

The Question Of Kashmiri Pandits In India

Dr Jai Kishan Bhardwaj

Assistant Professor, Institute of Law, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra,
Email: jkbhardwaj@kuk.ac.in

INTRODUCTION

The Hindus of Kashmir valley, a large part of majority of whom were Kashmiri Pandits, were forced to flee the Kashmir valley because of being targeted by JKLF and other Islamist insurgents during late 1989 and early 1990. Only two to three thousand remains there from 300000 to 600000 in the valley in 2016. According to Indian government, more than 62000 families are registered as Kashmiri refugees including some Sikh families¹. Most of them are resettled around national capital Delhi and other neighbouring states in various government funded refugee camps including in Purkhoo, Muthi and Mishriwala. Between 2011 to 2012, the Pandits, along with migrant Muslim and Sikh families, were shifted to a large settlement known as Jagti. The camp, which is about 20 kilometres from Jammu city, opened in 2011 and now holds about 4,200 families. The government gives registered Kashmiri migrants get a monthly sustenance of Rs 2,500 per person, as well as 9 kg of rice, 2 kg of wheat flour and 1 kg of sugar. In July 2017, the Supreme Court (SC) rejected a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking a fresh probe into the killing of Pandits in the valley, filed by the NGO Roots of Kashmir. The court said, "Twenty-seven years have gone by. Where will the evidence come from? Such a plea should have been moved a long time ago." However, in a separate judgment, the SC decided to investigate 186 anti-Sikh riot cases of 1984².

Under the 1975 accord, Sheikh Abdullah agreed to measures previously undertaken by central government in Jammu and Kashmir to integrate the state into India. Sociologist Farrukh Fahim states that it was met with hostility among people of Kashmir and laid the groundwork for the future insurgency. Those opposed to it including Jamat-a Islami Kashmir and People's League in Indian Jammu and