CHAPTER–VI
CONCLUSION

The partition of the Punjab is one of the most cataclysmic events of the 20th Century. Partition, Vibhajan, Vand or Batwara – it carries numerous names yet it implies unleashing of unprecedented violence of genocidal proportions and unfolding of high human misery. Accompanied by communal hatred and violence, it created a lot of human sufferings i.e. killing, looting, lynching, abduction, rape, suicide, mutilation, molestation and displacement. The partition of the Punjab has forced the historians, social scientists, human activists, public persons, social anthropologists, psychologists and creative writers to write enormously about the event owing to its intensity. It has turned out to be a complex problem to write about. Hence, it has initiated an endless debate about the role of persons and political parties in the partition, the far-reaching consequences on the sub-continental politics, the violence and the vast exodus it brought about.

Historicity of the partition of India defies conclusion. Each attempt tends to unfold its reality. M.A. Jinnah, the high priest and the ‘sole spokesman’ of the All India Muslim League, argued that Pakistan had been there for centuries. Before this, Lala Lajpat Rai, in the 1920s, suggested reorganization of the Punjab on communal lines. In the wake, Muhammad Iqbal, the poet of Pan-Islamism, demanded the creation of Muslim state within India. However, Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, a Cambridge University student, further crystallized the idea of ‘Pakistan’ in 1933. The idea was considered ‘chimerical’ and ‘impracticable’. The idea in a changed political situation culminated in the Lahore Resolution of 1940. M.A. Jinnah in the annual session of the All India Muslim League session tacitly argued: ‘The only solution for India was the establishment of two nation states, each autonomous but bound together by international agreements’. The Lahore Resolution was passed on March 23, 1940 in the 27th Annual Session of the All India Muslim League held at Lahore.
The non-Muslim press immediately labeled it as ‘the Pakistan Resolution’, for which later on M.A. Jinnah thanked the Hindu and the British press for giving one word. However, the Lahore Resolution did not include words ‘partition’, and ‘Pakistan’. The Resolution created much political heat. Meanwhile, M.A. Jinnah had taken care to draft the Resolution in such a way that textual ambiguities would not foreclose the alternative outcomes. He refused to define his ‘nation’ and thereby left his ‘scheme’ open to diverse interpretations. However, the Punjab formed the lynchpin of ‘the Pakistan Scheme’. Moreover, the idea stirred politics of the Punjab. Master Tara Singh and other Sikh leaders categorically declared that Pakistan would be formed on ‘their dead bodies’. Even a section of the Muslims criticized the Resolution. Sikandar Hayat Khan, the Premier, said that the Pakistan Scheme had sown seeds of communal hatred. He irreverently called it ‘Jinnistan’. Nevertheless, it was ‘a shrewd game’ of political chess in India.

The World War II created a number of contingencies. The Cripps Proposals of 1942 promised the dominion status and gave ‘an opting out’ clause to any province. The Congress denounced the Proposals. The Sikhs also opposed. The Quit India Movement (1942) enhanced the political relevance of the Muslim League. After Sikandar Hayat Khan’s death in December 1942, Khizr Hayat Khan became the Premier of the Punjab. M.A. Jinnah pressurized Khizr Hayat Khan to concede the League demands. However, the Premier resisted. The Sikander-Jinnah Pact collapsed in April 1944. The Governor of the Punjab, Sir. B.J. Glancy reported that “the Pakistan slogan is gaining momentum’. The landlords, pirs, middle class Muslims began moving towards the Muslim League. The Shimla Conference failed because of M.A. Jinnah’s insistence that he be allowed to select all Muslim members to the Viceroy’s Executive Council. The Congress loudly protested. However, it raised the status of M.A. Jinnah in the Muslim politics and the Indian politics as well.

In the post-war situation, the British Government suggested elections in India. However, Sir B.J. Glancy, judging the political situation in the Punjab, openly opposed it. He talked of ‘the absurdity of crude form of Pakistan’ turning into ‘a
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civil war’ in the Punjab. His views were overlooked. The elections of 1945-46 politicized the communities and out of it, the Muslim League emerged like a Sphinx. Meanwhile, the Unionist model collapsed under the burden of the war economy and political contingencies. The Cabinet Mission could not solve the political impasse. Furthermore, the Muslim League wanted political power in the Punjab. The League organizations were banned along with other para-military bodies. However, the heat of violence made the ban unsustainable. Consequently, the ban was lifted in January 1947. Some sections viewed it capitulation. On 20\textsuperscript{th} February 1947, the British Premier, Sir Clement Attlee announced withdrawal of the British by June 1948. Under such an uncertainty, the Khizr Ministry struggled to survive. It passed the Punjab Goondas Act (1947) to deal with violence. However, under much political pressure and uncertainty, the Premier Khizr Hayat Khan tendered his resignation on March 2, 1947. The fall of the Khizr Ministry and non-Muslim opposition to the proposed Muslim League Ministry in the Punjab led to large scale rioting and communal clashes. Later on, the violence spread to other parts of the Punjab. Moreover, the highly militarized character of the Punjabi society made the communal problem more volatile. Ex-soldiers were trained in techniques of modern warfare and organization which made the partition massacres so terrible. The situation worsened as the date of transfer of power drew nearer.

