CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In analysing the holocaust of Partition in its various dimensions one point which stands out is that the Partition of India was the result of political decisions taken by leaders, who were not attuned to the wishes of the people. It was an elitist decision and no one ever anticipated that it would have such tragic consequences. Why the Partition ever had to happen and why it was affected in such haste remains one of the unsolvable conundrums. These political decisions combined with the rising tide of religious nationalism, which could not be countered or stemmed effectively by the forces of Indian nationalism, led to the vivisection of the country. As communalism intensified no one ever anticipated the magnitude of the violence or that it would lead to the death, exodus and displacement of millions of people. As the two newly born nation-states of India and Pakistan celebrated their independence, the plains of the Punjab became killing fields where massacre, loot, rape, abduction and arson became the norm.

PARTITION’S MEMORIES: THE STATE, SURVIVORS AND THE HINGE GENERATION:

With traumatised refugees broken in spirit emotionally, psychologically and financially, the two governments of India and Pakistan had the daunting task of rehabilitating them on the one hand and, on the other; they were faced with the imperatives of nation building. The first step in this direction was the nascent Indian government’s belief in and commitment to secularism wherein the state would have respect for all religions and would not discriminate against any person or group on the grounds of religion. Religion, in other words, would not be the prime explanatory category of the Indian citizen.
In the interests of nation building, the government also embarked on a course of erasing Partition’s wounds from memory and repressing this fratricidal split. This meant that the focus would be on the triumph and achievement of political independence and on economic and political development. This required shedding one’s status as victim, survivor or perpetrator and the willing participation and the willingness to endure hardships on the part of the citizens. In order to do away with the traumatised past and to nurture the ideals of secularism meant forming a new collective memory for the new Indian citizen. This was achieved through rewriting historiography and school text books to foster the message of unity in diversity and Partition was dismissed a mere blip in the course of an otherwise peacefully achieved independence. At stake was the survival of the nascent Indian state with the ever increasing threat of communalism exacerbated by the Jammu and Kashmir imbroglio. This erasure, justified on the grounds of achieving these grand goals, meant turning away from the traumatic past in order to look forward towards a brighter future.

Coupled with the government’s attempt to erase the trauma from public memory has been the attempt by survivors to erase their personal memories in order to get on with life. Studies on Holocaust victims have thrown much light on this phenomenon. For the 1947 generation of survivors, their memories were either not allowed to surface by the state or even by themselves. The trauma, the carnage, the bloodletting were addressed by forgetting or more forceful denial, repression or simple indifference. This reaction was driven by the impulse to turn away from the gory past towards the future. This silence, which Pandey has detailed, in the public sphere was also encountered by Veena Das, who, in her study of Partition victims was struck by their silence and noticed that no reference to Partition violence or their suffering was allowed to surface. She asserts:

\[... an essential truth of the annihilating violence and terror that people experienced during these riots, namely that as human understanding gives way, language is struck dumb...[moreover] a relapse into a dumb condition is not only a sign of this period but is also a part of the terror itself.\]

Nevertheless, despite the survivors’ relapse into muteness the children of the survivors, the second generation or the hinge generation, have internalised the past wherein, the atrocities are kept alive in their minds, either through their
parents’ silences or their retelling the story in family circles. Perhaps, most importantly, this generation presents a link, a living bridge, between the remaining survivors and witnesses who directly experienced trauma on a massive scale, and subsequent generations, for whom the troubled past may be distant and resolved, or a present (although perhaps unconscious) source of pressure for retribution and further violence.  

How has the memory of 1947 impacted the subcontinent’s hinge generation? If for the first generation it meant erasure and silence in nationalist discourse and within families, for the hinge generation it meant resistance to inherited memories, stories and silences. Greenberg\(^5\) has pointed that this resistance has taken various forms. Firstly, among revisionist historians it meant rebellion against the distortions and erasures of the official accounts, which was spearheaded by the Subaltern Studies movement. Secondly, it meant rebellion through autobiographically infused scholarship and literary expression against the repressions and silences in survivors’ homes. This expression has also been termed *postmemory* as the memory is *mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation*.\(^6\) Thirdly, it includes a reactionary communalism from the Hindu Right against secularism, multiculturalism and amnesia-influenced tolerance of founding political institutions and ideologies.\(^7\)

