

## Research Article

# Diaspora Study of Kashmiri Pandits: The Lost Identity

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“We have lost our hope for freedom and we seek only to survive in the Galut, with our poverty and our degradation.” -Joseph Albo (after 1415)

**Abstract:** Diaspora literature is all about people of some community who are forced to leave their homeland and settle to a different place. Attributed to reasons such as recognition in the host nation, the time of their tenure in the host land, the success of that assembly, and so on, representations of some diasporas appear hazardous. Browsing observations on the lives of travellers from Kashmir to Jammu helps us to understand their representation in the out there cultural, political and economic life. The problem that women faced during this time is also discussed. It was in fact a very difficult time for the Kashmiri pandits and their families. All the difficulties that they faced are out there in the universe heard and shared by people all over the world.

**Keywords:** Camps, Community, Diaspora, Displacement, Home, Hindus, Kashmiri pandits, Lost Identity, Uncertainty, Women.

The definition of a diaspora is the dispersion of people from their homeland or a community formed by people who have exited or been removed from their homeland. Since its prominence in scholastic and geopolitical discourse began to erupt in the last part of the 1960s, the meaning of the word diaspora has been debated widely. Researchers have debated whether the word should apply to specific chronicled meetings, particularly but not just Jews, or whether it applies more broadly. At one extreme, some scholars have argued that the term should only refer to 'victim' groups dispersed through coercion, who maintain an antagonistic relationship with their host societies (for discussion see Safran 83-99, 255-291; Cohen 5-18, 507-20).

At the other outrageous, numerous scientists utilize the term freely to allude to any gathering living external its place of starting point – and even to any gathering showing a similar trademark – for instance there have been references to a 'gay diaspora' (and even, strangely, to an 'egg and cream diaspora'; Tölölyan 309-10). Some contend that trans-fringe gatherings, or alleged 'abandoned minorities' the place the outskirts has moved and the ethnic gatherings have stayed fixed, don't qualify as diaspora (Cohen). The "country" towards being referred to might be genuine or envisioned, and the gathering's "direction" towards it might appear as changing degrees of transnational distinguishing pieces of proof, or of transnational exercises, or a blend of both (see Snel et al. 285-308). Self-attribution is significant (Vertovec): individuals who share a trademark however don't characterize themselves or each other as per that trademark ought not really be thought of as individuals from a diaspora.

All of us knows that in various places of the country, the Pandits had to abandon their homes and look for oust. This did not happen in a day or two, rather it was the after-effect of the long-term accumulation of various items.

On October 14, 1989, people from Kashmir saw a large community taking an interest in the Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi parade, but there was something unexpected. They shouted the slogan :

Yahan kya chalega, Nizam-e-mustafa  
La sharqiya la garbiya, Islamia Islamia

Meaning : What will work here? The rule of Mustafa  
No eastern, no western, only Islamic, only Islamic(Rahul 65-66).

Whatever happened on those occasions wasn't only apparently something out of the blue. This was a battle being fought against the Hindus. Kashmir had never been a supporter of the Indian state. It was an immediate attack on their religion. Numerous Muslims agreed that they should be the piece of Pakistan by Jinnah 's two country hypothesis. On January 19, 1990 ,what was coming in the near future, became evident. The Farooq Abdullah led state government had resigned(A chronicle of important events and dates in J&K's political history) at the law and order was totally out of place. The central government sent Jagmohan as the governor and the Governor's rule was imposed in the state from January 20,1990. The night of 19th January experienced total anarchy. Thousands of anti-hindu people came out in the streets(Rawal TV). The loud speakers from the mosques broadcasted threatening messages. One such message was:

“Assi gacchi panu'nuy Pakistan, baatav rostuy, batenein saan.”(Rahul 51)

Meaning : We'll turn Kashmir into Pakistan, without the Pandit men, but with their women.

This is when Kashmiri pandits feel threatened and they thought that it was clear from this message that Muslim people did not want them in Kashmir. This huge story of migration that people hear is not just the story of migrating to another place happily. Kashmiri pandits were forced to leave their house, belongings, family behind they were not happy about the situation, certainly they had no choice. It was not only their house that they left behind it were their roots and identity that was lost too. When they left Kashmir in hurry many of their houses were looted, burned and illegally taken over along with their identity and normal life. Prof. Indu Kilam writes a poem in one of her research papers which portrays the identity crisis very well –

I left behind my identity  
When I was forced to flee  
And I need to prove my pedigree  
While I am here  
As a refugee

I possessed neither the ration card nor my school diploma  
nor the state subject certificate nor the voter's list  
my own or of my family  
My status is under question,

My identity suspect,  
for I am unable to adduce  
any documents or evidence  
or proof that I and my ancestors have lived in my motherland  
for five thousand years.

