CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Partition of India or, as Gyanendra Pandey designates it, *the Partition and Independence of the Indian subcontinent in 1947* is considered to be the single most traumatic experience, a cataclysm that forever changed the contours of the country and the lives of the people. It triggered off a series of reverberations that have continued to leave their mark on subcontinental politics even sixty-six years after the event. Suspicion and hostility with Pakistan have led to a series of wars and the division of Pakistan into two – Pakistan and Bangladesh. The regional tension and cross-border conflicts which Partition engendered continue to take their toll in human and economic terms, and as Gilmartin maintains:

... Few events have been more important to the history of modern South Asia than the Partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947. The coming of Partition has cast a powerful shadow on reconstructions of the decades before 1947, while the ramifications of Partition have continued to leave their mark on subcontinental politics fifty years after the event...2

The Partition is a much debated issue in the history of South Asia. One will never know how many people died in the riots which accompanied it, but it is now acknowledged that an estimated one million people died. Around twelve million people had to relocate themselves across the newly drawn boundaries, the magnitude of which remains unprecedented in recorded history. The Partition related violence and the subsequent uprooting caused unimaginable human suffering and misery, which has become a memory now. Nevertheless, its most enduring legacy is that it continues to leave its imprint on aspects of everyday life in the subcontinent, for the carnage of Partition is replicated with sickening regularity in several events more than sixty years later. This was witnessed in the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. Again, in
Bhagalpur, Bihar, hundreds of Muslims were killed in one of India’s worst communal riots in 1989. A few years later in 1992 the Babri Masjid was destroyed. Later thousands of Muslims were targeted in Surat, Ahmedabad and Mumbai. In 2002 the Sabarmati Express was burnt. This led to the Godhra riots in Gujarat. In another incident the Samjautha Express was attacked in 2007 to derail the Indo-Pakistan peace initiatives.

In each of these instances, Partition stories and memories were used selectively by the aggressors: militant Hindus were mobilized using the one-sided argument that Muslims had killed Hindus at Partition, they had raped Hindu women, and so they in turn must be killed, and their women subjected to rape. All this seems to suggest that Partition is still alive in the collective psyche. The unfinished business of Partition continues to haunt the nation, suggesting that historical wrongs have to be set right. All this seems to belie the belief that Partition can easily be put away, that it is a thing of the past. In-fact one finds Partitions everywhere: communal tensions, religious fundamentalism and continuing divisions on the basis of religion.

Yet these violent, ethnic encounters between Hindus and Muslims would have been unimaginable prior to Partition for scholars, writers and the people emphasize the syncretism and the composite character of Indian society, which defined the shared values and traditions that had enabled diverse communities to live harmoniously for centuries. In this respect, it is important to underline the fusion and integration of the Hindu and Muslim communities at different levels and the value they attached to religious tolerance and pluralism in their day-to-day living where all three communities: Hindu, Muslim and Sikh: remained undifferentiated.

If Hindu, Muslim and Sikh were inextricably mixed what led to the moment of rupture and genocidal violence, marking the termination of one regime and the inauguration of two new ones? Reflecting on the whole gamut of events at the time of Independence and Partition, historians often reiterate the view that the Partition holocaust in 1947 was the result of British machinations. In order to foster and promote its imperial interests, the colonial government encouraged separatist forces. At the same time, it was also the logical culmination of a long drawn communal divide. In order to understand this it is necessary to delve into the past.
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:

Ancient and medieval India was often exposed to external threat and internal disruption. But, due to her assimilative character, the invaders made it their home. However, the advent of Islam in India created an unprecedented situation. The Muslim conquerors could not be wholly absorbed in the Indian mainstream. Since the growth of their numbers was largely the outcome of conversions from the Hindu community, they inevitably acquired most of the characteristics of their forebears, but they uncompromisingly remained distinct and apart from the rest of the population. The Islamisation of India was made possible because the Hindus failed to defend their country due to lack of unity, chronic dissensions and indiscipline.