**POSTMEMORY IN HISTORIOGRAPHIC AND LITERARY DISCOURSES:**

From this brief discussion on memory it is evident that both revisionist historiography and literary writings on the Partition of India can be considered to be a form of postmemory that excavates the memories of the first generation through the creative act of writing. It can be argued that feminist historians like Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and KamlaBhasin, who also belong to the hinge generation, have done extensive pioneering memory work with reference to the predicament of women during the Partition by teasing out Partition memories and given fresh insights about their predicament. More recently, Ravinder Kaur in her exhaustive study of the Partition migrants has done the same though it is not a gender based study. They have resorted to oral accounts in order to bring the hidden, repressed histories and
memories to the surface. Moreover, influenced with the subaltern school of thought their focus has been the actors on the margins – the common men and women, who were most affected by the cataclysm.

It is also interesting to note that three of the writers chosen for analysis in this study are either survivors or belong to the second generation. Both, Khushwant Singh (1918) and Chaman Nahal (1927) are survivors, were born and lived in Hadali and Sialkot respectively, now in Pakistan, and both experienced the Partition. Bapsi Sidhwa (1938) occupies a special position in that she was a child of about eight when Partition occurred. She therefore witnessed the Partition and continued to stay on in Lahore, Pakistan after Partition. Since her family was Parsi, they were not affected by the violence or the riots. She is both survivor and belongs to the hinge generation. As for Shauna Singh Baldwin, because she was born in 1967, she did not experience the turmoil accompanying the creation of India and Pakistan and firmly belongs to the third generation. In addition, she is now residing in Canada and is a part the Diaspora. The time these novelists were born is significant for it has impacted the way they view and remember Partition in their novels. This will be discussed later.

Another pertinent point of interest about these novelists is that though Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal are victims and survivors, they have not regressed into silence. Instead, through their novels, Train to Pakistan and Azadi respectively, they have brought the horrors of Partition into the full public gaze. This was quite against the acceptable norm of silence. Khushwant Singh candidly admits that the partition theme was born out of a sense of guilt that [he] had done nothing to save the lives of innocent people and behaved like a coward.8 Nahal wrote Azadi to show that Independence solved nothing but created more problems. Singh wrote Train to Pakistan in 1956, which was almost immediately after Partition. In this respect he has joined the ranks of the other writers who wrote in Hindi, Urdu or Punjabi after the cataclysm castigating the decisions of the politicians and bringing out the horrors of Partition to the fore. It took longer for Nahal to write Azadi (he brought it out in 1975). With regard to these two writers, as well as with the countless others who wrote in other Indian languages, in giving a literary account of the times, they have left an enduring record, which appear to fly in the face of memory studies which emphasize the survivors’ reluctance to remember the past. It is apparent that this fictive testimony also has cathartic value. Sidhwa’s childhood memories came to
the fore in her creative endeavour, *Ice-Candy-Man* written in 1988, to show how hostilities between the religious communities led to such tragic consequences. The Hindu-Muslim problem still persists to the present day in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Baldwin too is aware of hostilities between Pakistan and India which continue to smoulder and in *What the Body Remembers* written in 1999, she tries to look at areas of silence in culture and history and to try to look past the privileged narratives of the past.9

The novelists having stated their intentions it will be fruitful at this point to examine firstly, the connection between history and literature, because many historians like Mushirul Hasan and Ian Talbot recommend reading and placing literature side by side with history and secondly, to see how effectively these novelists have conveyed the turmoil, the carnage and bloodshed that occurred in those troubled, cataclysmic days.

It has already been mentioned that the oral historian practitioners have excavated the memories of the survivors and have given novel insights into the plight of women and the refugees’ trauma. In so doing, the trauma of the faceless millions have surfaced. But what is it that makes these actors, these protagonists, these ordinary men and women come to life? What is it that invests it with an imaginative quality and makes them real flesh and blood figures? It is literature that invests it with such qualities and breathes life into them. History finds it difficult to deal with affect, with emotions as it does not have the language or the tools to do so. Literature bridges this gap and by dissecting motives, makes the event personal, immediate and realistic. Butalia, Menon and Bhasin have written about familial violence and the fate of the abducted women. It is only through literary witnessing and testimony that these horrors are made palpable. Kusum’s dismembered body in *What the Body Remembers*, Ayah’s abduction in *Ice-Candy-Man*, and the parade of naked women in *Azadi* makes this point clear. These examples not only shock but also create empathy in the readers’ mind for these women.

