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**Title:- Documenting Displacement: A Study of Kashmiri
Pandits of India**

By

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Documenting Displacement: A Study of Kashmiri Pandits in India



Kashmiri Pandits, photograph from 1895 CE, British Library. Source: Wikipedia

Home, My Home

*I had a home
There in the yonder vale,
Under blue sky
And green all around.
Brooks running down
From mountain slopes,
Merrily frisking away
Onto serene lake,
Reflecting the eternal Trinity
Truth-Love-Beauty
In the ecstasy of sunlight
And moonlit night!*

*Here was my home
My Sweet home.
I was born here.
Here I grew up
In sun and shade of Time.
I recall those yesterdays,
On sunny morns, through leaves
Sunrays filtered onto my bed,
Kissing me on cheeks,
Spraying warmth-
Of abounding Love,
Infusing hope sustaining life !*

*That was my home-
A cosy home,
Brimming with exquisite joy.
The inmates held by bonds-
Of Love and trust,
And faith in God and Man,
Despised hate-
Of man by man, faith by faith;
Not swayed by fallacies-
Of caste, creed or colour.
Though poor, rich in values
Humans have always held dear!*

*I had a home
There in the yonder vale
A storm swept it away.
An upheaval wrought by brutes-
Greed and hate possessed the inmates.
They have lost all-
Feelings of love and concern
Which once made them share
Mutual joys and pains.
Alas, enemies within destroyed the home,
My home I cherish to behold
In My dreams-today:*

by P.L. Kaul, New Delhi

Kashmiri Pandit living in New Delhi, a fter displacement. Source: Koshur Samachar

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Three Hindu priests writing religious texts – 1890s, Jammu and Kashmir. Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Chapter 1:-

Introduction

The present thesis dwells on the experience of Kashmiri Hindus or Pandits as they are popularly known. But to speak of Kashmiri Hindus it is almost indispensable to also reflect on the political scenario, the regional identities, and the idea of *kashmiriyat* without speaking of which is almost impossible to have a thesis on Kashmiri or any of its inhabitants. It is important because the idea of Kashmiriyat is what all Kashmiris struggle to hold onto, revive, relive and recreate. This notion of Kashmiriyat is spoken of by the Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims in the same breath. The Kashmiri Pandits when moved out of Kashmir, it is this notion of Kashmiriyat that they tried to hold onto in the diaspora. Chitralkha Zutshi in her work on Islam, formation of identities and the history of Kashmir beautifully articulates the idea of Kashmiriyat and I quote, “The wholesale acceptance of *kashmiriyat* in public discourse on Kashmir is absolutely central to two interlinked political projects, which alternately overlap, diverge, and clash: first, the discourse of a unified Indian nation-state based on a unitary nationalism; and second, a highly federalized nationalism based on regionalized and plural identities.” She further goes on to argue that the concept of Kashmiriyat, as a historical entity, asserting Kashmiri regional identities have been far more ambiguous, and certainly more complex than the term Kashmiriyat would lead one to believe. Kashmiri-ness was, and continues to be, a series of dynamic identities that have emerged in interaction with, and at times been overshadowed by, other forms of belonging, particularly the religious and national. (Zutshi, 2003) It is also important to note here that the notion of Kashmiriyat draws on a colonial discourse on Kashmir that far pre-dates the emergence of nationalism. European travelers have often mentioned about the religious discord present in the Valley. It was presented as a place where Hindus were uncaring of caste rules and Muslims did not make their usual pilgrimage to the Mecca, since they lived in what eventually came to be described as the “Happy Valley”. (Zutshi, 2003) The history of Kashmir is fraught with anecdotes of religious tolerance, syncretism and mutual affection. While the entire nation was divided along caste and religious lines, Kashmir lived in harmony. However, the contemporary times create headlines, on the contrary for quite different reasons which are never, in common parlance taken critically rather accepted unquestionably. The Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus of the valley lived peacefully together

which is in their language referred to as *Milchaar*. They had several codes of conduct in common binding them into a cohesive social collective. A powerful narrative that hovers over the discourse on Kashmiri Pandits is that the minority community in the Valley i.e, the Pandits never felt threatened until the political turmoil of the early 90's began. In fact, the ideology of Kashmiriyat was so powerful that the Kashmiris considered themselves culturally and socially distinct from the rest of the country. While writing a dissertation on Kashmiris it is important for one to note that the political scenario of Kashmir in the 1990's and the concomitant violence perpetrated against the Hindu community was not due to the fact that they were "Hindus" but rather, certain groups of people were perceived as being a threat to the calls for *azaadi* in Kashmir. There were, in fact many Hindus who stood up for the calls for *azaadi* in Kashmir. It were the Pandits who initially sought calls for *azaadi* in Kashmir. The large scale migration of the Kashmiri Pandits has often been referred to as political agenda of the then Governor of State of Jammu and Kashmir to drive the Hindus out of Kashmir in order to have greater control over the Kashmiri Muslims under the garb of controlling militancy.

This thesis however, is based on the displaced Kashmiri Pandits of India and their quest for survival in the diaspora. It also however, deals with the debates concerning to whom does Kashmir belong; to the Kashmiri Pandits who claim to be the original inhabitants of the Valley or the Kashmiri Muslims who claim that they have historically been the majority community in the Valley. The Kashmiri Hindus who are popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits by virtue of their unique historical origin in the landscape of India who descended from the sage *Kashyapa*. The entire community belongs to the single caste of Brahmins in contradiction to rest of India which is divided along the *chaturvarna* system. The Pandits of the Valley are a minority community comprising of extremely erudite individuals who have held high positions in government offices. One of my respondents spoke of the Kashmiri Pandits as a minority, an offshoot of those few families which could survive the general massacre and conversion under the rule of Pathans in Kashmir some few centuries back, or could have the safe escape from Kashmir and critical period of their existence. The Kashmiri Pandits have had to suffer from all those misfortunes which comprise the lot of minorities in general yet they have not received much of the compensation or recognition for their plight as they should have received from the government. This thesis would therefore, try to look at certain "events" of violence which leads to marginalization of certain sections of society

which either pushes them to the margins of the state or it compels them to struggle to get back their lost 'home' in a 'space' that they do not consider their own. This Pandit community of Kashmir has always been on the move to escape suppression and in search of the freedom that was long lost. It would be interesting to note however, that even though the year 1990 is an important moment in understanding the marginalization of this community due to rising violence and the concomitant violence while reflecting on the persecution faced by the Kashmiri Pandits yet I would show how exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley was not the first in the history of the Pandits. Moreover, I would also show how the popular imagination of the Kashmiri Pandits was molded by the government interventions into the Valley because of which the Muslims of Kashmir became the veritable adversary of the Pandits. This, however, was far from reality. It is interesting to note that till date several Kashmiri Pandits remain in Jammu many of whom are still living in the camps.

Who are the Pandits of Kashmir?

As narrated by Koul (1994), the Kashmiri Hindus were popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits. The Kashmiri Pandits had their own distinct class. They were the purest specimen of the Aryan race. Their fair and handsome features established their Aryan lineage and racial bonds. The Pandits were forward-looking, dynamic and vibrant, having no ill will against persons of other religions. Kashmiri Pandits were intelligent and quick at understanding the trends of events. They promptly met challenges to their survival.¹

Koul (1999) mentions that Kashmiri Pandits were inheritors of a rich cultural heritage, preserved even in times of calamity. It was well known that there was hardly a branch of learning that they had not enriched by their creativity and intelligent acumen. Philosophy, dance, drama, painting, architecture and sculpture had been the segments where they had made tremendous contributions.² Through their high thinking and lofty ideas that they pursued, the Hindus of Kashmir had transformed their land of scenic beauty into an intellectual centre, historically known as *Shardapeeth* or *Sarvajnanpeetha*. The pattern of culture that Kashmir had, imbibed various influences from the variegated cultural patterns of India and had emerged as one with its distinctive characteristics. Buddhism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism had imprinted the entire cultural pattern with their philosophical wisdom and

¹ Koshur Samachar, A Koul.

²

religious tenets. The ethos of culture which came to be known as *kashmin* culture was cumulatively a replica of Indian culture. As Kashmir is a cold region, snowfall is deeply associated with the cultural moorings of people. The importance of dress and devices to protect oneself from the cold climate has been too well known. Phiran, as the long cloak covering a human body to serve as a shield against cold, has been deemed of ancient origins. All levels of men, whatever the economic status, carry a kangri within their phirans. Nicely embroidered phirans and superbly decorated kangris are dowry items in Kashmir. On the day of Shivratri a bride, a long married lady or even a widow is given a gift of kangri by her parents. Kashmiri pandits as a specific ethnic religious group were deeply wedded to a plethora of customs and ceremonies that had been connected with marriage, birth and death. The customs varied from family to family according to the economic well-being of the family. There was almost no difference in the manner of their celebrations between the rural and urban setup.³

Zutshi writes that Kashmiri Pandits were divided into the astrologer class (*Jotish*), the priests (*guru or Bachbhat*), and followers of secular occupations (*Karkun*). The vast majority of Kashmiri Pandits, especially the ones who belonged to the *Karkun* category, were salaried state employees in the lower rungs of the administrative services, some of the Pandits were involved in cultivation and other such related occupations. A small minority of people were engaged religious occupation such as performing ceremonies and other rituals.

This thesis is however, concerns mainly with the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir to other parts of India most significantly the exodus of the 1989- 1990 when the Pandits had to flee from the valley due to fear of being killed, tortured at a mass scale. The valley in the 1990's was in a mayhem due to rising Islamic fundamentalism and calls for "azadi" all throughout Kashmir.

The wounds inflicted on the Kashmiri Hindus in the 1986 disturbances were not allowed to heal. Looking back now the episode looks like a mild arm twisting of the State administration and that of the so-called mighty India to gauge their real might and will-power to deal with recurrence of such disturbing situations. The unexpected speed with which anti-India and anti-Kashmiri Hindu designs, the seeds of which had been sown over the years, began to unfold themselves was the most terrifying thing about it.