Hindu-Muslim relations during the first millennium of Muslim rule in India can be studied in the light of two different methods of the Islamisation of India pursued by the Muslim rulers. One was the assimilation or the accommodation of Hindu culture as characterized by Akbar, and the other was of confrontation and liquidation as characterized by Aurangzeb. Nevertheless, the process of assimilation took place. Almost from the outset of the Muslim invasion the indispensability of the Hindu collaboration was realized thus making reconciliation between the two inherent. The advent of Islam led to two major changes in the country. The political sovereignty of the land went into the hands of the Muslims and Islam became the religion of the new ruling class. In all other respects the status quo prevailed. Agriculture and trade continued to be under Hindu control, so also were the Panchayats and trade guilds. Hindus were considered indispensable to run the civil administration. In order to consolidate their sovereignty the Muslim rulers admitted large numbers of Hindus into their armies. While the Rajputs became the sword arm of the Mughal Empire, the Marathas played a similar role under the Deccan Sultanates. Similarly, when the Marathas, Sikhs and Jats came to power they too had Muslims in their armies. Thus, the process of assimilation continued with the two religions co-existing side-by-side with occasional flare ups.

With the advent of the British the communal and political scene in India changed. The British exploited the religious differences and perpetuated the image of Islam being a hostile and aggressive force and Muslim societies [were] caricatured as rigid authoritarian and uncreative. These stereotypes were reinforced after
the capture of Delhi by the British in 1803. Power went out of the Muslim hands and also worsened their fate. This made the ulama declare a holy war against them. Shah Abdul Aziz advised Muslims not to learn the English language and not to serve under the British. This proved to be unsuccessful and, in retaliation, the British embarked on a policy of keeping Muslims out of high positions of the administration and also by striking them economically. Gradually, the Muslims were replaced by Hindus in most government jobs. The latter acquired English learning and a modern education and, as a result, stole a march of more than fifty years over Muslims. This resulted in the loss of power and prosperity among Muslims and a corresponding gain for the Hindus. This naturally bred ill-will against the Hindus in the Muslim mind. This was further aggravated by the British government, which openly sided with the Hindus against the Muslims who, as part of the imperial design, perpetuated myths about the stereotypical and barbaric characteristics of the Muslim community. They ignored the fact that Islam as it was practiced in everyday life – with its roots firmly anchored in Indian soil – developed autonomously from centralized political control.

The revolt of 1857 was a chance of unity between the Hindus and the Muslims to unite and overthrow the British. However, it was frittered away as the rebels rose in anger and offence, had no plan, no goal, no central leadership. It showed at one stroke, the capacity of the Indian people for disorder, indiscipline, disorganization and self destruction. All these qualities were again responsible for the fractured independence in 1947 that made Partition a reality.

The Muslims after 1857 could not organize themselves into any political agitation against the British. The loss of governmental power, the change in the court language, the failure of all their efforts to regain political power, the hostility of the new rulers, the lack of modern education and rampant poverty created a situation which demanded a basic change in their political thinking as well as leadership. This change did come about. A few Muslims like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, accepted the challenge of modernity and stood up against the ulama. The Muslims were encouraged to take to English education and to change their entire attitude towards the British. The lead in this direction came from members of the Muslim aristocracy called ashraf, who strengthened their position by accepting English education and by making loyal overtures to the British. Ironically, after the revolt of 1857, the roles of Muslims and Hindus vis-à-vis the British government were reversed: the Hindu elite
started gradually turning away from the path of loyalty to the British and the Muslim leadership became the chief pillar of British rule. A parallel development was that the Muslim leadership got estranged from the new Hindu elite, which had under the British dispensation, attained wealth as well as a position of authority that had been the earlier preserve of the Muslims.

In this scenario, the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and the subsequent political history was shaped by the multilateral interaction between the forces of British imperialism, the Congress, and Hindu and Muslim communalism.\(^5\) Henceforth, there was to be a continuous tug of war between the Congress, which had brought together people from the entire country on a common platform with common aims and grievances, on the one hand, and a Muslim leadership which wanted to chart a separate course on the other. The third course was charted by the Hindu and Muslim communal forces playing their own role in driving Muslims towards separatism. This was further exacerbated by the Muslim and Hindu revivalist movements in the nineteenth century which created unease and alarm in the minds of the people. The British government in this situation played off one community against the other.

