

A Study of Melvin Seeman's Theory of Alienation in Siddhartha Gigoo's the Garden of Solitude

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Abstract

Seeman's has identified five alternative meanings of alienation. While doing so Seeman's considers the social conditions that lead to the "five variants of alienation" and "their behavioural consequences" (1959, p.784). The paper examines the manifestation of Melvin Seeman's theory of alienation in Siddhartha Gigoo's *The Garden of Solitude*. It examines the application of Seeman's five classification of alienation on the community of Kashmiri Pandits who experienced forced exodus in 1990s from their homeland, Kashmir. The paper elucidates powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement as extensions of Kashmiri Pandits' alienation who were subjected to relentless trauma due to the forced expulsion. It endeavours to provide the textual evidences to quadrate the Melvin Seeman's theory of alienation with the alienation faced by Kashmiri Pandit community.

Key words: Melvin Seeman, Kashmiri Pandits, exodus, genocide, alienation

1. Introduction

The term alienation, derived from the Latin word alienatio, means to "take away," "remove," or "cause a separation to occur," was first used in theological writings (Melvin, 1959, p. 783). Kenneth A. Schmidt concludes that Melvin Seeman's theory of alienation laid, "the foundation for most alienation studies in the United States and Western Europe" (2011, p.11). Melvin Seeman's (1959) has held the "center stage in the discipline for more than two decades" (Harvey, Smith & Warner, 1983-84, p.17). Seeman delineates the definition of alienation by examining powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement is discussed in the paper.

Seeman had described the meaning of alienation in five aspects which are (a) powerlessness-a sense of low control over events; (b) meaninglessness-a sense of incomprehensibility of personal and social issues; (c) normlessness-high commitment to socially unauthorised means versus conventional methods for achieving given goals; (d) cultural estrangement (also known as "value isolation" in an earlier version, (Seeman 1959, p. 259)-the individual's rejection of commonly held values in society. Self-estrangement refers to an individual's participation in activities that are intrinsically not rewarding versus participation in an activity for their own sake; (e) social isolation refers to a sense of rejection versus social acceptance.

The third dimension, "normlessness," is related to the Robert Merton's anomie theory (Merton, 1949, p. 58). This phrase describes the individual's confusion when faced with evidence that unethical measures are effective in gaining culturally valued rewards. The fourth dimension has its roots in the "cultural isolation" work of Nettler (Nettler, 1957, p. 247). It is used to describe a marginalised person whose ideals are opposed to and different from those of mainstream culture. Lastly, the "self-alienation" dimension is influ-

enced by David Riesman's (Riesman, 1950, p.304) and Eric Fromm's work (Fromm, 1955, p.201). After doing the interpretations, Seeman continues by redefining the five aspects in terms of research.

In doing so, he based his approach on Julian Rotter's social learning theory (Rotter, Chance, and Phares, 1971, pp-1-43). Seeman transforms the five sociological dimensions into operational versions that emphasize the subject's psychological outlook on many aspects of his prospects in life. If a person has a strong expectation of being able to influence events or ideas, their level of alienation is considered high. Also alienation is considered as high if the person has a high expectation that external forces outside of his immediate, internal control will control reinforcements (Rotter, 1972:260-295). As a result, a psychological expectancy statement is created for each dimension that serves as Seeman's fundamental operational description.

1.1 Powerlessness

The first elucidation is referred as "powerlessness". This frame of alienation is from T. W. Adorno work (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson and Sanford, 1950, pp.617–622) and Karl Mannheim (Mannheim, 1951, pp. 51-60). It alludes to the subjective perplexity brought on by cognitive frameworks that fall short of explaining daily occurrences and their social interactions. By using the framework of Marx, Seeman elaborated the meaning of alienation. The powerlessness notion asserts to be "social psychological", defining alienation precisely in expressions of the actor's distinctive perspective" (Seeman, 1956, p.786). This variant of alienation can be conceived as the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks" (Seeman, 1959, p.784). According to Seeman powerlessness is closer related to, "'internal versus external control of reinforcements." The latter construct refers to the individual's sense of personal control over the reinforcement situation, as contrasted with his view that the occurrence of reinforcements is dependent upon external conditions, such as chance, luck, or the manipulation of others" (1959, p.785). According to Thus people may experience powerlessness when they are,

"... dominated by an external rhythm and, instead of regulating their own time, are made into its victims. They no longer see themselves as building their life and their world. Rather, they feel susceptible to threats whose origins they cannot detect, and whose development they cannot control (Augusto 1996: 188).