On the midnight of 14\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th} August 1947, the Independence was declared along with the division of India. Freedom came not only at the cost of India’s unity but also at the loss and uprooting of millions of innocent people. It was worst ever communal blood-bath in Indian history. In the words of Brig-General T.W. Rees, Commander of the Punjab Boundary Force, the killings were ‘pre-medieval in their ferocity.’ G.D. Khosla estimated the loss of non-Muslim life at a figure between two and half lakh persons in the West Punjab. It is believed that equal number of Muslims perished in the East Punjab. Ivan Stephens gives estimate of five lakh to six lakh persons dead. The estimate appears more reliable because he was amidst holocaust. Leonard Mosley has estimated six lakh dead and fourteen million driven from their homes. For J.S. Grewal, nearly a million persons perished and over
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thirteen million crossed the border. In all, nearly twelve million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were involved. It also led to the migration of some nine million people. In less than two months, about thirteen million changed homes crossing the Radcliffe Line in both directions amidst fury of monsoonal floods and disease.

History is ‘an unending dialogue’ between the present and the past, a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends. It acquires meaning and objectivity only when it establishes a coherent relation between past and future. History is collective memory, the store-house of experience through which people develop a sense of their social identity and their future prospects. Hence, history is a kind of research or inquiry. Moreover, the main objective of history is to study the historical past and to try to reach out the reality. For this purpose, the historian dwells on a number of tools, methods and a wide range of source material which includes archival records, oral narratives, folklores, folktales and literature. Moreover, in the wake of inter-disciplinary approach, the dependency of history on the allied disciplines has increased.

However, the traditional historians have mainly relied on the official or archival record. They have neglected literature as evidence because they do argue that literature is based on the imagination of human mind. Hence, it is considered away from reality. Traditional historical methodologies perceive recollections or testimonies as bearing imprint of bias, distortion and even exaggeration. Literature is an important branch of knowledge. It is reflection of society and a vital record of what people have observed and experienced. Literature is a form of human expression. It becomes a form of universal truth articulated through powerful personal expression. In a generic sense, literature includes creative writings such as poetry, fiction, drama and essays etc. The creative writer through the medium of characters, portrays social, political, economic and cultural mosaic of a particular section or a society. Moreover, literature is not written in a vacuum. Literature like history is influenced or moulded by the social environment. In a way, literature can be considered creative counterpart of history.
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If the historian is to study the contemporary society, social change, evolution of ideas and cultural milieu, he must go through literary writings. A literateur has a good understanding of society, social customs, values and other forces operating in the social system. It is both compelling and challenging for a creative writer to assimilate critically the legacy of history, as a reference point for the present as well as to reinterpret and ‘re-enact the past experience’. Moreover, the impact of a particular event can be judged by analyzing the literature of that time. Certain events and experiences get recorded in the conscious or unconscious memory of human mind. Literature deals with the complexities, inner workings and reactions of human mind in relation to a particular event or development. Literature goes beyond empirical reality, beyond treaties and wars. Furthermore, it goes on to tap the unconscious and irrational as it catches fragmentary realities. As literature transcends historicity, the appeal often becomes far-reaching and universal.

The dialectical relationship between literary narratives and historical reality has been a subject of critical discourse. Facts have always been privileged over fiction. Instead of trying to draw generalized, magisterial conclusions from isolated events and imposing some arbitrary pattern on them, literature records the writer’s endeavour to reconstruct the reality in slices and fragments by dramatizing some human situations. The true significance of historical fiction lies in its aesthetic interpretation of salient historical and socio-political themes. Turning his attention to literary narratives, Gyanendra Pandey argues that ‘the historian needs to struggle to recover “marginal” voices and memories, forgotten dreams and signs of resistance, if history is to be anything more than a celebratory account of the march of certain victorious concepts and powers like the nation, state, bureaucratic rationalism and capitalism, science and progress’.

In literary narrative, though historical aspect remains intact, the experience is likely to transcend historicity and becomes the universal experience. The appeal is far-reaching and the event narrated has an enduring impact rather than getting merely recorded in memory. The human experience of joy and suffering is an indispensable part of fictional writings. Literature speaks about human
relationships, human values and ethos, human suffering, agony and reflects the psychological condition of the people. Hence, the powerful relations between history and literature have been and are being revealed by the critics. Literary critics are now studying the theories of history; and professional historians seem to be searching freshly for unique insights a literary document may provide. Moreover, for better understanding of history and a nuanced study of reality, it would be, undoubtedly, rewarding to scan the rich repository of diverse experiences recorded sensitively by a creative writer in long and short narratives.

