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Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits a Review

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Abstract

Kashmiri Pandits, a small religious minority community in Kashmir's valley of which exodus began in January 1990 in which they were forcibly driven out of their homeland in Kashmir. As a result, their homes were set on fire, temples were burnt, and hundreds of people were killed. Kashmiri Pandits then decided to leave the valley and have been staying in refugee camps in various parts of the country, especially in Jammu. The government has taken a number of steps to help struggling families, as part of a larger strategy whereby those who have moved will eventually return to the valley. The government has also been providing assistance to uprooted families in Jammu district's camp and non-camp areas who have lost their source of income due to migration. Since then, Kashmiri Pandits have not returned to their homeland, and a return is still a distant hope for them. This paper aims to know the causes of exodus of Kashmiri Pandit, to know the problem faced by the Kashmiri Pandit, measure taken by the government for rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandit and to examine their present status. It also aims to find out the causes and effect of exodus and the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits in the Kashmir valley as well as the government's various decisions in their favour.

Key words:- 1 Exodus, 2 Kashmiri Pandit, 3 Community, 3, Operation sadbhawana.

Introduction

Kashmiris are the people living in Jammu and Kashmir located in the extreme north-west part of India. The Kashmiri Pandits are a part of the larger Saraswats Brahmin community of India. They used to live in Kashmir valley until Muslims spread their influence after a large number of Kashmiri Hindus converted to Islam (Greater Kashmir, 2008). Throughout history, the valley's Muslims and Kashmiri Hindus have coexisted peacefully. They shared mutual practices and adhered to a code of conduct that united them as a self-contained social group. They spoke the same language, 'Kausher,' and dressed in the same way, 'Pheren.' Hindu festivals such as Holi, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, Janamashtami, and Dussehra in Jammu and Kashmir were devoid of noise and smoke. As a result, both Hindus and Muslims have complete faith in one another and share each other's joys and sorrows, as well as respect each other's religion. (2011, Greater Kashmir).

The Brahmin Kashmiri Pandits of India lived inside the Kashmir district for more than 5000 years. The word Pandit implies a coach or researcher of Hinduism. Beginning in 1989, a large number of Kashmiri Pandits had to leave their homes because of Muslim extremists who came to Jammu and Kashmir. The Pandits were advised to change over to Islam, leave or be murdered which resulted in killing of more than 300 Kashmiri Pandits in 1990. Accordingly, most the Kashmiri Pandit escaped to different pieces of India. Today numerous Pandits live in evacuated camps while others have gotten comfortable in different pieces of India. When the Indian government expressed that the Kashmiri Pandits could securely get back to their homes, greater part of them were hesitant to restore due to the presence of Muslim fanatics. Col Tej Kumar Tikoo describes the decisive night in his book '*Kashmir: Its Aborigines and Their Exodus*' (2012), when the valley started to recover from the Islamist war-crises. This book also discusses the Pandit community's economic and political movement in the state over the last six decades, as well as the events that led to their frightful exodus. The radical Islamists attacked Kashmiri Pandits with a slew of highly communal and threatening slogans, which were accompanied by clear and visible threats to Pandits. Pandits had only three options: convert to Islam, leave the country, or convert to Christianity (perish). About 350,000 people were forced to flee their homes, making it the single largest forced migration of a specific ethnic group after the partition of India. By *Sangharsh Samiti*, the local organization of Hindus in Kashmir, Kashmir Pandit (KPSS) after completing a survey in 2008 and 2009, said that 399 Kashmiri Hindus were killed by insurgents from 1990 to 2011 with 75% of them being killed during the first year of the Kashmiri insurgency, and that during the last 20 years.

The Kashmiri Pandits Exodus describes the series of anti-Hindu attacks that took place in 1989 which forced Kashmiri Hindu Pandits to move out of the Kashmir. According to some traditions ten thousand Kashmiri Pandits were converted to Islam and hence the seeds of Islam were sown in Kashmir. Through successive waves of Buddhist, Brahmanical, Afghan, Moghul, and Sikh dominion, each of which has left its cultural and spiritual imprint, the Kashmiris have preserved an unbroken tradition of common nationality. Even the special group of Kashmiri Brahmins (Pandits) who migrated south to the Indian plains several generations ago and have since achieved unusual distinction in India's intellectual and political life. The present study aims to know the causes and effect of exodus of Hindus from Kashmir and problem faced by them and government intervention to resettlement of these Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of literature review.

