ABSTRACT

The issue of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent which was selected for study was, is and will always be an issue of national importance. The Indian Partition is not to be seen only as an important and crucial moment in history. It is coupled with the birth of a nation and is also a permanent marker of ‘self’ and ‘other’ on a gigantic material and national scale. The Indian Partition has raised many issues and questions about citizenship, national identity and the making of national and sub national mentalities. So even though it is studied often, it still demands from us a continuing search for many vital answers.

Aim of Research: A plethora of literature in the form of novels, short stories, plays, memoirs, essays, biographies and numerous other forms was created during and after partition; and the process still continues. This research has attempted to study this and set it in the larger picture of the two disciplines – history and literature.

This research was initiated with the following aims:

I. To confirm if history and literature are complementary to each other on certain issues. If History and Literature share any common places and if yes, what are the commonalities of these discourses?

II. To examine and study the Indian partition from the domains of History and Literature respectively and study the resulting patterns.

III. To view the partition from different temporal positions.

IV. To try to trace the voices of the marginal in the partition narratives.

V. To examine the text in the frame of text-context and location of the author and the historian respectively.

VI. All the above factors converge into scrutinizing the Indian partition through the axis of Discourse, Gender, Spatial and Temporal Locations.

The study is formed in four chapters:

1. Introduction
4. Conclusion.

The first chapter of the Introduction states the aims, objectives and hypothesis of the research problem. It is followed by a historical survey of the work done. Then the
interdisciplinary nature of the work is discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the methodology used. The methodology draws primarily from the tenets of New Historicism, Cultural Materialism and Feminism. This is followed by a justification of the texts selected for the study. A reference to Chapter Division concludes Chapter 1.

The second chapter starts with an introduction, and then proceeds to examine an epistemological study of history. Then the traditional histories are discussed followed by a detailed critique of the selected new histories by Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin, Ravinder Kaur, Vazira Fazila Yacoobali Zamindar and Gyanendra Pandey.

Analysis of the histories is attempted by looking at the entire process of Partition through the perspective of the locations of individual, community and State. The entire process of partition is broken into three stages for the convenience of analysis:

A. Pre partition: the making of the breaking
C. Aftermath and Continuum

The third chapter introduces the literary perspectives. This is followed by a critical analysis of novels. The six novels studied are *Sunlight on a Broken Column* by Attia Hosain, *Ice-Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa, *Tamas* by Bhisham Sahni, *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *Azadi* by Chaman Nahal and *Partitions* by Amit Majmudar. After this a critique of three collections of short stories is attempted. The collections are: *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto* (collection of short stories by Manto), *Translating Partition* (A collection of eight short stories by renowned authors like Manto, Kamleshwar, Bhisham Sahni, Attia Hosain, Joginder Paul and Surendra Prakash.), and *Unbordered Memories* (a collection of partition stories of the community from Sindh). The chapter concludes with an analysis of the issues emerging from the literature on partition.

The fourth and final chapter, that is, conclusion makes an attempt to juxtapose the disciplines of history and literature. Then a concluding study is made in the context of the Indian Partition. It is seen that both History and fiction texts have focused extensively on 1) Violence 2) Memory 3) Language and Silence 4) Politics of Partition 5) Issues of identity and Nationhood 6) Trauma of dislocation and loss at
multiple levels. These issues are discussed. This is followed by viewing the partition from different temporal locations. Then the traditional histories, new histories (including feminist narratives) and fiction on the Indian partition are seen and the different emerging patterns are studied. After this, the texts are examined in the context of the location of the author and the historian. All the above factors converge into scrutinizing the Indian partition through the axis of Discourse, Gender, Spatial and Temporal locations.

In summing up the study the following significant conclusions have emerged:

• The histories and fiction both have focused extensively on violence and displacement.
• Literature provides more space for the lived experiences and the trauma of partition.
• Traditional main stream histories are more on the politics and the ‘event’ of partition while the subaltern histories are on the experiences and effect of partition on the common man.
• New histories have assumed the form of narratives to bring out the authenticity of the experiences, blending them into subjective and objective positions.
• Feminist narratives have been crucial in uncovering facts that were hidden from main stream histories.
• Temporal location along with the location of the author provides important keys for text and context of partition.
• The responsibility of historian and author in being discreet in using the positions of subjectivity and objectivity while looking at the past is crucial.
• The new histories to be written ought to be posited exclusively in the interrogative and contested spaces in context of Indian Independence and partition.

This research has pointed to an inference – there is a shift, a drifting of literature and history to culture studies. Further debates would definitely be more situated in the space of culture studies, fusing literature, history, sociology, feminist studies and social anthropology.