

Identity and Mass Migration: A Study of Self-Image/Self-Esteem of Non-Migrant Kashmiri Pandits

Dr Manzoor Hussain, Rafia Rashid

Department of sociology University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India

***Corresponding author**

Dr Manzoor Hussain

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Abstract: In 1989-90 when majority of Kashmiri Pandits decided to migrate from the valley some of the Kashmiri Pandit families decided to stay back in the valley despite all the odds. These Pandits are known as non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have lost their distinct identity after the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits to Jammu and other parts of India. Earlier, the Kashmiri Pandits were considered to be homogeneous group and had distinct unique identity. But after mass migration of 1989, this unique identity got diluted and had a negative impact on the self-image/self-esteem of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Before mass Migration, the self-image/self-esteem of Kashmiri Pandits was very high but then it lost its uniqueness. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have got comprising self-image in the sense that they compromise even on performing certain customs and traditions. Before migration, they used to stick to their customs and tradition but now these have lost its rigidity to a large extent. Based on a sample of 150 respondents selected from Srinagar and Budgam districts of Kashmir valley, the study examines the impact of mass migration on the self-image/self-esteem of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. A stratified random sampling technique was used to collect information from non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Besides, community members and socially notable persons were approached to identify the respondents. For the present study, a explorative research design was used. This paper provides useful insights into the identity crisis visa-vis self-image and self-esteem of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits.

Keywords: Identity, migration, self-image, self-esteem, non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

INTRODUCTION

Identity is the establishment by an individual of an association with a person of similar background not only on an individual level but as a group. The association further visualises the establishment of a common bond of sympathy with the group or the community. This finds overtly in the common celebrations of festivals, religious and social, which include matrimonial alliances and other fraternal congregations and conclaves [1]. A well-developed identity needs to be flexible and open; identity commitments continue to change and evolve over time [2]. Erikson [3] has described identity as 'a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the sameness and continuity of some shared world image [4]. Identity and identification are two different terms. Identity is only a label whereas identification classifies the act itself. Identity is best understood as being both contextual and rational, while as identification is best seen as inherently a process. However, one's identity formation occurs through one's identification with

significant others. According to Erikson, identity formation is a lifelong process and rejected European notion that personality is fixed and life is determined; instead, he adopted the more American philosophical view that individual must take some personal responsibility for his or her life [5]. In order to become a mature person every individual should have a sense of developing self. Every one's idea about self-conception is a combination of different identifications. Identities are formed on the basis of many experiences and traits. Most of them are open to different interpretations. Race and skin colour is a good example. Many of the identities are not based on ascribed traits but on shared beliefs, concerns, and values, which are varyingly open to acquire by choice. Identities vary in many other ways. They are the attributions made about the persons and self-designations.

Identity among non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

In 1989-90 when majority of Kashmiri Pandits decided to migrate from the valley some of the Kashmiri Pandits decided to stay back in the valley

despite all the odds. These Pandits are known as non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Sharma [6] reveals that the Brahmans of Kashmir were in past times renowned for their learning and scholastic achievements, and are known as Kashmiri Pandits all over India. The Sanskrit word Pandit means 'a learned man' they refer to themselves by the word *Bhatta* which is the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit *bhartri*, meaning 'doctor'. Wakhlu [7] reveals that Kashmir's association with Hinduism is very old. The very name Kashmir is said to be derived from Kashyapa, one of the seven Rishis in Hindu mythology. Most Kashmiri Pandits are devout Shaivites, however many Kashmiri Pandit families who had migrated into other Indian territories have been ardent vaishnavites as well [6]. Kalla [8] says that Kashmiri Pandits have been considered to be the descendants of the so called "Aryans" in purest form [8].

The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have lost their distinct identity after the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir. Earlier, the Kashmiri Pandits were considered to be homogeneous group and had distinct unique identity. But after mass migration of 1989, this unique identity got diluted and with the passage of time this community has lost its unique identity to a large extent. This mass migration of 1989 has a negative impact on the self-image/self-esteem of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Before mass migration, the self-image/self-esteem of Kashmiri Pandits was very high but then it lost its uniqueness. Earlier, Kashmir society was socially united and a kin-bound society but now it has been socially fragmented and social cohesion is weak [9].