Exodus of Kashmiri Hindus or Kashmiri Pandits

In 1989 when Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pioneer Jia Lal Taploo and a resigned judge, Neelkanth Ganjoo, were killed. It sent stun waves through the Pandit people group. Although supportive of freedom, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) said the two men were murdered as a result of their binds with the Indian state instead of their Pandit character. Pandits were given a decision: convert to Islam, leave the Valley, or die. The Hizbul Mujahideen set up banners requesting all Hindus to leave the Valley and records with names of Pandits to be killed were flowed. In mosques and mass assemblies, individuals yelled fierily and against Pandit mottos. "They needed sharia rule in Kashmir," Dhar said, adding that the Pandits "had no real option except to leave" their homes. Matters reached a crucial stage the evening of January 19, 1990. With strains topping, many Pandit families started their excursion out of the Valley. What occurred in January 1990 is sharply challenged. Kashmiri Pandits keep up that they were driven out of the Valley by the Muslims. "Indeed, even our Muslim companions were up to speed in the Islamist furor of that period," Dhar reviewed. Kashmiri Muslims oppose this idea. They consider the then-Jammu and Kashmir lead representative, Jagmohan, for the Pandit mass migration. Muslims contend that by orchestrating transports to ship Pandits out of the Valley, Jagmohan encouraged their flight, making ready for the Indian security powers to jump, start a hard and fast military hostile against Muslims. Just approximately 600 Pandit families remained in the Valley. While they were left safe generally, dread gatherings like the Lashkar-e-Taiba slaughtered Pandits at Sangrampora (1997), Wandhama (1998), and Nandimarg (2003).

Causes of Exodus of Hindus from Kashmir

The Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits was a grievous episode. Their families were resettled in Jammu, Delhi-NCR, and other adjoining states. Two or three hundred groups of Kashmiri Pandits kept on living in the Kashmir valley. Ghulam Mohammad Shah came into power subsequent to grabbing the situation from his brother by marriage Farooq Abdullah and turned into the central priest of Jammu and Kashmir. He chose to fabricate a mosque, named the equivalent to be Shah Masjid and began developing it inside the premises of an old Hindu sanctuary in Jammu. Numerous individuals began to dissent and conveyed huge mobilizes and walks against this choice which occurred during the year 1984. At the point when Gulam Mohammed Shah got back to Kashmir, he responded and incited the Kashmiri Muslims by saying Islam was at serious risk. As an outcome, Kashmiri Pandits went under the radar of Kashmiri Muslims and were being assaulted.

Numerous occurrences were accounted for in different regions where Kashmiri Hindus were murdered and their properties and sanctuaries harmed or annihilated. The most exceedingly awful hit territories were essentially South Kashmir and Sopore. Muslim hordes looted and annihilated the belongings and sanctuaries of Hindus. This was trailed by the Anantnag revolt in 1986. No Hindu was murdered rather numerous houses and different properties having a place with Hindus were plundered, consumed or harmed. Therefore, numerous Pandit families left the Kashmir valley. Gulam Mohammed Shah's administration was excused in the very year in March, by Governor Jagmohan. After two years of the Anantnag riots, the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front began a dissenter uprising development for the freedom of Kashmir from India. The dread outfit killed a Kashmiri Pandit without precedent for front of a few group in September 1989, who was a promoter and a noticeable head of Bharatiya Janata Party, Pandit Tika Lal Taploo. This taught the dread in the

Kashmiri Pandit people group particularly as Taploo's executioners were rarely gotten ([Eur Asian Times Desk](#) April 22, 2017).