The basic issue between the Congress and the Muslim leadership until Partition was that the latter considered the Congress to be a Hindu body and denied its claim to represent Muslims. The Congress, on the other hand, always tried to attract and enlist the support of Muslims. This friction between the Congress and the Muslim leadership shaped the political course of events from 1885 to 1947. It resulted in the Muslim League’s demand for Pakistan being finally met in 1947.

As early as December 1887, Sir Syed Ahmed declared that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations as Hindu candidates with their overwhelming majority would always win and the system of representative government would only lead to the perpetual subjugation of the Muslims by the Hindus. He also maintained that a few Muslim delegates at the Congress were not the genuine representatives of the Muslims. The Congress remained undaunted and continued with its wooing of Muslims. The death of Sir Syed made the politically conscious Muslims feel politically orphaned as he had left behind no political organization which could carry on his work. Therefore, at the beginning of the twentieth century, educated Muslims felt the need to have a political organization like that of the Congress, which would
take up their cause. Thus was born the Muslim League on 31 December, 1906. Its aim was to promote and protect the Muslim interests and to nurture loyalty towards the British government.

In its first six successive annual sessions, the Muslim League demanded separate denominational representation in all elective bodies; separate representation for Muslims in public services on the basis of their population and political importance; and the recognition of Urdu as the lingua franca of the country. In March 1908, the League demanded separate electorates and weightage at all stages and also fifty percent representation in the Viceroy’s Executive Council. The British finally introduced separate electorates in 1909 through the Morley-Minto reforms to counteract the rising nationalism. One major factor that alienated Muslims was the use of Hindu symbols for mass mobilization in the cause of national freedom. Another cause for their alienation was the increasing militancy of the Arya Samaj. In 1907, they founded an association known as the Shuddhi Sabha or Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, for the reconversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism, which was viewed with alarm.

On the other hand, a great change took place in the course of Muslim politics. In 1905, when the British partitioned Bengal because they were alarmed at the growth of national solidarity in India and were anxious to thwart it, the Muslims welcomed it thought was strongly opposed by the Congress. However, when it was revoked on 12 December, 1911 it was construed as an act of betrayal by the Muslim League. In 1912, due to the annulment of the Partition of Bengal, the pre-war situation and the British animosity towards Turkey, the Muslim League Council sought to work, in cooperation with other communities, for a system of self-government suitable to India.  

Thereafter, for over a decade, the League steadily pursued a policy of cooperation with the Congress and opposition to the government. In December 1916, the League and the Congress ratified the Lucknow Pact wherein the Congress conceded the demand for separate electorates and substantial weightages in the provinces where Muslims were in a minority. The thaw in the Hindu-Muslim relations did not mean that the fundamental differences had disappeared. It was because of the anti-British emotions that the Muslims felt they had to reach out to the
Congress. Gandhi saw in this a fine opportunity to bring Muslims closer to the Congress and sided with the Khilafat Movement.

At the end of the First World War, the Khilafat Movement of the Muslims, supported by Gandhi and his Non-Cooperation movement, had electrified the whole political atmosphere of the country and brought a sea change in Hindu-Muslim relations. But this cordiality between the two communities was not to last for long. The Moplah outbreak in August 1921, in which many Hindus were killed, had a devastating effect on the future course of politics and the communal situation. In February 1922, after the Chauri Chaura incident a deeply agonised Gandhi called off the Civil Disobedience Movement without consulting the Khilafat conference, which upset the Muslims. With the abolition of the Khilafat as an institution by the Turks themselves, in February 1924, the Khilafat Movement received its final death blow. The entire country witnessed communal outbursts during this period. Both, Hindu and Muslim fanatics carried out the most provocative propaganda against each other through the press, pamphlets and abusive speeches. The communal warfare stunned Gandhi, who went on a twenty-one day fast in Delhi after the Kohat riots in September 1924.

