WHO AM I? THE SUMMING UP
Chapter - 6

Who am I? The Summing Up

Zindaginama, the novel by Krishna Sobti on pre-partition Punjab is essentially a recapturing of the nostalgia of lost consciousness by the author. The world created by the author partly empirically and partly in the ‘imaginiare’ is essentially an attempt to reconcile with the self by trying to solve the existential crisis of who am I?, for who you are is not an empirical but a conceptual reality. This search for the cultural who am I? is essentially a voyage of the author through three distinct phases of experience which inform the writing of the text, produced in the late nineteen seventies.

The first phase is the author’s coming to terms with her world of integration. It is the world of pre-partition Punjab, in which she is born and grows up. Having deep links with the ancestral village in district Gujrat, she absorbs in her consciousness the village as an integrated whole, characterised by the existence of the three main communities in a life of economic, political, and religious co-existence, a co-existence regulated by tradition and resting on the premise of loyalty, honesty and generosity. It has its own interlocking system for absorbing dissent and differences, as, at this stage of integration, the relationship between the being and the other is based on a network of relationships and differences juxtaposed in a harmonious whole.

The second phase in the evolution of the author’s consciousness is the partition, which evokes the author’s nostalgia. The partition of the Punjab creates a situation of a violent rupture. Violence, destruction, annihilation lead to a disintegration where the being does not co-exist with the other; it is annihilated resulting in a situation of ‘decentered I’. Partition takes the author away from her homeland, creating within her a longing for her roots and home which have become a part of another country. It is this longing to go back which leads to a
reconstruction of an imaginary homeland. For home or the Punjab itself has changed, effecting a rupture in the author’s creative process. The land left behind, having changed in its demographic, religious, cultural and social structural configuration, the grand tapestry of the Punjab has lost its old colour and texture forever.

Finally, in the third phase, the author juxtaposes, the other two phases to create the novel. The world after partition is the world of alienation, wherein the being and the other neither coexist nor struggle to annihilate but are simply indifferent to each other. A complete de-existentialisation of existence takes place. The realisation of having lost something and gained nothing haunts the mind. As the author, as a rootless refugee, enters the new world of post-partition Urban Delhi, with its growing metropolitan dimensions, she faces a complete contrast to the world of community harmony and bearing left behind. She enters a new impersonal world of rights, duties, laws and obligations. As an alienated individual and with the experiences of the past haunting her consciousness, she attempts to reconcile with herself the existential question who am I?

6.1 Integration

The world of the author as she grasps her consciousness is the world of pre-partition Punjab. It is a world where she is born and receives as her heritage. A world which is entwined with her childhood, growing up, adolescence and maturity. A world which leaves its impact and mark on the formation of her identity. She familiarises herself with this world, through her own lived experiences and from the universe of her parents, grand parents and other relatives who constitute its core. With the passage of time, she gets more and more deeply rooted in it socially and culturally.

It is a world of harmony and order where the being and the other are at peace with each other. The basis of this harmony is the feudal structure which envelops in itself the caste and
power structure. Since all the institutions are supported by this structure, all levels of society are integrated. The society rests on the edifice of three fundamentals, loyalty, honesty and generosity, the basis of which is personal relations that contribute to the prevailing harmony. This is the universe of the author's village in Kharian Tehsil of Gujrat District. To understand the unique distinctive flavour of the novel, it is important to understand the anthropological world of the author, the world of integration which the author lived and grew up in and lost. For the author it was a loss of herself her heritage and tradition. That is what makes it especially relevant to comprehend this world of Gujrat in West Punjab.

The Gujarat District was a part of the Rawalpindi Division. This district:

lies between the Chenab and Jhelum rivers and marks the northern limit of the true Punjab plains. It is bounded on the north-east by Kashmir; on the north-west by Jhelum District, on the south-west by Shahpur; and on the south-east by Gujranwala and Sialkot. The northern corner is crossed by the Pabbi Hills, a low range, pierced by the Jhelum at Mong Rasul, which forms a continuation of the Salt Range... Their highest point has an elevation of 1,400 feet above sea-level, or about 600 feet above the surrounding plain. Immediately below and surrounding these hills a high and undulating submontane plateau extends across the north of the district from the Jhelum eastwards, till it terminates in a precipitous bank 100 to 200 feet in height, which almost overhangs the waters of the Tawi and Chenab. At the foot of the plateau a belt of upland crosses the District terminating in a high bank, beneath which lies a strip of lowland about 8 miles in width, which forms the wider valley of the Chenab. A similar narrow belt of lowland fringes the Jhelum.... Besides the great boundary rivers, the Jhelum and Chenab, the District is intersected by numerous hill torrents rising in outer Himalayas or the Pabbi hills, the chief being the Bhimbar, Bhandar, Dalli, Doara and Baka. The rainfall is abundant... It rapidly decreases with the distance. Himalaya and the Pabbi range, the average annual fall varying from 28 inches at Kharian to 20 at Phalian. (Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series Punjab, Vol.2 1991 (reprint):110-111).

