

СТРАНЫ И РЕГИОНЫ ПОЛИЦЕНТРИЧНОГО МИРА

UDC 327

Displacement and gendered violence in the Kashmir Valley: An analysis*

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In the global era, women, particularly in sub-continent are facing violence in every section of society. They are not only abused by partners and other family members, but they are treated as a different and marginalized sect of society. While talking about Kashmir, the escalation of political turmoil led to the displacement of minority communities, mainly the Kashmiri Hindus, from Kashmir. The weak democracy in Jammu and Kashmir and the majority-minority dynamics in the state led to the displacement of about three lakh persons (primarily Hindus) from the valley in 1989. It is more than two decades since the displacement of minorities from Kashmir, and their prolonged living in the new locations has resulted in social and cultural changes post-displacement. The shift to a new location has significance in analysing how the traditional structures and practices are redefined in the new locations. An atmosphere of fear and threat developed in Kashmir after the alleged rigging in the 1987 state assembly elections and this heightened the frustration of a large number of Kashmiri youth due to malpractices of the government. The women (non-Muslim) mostly faced coercion in the form of abuses during the 1990s. Abusive slogans were displayed on loudspeakers and the rape threats were clearly visible in the letter that was displayed on the street poles. The assessment of this paper is to highlight violence against women during the escalation of displacement and after displacing, how such women face the same gendered violence outside the state. The paper would be based on experiences and narratives of Kashmiri pundit women, who are residing in different migration camps outside Kashmir. The study is based on descriptive and empirical analysis of a problem that can be studied by applying the exploratory approach.

Keywords: Kashmiriyat, Kashmir conflict, internal displacement, gendered violence.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this paper is to understanding displacement and gendered violence in broader way. However, to understand these two terms, it is necessary to have a look on Kashmir conflict. The study aims to look the displacement and tried to find out

* The article is based to understand what actually happened in the Kashmir valley in the year of 1990.

different narratives of it. Besides that, the study emphasis more on gendered violence and brought some interviews of gendered violence to understand the violence in language of common people.

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind

M. K. Gandhi

Introduction

Kashmir is a land of remarkable beauty, blessed by nature with breath-taking. The scenery and a glorious climate, the Kashmir valley, a fertile well-watered spot, surrounded by high mountains have been described with justification heaven on earth, a produce-rich oasis an area not noted for its abundance [1]. 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 Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and Tibet that deserve constant vigil and as such it has made the state very important through geographically, politically, economically and from the military point of view [2].

The post-1988 was the turmoil period in which Kashmir stood for self-determination and challenged the sovereignty of India. The state which was having 4 % of Hindus (Kashmiri Pundits) form an important part of the Kashmiri nation. However, in 1990, there were killings of prominent personalities, who supported Indian rule. Due to the failure of the administration, many Kashmiri Pundits migrated to India and other parts of India [3]. However, the questions arise that what are 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.

To understand the displacement of Kashmiri Pundits in a broader context, it is important to discuss the various aspects of political turmoil, Kashmiriyat, insurgency and counter-insurgency and the failure of the state. The political disorder in the Kashmir valley led to the displacement of the minority community (Pundits). The weak democracy and the majority-minority dynamics are one of the reasons that led to the displacement of around three lakh persons from the valley in 1989–1991 [4, p. 83]. 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 Pundit displacement is very much vibrant in the discourses on contemporary self-determination.

Background of the Kashmir conflict

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is deeply rooted in the colonial history of the sub-continent [5, p. 57]. 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 [6].

At present, the parts of Kashmir are not only occupied by India and Pakistan, but China also occupied some parts of it. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a Muslim majority population and was variously ruled by central and west originating Mughal-afghan dynasties. In the nineteenth century, the Britishers take it from Sikhs and sold to a Hindu Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh in the treaty of Amritsar for seventy-five lakh rupees

[7, p. 43]. Thus, the valley of Kashmir witnessed the Dogra rule from 1846–1947. The people led a 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 [8].