The madrasas financed and run by the Jamait-e-Islami had poisoned the mind of the younger generation with Islamic fundamentalism under dictation from the theocratic Pakistan. The Jamait -e-Islami activists had crept into the services at a large scale. They had found their way even into the top rung of the State machinery and also influenced and won the members of the bureaucracy that crossed over to their side. So for all practical purposes the State bureaucracy was hand in glove with pro-Pak elements and forces that had most sinister plans up their sleeves. Though Dr. Farooq Abdullah saddled himself in power by allegedly rigged elections in 1987, the power had, as a matter of fact, slipped from his hands. The Muslim United Front, a new fangled Muslim outfit owing political allegiance to Pakistan did not take its defeat at the busting lying down and vowed to get its own back. A monster with virulent fangs was harnessing itself for the charge. The Government headed by the chief minister was too inefficient to crush the monster raising its horrible head. Law and order machinery that had developed cracks became steadily defunct. Farooq Abdullah openly admitted having sent numerous Kashmiri Muslim youth to Pak for training in arms. He released about seventy of them soon after they had been arrested. It is clear that armed insurgency and subversive activities were receiving state patronage and protection. Soon the forces inimical to secularism and democracy, having got sufficiently pretty good time and long rope found the time ripe for sounding alarm calls of terrorism which before long became the rage throughout the length and breadth of Kashmir Valley.⁴

The Kashmiri Pandits therefore, pertinently ask, where do the displaced Kashmir Pandits stand? It is equally obvious that the Central Government is creating an impression that the KPs are a non-entity and has no locus stand and has as such sidelined them in its efforts to cut the Gordian knot and restore normalcy or at least semblance of it in the state. As long as the KPs, an essential and inalienable component of Kashmiri Society, are in exile they have littlepoint of interest in the elections and holding the elections without their participation is meaningless and futile. That they all are unavoidable party to any future settlement of the Kashmir problem on the political level has been validly recognized at international forums, albeit Indian government has done precious little to project their plight as the worst hit victims of Pak sponsored militancy and terrorism in the state. But it is important to also note that

⁴ Munshi, Dwarkanath (2019) The Victims—The Kashmiri Pandits. *Koshur Samachar*.

It is the lobbying of the KPs themselves that has lend strength to India's stand on the issue. It is desirable that the Indian government woke up and became amenable to reason and saw the realities in their true perspective and not be complacent in neglecting the significant state of the KPs in any political settlement. In democratic scheme of things minorities have as much and as important a voice in amicable settlement of issues of national importance as the majority. No arrangement showing disregard for the aspirations and ethnic consideration of the KPs will be acceptable to them. The powers that be must not commit the folly of taking them for granted and take them for a ride.

In the thesis, I have tried to rethink the concept to violence locating it within the discourse of the internally displaced persons who have fled from the place of origin due to fear of persecution. The internally displaced populations are one of the worst affected segments of the population who face endless victimization at the hands of the machineries of the state or any other agent that pose a threat to their existence. The present dissertation reflects on the experience of the Internally Displaced People or IDP in this case the Kashmiri Pandits. Through narratives of persecution faced in the Valley and even beyond, I have interrogated the collectively constructed notions of pain, trauma, and suffering. I have engaged with the body of research that deals with agency and pain and how that lays the ground for the rebuilding of a community and its life from a place away from their original habitation. The place of resettlement poses arduous challenges for the migrant community as they are not always readily accepted by the host population. In my thesis, I critically consider the body of literature that considers pain to be a merely a private experience. (Scarry, 1985) Rather, I argue along the lines of scholars like Talal Asad who consider pain not simply as a private affair but also as a public relationship. (Asad,2003) This leads to the creation of a moral community of shared experience which is the basis for re-building the community in the diaspora. It is in this manner that the community embodies notions of subjectivity.

Through the debates and oral narratives, I would try to establish how the experience of violence of the Kashmiri Pandits is unique with respect to other such communities. I would also argue along the lines of Charu Malhotra who perceives these internally displaced communities not as passive objects of violence but as having the agency to cope with the changes in culture. Even though their economy has been adversely affected yet they are negotiating to survive in the new host communities. The displaced people are utilizing various response strategies to deal with the changes in their social structure owing to

displacement. (Malhotra, 2007). Through this I would endeavour to establish the identity of the Kashmiri Pandits and answer the following questions: Who are the Kashmiri Pandits? What entailed the experience of exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits? Why did they suddenly become the object of violence in their own homeland? What is the experience of Kashmiri Pandits as internally displaced people and how is that different from that of refugees inhabiting in India.

The fieldwork for the present thesis has largely been conducted ethnographically in Kolkata and New Delhi among the community of Kashmiri Pandits along with that I have also referred to the newspaper *Koshur Samachar* and a journal; published by the Kashmiri Pandits themselves called *Vitasta*. While the main focus of my dissertation is on the displacement caused by the unrest in the Kashmir Valley in the 1990's due to rising forces of Islamic Fundamentalism. In the present work, I intend to throw light on the various crosscurrents of the lives of Kashmiri Pandits and how the experience of being internally displaced is different from that of being a "refugee" who cross international boundaries to find security in a new nation- state. The Kashmiri Pandits on the other hand, have historically held a position of great relevance in the Valley until the time they were displaced to the "camps" in Jammu. The next section comprises of brief summaries of each chapter of the dissertation. The dissertation is divided into four chapters throwing light on the contemporary situation that Kashmir is engulfed in and how those circumstances have impacted upon the lives of the Kashmiri Pandits from the time of their displacement in 1990 till the present.

The Internally "Displaced": Establishing the Identity of Kashmiri Pandits.

In this chapter of the dissertation, I would try to bring forth the debates relating to the internally displaced persons and the refugees and how the experience, in this context of the Kashmiri Pandits have been extremely different and the intangible pressures that they had to face as part of their day to day lives considering the fact that they belonged to reputed families and how the lives of these Hindu minority have been drastically different in the "camps" that were provided by the government to the Pandits in the valley and also in the National Capital region. The initial chapter would also have theoretical discussions on the idea of the "camp" as a political category; the camp being a reminder of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany and what entails being in a camp under a situation of violent occupation. The

chapter would also have discussions on the difference between violence and threat of violence. The threat of violence was so deep rooted and entrenched in the valley that it had become what could be termed as “geography of fear” for the Pandits. My informants recalled memories of their relatives being named on the hit lists and were name called on loudspeakers of the Mosques as the “target” for being a threat to the calls for *Azaadi* in Kashmir.

In this chapter, I reflect on the Kashmiri Pandits as Internally displaced persons Devakumar in his work on the internally displaced pertinently argues that unlike the refugees the condition of the internally displaced population is more vulnerable because unlike the refugees they are never able to move away from the site of conflict and have to remain within the state in which they were forced to leave the ‘home’. The internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced and obliged to leave the place. Displacement can happen due to forces of development which takes the form of construction of dams or other such development projects. The exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits, however was caused due to rising violence and terrorism in the Valley around this time. Many of my respondents recalled the names of their family members being listed in hit-lists and announced on loudspeakers to create a fear among the people of that community. The chapter would have in depth discussions on protracted displacement and seek to argue along thinkers who perceive this as a form of “active” waiting. It is implicative of a state of being which is not static but is made dynamic by the “agency” in waiting even if for many of the displaced that is how it feels. Individuals feel stuck in a present that they do not want to inhabit, awaiting a future that is often unpredictable and uncertain. (Burn, 2015)

However, I do not wish to portray the Kashmiri Pandits as a marginalized community in terms of the resources that are at their disposition. The Hindus of Kashmir are a small group of prominent people and occupied respectable positions in government offices. But what I emphatically argue is that the community faced marginalization at the face of abrupt events occurring in the Valley leading to their displacement and concomitant predicament. The community of Kashmiri Pandits has been a powerful political factor, historically. However, it is important to note that it would be wrong to consider the KP’s as a homogeneous community. There are a section of the KP’s who are living in acute poverty and living in the camps in Jammu even in the present times. While at the same time there are KP’s who have played a vital role in political mobilisations. Haley Duschinski in her work on Kashmiri

Pandits has pertinently contended that any study of power in contemporary India must entail the political stance of the communities. I contend here that these displaced communities by virtue of the violence, torture and marginalization acquire a political disposition which is a central factor in the negotiations carried out by the community. Negotiations happen at the level of seeking political representations, obtaining rehabilitation facilities, and such other reasons. Duschinski in her study on the Kashmiri Pandits has taken an interesting stance which is that, from 1970's onwards, resource allocation by the government has usually been conducted at the level of the communities. This nature of resource allocation has also led to communities acquiring the nature of "pressure or interest groups".

Towards the end of the chapter, there are theoretical discussions on the notion of "camps". The reflections would mainly pertain to the life in camp and what entails the life of the migrants in the camp. I argue along the lines of authors like Ankur Datta who perceive these camps as spaces of exception; Giorgio Agamben defines the spaces of exception as "being a threshold of indeterminacy between democracy and absolutism." It is almost like a rupture in the normal course of their lives especially because, as Datta mentions, Pandits as a community of Hindus, exclusively Brahmin, and hence, upper caste' implicative of the fact that they have historically enjoyed a status of prominence. They held high positions in bureaucracies and were 'major landowners in pre- colonial, colonial and post- colonial Kashmir.' It would, therefore be erroneous to speak of Kashmiri Pandits and not reflect on their lives in the camps of Jammu and New Delhi after displacement from the Valley. However, my knowledge of the Kashmiri Pandit camps are restricted to the ethnographies, unpublished dissertations and articles based on the Kashmiri Pandit camps in Jammu and NCR among others.

This chapter would also have discussions on the rehabilitation facilities extended to the Kashmiri Pandits. The gap in the narratives of the people and government would be reflected upon.