In August 1928, after the boycott of the Simon Commission, the Nehru Report was published in which Motilal Nehru as the chairman, determined the principles of the constitution of India. It rejected federation as a possible solution to the communal problem and encouraged a unitary government at the centre. The Muslim problem was treated as a religious and cultural matter only. Besides other issues, separate electorates were to be abolished; reservation for the Muslims was confined only to the centre and in the provinces where they were in a minority, no weightage was to be given. This left the Muslims discontented and, Jinnah tried to persuade the All Parties Convention in Calcutta in 1928 to accept some of the Muslim demands. Jinnah’s fourteen points were put to vote and lost. The apprehensions of the Muslims were not allayed and Jinnah parted ways with the Congress.

The next step in the parting of ways was the Simon Commission report, published in May 1930, which recommended a federal framework for India. The Congress rejected the report while the Muslim League reserved its judgment knowing that the matter would be finally decided at the Round Table Conference. The three sessions of the Round Table Conference at London in 1930 and 1931 did not produce
any settlement of the communal problem. The British government then came out with its own Communal Award in August 1932, wherein separate electorates for Muslims and all the other minorities were retained. The Muslim majorities in Punjab and Bengal were reduced to minorities. The Award was, however, not popular with any party. The recommendations of the Round Table Conference were incorporated in the Government of India Act, 1935, which came into operation on 1 April, 1937. Part II of the Act, dealing with the All India Federation, never came into operation.

After the general elections in 1937, the Congress formed its governments in six provinces – U.P., C.P., Bihar, Orissa, Bombay and Madras, but only after getting embroiled in two controversies with the Muslim League. First, the Congress had obtained an assurance from the Viceroy that the provincial governors would not use the special powers given to them by the Act for safeguarding the interests of the minorities, which was greatly resented by the Muslim League. Second, the Congress refusal to form a coalition government made the politically minded Muslims suspect the intention of a Congress majority dominated by Hindus. This was presently to make the League a more powerful force as they wanted to safeguard Muslim interests.

The Congress rule in the six provinces from July 1937 to October 1939 was held out by the Muslim League to have been a nightmare for the Muslims. Their rule also led to a significant change in the attitude of the Muslim League, which had all through wanted an Indian federation with limited powers, now no longer wanted a federation. As the Congress travelled towards the idea of a united India, the League turned towards Muslim independence as voiced by Sir Mohammed Iqbal in 1930. By 1937 the Indian political scene had undergone a sea change for the political unity of India was no longer the desired goal of the Muslim League. It was, however, the Lahore Muslim League session of March 1940, which passed its historic Lahore Resolution or Pakistan Resolution. It adopted the establishment of an independent Muslim state as its final goal. Jinnah, in his presidential address said that the Muslims were a nation by any definition. The problem between the Hindus and Muslims should be treated as an international issue. The differences between the Hindus and Muslims were great for they had two different philosophies and social customs. They neither inter-married nor inter-dined together. They belonged to two different civilizations, which were based mainly on conflicting ideas and concepts.
To yoke together two such nations under a single state, he said, must lead to a growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be built up for the governance of a state. Therefore, Muslim India could not accept any constitution which would necessarily result in the permanent rule of a permanent majority. The only course open to all, Jinnah said, was to permit the major nations to establish separate homelands by dividing India into sovereign states.\(^7\)

The Muslims stood for free Islam and free India. They were demanding Pakistan not from the Hindus but from the British who had subjugated them. The simple fact that eluded Jinnah which Nehru realized was that India was not at any stage structured around religious solidarities or polarized along communal lines. Inter-community conflicts, as and when they occurred, were counter-posed to the quite, commonplace routines in which communities intermingled. The Congress considered the battle cry for Pakistan synthetic and artificial and maintained that it was raised by Jinnah because of vested interests. Even the Muslims did not seem to favour the creation of a sovereign Pakistan in spite of their fear of Hindu domination. Nevertheless, the idea of Hindus and Muslims as two nations, even within a federation, had emotional appeal for Muslims... because it put both communities on an equal footing – nations negotiated as equals.\(^8\)