The Pandits acknowledged they weren't protected in the valley and could be focused on any time. Numerous other Kashmiri Pandits and unmistakable characters were reliably focused on and executed. There was likewise an article given in neighborhood paper Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, requesting that all Pandits leave the Valley right away. This instilled the sensation of dread among the Pandits. To debilitate his political opponent, Farooq Abdullah who around then was the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister of Home Affairs Mufti Mohammad Sayeed impacted Prime Minister V.P. Singh to designate Jagmohan as the legislative head of the state. Abdullah didn't have great terms with Jagmohan who had been selected by the lead representative prior in April 1984 too and had recommended Abdullah's excusal to Rajiv Gandhi in July 1984. Mufti was firm that such a move will disturb Abdullah and make him quit. Abdullah had said before that he will leave his seat if Jagmohan was made the Governor. In any case, the Central government felt free to select him as the Governor. Accordingly, Abdullah surrendered around the same time. This prompted utter upheaval and Jagmohan couldn't arrive at Srinagar because of awful climate and needed to remain at Jammu. Wrongdoing and fear assumed control over the valley and the group with trademarks and firearms began to openly wander the roads. The brutality further expanded after the Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. The assailants obliterated the properties of Kashmiri Pandits after their departure. Kashmiri Hindus are as yet battling for their re-visitation of the valley and large numbers of them actually live in exile. In 1989 killings of Tika Lal and Nilakanth Ganjoo sent a stun wave down the spine of the Pandit minority local area of the Kashmir Valley.

Election and Muslim United Front (MUF)

Two months before the killing of BJP pioneer Tika Lal Taploo, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah ordered the release of various Kashmiri Muslim youth from Srinagar prisons, who were affirmed to have gone too far of line of control and got preparing in psychological oppressor camps in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir. They were the early activists of Muslim United Front (MUF) that challenged 1987 races to the Legislative Assembly of Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir and were accused of rebel against the State. MUF had emphatically challenged affirmed apparatus of decisions by National Conference-Congress join, which later on framed the alliance government with Farooq Abdullah steering the ship. MUF guaranteed that National Conference had let free reins of dread during the races. Their surveying specialists were attacked, mauled, mishandled and embarrassed. Presenting to National Conference's harsh measures and demonstrations of terrorizing to the notification of the Election Commission evoked no response from the last mentioned. It persuaded MUF that the whole political race hardware was working in a sectarian way. In spite of the fact that they had their motivations to lose trust in the decency of the Election Commission, the Kashmiri Pandits had no part in these political contentions. MUF, the forefront activists of Kashmir's Jamaat-e-Islami, projected the apparatus scene as a stage towards concealment of Muslim prevalence in the State. Furnished opposition was the choice and there were takers of the alternative in the Valley of Kashmir just as in Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir. The possibility of Islamic opposition development exceptionally fit late Zia-ul Haq's (Military Dictator of Pakistan) 'Activity To pac' plan for Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan's genius association, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) came right into it.

Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)

ISI arranged roping in of political activists in Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir and their UK-based solid diaspora. The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), out and out with its twin places in Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir and UK, started uprising in the Kashmir Valley during the 1980s with help of ISI. It opened its record of executing Hindus with the abduct and

resulting murder of Indian Assistant Commissioner Ravindra Mhatre in Birmingham in 1984. JKLF leaders drew power from Kalashnikovs. Pakistani insight organizations likewise embraced a two dimensional system. First individuals in Pakistan and Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir must be inculcated with the idea of Islamic Jihad where the Hindu as kafir (heathen) turns into the objective. Despising Hindus turned into the refrain of this monstrous publicity. Individuals were informed that Muslims were stifled and mistreated by the Hindus in Kashmir. The second piece of the methodology desired of the activists in Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir for control over the whole State of Jammu and Kashmir, if the Valley was scrubbed of its Hindu populace, regardless of howsoever small and unimportant. They were informed that once the Kashmir Valley was gotten free from tainted Indian and Hindu presence, they would be the bosses of that part and appreciate the success however much they might want as Kashmiris would be just the hewers of wood and drawers of water for them.