Gujarat is a place of historical significance, associated in ancient times with rulers like Porus, Chandragupta Maurya, and later Gaeco-Bacterians, Indo-Parthians, particularly Moes, locally known as Raja Moga. Later it came under the Lodhi Sultan, Sher Shah Suri and the Mughals. It was the completion of Gujrat fort by Akbar, which compelled the Gujjars to settle
MAP OF DISTRICT GUJRAT
(ERSTWHILE PUNJAB)
down, that got the district and Gujrat city its present name. With the decline of the Mughals. 
Gujrat too was ravaged by the Gakkhars of Rawalpindi and bore the devastation of Nadir Shah 
and Shah Durrani. This was followed by the rule of the Sikh Chieftain Gujar Singh Bhangi and 
consolidation under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, later by its present form as part of the British 
empire. Here too it becomes the site of the crucial battles of Sadullpur, Chillianwala and Gujrat 
before coming under British rule (D.G. Gujrat, 1883-84, 1892-93, Imperial Gazetteer of India, 

After a number of territorial alterations, the district came to have stable boundries from 
the late 1850's onwards. The 1931 census of India, taken before partition, shows Gujrat district 
with a population of 922,427, the Hindus constituting 69,975, Sikhs 59,188, Muslims 7,86,750, 
Christian 3,097, depressed classes 3,381 (Census of India, 1931, Appendix 1 to Chapter XI:317). 
The three major religious communities in terms of percentage, approximated 88% Muslims, 
9.5% Hindus, 3.5% Sikhs. The district contains four towns, Gujrat, Jalalpur, Kunja and Dinga 
and about 1336 villages. It has been divided into three Tehsils of Gujrat, Kharian and Phalian. 
(For a detailed and comprehensive picture see (6.4.1, 6.4.2).

The Jats are the most dominant caste group numbering 1,95,000 (26% of the population) 
followed by the Gujjars numbering 1,11,000 (15%), Rajputs (24,000), Arains (22,000), and 
Awans (15,000), Labanas (8,000). The mercantile classes constituted of Aroras who were large 
in number (29,000) and Khatris (18,000), Bhatias (5,000). The priestly classes comprised 
Brahmins who numbered (7,000) and among the Muslims Sayyids (19,000). The artisan classes 
were represented by the Mochis (shoemakers and leather workers, 34,000), Tarkhans (carpenters, 
24,000), Julahas (weavers, 23,000), Kunhars (potters, 18,000), Lohars (blacksmith, 14,000), 
Telis (oil pressers, 9,000). Among the menials the majority comprised of Churas (sweepers, 
34,000), Macchis (fishermen, bakers and water-carriers, 16,000), Nais (barbers, 15,000) etc. 
(Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, 1991: 114-115). For detailed and comprehensive 
distribution see (6.4.3).
Distribution of land tracts among the main tribes in the district shows: Gujars in the rain tracts, Jats in those irrigated by wells; Jat Gondals in the bar; Chibs and Awans in the northern corner of the slopes of Pabbi Hills. The upper corner of the Kharian tehsil shows a strong sprinkling of Awans, Chibs and miscellaneous Jats, with a few Hindu and Khokkar villages. They are socially connected with the Jammu Territory adjacent to which they lie, so the eastern corner bordering on Bajawat has an edging of Khokhar and Hindu villages, while the remaining portion of the district, comprising the Western and Southern tracts is occupied entirely by the Jats, with the Gujars enclosed towards the outer belt.

Of the Hindus and Sikhs who constitute less than 12% of the population, nearly 70% belong to the non-agricultural tribes. Khatris are the owners of 20 villages, while in 34 villages they are the main predominant tribe in terms of population and in 47 other villages they are one of the main tribes, found mostly in combination with the Jats (D.G. Gujrat 1892-93:61). Generally the land owned by them is tilled by tenants, but some exceptions do exist for the 1883-84 Gazetteer mentions 4420 Brahmins and Khatris and 725 Aroras who are entered as proprietors or tenants in settlements records (See 6.4.4). Two other tribes among the non-Muslims are of special significance, the Bahrupias who are mainly Sikhs are of miscellaneous Rajput descent and principally located on the banks of the Chenab and hold 11 villages, they are also known as Mahtams. The other distinctive ones are the Labanas, who are Sikhs and hold 7 villages. They have the same position among the Sikhs as the Bahroopias and correspond to the Banjaras of Hindustan.

The district Gazetteer of Gujrat (1892-93:85) shows the number of proprietors or tenants as Muslims, 84,173, Hindus 8,522, total 92,695.

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21 Mentioned as tribe rather than caste in the Census.
Table 6.1: Table on agriculturalists and non-agriculturalists\(^{22}\) in terms of religious categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gujrut</th>
<th>Kharian</th>
<th>Phalia</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu-Agricultural</td>
<td>16,782</td>
<td>4,945</td>
<td>4,074</td>
<td>25,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu-Non-Agricultural</td>
<td>20,944</td>
<td>8,937</td>
<td>13,813</td>
<td>43,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim-Agricultural</td>
<td>126,093</td>
<td>110,031</td>
<td>76,333</td>
<td>312,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim-Non-Agricultural</td>
<td>80,932</td>
<td>44,963</td>
<td>45,020</td>
<td>170,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Agricultural</td>
<td>142,875</td>
<td>114,976</td>
<td>80,407</td>
<td>338,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total-Non-Agricultural</td>
<td>101,876</td>
<td>53,900</td>
<td>58,833</td>
<td>214,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244,751</td>
<td>168,876</td>
<td>139,240</td>
<td>552,867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Gazetteer Gujrut, 1891-92, p. 85.