There are three hundred and fifty thousand here Who could vouch for me  
but their testimony is null and void  
for they, like me,  
roam without identity. Who am I,  
Oft do I ask myself and others too,  
but a reply  
is hard to come by.

This sonnet draws out the feelings of a displaced person quite well. While conversing with one of my companions, I felt the torment of being driven away from your own property. He said - "Yes I go to Kashmir. We have a house there. I am mindful of the apparent multitude of roads, each niche and corner yet I am not one of them any longer. I go to that place as a guest, I no longer go to my home." Aside from this, it turns out to be troublesome nowadays when it comes to saving the Kashmiri personality. Pandits fled to different parts of the country-the people in exile camps who had companions or family members in different parts of the nation, fled there and the people who had no place to go-took shelter. The younger generation, who were small children at the hour of mass migration or who were simply conceived, don't see a point in returning back to the valley. The children have grown up in this condition from the very beginning so they don't have any attachment to the valley nor they would like to go there and settle down and they are right in a way because there is no future in the valley as there are no factories no glamorous life and most important so much of insecurity at every hour of the day. This was a normal-forward understanding, what is more important is the way she does not want to attach to the country simply and remain focused on it, while the village actually needs to be comfortable for the middle age citizen. This undeniably indicates that the more youthful youngsters of the Kashmiri Pandits is not peculiar to the safety of their characters. With the multidimensional relation of their character has gotten much more delicate. The departure occurred over 20 years back. This is a huge time span for memories to faint. Dr. Shakti Bhan who is a gynaecologist in New Delhi and who is a Kashmiri Pandit, admits that the identity of the Kashmiri Pandits is getting eroded at a rapid pace(NDTV, "Kashmiri Pandits).

One essay recollecting the events of the day indicate the shock and fear many Pandits felt:

When I began to hear screaming incoherently on the expressways, just a short lived time period had managed to pass. There were shrieks of 'Allah O Akbar,' and I could make people shout out. What's more, it seemed like the sounds were moving nearer. I was frightened, so there was nothing I might do at all ... And then they appeared all outside our residence from nowhere, shouting,' come out Dr. Bhan, we know you're inside.' Oddly enough, I'd looked out before from the higher part of the household and seen that a large number of the youthful people in the party were young men I have transmitted to the clinic! They were also shouting for my flesh here "(Raina 178-179)."

Another article frequently circulated in the mid-1990s in which a columnist describes a congregation in Jammu of a dislocated Kashmiri Pandit also gives a sense of the occurrences:

Resulted in a huge "azadi" processions in late January, they left Srinagar. "It was getting too tense", she says, "everyone seemed so agitated especially in our locality ... all day and all night there were loud slogans from mosques around our house...." She acknowledges that there was no direct danger to her family, the family had lived there for decades and the community never gave up any trouble. "But we kept hearing people being killed specially Kashmiri Pandits and the younger lot of men kept shouting azadi, azadi. At night we could hear shooting and blasts...It was getting too much so we had to move...nobody likes leaving home but we had to" (Thakur 1991:185).

The account that the people exchanged pleads guilty to the uncertainty they were experiencing. The commemorations seem to have unexpectedly arisen, re-casting the region into a target zone. The people saw the observances as a challenge targeted towards them, like so many other Pandits.

Not only the community but women were at great risk and scared for their life. They faced an extremely difficult situation in those times. Some of them were married early in haste before the legal age of getting married just to keep them safe in case the mob harasses the girl. This was done because the people heard about the abduction of single women and believed that union was a solution to guarantee them. Another people believed in making his girl wear several pieces of clothing on the off chance that people break into their house, that would have made it difficult to rape her. They told girls that she would go to the top of their residence and then leap into the street to end it all on the off possibility that she would be unable to escape from a horde. While the fear of violence against women is true, there are also incidents of Pandits being responsible for by Muslims.

Koul (1999) narrates that Kashmiri pandits, who had been ethnically cleansed from the Valley, were in a State of diaspora and dispersal. The displacement had been a continuous cycle straight from the beautiful night of 19 January 1990 and continued until April 2003, when an enormous cycle took place. As a result of the lack of security and serious danger to their lives, the dislocated Kashmiris took hideouts and resettlement in Jammu, Udhampur, from Anantnag, South Kashmir Delhi, Chandigarh, Bombay, Bangalore, and also in the nation's Southern Urban Areas. At the central and state and local level, the legislators chose to group the sheared Pandits as "transients" and not "outcasts" or "outrooted people." The intention behind such trickery was seen to be explained on specialised levels, but the irony stayed that India's deplorable inhabitants lost many benefits due to a deceptive classification labelled on to them and needed to travel from other remote locations out of the Valley. Koul (1994) and Koul (1996) mentioned that in the rural areas of Kashmir, thousands of almond and apple orchards owned by Kashmiri pandits were chopped off.