In a nutshell, I would reflect on the experiences of conflict, displacement and violence on the Kashmiri Pandits and I want to reflect on how the state through its *writing* practices manipulates memories of violence, thereby maintaining a gap between the '*paper truths*' and the '*actual*' events. Finally, I want to find out how memory, trauma and mourning become *political tools* to negotiate with the state in the event of violence in order to avail the "rehabilitation" facilities provided aftermath of violence

Politics of ‘Homeland’: Whose Kashmir, Whose Home?’

In this chapter, I situate the Kashmiri Pandits in the diasporic space. After being displaced from their ‘homeland’, how this minority community re-established themselves in an alien land and what challenges this space created for them and how these circumstances were politicized to get back their lost ‘homeland’. From the time of displacement of the Pandits from Kashmir, the quest has always been to get back their lost ‘home’ in the Valley. The Pandits sought back their homeland in the Valley with a Union Territory Status. Newspaper reporting’s of the Kashmiri Pandits from the camps in Jammu clearly depict that they are dismayed by the fact that the seven lakh odd Kashmiri Pandits who had to flee from the Valley in the wake of rising terrorism in 1989-90 are still living as ‘refugees in their own country’ for more than three decades but yet nothing has been done for their return and rehabilitation.⁵The biggest hurdles in returning to their ‘roots’ were concerns were of “safety and security” and the inability of the government to implement its return and rehabilitation packages on the ground. The theoretical arguments in this chapter mostly concern with the notion of place making, space and centrality and nostalgia attached with the notion of ‘home’ and ‘homeland’. A central question of the thesis was on the dealings of the experiences of dislocation, violence and place- making; and how these relationships are mediated through the notions of “home”. An important aspect of the quest for survival of the Kashmiri Pandits has been the retrieval of their lost “homeland” in the valley, and to re-establish their identities socially, politically and economically in the diaspora.

The Kashmiri Pandits who claim to be the original inhabitants of Kashmir were left with no choice other than fleeing from their Valley. Kashmir was their home, they were Kashmiri yet they had to leave their motherland, says nostalgically one of my respondent’s. The Kashmiri Pandits were left with three impossible choices: - *Ralive* (subsume their identity), *Tsaliv* (leave the valley) or *Galive* (die).⁶But to the Pandits the preservation of their identities, their community was of utmost importance which resulted in leaving their homeland and were allotted one room tenement’s in the Jammu region. In 2008, the then government at the centre

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had allotted a package for the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants. The Kashmiri Pandits recalls that the plan has not moved forward an inch since then.

The plight of the Kashmiri Pandits has often become the motive of political manipulations and mobilised question of the Kashmiri Pandits especially by the Hindu nationalist forces who always asserted the promise of helping them to return to their homeland in their political manifestoes. (Duschinski,2008). Like I mentioned in the previous chapter, scholars Duschinski assert that from 1970's onwards, resource allocation by the government has usually been conducted at the level of the communities. For this reason, a community discourse was predominant in this period. The community discourse was operated in the domain of public culture which could be defined as the social field within which individuals imagine, represent and recognize them. (Hansen, 1999) Thus, it gave birth to a very strong notion of *biradari* among the Kashmiri Pandits with which they could organize and create a unison of voices. The grounds on which Pandits create a "*biradari*" and how this notion of "*biradari*" becomes absolutely central to the establishment of their identity in a diasporic space which further helps them in political negotiations and community petitions. Kashmiri Hindu discourse casts the dispersed community as a unified *biradari*, a term that refers to a group of separate lineages of the same caste spread over many villages. This *biradari* coheres as a moral community with a common purpose and common platform through the illusion of consensus, constituted in the domain of public culture through discursive moral stories that frame the experiences of the migrants in particular ways. (Duschinski, 2008).

The developmental policies of welfare provision and populist techniques of political mobilization coincided with new forms of governance. (Duschinski, 2008) The Kashmiri Pandits, she argues, emerged as a powerful actor in the 1990's as a Kashmiri Hindu migrant community with the espousal of Hindu Nationalist forces but in this paper I intend to argue that while the Kashmiri Pandits came under the powerful political rhetoric of the time yet as a "community" in the diaspora they have incessantly struggled in the face of linguistic and cultural marginalization. They held onto their identity as a Kashmiri by establishing the Kashmir Sabha in all places where there were at least 50 families to retain their *Kashmiriyat* which political representations were unable to bestow. I rather agree with UpendraBaxi, who points out that political discourse remains concerned with people's anguish but in reality is consumed by its own imperatives. "It is then representative only in the meagre sense of providing a spectacle of competitive politics, where even Holocaustian sufferings of people

get transacted only as so many modes of refurbishing dilapidated party and leadership credentials...” (Baxi 2002: 19)

In the diaspora, the Kashmiri Pandits have robustly tried to retain the Kashmiri Language. It is due to this reason that wherever the Kashmiri Pandits moved they have established the Kashmiri Sabha where they discuss, read, and proliferate the Kashmiri language, literature and other religious practices. I have myself been a part of one such religious event which is central to their community. It is a yearly gathering wherein they carry out a *homam* or *havan* as they call it to make consecrated offerings to the fire. The event is more of congregational affair where the Pandits meet annually to strengthen the bonds of the community. The interesting thing is, in such gathering they all speak in Kashmiri or Koshur and in many cases, I have been asked whether I am able to make sense of what they are saying. Also, adding at the same time that I should be able to make sense as the script of the Kashmiri Hindus is *devanagari* (the script for Hindi as well). In the diaspora, the Kashmiri language became an important marker of Kashmiri identity which led to the establishment of Kashmiri Sabha in various parts of the country including Kolkata where the Pandits met at regular intervals to not only discuss the issues pertaining to their community but also to keep their Kashmiri language alive in the diaspora. Interestingly, the Kashmiri Pandits claim that the even the linguistic script used by the Pandits has a unique presence.

The Kashmiri language initially was derived out of the *sharda* script and was later developed in the *devanagari* script and how by adhering to the *devanagari* script the Pandits endeavor to maintain a “hindu” identity. This chapter would have discussions of the events in the Kashmir Sabha. However, many of the KP’s reflect on the challenges of maintaining their mother tongue and literatures due to the challenges that are posed by the diaspora. They narrate that the Kashmiri writer in the diaspora had the rare courage to pen down their thoughts in their mother tongue. I also discuss here some of the literatures that form the basis of their identity.

It would also have discussions on Kashmiri poetess Lalleshwari or Lal Ded as she was popularly referred to, along with a few other Kashmiri poets who have made remarkable contributions to the construction of Kashmiri Hindu Identity but along with that I would also

reflect on the contested nature of their identity. Lal Ded or Lalleshwari is fondly remembered by the Kashmiri Muslim community.

Methodologically this thesis is based on ethnographic reflections that were at my disposal during the time of my fieldwork in Kolkata and New Delhi. However, due to constraints of time, I have heavily resorted to archival sources as well. The Kashmiri Pandits by virtue of their rich cultural heritage have also been associated with in depth research of their own community. They have researched on vast areas pertaining to Kashmiri Pandits, be it on aspects related to their culture or even to the violence that they had faced in Kashmir to their struggle in the diaspora. The Kashmir Sabha in Kolkata was a rich source of 'archives'.

While doing the present research, I realized that ethnography could and should also be done on the archives. The archives on the contrary, could act like humans, garnering emotions and sentiments within the ones who are collecting it. It is almost like engaging in a dialogue with the informants. Though this dissertation, I have tried to rethink the conceptions of 'self' and 'other'.

Conclusion: Politics of Hope and Fear

In the conclusion, I argue along the lines of certain scholars who argue that the entire exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley was the result of a political ploy to take the Hindus out of Kashmir to have greater control over the Muslims of the Valley. The violence in the valley against the Muslims was so entrenched which saw its worst possible manifestation in the event of Kunan Poshpora that in the 1990's Muslims in the Valley established a veritable adversary in the Kashmiri Pandits who were till then living in harmony with each other. I therefore, argue that the situations and events in the Valley have forever been escalated due to manipulations carried out at the level of politics. On these grounds, I shall have theoretical discussions on the idea of fear.

The binding factor of the dissertation would be how the land of Kashmir which had been a haven of peace among diverse communities became a matter of contention and geography of fear for the entire nation. In that geography of fear how the Pandits became the persecuted community and how they re-established their lives after being displaced from Kashmir.

Chapter 3:

The Internally “Displaced”: Establishing the Identity of Kashmiri Pandits.

The harshest reality of the contemporary times is displacement of people from their homeland to the margins of the state due to ongoing conflict, violence, development projects among other reasons. However, the displaced people are hardly ever able to become a part of the popular discourse. In fact, there are no proper documentation on the displaced people leading to “disappearance” of millions of people from the landscape of the nation. In this chapter, I seek to construct and trace the experience of displacement of the Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir to the camps allocated to them as a part of the rehabilitation facility by the government in Jammu to their exodus into the diaspora.

A critical problem with the modern times is ‘protracted displacement. ‘It is often considered to be a static state of being. For those who have been displaced, it is beyond any question that they often experience a sense of loss and find themselves stuck in a place they do not wish to inhabit and yearning for a future that is beset with uncertainty, instability and erratic. ⁷ However, in speaking of this uncertain future with which the life of the displaced is fraught yet my thoughts concur with Catherine Burn who perceives an “agency” in this waiting for an undefined future. She argues in her work that people’s future orientation might change while they are physically and psychologically “stuck” due to prolonged period of displacement. However, what is most significant for my work is her concept of displacement not as static but she gradually moves towards conceptualizing it through the notion of fluid by considering it within a temporality. (Burn, 2015) It is important to understand this “waiting” as active, as having an “agency” which lingers in the post displacement phase. I agree with Veena Das who in her work on the post partition of India in 1947 and after the anti- sikh riots of 1986 that, in the post violence period, people descend into the ordinary. They carry out their lives as they were habituated to before the violence created havoc in their lives. The difference lies in the fact that, the “event” creates a point of rupture around which they tend to re-build their lives and conditions. ⁸

⁷ For further discussion on protracted displacement refer, Burn, Catherine. 2015. *Active waiting and Changing Hopes: Toward a time perspective on Protracted Displacement*. Social Analysis, Volume 59, Spring.