Md. Sadequl Islam summarises Seeman's powerlessness as when people are socially isolated, they believe that their lives are out of their control and that everything they do in the end is meaningless. This perception gives rise to sentiments of helplessness (2019, p.74).

1.2 Meaninglessness

Meaninglessness is the second dimension of alienation (Seeman, 1959, p.786-787). It is operationally anchored in Karl Mannheim's writings on the growth of functional rationality in industrial society (Mannheim, 1951, pp. 51-60) and T.W. Adorno's work on anti-Semitism (Adorno, et al., 1950, p. 617–622). According to Seeman, meaninglessness is prevalent when a person who has little confidence in their ability to accurately "predict behavioural outcomes" (Seeman, 1959, p.786). Meaninglessness is defined as follows:

We may speak of high alienation, in the meaninglessness usage, when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe—when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met. Thus, the post-war German situation described by Adorno was "meaningless" in the sense that the individual could not choose with confidence among alternative explanations of the inflationary disasters of the time (and, it is argued, substituted the "Jews" as a simplified solution for this unclarity). (Seeman, 1959, p. 78)

Seeman further explicates, "One might operationalize this aspect of alienation by focusing upon the fact that it is characterized by a low expectancy that satisfactory predictions about future outcomes of behaviour can be made (1959, p.786). According to Hamid Sarfaraz, "the 'meaningless' individual is likely to have a low level of confidence in predicting the consequences of acting on his belief" (1997, p.53). On the basis of the above discussion it can be concluded that if people do not feel a part of a decision making process, they become detached to their environment. There is an incomprehensibility or a failure to comprehend one's complicated surroundings. Henceforth their existence in the prevailing system becomes meaningless to them.

1.3 Normlessness

"Normlessness" is the third meaning of alienation. The transition from meaninglessness to normlessness appears natural as both are rooted in the concept of "anomie". It is defined as the situations in which norms have forfeited their regulatory power; hence disorder, anarchy, instability and individualism prevail.

Seeman states that "anomie," as defined by Merton in "Social Structure and Anomie" (Merton, 1949:125-150), is yet another definition of alienation. According to Seeman's definition of normlessness

the anomie situation, from the individual point of view, may be defined as one in which there is a high expectancy that socially unapproved behaviors are required to achieve given goals. This third meaning of alienation is logically independent of the two versions discussed above... (Seeman, 1959, p.788).

This definition's content is heavily based on the "innovative adaptation" of Merton's anomie model. When culturally sanctioned modes of social ascension are no longer as successful as illegitimate paths, the subject finds himself in a perplexing situation. The connections between culturally sanctioned goals and institutionally sanctioned means become muddled. Victims emphasize on the social barriers and they are not always conscious of the process of their aspiration. To be sure, they are usually aware of a disparity between personal worth and social rewards. However, they do not always see how this occurs. Those who find its source inside the social structure may become alienated from it, making them prime candidates for adaptation (Seeman, 1959, p. 78).

In short, when people start disbelieving that previously sanctioned social standards are no longer useful in directing their behaviour towards the accomplishment of personally or culturally determined goals, they are said to be experiencing normlessness.