Having mentioned the importance of the oral narratives in gaining a better understanding of the silence of the women victims and discussing how literature has enhanced the appreciation of the holocaust, does not mean that normal historiography should be discarded. Historiography has changed dramatically and drastically over the years and is no longer confined to merely discussing and dissecting the high
politics of Partition and the role of the major actors in the drama. It now includes its ambit the rise of communalism and the consequent death of syncretism; how women became the chief sufferers; the turmoil of moving out of settled homes to new places – in other words the forced migration; and the excruciating process of resettlement and rehabilitation. Modern historiography also deals with the fall-out and the legacies of Partition, which still continue to affect us to the present day. In all this, both, history and literature now play a crucial role in bringing the everyday experiences of the people to the fore. It makes their experiences visible and human voices, which were till now silent, have started to become audible. As has been demonstrated earlier, the literary archives supplement and complement the historical archives and question the early nationalist discourse that had re-invented history and insisted on the silence of its new citizens. In analysing the novels, without resorting to history, and her sister concern sociology, and the insights they have to offer, the work of reliving those days and understanding those events better would have been impossible.

NOVELISTS’ CONCERNS AND DEPICTION OF 1947:

Recognising the importance of history in foregrounding the crucial historical context of the novels under study, it is instructive to note that these novels not only discuss and dilate on the concerns relating to 1947 but also, at times, question it. Khushwant Singh, while dealing with the passing away of the old world order, shows how Partition rent communities, due to the decisions taken by the political actors involved in the high politics of the event, how ‘outsiders’ are responsible for fostering this feeling, and how Indian nationalism failed to live up to its promises. In short, in indicting Indian nationalism, he breaks open the wall of silence that was expected of good citizens during those days. ChamanNahal too uncovers the shroud of silence and shows how his protagonists are forced to bow down to the forces of communalism. Though these two writers indict Indian nationalism, their humanistic and secular vision is also apparent, when they find redemption amidst all this inhumanity. It is love and sacrifice for Singh and forgiveness for Nahal. Jugga’s crushed body is symbolic of how secularism failed the nascent Indian state as well as the bridge across which the communal divide can be overcome in the future.
LalaKanshi Ram’s determination to forgive becomes the only way out if one is to rebuild life, the future and the nation. Sidhwa too deals with the problem of communalism in her depiction of the break-up of the multi-religious group of admirers that surround Ayah. However, in her portrayal of the Sikhs and in her assessment of Jinnah, she leaves no one in doubt that she has carved out a Pakistani identity for herself. All this does not mean that she endorses the violence or the vivisection of the country. Through Lenny’s naive observations, who wonders if a country can be ‘cracked’, she questions the popular rhetoric and discourse of the day which stated that Partition was the only way out. As for Baldwin, she deals with the problem of communalism and fundamentalism from a Sikh angle. Throughout the novel, she constantly dwells on the difference between the Hindus and the Sikhs, as well as the Muslims and the Sikhs. Though she portrays a modicum of closeness between the Muslims and the Sikhs she is, at the same time, quick to point out the undercurrents of hostility that go centuries back, lurking beneath the surface which explode when Partition becomes a certainty. However, her main concern in the novel is to show how the Sikhs were wronged and betrayed and lays the ground for the formation of a Sikh fundamentalist identity, which will be troublesome for India in the future.

In all this, none of these writers subscribe to the two-nation theory. Instead, they question the elitist discourse, which maintained that Partition was the only way out to contain communalism. Partition was affected at the cost of syncretism, which forever changed the character of the plural, multi-cultural and multi-religious society of undivided India.