⁸ Das, Veena() Life and Words:

Similarly, protracted displacement has often been defined as “waiting”. Burn defines “waiting as the time that fills the gaps in our time”. “It becomes a “temporal aberration”, a feeling of being out of sync with time. It is when we wait that we become conscious of time because there is a mismatch between expectations and chance. Invoking Bourdieu and Pascal she writes that “we are waiting for a future that is too slow coming.”⁹ Bourdieu distinguishes between an abstract future- a time perspective that operates independently of one’s everyday life- and everyday time. Everyday time represents our routinized practices, the things we do every day. It involves participating in the safe routines that define our lives, such as getting up in the morning, making breakfast, getting the children ready for school, and going to work. For many refugees and IDP’s, both the routinized everyday time and the abstract future time may lack content.¹⁰ In Burn’s conceptualization, active waiting implies a constant monitoring of the likelihood that the events one is waiting for will occur and of how much time one is prepared to wait. In my research, I employ this conceptualization where protracted displacement is beset with agency. It is due to this reason that post displacement, or violence people re- build their lives. This period is beset with nostalgia of their homeland; a sense of loss is almost ever present yet re- building their lives to put together the life that they had been leading in their place of origin. In the case of the KP’s, it would be interesting to note that wherever they have moved they have not only tried to rebuild their lives but at the same time have tried to reconstruct all that which was a part of their lives, especially rich cultural heritage by establishing the Kashmir Sabha. The Kashmir Sabha acts like the binder of their community as it is through this that they reach and connect with all the Kashmiri Pandits spread over the entire world.¹¹ The argument that I trying to focus on here is that the Kashmiri Pandits form a comparatively privileged class of people among the internally displaced. However, the struggles of this somewhat privileged group have also been infinite.

But the commonality between the experience of being a refugee or an IDP is this processual waiting. A thorough understanding of this waiting should encompass an engagement with the past which I am going to do in the next section. Catherine Burn in her work engaged with IDP’s who were displaced due to some experience of violence. Burn argues, “in the case of

⁹ Ibid, pg 23.

¹⁰ Bourdieu, Pierre (2000). *Pascalian Meditations*. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Polity

¹¹ Further discussions on the Kashmir Sabha and its cultivation of Kashmiri Pandit culture refer to the last chapter, “*Our Own Koshur*”.

the Georgian IDP's, the past may be expressed as the idealized and harmonious past before the conflict or as the violence experienced during the war and displacement.”¹²

Veena das in her work mentions that the violence encountered in the past continues to haunt in the present life of the victims of violence. The most important strategy that they employ is to get on with their everyday, mundane lives.¹³

It is however, important to note here that the experience of the internally displaced and the refugees are indeed, very different. The UNHCR defines ‘Refugees’ as ‘people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country’ whereas ‘internally displaced people (IDPs) have not crossed a border to find safety. Unlike refugees, they are on the run at home.’¹⁴ This run within the boundaries of the nation often goes without any documentation, rehabilitation or assistance. In case of the displaced of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, millions of tribals were displaced. It would be pertinent to say that these “displaced” tribals simply disappeared from the map of India. In the case of Kashmiri Pandits however, the situation was not as grim, probably because they belonged to the Hindu community; which constitutes the majority religious community of India. It would be wrong however, to think that they received government assistance without any impediments whatsoever. The Pandit community outside the Valley or in the diaspora gained a political fervor because of which took the nature of a pressure group which helped them gain political representation and ‘promises’ of rehabilitation at the least unlike the plight of internally displaced people in general.

Datta, in his ethnographic work on the Kashmiri Pandits living in the camps of Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir, throws light on the marginalization and suffering that the Pandits face in the “camps” allotted to them. The Pandits have received assistance from the state as Indian citizens, though the official term for displaced persons in the regions is ‘migrant’. However, one of the main concerns of life in the camp is that of the youths who inhabit these spaces. The camp is perceived as the den of all evils. It is in these camps that the youth especially, engage into all kinds of malpractices like smoking, drinking, teasing women. The

¹²Ibid, 24.

¹³ Das, Veena(2000)“ The Act of Witnessing Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity: Violence, Political Agency and Subjectivity.” Pp., 205- 226in *Violence and Subjectivity: Violence, Political Agency and Self*, ed. Veena Das, Arthur Kheinman, MamphelaRamphela, and Pamela Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹⁴ The definitions have been given by UNHCR

Pandits, as Datta recalls, were a community of highly cultured and respectable people. The youth living in the camps however, are seen as ruining the legacy of the Pandits.

According to AnkurDatta, who conducted ethnography among the Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu, “the Pandits have historically been associated with power in the region, having been prominent landowners in the past and employed in state bureaucracies in the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods of South Asian history. The Kashmiri Pandits also share a long history of migration from Kashmir to different parts of India, contributing to an image of the Pandits as a community of influential elites associated with the middle-class occupations. Work involving physical labor is seen as undesirable by Pandits”.¹⁵ As can be understood from the above statement that the Kashmiri Pandits due to the eminence of their community they think it is below their status to engage in any occupation involving hard labor. The displacement has actually caused a disruption in achieving the normal standards of their community. Displacement has, upset this life-span. While the Pandits were in camp spaces, they were unable to finish their schooling, attend university or gain any experience in professional courses.

Living in the Space of Exception: The Kashmiri Pandits in the camps of Jammu.

In the present section, I look at the “camps” in which the refugee or the internally displaced are coerced by the circumstances to live in as a space of exception. The state of exception is a zone of ‘undecidability’, a condition which is opposed to the normal conditions of existence which is the most ‘immediate’ response of the state in a situation of civil war, to the most extreme forms of internal conflict.¹⁶

To conceptualize the state of Kashmir through the notion of state of exception seems almost instinctive. The land of Kashmir itself appears like a huge “camp” that houses innumerable number of people who are living in a perpetual state of disorder, anarchy and abnormality. In such circumstances, it is almost inevitable for any community to live in peace when their homeland is in a state of anomaly. To speak of the Kashmiri Pandits who lived in the camps of Jammu, life almost appeared like a dead end for them by the time they found themselves abandoned in the one-room tenements (ORT’s) allotted to them by the State as a form of assistance or rehabilitation. Authors such as Murphy and others have observed the camps to

¹⁵Datta, Ankur (2017). *On Uncertain Ground: Displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and Kashmir*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

¹⁶Agamben, Giorgio (2005). *State of Exception*. Trans. Kevin Attell, University of Chicago Press:Chicago

be 'uniform', characterized by conditions such as overcrowding, the absence of privacy and the limiting of people to a specific space. Some other scholars have explained that the camps are like potential laboratories to understand the psychological trauma that the inhabitants have undergone. They reconcile that living in the camp is the best way to understand the 'displaced persons apathy.

The notion of camp is specifically significant as it is reminiscent of the death camps of Nazi Germany and later on also developed in various parts of Central Europe until the end of the Second World War. These camps were located outside the "norms of sovereignty and citizenship, being "the space that opens up when the state of exception becomes the rule"¹⁷(Datta, 2016) Ramadan in his article on Palestinian refugees, writes that in the age of conflict, mass migration and climate change, the refugee camps has been and remains a crucial spatial formation in the struggles over territories, borders and identities. Hannah Arendt has earlier proposed the refugees camps as a paradigm of new historical consciousness¹⁸ (Arendt, 1946) and Agamben has proposed the camp life as a paradigm for future human settlements. (Agamben, 1994)¹⁹

The refugee camps should be perceived as distinctive political, social, cultural, humanitarian and disciplinary spaces. (Ramadan, 2012) The refugee camps have been conceptualized as a temporary space acquired by groups of individuals receiving humanitarian relief and protection until a durable solution is found to their situation.²⁰ The camps have often been conceptualized as spaces of hospitality, identity, exception insecurity and even violence.²¹

I take this notion of violence to be important for my study, as I have previously mentioned that through the various chapters, I would explore the concept of violence in the study.

It is interesting to note that how I perceive violence, is an extremely personal act. The notion of violence indeed, varies from person to person and from society to society. It is due to this reason that how one community perceives violence cannot ever be questioned. Das mentions a very interesting point in this regard. She argues that the violence upon people live in a life world that is intrinsically different from our own. So, what I perceive as violence might not be violating to another person. The violence perpetrated on the other therefore, remains to a certain extent unknown to us. In the case of the Pandits it is difficult to understand the trauma, pain, fear, insecurity and persecution that this community had to face while living in

¹⁷Agamben, Giorgio (2005) *State of Exception*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago

¹⁸ Arendt, H (2005) *We refugees. Memorah Journal* 31Pg 69-77.