1.4 Social Isolation

It's no coincidence that one of the most recent rallying points has been expressed in the slogan "community control," because that phrase represents two of the core themes associated with alienation: the claim to control and the search for community. They include a notion of existential (or socially created) loneliness or the approval or rejection based on a person's membership in a minority-type subgroup. The concept of community, like the notion of alienation, comes to hold for the entire set of problems which modern society is said to produce social isolation. According to Kalekin-Fishman, social isolation is "[t]he feeling of being segregated from one's community" (1996, p.97). Social isolation leads to powerlessness, meaninglessness and normlessness.

The consequences of alienation and social isolation can be viewed in "buffering hypothesis," which holds that those who are not integrated into supportive social networks endure a broad range of adverse consequences, because the influence of stressful circumstances can be regulated or eliminated for individuals who are not isolated. As a result, research has been conducted to demonstrate that network participation reduces the effects of loss of job and occupational stress on health (Gore, 1978; LaRocco et al., 1980); in fact, the studies indicate that mortality rates are greater for isolates (Berkman and Syme, 1979). A semblance of

clarity can be created by differentiating three concepts of self-estrangement: (1) the "despised" self, (2) the "disguised" self, and (3) the "detached" self (Seeman, 1958, p.291). The very first is essentially low self-esteem, defined as a negatively assessed disparity between the "person's preferred ideal and perceived actual self". The concept of a "disguised" self is more appropriate and complicated. As it has a strong affinity with the Marxian concept is particularly about "false consciousness" feature. In some ways, the disguised self involves a "deprivation of awareness" (Touraine, 1973,p. 201)—for example, the inability to acknowledge one's truly human capabilities, or one's true preferences, or one's emotional responses (to be, as the saying goes, "out of touch" with one's feelings—as with an overly protective unconsciously dismissing parent). The third version is referred as the "detached" self which is estranged from itself due to the disjunction between activity and affect—that is, the individual's participation in activities that are not rewarding in and of themselves (Seeman, 1959); as Marx put it, alienated unions that is "only a means of satisfying other needs").

1.5 Self-Estrangement

The final dimension is estrangement from oneself. Seeman builds it on the writings of David Riesman (1950) and Erich Fromm (1955). In the case of self-estrangement before delving into Seeman's operational derivation and claims to theoretical convergence, the issue of polemical content will be addressed in relation to alienation theory and research in general. It can refer to the inability to comprehend one's human potential (Marcuse 1964), to the person's level of self-esteem or to a signified discrepancy between one's ideal qualities and realised qualities (Coopersmith 1967), to repressed or disrupted psychopathologies (Laing & Esterson 1965) or to the "loss of identity" (Rainwater 1970), or to one or more forms of "bad faith" with oneself (Sartre 1948). Seeman's simpler explanation of self-estrangement is,

One way to state such a meaning is to see alienation as the degree of dependence of the given behaviour upon anticipated future rewards that is upon rewards that lie outside the activity itself. In these terms, the worker who works merely for his salary, the housewife who cooks simply to get it over with, or the other-directed type who acts 'only for its effect on others' -- all these (at different levels, again) are instances of self-estrangement. In this view, what has been called self-estrangement refers essentially to the 'inability of the individual to find self-rewarding — or in Dewey's phrase, self-consummatory — activities that engage him' (Seeman 1976, pp. 410-411).

According to Kalekin-Fishman defines self-estrangement is, "... the psychological state of denying one's own interests – of seeking out extrinsically satisfying, rather than intrinsically satisfying, activities" (1998:97). Hence self-estrangement occurs when a person feels detached from his environment and experiences loss of identity and personal fulfilment. He will engage in activities which are not self-satisfying rather leads to estrangement from the self.

2. Seeman's Theory in *The Garden of Solitude* by Siddhartha Gigoo

The Garden of Solitude is an autobiography written by Siddhartha Gigoo which intends to explain the experience of ethnic-cleansing faced by the Kashmiri Pandit community in Kashmir during 1990s. This paper attempts to explain the representation of Seeman's theory in novel *The Garden of Solitude*. Sridar, a young boy is the protagonist of the novel. Mahanandju and Gowri are his grandparents and Lasa is his father. It illustrates the characters' sense of despair and distress, hardship, suffering, and hopelessness faced by the characters.