The conflict of Kashmir is deeply rooted in the colonial history of the sub-continent [5, p. 57]. 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 [6]. At present, the parts of Kashmir are not only occupied by India and Pakistan, but China also occupied some parts of it¹. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has a Muslim majority population and was variously ruled by central and west originating Mughal-afghan dynasties. In the nineteenth century, the Britishers take it from Sikhs and sold to a Hindu Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh in the treaty of Amritsar for seventy-five lakh rupees [7, p. 43]. Thus, the valley of Kashmir witnessed the Dogra rule from 1846–1947. The people led a 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 [9].

The origins of conflict of Kashmir lies in the subcontinent's Partition in 1947 created the independent states of India and Pakistan. With this, the hundreds of nominally independent princely states were absorbed into India and Pakistan. The Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir wants to remain independent and refused to accede to either nation [11, p. 20].

In 1947, the maharaja faced the 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 situation deteriorated, and Kashmiri Muslims revolted openly. The tribesmen from Pakistan's North West frontier province also joined in the armed insurrection. By October 1947, the tribesmen capture the several towns and massacred many civilians and advanced to capture the capital of valley [12, p. 2].

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 agreed to sign the instrument of accession to India on the condition that Kashmir should be permitted to retain its own constitution [11, p. 20].

In the same year, both India and Pakistan fought their first war on Kashmir dispute and India took the matter before the United Nations (UN). With the intervention of the UN, a cease-fire agreement was signed on January 1, 1949 [13, p. 1008]. In 1965, once again both the 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).
- The northern area administered by Pakistan.
- Aksai-Chin, controlled by China [13, p. 1009].

¹ In the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, India has occupied 43% of the region known as Indian occupied Kashmir (IOK) and 37% of the region is occupied by Pakistan which is known as Azad Kashmir or Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK). The third part which China occupied during 1963 war is known as Aksai Chin [10].

In January 1966, the Tashkent Agreement was signed between India and Pakistan and both countries decided to solve the Kashmir dispute through peaceful negotiations. In 1972, another agreement was signed after the war and both countries decided to end their conflict and resolved to settle their differences through bilateral negotiations and this agreement came to be known as Shimla Agreement [14, p. 12].

Kashmiriyat: A unique identity

Despite this, the state of Jammu and Kashmir stranded for peace, harmony as well as brotherhood. Historically, it was an institution of Sanskrit learning and the branches of Hinduism, Saivism found eloquent teachers in the Kashmir. The word Kashmiriyat itself denotes Kashmiri-ness, which means the common identity and culture of the inhabitants of the Kashmir valley. The sharing a common culture, identity and peaceful co-existence has been named as Kashmiriyat [15; 16].

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 form of Reshi Movement (a sect of Sufi movement) started by Sheikh-Nur-ud-Din. The main concern of the Sufi movement was universal brotherhood beyond the religion. The same teachings were also led by a Hindu yogini namely Lalla Ded and both laid the foundation of an ideology known as Kashmiriyat. However, the Mughal conquest of Kashmir in 1586 brought the decline of this cultural achievement [17, p. 2–3].

Second phase of Kashmiriyat (national conference)

After the Mughal occupation of Kashmir, there was a gradual rise of Kashmiri Pundits to key posts. The revenue collector of the Mughal Empire was mainly Pundits. After Mughals, Kashmir was ruled by Afghans and Kashmiri pundits occupied the same titles. The Diwan of Kabul was granted to Pundit Ram Tikku. After the Treaty of Amritsar (1846)², the Kashmiri Pundits welcomed the Dogra Rule and they served as Prime ministers, Governors and heads of the department (Ibid). However, they lost the monopoly during the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh in 1925 [18].

The Dogra rule not only infuriated the Pundits 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 as well as regional identities and interference in the culture laid the foundation of Kashmiri nationalism as a response to the Dogra's in Kashmir [17].

Initially, it was dominated by the religion and after its inclusion from various regions transformed it one line of secularism by Sheikh Abdullah in 1939 [20, p. 28]. The expansion of Kashmiri nationalism necessitated the creation of Kashmiriyat, in which both Hindus and Muslims shared the common identity. Abdullah and his followers

² 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 [19, p.10].

spread the ideas of Kashmiriyat through speeches, articles as well as religious sermons. In one his political speech he says: "Like us, most Hindus and Sikhs have suffered at the hands of the irresponsible government. They are also steeped in deep ignorance, must pay large taxes. We must open our 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" [20, p. 33].

