

nominate a leader from Jammu. This leader should be consulted for all Jammu affairs and have as high a status as any other Kashmiri leader. We should try to rally around such a leader. This might not be a democratic way. But in the present undemocratic system, if Shiekh Abdullah's leadership is indispensable and the integrity of the State is to be maintained, this is the most feasible way to defend the self-respect and honour of Jammu.⁸

Jammu and the Pandit Migration

In the late 1980 and early 1990, the Kashmiri Hindus, known as Kashmiri, fled from the valley towards the southern part of the state and the rest of the cities in India. The Pandit migration coincided with the resurgence of Hindu rights in India. Thus, the Kashmiri migrant Hindu community emerged as an important factor in the 1990s as the Bharatiya Janta Party and its affiliate members increasingly used the issue of Kashmiri Pandits as a political mobilisation tool and quickly associated it with the Hindu nationalist project. After the Pandit migration, Hindu-right wing leadership constantly raised the issues of Kashmiri Pandits in their speeches. The then BJP president L K Advani, in response to the Pandit migration, said, "None raised the voice when 40 odd temples were desecrated in Kashmir. Why these double standards"? According to Nandudar (2006), the BJP's Hindutva politics worked on the perception of a 'Muslim threat' to the Hindu majority, which, given the departure of Pandits from a Muslim majority state, served their ideology. In one of their publications, the Hindu right-wing political group RSS, documenting the 'genocide' of Kashmiri Pandits, claimed that 600 Pandits were murdered and 36 temples desecrated."⁹ The Sangh Parivar situated itself in hostility against the secular nationalist position as it said it ensured minority appeasement at the cost of the majority. Thus, Hindu nationalism was becoming a reservoir for middle-class

8 Desh Sewak, Jammu, 23 March 1950.

9 Speeches by senior Bjp leadership as recorded in Anand Patwardan's documentary Final Solution made in 2012.

anxieties. As in the case of Kashmir, the fleeing minority became the plank for communalism and xenophobia. The Kashmiri Pandit issue was invoked in political manifestos, speeches and slogans, repeatedly arguing that congress leaders had implemented minority appeasement policies for decades but could not provide adequate protection for the Pandit community, which was a minority in Kashmir. Duschinski (2008) writes that “Hindu nationalist rhetoric presented the anxieties of the Kashmiri Hindu migrant community as a mirror of anxieties of the Indian middle class themselves, who felt vulnerable to increasing mobilisation among minority and impoverished classes. This position also enabled Hindi nationalist political parties to strengthen their claim as defenders of national boundaries and national interests in India.” Thus, the Hindu right positioned themselves within this framework vis a vis the Kashmiri Pandit discourse. With the eruption of militancy in 1989, Kashmiri Pandits felt vulnerable, and the targeted killings of important members of the community of the community aggravated the feeling of insecurity. The state narrative believes that the target killings were mainly responsible for the departure, but the killings were not entirely based on religion but more so on political affiliations. The argument is supported by Madan (1993) and Bose (2003), who argue that targeting was not based on religion; in fact, the number of targeted Muslims surpassed the number of targeted Hindus. Allegedly, some local newspapers also carried direct threats ordering the Pandit minority to leave the valley or be prepared to be killed. The Hizbul Mujahideen issued the threats issued. Evans (2002) makes a claim by the valley using census data that not more than 155,000-170,000 Pandits left the valley at the onset of 1989 violence. Most of the Kashmiri Pandits moved towards Jammu. However, the state outrageously had no adequate requirements for the relief and rehabilitation of the migrants. As the state stumbled to offer assistance, socio-cultural organisations, many of which had loose affiliations with Hindu rights, came forward to help. Duschinski (2008) notes that the community found support for Kashmiri Hindu families who had moved to Delhi over the years. The other source of support was the political parties, which had their vested interests. Panun Kashmir, a prominent Kashmiri Pandit organisation, claims that the Pandits were

thrown out of their homeland after a sustained campaign of intimidation and harassment by the secessionists. It was done to create a Hind-free Kashmir where the goal of 'Islamisation' could be easily achieved". Behera (2000) records that the Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits shared an ethno-nationalist identity. With the increasing momentum of the self-determination movement, the community began feeling vulnerable and insecure. The other narrative sharply blames Governor Jagmohan for hatching a conspiracy to comb out militancy, but after shifting Kashmiri Pandits outside the valley for an interim period. Akbar (1991) reinforces that Jagmohan encouraged the scared Kashmiri Pandits to create legitimacy for his harsh tactics. Some prominent citizens did make efforts to stop the Pandits from fleeing. However, it did not yield any results. Traditionally, Kashmiri Pandits sided with the National Conference on a local level and the Congress Party at the national level. Even the Praja Parishad, the vanguard party of the Jana Sangh, was not popular among the Pandits. However, the situation began changing in 1990 as the relationship between Kashmiri Muslims and the Kashmiri Hindus came under a double threat. One was from fundamentalist militant groups like Hizbul and another from the Hindu nationalistic organisations like Sangh Parivar. The Hindu nationalist organisations offered support to the Kashmiri Pandit cause for reinforcing other causes like full integration of Kashmir into India.

Panun Kashmir was formed in 1991 to articulate a vision for Kashmiri Pandits and work towards the cultural revival of the community. They demanded a homeland for Kashmiri Pandits for the formation of a separate homeland, which would comprise the eastern and northern basin of the river Jhelum. The demarcated territory would have the status of union territory and governed by the constitution of India. The homeland would provide resettlement to all those Hindus who left the valley. Some community organisations responded harshly to such demands and saw the demands as part of political manoeuvring. In 2007, Kashmiri Pandits formed their political party. The formation was due to non-dependence on mainstream parties like the Bharatiya Janta Party and the Indian National Congress.