2.1 Powerlessness

The Muslim neighbours would ironically tell their Pandit neighbours not to waste their time attempting to repair their houses because they would have to abandon them sooner or later. (Pandita, 2013, p. 47). There were signs of unrest and chaos. Sridar used to take tuition classes of mathematics from Professor Waklu.

One morning during the class, the servant came to inform the Professor that some visitors had come and wanted to meet him. Sridar peeked from the window and saw two men's talking with his professor. One of Sridar's friend told him that the visitor was Billa Puj.

Sridar was puzzled and clueless. Anil pinched him and whispered something in his ear. 'Billa Puj is the goon of the area. He owns a butcher shop at Gaw Kadal. Don't you know that his brother Majid is a militant and works for The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). The next day when the first batch of student's arrived at Professor Waklu's house at 5:30 in the morning they found, they gate locked. The windows were shut too. A hastily written note pasted on the door read: My wife and I had to leave with our son. We will be back in a month. Till then, continue your studies. (Gigoo, *The Garden of Solitude*, 2010, p. 22)

By evening everyone could comprehend that the reason behind Professor Waklu's sudden disappearance was because of his meeting with Billa Puj the previous day. These incidents lead to a feeling of powerlessness amongst the community of Kashmiri Pandits as stated by Seeman that powerlessness comes from a feeling of alienation when "his or her own behaviour cannot determine the outcome he seeks". On several levels, there was a rapid shift towards Pakistani culture in Kashmir. Roads and villages had their names changed. Green was designated as the new colour for all shop and company signboards. The time on all clocks and watches was set back by half an hour to correspond with Pakistan's standard time. The youth who supported these terrorist groups would stop pedestrians on the road and ask them to show their wrist-watches, and Pandits who did not adjust the time according to Pakistan's standard time were beaten and their watches smashed. Gigoo depicts how the names of different locations were changed in an attempt to change the identity of Kashmir.

The names of town and streets were changed to reforce a new culture identity. Green was decreed to be the colour for all signboards of the shops and commercial establishments. The time in all the watches and clocks was turned backwards by half an hour (Gigoo, *The Garden of Solitude*, 2011, p. 23).

During the night in January the Pandits in Yarbhal heard the mosques' loudspeakers broadcasting the announcement that Pandits were 'kafirs' and the land must be cleansed of them. They constantly announced "Leave Kashmir. Leave Kashmir"

"O informers, agents and kafirs, leave this land. Leave Kashmir, leave Kashmir" .With each hour passing during the night the slogans grew louder and louder. Till nightfall they reverberated with new slogans "Pandits must leave. Freedom is ours! The land must be purified" (Gigoo, 2011, p. 23).

According to Seeman "when a person believes that his or her actions have no effect on outcome it leads to powerlessness" (Islam, 2019, p. 72).

2.2 Normlessness

The conditions turned awry. The newspaper became a mouthpiece for the militants carrying their message for the general public prompting them to join their struggle of 'Azadhi' and clear the land from 'Kafirs' by killing the Pandit community.

The local newspapers wrote about the freedom struggle. Fear ruled the hearts of the Pandits, and they became suspicious of the Muslim neighbours and friends with whom they had shared close bonds for years. The same fear shattered the love Muslims had

for the Pandits. The Pandits became suspects –informers and agents of India” (Gigoo, 2010, p.52)

Several Kashmiri Pandits were abducted, killed and raped in the most barbaric form by militants. Hit list were pasted all across the walls of Kashmir containing the names of Kashmiri Pandits to be killed next. Fear ruled the hearts of the Pandit community. They became familiar with the dreadful noises of firing leading to normlessness. Seeman states that normlessness is felt when norms have forfeited their regulatory power; hence leading to disorder, anarchy and instability felt by the Pandit community after the collapse of law and order in the Kashmir valley. The news of a militant's death woke people up one morning. There was chaos all over the roadways. From the mosques, a man declared that the martyr would find a spot in paradise.