The district is mostly held by communities of small peasant proprietors, while large estates cover only about 1000 acres.

\(^{22}\) These figures include as agriculturists only such part of the population as are agriculturalist pure and simple: and exclude not only the considerable number who combine agriculture with other occupations, but also the much larger number who depend in great measure for their livelihood upon the yield of agricultural operations.
Table 6.1.1: Tehsil-wise distribution of cultivated area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tehsil</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Cultivated</th>
<th>Irrigated</th>
<th>Cultivable Waste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharian</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalia</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,922</td>
<td>1,332</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The area in square miles under each of the principal food crops in 1903-4 was wheat (507), spiked millet (235), great millet (103), gram (97), and barley (56), Sugarcane (10), Cotton (22) etc. Out of the total cultivated area 26% irrigated from wells, while 7% from inundation from the Jhelum, Chenab and minor streams. The district contains about 10,435 masonry wells worked by cattle, about 541 unbricked wells, lever wells and water lifts. (1991 (reprint): 116).

The data on the cultivating occupancy of land in the district show that 67% of the total cultivated area is held by owners, tenants paying no rent hold one percent, tenants with rights of occupancy hold 7 percent, and tenants at will hold 24 percent of the cultivated area. In Tehsil Gujrat owners hold 63%, occupancy tenants 10%, and tenants at will 26% of cultivated area. The average area of an owner's holding is 3.3 acres, of an occupancy tenant's holding 1.7 acres and of the holding of a tenant at will 1.9 acres. In Tehsil Kharian 66% of total cultivation is in the hand of owners, 11% held by occupancy tenants, 22% by tenants at will. The average area per holding of owner is 4 acres, per holding of occupancy tenant 1.8 acres and per holding of tenant at will 1.7 acres. In Tehsil Phalia 73% of cultivation is in the hands of owners, occupancy tenants hold 1% and tenants at will 25%. The average area per owner's holding is 5.9 acres, per holding of occupancy tenant 2.7 acres and per holding of tenant at will 3.1 acres (D.G. Gujrat 395).
In the subsequent years the average holdings continued to decline and ranks of tenancy too swelled up.

The diversity of this area is reflected in its religious and social life. The main festivals of Id, Diwali, Dusshera and Baisakhi are celebrated with zeal. Moreover, a large number of fairs approximately more than 15 are held annually to celebrate these festivals and others associated with local legends and folklore (see 6.4.5) highlighting the variety and colour of life.

It is this ordered universe of the author which holds its own in her growth process. A most remarkable feature of this universe is its capacity to juxtapose differences in a harmonious structure of co-existence. Differences arise, on matters of class, caste, religion, economic ties etc., yet, the differences seldom lead to a complete rupture. The inner resilience of the society and its control mechanism serve to smoothen them out, yet leaving space for conflict and contradictions. This comes to fore when discussions tend to become acrimonious particularly in the understanding and articulation of history and politics, with both old and new myths reinforcing contending sectional cultural, religious and social positions.

6.2 Disintegration

...This blessed land of Punjab has been engulfed by poisonous floods uprooting mass of human feet. Reoccurring invasions and conquests Rulers and governments changed. But the broad-chested, brave-hearted ones never lost courage. Never shy of dying and killing for a cause. But today? Has the mark of valour been erased? Have the weapons on their shoulders dropped limp? Their shoulders drooping.
with the burden of sheer powerlessness.
Their hand not flashing the sword.
Have the one's who stirred at a slight injustice
lost their anger forever?
What is this fury in their hearts?
Like God's proclamation
is it a final judgement?
Turn away from your home,
turn away from your aangan (compound).
Look away from the ripe mellow harvest,
the lush green fields,
the deep penetrating roots,
and the blue horizon.
We have reached the finale
of meritorious deeds
on this land.
Now it is time to part
from our mother.
From the mother of us all.
From the shade and warmth
of her sweet protection.
Mothers breasts full of milk
now ooze out blood.
Turn back and see.
No don't look.
Run away.
Leave this water
and this land forever.
The land which sired
brave sons every season.
The brave sons who worked hard,
the brave sons who savoured the joy of living,
possessing a tremendous potential
to love and sacrifice.
Lighting the flame of life wherever they stepped.
Farewell the divine streams of water
flowing in this land,
the land of the five rivers.
Adieu to Jehlum and Chenab.
Adieu to the memory of my ancestors,
the children created by
their flesh, blood and milk
will never soil themselves
with the earth of this land,
they will never play under the shade of the Zinda-rukh
the tree of life which provided shelter
and comfort to their prospering tribes.
The bridal palanquins will no longer rest or linger
under the Beri's and Sheeshams.
The rich decked 'ghoris' of the bridegrooms
will no longer stop at the village margins.
The virginal voice of,
milky complexioned girls of the Punjab
will no longer resound with tappas
giving out cries of sweet longing
reaching out to their beloveds.
Who will know and understand?
The pain of leaving one's land,
agony of turning one's back on it forever.
Jhelum and Chenab will
keep on flowing on this land.
This land will be
freshened by invigorating breeze.
Every season
every day
every month
every season
every mausam
will be the same.
Only we will not be here
never again
to feel the pulse of this land.
(Zindaginama P.13-16).