The partition of India is one of the most contested issues in Indian historiography. The historians have written enormously on the topic. However, all these writings revolve around the ‘high politics’ of India’s Independence and the partition. These studies focus on Indian politics, political activities at the national level and contesting ideologies of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. Most of these studies have focused on the political aspect of the event, relying basically on the official or archival record. These historical works interpret the partition as an event, address only to political and economic dimensions; present the varying and cold facts about it. However, the tragedies like the partition can not be understood in terms of facts and figures, and can not be relegated to statistics alone. However, the human dimension of the partition is missing from most of the studies. Moreover, human experiences of the partition, human trauma, pain, loss and agony have been left unattended in these historical studies.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, certain new trends have surfaced in the case of Partition Studies. The scholars have begun to interpret the partition with alternative modes of history like oral, narrative and fictional representations of the partition. Even feminist writings on the partition have been gaining momentum. Through all these modes, the neglected aspect of the partition is being explored i.e. human dimension of the event. Authors like Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin, Alok Bhalla, Urvashi Butalia, Gyanendra Pandey, Mushirul Hasan, S. Settar and Indira Baptista Gupta and Jasbir Jain have tried to use oral narratives,
testimonies, memoirs and literature to reconstruct the ugly reality of the partition (1947).

The partition of the Punjab not only created new boundaries but also etched deep psychological scars on the mindscape of the people. The torturous dismembering of land which occurred like a surgical amputation created the human suffering and pain of unimaginable proportions. There is no dearth of historical evidence to substantiate the colossal anarchy, insensitivity and inhumanity in prevalence at this historical juncture. The creative writers have graphically portrayed the human pain and sufferings, fiendishness of communal violence, trauma of displacement, loss of identity, loss of honour of women, disappearance of moral values in the wake of communal frenzy. The fictional writers have fully addressed the issues like molestation of women, breakup of families, division of the Punjabi society on communal lines and enduring friendships during mayhem. Broadly, they argue for human brotherhood, tolerance, unity, respect for women’s dignity, preserving the shared language, cultural heritage and integrity of the country. In essence, they are opposed to religious animosity, bigotry and any kind of violence against humanity, bringing dishonour to womenfolk and finally the partition of the Punjab and India as well.

Thus, by creating a special fictional space and speaking through the characters these literary representations reveal the other face of freedom. These writings fully address sensitive issues which the historians have somehow glossed over. The celebrations of the Independence were marred by a number of pathetic cries of those who lost their self, identity, home, honour and even life. The creative writers have tried to listen to these marginalized voices which do not find any space in the historical discourse. The fictional writings explore the mental agony, pain and utter bewilderment of the people who experienced such a catastrophic event. They speak about the ordinary people who paid a heavy price for the freedom. They were just poor players trapped in the ‘high politics’ enacted to satisfy egotism and forceful ambitions of the powerful. These creative writers poignantly lament over inhumanity of the event. They have written about grim and ugly reality and
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II

The partition resulted in tremendous material, human loss and suffering. The people of the Punjab passed through a traumatic experience in which anarchy and violence created a deep rupture in the social fabric. It has been rightly stated that ‘the butchery of 1947’ was an organized one and with a few parallels in history. These killings can be described as ‘a general massacre’ master-minded by politicians and executed by gangs armed with and trained in modern weapons. The most significant sign of the partition of India was the massive violence that surrounded, accompanied or constituted it. Moreover, the highly militarized character of the Punjabi society made the communal problem more volatile. In the presence of ex-soldiers, who were taught to kill and were newly trained in techniques of modern warfare and organization, the partition massacres were so terrible. The Redcliffe Award was ready on August 9th, yet the government withheld it to avoid repression and responsibility. The announcement of the Award fuelled communal frenzy. The Award was handed to Jawaharlal Nehru on August 16th and to Liaquat Ali Khan on August 17th. This uncertainty of borderline created panic which perpetuated communal violence phenomenally. Therefore, the mass violence and exodus were rendered inevitable.

The suddenness of the event and fiendishness of partition violence has benumbed all sensitive minds. A common refrain in popular and scholarly writings was that country’s division was a colossal tragedy, a man-made catastrophe brought about by hot-headed and cynical politicians who failed to grasp implications of division along religious lines. Anguished by orgy of communal riots, Jawaharlal
Nehru wrote in 1947: ‘it is curious that when tragedy affects an individual we feel the full force of it but when that individual is multiplied a thousand-fold, our senses are dulled and we become insensitive’. Shorish Kashmuri, a poet and a journalist, poignantly but aptly summarized the situation: ‘All India Radio proclaimed Independence by broadcasting Vande Matram and Pakistan Radio did so with the recitation of the Quran. But as the day dawned, both sides began to butcher their minorities in the name of religion. The riots ceased to be communal. On the contrary, it was genocide of the minorities by the majorities’. In 1947, the violence had changed into non-consensual violence and appropriated genocidal proportions. It is an archetype of nationalist fratricide where people of common cultural heritage were competing for political control of land and government. The partition violence was constituted by genocidal massacres characterized by the annihilation of a section of a group-men, women, and children as for example in wiping out whole villages. Phillip Ziegler has rightly stated that ‘human suffering is not to be counted in statistics; the partition of Punjab caused untold misery to several million people’.