‘God, give us more sons like him, so that they can sacrifice their lives for freedom and glory’ a woman wailed. ‘Brothers, prepare for the grand funeral’, a bearded man said ‘one death will create a thousand more heroes. The world will see them emerge victorious. Bring out children out from the confines of the houses. Bring them on to roads and let them see their hero for the last time. Let them see what it is to live (Gigoo, 2011, p.65).

The people sang the song of freedom throughout the day. They motivated their children to join the struggle of ‘Azadhi’. Many went across the borders in Pakistan to receive trainings in handling arms and ammunition.

There was only one song on people’s lips ‘Freedom from India! Free Kashmir’. The new song everyone sang was ‘We want freedom, We want freedom!’ The songs of freedom were broadcasted from loudspeakers to remind people of their duty to fight for the cause and join freedom struggle. Children were made to memorize the songs. The carpet dwellers, doonga dwellers, the craftsman, the bus conductor and the labourers were asked to sing this song while they were at work (Gigoo, 2011, p.39).

In the evening mourners defied and took out his funeral procession on the main road. The procession headed towards the Freedom Graveyard. Men, women and children mourned the death of militant. They termed his death the ‘supreme sacrifice’ the ‘most sacred martyrdom’ and prayed for his soul. Women beat their chests in anger and hate (Gigoo, 2011, p.40).

Several prominent members of the Pandit community such as Neelkanth Ganjoo, Pandit Tika Lal Taploo, Sarla Bhat, Girija Tickoo, Satish Kumar Tickoo, Lassa Kaul, Sarwanand Koul Premi and his son, Virender Koul, Bushan Lal Koul, Brij Lal Kaul, Omkar Nath Wali were killed by militants. Pandits mostly stayed indoors in trying to protect themselves hoping for the conditions to normalise.

Sridar kept indoors and spent most of the time in his room dusting his books and trying to fill the pages of his diary. His mother kept the windows of their houses shut for most parts of the day. They listened to the sounds of the ranging gunfire emanating from the streets at Nalla-e-Maer. Every day the sounds became louder and louder, indicating that the militants and the forced were inching to the houses in the locality. Sridar got used to the sounds of bullets being fired (Gigoo, 2011, p.41)

The Pandit community tried to hide their identities from militants wanting to ethnically cleanse their community. They tried to mimic the neighbour Muslim community in order to save themselves. The instability which leads to normlessness had cracked deep after the insurgency in the Kashmir valley. As quoted by Seeman that normlessness is contributed by both ‘powerlessness’ which Pandits felt while hiding their identities and ‘meaninglessness’ which they felt when they saw Pandit family members getting brutally killed by the militants openly.

Every day brought more deaths and more disappearances in Mahanandju's locality. Days progress somewhat fast, some days were quiet, while others were marked with incidents of stone pelting and crossfire between the forces and the militants. The Pandits kept the windows of their houses permanently shut. They were scared to venture out on the roads. The Pandit women stopped putting *tilaks* on their forehead to mask their identity. The men grew beards. They did not speak to one another on the streets. They abandoned their traditional greeting 'Namaskar' (Gigoo, 2011, p.44)

The Pandits had to hide their identities in order to hide from the militants aiming to ethnically-cleanses. As Seeman states "when norms have forfeited their regulatory power hence leading to disorder, anarchy and instability, leads to a sense of normlessness" (Seeman, 1959, 786) faced by Kashmiri Pandits when everyday was marked by stone pelting on Pandit houses, gun-firing between militants and army.

2.3 Meaninglessness

Lasa's neighbour warned him that many Pandits have started leaving Kashmir and they must leave too because they are no longer safe now. Though Lasa knew that this is true but his heart was not willing to accept that the conditions were degrading. Consoling his neighbour Lasa said "The hysteria will not last longer. We need to hold on to ourselves and wait for the situations to improve". But later when some armed men with guns knocked on Lasa's door at night, trying to barge in Lasa felt terrified. He realised that the situations were only worsening day by day and his family is not safe anymore in their own house. Lasa told his family to get ready for leaving the next day. There was nobody with whom the Kashmiri Pandits could discuss their dilemmas. They felt isolated even inside their own homes. Sleep had eluded them. Lasa's family began to pack their longings.