In the decades since the Kashmiri Pandits exodus, Kashmir has seen immense bloodshed. Thousands of Kashmiris including Indian security personnel have lost their lives. In reality, Kashmiri Muslims have faced the brunt of the violence supported by Pakistan-backed militants and Indian security forces. A powerful anti-India militancy rattled the Indian state. Anti-India sentiment has undergone changes not just in its intensity but the way it is articulated. The view of the international community has also changed over India-Pakistan dispute. More importantly, Jammu and Kashmir's status has changed. With the revoking of Article 370 of the constitution in August 2019, by the Indian government, Jammu and Kashmir has been deprived of its special status of limited self government.

Pandits have always favored the integration of Kashmir with India. The decision of revocation of Article 370 was deeply welcomed by the Pandit community as it tightens India's control over the region. Many Pandits celebrated the Indian government move as they believe it will create a way for their return to the Valley. Successive governments in New Delhi and Srinagar have attempted to draw displaced Pandits back to the Valley by announcing resettlement packages and promising financial support & jobs for those who returned. However, these offers have failed to attract the Pandits due to mainly security issues. Pandits are frightened that they will be attacked by Islamists if they return home (Charu Malhotra 2007). Kashmiri Hindus were the affluent community historically in Kashmir, though in minority. They boasted of a rich culture and took pride in being main stream citizens of India. Ever since independence they faced the wrath of political marginalization at the hands of the majority community in terms of opportunities for education, government jobs, business and agriculture. Pakistan sponsored radicalism set the pace for dilution of the Sufism culture in Kashmir (Colonel Kanwaljit Singh Talwar 2020).

Non Secular Buildup

The Central government has failed to revive the calibrated trail in the majority community dominated State possibly for appeasing the Muslim majority at the cost of Kashmiri Hindu minority Chrungoo, A.K.(2010). The State government covertly supported the exodus by showing helplessness in protecting the Hindus and in the ensuing 30 years, Kashmir has deteriorated into full fledged insurgency, with the present non secular social fabric acting as a catalyst for Pakistan to exploit. The state authorities also turned a nelson eye to the ongoing destruction of Hindu properties, misrepresenting of revenue records for illegal takeovers of their land and orchards and desecration of their temples and shrines, so that marks of the displaced community does not reappear on the canvas of Kashmir.

Biased Opportunities

Today the Muslims in Kashmir enjoy full monopoly for trading in handicrafts, fruits, carpets, wood work, tourism sector and construction of roads and State property. The overall delimitation of the

constituencies was based upon unequal distribution of population, ensuring the Muslim-majority community of Kashmir a heavier weightage than the Hindu-majority community of Jammu. Consequently, the Hindus and the Sikhs did not have even a single non-Muslim majority constituency in Kashmir where from a representative of their choice could be elected to the Legislative Assembly. In the Council of Ministers, during the last six-and-a-half decades, the Hindus, Buddhists and other minorities held an average of 26 per cent of the ministerial offices, the rest being held by the Muslims. The total administrative control of Kashmir was under Muslims. Less than the average of 20 percent officers of the Government of India on deputation in the State including the officers of Indian Administrative Services was Hindus. The Kashmiri Hindus shared only 12 per cent of the available employment, whereas the Kashmiri Muslims shared 38 per cent in the services of Central Government Chowdhary, K.L.(2000). During the last 60 years, the admission of Kashmiri Hindus to various academic institutions and institutions of higher learning was restricted to an average of 8 per cent of the total admissions made every year. 12 per cent of Hindu candidates were admitted to the admissions in technical training colleges though 66 per cent of Hindu applicants possessed a first class. On the contrary, 82 per cent of the Muslims were admitted to these technical colleges though first class was possessed by only 28 per cent of them. The demand of the Hindus of Jammu for a review of the delimitation and the six decade long struggle that had come to the State from the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) after the consequence of the partition holocaust, for the citizenship of the State, has not been met. The Muslims own and control 96 per cent of the orchards, agricultural land and urban estates. The marginalization of Kashmiri Hindus can be seen from the fact that today 33% seats in J&K college admissions are for the reserved category but surprisingly Kashmiri Hindus do not figure in it.