At the dawn of independence, Punjab comprised of 52.40% Muslims, 30.18% Hindus and 14.29% Sikhs. The Western districts of Sheikhupura, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Jhang etc. were largely Muslim dominated, the eastern parts comprising Rohtak, Gurgaon, Mahindirgarh, Sirsa, Karnal and Jind were predominantly Hindu, while in the Central Punjab comprising districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Ambala etc. no religious category was in a majority but it had large segments of strong Hindu, Muslim and Sikh concentration. It was, in particular for this composite, population that independence became a swan song as it brought along the destruction of partition.

The partition of Punjab was like a violent eruption creating a situation of intolerance, reaction and free play of destructive passions. It brought with it an orgy of looting, murder, rape, abduction of women, forcible conversions and a near total breakdown of norms and values. The ordinary people in the villages and towns, the police, army and other government functionaries all became consumed with destructive frenzy and the hatred of the Other. The resulting annihilation of the minority Other led to a number of social, political, cultural and economic consequences, a most important being the damage to the traditional inter community harmony and co-existence. The strong military tradition according to Waseem (1997:25) gave the violence an organised form and raised it to a much higher level as compared to other provinces. This is particularly evident from the methodical and precise manner in which military tactics were employed to attack refugee trains.

The estimates of casualty figures vary and considering the circumstances, there is inevitably an element of speculative arbitrariness in them. Sir, Penderal Moon making an
estimate in respect of West Punjab and Bhawalpur puts the number of casualties at about 60,000. He puts the casualty figures to be higher in East Punjab, and makes an overall estimate of about 2,00,000 (c.f. Singh 1989:132). Another estimate provided by the Report on the first year of Pakistan, takes the figures to about half a million. While G.D. Khosla sees the loss of non-Muslims and Muslims lives around 2,00,000 and 2,50,000 respectively, the veteran journalist Durga Das puts the figures of those uprooted at ten million and estimates about half a million to have been massacred. (Das 1969:263). In the district wise estimate given in Lord Mountbatten's Communique to Sir Francis Mudie, the break up of a total of 59,250 casualties is: Multan 2,500, Montgomery 2,000, Sheikhpura 1000, Mianwali 4,500, Lahore 10,000, Gujranwala 4,000, Sialkot 3,500, Gujrat 3,000, Rawalpindi 4,500 etc. (c.f. Singh 1989:131).

A crucial factor in raising the level of violence and the casualties was,

'the deep commitment with which religious minorities were harassed and pushed across boundaries by religious majorities, ostensibly to put an end to religious pluralism. It was this vision of a society based exclusively on one's own religion which led to extreme cases of violence in the province' (Waseem 1997:26).

Dealing with the events close to the setting of the novel, G.D. Khosla provides a grim account of violence in a number of villages of Gujrat district:

Village Khunjah was similarly attacked on August 18. The shops of the non-Muslims were broken open and looted and then... burnt down. The town was completely sacked. About three hundred and fifty non-Muslims were murdered and about one hundred and fifty Sikhs were forcibly converted to Islam. About twenty girls were kidnapped. Village Bhairowal was attacked on August 31. The shops and houses were looted and about one hundred and eighty persons were murdered. The survivors agreed to accept Islam but when they were being escorted to Haveli Manu Basal, a neighbouring abadi, they were set upon by a Muslim mob and thrown into the river Chenab. Nearly a hundred girls were carried away. The same Muslim mob then went to the neighbouring village of Makhdoom and killed a number of non-Muslims. They carried away thirty five women. Karianwala, Daulat Nagar, Gakhar Kalan, Gobindpura, Kalu and Jalalpur Jattan were also subjected to very severe attacks and the loss of life... was
considerable. The residents of Barsala, Ram Garhwal, Gotrialu, Sudewal, Dhal, Lahri, Ara, Samithal, Dhamtha and Alamgarh near the border of Jammu state, were frequently attacked while proceeding to seek refuge in the State Territory (Khosla 1949:157).

Khosla's detailed accounts of village wise, trouble erupting in Punjab, are eye openers not so much for accuracy, but as reflecting the magnitude of anarchy, terror and intolerance. (See 6.4.6).