"Lasa felt miserable. There was no one to talk to. Pandits feared for their lives and saw to it that nobody came to know about their silent exit. Mahanandju could not sleep that night. He put his personal belongings in a trunk. Lasa's wife kept the essential belongings in some trunks and readied for leaving. Gowri cried the whole night in the living room" (Gigoo, 2010, p.91)

The feeling of meaninglessness invaded them as they were unclear as to what they ought to believe or what decision should they make at that point (Seeman,) Gowri prepared to leave. She knew she had no choice but to leave. Her interaction with Lasa reflects the inexorable agony she felt while leaving her home

'Can't we take the tiles? Can't we take the new ceiling?' she said to her son, as she looked at the tiles and the ceiling. They had spent a lot of money on the renovation of the house (Gigoo, 2010, p.72).

He couldn't decide what to carry and what to consider leaving behind. The objects in the rooms were scattered. The precious items faded away behind the room's dark shadows. Seeman mentions meaninglessness is attained when the individual's minimal standard for clarity in decision-making is not meant.

Everything useful appeared frivolous and trivial. He was not able to decide which things to pack and take with him, and which things to leave behind. The household items lay unattended to and scattered in the rooms. The ones which were his prized possessions disappeared behind the dark corners. Lasa looked at the items, touched them to know if they were indeed useful. One moment, each item seemed precious. The other moment, everything seemed useless. The familiar household items scattered on the floor seemed to have lost their utility, except an old quilt in which Lasa lazed in winter. (Gigoo, 2010, p.66)

Lasa sent all of his family members the next morning, promising to return the following day with the belongings they had packed.

The night earlier was the most traumatic night of Lasa's entire life. He missed his wife. He was not able to decide which things to pack and take with him, and which things to leave behind (Gigoo, 2010, p.97).

He didn't know the purpose of the gathered items while he saw them. He considered if the items in the trunks held any worth. He decided to anyway take them.

Lasa looked at the clock in the truck and thought about the times ahead and what was to come. He wondered if he was to return to his home. Could he ever reconcile with a new beginning? Was it just an end or a new beginning? (Gigoo, 2010, p.102)

Lasa's heart resisted while boarding the bus next morning, but he realised he had no other choice. He sat inside the bus as it moved forward, he watched his house vanishing slowly. He gazed at the clock and pondered what future lay ahead for him. The community of Pandits felt alienated and disheartened as they left. Their hearts refused to leave their homes. They became homeless in a single night. As stated by Seeman "the feeling of meaningless comes when the person has no confidence in their ability to predict any future outcome due to the unclear present situations" (Seeman, 1959, p.786) which was felt by the whole Pandit community when they were forced to leave their homes.

2.4 Social Isolation

Pandits felt disappointed as they left. In a single night, they became homeless. Some even ran barefoot, carrying nothing (G.L Pandit, 2006, p.155). The terror and current fear kept them from thinking about the horrors that awaited them. Many Pandit families left their homes, with quivering lips and tearful eyes. Women, children, and men fled their homes in caravans. Pandits were made homeless, unemployed, and migrants not due to any natural disaster such as earthquake or floods but due to a man-made disasters. The Pandits discussed how, despite the fact that everyone was innocent, many of them were killed because militants considered them as Indian government informants (Malik, 2016, p. 19). On the roads, there were long lines of buses and trucks. "Each truck carried a home and despair." Each truck trudged on inexorably, terror-stricken faces pitifully looking around" (Gigoo, 2010, p. 66).

Lasa was perplexed by how bizarre everything was. There were Pandit families, coming from various towns and villages of Kashmir moving in trucks. Some persons spoke softly, while others appeared to be speechless as they had lost their voices. Others spoke as if it were their first words after a prolonged period of silence. Lasa observed a feeling of abandonment among the Pandits (Gigoo, 2010, p. 77).