It is now an admitted fact that women’s voices have hardly been heard in the archives. If the imperatives of nation building demanded a silence from its new citizen-subjects and men could not speak openly about the violence and the material losses they suffered, abducted and raped women were condemned to a silence worse than this. These women’s experiences were not allowed to surface nor could they articulate their experiences, for speaking about it meant a definite social death, since it revolved around issues of their purity and pollution. Colonial and feminist historiography has proved invaluable in foregrounding how women’s purity and chastity was linked to their becoming symbolic bearers of the nation. During Partition raping and abducting women meant avenging the Other community as well as
destroying the community honour. In all this, women were governed by a strict patriarchal code. It was men, who decided if they were to be put to the sword in order to preserve the community honour or to migrate with them. Women’s acquiesce was taken for granted in a similar manner like what Papaji expected of Kusum in *What the Body Remembers*. In any case, honourable death was preferable to certain dishonor, which was the norm, and women had no choice in the matter. Abducted, recovered women had no choice in choosing their country or their religion as the patriarchal Indian state stepped in to become a coercive parent.

All the four novelists chosen for study also deal, to a greater or lesser extent, with this aspect of Partition violence. Khushwant Singh does not go into any great detail about the abduction of women and merely voices the clichéd sayings about death being preferable to dishonour for women. Baldwin reinforces this point forcefully through Kusum’s dismembered body. She also concentrates on why family honour, *izzat*, was so important during those times and how it reinforced the patriarchal attitudes and code during Partition. Sidhwa narrates abduction sensitively and also deals with the fate of abducted women: Hindu as well as Muslim. However, in two crucial aspects she differs from what history has to tell. She complicates the discourse about abduction by implying that in abducting Ayah, it was not only about *Othering* the rival community but also about enabling Ice-candy-man to satisfy his desire for her. In a twisted form of love, he brings her to the *Kotha*, converts her and turns her into a prostitute, ostensibly to protect her from the Muslim mob. Later, overcome by remorse, he offers to marry her. Ayah spurns his offer and, instead, demands that she be sent back to India. This is contrary to what researchers have to say about women resisting recovery. Ayah does not resist recovery. In resorting to this course of action, she *others* herself to both Pakistan and India though she knows that she would face a definite social death in India. Nahal, though he mentions Chandini’s abduction and describes Sunanda’s rape in detail, does not discuss either of these two concerns from a psychological viewpoint.

What all these writers also engage with, to an extent, is a little explored aspect of Partition violence, which is violence inscribed on male bodies. For Singh, virility is very important and is witnessed in Jugga’s bold action in preventing a massacre of a train load of Mano Majra Muslims. Bold, decisive action is bound with virility and death whereas impotence with cowardice and life. In the novel, Iqbal occupies an
ambivalent space for he is a circumcised Sikh. In Singh’s opinion in voluntarily circumcising himself Iqbal becomes impotent, hence he behaves in a cowardly manner.

Singh also touches on violence men faced. Iqbal is made to strip in order to ascertain his religion and Sundari’s husband, Mansa Ram, is castrated. Sidhwa too talks of forced circumcision. Hari can only stay on in the newly created Pakistan, provided he converts. The ultimate fool-proof test of his conversion is to make him strip to ascertain if he is really circumcised. However, he is spared this humiliation because Imam Din and the barber, who circumcised him, vouch for the fact that he has actually done so. His conversion symbolises his symbolic emasculation for the Muslim mob. In Baldwin, Sardarji is psychologically affected and has lost his self-confidence. It is left to Roop to provide the redemptive, healing touch. Finally, Nahal depicts Arun temporarily emasculated by the parade of naked women. Moreover, Chandani’s abduction and Sunanda’s rape have left their mark on him and he feels psychologically unmanned.

In dealing with the gendered violence of Partition there is a distinct difference between how the men and women authors deal with the subject. Nahal gives a detailed account of the parade of naked women and Sunanda’s rape, whereas Sidhwa only shows Ayah being carried away by the Muslim mob. Her violation is not depicted at all. It is through Lenny’s eyes that Sidhwa conveys Ayah’s experiences when she notices that Ayah’s eyes are vacant and wide-opened. Similarly, Hamida’s rigid lap also conveys her deep humiliation. Baldwin does not directly show her father beheading Kusum but makes him talk of it later. Bachan Singh even then maintains that she was accepting in death. In the same manner, Major Jeevan reports how he found Kusum’s dismembered body. The Muslim mob executing this gruesome act is not described in detail as all. Nevertheless, Roop’s condemnatory tone suffuses the narrative. In all this, it becomes clear that though women novelists do not dwell on the descriptions of rape, torture or bloodshed they still do not gloss over the violence but convey it through indirect means very sensitively.