This situation led to the transfer of population which completely changed the texture of Punjab Society. Approximately 'six million Hindus and Sikhs' are believed to have migrated to East Punjab, Delhi and the rest of India and 'about six million Muslims from India' including East Punjab, Delhi etc. moved to Pakistan (Singh 1989:160). The reality and finality of everything was beyond the comprehension of everyone. 'The thought that this was a going away forever never crossed anybody's mind. A calamity might cause temporary uprooting, but afterwards that you came back to what had always been your home' (Tandon 1961:245). However, this ray of hope gradually began to fade as 'the whole Punjab was in conflagration. Six million Hindus and Sikhs from the West Punjab began to move in one dense mass towards safety, and from the east of the border a similar mass movement was under way in the opposite direction' (Tandon 1961:245). This was a situation unprecedented in the history of this land. As an old peasant comments in the biography of Durga Das: 'This country has seen many changes of rulers, they have come and gone. But this is the first time that with the change of rulers, the riyaya (subjects) is also being forced to change and flee their homes'. Similarly another old woman unable to reconcile to this tumultuous change laments, 'Partition takes place in families. Property changes hands, but it is all arranged peacefully... could you not do it the sensible way families are divided' (Das 1969:264). Even the exchange of population between Turkey and Greece, known as a big exodus took place in a year, 'whereas in the East Punjab and West Punjab, the transfer of eight million people was completed in three months' (Singh 1989:140).
The last journey of Prakash Tandon's family from Gujrat was the tale of millions who left their lands forever and deserves to be quoted at length:

As dawn was breaking, they caught the last view of Gujrat through the shisham trees by the road; a view they had so often seen when going to the river Chenab at Baisakhi. They looked at the weathered dark brown mass of the city rising as a flat-top cone. My aunt's ancestral house was in the highest Mohalla inside the fortress, and she could see almost the spot from where twenty-seven years ago her pallanquin had descended the narrow lanes to our old house inside the Kalri Gate. She wondered what would happen to her house, to her cupboards and trunks full of clothes, linen and utensils, and above all to the buffalo and its calf that she had left tied in the yard. She suspected that in a few hours their home would be swept bare, but she was too numbed to care. Through smoking towns and charred villages the convoy moved like a dark snake. At one time over the narrow bridge of the Bullokee head works, where I was born, there was a convoy of over two million people seeking its way out. Through Kharian, Wazirabad, Gujranwala, Emmnabad, Gakhar, it heaved forward swelled by other convoys, joining it from the side roads.... Uncle's party eventually arrived at the new frontier post of Waghah, a tiny hamlet which was now in the limelight as a scene of dramatic activity. As the truck, passed the barrier into India, they looked back at Pakistan, their homeland which did not want them' (Tandon 1961:246-247).

This breakdown of relationships and movement of population to the tune of more than eight million altered forever the geographical, religious, economic, political and cultural composition of the Punjab. The figures of the 1951 census of West Pakistan prove the finality of the change. Muslims 97.1%, Caste Hindus 0.5%, S.C. 1.1%, Christians 1.1%, others... The figures of Punjab and Bahawalpur state articulated the change even more clearly, out of a total population of 2,06,373 the Muslims constituted 2,02,041 Caste Hindus 3, S.C. 30, Christians 40, and others... Gujrat district with which we are concerned had its own story to tell. Out of a total population of 46,971, Muslim population was 46,575. Caste Hindus nil, SC nil, other religions 396, Muhajirs 9,738. (Census of Pakistan 1951, Vol.1:31,2-3,4-2). Similarly the 1951 census for Indian Punjab showed a corresponding wide disparity: Hindus 61.23%, Sikhs 34.42%, Christians 1.97% and Muslims 1.17% (Abbi 1989:6).

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23. Figure in thousands
Culturally, the partition led to a considerable dispersal of Punjabis of different localities, having varying customary, behaviours style of life, linguistic, cultural and other differences. This led to a good deal of mutual cultural shock and inter-personal suspicion and tension between migrants and locals as well as to complex mutual adjustments. Moreover, old established folk regions like Majha, Malwa, Doaba, Lehnda etc. and smaller localized variant cultures of different sub-regions or neighbourhoods, lost some of their distinctiveness and flavour and became uniformly mixed (Abbi 1989:7).

Again analysing the 1951 census of Pakistan the Muhajirs constituted 9.8% of the total population, while Punjab and Bahawalpur State became the haven of 5.3 million refugees which constituted almost 25.6% of its population (Waseem 1997:28). Nearly 97.5% of the refugees to West Punjab came from the North-West Zone comprising East Punjab, Ajmer, State of Jammu and Kashmir etc. (Waseem 1997:28, 29). In the West Punjab the migrants were:

'settled on agricultural land or urban property in the form of large communities... Refugees who came from East Punjab, Delhi and Kashmir were largely accommodated in West Punjab districts' (Waseem 1997:30).

Of these refugees about 2.6 million were agriculturalists and were rehabilitated with allotment of land while the rest found survival in the urban centres. Accounting for the major cities of Punjab with a high concentration of refugee population. Lahore with 43% migrants, Multan 49%, Gujranwala 50%, Jhang 65%. Faisalabad and Sargodha 69% clearly show this process of assimilation. (Waseem 1997:30, 32, 33).