Ganghar concludes that as a result of the state's indifference, "the Pandits were neither Kashmiri in Kashmir nor Indians in Jammu in terms of national identity" (2013, p.31). Gigoo, too, emphasizes the novel place, culture, climate, and social and economic fabric that has a significant impact on the migrated Pandits. The conditions of Pandits is pitiful. They faced homelessness and grief of being deceived by their own neighbours with whom they had been living like brothers. They were not able to comprehend their true emotional response leading to a sense of social-isolation as discussed by Seeman.

The past was too beautiful to be left behind. The past evoked a longing to be free-lived. The past aspired to race past the present and the future. The present was just a crippled memory, a child's play, a bubble (Gigoo, 2010, p. 37).

The Pandits began to speak after a long silence after arriving in new cities. Some of them continued to communicate in hushed tones, as they had for a long time in Kashmir. Now the Pandits were filled with a sense of loss. They faced acute housing shortages, price increases and severe overcrowding in all public institutions in the host land. Cultural differences existed between migrants and natives. The Pandits had a difficult time in the camps. As specified by Seeman that 'Social isolation' is felt when the individuals devel-

op a low self-esteem which the Pandits after exodus in the new land began developing contributed by the previously suffered trauma and present hardships in camps.

When the Pandits moved to Jammu after leaving Kashmir, they faced not only environmental, cultural, linguistic, and lifestyle changes but they were mocked by their new neighbours due to their different accent and dressing style. Students in Jammu would tease their fellow Pandit classmates by yelling Azadhi. For them, it was just an act to mock Kashmiri Pandit students, but for Pandit students, the word Azadhi evoked up images of horror that would flash through their minds when they were teased. They felt socially isolated in the new land after exodus. Images from those days continue to haunt them. The people on the roads, standing on bus roofs, in the shikaras and masques (Pandita, 2014, p.53).

Seeman mentions “a sense of loneliness or rejection based on a person’s membership in a minority-type subgroup leads to a sense of social isolation” (Seeman, 1959, p.784), which the Kashmiri Pandits felt when they were forced to leave their home and seek refugee in a hostile land where they not only faced drastic climatic and cultural changes but also felt a sense of social isolation from the natives in new land which mocked their different accent, food habits and culture.

2.5 Self-estrangement

When the Pandit community displaced into various cities such as Jammu, Pandits faced a lot of struggle to find the accommodation. The Dogra’s saw this as an opportunity, knowing that there was a huge demand for shelter so they quickly escalated the prices of all rooms and even small animal sheds knowing that Kashmiri Pandits had no other option than to pay them because only few families could find the accommodation in government camps whereas the other Pandit families were left on their own fate in the alien land without the help of government.

For years we lead a pious life, a life of hard work and of virtuous subjugation. We were silent when our women were abused and mocked at. Muslims teased us and called us names. We allowed ourselves be lampooned and laughed at. We lived by our sanskars, our values. But now we must struggle and live. How long can we live like this in buffalo sheds? We have daughters to marry. My landlord stopped the water supply to my kitchen. He says we must evacuate as soon or pay him two hundred rupees more. My mother can’t even weep in the room (Gigoo, 2010, p. 99).

The conditions in the camps were inhumane. Several families lived in the small tents which were nothing but a breeding ground for disease due to the poor sanitary conditions. The people in camps used school latrines which had stretching appeal from miles. People tried to hold their bladders as long as they could in order to avoid going to those latrines. During the windy and rainy seasons the tents would fly away forcing the Pandits in trying to hold the tents in place. Numerous Pandits died due to sunstrokes and snake bites. The quality of water available in camps was horrifying and full of worms. The youth faced unemployment and frustration. The community felt a sense of self-estrangement as they perceived the gap in between going attributes in a society and the individual’s own standard as stated by Seeman. Like several other Pandits Mahanandju was also not able to come in terms with the new alien environment. He felt that there was no purpose in anything. He stopped doing his daily routine. He stated developing Alzheimer’s. He could not remember thinks clearly. Slowly he lost his appetite too.