The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have got comprising self-image in the sense that they compromise even on performing certain customs and traditions. Before migration they used to stick to their customs and tradition but now, tradition and culture has lost its rigidity to a large extent and the use of *Tilak* on forehead is seen rare. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits feel isolation and social distance because of mass migration of their relatives and friends from the valley. Also, self-esteem of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits is not fully satisfactory in the sense that this community is trying to keep its unique identity alive in Kashmir by practicing their religious as well as social festivals jointly especially the elders of this community but the young generation of this community is living outside. The community feels fragmented and has a loose sense of community sentiment. Earlier, they were living in groups performing customs and rituals together, and sharing their sorrows and happiness with each other, but now due to the mass migration they feel disintegrated. There is lack of we-feeling, social solidarity and they feel alienated in their own homeland. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits are in search of their

traditional identity but they face lot of problem in reviving it. The community of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits is living in isolation now. Their traditions, customs, rituals are getting vanished day by day because this community has disintegrated. However, many non-migrant Kashmiri Pandit associations and Samities have been formed to look after their needs and to take care like Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS, 2015) which was formed in the year 1998. In spite of these efforts, non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits happens to be diluted community and face identity crises.

Identity and Mass migration

The mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir had led to a deep impact on identity of Kashmiri Pandits who decided to stay in the valley because they do not want to leave their birth place. But now, the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits who decided to stay here had lost their identity and also their social and cultural linkages are getting weaker with the passage of time. There is a continuous migration of young generation of this community either for employment or for job which is resulting in the population decrease of this community at a rapid rate. Majority of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits are regretting their decision of staying in the valley because they are isolated from their community members, they find their community nowhere now. The Kashmiri Pandits who migrated from the valley feel that these non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits did not cooperate with them at the time of migration. The biggest loss of this community is emotional loss. Despite the consolation of other communities they do not get that satisfaction which they would have got them from their loved ones. In socio-religious functions the participation is very less because of which this community feels identity crises. Before migration on the eve of *Navreh* big functions would be held at *Ram Mandir, Hari Parbat, Badam Wari*, and at district levels. The children and newly married woman would wear new clothes and go to these places along with their families taking food or tea with them. But after migration all these things totally vanished. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits celebrate their religious as well as social festivals at individual level because they are surrounded by the lesser number of their community members which is giving them the sense that the identity of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits is not alive in Kashmir.

The total population of Jammu and Kashmir, as per a report published in the year 2001 was 1, 00, 69,917; out of this Hindu population in the state was 19, 30,448 [10]. Prior to migration, Kashmiri Pandits were concentrated in Kashmir valley and constituted nearly 8 percent of Kashmir's population. In the year 1990, migration took place throughout the valley. Prevailing situation at that time forced Kashmiri Pandit families to

move out of their motherland, within a short span of one week to fortnight [11]. The population of these non-migrated Kashmiri Pandits is also draining out. After extensive research and analysis of different census reports of state and central government about the

population of Kashmiri Pandits from time to time reveals some interesting facts about the population of the community and also after migration in the early 1990 [11]. The population of Kashmiri Pandits from the period 1990-2008 is shown in the table given below:

Table-1: Kashmiri Pandit Population, 2015

Time Period	Kashmir Pandit Population	
	Total non-migrant families living in Kashmir valley	Total migrant families left the Kashmir valley
Till 01.01.1990	75,343	–
01.01.1990-31.08.1990	40,741	34,602
01.09.1990-31.03.1992	6,460	34,281
01.04.1992-31.03.1998	3,773	2,687
01.04.1998-31.03.2008	651	3,122

Source: - Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS), 2015.

The census carried out by the Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti [13] reveals that there are 651 families living in the valley having less than 3000 persons by the end of March 2008. As the process of migration never stopped so the figure after the gap of 2 years, i.e. 31.03.2010 could be more less as it seems from the trend. Also it has been found that during 1931 the total Kashmiri Pandit Population in the valley was 53,782 families comprising 2,52,096 persons which came till 1947 to 47,308 families comprising 2,21,752 persons.