Recent historiographical research has thrown much light on the exodus and the trauma of refugees. Ravinder Kaur has identified three narrative themes running through the refugees’ accounts. They are, the pre-Partition days of harmony, the enforced move to refugee camps and the last journey thereafter, and finally, the
process of resettlement and rehabilitation. ChamanNahal’s Azadi incorporates these themes into the narrative and has depicted it in its stark, bitter reality through LalaKanshi Ram’s experiences when he sets out on the iconic foot journey. When he and his family finally do get a roof over their heads and start rebuilding life anew it comes at a great psychological cost. All the protagonists withdraw into their shells, unable to reach out or communicate with each other in their hour of crisis. The fate of millions of refugees is vividly depicted through scenes like the mass cremation, the parade of naked women and Sunanda’s rape. Kushwant Singh depicts the fate of the refugees, whom he portrays as being a source of trouble through the iconic train journey. These ghost trains form a powerful backdrop for the indictment of Indian nationalism and Partition. The train load of dead refugees and corpses floating in the Sutlej are again very dramatic and descriptive. Shauna Singh Baldwin deals with the Sikh predicament during the Partition and how they are affected by the enforced exodus. What is interesting here is that since Sardarji is a man of means, his situation and troubles were not as traumatic as that of LalaKanshi Ram’s. This confirms Ravinder Kaur’s observation when she says that the migration threw up class differences and that people with money or connections could make the last journey faster without encountering much danger and that their rehabilitation was easier. BapsiSidhwa just makes passing references to the refugees. She reports it through Lenny’s eyes when she becomes aware of the absence of the old inhabitants and the presence of the recently arrived scruffy refugees appropriating abandoned houses and property. The plight of the refugees is also touched upon through Imam Din’s relatives, who arrive from PirPindo and seek refuge in his house. The most important thing that Lenny becomes aware of is that the vibrant, multi-cultural, multi-religious, cosmopolitan group of people in the Queen’s garden has now become homogenous thus indirectly pointing out to the change in the demographic composition of the city. She also deals with the fate of Partition children through Ranna’s story. In tackling the plight of these children, Sidhwa stands apart from the other novelists though this is again treated superficially.

It is also interesting to note how memory has affected the writers chosen for study in yet another way. It is remarkable that Singh and Nahal, who experienced the holocaust and the dislocation, long for and are nostalgic about the pre-Partition days relatively untouched by communalism. Though they indict the nationalist leaders
they remain committed to humanism and secularism and are deeply affected by the communal breach. InSidhwa’s case, though she condemns the violence and though Ayah’s abduction is effectively and dramatically portrayed, one cannot help but notice an emotional distancing in her portrayal of the carnage. This is because, unlike Singh and Nahal, she was only a child when Partition occurred and belongs more to the hinge generation. Moreover, because she is Parsi, she remains neutral and uninvolved and firmly allies herself with Pakistan. Because Baldwin was born much after the Partition and belongs to the Diaspora, her assessment of the Partition is completely different. What is striking is that she deals exclusively with the Sikh dilemma and travails during the Partition. Though this is not wrong in itself, a distinct feeling of only her community being wronged comes strongly across. She also talks about and gives reasons for the rise of a Sikh fundamentalist identity and lays the ground for Sikh disaffection in modern India. In no way does she condemn it, nor does she convey the horrors of Partition effectively with the exception of Kusum’s death. This is mainly because she belongs to the third generation of survivors and deals with the splitting of the country from a diasporic location, and, as has been pointed earlier, the novelists’ closeness or distance from the holocaust impacts their assessment and response to the Partition.

What ties all these writers together is their condemnation of the political decisions and the effect on the common man. None of them are in favour of or want Partition. All of them depict characters caught up in the cross fires of political decisions not of their making. Though they show the dissonance between the political actors and the people, their distance from the events also show how they remember Partition, and how they interpret it.

