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Partition And Displacement: Deprivation Faced By The Pakistan Occupied Jammu And Kashmir (PoJK) Displaced Community

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Abstract

Pakistan has consistently acted as an aggressor against India, causing disturbances both directly and indirectly on the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. By targeting India, Pakistan has sought to establish hegemony over the region through both timely and untimely measures. The attack in 1947 represents the first direct assault on Jammu and Kashmir, revealing Pakistan's intentions towards the region and its inhabitants. This assault was not only brutal but also resulted in demographic changes and alterations to the territorial boundaries of the state. It displaced thousands of families, effects that persisted for several decades. Moreover, Pakistan's actions led to the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir, with a portion of the land unlawfully occupied by Pakistan, known as Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK). This paper aims to analyse the suffering experienced by displaced families of PoJK following their displacement, as well as the dynamics of their identity in the contemporary context. Therefore, Pakistan remains not only an aggressor but also continues to inflict harm upon India through numerous strategic actions.

Keywords: Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), Displacement, Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistani Attack.

Introduction

On 15th August 1947, India gained independence from British rule, marking the partition of 'British India' into two parts: India and Pakistan. Partition led to large-scale communal disturbances in different parts of the two countries, resulting in a mass movement of people across the border, which has left an unforgettable mark on the minds of people. According to the 1931 census, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was about 640 km in length from north to south and 480 km from east to west. The total area of the state was 218,780 sq km, of which Jammu province occupied an area of 32,067 sq km and Kashmir 21,166 sq km. With the marking of the ceasefire line between India and Pakistan in the Jammu and Kashmir state, the area of the state under India's territory was reduced to 1,38,992 sq.km, leaving 79,788sq.km of its area in Pakistan's illegal occupation. Jammu province was reduced to 26,689.4 sq. km, and that of Kashmir to 15,520.3 sq. km. The bulk of the population in the state consisted of three main communities: Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. Some Christians, Buddhists, and Jains were also there, but their number was quite small.

Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir, PoJK, as called in India, was legally a part of India before the Pakistan aggression in 1947. Today, PoJK lies in the illegal and forceful confinement of Pakistan, called by them as Azad Kashmir in Pakistan. The areas under PoJK are Mirpur (Bimber, Kotli), Poonch (Haveli, Sadhnuti, Pllundari, Mendhar, Bagh), and Muzaffrabad (Karnah, Uri).

Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 was an independent princely state governed by Maharaja Hari Singh. With India's independence, the Maharaja had to decide whether to accede to the Union of India or the Dominion of Pakistan before 15 August 1947.

The Maharaja wanted to retain the independent status of his state due to his lack of trust in both Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Pakistan's Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Therefore, he signed a Standstill Agreement with both Pakistan and the Union of India to remain neutral and not to be a part of either country. India honoured that agreement, but Pakistan did not.

Pakistan regulars of the army, retired personnel, along with tribals, attacked Jammu and Kashmir on 22 October 1947, which resulted in large-scale displacement of Hindus and Sikhs to safer parts of J&K, particularly in the Jammu region and also in other states of India like Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, etc.

The innocent Hindu Sikh population became the victims of Pakistan's aggression. The houses of the people were burned and looted, women were dishonoured, and thousands of people were killed. Many women, to save their honour, killed themselves or requested their husbands to do so. Raiders even carried away several women with them, but the women refused them, but they were unmoved and brutally raped them. To escape them, women lit a fire and, by chanting sacred mantras, jumped into it. The merciless raiders dragged their half-burned bodies and tore the ornaments from their bodies, or women threw their children first into rushing rivers, and then they jumped themselves into it, and all this happened in the twinkling of an eye. Raiders were brutal to Sikhs who could be easily distinguished because of their beard and long hair, and were labelled as '*Ball Wale Kafir*', and were forced to conversions.

The government, to help the people, set up Rehabilitation relief camps at various places. Some of them are as follows:

1. Nagrota Camp
2. Chatta Camp
3. Satwari Camp
4. Simbal Camp
5. Yol Camp (Kangra, Himachal)
6. Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh)

There were some other places also where the rehabilitation of PoJK displaced families took place, like in Jammu at Kachi Chawni, Badyal Brahmana, R.S Pura, Ustad Mohalla, Shahidi Chowk, Jourian, Rehari, Sarwal, Adarsh colony (Udhampur), Mirpur colony (Pathankot), Jallander, Ganganagar (Rajasthan), Narayana (Delhi), Alwar camp (Rajasthan), Sunder Bani, etc.

Objectives of Study

1. To study the hardship faced by the displaced during and after displacement
2. To study the change in their socio-economic status.
3. To study how the communities of PoJK have made their identities firm post-displacement.

Research Methodology

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect the data. Primary sources include interview schedules and observations. Secondary sources include government records, newspapers, books, reports, journals, literature, the internet and other similar sources.

Area of Study

In the Jammu region, the areas where PoJK displaced families were rehabilitated included Satwari, Chatta Camp, boor camp, R.S Pura and Simbal Camp, which were taken for study.

Sampling

1. A purposive sampling method was used.
2. A case study method was used to study people who are the actual survivors of the 1947 attack.
3. The observation method is also used.

Significance of Study

1. To highlight the struggle for survival of the PoJK Community.
2. To make the young generation aware of their ancestors' struggle.
3. To bring the community into the mainstream along with other affected communities of Jammu and Kashmir.

Findings of the Study

The displaced people faced numerous problems after their displacement. Some of them are listed below:

1. Cultural Degeneration
2. Loss of ties to Homeland
3. Loss of Nativity
4. Loss of Neighbourhood
5. Loss of Movable and Immovable property
6. Loss of Social Support and Community Backing
7. Loss of Family Members by Untimely Deaths
8. Change in Socio-Economic Conditions
9. Lack of Government Preparedness

Challenges faced by the displaced families in new social settings after displacement. Some of them are listed below:

1. Lack of Medical Facilities in a New Social Setting
2. Various health problems due to Overcrowding
3. Epidemic-like Situations
4. Legal Identity and Documentation Issues
5. Registration Issues
6. Loss of Education for Children
7. Lack of Resources
8. Scarcity of Food; Hunger and Malnutrition
9. Lack of Privacy
10. Lack of basic Civic Facilities
11. Feeling of Insecurity
12. Loss of Identity
13. Change in Family Structure; Breakdown
14. Post-Displacement Trauma, Stress and Grief
15. Lack of Shelter
16. Inequality in Relief

Current Challenges Faced by PoJK Displaced Families:

1. Incomplete Compensation
2. Political Neglect
3. Socio-Economic Hardships
4. Unfulfillment Right of Return to PoJK Land

There are a few lines that show the pain behind the words by Poonchies (PoJK Displaced)

*“Watan Sada Poonch Rangeela, Sab Watana Tun Aala
Auran Nu Rab Rozi Denda, Pooncian Nu Desh Nikala”*

PoJK displaced families have long remained marginalised in historical records as victims. Their identities were also eroded during the process of displacement and resettlement. It took the community years to recover what was lost, both economically and in terms of their sense of identity. Consequently, the forced displacement experienced by this community has not only threatened their physical existence but also threatened their historical and cultural identity. The community was displaced because they refused to join hands with the Pakistani attackers.

Conclusion:

It is disheartening that a community that was the actual inhabitant of the Jammu and Kashmir land have to face displacement because of the aggression of the Pakistani Community. Aggression and attack have not only deprived families of their homes but have also made them vulnerable to perish in the times to come. But it was the strong spirit of the community that they survived the Pakistan attacks, but at the cost of losing everything they had built over the years from generation to generation.

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