The non-migrant Pandits living in the valley have pinned high hopes for the announcement of a package for the rehabilitation of this minority community. According to Chunni Lal, President Hindu Welfare Society Kashmir (HWSK) “we stayed back in Kashmir during the conflict; most of us are internally displaced in the valley. The government is not taking care of those who stayed back in Kashmir and continue to face several issues, especially those related to employment and rehabilitation. Around 650 non-migrant Pandit families are at present living across the valley and they have been staging regular protests in the past to highlight their demands.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Universe of the study

The universe of the present study constitutes non-migrant Pandit community of district Srinagar and Budgam of Kashmir valley. As per the census of Jammu and Kashmir, 2011 [12] the total population of Srinagar district was 12, 36,829 and the literacy rate as 71 percent and the total number of households in Srinagar district as 1,91,678. The same census of 2011 reveals the total population of Budgam district as 7,53,745 and the literacy rate as 57.98 percent. The total number of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandit households is not available as no information is recorded in censuses of Jammu and Kashmir. However, as per the President

of Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS, 2015), the estimated number of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandit households in Kashmir is 651 residing at 192 places, out of which 171 households are residing in Srinagar and 47 in Budgam, respectively. The total population of Kashmiri Pandits living in Kashmir valley is approximately as 2,765 persons.

Sampling plan of the study

The present study is based on sample of 150 respondents, 110 from Srinagar and 40 from Budgam district. A stratified random sampling technique was used to collect information from the respondents as shown in the table below:

Table-2: Sampling Plan of the Study
Total Sample: 150

R (40)		U (110)	
M (20)	F (20)	M (55)	F (55)

R = Rural, U = Urban, M = Male, F = Female

Techniques of data collection

To carry out this study, the technique of interview schedule and observation were used to get objective and reliable findings. The relevant literature was reviewed and analysed to provide some direction in drafting schedule. Several questions were framed on the basis of themes. Direct questions were put in a very simple language so that they could be well understood by the respondents. However, some questions which could be answered with a ‘Yes or No’ were considered to be easier to answer and therefore more suitable for the respondents. The questions were arranged in a sequence from easier and general questions to more pointed ones. Care was also taken to avoid any influence by the contents of the preceding questions upon the answers of the questions following them. The use of body language such as facial expression, gestures

were given due importance. If the answers to the questions were ambiguous and confusing, supplementary questions were asked. Both fixed choice and open ended questions were put in the interview schedule. In order to give a practical shape to the research, the researcher went for a pilot study and collected the data so that the researcher may arrive at an empirical conclusion about the study. The research was not merely a data collection exercise all along but also interview schedule and observation as a techniques waere used to assess the overall impact of mass migration on the identity of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. All possible efforts have been made to maintain the validity and reliability of the facts required for the analysis.

Hypotheses of the study

- Non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits are losing their unique identity. They are facing identity crises in their own homeland.
- The decision of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits staying back in the valley despite mass migration in 1989-90 was based on socio-cultural factors.
- Non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits are having a compromising self-image/self-esteem in Kashmir.

Objectives of the study

- To trace the factors responsible for non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits decision to stay in their homeland despite the mass migration of their community members,
- To explore the impact of mass migration on the unique identity of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits,
- To analyse the social dimension of problems faced by non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits visa- vis their self-image and self-esteem.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Identity, mass migration and non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

The movement by people from one place to another with the intentions of settling temporarily or permanently in the new location is called migration. The movement of people is often from one country to another or it may be internal migration. The conflict situation in Kashmir in 1989-90 led to the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir. Despite the mass migration some of the Kashmiri Pandits decided to stay in the valley. These non-Migrant Kashmiri Pandits have remained a small segment of the much larger whole of Kashmiri society. In order to find out what was the impact of mass migration on the identity of these non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits the respondents were asked certain questions and the responses provided by the respondents are given in the table below:

Table-3: Identity, mass migration and non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