The best of fiction writers are not concerned with merely telling stories of violence, but with making profoundly troubled enquiries about the survival of our moral being in the midst of horror. Whatever the fiction emerges from the survivors’ account are not deviations from the ‘truth’ but are part of the truth in any particular version. The creative writings on the theme of partition offer insights into new sense of subjectivity, the profound sense of rupture and the deep personal meanings emerging from grotesque human massacre. For Alok Bhatta, fictional writings ‘express bewilderment of the people and deal with violence itself in different ways’. Most of the creative writings presuppose that people were living in mutual harmony and peace. The writers interpret the Punjabi society from the view of brotherhood and secularism. The partition literature deals with the dilemma and confusion of the people who were too bewildered at the things which were threatening the contours of composite culture. The creative writers speaking through their fictional characters convey the popular anguish against the leaders. The writers speak for the common people who were caught amidst the holocaust. For the ordinary people,
Independence meant nothing. The joy of Independence was overshadowed by the pathetic cries of those who lost their home, honour, identity and even life.

The creative writers are equally critical of the British who were primarily responsible for the vivisection. Chaman Lal’s *Azadi* accuses the politicians of betraying the people. In the novel, Lala Kanshi Ram says to an Englishman, Bill Davidson; ‘we have been let down by you people.. The English have biggest hand in this butchery.” Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* calls the British as a race of four twenties (deceivers). In Kamleshwar’s *Partitions*, Jinnah was deliberately made ‘the trump card of the British’. Sometimes, it appears that the creative writers try to over-romanticise the inter-community relationships. Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* portrays the cohesiveness of common life. Thus, the writers tend to expose the inevitability theory of the partition. For the creative writers, the partition and subsequent violence was a sudden eruption, a moment of rupture having no antecedents. The magnitude of violence brought complete incomprehensibility among the creative writers. Some called it ‘unnatural’, and other considered it ‘divine punishment’. Kulwant Singh Virk, in his short story *Ulahama* complains to the god for the obtrusive segregation of the people of one community from the other. Alok Bhalla reveals ‘how we fell out of a human world of languages, customs, rituals and prayers into a bestial world of hatred, rage, self-interest and frenzy. The partition literature records that along with the maps, mass passions were aroused in the partition era followed by endless holocausts coupled with mass murders by hordes of communalists. The friends became enemies overnight. Gurbachan Bhullar’s *Phattu Mirasi*, a low caste ignorant, who describes the partition as a deluge where the sanity of all vanished into air. The partition fiction focuses on the religious cynicism and human savagery. Mutual hatred, fear and distrust had resulted in psychological restlessness as friendship became secondary to faith. The violence between the Punjabis was larger than life phenomenon; one comes across several examples of attitudes and behaviour in fiction that seem to have been socially sanctioned during the violent orgy of partition in this very proud headstrong, militant and comparatively prosperous region. A character in Bapsi
Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy Man* states ‘I lose my senses when I think of mutilated bodies on the train from Gurdaspur’. Embedded in each individual narrative is a profound sense of loss, of dislocation and ultimately of violence. Sant Singh Sekhon, in *Bhootan di Khed* considers killing to be a sacred duty. He narrates indiscriminate killing by the marauders. The perpetrators of violence found some sort of romance in killing the ‘others’ ruthlessly. Sujan Singh’s short story *Manukh te Pashu* depicts fiendishness and madness with which people were slaughtered. Saadat Hasan Manto’s short story ‘Bestiality’ brings to the fore the question that who was the beast - animal or human being who had gone mad and lost all the sanity. Those who opposed and stood for humanity and brotherhood were termed as traitors and eliminated. There was a lurking fear of more violence. Nanak Singh in *Agg De Khed* states: ‘streams of blood would flow. This time *holi* would be played with blood instead of colour’.

The killings were carried on an arithmetic precision. The creative writings portray the elementary ferocity of partition violence. The partition violence provides flashback of medieval barbarism. It was an obscene instance of religious fanaticism. Saadat Hasan Manto, sarcastically, in his story ‘*For Necessary Action*’ makes a rigorous attack on the futility of religious beliefs of non-violence’ Mohinder Singh Sarna’s short story ‘*Savage Harvest*’ (*Chhavian de Rutt*) resoles around the discomfiture of Dina, an ‘ironsmith, who is forced to make axes and spears for the butchery of the Hindus and Sikhs. He is totally moved when he sees an old woman butchered by an axe made by him’. Religious slogans were used to provoke already charged emotions and to maximize the damage to the ‘other’. Such slogans as *Nara-i-Taqbir, Allah-ho-Akbar, Har-Har Mahadev* and *Jo Boley So Nihal* were considered war cries during the carnage.