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 advanced credence to Kashmiriyat. According to Nehru, "Kashmir represents an intellectual scene of the country from almost 2000 years [15].

The ideology of Kashmiriyat remained little use for the public. However, it was popularised during the regime of Farooq Abdullah (Son of Sheikh Abdullah) in the 1983 election by making an alliance with the 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 [21, p. 31]. The result was the 1987 election, which was fought by Muslim conference separately on religious line. However, the rigidity of election laid the foundation of armed insurgency in 1989.

Insurgency and aftermath

Kashmir had a separate ethnonational consciousness remained consistently strong among Kashmiri Muslims. It was in the late 1980s that widespread frustration among Kashmiri Muslims against some of their own 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 in the state. 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 [22, p. 310].

The 1989 insurgency has its historical implications as the valley is ruled largely 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 [23, p. 160]. It was 1989 that the whole valley was wrapped by an insurgency. There was the growth of an armed struggle participated by most of the locals began to develop through secessionist groups. The valley witnessed popular support and slogans in favour of Azadi (freedom) rose by the local population. The 1989 secessionist movement was launched by the youth demanding the right to self-determination [24, p. 40].

The immediate cause of the 1989 insurgency was based on three points (i) dismissal of 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 [23, p. 160]. (iii) Lastly, it was the 1987 legislative elections in which a new political party namely Muslim United Front (MUF), a newly organized

coalition of political groups contested in the 1987 election with the objective of fulfilling their demands of economic growth and to achieve the main goal of freedom through plebiscite opinion by reaching out on a political platform [25, p. 925]. They fought against the National Conference and Congress with the expectation of mass support by the people had failed to win the number of seats expected by the leaders which created crises in the state and break down of Farooq's government. There was no law and order in the state [23, p. 160].

The armed struggle led by the Kashmiri youth under the banner of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)³ 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 with the objective of JKLF as they wanted accession with Pakistan [27, p. 219].

During the insurgency, there was anger among many of the Islamic militant groups as the number of Pundits (Kashmiri Hindus) approximately two lakhs fled away and about four lakh Indian army and paramilitary forces were deployed in the valley to control the insurgency [28, p. 77].

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 [29]. According to the United nation's guiding principles on internal displacement "a persons 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 in order 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" [30].

The Kashmiri Pandits have constituted a visible group of internally displaced persons in the region [31, p. 53]. The state of Jammu and Kashmir that turned into armed conflict in the era of the 1990s and due to this conflict, a portion of the minority were displaced from their homeland. The people, who are being forced into a conflict region are commonly known as internally displaced persons (IDPs). However, they are officially termed as 'migrants', which is the nomenclature employed by the Government of India and that of Jammu and Kashmir to refer to displaced persons in the state. They are from Brahmin community and historically associated with middle-class in Kashmir [32].

³ 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 [26].

Displacement of Kashmiri Pundits: Different narratives

There are different narratives regarding the displacement of Kashmiri Pundits. According to most of the Kashmiri Pundits, the displacement of their community took place due to the atmosphere of fear created by Muslims, who were demanding the right to self-determination. The slogans like *Ae Kafiroo Ae Zalimoo*, *Kashmir Hamara chhod do* (you infidel's you tyrants, leave our Kashmir) and *Asi Gache Pakistan, Batav rosti batnev san* (We want Pakistan, inclusive of Pundit women and exclusive of pundit men) from loud-speakers disturbed us and compelled us to leave the place [3, p. 6]. Besides that, there were also warning of death from the militant outfit, which was carried in the local newspapers like *Alsafa* and *Srinagar times* [16].

The displacement of pundits happened without any communal incident, burning, looting and misbehavior of women. This was a set back to the harmony that Kashmir proved from ancient times. It was a tragedy for both Muslims as well as Hindus, one who was tagged as migrants and others were considered as 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 (Emphasis added) [3, p. 7].

It is also a fact that there are Kashmiri Pundit families that do not migrate from the valley. However, their narrative is different from those who are living in Jammu, Delhi and other parts of India. The association of Pundits, who stayed in Kashmir namely *Kashmir Pandit Sangarish Samiti (KPSS)* narrates that in the early 1990s there were threats from the militant organization, but a common Kashmiri Muslim was not against us [3, p. 7].