Theme	Response	Number	Percent
Reasons for staying in the valley despite mass migration in 1989	Attachment to the homeland	67	44.67
	Family members did not want to leave	50	33.33
	Property /Assets	24	16.00
	Security of job	09	6.00
Total		150	100.00
Are you satisfied with the decision of staying in the valley	Yes	27	18.00
	No	123	82.00
Total		150	100.00
If no, what are the reasons	Your community who migrated feels that they did not cooperated with them	06	4.88
	Find your community nowhere now	51	41.46
	Find your community isolated now	44	35.78
	Said their community is now fragmented	22	17.88
Total		123	100.00
Do you find your identity as it was before migration	Yes	01	0.67
	No	149	99.3
Total		150	100.00
If no, what are the reasons	Identity has been diluted because of non-availability Of community members	86	57.71
	Identity crises is there	46	30.88
	Functioning of religious activities are very less	17	11.41
Total		149	100.00

Responding to the question what was their reason of staying in the valley despite mass migration in 1989; out of 150 respondents, 67 respondents (44.67 percent) said attachment to home land, 50 respondents (33.33 percent) family members did not want to leave, 24 respondents (16.00 percent) property/asset, and 9 respondents (6.00 percent) security of job. At the time of mass migration these Kashmiri Pandits decided to stay in the valley because they do not want to leave their birth place. But now the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits who decided to stay here are in the danger of losing their cultural identity, their social and cultural linkages are getting weaker day by day. Mass migration has an impact on the social fabric of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. There is a continuous migration of young generation of this community either for employment or for job which is resulting in the population decrease of this community at a rapid rate. It was observed that mass migration has attributed the dilution of their unique identity. Again, out of 150 respondents, 123 respondents (82.00 percent) revealed that they are not satisfied with the decision of staying back in the valley and 27 respondents (18.00 percent) are satisfied. The reasons for their non-satisfaction are like 51 respondents (41.46 percent) you find your community nowhere now, 44 respondents (35.78 percent) you find your community isolated now, 22 respondents (17.88 percent) your community is now fragmented, and 6 respondents (4.88 percent) your community who migrated feels that you did not cooperated with them. It was found that majority of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits are regretting their decision of staying in the valley because they are isolated from their community members, they find their community nowhere now. Those Kashmiri Pandits who migrated from the valley feel that these non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits did not cooperated with them at the time of migration.

It was also observed that the biggest loss of this community is emotional loss. Despite the consolation of other communities they do not get that satisfaction which they would have got from their loved ones. Those who migrated from the valley are getting benefits from the government, but nothing is done for those who stayed in the valley. Further, out of 150 respondents, 149 respondents (99.33 percent) said that they did not find their identity same as it was before migration, and 1 respondent (0.67 percent) finds it same. Various reasons found for the change in their identity are like 86 respondents (57.71 percent) identity has been diluted because of non-availability of community members, 46 respondents (30.88 percent) identity crises is there, and 17 respondents (11.41 percent) functioning of religious activities are very less. Identity of any community is with its community members but majority of the members of this community have got migrated which has resulted in the

change in the identity. In socio-religious functions the participation is very less because of which this community feels identity crises. It is because of the inability of this scattered community to preserve its culture against the dominant local cultures across the country and a high rate of marriages outside their castes. Out of 150 respondents, 113 respondents (75.33 percent) revealed that their identity is not alive in Kashmir, and 37 respondents (24.67 percent) said it is alive. The different reasons found for the response that their identity is not alive are like 71 respondents (62.83 percent) as separate celebration of festivals, 24 respondents (21.23 percent) not practicing rituals as before, and 18 respondents (15.92 percent) lack of community feeling. It was observed that before migration on the eve of *Navreh* big functions would be held at *Ram Mandir*, *Hari Parbat*, *Badam Wari*, and at district levels. The children and newly married woman would wear new clothes and go to these places along with their families taking food or tea with them. But after migration all these things totally vanished. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits celebrate their religious as well as social festivals at individual level because they are surrounded by the lesser number of their community members which is giving them the sense that the identity of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits is not alive in Kashmir. According to KPSS there are only 2,765 non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits (651 families) left in 192 places across the valley.