Partition literature goes beyond the political processes and touches the human beings at their sensitive and contemplative best. The creative writer is sensitive to the divisive communal trends eating into the very vitals of social organism which tore asunder the social fabric. In Saadat Hasan Manto’s *Dekh Kabira Roya*, Sant Kabir wanders through the streets of Lahore and weeps over
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Vandalism and inhumanity brought about by the partition. The partition violence brought to the surface, both at the level of action and of imagination, certain primitive fantasies of bodily violence, prominent being sexual mutilation. The partition fiction also attempts to reflect the efforts of sustaining communal harmony and enduring relationships under the sway of communal orgy. On the one hand, characters participate in communal holocaust and on the other, they make sacrifices for those belonging to other community. Many in the bitter days, tried to resist communal violence. The creative writers compile an endless cumulative dossier of barbarity of mayhem of 1947. They fictionalize the unqualified horror and terror. The pain and agony speak spontaneously. The fictional writings look at the problem from a humanistic point of view. The creative writers have given us various perspectives on and sensitive portrayals of those bloody days. They have narrativised bewilderment and incommunicability of the people who lived through violence-marked epoch and experienced the traumatic event.

The partition uprooted the people overnight, homes became strange places, to borrow the appropriate phrase from Amitav Ghosh, millions were left 'with no home but in memory'. Identities had to be suddenly renegotiated and redefined. It was the largest mass migration in history. The millions were forced to leave their homelands and adjust themselves in new locales despite their continued protestation. The partition enforced movements of the people on a scale absolutely unparalleled in history. Furthermore, it brought the problem of minorities into greater prominence than ever before. Ivan Stephans and Michael Edwardes estimated that some 14 million people were forced to leave their homes. A greater part of this massive migration took place within the short span of three months i.e. between mid of August and mid of November 1947. By October 8, 1947, some 16,28,000 refugees had already been exchanged between East Punjab. In the census of 1951, refugees formed one fifth of the total population of East Punjab and one sixth of the entire population of West Punjab. On the whole, the Muslims suffered most lives. The Hindus and Sikhs lost most property. There were columns of refugees stretching for more than sixty miles, creeping along narrow roads, the families carrying all their
worldly goods in bullock carts. The partition transformed the landscape of northern parts of the sub-continent as it uprooted millions of the people from their habitats and the places experienced transformations due to such displacement and rehabilitation. India celebrated Independence with sense of joy but mixed with pain and sadness.

The partition and consequent migration brought about uprootedness and emotional trauma. The millions were forced to leave their homes, their *bastis*, their *watan* and undertake a difficult and sorrowful journey, often against their desires and better instincts to cities and villages whose names and images had rarely ever before drifted across the boundaries of their affected realms. Mushirul Hasan has rightly observed: ‘the history books do not record the pain, trauma and sufferings of those who had to part from their kin, neighbours and friends, their deepening nostalgia for places they had lived in for generations, the anguish of devotees removed from their places of worship and harrowing experiences of countless people who boarded trains thinking they would be transported to the realization of their dreams, but of whom not a men, women or child survived the journey’. The partition fiction has fully addressed the issues largely glossed over by the historians in the mainstream history. The creative writer has graphically portrayed that how the people were divided, how they were separated from their homeland and how the people tried to cope up with this trauma.

Independence brought with it anguish and dilemma, the emotional pain of severance from home. The partition was irrevocably etched on the minds of the people. The partition fiction laments the loss of a world not only in the form of romanticized nostalgia but also in form of dejection and bewilderment. This disillusionment is poignantly captured by scores of writers on both sides of the border. The plight of every one caught in the middle of brutality of the partition days, was perhaps, summed up by a refugee who told an interviewer with the austerity of those who had suffered for too much: *Kaun Ujardna Chahta Ta?* (Who Wanted to be Uprooted). Fictional writings lament the loss of a world though not only in form of nostalgia which emerges as an ambivalent motif. In such writings,
narratives, nostalgia serves to illustrate the irrevocable break with traditional values that the partition brought about. The partition did not mean the birth of two new geographical dominions, as the examination of creative literature proves. It gave birth to ‘a new psychic dominion’ as well.

The fiction portrays initial hesitation and dilemma about leaving the home. When faced with the reality of partition, many characters in the partition fiction asserted with quiet confidence their refusal to leave their homes and hearth. They suffer acute pangs of nostalgia for leaving their *watan*: “I was born around here, how I can be a refugee in my own home”, states a character in Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi*. Decision to go or to stay was very short and tumultuous and often made abruptly. After the partition, the people were shattered when faced with the stark reality of division and consequent uprootment. There was a hope among the people that all the tribulations and adversities would subside and they would be able to retain their places. A character in Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* says “I suppose, we’ll continue here, why Hindus and Sikhs can’t live in Pakistan?” The partition literature speaks about the concept of place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire. Human beings are like plants. When pulled out, some portion of a person’s roots remains in the native soil and the memory of the lost roots tortures him or her for the remaining life. However, the people moved to safer places to escape violence with the only hope that soon peace would return back. The migrants in the partition narratives fail to understand how they will ever find their way back to an ordinary place called ‘home’. The partition literature deals with profound sense of rupture, tribulations and traumas experienced by the people. In Davendra Satyarthi’s short story *Janam Bhoomi*, love for birth place is held responsible for excruciating pain suffered by the people while being uprooted from their native lands. The story speaks about the utter sense of rupture, detachment and displacement. In Santokh Singh Dhir’s story *Mera Ujadaya Gwandi* the protagonist wishes “If I were a crow I would have once more seen my village and its dwellings. There would have been no threat to my life as the birds and animals do not have any religion”. Thus, *Desh* remains trapped in people’s past, in their nostalgia and in
their memory. ‘The Muslims of Mano Majra began ‘to come out of their homes, driving their cattle and their bullock carts loaded with Charpoys. There was no time even to say good bye. The Sikhs watched from distance till they were out of sight. They wiped the tears off their faces and turned back to their homes with heavy hearts’. Hence, the fiction probes the inner recesses of the mind. Through the fictionalized characters, the creative writers epitomize the psychological trauma of the people while being robbed off their homeland. There were people with no fixed abode, no fixed national status. The cartographic and political divisions constituted by the partition were ‘shadow lines’ that the literature seeks to repudiate.