Discussing the effects of partition in his study of Vilyatpur a village in East Punjab (now Indian Punjab), Kessinger describes the changes that took place:

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Vilyatpur a village in East Punjab in Jullunder District
Except for one man too sick to travel, his wife and infant son, all Muslims in the village left for Pakistan: eight Potter families and three of Gujjars amounting to more than seventy persons. In Vilayatpur's case this loss was offset by the return of fifty-six refugees, mostly chamar and weavers, who had been in the canal colonies, now on the Pakistani side of the border (Kessinger 1979:107).

Hershman in his study of another Punjab village Randhawa Massandan stresses the Muslim population which left after partition. This included two households of carpenters, one household of potters (Kumhars), two households of cobblers (Mochis) and one household of Mirasis (Hershman 1981:26). A tabular description of the composition of Muslim emigrants and their dispersal has been provided in 6.4.7. Similarly the manner in which the resettlement of refugee landholders took place in India is elucidated by the following partial list of the dispersal of various geographical and subcultural groups paving the way for new influence and change.

Table 6.2: Refugees Landholding and Resettlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refugee Landholders of West Punjab</th>
<th>Resettlement in the East District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lahore and non-colonists from Montgomery</td>
<td>Ferozepur district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi, Sheikhupura and Gujranwala District</td>
<td>Karnal district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahpur and Gujrat district</td>
<td>Ambala district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multan district</td>
<td>Hissar district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhang and Muzzafarnagar</td>
<td>Rohtak district</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Singh, K 1989, p.181

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25. Randhawa Massandan a village in East Punjab in Jullundur district
This kind of reallocation, resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees continued in Delhi and other parts of the country as well. However, not everyone could be resettled in this way as adjustment had to be made according to the Muslim evacuee property available for resettlement.

As to the economic repercussion of Partition, the Hindus and Sikh refugees had to accept a graded cut in property because the Muslims who migrated out were though larger in numbers than the Hindus and Sikhs who migrated to India, but the land and urban property left behind by the Muslims was much less than that left by the Hindus and Sikhs. 'Out of a total of 18.8 million cultivable acres in west Punjab about 6.7% belonged to non-Muslims who paid 34% of the total land revenue, while Muslims in East Punjab owned 4.7 million cultivable acres out of a total of 14.2 million acres and paid 27% of the total land revenue' (Singh 1989:182). The same deficiency was evident in the urban areas. Hindus and Sikhs left behind, '1,54,000 houses in West Punjab, while Muslims in East Punjab only 1,12,000. The number of business establishments abandoned by Hindus and Sikhs was 51,000 while those left behind by the Muslims amounted to 17,000' (Singh 1989:183). Waseem too points out that, 'nearly seventy-five percent of urban immovable property in the Pakistan area belonged to Hindus in pre-partition days' (1997:34).

This major economic blow caused a good deal of distress and associated difficulty of personal and social adjustment to many. In terms of land, if area abandoned was, ten acres net allotment was 7.5 acres, for thirty acres allotment was 21 acres and for 50 acres the land allotted was 32.5 acres respectively (See 6.4.8). These rehabilitation facilities did not apply to those Hindus and Sikhs who had rented their lands to Muslim tenants.

The movement of population across the border reinforced the rural urban divide with religious and to a considerable extent with caste divisions. Sikhs who were predominantly agriculturist settled in the rural areas and Hindus moved into the urban areas. Even among the Sikhs the trading and other non-agriculturist Sikhs called Bapas were more strongly represented.
in the urban areas than Jat Sikhs. The rural settlement process was more orderly and showed sensitivity to cultural compatibility and community needs. This difference was a major factor in the adjustment and rehabilitation between urban and rural refugees. For the urban refugees partition remained an open wound; they 'took a long time to settle, not just in terms of homes and dwelling, but also in terms of finding variable occupations and economic opportunities. They after all had no land to return to' (Gupta 1986:51). As the permanent crevices created by the Partition merge gradually into the past, they leave a deep hollow - an empty slot never to be filled.

Today we have no one left in Gujrat. All the Hindus came away at Partition. It is strange to think that in all the land between Ravi and Chenab, from Chenab to Jehlum, from Jehlum to Indus, in the foothills, and in the plains down to Panjmand, where the five rivers eventually meet, land which had been the homes of our biradaris since the dawn of history, there is no one left of our kind (Tandon 1961:249).

6.3 Alienation

Partition changed all this. For us there was no more Punjab. Many refugees settled in East Punjab, but to us and many others, it was all over when the West Punjab went, and home was now where we earned our living' (Tandon 1961:254).