Identity of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

Identity is defined as the unique features belonging to any given person or shared by all the members of a particular social group or community. It refers to the establishment of a common bond of sympathy with the group or the community which includes common celebration of festivals, religious and social which include marriage, birth and other celebrations. Due to the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits in 1989, the identity of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits got diluted. For the present study, the identity of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits was divided into single identity, multiple identity, self-image, self-esteem and identity crises. First, single identity refers to that type of identity in which an individual identify himself through only one belief and value and multiple identity where an individual has related his/her identity to different belief and values. Second, self-image is a number of self-impressions that have built up over time: hopes and dreams, thinking and feeling. What have you done throughout your life and what did you want to do? Third, self-esteem is a way of thinking and feeling and means believing in oneself, confidence in one's own worth or abilities. Fourth, identity crises refers to the period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity become insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or role in the society. In

the above context the respondents were asked the questions which are present in the table below:

Table-4: Identity of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

Theme	Response	Number	Percent
Identity	Single identity	25	16.67
	Multiple identity	125	83.33
Total		150	100.00
If single identity are you	Kashmiri	15	60.00
	Pandit	5	20.00
	Bhata	5	20.00
	Any Other	0	00.00
Total		25	100.00
If multiple identity are you	Kashmiri/Pandit/Bhata	52	41.60
	Bhata/Kashmiri	33	26.40
	Pandit/Kashmiri	17	13.60
	All of the above	20	16.00
	Any of the above	03	02.40
Total		125	100.00

Source: - Field work 2015, carried out in Budgam and Srinagar

The above table reveals that out of 150 respondents, 125 respondents (83.33 percent) have multiple identities like 52 respondents (41.6 percent) as Kashmiris/Pandit /Bhatta, 33 respondents (26.4 percent) as Bhatta/Kashmiri, 17 respondents as (13.6 percent) Pandit/Kashmiri, 20 respondents (16.00 percent) as all of the above, and 03 respondents (2.40 percent) as any of the above. Out of 150 respondents, 25 respondents (16.67 percent) have single identity. Out of these 25 respondents, 15 respondents (60.00 percent) said that their identity is Kashmiri, 5 respondents (20.00 percent) as Pandit and 5 respondents (20.00 percent) as Bhatta. The reasons for having multiple identities were that the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits has lost their distinct identity after the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir. Earlier, the Kashmiri Pandits was considered to be homogeneous group and had distinct unique identity. But after mass migration of 1989, this unique identity got diluted. Unique traditions were followed by non-migrant Kashmiri at the time of birth, wedding and death. But with the passage of time this community has lost its unique identity to a large extent. Similarly on the 13th day of *shivratri* a *pooja* was done for which blood of sheep and fish was main thing used in *pooja*. Nothing such happens now.

Self-image/self-esteem of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have lost their distinct identity after the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits. Earlier, the Kashmiri Pandits was considered to be homogeneous group and had distinct unique identity. But after mass migration of 1989, this unique identity got diluted. With the passage of time this community lost its unique identity to a large extent. The mass migration of 1989 had a negative impact on the self-image/self-esteem of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Before mass migration the self-image of Kashmiri Pandits was very high but now, it has lost its uniqueness. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have got comprising self-image in the sense that they compromise even on performing certain customs and traditions. Before migration they used to stick to their customs and tradition but now, tradition and culture is losing its rigidity to a large extent and the use of *Tilak* on forehead is rare. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits feel isolation and social distance because of mass migration of their relatives and friends from the valley. The self-esteem of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits is also unsatisfactory in the sense that this community is trying to keep their unique identity alive in Kashmir by practicing their religious as well as social festivals jointly especially the elders of this community but their young generation is living outside. The community feels fragmented and has a loose sense of community sentiment.