Loizos' (1981) ethnography of Greek Cypriots uprooted by war in Cyprus gives extraordinary consideration to issues of accommodating fundamental needs, and the huge feeling of hardship exuding from the loss of past jobs and particularly the loss of status and self-esteem because of dispossession and relying upon good cause. It has likewise been seen that the uprooted have frequently been constrained into relationship of reliance with helpful offices, which may prompt lost status and sense of pride (Harrell-Bond 1986). A comparable circumstance has likewise been accounted for in investigations of advancement incited relocation as removal came about in the loss of land, yet in addition in squeezing political authority inside the network that has been dislodged, common and connection relations, interruption to custom movement and an

overall loss of way of life (Colson 1971, Scudder 2009). Misfortune and dispossession along these lines includes both material and psycho-social contemplations.

Namely 'home' and 'uncertainty', prevails in terms of Kashmiri pandits. Induced refugees are generally viewed as missing a family and a fixed position that is supposed to be restored. But how do people like the Kashmiri Pandits visualize being at home? Is home thought of as a hometown, city, area, or an apartment's structural characteristics? Is it only in remembrance and remorse that homeland remains, a community that once was but is no more? Home does not only apply to spatial spaces, it also relies on emotion and cognitive problems. The concept of recovery, as mentioned earlier, is about the concept of household for the relocated, which helps them to create continuity of life and helps management approaches for those undergoing prolonged withdrawal in the present. Kashmir 's re-visitation of the Pandits as explorers, on service, or all to examine alone. They can return with relatives or entirely. Some may see their trip as an assertion it was because of continued hazard and the inconceivability of residing with neighbours from an earlier date, one could not re-visit assimilating in Kashmir. Someone else can experience the pleasure of getting back to their country and fulfil their aching. There is also concern about the risks of departure so far as Pandits can feel at repatriating in what is still a region of contention as far as economic and political fragility is concerned. Resettlement can become a consequential dislocation, notably for people who have revived lives abandoned elsewhere and now display a 'confusion of permanent quality.

Two issues are sparked by a total commitment to the Kashmiri Pandits on the topic of relocation in the end: residence and insecurity. The domestic problem, its catastrophe, and the struggle to regain it is an essential part of the restricted edge effects. Dwelling (and region) is the focus, either through inhabitants or as restricted travellers, of longing and sentimentality and democratic sphere. It is related to sense of belongingness or becoming odd. Although the Pandits respond in an unpredictable way to their adventures, their experiences show how transfer accelerates the ruptured to come through after some period with the relevance of residence.

In August 2019, with thunderous applause from the Indian Parliament and massive condemnation from Pakistan and the Kashmir Valley people, the Kashmiri Muslims (Eurasian times) abrogated Jammu and Kashmir's special status in August 2019.. People had various opinion about this act some feel insecure and some felt that this was the new ray of hope of freedom for Kashmiri Pandits.

The Kashmiri Pandits immigrant association has requested the government of India to restore Jammu and Kashmir's national identity and unique status. The initiative named Rehabilitation, Relief and Reconstruction requested that Article 370 be restored in Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August prior to the completion of the year in which it was repealed by the Government of India. The revocation revoked the special status of the state and subdivided it into two jurisdictions of the Union, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

"We demand immediate restoration of statehood and special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian Constitution ensures the right to equality that extends to individuals, communities, religions, regions, and all social and political institutions. The right to equality ensures non-discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, region, or any other social and political sub-categories. Never before a state has been downgraded. This is not done in a democracy. One can't have a military solution to a political situation and can't go to war with their own people,"

Satish Mahaldar, leader of the migrant organisation called Rehabilitation, Relief, and Restoration of Kashmiri Pandits, said in a statement released.

The party made an application to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Home Affairs and the government claiming,

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir were your own people, love them. As a good gesture, confer special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The representatives /parliamentarians are for the people, by the people and they need to understand the aspiration and the wishes of the people"( Shuja-ul-Haq).

Secondly , the Government of India and the State can not arbitrarily mandate the deportation of the Pandits to their country. It must be the result of an agreement between the various state opposition leaders and the representatives of various communities. There is a legal obligation for the indian government to work towards this kind of resolution.

It has not, at current, already been doing. It can be done by community outcry to do so. It is appropriate for the distress of the Pandits and their prospects to avoid pointless breast-beating. It is time to search for tangible ways of allowing integrity and dignity to migrate to their descendants. Three decades later, it is imperative that Kashmiri Hindus return to their homes and assimilate them with complete reputation, pride and protection, therefore the entire object of repealing Article 370 will be vanquished. The Valley circumstance need to become common so that these people no longer just had to survive around their own community as internally displaced people.

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