¹⁹Agamben, Giorgio (1994) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University, Stanford, CA

the camps. It is especially so because the Pandits lived a life of comfort and luxury prior to their exile. The Pandits who previously lived in big, multi- storied buildings in the Valley were suddenly seeking simply a roof above their head, compensation from the government to live and survive these adverse circumstances which they were undergoing. The abrupt “rupture” in the life course of a community is equivalent to violence. During my conversations with my informants, many of them told that the valley posed an acute threat of violence; the possibility of their survival was so bleak and grim that they had to flee disregarding the fact that they would end up in the camps which they often referred to as the ‘gulags’. I thoroughly accept the notion put forth by Ramadan of the camp being a space of hospitality and receive humanitarian relief. He writes and I quote, ‘The refugee camp is a temporary space in which refugees may receive humanitarian relief and protection until a durable solution can be found to their situation’.²² The camp was simply a place where they received the bare minimum to subsist them. The families perceived the camps as places where they found their culture, heritage in vestiges and ruination. The important fact about the internally displaced persons is that unlike the refugees who have greater legitimacy as they have a legally defined status. The IDP’s, however, are not a legally defined group because of which it is a far less recognized category of people who find themselves in a continuous state of movement. Internally displaced people have a risk of becoming lost in the larger category of migrants. The stance that Datta provides is absolutely central. He posits that the status of the Kashmiri Pandits is far more complicated by their designation as “migrants” especially because ‘anybody could be a migrant’.²³ It is a far less politically recognized category of people. During my fieldwork, many of my informants told me that the time spent in the camp was almost like a ‘lapse in time’. Apart from this there were several other factors that affected the Kashmiri Pandits in the camps. For instance, as P.K Hak mentions in the *KoshurSamacharan* exiled Kashmiri Pandit has summed up the experience in one sentence:

"We migrated out of the valley of bullets into a pit of snakes." Many outlying areas in Jammu where the camps are located are over run by bushes which harbour snakes and other reptiles and are rife with stray dogs some of whom are rabid. The members of the community are taken unawares during evenings or dark nights or when they go to the bushes to ease

²³ For further discussion on this refer, Datta, Ankur (2017). *On Uncertain Ground: Displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and Kashmir*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

themselves. Twelve people have lost lives, ten due to bites by poisonous snakes and two due to rabies”²⁴

P.K Hak further writes that, “One facet of the multidimensional human rights violation against the Kashmiri Hindus is the health trauma-physical, mental and psychological, resulting from the forced exodus of the community.” It is clear from the above news that camps in which the Kashmiri Pandits were made to live was almost inhabitable as the camps were filled with scorpions, snakes and even had the worst sanitation and health provisions. The Pandit found themselves affected by unprecedented forms of diseases and adverse health conditions. While it is true that the Kashmiri Pandits till date perceive the Kashmiri Muslims brethren as their most veritable adversary yet I would like to argue that the political circumstances of Kashmir at that time were such that it was not one community against another, rather, it was one community (Hindus) was perceived as being potentially against the calls for *azaadi*.

A prominent Kashmiri Pandit once equated the rehabilitation extended by the state in the *KoshurSamachar* as thus:

“Till then any talk of return and rehabilitation of I.D.P.s is a dream of imaginary wishfulness. Till then any persuaded "return of the native" may turn to be the rehabilitation of the "Jews" at "the Auschwitz Nazi Camp" in which the code word for elimination by gas chambers was "rehabilitated". Readers will find this in the 20-year old research classic work by William Schirer on World War-II which was named "The Rise and Fall of Third Reich". The daily telegram from the Auschwitz Gas Chamber chief to his boss, the Fuehrer (Adolf Hitler) was "... thousand 'rehabilitated' today".

I find this particularly interesting because Ankur Datta in his ethnographic study mentions that the Pandits have often referred to the ‘camps’ as ‘gulags’ or concentration camps and have equated rehabilitation to be similar to the calls for death of the Jews in the concentration camps assembled by the Nationalist Socialist Party in Germany implies that the rehabilitation facilities provided by the state was almost non-existent, degrading and disgraceful at the

²⁴Hak, P.K. (2019) Kashmiri Migrants' Health Trauma: A Study. *Koshur Samachar*.

best. P.N Kalla another Kashmiri Pandit writes in another article in the *Koshur Samachar*, that the Kashmiri Pandits suffered from “tremendous material loss suffered by the community with houses damaged and burnt, property looted, lands and houses occupied, business shattered, incomes and resources shrunk - what would be the extent and manner of compensation for rehabilitation? What would be the time-frame? How does the government plan new settlements in Kashmir to house the homeless?” At this point it would be pertinent to ask a question that Veena Das mentions in one of her ethnographies. What is it that people do when they experience violent events beyond what they can endure? Probably, it is too difficult a question to be resolved in this limited and flawed dissertation.

A recent edition of the *Koshur Samachar* writes thus, “These are some of the vital questions to which answers have to be found without any more delay. These are the questions which cannot be wished away. The generation of Kashmiri Pandits cannot afford to wait indefinitely as, with the passage of time, they will get absorbed in the struggle of existence in the length and breadth of the country and lose their identity and moorings for all times to come. All social and political organisations which operate at different levels within and outside the state will be failing in their duty if they do not agitate on these issues with all their vigour and with a sense of urgency and objectivity. Most of the Kashmiri Pandits still live in a traumatic condition taking refuge in tattered tents, congested halls, under construction Govt. buildings and, of course, some were living as tenants in dingy and dilapidated houses.”

They live on meagre pittance that is doled out to them. The education of children has gone awry. They can't concentrate and carry on their studies in the limited sheltered space. They continue to be marginalised so far as government employment is concerned. The displacement caused due to the violence in Kashmir has led to an array of problems for the Kashmiri Pandits. Their economy, their livelihood, their homeland, culture, everything was lost in the matter of a few days. I quote a Kashmiri Pandit as saying, “

“The host of problems, to say the least, has erupted with the mass exodus from the valley and this situation has posed a multi-faceted challenge for us so that we can survive the onslaught. In fact, it is travail for our existence or extinction. In order to give extra impetus to the on-going struggle for existence and our right to retrieve the lost lands and property, I feel we can do enough to ameliorate our miserable condition.”

The main target of the Kashmiri Pandits has been to rekindle the community sentiment in the minds of the Pandits living outside of Kashmir because of which the strength of this community was dwindling. Their agenda almost goes like this, “The community must shed all individualistic approach and feel like one body. All dissensions and bickering among the various organisations of the community should end. Nobody should be allowed to exploit and make political mileage out of the prevailing situation. Every Pandit should contribute his might in retrieving the lost glory.”

Youth, a potential resource, if harnessed in right direction, may also restore the community its lost position. It is true that some harm and damage has already been done to their conscience and mental outlook but despite this they have creditably borne the brunt and have come triumphant in absorbing the shock of immense magnitude. In this entire scenario, the youths have been the worst affected. Ankur Datta mentions from his ethnography among the camp dwellers in Jammu that the youth living inside these camps have been the worst affected. They are into every bad activity possible cigarettes, drugs and such others.

The concerns of the Kashmiri Pandits can be put across in this way, “The sad affair afflicting the community is their total apathy towards social reform. It is futile to reiterate that hypocrisy, social pride and ego still persist in the community. Dowry system and ostentation in marriages will accentuate their financial problems. Already they have invested their substantial earnings in raising huge buildings which are being gutted apace in the valley. They should exercise parsimony, conserving whatever is left with them. Social checks in conducting the marriages can prove very fruitful in conserving the financial resources. Voluminous belongings devoid of any practical utility should be discarded as these hinder the mobility.”²⁵

The community felt proud in establishing some prestigious colleges in Kashmir. It feels acutely the need for technical and medical colleges of its own. However, by raising sufficient funds through mobilisation, the community can own its engineering and medical colleges. Besides, imparting job oriented training to the youth, it can generate employment opportunities for unemployed youth. The potential to man these institutions is already present in the community. Steps may be taken vigorously to open more colleges and schools to

²⁵ *Koshur Samachar*, May 2019.

educate the community children. And, if possible, we can train our youth to start small industries with the help of government.

To preserve our ethos and cultural distinction, we should conduct regular meetings and especially on festival days in our respective localities. This will give greater chances of interaction and hence induce us to render our utmost service in time of need or if any one of us is afflicted with some trouble and suffering. This social service must be rendered unhesitatingly and without any fail.

And wherever there is a Kashmiri Pandit doctor, he should not hesitate to render free service for deserving Kashmiri Pandit patients. The community should pay utmost heed towards the growth of their physical and mental health. Many members of this community are afflicted by various mental and physical diseases which if treated at an initial stage can be remedied.

The dismal and pathetic scenario confronting the community can be overcome by optimism and positive approach. The government, by its slow and inept handling, will not come to our rescue but we must remember the maxim that God helps those who help themselves. There is no denying the fact that Pandits have lost the paradise and the government has been a mute spectator to the complete ethnic cleansing in Kashmir. The responsibility for our safe return and rehabilitation in the valley devolves on the government. This is the greatest challenge that we must face and strive for. After all we are an educated community. We can mobilise media people to highlight our problems and urge the government for the redressal of these problems. Keeping in view the present scenario, and the government's apathetic approach towards resolving our problems, it is not possible for us to return to the valley soon. Guns still rule the roost, and the present government's plans to offer greater autonomy to Kashmir will further complicate the situation. Parties that come to power may then demand still more autonomy which will be no less than freedom. Kashmiri Pandits have to rise to the occasion and to think seriously about their prospects to live honourably on the Indian soil. So, problems are numerous and complicated. We have to stand united to challenge these problems.

Even though their economy has been adversely affected yet they are negotiating to survive in the new host communities. The displaced people are utilizing various response strategies to deal with the changes in their social structure owing to displacement. (Malhotra, 2007).

Through this I would endeavor to establish the identity of the Kashmiri Pandits and answer

the following questions: Who are the Kashmiri Pandits? What entailed the experience of exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits? Why did they suddenly become the object of violence in their own homeland? What is the experience of Kashmiri Pandits as internally displaced people and how is that different from that of refugees inhabiting in India.

The displacement of about two and a half lakh Kashmiri Hindus from the peaceful Valley has caused a number of psychological and behavioural problems. If these are not properly and effectively checked and dealt with, it can lead to serious mental illnesses. I had a chance to see about one hundred fifty cases between March 1990 and the end of December 1991. While majority of them presented transitory and situational maladjustment problems, there were a number of cases who had more severe neurotic symptoms like acute anxiety, neurotic depression, hysterical reactions and so on. A few patients also presented initial phase of psychotic reaction.