Opportune Time For Return & Rehabilitation

The voices of this segment in camps was not taken deliberately on board by the biased state authorities to engage as a well settled smooth layer of the displaced Pandit community and multiple Kashmiri Hindu organizations not in mutual synchronization, to keep the return policy in suspended animation and successfully ensure no workable solution emerges over three decades for return and rehabilitation. The displaced Kashmiri Hindus in evacuated camps are ageing and facing decline in population growth, the new generation born in these camps remains disconnected with their culture and is under threat of extinction. 5th August 2019 was a made a memorable day when the Central government took a bold and significant step in reviving the long pending federal structure in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Hence in this favorable time, workable steps in sync with ambition of displaced Kashmiri Hindus in camps must be taken to rehabilitate them back to their roots and restore the secular social fabric in Kashmir.

Indian Army Operation in Jammu and Kashmir

Indian Army includes security operation such as operation Rakshak is an ongoing counter insurgency and counter terrorism operation started in 1990.

Operation Sarp Vinash-2003:- It was an operation undertaken by Indian Army to flush out terrorist who made bases in the in Hill Kaka Poonch –Surnkot area of Pir Panjal in J&K.

Operation Sadbhavana :- It also referred to as Operation Good will which was launched in J&K by the Indian Army under their military civic action programmes. Its aims to winning the heart and minds of the people in the region. Welfare initiatives under OP Sadbhavana include infrastructure development, medical case women and youth empowerment, educational tours and sports tournaments among other initiative. The catch phrase of the operation is Jawan aur Awam, Aman hai Muqam. Operation Sadbhavana was official launched in 1998 especially in rural area near the LOC where insurgency and militancy has caused destruction.

Initiatives:-

Kashmir super -30 & super -40 :- The Indian Army teamed up with new Delhi based NGO centre for social responsibility and leadership to launch the super-30 initiative alongwith the lines of highly acclaimed and successful 30 concept stated by Abhaya Nand in Bihar.

Schools :- The Army has established 53 English medium Army Schools in places in J&K such as Rajauri, Poonch, Baniyal, Assistance has also been provided to approximately 2700 public Schools.

Women Empowerment Centre:- Women are taught various skills, awareness is raised about health and birth control, information regarding banking and loan procedures is imparted , basic education is imparted including operating computers, fashion designing and craft related skills .

Model Village:- Model villages setup under operation Sadbhavna include Chandi gram model village.

Health Case :- Medical camps are conducted in a regular basis by the Indian Army. A military Hospital in Kargil has also been set up which also centre to civilian with various services being free of cost.

Sports:- The Indian Army organize various sporting events in J&K in coordination with local sports bodies . Some events that has been conducted under the initiative includes Baramula cricket premier league, Kupwara Premier Football league, Gingle Volley ball league.

Article 370:- Article 370 of the Constitution gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir from 1954. It was drafted in Part XXI of the Indian constitution titled Temporary Transitional and special. The effect was that the Jammu & Kashmir status resident live under a separate set of laws and Indian Government has no control except Communication and Foreign policy.

Abolishment of Article 370:- On August 5th the Government of India issued a presidential order superseding the 1954 order are making all provision of the Indian Constitution applicable to J&K . This order was based on the resolution passed in both houses of India.

Government 2022 J&K plan resettlement of Kashmiri Pandits

Union Home minister stated that the Government has decided to resettle all displaced Kashmiri Pandit in the valley by 2022 alongwith creating 25000 jobs for the people and there are their connectivity to the region that almost 3000 jobs have already been given in last 17 months. The Government also provides free ration and plan to resettle them back in their houses in the valley by 2022. The Government allocate 881 crore from the Ministry of Development under Prime Minister Development package to J&K Panchyati Raj has been restarted in J& K and 3650 Sarpanch and 33000 Panch were elected recently .

Conclusion :-

The migration of Kashmiri Pandits did not happen overnight. The background had already been prepared for this. These atrocities on Kashmiri Pandits had been taking place for a long time, but the ghost of that day in January 1990 was painful when hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits families had to leave their motherland to save their life. The reason for all this is not only communalism but it is also the result of mutual enmity between the two countries, where political system is primarily responsible for this. Education, unemployment and corruption are also involved as other reasons. Indian government and J&K government have tried time to time to rehabilitate these Kashmir Pandits but today even after 30 years we cannot say that we have been successful in getting justice to Kashmiri Pandits.

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