Table-5: Self-image/self-esteem of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits

Theme	Response	Number	Percent
Self-image of nonmigrant Kashmiri Pandits	High	04	2.66
	Low	0	0.00
	Moderate	0	0.00
	Degraded	36	24.00
	Promising	16	10.67
	Compromising	94	62.67
Total		150	100.00
Self-esteem of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits	Strong	47	31.33
	Weak	01	0.67
	Satisfactory	53	35.33
	Good	49	32.67
	Bad	0	0.00
Total		150	100.00
Feeling of Identity crises	Yes	150	100.00
	No	0	0.00
Total		150	100.00
Reasons for identity crises	Vanishing of old traditions/customs	57	38.00
	Isolation	60	40.00
	Disintegration of community	29	19.33
	Lack of we-feeling	04	2.67
Total		150	100.00

In the above table, out of 150 respondents, 94 respondents (62.67 percent) revealed that they have compromising self-image, 36 respondents (24.00) degraded self-image, 16 respondents (10.66 percent) promising self-image, and 4 respondents (2.66 percent) high self-image. Before mass migration the self-image of Kashmiri Pandits was very high but now it has lost its uniqueness. These non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have got comprising self-image in the sense that they compromise even on performing certain customs and traditions. Earlier, they used to stick to their customs and tradition but now, tradition and culture is losing its rigidity to a large extent and the use of *Tilak* on forehead is rare. Again out of 150 respondents, 53 respondents (35.33 percent) had satisfactory self-esteem, 49 respondents (32.67 percent) as good self-esteem, 47 respondents (31.33 percent) as strong self-esteem, and 1 respondent (0.67 percent) had weak self-esteem. It was observed that non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits feel isolation and social distance because of mass migration of their relatives and friends from the valley. This is because the young generation of this community is living outside because the parents do not find the future of their children safe. Out of 150 respondents, all the (100.00 percent) respondents revealed that they face identity crises in their own homeland. Various reasons were found for having identity crises among non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits like 60 respondents (40.00 percent) believed that it was because of isolation, 57 respondents (38.00 percent)

vanishing of old traditions and customs, 29 respondents (19.33 percent) disintegration of community, and 4 respondents (2.67 percent) lack of we feeling. The community feels fragmented and has a loose sense of community sentiment. However, many non-migrant Kashmiri Pandit associations and Samities have formed to look after their needs and take care like Kashmiri Pandit Sangarsh Samiti (KPSS) which was formed in the year 1998. According to the survey done by KPSS 100 percent non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits are facing identity crises and 62 percent are having compromising self-image. In spite of these efforts, non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits happens to be diluted community and face identity crises.

CONCLUSIONS

In 1989-90 when majority of Kashmiri Pandits decided to migrate from the valley some of the Kashmiri Pandits decided to stay back in the valley despite all the odds. These Pandits are known as non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. The Sanskrit word Pandit means 'a learned man' they refer to themselves by the word *Bhatta* which is the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit *bhartri*, meaning 'doctor'⁵. The Kashmiri Pandits have been considered to be the descendants of the so called "Aryans" in purest form. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have lost their distinct identity after the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir. Earlier, the Kashmiri Pandits was considered to be homogeneous group and had distinct unique identity.

But after mass migration of 1989, this unique identity got diluted. With the passage of time this community has lost its unique identity to a large extent. The mass migration of 1989 has a negative impact on the self-image of the non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Before mass migration the self-image of Kashmiri Pandits was very high but now, it has lost its uniqueness. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits have got comprising self-image in the sense that they compromise even on performing certain customs and traditions. Before migration they used to stick to their customs and tradition but now, tradition and culture is losing its rigidity to a large extent and the use of *Tilak* on forehead is rare. The non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits feel isolation and social distance because of mass migration of their relatives and friends from the valley. The self-esteem of non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits is not utmost satisfactory in the sense that the elder members of this community is trying to keep their unique identity alive in Kashmir by practicing their religious as well as social festivals but the young generation of this community is living outside. The community feels fragmented and has a loose sense of community sentiment. Earlier, they were living in groups performing customs and rituals together, and sharing their sorrows and happiness with each other, but now due to the mass migration they feel disintegrated. There is lack of we-feeling, sound solidarity and they feel alienated in their own homeland. Their traditions, customs, rituals are getting vanished day by day because this community has got disintegrated now. However, many non-migrant Kashmiri Pandit associations and Samities have formed to look after their needs and take care like Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS) which was formed in the year 1998. In spite of these efforts, non-migrant Kashmiri Pandits happens to be diluted community and face identity crises

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