The question arises, if Pundits were forced to leave Kashmir, why some of them stayed or returned and who is solely responsible for Kashmiri Muslim or state administration. The Pakistan factor is the root cause of exodus, because Pakistan was fully supporting the insurgents in the Valley. In early 1990, the pro-Pakistani organization like *Jamaat-i-Islami* and pro-Independence organization like *Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)* considered the Kashmiri Pundits 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 [33]. The displacement Kashmiri pundits was a political turmoil and is apart from religion. The valley remained a ray of hope and there is no single evidence of communal riots.

State machinery: A failure

The rigid elections of 1987 not only prevented the Kashmiri people for electing their representatives through democratic means but also created the notion of hatredness towards the majority section. The people lost 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 in 1990), who played an important role in the state [34].

According to *Pankaj Mishra*, the policies of *Jagmohan* were pro-Hindu in nature [35]. In other words, it has been mentioned that the Governor of the state revised the 1927 poli-

cies of Hari Singh. The elected government was dismissed twice, recruitment of Muslims in the administration went down, 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 [34].

According to Schofield, there was a widespread feeling about Jagmohan of being anti-Muslim and played an important role in the migration of the Hindus, to crush the pro-Pakistani elements [36]. It is further supported by the argument of Patricia Gossman, who argues that the government of Jagmohan assisted the Pundits in leaving the Kashmir valley for camps in Jammu and New Delhi. However, after one week, the para-military troops opened indiscriminate fire on unarmed protestors [37].

The popular perception of displacement of Pundits stands against the state machinery. According to locals, Jagmohan represents the hate figure and was particularly sent to Kashmir to evacuate pundits and suppress the pro-Pakistani people in the Valley [3, p. 9].

After 19th January, 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: [38; 39].

Gendered violence in the Valley after post 1990s

In India particularly, the word “Kashmir” is hyper visible in specific ways. Most Indians have understood Kashmir through media narratives which tend to be more state centric. The word Kashmir is a powerful one in the contemporary Indian imaginary and depends on the qualifies how to present it for their political needs. The term Kashmiri Pandit, Kashmiri Muslim, Kashmiri men and Kashmiri women have different narratives and discursive functions [40]. The Kashmiri pandit category is considered as victims, Kashmiri Muslims are considered as anti-nationals, terrorists, and newly coined term urban naxals. Kashmiri women are considered as beautiful and lured to sexual desires. It is remarkable, that after the abrogation of Article 370 on 5th August 2019. The first statement comes on women by the Chief Minister of Haryana, who stated that Indians would now bring girls from Kashmir. The statement was defining the bodies of women are considered through the object of sexuality [41]. The statement was shared mostly by Hindu extremists like RSS, ABVP students, VPH, Bajrang Dal, who considered themselves as saviours of Hindu religion.

While analysing conflicts, the women experience more than men. Sexual violence against women has become an unavoidable feature of modern conflicts. History provides the information that in the 20th century, the Balkans and Rwanda experience gendered violence that was brutal in nature. Both men and women were targeted for sexual abuses

because of their identity or ethnicity. In Kashmir, both men and women are facing atrocities in terms of torture, detention, rape and other inhuman and degrading treatments. There are testimonies that men have gone through interrogation techniques by the Indian army and state police. Among these interrogation techniques, the electric shocks to genitals, pouring of petrol in anus, inserting a rod into anus and forcible performance of sexual acts on others confirms that men are also being targeted to the sexual violence [42]. There are thousands of people, who are gone through these brutal methods because of their identity. As a part of my research, I have interviewed many people, who narrated their stories how they were tortured by the security forces.

