir identity. They chanted the slogan save Kashmiri *Pandits*, save Kashmir, and save India rather than Hindu Muslim Sikh Etihad, which they chanted on the eve of partition.

The narratives of *Pandits* vary across the different actors of state politics and within the pundit community. The allegations and accusations were blamed on each other, and there is no agreement on a single cause of the exodus. It is also interesting to see that even after two and half decades of their exodus, the debate on the subject continues through academics, politics, and social media. It is also remarkable that the young generation wants the Kashmiri *Pandits* back to their real places rather than separate townships.

It is a fact that Kashmir *Pandits* suffered a lot from the past 28 years in terms of rehabilitation, gender, and social isolation. The

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<sup>49</sup> Chowdhury, S. (February 04, 2016). Rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits: no land, MHA plan to set up townships stuck. India: Indian Express. <<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/rehabilitation-of-kashmiri-pandits-no-land-mha-plan-to-set-up-townships-stuck>>

important thing is that awareness is aroused among Kashmiri youth, who feel incomplete without the *Pandits*. The need of the hour is to focus on the rehabilitation of Kashmiri *Pandits* so that the lost *Kashmiriyat* can be renewed in the Valley.

### **About the Author**

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