Women Suffered More

It was clear that while men were able to give vent to their grievances in social meetings etc., the women-folk suffered internally and were more worried about their new settlement in refugee camps etc. They felt the loss of their home and hearth more severely than probably the male counterparts and became victims of psychological symptoms more easily. While the situational maladjustment cases were given a few sessions of psychotherapy and reassurance, the severe cases of neurosis and the functional psychosis were put on drug therapy by consulting physicians (Dr. C.L. Sarup, Physician Specialist, and Dr. P.K. Hak for ENT problems free of charge).

Feelings of Depression

Long queues of migrants waiting to be registered, being pushed in different directions, rude behaviour of some officials, feelings of loss and other related features created a feeling of guilt in their minds and they felt as if they had committed some sin or crime.

Insomnia

While anxiety, tension and other worries including feelings of depression were the main causes of loss of sleep, lack of accommodation proved another factor responsible for insomnia, as all the members of the family had forcibly to sleep in the same room/tent where

individual needs, habits and behaviour patterns of sleep or work had to be modified, changed and adjusted to the needs and conveniences of the other members of the family. Situation was worse if several families were sharing the same room/hall. Insomnia resulted in brooding over the past events, happy days in Kashmir, property left, loss suffered and other related issues leading to further feelings of anxiety and depression and aggravation of symptoms.

Loss of Appetite

A good number of patients complained of loss of appetite and did realise that it was all due to anxiety and worries and tension and feelings of depression. However, proper understanding of their problems and a few sessions of psychotherapy helped them in overcoming their basic symptoms to a large extent which also helped in reducing the problems of reduced appetite. A number of patients also reported that they had developed some physical symptoms and ailments like attacks of gastritis, palpitation of heart (tachycardia), feelings of exhaustion and skin diseases and some other psychosomatic disorders for which they had received treatment from various physicians.

State of Uncertainty

A common feature seen among the patients was a state of uncertainty, confusion and lack of any plan of action, There was a general feeling that everything was gone (almost amounting to a sort of nihilistic delusion) and there was no clear cut programme for rehabilitation and resettlement, which created doubts in their mind about their survival even.

Feeling of Being Uprooted

Majority of the patients felt as if they had been thrown away by a strong volcano, a storm of immense magnitude into a state of wilderness and their roots almost cut off. There was a general feeling that something was amiss, something had been snatched from their hands and their lives were empty and incomplete; an inner feeling of emptiness prevailed among almost all the patients. Loss of home was a very strong feeling. Self-talking and unproductive movements: A few persons were seen to be engrossed in self-talking and making strange gestures and movements of hands and fingers, at times movement of lips as if in conversation with others. Majority of the displaced people who sought consultations for their mental health problems also complained of their inability to adjust to a different environment.

Problems of the Student Community

Perhaps the worst hit section of the displaced people has been the student community. Their problems included not only lack of the facilities but absence of the very basic needs and requirements; all these problems created a lot of mental health problems for the displaced students. Denial of admission in regular institutions, forcing the administration to start Camp institutions where all the desired and required facilities could not be provided played havoc with the mental health of students. Lack of laboratory and library facilities affected the studies of even the brightest students. The students also felt disheartened on account of delay and postponement of examinations.²⁶ (*Koshur Samachar*)

These have been the effect of the displacement faced by the community according to the members of the community who are researching and studying their own community and their struggles in the diaspora.

²⁶ Koshur Samachar, May 2019

Chapter 4:

Politics of Homeland: Whose Kashmir, Whose Home?

In the present chapter, I rethink questions of belongingness, the theoretical differences between theoretical discussions on space and place, and how the displaced people after being displaced from their homeland into a space with which they do not relate to emotionally, and passionately. The space which they acquire does not create in the minds a map of belongingness, attachment or association, such a landscape will certainly lead to the birth of contempt in the minds of its occupants. The present chapter would focus on the Kashmiri Pandits in the diaspora. After their exodus from the Valley to different parts of the nation-state, their lives were beset with innumerable challenges that an ‘unfamiliar’ place throws up for the abrupt its occupants. The Kashmiri Pandit communities, in the diaspora were deeply politically motivated. The major political parties of India, especially the Hindu right took up the ‘cause’ of the Kashmiri Pandits and brought them into the larger political narrative of the nation. In the next section, I argue that the entire struggle of the Kashmiri Pandits has been surrounding the loss of their homeland. The Pandits had a good economic, cultural and social base in Kashmir which was completely lost after being displaced from Kashmir. The next segment of the chapter, would talk about the difference between the space and place. How a space to which one does not belong to can potentially be ‘haunting’, or disturbing which leads to imparting a sense of loss in the minds of its inhabitants.

Making Place, Placing ‘Home’:

Tim Ingold demonstrates in his work the difference between place and space. He critiqued the primacy given to the notion of ‘space’ over ‘place’. He asserts the example of Casey who criticizes the Enlightenment presumption of a preexisting medium of space and time within which “place” is produced. Instead, he argues, the phenomenologically prior experience is of distinctive and particular places, with “being- in- place”. Casey (1995) argues that the “very idea of space”, he insists, is posterior to that of place, perhaps insists, “is posterior to that of place, perhaps even derived from it...” The notion of place therefore, pertains to the

relationality between the space acquired and the people living there. Place is therefore, the relationship built in between the physical space and the people reviving the space with emotions, memories and attachments. By bringing in the notion of place and space, my intent is to project why displacement is afflicting and tormenting for the people. Displacement breeds a sense of loss. It is a loss of all those inter-relationships, livelihood and culture giving way to a competitive fervor to get hold of all those resources which they had previously lost and are lacking in the present. In Jammu, there were sections of the Kashmiri Pandits who live in the camps while there are others who live on their own. The ones who live on their own do not have any entitlement to the amenities provided by the government. These migrants who do not live in the camps, they perceive them with a sense of envy. However, it is important to also mention that these same people, who in the present are in conflicting relation were at a point in time neighbors and shared a deep bond with each other. The displacement has led to an alteration of the relationships.

Christopher Tilley an exquisite explication of the idea of a social space and he defines it as thus, “A social space, rather than being uniform and forever the same, is constituted by differential densities of human experience, attachment and involvement. It is above all contextually constituted, providing particular settings for involvement and the creation of meanings. The specificity of place is an essential element in understanding its significance. It follows that the meanings of space always involve a subjective dimension and cannot be understood apart from the symbolically constructed lifeworlds of social actors.” It is this subjectivity of the place which is wrought with emotions, sentiments and feelings and an event like displacement leads to a breakdown of this social and moral unit of the community. My informants in New Delhi have often remarked to me that the relationships that “we had at back in the Valley are not there anymore. Nowadays, sometimes we come together annually or once in many years. This would not have been the case had we were still living in Kashmir.” Tilley further mentions that, “space has no substantial essence in itself, but only has a relational significance, created through relations between peoples and places. Space becomes detotalized by virtue of its relational construction and because, being differentially understood and produced by different individuals, collectivities and societies, it can have no universal essence.”

It is due to this loss of homeland, the place of their origin, the place with which all their emotions and sentiments were entangled that led to the Kashmiri Pandits from the time of

their movement from out of Kashmir to seek back their homeland. The place which they even today believe belongs as much to them as it does to the Kashmiri Muslims.

Politics of Homeland:

Haley Duschinski has pertinently contended that any study of power in contemporary India must entail the political stance of the communities. She has also argued that from 1970's onwards, resource allocation by the government has usually been conducted at the level of the communities. The developmental policies of welfare provision and populist techniques of political mobilization coincided with new forms of governance. (Duschinski, 2008) The Kashmiri Pandits, she argues, emerged as a powerful actor in the 1990's as a Kashmiri Hindu migrant community with the espousal of Hindu Nationalist forces.²⁷

But in this chapter, I intend to argue that while the Kashmiri Pandits came under the powerful political rhetoric of the time yet as a "community" in the diaspora they have incessantly struggled in the face of linguistic and cultural marginalization. They held onto their identity as a Kashmiri by establishing the Kashmir Sabha in all places where there were at least 50 families to retain their *Kashmiriyat* which political representations were unable to bestow. I rather agree with Upendra Baxi, who points out that political discourse remains concerned with people's anguish but in reality is consumed by its own imperatives. "It is then representative only in the meagre sense of providing a spectacle of competitive politics, where even Holocaustian sufferings of people get transacted only as so many modes of refurbishing dilapidated party and leadership credentials..." (Baxi 2002: 19) Veena Das had pertinently made the point that such "communities reproduce the illusion of a boundary between society and state by casting themselves as protectors of tradition acting in opposition to an oppressive modern state structure." These communities act as powerful sites of symbolic and cultural production like imagined states, allows consideration of the irreducibly contested nature of identities, collectivities, and constituencies in modern India.²⁸

In the 1990's the Kashmiri Hindu Pandits positioned themselves within forms of community discourse which was specific to their community. Duschinski, in her work shows how the

²⁷Duschinski, Haley (2008) "Survival is Now Our Politics": Kashmiri Hindu Community Identity and Politics of Homeland. *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Springer.

²⁸Das, Veena (1995) *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Kashmiri Pandits organized the concerns of their community along the critical issues pertaining to the migrants return to the homeland. In speaking about her analysis on the Sikh militant discourse, Veena Das writes that the political language of such communities tend to create a “we” group out of a heterogeneous community “to function as an effective political agency within the context of the modern state structures in India.”²⁹ In a similar cord, scholars like Duschinski mention that the Kashmiri Hindu discourse “casts the dispersed community as a unified *biradari*, a term that refers to a group of separate lineages of the same caste spread over many villages.” The *biradari*, therefore, acts as a moral community with a common purpose and common platform through the illusion of consensus, constituted in the domain of public culture through the discursive moral stories that frame the experiences of the migrants in particular ways. (Duschinski,2008). In this context, it is worthwhile to quote a prominent Kashmiri Pandit writing in the *KoshurSamachar* that “Let it be known and understood clearly by as much the State authorities and the Central leadership that the Kashmiri Pandit community will never again allow itself to be used or carried away on one consideration and pretext or another. Those of us who survived the 1989-90 holocaust by the terrorist Islamic fundamentalists and came away have steeled our resolve to retrieve what all was lost and vowed to return home in triumph and dignity. Homecoming, be it after a day's hard labour and sweating, a month's vacation, a year's accomplishment or a decade's tyranny of exile, is always a matter of rejoicing. So should it be for us.” It is important to note here that the present politics of the Kashmiri Pandits lies in the fact that getting to return to their homeland which could only be achieved by adhering to the larger political narrative of the nation.

