The partition of the Punjab in 1947 was one of the most cataclysmic events in the history of human civilization. It lingers as a pivotal moment not so much for the political significance, but for its lasting impression of monstrousness and horrific emotional duress. The year 1947 stands distinctly in the troubled history of the Punjab when it was partitioned resulting in massive displacement of millions and communal frenzy leading to widespread rape, abduction and killings. Thus, the partition has become a seminal event in the history of Indian subcontinent and a reference point for everything that has come after. It caused one of the greatest human convulsions. The Punjab turned out to be the arena of communal bloodbath where violence spread to every nook and corner. The partition resulted in tremendous material, human loss and suffering and the people of the Punjab passed through a traumatising experience in which anarchy and violence created a deep rupture in the social fabric. The most horrible aspect of the partition was the frenzied communal violence which accompanied it. The historical studies have largely focused on the political processes leading to and following the partition. Human agony, pain and suffering do not find place in the pages of written history. In the past one or two decades the partition has began to be probed alternatively. The focus has been shifted from ‘high politics’ of the partition, and way has been given to new perspectives largely ignored in the historical narrative. Various genres of literature are being used to fully
comprehend the absurd reality of the partition and to recover the lived experience of the people. In response to the tumultuous period of 1947, a huge corpus of fictional writings has been produced by scores of the writers who have tried to address the human dimension of the partition. There has been a resurgence of popular as well academic interest to unfold, disentangle and understand the event of the partition. These writings have delved on the varied individual experiences of the tragedy, weaving long and short narratives thus translating the gruesome reality of the partition. The use of the fiction for the purpose of portraying the other face of the freedom has introduced the poignant and powerful narratives and has triggered lively discussions that go beyond the limited terrain explored so far. The present work is an attempt to recover the marginalized voices through the medium of creative writings.

I may halt for a while, and avail this opportunity to place on record my gratefulness to all those who have made a direct or indirect contribution towards the successful completion of this thesis. First and foremost, I bow my head in reverence to the God Almighty, for providing me with this opportunity to work with intelligentsia and enabling me to reach far beyond my own restricted ambit of thought and action. No words can express my gratitude towards my parents, whose farsightedness, support and sagacity have liberated my mind from the shackles of ignorance. My life could have taken an entirely different course, had not they cared to provide me best educational facilities even beyond their resources. I reverently acknowledge their generous support, invaluable blessings and selfless but untold sacrifices for my better and bright future.

With great pleasure, I take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude and sincere regards towards my supervisor Dr. Sukhdev Singh Sohal, Professor, Department of History for his inspiration and seasoned guidance. He was a constant source of inspiration for me throughout the work. He was like a lighthouse throughout the execution of the work. I am falling short of words to express my thanks to my esteemed teacher. I am also thankful to Mrs. Harminder Kaur Sohal for her constant support and encouragement. I express my sincerest thanks to Dr. Sukhwant Singh, Professor and Head, Department of History, who helped me in so many ways. I also express my gratefulness to all the faculty members of the Department of History whose help and support cannot be circumscribed in words. With a deep sense of thankfulness, I
acknowledge unending support and encouragement given by Professor Gurnam Singh, former Head, School of Social Sciences. I also express my gratitude to Dr. Parminder Singh, Professor and Head, Department of English and Dr. Paramjit Singh Judge, Professor, Department of Sociology for their timely and valuable insights on the topic.

My profound thanks go to the Library Staff, Department of History and Bhai Gurdas Library, Guru Nanak Dev University; Library Staff of Central Library, Punjabi University, Patiala; Library Staff of Central Library, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Library Staff, Central Library of Jawaharlal Nehru, New Delhi, Incharge and Staff, Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi, Incharge and staff of Sikh History Research Library, Khalsa College, Amritsar for their help and cooperation while looking for various sources.

I owe a special note of gratitude to my friends – Dr. Baljit Singh, Dr. Rajbir Singh, Dr. Anjali Mehra, Kuljinder Singh, Randeep Singh, Dinesh Kumar, Raj Singh, Jatinder Singh Gill, Kabal Singh Sandhu, Ramandeep Singh, Dr. Harpreet Kaur, Dr. Manjit Kaur, Dr. Gurvel Singh Mahli, Sachin Kumar, Gaganpreet Singh – who stood as pillar of care, comfort, encouragement and moral support during the research work. I highly appreciate their unsolicited cooperation as they have been the source of my inner strength and they stood by me in every thick and thin. My sincere thanks go to Mr. Jatin Mehta & Mr. Sadanand of Pioneer Computers for patiently typing and making corrections in the thesis. People closest to an individual play the most effective role in one’s success. I express my deep sense of appreciation to my sisters Manjit and Kuldeep who have always supported me. I shall not forget mentioning the name of my nephew Karan who gave me cheerful company. I am also thankful to my parents-in-law for their constant support and encouragement. Like the boiler team on a ship, someone has to work behind the scenes. My heartfelt appreciation to my better half Aarti, who always stood by my side throughout this ordeal and sacrificed the precious moments of togetherness without any complaint.

Jasbir Singh