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the British government in its August, 1940 offer promised Dominion Status and a constituent assembly for India at the end of the war. It also assured that full weight would be given to the views of the minorities in any revision of the constitution and that no further political development which did not satisfy the minorities would be approved by His Majesty’s Government. In 1942, the British took a fresh political initiative to attract greater Indian support for the war effort through the Cripps Mission. However, it did not succeed because it contemplated the perpetual vivisection of India. The Cripps Proposals, published in March 1942, also recommended Dominion Status and a constituent assembly. It also said that any constitution made would be acceptable to the British government and that any province would be free to keep itself out of the proposed Indian Union. If such non-acceding provinces so desired, they could have their own separate union analogous to the proposed Indian Union. The Congress opposed the non-accession clause of the proposals because it contained the seeds of India’s disintegration. The Muslim League rejected it as it did not ensure the creation
of Pakistan though the possibility of a Muslim state was implicit in it. By giving the province the right to opt out of the federation, the Cripps formula thus made provision for Partition much before the transfer of power took place. For the first time the British clearly indicated that the main parties involved in the transfer of power would be the Congress and the Muslim League. On 8 August, 1942 the Congress adopted the Quit India Resolution to give expression to the resentment of a frustrated people. Speaking on the occasion, Gandhi maintained that this was the last struggle of his life. The Congress movement assumed convulsive proportions and often flared up into violence following bureaucratic provocation. The events of August 1942 showed the depth of national will even though the British concentrated on suppressing the movement. Gandhi gave the Do or Die call but he and other prominent leaders were arrested. The absence of the Congress leaders from the political arena at this crucial moment gave the advantage to the Muslim League for its presence would have produced a restraining influence on the separatists.

The prestige of the League was enhanced between 1942 and 1945. As a part of their tactics, the British recognized the League’s claim to speak for Muslims at the all India level. Even the Congress leaders gave some consideration to the idea of Pakistan in 1942 and 1944. In September 1944, the Gandhi-Jinnah talks were held in which the principle of Pakistan within a federation was conceded. This was taken as a symbolic victory for Jinnah by the British, Muslim League and a section of the Congress. The Simla Conference in June-July 1945 failed due to the disagreement on the question of communal representation. Jinnah refused to let any party other than the Muslim League name the Muslim Councilors. The British tolerance of Jinnah’s obduracy regarding the nomination of the Muslims to the Executive Council, and the decision to break up the conference rather than going ahead without him consolidated Jinnah’s position. At this juncture, Jinnah’s demand for a sovereign Pakistan did not gain full support even in Muslim provincial politics but the British were bent on playing out their divide and rule policy. Between the Congress and the Muslim League they favoured Jinnah.

In September 1945, the Congress formed the government at the centre and later the League also joined the interim government. A coalition ministry was formed at the centre. In the elections for the central Legislative Assembly held in December 1945, the Muslim League won every single Muslim seat. The Congress success in
non-Muslim constituencies was equally spectacular. The results of the general elections conclusively established that the Muslim League represented Muslim India making visible the Hindu-Muslim problem in all its stark reality. In March 1946, the British announced that the Cabinet Mission would negotiate with the concerned parties the basis on which power could be transferred but they preferred to transfer power to a united India. This was because British imperialism was weakened due to the war and the non-cooperation of the Congress and the League, and also because their ability to enforce law and order had diminished.

After consultations with the Congress and the League representatives in May 1946, which could not throw up any consensus, the Cabinet Mission published its own plan. It envisaged a Union of India comprising British India and the Indian States, which would deal with Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. All residual powers would belong to the provinces which would be free to form groups with their own Executives and Legislatures. Each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common. Any province could by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after every ten years. A constituent assembly elected by provincial Assemblies on the basis of population would frame the future constitution of India.

