Conclusion

Writing a conclusion is always a daunting task because no research can ever come to a full stop. On the other hand, if one does away with it altogether, one is left stranded as it were and there is an urgency to tie up loose ends and give a neat finish. What I want to say here is that my study of the fiction dealing with Partition and the Cinema, which came out of it, has been a way of finding out the notions of 'gender' and 'nationhood' as represented by these writers and filmmakers. Thus my study attempts to present a conjunctural picture of historical context, fictional and national intertext along with cinematic text along the issues of Gender and Nation. It is also a reminder that the region/nation dialectic interacts in complex ways with the culture/nation dialectic in Indian thought. This is where we have to assert the importance of Nationalism as a need of the moment. At the same time, one has to keep reminding oneself of the way 'women' have been represented, treated, dealt with, analyzed and acclaimed in this discourse of 'nationhood'. Much has been said already but the debate never ends.

Partition history represents a chapter of our country, which many have preferred to skip. The Government wrote only the official records and never recorded the enormity of this mammoth event in terms of human loss and suffering. The prominent leaders were too embarrassed to talk about it and hence it was quickly swept aside in the euphoria of gaining freedom after so many years. The fiction writers and the filmmakers too, could not reconcile with it easily and
that is evident in their novels and films. What is left unsaid is even more important than what is being said. Ghatak’s cinema is teeming with images of this barren, hopeless, mechanical existence and clearly brings out the trauma of being uprooted and the loss of one’s identity.

It was imperative therefore to bring together these writers from different cultures, regions and languages and examine the way they have dealt with several issues connected to Partition. I wanted also to look at the different perspectives of men and women writers, writing in the aftermath of Partition. Were they different in their approach towards ‘women’ and if so, what caused this difference?

There was also a lacuna in Partition fiction studies as far as Hindi writing is concerned. All the research that I could find was concentrated upon Urdu writers and their translations or some writers of Indian English. Yashpal’s ‘Jhootha Sach’ has not even found a translator as yet. My task was to take up writers like Yashpal and Bhisham Sahni and some women novelists from India and Pakistan who had not received the kind of critical acclaim, which was due to them.

My work therefore brings together writers in Urdu, Hindi and English who have written on Partition and juxtaposes them with each other, contrasting, historicizing, drawing parallels and most important, placing them in the literary canon as unparalleled writers of Partition fiction.

There was a strong motive behind incorporating cinema in my study. I think that for cinema it is easier to negotiate boundaries. As it is a visual medium, its representation is easily identifiable as national/cultural. Even the cinematic
language is a universal one (consisting of editing, camera placement, camera angle, lighting and cinematography) and one can easily identify with the visual on the screen, irrespective of the language being spoken by the characters. This is the power of cinema and thus, it is amply made use of by several directors who have focused on the tragedy of Partition.

Defining a ‘Nation; and its women has been the attempt of this study but definitions are essentialist by nature and so the need to expand them into pluralities is important. The richness and the complexity of this entire process have been worth the effort. What I have found in it is that the family, community and state emerge as the three powerful agencies, which determined the fate of women at an individual and a collective level. Talking in secular terms, we are constantly reiterating a legacy of religious difference as well. For us, Partition has taught us the sharp separatedness of Hindus and Muslims. In fact, every time we assert our ‘national’ identity, we are in effect invoking our hostilities with our neighbour. This hollow sense of patriotism will have to give way to a more authentic and reliable sense of national history. Partition writings are helping us explore these new vistas of meaning, helping us to conceptualize a whole new sense of the ‘nation’. I have also found that Partition identified the; nation’ and the ‘woman’ as conceptualized territories—to be conquered, inscribed and exploited and it is most evident in the short story of the period. Last but not the least, the cinema dealing with Partition is breaking stereotypes, questioning certain
assumptions and even unfolding a whole new generation unburdened by Partition to rethink their history and their future.