PARTITION AND ITS AFTERMATH: MEMORY, HISTORY AND LITERATURE:

So far, the discussion has borrowed heavily from recent historiographic sources to glean a better understanding of the Partition. In so doing, it is apparent that literature complements history in depicting the human dimension of the holocaust – the fears; the sorrows and the uprooting of the protagonists are shown all its stark
detail. All this was possible because there was a committed intention on the part of historiographers and literary critics to move away from the grand narrative, which was amnesia-induced in order to get on with the imperatives of nation building. This historiographic version reinforced elitist and patriarchal versions of the truth leaving the ordinary man and woman out of its ambit. What recent historiography and literary criticism has done is to put the marginalised, the bit-players centre stage, excavate their memories and analyse how Partition impacted them. However, these novels stop short of the Partition of India and do not go beyond 1947 in discussing the aftermath. Moreover, they only deal with the crisis in the Punjab and not what continued to happen in Bengal.

Nevertheless, these novels help understand what problems continue to persist in India and Pakistan and how memory is tied up with it. Though Partition was portrayed as a clinical act, it has left troublesome, enduring legacies. Besides continuing hostilities between the two countries, each one has its own peculiar set of problems. In Pakistan, secularism has been derailed due to the growing Punjabi dominance in the country, of military interventions and the rise of Islamic nationalism. Sindh continues to simmer as the mohajirs have not been integrated into the mainstream, and worse still, its eastern wing has broken away and a new country Bangladesh has been formed. In India, the Jammu and Kashmir imbroglio has proved intractable, the north-east continues to be problematic and the Sikh disaffection with the Indian state coupled with the rise of Sikh fundamentalism made the demand for Khalistan a strident one. However, this problem has been contained. Behind these developments in both countries has been the resurgence of religious nationalisms which, though significantly different from the pre-Partition days, provide a contemporary presence to Partition as an idea as well as a lived experience. Partition in this sense is very much an ongoing process that defies closure as being easy prey to ‘reinvention’ and ‘reconstruction’.10

In this context Greenberg’s observation about the Hindu Right using Partition’s memories negatively made earlier becomes crucial. Because of this the secular fabric in India is undergoing a lot of strain and stress. India, despite her avowal in secularism has had problems in the Punjab, witnessed the anti-Sikh riots, the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the pogrom against the Muslims in Gujarat. In each case, Partition memories were selectively invoked to bring out the spectre of a
Hindu majority being decimated by a Muslim or Sikh minority and also to settle Partition scores. Moreover, the state-driven secular ideology has come in for a lot of criticism from the Hindu Right. They allege that the state and those who sympathise with the Muslims are ‘pseudo-secularists’ for they pander to the Muslims only to garner votes. They stridently demand a Hindu nation and maintain that the religious minorities, including the Christians, are merely tolerated. What is even more disturbing is that the *Hindutva* organisations have opened educational institutions all over the country where students are indoctrinated with the *Hindutva* ideals and ideology which are overtly anti-minority which will, in the long run, ensure a Hindu nation.\(^{11}\)

If secularism in India has come under strain, how is one to reinfuse it with life and meaning? Madan\(^{12}\) maintains that secularism in India is an alien concept that disavows religion and does not take into account the religious moorings of the people. In his view, the only way it can work is through a return to religion as faith not ideology which will give people spiritual and moral guidance. In Partha Chatterjee’s\(^{13}\) view secularism has failed because the state has failed to keep religion and politics apart. He joins Madan in arguing for a politics of religious toleration but from within communities. The key thrust of his argument is to resist homogenization from outside, which means a state imposed secularism, and to fight for democracy from within communities. Though there are merits in both their arguments and recommendations, their ideas are romanticised and impracticable. By placing their faith only in religious faith and the individual community’s ability to match up to expectations and in denouncing the state practices in its march to modernity, they fail to take into account that much has been achieved in the Indian social scene and that, even today, secularism is the best way to deal with a multi-cultural and multi-religions country like India.