The Congress accepted the Plan but held that it was open to the Constituent Assembly to vary the Plan and that no province could be compelled to belong to a group against its will. Initially the Muslim League accepted the Plan because the grouping of provinces provided the foundation for Pakistan. But after the Congress stand that it had only agreed to go to the Constituent Assembly and nothing else, coupled with the silence of the authors of the Plan on this Congress policy, the Muslim League withdrew its acceptance in July 1946 and called on the Muslims to resort to Direct Action. On 16 August 1946, Direct Action turned violent in Calcutta. Inflamed by fanatical leaders the Muslims all across Noakhali turned on the minority Hindus that shared the village with them. The rioting and violence spread to other parts of the country including the Punjab and the NWFP and set the whole subcontinent ablaze after which the creation of Pakistan was a foregone conclusion. After November 1946, the League’s attitude became more rigid. Its negative attitude towards the Interim Government, its attempt to forcibly overthrow the Unionist ministry in the Punjab, its refusal to enter the Constituent Assembly and to accept the
Cabinet Mission Plan of May 1946 indicated its intention of achieving Pakistan. On 31 December, 1946 it demanded the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. It was in this atmosphere of mutual recrimination that the British government made its historic announcement of 20 February, 1947 that it had a definite intention... to effect the transfer of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. Lord Wavell was recalled and Viscount Mountbatten replaced him. As the Cabinet Mission Plan was for all practical purposes dead, Mountbatten had to prepare another Plan. On 2 June, 1947 the Viceroy put the Plan before a meeting of the Congress and the League leaders and Baldev Singh, the Sikh representative. It was approved by all three parties. On 3 June, 1947 Mountbatten held a Press Conference and mentioned 15 August 1947 as the tentative date for the transfer of power thus hastening the date.

In essence the Partition Plan was simple. The country was to be divided into two dominions, known as India and Pakistan, but Pakistan was to be of the truncated contiguous area involving the Partition of both the Punjab and Bengal, which Jinnah had hitherto always spurned. In order to give to this division of the country the seal of democratic approval arrangements were to be made for recording the popular will in the Muslim-majority provinces. The issue to be put to them was whether they should join the existing Constituent Assembly or an altogether new Constituent Assembly, which would frame a constitution for a separate dominion of Pakistan. The new state of Pakistan would comprise the Muslim majority districts of Bengal and Punjab, which constituted the major area and population of these two provinces, the district of Sylhet and the whole of the NWFP, Sindh and Baluchistan. Arrangements were to be initiated as quickly as possible for dividing the armed forces, the administrative services and the assets and liabilities of the Central Government between the respective successor authorities and for carrying out a similar division in respect of the provinces of Bengal and the Punjab.

For the actual Partition of these two provinces a Boundary Commission, headed by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, was set up. Over a span of three months Sir Cyril Radcliffe drew borderlines on the maps of India that split up the regions of Punjab and Bengal into two nations: India flanked on both sides by the nation of East and West Pakistan. Pakistan was born at midnight on 14 August, 1947, a day before India. Thus, even as 1947 marked India’s freedom from British rule and her
emergence as a secular nation, it was at the cost of her vivisection into two different
nations, India and Pakistan. It is a remarkable fact that the exact location of the
borderline was announced by radio on 17 August, 1947 after the two nation-states
had been declared independent. As a result, they formally came into being as
political entities before their citizens knew what their territorial frontiers were.

The Plan was acclaimed not only in India but throughout the world. Yet only
a year earlier the Cabinet Mission had given cogent arguments against a settlement
based on a truncated Pakistan. They had pointed out that it was not in accord with
Muslim wishes, that the radical Partition of the Punjab and Bengal would be contrary
to the wishes and interests of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these
provinces and that it would necessarily divide the Sikhs. No one had opposed these
arguments, but now all parties, including the Sikhs, acquiesced in this solution.

IMPACT OF PARTITION:

On 15 August 1947, as India celebrated her independence, the whole of the
Punjab was aflame. The division of Bengal in the east remained relatively less violent
due to Gandhi’s influence. As this August Anarchy continued no one ever imagined
that a mass migration would take place from one part of the Punjab to the other
dislocating millions, or that rivers of blood would flow due to the large scale
insensate, communal violence making it a singular event. Whole villagers were
forced to migrate and relocate themselves in territories that were in the process of
being marked as Indian or Pakistani in the world’s biggest mass migration that took
place in less than nine months, affecting about twelve million people. As populations
were exchanged according to their religious affiliations, slaughter accompanied their
movement; many others died of malnutrition. An estimated two million people were
killed. Forced conversions, rape, separation of families, dislocation, and destruction
of property, loot and arson were the order of the day. Fleeing refugees made their
way on either side of the newly demarcated borders in kafilas (foot columns), trains,
ships and planes. On their way to safer places where their co-religionists were, they
were attacked by groups of men from antagonistic communities who massacred and
looted villages, and also abducted raped and mutilated women, men and children. Trains arrived from each country laden with the slaughtered bodies of refugees.