The case of Fayaz Ahmad (name changed)⁴, who I interviewed after he was released after detention reveals the marks of torture that were visible on his body. In 2006, Fayaz was going to meet his friend in a nearby village. According to him, there was a hit and run case, in which a truck and motorcycle met with an accident. Fayaz, along with other person went to the place and lifted the person riding on a motorcycle and took him to Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SHMS) hospital Srinagar. As soon as the unknown person was admitted, the doctors requested blood. So Fayaz voluntary donated blood to the unknown person. After some hours, security forces cordoned the ward and arrested Fayaz. He was taken to Joint Interrogation Center (JIC) Humhama, where he was questioned about the man. The Police officers at the JIC reveals Fayaz that the unknown man was a militant. When Fayaz stated that he lifted and donated blood as humanitarian work. He was detained and shifted to JIC Anantnag, where Fayaz was tortured to confess that he is working as over ground worker (OGW) for Hizbul-Muhajadeen. The victim denied accepting the confession and he was tortured third-degree method including electric shocks, roller and waterboarding. Fayaz revealed that torture was so extreme that he one day told the police officers that he show you the place where he hides the weapons. So, he was boarded in an army vehicle and was taken to that place, which lies in the hilltop of Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir. When asked the victim, was he having affiliation and was he working as OGW. He responded that during this period, the security forces did not torture, so I took a long route as this place was known to me because I was working theirs in apple gardens. The police and security forces accompanied the Fayaz and he took them in a garden and showed the water pump and said that I have no weapons or affiliation, however, I have drink water near the pump so many times. The police and security forces tortured him there until he fell unconscious. He was again shifted to JIC Anantnag. Later, he was slapped PSA for two years and after release, Fayaz had to give attendance before police and a local army camp. He is also facing pain in the left knee, for which doctors suggested surgery. Fayaz said that after torture, I cannot work all day and I feel pain in my leg and back [emphasis added].

The narratives of torture described by Bilal (name changed), who was studying at Kashmir University denotes the might of militarism and how bad torture is. Before Bilal was summoned by the Special Operation Group (SOG) Humhama to come to the police station, there was an encounter in the village of Bilal. The militants were hiding at Bilal's house. According to Bilal, he usually was returning from the university, when he came to know about the encounter. However, the militants escaped from the encounter site. After some days, Bilal was summoned to give attendance to the Humhama police station run by

⁴ Personal interview.

SOG. His father, who is working as a teacher was with Bilal, when he went to the police station. After some time, his father was asked to leave with the assurance that tomorrow he will be released. However, Bilal was released after six months by means of all efforts done by his family. According to the victim, as soon as his father was asked to leave, and I was brought to the interrogation cell and was asked about the militants. When I told them that I have no information about them, they slapped me, then done third-degree torture, including electric currents. However, Bilal repeated the same words. Every day, a new officer comes for questioning and new men for torture. Bilal said that he felt unconscious so many times. His fingernails were pulled off and salt and chilli powder were put on the wounds. After his release, Bilal went in trauma and his parents motivated him for further studies. Bilal completed his PhD and during his studies outside the state, he was getting calls from police and when he goes back in vacations, he had to give attendance in the local police station and an army camp. Bilal narrated that it is better to die rather being tortured through their hands. Bilal faces migraine as well as back pain due to third-degree torture [emphasis added].

The women in Kashmir also became victims of security forces, police officers and militants. Along with threats and attacks on their life, the women's have also been subjugated to torture (Physically as well as sexually), trauma, death and disappearance of their beloved ones [43]. The most important thing is that women either irrespective of religion got harassment and molestation from the hands of state actors as well as non-state actors. There are so many cases that are documented by amnesty international, human rights watch and other human rights organizations. There are some narratives of women, who detailed how they were molested by state as well as non-state actors;

Razina Begum, whose husband had joined militants was harassed by army men. She has to present herself in the camp anytime. She reveals that on 29 October 2000, she was detained by the army men of 15 Bihar Regiment and was sexually abused whole night. Next, some men and women visited the camp and asked for my release. There were around 20 women, who are also being detained for several hours were sexually assaulted and molested. After that, we all were released and next, we went in a delegation to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and the senior superintendent of police (SSP). Our complaint was registered as well as forward to the home ministry, but nothing happened (emphasis added) [44, p. 23].