There was lot of hysteria when the land of the ‘five rivers’ was suddenly ripped into two territories-Hindus and Muslim, India and Pakistan. Threatened by unrelenting and remorseless violence, migrants’ journey across the new borders had no moral glamour attached to it and no religious sanctity. Significantly, it is the effective recounting of peoples’ experience of migration and highlights the disjunction between home and nation. Migrants in the partition narratives fail to understand how they will ever find their way back to an ordinary place called ‘home’. In Intizar Husain’s short story “The Boat” a character enquires “will we ever go back? ‘Where?’ ‘Home’, ‘Home’? They were bewildered. The very thought of home threatened to shatter their sanity just as a storm threatens to uproot trees”. On the whole, the partition fiction repudiates the territorial boundaries and divisions constituted by the partition. The reminiscences of the uprooted are like a perpetually yearning for ‘a paradise lost’. Moreover, the partition migrants in their accounts appear united in their misfortune irrespective of their social class, caste and gendered experience. The partition literature depicts collective as well as individual anguish and mental disequilibrium of those who were being drifted away from their homes. Bapsi Sidhwa’s character in Ice Candy Man enquires: “Do you expect us to leave everything we have valued and loved since childhood?” There was alienness in the environment. In Kulwant Singh Virk’s Ulahama: “the Hindus and Sikhs realised that it is impossible for them to live there. Within a day or so, ploughing came to a standstill. Those who used to sow seeds in the fields, felt estranged. What
was the use of sowing of crops which they could not later on harvest. Gradually, all the Hindus of the area left for refugee camps”. The literature tries to crystallize that how a place called ‘home’ or *watan* was just reduced to rubble and converted into some alien land. Kartar Singh Duggal notes in *Nau Te Maas*: “The farms where farmers ploughed the field, grazed the animals, sang the songs and felt amused, did not now know why they were being deserted in those days”.

In the cataclysmic event of partition, epitomized by scenes of carnage, devastation and utter chaos, reality itself became a melodrama. The underlying sentiment in the partition is that the arbitrary delineation of borders created a lost generation, a generation with no moorings. Literature speaks about the unending and woeful journey that the millions had to undertake. The movements of exodus represent both chaos and order. The pictures of long *kafilas* of people, their belongings and their bullock-carts moving from one place to another have, in the world of images, become a metaphor for the longest human migration in history. Fiction uses vehicular metaphors to communicate their sense of dislocation, the train being the prominent one. Krishan Chander’s short story “*Peshawar Express*” through the character of train itself narrates the plight of refugees from the West Punjab who were forced to leave their home and hearth. Bhisham Sahni’s short story “*We Have Arrived Amritsar*”, gives the mental mappings of refugees traveling by train from West Punjab. The trains were especially vulnerable to systematic, pre-mediated attacks because trains had fixed routes and may not change them and indeed their times of departure and arrival were known to the assailants. The image of hapless passengers huddled in a corner of the train compartment with a few belongings and a look of total disbelief heralds the beginning of all narratives of loss and misery during the partition. Literature explores the uncertainty of a human situation where violence was the only certainty. The trains virtually turned out to be ‘corpse carriers’ and ‘heralds of deaths’. The platforms and the compartments of the trains became the ‘indicators of the misery of refugee existence, a life in flux’. The attacks on the refugees’ convoys were the hallmark of the partition violence.
Torn from their roots and bearing the trauma of being uprooted from their ‘homes’, the migrants had a very little ability to combat the attacks. On the whole, the moving migrants were unfortunate victims of the marauding attacks or silent witnesses. At the mental and spatial level, the people traveling on foot shared the same hatred, suspicion, mass hysteria and insecurity with those traveling by trains. When people died due to illness or exhaustion, as many did, they were cremated by the roadside and the family moved on. Moreover, the partition brought about the identity crisis. Loss of home is loss of self for which people yearn forever. Saadat Hasan Manto approaches the subject in his classic story ‘Toba Tek Singh’ through an allegory which concerns the exchange of lunatics after the Independence. Toba Tek Singh is a triumph of ambivalence. The madman’s death takes place in no-man’s land, where the writ of neither nation prevails. Indeed, the term ‘madness’ itself has a privileged status in the discourse on the partition. Analogies of madness appear in abundance and with frightening frequency. Loss of identity is well portrayed in Kulwant Singh Virk’s story ‘Mainu Janney’. Intizaar Husain’s short story “An Unwritten Epic” graphically portrays the theme of a lost world and utter bewilderment in the new landscape and consequent emotional trauma. The poor Pichwa faces the hostile words like, “every muhajir here should damn well pack up and go back to India”. Mulk Raj Anand’s short story “The Parrot in Cage” deals with woes of the migrants through the character of an old woman Rukmani. The story deplores the inhumanity and callousness of the administration while dealing with the refugees. The creative writers have portrayed the process of migration and rehabilitation in their writings providing window to human strength and frailities. Kartar Singh Duggal’s short story “A New Home” portrays the plight of the migrants who had to leave their homes in a hurry to escape the attacks. They were not able to take anything except their cloths on. The refugee camps were ubiquitous. The camps formed the transit stage between uprootment and resettlement. These camps have been fictionalized in the partition literature as portrayal of humanity under duress. The people had to relocate themselves in the changed and hostile landscapes. The refugees were nobody’s responsibility. Despite all the adversities, refugees
started the long journey to recovery and adjusted to their new lives that would never be the same again. After the anarchy and chaos of the partition, the life began itself in its rhythm with all vigour and force. Kulwant Singh in his short story ‘Khabbal’ depicts the rooting of a woman afresh amidst hostile environment.