This also resulted in a change in the demographic picture in Punjab, Bengal, Kashmir, U.P. and Bihar as people were caught up in the cross-fires of hatred in a newly created geographical entity they had nosay in. Confusion and mayhem was exacerbated as many people did not know whether their villages were now in Pakistan or India, nor did they know in which direction they were to migrate. People were torn apart from their familiar and cultural moorings, which led to a deepening nostalgia for places lived in for generations. In the process, it severed and fragmented cultural ties that undermined a vibrant, composite intellectual tradition. Partition was a defining moment in shaping and strengthening communitarian consciousness. Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus, argues Gyanendra Pandey, were all redefined by the process of Partition as religion became the prime explanatory category of nationhood. The scale and nature of violence made it one of the most violent events in the history of modern nation formation, and, surprisingly, and despite many warnings, the new governments of India and Pakistan were unprepared for the convulsion.

The trauma of Partition and the resultant violence and dislocation has been reinforced by the refugees' oral accounts. A few refugees were interviewed by me, the accounts of which feature in this research work (Appendices 1 – 10). An analysis of their experiences shows that they all spoke of the brotherhood and communal amity between Hindus and Muslims. Y.P. Suri’s account, in particular, underlines the homogeneous mixture of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in pre-Partition Punjab (Appendix 1). Despite the passage of years he can still vividly recall the details of the riots, and the carnage and confusion that took place and of having lost all to rebuild lives. In account after account the Partition survivors narrate their disbelief about Partition and their reluctance to move. They had land, factories and established businesses and jobs and were prepared to continue under the new dispensation. All of them refused to move till the very last moment. When they fled they had to leave everything behind. All of them were witness to the horrors of Partition violence – of dead bodies on both sides of the border; of a Muslim hopping to safety on one leg, leaving his severed leg behind; a Hindu’s arm being cut-off because he was a mistaken for a Muslim; of a Muslim being doused with kerosene
and being set ablaze; of bodies floating in rivers and canals and of being forced to drink the same water; of train loads of dead in Amritsar station.

Acts of humanity also dot their accounts. They talk of Muslim neighbours in Pakistan warning people to flee; of allowing them to use their telephone; of a Muslim woman who offered water to a wounded girl; of Muslims protecting them; and of enduring friendships even after the vivisection of the country. The uncertainty of which places were going to be in India and which in Pakistan is reflected in PremNathPuri’s and in Jugal Kishore Malhotra’s accounts (Appendices 4 and 9). The communalization of the armed forces is also mentioned in a couple of accounts. However, no one admits to being witness to abductions or rape nor do they admit that it happened in their families. PremNathPuri recalls seeing abducted Hindu women with tattoos inscribed on their bodies. What made the scene more pathetic is that they were not acknowledged or claimed by their relatives (Appendix 4).

These accounts also show how, despite the adversities they faced, ordinary people showed immeasurable courage, in taking charge and rising to the need of the hour; and how they rebuilt their lives even if it was from a suitcase and two rooms; of the nostalgia and home-sickness and of the shock of seeing their houses occupied by strangers. PremNathPuri ends with a damning indictment of Partition: *Partition on religious grounds should never have taken place:* he maintains to date (Appendix 4). Relintoo asserts: *The seeds of Babri Masjid were sown during Partition:* (Appendix 8).

These interviews are nothing less than oral accounts that bring the popular experiences of violence and displacement to the fore. It deals with the impact of Partition on the lives of hundreds of millions, including the trauma of women, and how the upheaval affected their lives making a return irrevocable. There is also a sense of betrayal around this momentous happening as the callous haste to partition India and the last minute arrangements to demarcate the border did not reflect the opinion or the collective will of the community. It was striking in its *failure to satisfy the interests of the very Muslims who are supposed to have demanded it.* Anticipating this problem, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad issued the following statement on 15 April, 1946 when he was President of the Indian National Congress and the clamour for the scheme of Pakistan was deafening:
...Let us consider dispassionately the consequences which will follow if we give effect to the Pakistan scheme. India will be divided into two states, one with a majority of Muslims and the other of Hindus. In the Hindustan state there will remain three-and-a-half crores of Muslims scattered in small minorities all over the land...