The novel Zindaginama published in 1979 is essentially a nostalgia of lost consciousness which takes place in the reflective moments of the author in a state of alienation, an alienation resulting from the dislocation of her social, economic, political and cultural space. In the post-partition India, the author, having been cut off from her home base in West Punjab, feels rootless as did lakhs of others who had to flee from their homes in West Punjab to seek shelter in Delhi. Till the partition her world was an ordered whole, and the village in Gujrat her ancestral home, and cities of Lahore, Shimla and Delhi, where she had lived and studied from time to time, constituted a differentiated geographical setting, forming an organic part of her life space within which she had moved back and forth with familiarity case and sense of belonging.
Thus, her urban existence had the reference point of an integrated world of the village of Gujrat, wherein the ties with the rural home implied community links, relatives, property and above all the possibility of returning home. The Partition shattered all that. Even the old familiar city of Delhi was radically changed into a bustling metropolis swarming with displaced and migrant populations from all over the Indian sub-continent. The estimates of the number of (West Punjab) migrants to Delhi vary considerably. Dipankar Gupta (1996:29) felt that the census of India, 1951 figure of 4,68,562 was too low as compared to his own estimate of 1.5 million based on the recollections of knowledgeable persons resident in Delhi in those days. Be as it may, however, Gupta too finds that the sudden influx of the Diaspora population disturbed the ‘stately rhythm of Delhi life and the old traditional equations between communities were disrupted overnight’ (Gupta 1996:30).

The author was exposed to an all pervasive social and cultural dislocation and sense of alienation which prompted reflection on and nostalgia for the good old days in her ancestral home in rural Gujrat. Her fond memories especially dwelled on those intricate bonds of mutual accommodation and co-existence between different religious communities and caste biraderis that make possible a vibrant and harmonious social life for generations, despite occasional strife. The novel represents an imaginative recreation of and nostalgia for that life world which the partition holocaust destroyed forever.

Her new status in Delhi in that sense leads to a complete disjunction by changing the nature of her links with her own past, and forcing her to draw strength only from the present and the anticipated future, for now the author has no home to return to. Her longings have to be permanently etched in nostalgia, as both the Punjab of the past and the present are irrevocably changed. Thus, the novel Zindaginama is an internalisation of the author’s response to, (a) the process of growth in a particular environment and linkages with that little world of which she was emotionally and culturally a part, (b) her aesthetic and artistic response to a given historical situation i.e. Partition which completely uprooted her, (c) the challenge of a new situation, the despair of a lost world and the struggle to recreate something new so that individual life goes on.
Anthropologically she becomes a part of urban Delhi expanding tremendously in the post-partition years and becoming a huge metropolis. As an uprooted being she enters and grapples with a society which is by definition impersonal, based on contractual obligations and clearly defined rights, duties, laws, strong competition etc. For the author this shift from a highly personalised and familiar universe to an impersonal setting of non-relations, sets in motion a process of alienation and indifference. The sense of deprivation and longing for the lost world of warmth trust and harmony suffuses her consciousness. Referring to a similar state of consciousness Menon and Bhasin point out:

'[I]n their recall, the predominant memory is of confusion, dislocation and a severing of roots as they were forced to reckon with the twin aspects of 'azadi' - bewildering loss: of place of property, no doubt but more significantly, of community, of a network of more or less stable relationships and of coherent identity (c.f. Raj 1997:108).

Swelling, headstrong breasts full of milk, land of Chenab and Jehlum, became a mother, opening her kurta, for the milk to overflow. On the golden mounds of wheat glowed the sweet radiant sunlight at daybreak, adorned by silver chaunkphul. Kissing the snow capped peaks blew the cool pleasant breeze. Swaying the yellow mustard fields, bouncing on the untamed, extraordinary waters of Chenab. This water of life has created trees (men) of blood on the fences of the green fields. A stretched forehead,
strong and defiant looks,
wheat complexioned and mischievous moustaches,
broad faces reflecting a divine blessing.
Jingling their choora
like corn in full bloom,
intoxicating eyes,
newly wed brides
smiling vivaciously,
delighted with their effect
Heers of this prosperous Punjab
and their mischievous friends.
In the bright sunshine
hiding behind their phulkaris,
quietly steal a glance,
at their young men,
standing on the fences of the fields,
almost transformed as their Gods.
In this unique Punjab
with houses full of milk,
Rani's sit on the colourful stools
working at their spinning wheels
'ghu-ghu-ghu' it rhymes,
weaving fine cotton,
reflecting prosperity and
well being in their bodies
draped in thick khaddar,
hard working maharanis.
Bent near the hot tandoor,
engulfed by the divine aroma
of rotis laced with ghee,
picking up little balls of dough,
rolling them with their hands
to bring alive the,
fragrance and fire of life.
In the light of morning stars,
every guardian of the fields
got ready with his ox for centuries
harvesting golden wheat.

Time to time,
young man of every generation
morning after morning
stretching his strong muscles
paid his respects to the fields.

Every evening
his mothers, sisters and beloved
offered holy water.

This was the engraved picture
of robust manly Punjab.
reflecting the spirit of valour
and the sweetness of its waters
in all fluttering hearts
in all pulsating arms
in the headstrong waves of the rivers.

Proudly, stunning everyone
this land of Punjab adorned as a bride,
a cynosure of all eyes.

A thousand times
evil spirits were charmed away,
a thousand times
sky bowed before the earth.

A million times
jasmine decked the groom's sehra.
a million times
drums resounded celebrating Lohri and Baisakhi.
Pulsating rhythm of feet
creating a magical spell of Giddha and Bhangra.