In any upheaval, when sectarian passions are aroused or violence reigns supreme, women become the worst victims of rival groups. In a situation of civil war, where nearly every man is a soldier fighting for his homeland, women come to be seen as ‘territory’ to be occupied. The increasing incidents of abductions and attacks on the women during 1946-47, undoubtedly reflected attempts to expose the most protected aspects of ‘other’s’ honour. The experience of women as both victims and survivors of violence is absent from standard historical accounts. Urvashi Butalia has rightly observed that historians have paid little attention to the experience of women during the partition. The story of the partition, the uprooting and dislocation of people was accompanied by the story of rape, abduction and widowhood of thousands of women on both sides of the newly formed borders. The feminist historiography emphasizes that “representative history can only be written if the experience and status of one half of the mankind is an integral part of the story. While men belonging to the other community were killed, women were not let off in a show of compassion: instead, they were abducted. Thus, only the form which the violence took differed.

Women were ‘the chief sufferers’ of the chaos created by the partition. An estimated 75,000 to 1,00,000 women were abducted by the members of other religious communities to be raped and murdered, sold into prostitution, or forced into marriage. Women were distributed in the same way the baskets of oranges or grapes are sold or gifted. Some were sold in the market places for Rs.10 or 20 a piece, others were sent as gifts to friends and acquaintances. Many of them suffered daily physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their abductors. As vessels of honour of the whole community, the shame and horror fell on everybody associated with the girls: these were not individual tragedies. Women were sites upon which communal politics was played. The traumatic violence meted out to numberless women at the
time of partition demolished all sense of self, existential or social, granted to them by established patriarchal system. If they did not die a physical death, they died a psychological death. The abduction, molestation and rape of women were weapons to humiliate the men as being unable to protect the community honour. Women’s bodies were made the passive witnesses of disorder. There were various methods of humiliation such as breasts and noses were cut off, their bodies branded or tattooed with signs and symbols of ‘other religion’, pregnant were forcibly aborted and often women were made to strip naked and paraded through the streets in towns and cities. The Ajit in April 1947, in a printed pamphlet, narrated the plight of women rather pathetically: ‘hundreds of women have been abducted, women jumped into the wells and sacrificed their lives to preserve their honour’.

Bapsi Sidhwa has rightly observed that women are the ‘living objects on whose soft bodies’ victors and losers alike vent their wrath, enact fantastic vendettas, and celebrate victories’. The ravaged bodies of women became ‘envelopes to carry the message of conquest from one group of men to another’. Santokh Singh Dhir in Oh Din mentions that ‘the women were helpless. The untold brutalities were committed on women. Hindustan and Pakistan were inscribed on their thighs and breasts. Hindu-Sikh women on that side and Muslims women on this side of the border were hapless young and beautiful women were in more trouble’.

For many a woman, it was not only miscreants, outsiders or marauding mobs that they needed to fear. Husbands, fathers, brothers and even sons turned killers. Thousands of women were rejected by their husbands and families and they had no option but to live their lives in ashrams and brothels. Veena Das writes that woman’s body became a sign through which men communicated with each other and political programmes of creating two nations of India and Pakistan were inscribed upon the bodies of women. The partition was a pathegony of the male lust and women were made the site of macabre treatment. Shahni, the protagonist of Krishna Sobti’s story ‘New Regime’ resists the uprootment from her haveli. She poignantly captures the torment of an elderly woman who is pushed into migration when her very identity is based on the confines of her house. To her, discarding her
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home means discarding the self. The women reacted sharply to the idea of migrating as it was tortuous even to think of. Salma in *Jadon Sawar Hoi* declares, ‘I would prefer to die over here rather than leaving my home’. Nooran in *Train to Pakistan* says ‘this is our village. Who will throw us out’? Women became ‘plunderer’s paradise’ as it is clear from a dialogue of two characters in the *Train to Pakistan*: ‘Bholeya, I hear a lot of women are being abducted and sold cheap. You could find a wife for yourself. Why Sardara, if you can find a Mussalmani without paying for her, am I impotent that I should have to buy an abducted girl’, replied Bholia. Amrita Pritam’s novel *Pinjar* reveals the women’s travails during the partition.