There is yet another way in which I recommend secularism can be reinforced, and that is through the reading of the social sciences: history and to certain extent sociology: and literature. Nevertheless, these modes of memory need to be used in a positive manner. The question then arises is: why rake up memories of a traumatic event which is over and done with? It is for two reasons that it needs to be done. One is to ensure that healing takes place and, that, hopefully these mistakes are not committed again. The second is to counter the forces of militant Hinduism. It has
been seen that Partition still lingers in our subconscious mind and the memories surface in the most unexpected of places and the most unexpected of times making it a living theme.\textsuperscript{14} If the forces of resurgent Hindu nationalism can rake up these memories for all the wrong reasons, the same memories can be utilised in a positive manner. This can only be done through an ethical reading and interpretation of history and literature. History and historical details are ideally suited for the \textit{literary exploration for examining its ‘values’ for our own existence ... The lifeless past is made alive on the premise of history, and perpetuated through literary modes into a philosophy of life}.\textsuperscript{15} It follows that memory, history and literature are inextricably linked which provides a plurality of perceptions that makes the event clearer. In short, if the violence of Partition is to be understood in all its dimensions, including the human and political dimensions and the right message is to be gleaned from it, it calls for a multi-disciplinary approach. This will not only address the phenomenon of Partition in the right manner but will also lead to a better understanding and appreciation of the event.

\textbf{SUMMING UP:}

This study has revealed that the political decision to Partition India did not reflect the will of the people. After the event, in its march towards modernity, the newly formed Indian nation-state deemed it necessary to exorcise these horrendous memories. This led to a collective amnesia about the events of 1947 as there was no acknowledgement of the violence. In the private sphere too survivors hardly ever spoke about their experiences, except perhaps in their homes. It is the children of the survivors, known as the second generation or the hinge generation, who have excavated these memories and have used them in various ways. Firstly, revisionist historians led by the subaltern school made the common man and his everyday experiences the focus of their study. Secondly, historians like Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have turned to oral accounts to get a clearer picture of the holocaust. Creative writers too have imaginatively made use of postmemory in their works of fiction. Thirdly, the Hindu Right has used Partition memories to rake up the past and promote its Hindutva agenda.
Throughout this study, the interlinking of memory, history and literature has been demonstrated. History supplies the background to the events and literature infuses it with life. In fact, without the crucial historiographical insights historians like Butalia, Menon, Bhasin, Pandey, Talbot, Singh and Kaur, to name a few, have given, a complete understanding and interpretation of the novels would have been impossible.

The writers taken up for study deal with different aspects of Partition and make visible the everyday experiences of the people. In their own unique ways they tackle the problem of communalism and fundamentalism, the bodily and psychological violence men and women faced, the tortuous last journey the migrants had perforce to take and their rehabilitation. In all this, the only difference between the male and female writers is in their depiction of the gendered violence. The male writers depict and write about rape and abduction in all its gruesome details, whereas the female novelists tackle these issues indirectly without glossing over the horrors.

Though none of the writers advocate the two-nation theory, Sidhwa firmly proclaims that she is a Pakistani and Baldwin, in voicing the Sikh concerns, shows her sympathy for them and indirectly criticises the nationalist leaders for letting the community down. All this has a lot to do with when the writers were born. Singh and Nahal experienced Partition, became refugees and decry the passing away of syncretism and pluralism. Their humanistic and secular concerns are also apparent. Sidhwa was a child in Lahore during Partition. Being a Parsi is the chief reason for allying herself with Pakistan and in depicting the Sikhs in a negative light. Since Baldwin was born much after Partition, her account does not effectively capture the violence of the time. Moreover, her sympathies are with the Sikhs who, she feels, have been wronged by Gandhi and the Indian nationalists.

What these novels do not deal with is the aftermath and the legacies of Partition. These Partition memories are being used selectively by the Hindu Right to further their Hindutva agenda which has put secularism under strain. The greatest challenge the Indian nation faces today is to preserve its secular fabric. Here, the role of memory, history and literature becomes crucial. If used positively, it could help in combating these forces. In this respect, literature can play a healing role and perhaps make people aware of the dangers of communalism, which these writers have successfully and effectively done.
REFERENCES:


2. Gyanendra Pandey, (2006): *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories*, in Subaltern Studies: Monograph Series, Shahid Amin *et al* (eds.); Delhi: Permanent Black, pp 21-24. Read these pages for a better understanding of the Partition induced amnesia in Indian nationalist historiography, journalism and film making. This was done because the Partition and communal wounds were still festering.


5. *Ibid.*, pp 260-262. Insights into how the hinge generation reacted to Partition are gleaned from these pages.