Seeds were sown in the fields,
seeds became saplings,
mounds of golden harvests
became bigger and higher.
Mothers, nourished in their womb
saplings of strong boys and girls
blessed by the pir-fakirs,
carelessly bestowing their love.
Bitter cold
scorching heat,
sharpened
men of real flesh and blood
shaped their
strong and fierce attributes.
Mothers fed milk to the
little brave children of the land.
'Kanthas' adorned their kurtas
as also precious 'Rani-hoors'.
Beres in full bloom
invited joyous shrieking of children.
Every evening
with gay abandon
games of gulli danda and saunchi.
Auspicious baghs and phulkaris
adorning the outer and Inner rooms.
Bhandar ghar full of grain,
invigorating smell of corn and bajra
intoxicating the inside and outside of every home.
Prosperous land
reflecting prosperity and well being.
satiating one's thirsty eyes,
embers of every kitchen,
sparkling brightness and joy
continuity and abundance.
Doling out by the handful,
filling the utensils,
A desire to eat and live well.
A desire to enjoy every moment of life,
where every hardworking badshah,
considered the safa on his head,
as his crown.
His fields as
his motivating force for survival,
offered his obeisance to them...
(Zindaginama P.9-13).

The alienation of the author becomes an anguished expression and a critique of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh relations in modern times, of communal strife, tension, suspicion, riots, violence etc. which have become a significant feature of these relations. Their worsening trend and regressiveness are a comparative yardstick for the author. Similarly the gradual reconstruction of religious boundaries between Hindus and Sikhs too are not left unnoticed.

Existentially this alienation is at a much deeper level, where the self is split into two and one part of the self is alienated from the other. This split is essentially a disjunction between the past and the present. This crevice becomes deeper as distance (both social and spatial) and involvement lead to an imaginative recreation of the past. It is this recreated past which lives in memory and is the telescope through which both the enormity of the loss and its implications and finality are understood. It is this recreated past which lives in memory and is a source or measure of what has been lost forever, providing thus, both a sense of rootedness and uprootedness to the author. This split in the self leads to a further alienation as the past remains the measure and contrast for understanding and reconciling with the present. The present has to grasp the imagery of the recreated past in the mind. As the two selves become contradictory it leads to a complete de-existentialisation of existence. A completely decentered 'I'.

Thus, the essential search who am I? which is the motivating inspiration for the novel Zindaginama is an accumulation of a number of experiences, episodes, events in history,
personal life etc, the major movements in time (as discussed earlier) being the author’s actual experience of the world of pre-partition Punjab, the playground of her childhood, youth and heritage, followed by the Partition and its consequences and finally a deep sense of loss and alienation felt by her being in the post-partition scenario. These three moments in time lead her to recreate an ‘imagined’ village and countryside in pre-partition Punjab.

Since it is the parameters of the present from which she looks at the past, the author selectively highlights certain facets of the society lost forever. Referring to the mythic dimension of this selection, Samuel and Thompson point out:

Like myth memory requires a radical simplification of its subject matter. All recollections are told from a standpoint in the present. In telling they need to make sense of the past. That demands a selecting, ordering and simplifying, a construction of coherent narrative whose logic works to draw the life story towards the fable’ (c.f. Raj 1997:104).

Thus, the wholeness, harmony, mutual trust, coexistence, give and take necessary for coexistence and organic nature of community life which subsume inter-religious, inter-caste and other sectional relations are foregrounded if not over emphasised. Conflicts, disharmony and sectional struggle though taken note of are seen as encompassed elements in the ordered whole rather than something with an explosive potential. Disharmony in the novel is mainly to lend a touch of authenticity and realism to the portrayal. In that sense it becomes aesthetically subsumed. The tragedy of partition which was to come later becomes an outward intrusion destroying the idyllic world rather than a dialectical interplay between the rural setting and the outer world in which the internal conflicts of the rural community come to full play providing the inner complement to the externally imposed strife.

Thus things lost forever assume special significance. These are of two types, those linked directly to the rural way of life, having lost their significance in urban Delhi and those culturally specific to Gujrat and erstwhile West Punjab but now faded away in the lost scenario.
The spinning wheels, the special colouring of duppattas, products of different cities and towns, routes, journeys, types of cloth (Kabuli dariyai, Multani cheet), the Muslim service castes, biraderi sessions, marriage ceremonies, the mountains, river Chenab, small streams, rituals of popular religion, Sufi poetry etc. The most important dimension of the world etched in memory and brought to life to be permanently inscribed in Zindaginama is the world of pre-partition Punjab, where the non-Muslims though in a minority prospered and played a prominent role, economically, socially and culturally. They were a vital and indispensable ingredient of that way of life.

Lastly though the novel Zindaginama is full of characters and situations, it is the roots which are central and appear to be eternal. Thus the author by recreating her past makes her place in the present. For "...this memory is very closely tied to identity, who we are and what we have become" (Raj 1997:104). The text and its heritage explains everything for her. She searches her roots and identity from the world left behind. The readers are familiarized with a universe which belonged to her. Indeed to the label 'refugee' she replies back with Zindaginama. This myth, for the present, appears to be her answer to the existential question who am I? who I was? what am I not? However, as life goes on, the dialectics between the search and the question will continue producing perhaps some other mythic solutions.