In the 1990's, the political manifestoes, slogans, speeches, Hindu nationalist parties highlighted the plight of the Kashmiri Hindu migrant community. They accused the “secular” political parties of siding and appeasing the Kashmir Muslims for decades now in order to commit to the principles of secular nationalism but had failed to adequately protect the Hindu minority community of the Valley simply because they shared their religious affiliation of the majority of the nation. The Hindu nationalist rhetoric, in this way actually incorporated the anxieties of the Kashmiri Pandits under its fold. The main argument of this chapter, concurs to a great to that of Duschinski who writes that the Kashmiri Hindu community discourse

²⁹Duschinski, Haley (2008) “Survival is Now Our Politics”: Kashmiri Hindu Community Identity and Politics of Homeland. International Journal of Hindu Studies, Springer.

articulates with Hindu nationalist discourse by emphasizing the superiority of Hindu religious and cultural tradition, decline of Hindu culture, the loss of Hindu homeland, the fear of encroachment by Muslims and other poor and plebeian classes, the desire for special recognition by the state. (Duschinski, 2008) Among recent scholarship, Mridu Rai and Chitrallekha Zutshi have demonstrated with exhaustive historical examinations of Kashmiri political culture. The Kashmiri community identities have primarily been shaped by the interplay of regional, religious, and class divisions that have shifted in relation to one another throughout the entire colonial period. The Pandits in the scenario of Kashmir are a small minority of that had become established as the clerical caste of revenue administrators and office holders who had quite a privilege of acquiring education and other occupational opportunities in relation to the Kashmiri Muslim masses. The early twentieth further nourished Kashmiri religious identities especially under the practices of the Dogra state, the state's contact with British India, leading to the birth of a new Kashmiri Muslim educated leadership. The Kashmiri Hindus in such a scenario felt vulnerable to the changing circumstances and due to their dependence on employment in state administration.

Kashmiri Hindus migrated out of Kashmir Valley in significant numbers during the colonial period, with migrant communities engaging in considerable self-conscious reflection on the preservation of cultural identity, values, and traditions under conditions of political adversity and social change. As Henny Sender (1988) has shown, Kashmiri Hindu community associations flourished outside the Valley in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among community members living in the areas that were then known as the Northwestern Provinces and Oudh, the British province of Punjab, and some of the princely states of central India, Rajputana, and the Punjab. As urban elites who had worked in government service for generations, Kashmiri Hindus in these areas formed Kashmiri mohallās (enclaves) in the northern towns, such as Amritsar, Allahabad, Agra, Lahore, and Lucknow, which were the centers of the former imperial and princely courts. These towns “were the nerve centers of Kashmiri Pandit life, linking Kashmiris in these cities through kin, biradari, and marriage relationships with their caste-fellows scattered all over northern India” (Pant 1987: xv). Community members, through the work of community associations, made self-conscious efforts to preserve their distinctive identity as Kashmiri Brahmans while participating in the world of the Urdu-speaking elite in northern India. (Pant, 1987)

Kusum Pant (1987) notes that Kashmiri Hindus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century did not have a strong urge to return to Kashmir and did not participate in social and political movements taking place there. At the same time, however, “the romantic view of Kashmir and the sense of being exiles or expatriates which it bred reinforced a feeling of separateness from non-Kashmiri Pandits and strengthened the bonds that linked members of the Kashmiri community together” (Pant 1987: 8). In this way, the community cultivated an attachment to Kashmir as a land of common origin but not a place of current connection.

It was around this time that many of the Kashmiri Pandit Organization sprung up in the diaspora. New Delhi and Calcutta are some of the primary places where such organizations sprung up. New associations emphasizing preservation of the social values and cultural traditions of the dispersed community emerged among these urban elites after Indian Independence. One of the earliest of these new associations was the Kashmiri Pandit Association at Varanasi, founded prior to Independence, in 1946, by students and faculty affiliated with Banaras Hindu University (Dhar 1995). Another prominent association was the Kashmir Sabha Calcutta, which formally adopted its constitution in 1955 and pursued regular activities in the 1960s, including festival celebrations for Navreh, Sivrâtri and Krishna Janmashtami children’s functions, community outings, and publication of a monthly newsletter. These local associations were brought together under an umbrella organization called the All India Kashmir Samaj (AIKS), formed in Allahabad in 1979 under the leadership of Justice P. N. Bakshi, who had also founded the Uttar Pradesh Kashmiri Samaj (Dhar 1995). These AIKS biradari units in the 1980s fostered and preserved a sense of cultural identity by holding meetings, functions, picnics, and celebrations. They also addressed community concerns, including the dowry system, education and employment problems, preservation of cultural heritage, and propagation of the Kashmiri language.

Delhi, known as the oldest and largest Kashmiri Hindu center outside Kashmir since the Mughal period, became a focal point of biradari activity after Indian Independence. A group of Kashmiri Hindus in Delhi founded the Kashmiri Cooperative House Building Society in 1950, purchasing 26 acres of land in South Delhi, at Kalkaji, in order to develop an enclave for community members “with the definite objective of maintaining and perpetuating their culture and traditions” (A.46 / Haley Duschinski Raina 1995: 552; see also Kachru 1995: 564–65). This area developed into Pamposh Enclave, with approximately 150 plots, ranging from 200 to 700 square yards, for residential purposes (A. Raina 1995: 553). The Kashmiri

Samiti Delhi emerged in the 1950s, with many of its members located in Pamposh Enclave, and began circulating a community magazine, *Koshur Samachar*, in the 1970s.

It would be significant to also note that while the central politics of the Kashmiri Pandits has remained getting back their homeland, yet this entire vision is fragmented and divided at best. I prominent Kashmiri has written in a recent issue of *Koshur Samachar* and I quote,

“The decision of the State government to dump the Hindu community of Kashmir, living in exile for the last seven years, back into its ravaged past, is patently a politically motivated manoeuvre, aimed at using it to provide a secular cover to the Muslim crusade in Jammu and Kashmir and to conceal the real objectives the militarized pan-Islamic fundamentalism is set to achieve. There is an element of ludicrous in warbled versions about the ugly events that occurred in the state in 1990, and scattered over the length and breadth of India a huge fugitive population, which poured out of the Kashmir Valley in thousands to escape genocide. It will please no one if the lies are whitewashed and the process of the ethnic cleansing of the Hindus from Kashmir is sought to be camouflaged by make-believe and tendentious scoops about what really happened in Kashmir. It serves none, the least the Muslims in Kashmir, as well as in the rest of India, to claim that the religious crusade in Kashmir espoused the values of secularism by murdering the Hindus on grounds of compassion and in furtherance of its divine duty to deliver the sinners unto justice, without malice to them.”

In my perspective, in the aftermath of violence, there are lines of strategic negotiations with the machineries of the state in order to avail the facilities of the state. It is indeed a politics of survival which coerces the marginalized and violence upon community to venture along lines of legality and illegality to “transact” with the “events” after the end of violence. The terrain in which the refugees find themselves is one which is a slippage between the threat and guarantee. It is a “site” along the lines of which the legitimacy of the state is brought in contact with sometimes arbitrary forms of power that underwrite sanctity of law. This site is marked by uncertainty as it constitutes itself along the margins of the state where the boundaries of the state tend to vain itself, and becomes fluid where the lines between legality and illegality tends to overwrite each other. Illegality seems to be away of life along the borders and in the fluid areas of the state. However, the Kashmiri Pandits of India have never ventured into the domain of illegality, even though the life of the IDP’s, refugees is often marred with such fluidities. It is so because people who are living in the margins of the state

have to face such unflinching challenges that it becomes almost inevitable to not venture into the domain of illegality.

In such situations, the quest for life and survival tends to give way to illegalities. Deborah Poole argues that the “moment that separates the threat and guarantee as a “site” that is neither inherently spatial nor stable.” She further explicates, that rather, “it is a site that itself is only traceable through the sorts of fleeting instances”. In speaking of the politics of rehabilitation, Yasmeen Arif brings into an interface between sectarian urban violence, internal displacement and strategies of rehabilitation on the one hand, and religious identity on the other. Intertwined in this assemblage is the profound implication of space, in such a way that the claim to life in the city, in all its material and affective aspects, becomes an intimate experience of identity practiced in space. (Arif, 2008). She further argues and introduces the idea of ‘humanitarian biopolitics’— “if biopolitics is to be understood as the power over life and death as well as the political mobilization of governmentality in the processes of that power, then the adding of this humanitarian agenda to the notion of biopolitics seems almost like an inevitable undertaking.³⁰ In such a situation, humanitarianism is both an act of humanity and inhumanity as those populations who have been systematically stripped and excluded from the arenas of political rights.

Veena Das mentions that after the 1984 riots and after three days of killing and looting, the people who were in the relief camps registered criminal cases against the perpetrators. But it was so in order to obtain official proof that these grievous events had, indeed, occurred and that they had been affected by these events than in any hope that perpetrators would be punished because the survivors were well aware of the complicity of the police in the riots. The policeman on duty dictated the framing sentences of the FIR.³¹ She further mentions that once the state institutes forms of governance through the technologies of writing, it simultaneously institutes the possibility of forgery and mimetic performances of power. Even this entails the negotiation between the state and the victims who went to the police station, at the first place, to register a complaint because they had been recommended by the local power brokers that it would be difficult for them to claim any compensation for the losses without “legal proof”. So, ironically, she points out, those who were locked in a combative relation with the state and who had direct evidence of the criminality of the state nevertheless

³⁰ Arif, Yasmeen. (2016) *Life Emergent: The Social in the Afterlives of Violence*. University of Minnesota Press: Minnesota.