The partition fiction exposes the devilish instinct and brutality with which women were handled. Bapsi Sidhwa narrates in *Ice-Candy Man*, “they dragged (Ayah) her by her arms stretched out and her bare feet that want to move backwards were forced forward instead. Her lips are drawn away from her teeth. The men drag her in grotesque strides to the cart and their harsh hands supporting her with careless intimacy, left her into it”. Literature depicts dramatically the psychological wounds of women being separated from their families who were already uprooted.

Rape was the worst form of women sufferings. It was used to kill the ‘other’ morally. Women were too much unfortunate to conceal ‘their selves’. The hunting eyes were in search of the beauty to be devastated. Detached from the whole bodies, the sexed body parts were powerful testimony to the dehumanization of women and their reduction to ghastly currency in an exchange determined by the rules of men. Saadat Hasan Manto’s short story ‘Khol Do’ (Open It) is a chilling story how a women became totally insensate after undergoing the multiple rapes. She had inwardly resigned herself to become a robotic object. In another story *Thanda Ghosht* (Cold Meat) a young girl is raped even after she is dead. The event had such a chilling effect on the rapist that he became impotent. The story vividly depicts man’s descent into savagery. In short story “Allah Wale” the protagonist Sawinder exposes her travails in the form of abduction, escaping and jumping into the river, then finally being captured, recovery and restoration to her parents. Forceful marriage was another dimension of women suffering. The women were forced to
live with a person whom they were not ready to accept. In certain cases, after being raped or molested, women had to accept their ravishers as their husbands. Chammo di Baithak, a short story by Surinder Singh Narula narrates that even the brothels were not spared. The prostitutes were forced to announce their religious affiliations. It makes a point that marauders were more degenerated even than the universally condemned women (prostitutes). Jaspinder Singh Kanwal’s Sarhde Jakham is a lamentation over the fate of women who had been hurt, oppressed and violated by the men for centuries, irrespective of their religion. Mahinder Singh Sarna’s short story Hira Mirg narrates how a dog (Moti) died while defending the honour of daughter of his master. It is a verdict on the surging humanity of a beast when the human beings went berserk in the name of religious and defeated even the beastliness of beasts.

Qudrat Ullah Shahab’s short story Ya Khuda is a tale of Muslim girl Dilshad who suffers first at the hands of non-Muslims where she is sexually abused. Her hopes were shattered when she discovered that even her co-religionists looked upon her as an object of sexual pleasure. Forceful marriages during the partition upheaval were another dimension of women sufferings. The women were forced to live with a person whom they were not ready to accept. Patriarchy determined the fate of women. Abducted women were ‘recovered’ and restored despite their reluctance in certain cases. The recovery operation raised the hopes of many of women for their re-union with their families. In Ice-Candy Man, a character is asked ‘what if your family won’t take you back?’ She says ‘whether they want me or not, I will go’. However, all the women were not fortunate enough to be accepted by their families. A character in short story Lajwanti says: “We will not take these sluts left over by the Muslims’. The literature graphically portrays the insensitivity and inhumanity of the recovery operation. Fate- smitten women were ‘recovered’ and restored despite their reluctance in certain cases. Such women had either surrendered to their fate or they were pushed by the patriarchy into vicissitudes of time. There was a large number who were not recovered despite their wishes so far. Thus, they apparently reconciled to new circumstances but they carried within
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themselves a broken sense of irreparable loss of the past and family. Jamila Hashmi’s short story ‘Exile’ gives such a picture where the protagonist had to marry her abductor and this Sita had to accept Rawana’s home. Large number of women opposed forceful recovery as they had a readjusted in the new domestic spaces. Pooro in Pinjar shows no will for her being ‘recovered’ to her parents. Rather she says, “Now this is my place”. Women had to suffer a double wave of trauma. Firstly, when they were separated from their families and secondly, while being forcefully recovered when they had almost accepted their fate as wives of abductors or saviors. There are number of stories highlighting the insensitivity with which women were recovered even having their children. However, the unfortunate ones rejected by their families and husbands committed suicide.

It is in the partition literature that we come to know what the partition actually meant. These writers have narrativized the bewilderment and incommunicability of the people who lived through the violence marked epoch. Their writings probe the inner workings of the individual as well as general mind, the plight of humanity under duress, the loss of humanity under worst conditions. The literary writings on the partition have graphically portrayed almost all the concerns of the partition i.e. violence, migration, loss of identity and honour, resettlement and relocation in new environment. These writings have prominently focused on the human pain, agony and suffering during the mayhem of 1947. They represent the ‘underside of the history’, the human dimension of the event, how the people experienced the trauma of partition and how they coped up with that trauma.