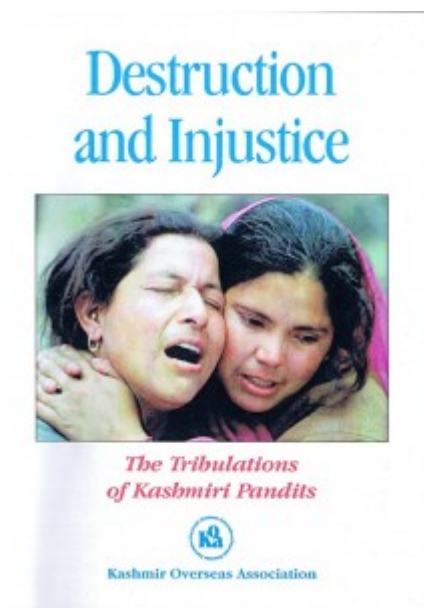


Destruction And Injustice



The Tribulations Of Kashmiri Pandits

Introduction To The Book

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When a person or a community hits the headlines for a while a wave of curiosity to find out more about it is generated. People want to know more about the subject of the sensational news, in some cases they want to go to the roots of the story in the news.

Such is the situation with Kashmir Problem, which has hit headlines over a half-century. Kashmir Problem is complex as it has grown through a long stretch of

time and contains diverse elements. A vast majority of non-Kashmiri Indians do not know it in full depth and very few foreigners have even a conversational knowledge of it. This ignorance contributes to the difficulties of solving this problem.

This booklet is mostly based on a seminar Kashmir Day presented by Kashmir Overseas Association (KOA) on Oct. 26, 2002, at Kendal Park , New Jersey under the auspices of Bharat Sevashram Sangha Of North America. The idea behind the seminar was to inform non-Kashmiri Indians about the intractable and longstanding problem of Kashmir. It was also projected by the creators of the seminar that the seminar materials would be used for organizing similar seminars in other cities in U.S.A. Behind this thinking was the idea that by improving the information level of people about the problem Kashmiri Pandits (KP's) will increase the support of their Indian brethren and American friends, who will better understand the causes of their plight. The jump from seminar to the booklet was a logical step in the effort to maximize the dissemination of the information about Kashmir Problem, thereby gaining support for the cause of the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits. The booklet is not a comprehensive work on the subject of Kashmir Problem but is a useful introductory outline for the people who are only superficially acquainted with it.

This booklet should have been produced by Government Of India (GOI) but that has been very behind in this and other departments in achieving the solution of Kashmir Problem. Throughout nineties the awareness of Kashmir Problem even among U.S. congressional representatives and their staff was low. Then unable to take GOI's passivity and incompetence anymore, and seeing Government Of Pakistan's strides in the diffusion of misinformation on Kashmir Problem through its spokesman Guhram Nabi Fayi, a Kashmiri organization, Indo-American Kashmiri Forum (IAKF), took the wheel in its hands. Through its effective communications U.S. congressional people started getting some real information on Kashmir Problem.

Some sixty-thousand people, Hindus, Muslims, and others have died in the

ongoing Kashmir war, without the end in sight. The recent murder of twenty-four KP's in Nadimarg, Kashmir , which included two children, is a case in point, when many people thought that the war was cooling off. The fires driving the Kashmir Problem are enormous as they are sourced from the almost inexhaustible human weaknesses: religious bigotry, hatred, greed, blindness, and political exploitation. Generations of Pakistani politicians have kept the Kashmir Problem alive to keep the real devastating problems facing that nation on the back burner. The fantasy of a beautiful Kashmir hanging romantically on the horizon has seduced Pakistani people to the extent of them becoming blind to the downfall of their nation, economy, and institutions. Today Pakistan stands as a world terrorism capital, impoverished, torn asunder between the blind, insensitive, and incoherent extremists on one hand and unscrupulous, greedy, opportunistic politicians on the other. One thing that unites this benighted crowd is the fantasy of them one day acquiring the charismatic Kashmir.

We do not know what will be the conclusion to the fight over Kashmir, if there is one, given the intrinsic weakness of Pakistan as a nation and the shallowness of GOI's determination to fight for what is theirs . Let things be as they may but we have to save KP community. It has almost totally migrated out of the valley of Kashmir and is struggling through the process of transplantation. It needs opportunity, respect, and friendliness.

We hope this booklet opens a window, however slightly, on the tribulations of KP's through history and thereby makes the fellow human beings understand them better.

Suffern, New York