Mahanandju did not move from the room for days together. Every morning he shaved and then spent the rest of the day fanning himself with a hand fan. He lost his appetite. There was nothing to be done. Sometimes, he stood in front of his shaving mirror and cried silently. At times he spoke to himself. His memory had started playing tricks with him, especially with the dates and sequence in which the events occurred. He stopped listening to the news broadcast on the radio in the evenings. When his wife asked him why he had stopped listening to the news, he said ‘The news yesterday was the same as

it was the day before yesterday. It will be the same even today. They will say dozens of people died and hundreds got injured. Nobody knows the truth. Falsehood had become the truth and people like to listen to things which are not true. Blasts and grenade attacks! The Prime minister said this and that. Throw the radio out of the window. Banish it (Gigoo, 2010, p. 107).

The Pandit community felt separated from other communities because on festivals and special occasions, members of other communities could always go to their homes and celebrate the occasion, but the Pandit people knew they couldn't. The fact that Pandits could buy a residence in any area of the nation but not in their motherland, where they truly came from, gave them a sense of isolation and distinction (Pandita, 2014, p.50). As mentioned by Seeman that in Self-estrangement the individual cannot control the sense of felling alienated.

The violence in Kashmir created such an impression on Pandit's community memories that they could hear all those cries even years after leaving. The journey left an indelible impression on the hearts of Pandits. They couldn't forget the gunshots and warnings from Mosques telling Pandits to leave. The noise felt like a burden pounding on their chests. Their head felt like an inferno along with sweat traversing down their back whenever they recalled their past (Pandita, 2014, p.51) Many Kashmiri Pandits developed the habit of reciting the same story about their Kashmiri homes due to the sense of powerlessness experienced by them. They believed it had now become an element of their identity. They would tell the same old story to their new neighbours and their children. In fact, the exiled community's survival has been hampered by health trauma (Hussain, 2018, p.709). The undercurrent of terror that has engulfed the migrated Pandits lingers, as do sentiments of deprivation and uprooting. They are battling with normlessness including joblessness, trauma, relocation stress, social instability, a grim future, substandard housing, unsanitary living conditions, few medical facilities, and starvation while readjusting and surviving in an unfamiliar land. "To be a Kashmiri today means a sense of defeat, a crisis of identity and bewildering uncertainty" (2013, p.35). As Seeman mentions "self-estrangement is quite similar to identity-crises. Alienated person can feel detached from themselves and he may experience no sense of identity" (Islam, 2019, p.72).

Seeman's five dimensions of alienation can be clearly seen in *The Garden of Solitude* where the insurgency lead to the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits which can be seen suffering through the Seeman's paradigm of alienation. A person's alienation is regarded as low if he expects to have control over events or ideas which can be seen in the case of Kashmiri Pandits were they had no control over the events leading to a high sense of alienation. Alienation is classified as strong if the person expects reinforcement control to be influenced by external occurrences above his immediate, internal control (Rotter, 1972, pp.260-29). The community of Kashmiri Pandit is trapped in an endless loop of pain and exile. The community has suffered a number of losses, involving the loss of their homes, property, farms, orchids, temples, shrines, and liberty, which the government and human rights advocates have failed to acknowledge (Evans, 2010, p.19). The memory of the elderly Kashmiri Pandits has faded. They are unable to identify their own family members due to the trauma they had to endure, which left permanent wounds on their memory due to the normlessness experienced by the Pandit community. Even today, the Kashmir issue is seen as nothing more than Kashmiri Muslims' desire for 'Azadhi' depicting their powerlessness. The genocide of Kashmiri Pandits is ignored by the administration and debaters. The Pandit community's minds are burdened by broken dreams of self-estrangement and social isolation. Every day, the exile's flames devour their spirit.

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