On 12th April 2016, a school going girl was sexually abused by an army man in Handwara. The girl made noise, which was noticed by the public, who raised the protest against the army. However, the army opened the indiscriminate firing on the protesters, which lead to the death of five civilians on spot. Later, the police registered a first information report (FIR) about the incident. The girl narrated that she went to the public washroom and when I was returning back to the road, a soldier in a street held my hand and started to touch my private parts. I resisted and ran away. Crying, weeping. The youth on the road noticed me and helped me to reach my safety. the girl was taken into police custody and kept there with her father. What happened with the girl in the police custody, she narrates that I was taken in a room and some policeman, who have covered their faces started investigating me. When I narrated the whole incident, they advised me to change your statement before the magistrate, otherwise, your life would be in danger. When I resisted about it, one of them slapped me on my face and said "Don't you understand? You should say what we tell you. That will save you and your family". The police made a recorded video

after being pressurised. The video was circulated on social media without her consent. Instead of justice, the girl was again harassed and threatened to death by police and the evidence were destroyed.

On 29th April 2009, two women namely Asiya and Nilofer were abducted by security forces from their garden in the evening. Both were gang-raped first and later were murdered. When next day, their bodies were found from a river, the people came out from their homes and staged the protest against the authorities, However, the police refused to file FIR until June 7, which later was filed due to public resistance on court orders.

The government ordered a magisterial inquiry and a committee was constituted under the supervision of (Retired) Justice Muzaffar Jan on June 01, 2009 to investigate the incident. The committee collected the evidence and recorded the testimonies of the eyewitnesses. On July 08, 2009. The committee submitted its report and the local police changed its statements as the SSP Shopian was being involved in this crime. After 09 years, the family did not get justice [45–47].

The case of Kunan Poshpora, which was deleted from the files of the state government was reopened by the State human rights commission in 2011. There were some scholars, who visited the place again and recorded the testimonies of 30 women. All these testimonies were framed into a book 'do you know Kunan Poshpora'. The Kunan and Poshpora are the two villages of Kupwara district. On 23 February 1991, the security forces cordoned the two villages in the mid-night. It was announced that male should assemble at one place. It is noteworthy, that during the crackdown, men have to come out of their homes and women have to stay in homes. During the search operation, the security forces started molesting the women. Different reports state that around 30–53 women were gang-raped between the age of 13–80 [46]. There are some cases like Sarla Bhat, twenty-seven years old staff nurse at Soura medical Institute was kidnapped by militants and was sexually tortured for four days and shot to death after that. Medicals reports claimed sexual torture. Archana, daughter of Sohanlal was sexually tortured by militants on March 20, 1992. After hearing the cries of her daughter, the victim's father and mother came for help but were shot dead by militants. Medical reports claim rape to both women's [11, p. 153–154]. Girja, a school teacher at Bandipora also became a victim of militants. First, she was kidnapped, gang-raped and later strangled to death [48].

Reports of sexual torture to women in Kashmir by Indian security forces emerged soon after January 1990. There is so many evidences that the army used sexual torture (Rape) as a tool during counterinsurgency. In most cases, no investigation takes place by having laws in the Indian constitution like 376(1) of the Indian penal code and the criminal Activities of 1983 and soon. Still in valley rape by security forces continued in some areas. In February 1991, in a village of Kupwara namely Kunan Poshpora, at least fifty-three women were gang-raped by the security forces [49].

Conflicts does not a particular language or colour, through which one can be recognised. It is voiceless and it impacts all irrespective of religion, region, caste and sex. it should not be justified that only one section were more impacted or one particular identity was being targeted. In Kashmir valley, people from all sections were victims of the conflict. However, it is true that the overall ramifications either economically and socially laid its impact on the women.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the displacement of Kashmiri Pundits was the strongest 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 have crystallized over the last two and a half decades or so. However, a fair degree of mistrust and disbelief was already existing, simmering underneath an apparently harmonious society before 1990. It is true that during the freedom struggle, a few Pundits 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, but it never led to the confrontations on a scale that would make one community insecure as well as a refugee in their homeland. It posed a threat to the secular fabric of Kashmiriyat. Living away from homeland changed the narratives of the Pandits and they looked the Muslims through the prism of Islamic identity rather than Kashmir identity. Their 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 Pundits vary across the different actors of state politics as well as within the pundit community too. 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 as well as through social media. It is also remarkable that the young generation wants the Kashmiri Pandits back to their actual 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 as well as social isolation. The important thing is that an awareness aroused among the generation of 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.

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