³¹ Das, Veena(2006). *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

ended up being pulled into the gravitational force of the state through the circulation of documents produced by its functionaries. Moreover, they perceived law as a resource for seeking justice, although they knew that its use is fraught with uncertainty and danger.

Roma Chatterjee and Deepak Mehta, in connection to the riots describe how local communities are reconstituted through the narratives of violence. Through naming and the construction of genealogies, these narratives order memories of violence. They interestingly, point out that narratives of violence and of rehabilitation run parallel to each other and the narrative of rehabilitation provide one way of understanding the healing process of the victims. Relief acts also structure violence, shifting the focus to a different register, so that anonymity gives way to recognition of face- to – face relationships and the uniqueness of particular incidents in the *danga* (chaos).³² She shows how the event of violence and the work of rehabilitation are framed within the *practices of governmentality*.

After 1990, the Kashmiri Hindu migrant community emerged as a powerful political actor through the strategic production and circulation of forms of community discourse that sought to produce a homogeneous moral community with a single form of attachment to homeland. Through this discourse, community associations emphasized the community’s vulnerability as a victimized minority in ways that resonated with broader concerns among the Indian middle class about their own uncertain positionalities at a time of significant political and economic transformation in the country as a whole. Community demands for the “right to return” under specified conditions articulated with Hindu nationalist renderings of Indian pride and strength. In this way, the notion of return to homeland became caught up within the “conservative revolution” of Hindu nationalism that was premised on and also reacting to significant transformations in the fields of culture and politics in India at that time (Hansen 1999). Community return, it seemed, could only be possible through a radical restriction of national political culture and a shift from the policies of secularism to a politics of majoritarianism.

Our Own ‘Koshur’: Preserving Language and Literature of the Pandit Diaspora

³² Chatterjee, Roma and Deepak, Mehta (2007) *Living with Violence: Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life*. Routledge: India

The Kashmiri Pandits, in the diaspora have always tried to preserve their cultural heritage which was intrinsic to their community in Kashmir. This drive for preservation of art, culture, literature and language has almost taken the role of a movement. One of my respondents, Dr. B.K Moza has reflected upon several of those aspects of the movement that they were trying to bring in the diaspora. The All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) is a remarkable movement of Kashmiri Pandits outside Kashmir. They believe that this movement is absolutely central in keeping the Kashmir Pandit culture alive especially because the community is a fragmented.

In this ambience, we will be looking in vain for innocence and nursery naivette which were eulogized as the high water-marks of Kashmiriyat and which are still propagated as being present in Kashmir. The Rishis who are supposed to have deeply influenced the behaviour-pattern of the Kashmiris are a nearly forgotten lot, except when they come handy for political ends. In fact Lal Ded and Nund Rishi were essentially deviants who opted out of the growing social degeneration and found solace, not in the multitude, but in a mystical oneness with the Supreme Being. These great souls have not influenced or contributed to Kashmiriyat- a changing concept. I would be surprised if a modern technically trained management or computer specialist or an engineer or a bureaucrat can reproduce a single wakh of Lal Ded or a Tukh of Nund Rishi. Even those who possess their works-a microscopic minority-have relegated these to the top shelves as the "Great unreadables". Lal Ded advocates introversion. Which modern Kashmiri would opt for that in an age whose slogans are grab somehow and consume? It would be unfair, if not wrong, to deduce the characteristics of a people from the great mystics they may have produced. What is happening in Italy is not even a travesty of Dante.

So the present day Kashmiri carries no influence of the poetry of Lal Ded or Nund Rishi and knows other Rishis only on their annual Urs festivals. With the spread of the vast network of communication and politico-communal pulls emanating from diverse national and international sources, the Kashmiri is completely transformed. A strong dement of narrowness has permeated his thinking as compared to the catholicity of the age of innocence. Where and what is Kashmiriyat? It is no use holding on fondly to shibboleths when the reality is so disagreeable and disgusting. Humanism & fraternity transcending the communal divide and broad and Catholic outlook born out of innocence and lack of awareness are ephemeral in their very nature. These traits are enduring only if they are an outcome of a long period of marination in educated and cultured social environment and of a

true appreciation of what religion means and stands for. This is true of the European peoples. In our present evolutionary state we are a fanatical, narrow-minded people who burn neighbours' houses and places of worship and shoot as a pastime, partly to prove that the Kashmiri is macho & not supine. Kashmiriyat of the classical times has got completely atrophied from people's behaviour-pattern and ethos. It will be a long wait and only sustained evolution and education will re-civilize us into decent Kashmiris. The suppressed devilry must expend itself.

Conclusion: Politics of Hope and Fear.

It will of interest to speak of the notion of hope and fear when it comes to writing a thesis on migrants, refugees, or simply the displaced. The most critical aspect of the life of the migrants is that of hope and fear. One cannot imagine displaced people without the fear of persecution, violence, or simply the fear coping with the challenges put forth by the alien space. In such a situation, it is the moral community of shared pain, trauma, and suffering which acts as a binder of the otherwise already fragmented community. In this dissertation, I have tried to bring forth the truth of the “victims” of displacement.

I can find my thoughts concurring with Charu Malhotra who says that though Kashmiri Pandits are dislocated from Kashmir, they are coping with changes in culture. Their economy has been adversely affected but they are negotiating to survive in the new host communities. The displaced people are utilizing various response strategies to deal with the changes in their social structure owing to displacement. Thus, displacement has both personal and political losses and gains. There are differences in the agency exercised by the different categories of individuals within the stratification system. In considering agency, it is however, important to also consider that agency will be determined by the resources that are at your disposal. The Kashmiri Pandit community has never been a heterogeneous community. There were people who were extremely poor and made a living out of performing *puja* in their locality back in the Kashmir Valley and making a survival therein. However, there are also people who were privileged back in the Valley and are so even today. So, the ones who are each and every day struggling to make a living would probably not be as agentive as the ones who have adequate resources with them, However, I do not wish to put across that the privileged people have more agency than the poor. The displaced Kashmiri people need to be recognized not simply as 'victims' but their agency needs to be acknowledged. The displaced people are not passive spectators. Through their active participation, they have given a new meaning to their life in

the current setting. Therefore structures, as Giddens (1984) held are not only constraining but also enabling.

My thoughts and arguments concur totally with Malhotra who considers, “ agency on the part of the victims and the other institutions in addressing the situation needs to be recognized.” The role of the state and the welfare organizations is considered secondary to their own efforts by the respondents in Jammu and Noida. The role of the state is, however, recognized by the people living in the camp areas. The role of the state is to be recognized in providing relief, ration and ORTs to the displaced people. The people living in the camp areas, however, reported of a casual attitude on the part of the government in providing them the adequate infrastructure and other facilities. Many of the Kashmiri Pandits during dissertation have mentioned that we have often been perceived as political pawns. We have never received adequate support from any government whatsoever. We would politically comply only with those who would empathize sincerely with their situation.

But like to speak of fear, let me quote from Joshua Baker who writes, “The assemblage of discourses, institutions and technologies that shape the social dimensions of fear may sometimes achieve a certain degree of stability and coherence over time. In these cases we might talk about a culture of fear.” She further writes, “Cultures of fear may be restricted to a particular locality, such as a city or nation-state, but they may also be global in scope. An example of a very longstanding global culture of fear is that of the Cold War, in which the fear of nuclear Armageddon radically reconfigured”. This culture of fear is one of the harshest reality of the present times. Today, in Kashmir every single person lives in the fear of being violated for the ‘disturbed’ circumstances of Kashmir. The Hindus and Muslims have been put against each other in the worst possible manner. So much so, that the displaced Hindus perceive the Kashmiri Muslims as their most veritable adversary. While the Kashmiri Muslims have often argued that the displacement of the Hindus of Kashmir from the valley has been the greatest political victory of those people in power who would inevitably gain from these circumstances. There are scholars who argue that it was the political ploy to move the Kashmiri Hindus out of Kashmir in order to better control “militancy” in the Valley. The Happy Valley bled in the 1990’s when the Kashmiri Hindus were displaced and violence upon and it is bleeding even today. I would quote a venerable Kashmiri Pandit in this regard, who said, “The world has witnessed how we were slaughtered, uprooted and kicked out of our homes. Our trauma, however, is by no means recent. Even in the earlier years after Independence in 1947, we were always discriminated against, deprived, humiliated and

systematically reduced to second-class citizens by the successive so-called "people's" governments. And the governments at the Centre ignored and betrayed us and denied us our constitutional as well as universal human rights. We have been willfully maligned, misrepresented and insulted by insinuations such as the most illogical and baseless proposition that the community left the Valley at the instigation of an individual. Or, again, that we were exploiters and had grabbed almost all government posts and positions of influence. At one time, a Central minister in a patchwork government went as far as to state this unpardonable, utter falsehood in an immoral and perverse effort to justify the insurgency in the state which is a challenge to the country's integrity and also minimize our intense trauma. Little did they see in the blindness of their personal and presumed political interests that they were cutting at the very roots of what they pretended to be fair and in the nation's good.

I would finally argue along the following lines, that through the practices of documentation of the events of violence, the "voice" of the victims gets sunk in the overarching intonations of the state. The documents of the state like voter cards, ration cards, etc; which are meant for the *security* of the population gets metamorphosed at level of the local into the hands of the perpetrators of violence when even establishing identity becomes a matter of life and death. Hence, governmental practices are therefore, fraught with paradoxes; on the one hand, it violates population through its machineries and at the same time it extends its arms for "rehabilitation" from the same trauma and injustice which it has itself perpetrated. The State in extending such "*rehabilitation*" facilities therefore, reflects a paradox intrinsic to the nature of "governance".

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