...They will awaken overnight and discover that they have become aliens and foreigners. Backward industrially, educationally and economically, they would be left to the mercy of what would then become an unadulterated Hinduraj ... Two states confronting one another offer no solution to the problem of one another's minorities, but only lead to retribution and reprisals by introducing a system of mutual hostages. The scheme of Pakistan therefore solves no problems for the Muslims...\(^{13}\)

Every word in this analysis has turned out to be true, and all his negative conclusions have proved to be even darker that what he foresaw. India's freedom was born out of bloodshed and disunity as the canker of communalism fragmented the nation. This fratricidal war impacted two generations negatively and resulted in the break-up of centuries' old social order wherein communities lived in mutual co-operation and harmony. The common refrain in popular and scholarly writings was that the country's division was a catastrophic occurrence brought about by cynical politicians out of touch with ground realities, who failed to grasp the implications of division along religious lines. In a revealing interview with Leonard Mosley in 1960 Jawaharlal Nehru maintained: *We were tired men, we were getting on in years too ... The plan of Partition offered a way out and we took it ... We expected that Partition would be temporary, that Pakistan was bound to come back to us.*\(^{14}\) This naivety is in itself damming and no excuse for hastily agreeing to divide the country and to present it as a “logical” resolution of the incompatibility of Muslim political destiny with Hindu majority power.\(^{15}\)

OFFICIAL INDIAN STAND:
However, despite the harrowing experiences the refugees testify to, there has been an official Indian erasure about this collective violence. In all official and historiographic accounts violence has been treated as an aberration and an absence, a moment of insanity in an otherwise remarkable discourse of non-violently achieved freedom from the British, because responsibility for the violence lay with all the parties involved – British, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs. As a result “Modern Indian History” still stops for the most part with 1947 and independence. In addition, due to continuing communal tension and conflict, and the ever present danger of reopening old wounds the violence of Partition has been suppressed. Even in his momentous speech on the eve of Independence the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, elides the magnitude of the traumatic violence and mass displacements that took place at that time:

…Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now…

Nehru’s reference to the pains of labour can be read as an indirect reference to the trauma of Partition and the ethnic violence and forced migration experienced by so many Indians as the inevitable labour pains of a nation giving birth to freedom. Moreover, by describing the violence and displacement as a “memory” and a “past” that is over, Nehru minimizes their magnitude and elides state responsibility for the imminence and continuity of violence and migrations that endured well into at least 1949.

Partition, which fundamentally transformed the lives of the people, has been little memorialized by the state or by those affected by it. The experience of the First and Second World Wars has been commemorated in Western Europe and Japan through the erection of major, national and civic monuments. There has been no equivalent to the Nuremberg trials or public acknowledgement or mourning of the event, no move to establish a Partition archive or the acknowledgement of public guilt at the official or unofficial level. In short, it has led to a collective amnesia about the event. This has also been borne out by Vinod Goyal’s testimony. He maintains that the horrors of Partition are treated as embarrassments best forgotten. He also feels that posterity will judge their generation for acquiescing to genocide by
hiding the facts. In his view this should not be allowed to happen (Appendix 3). Unfortunately, this has been allowed to happen with the state’s complicity.
THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE:

Accompanying the official Indian erasure of the violence has been the historiographical lacuna on the moment until recently. Partition, in conventional historiographical discourses remains subsumed under the ideological imperative to assert the credentials of the nation-state at the time of its creation and to justify the achievements of the respective nations’ founding-fathers who steered them to their destiny of freedom. Therefore, both Indian and Pakistani national discourses elide the pangs of Partition and instead focus on the celebratory accounts of independence in their respective nation states. Historical debates centre round the causes of Partition. There are at least three familiar viewpoints in this respect: the imperialist (British); the Pakistani (Muslim); and the Indian (Hindu). All of them raise pertinent questions about the causes of Partition; whether it could be avoided and the share of the British the Congress and the Muslim League in the division of the country; and the role of individual leaders Nehru, Jinnah and Mountbatten and other accidental factors. However, none of them deal with violence.

Pandey has problematised the difficulties historians face in representing Partition violence. In historical discourse, violence appears as an absence, because the historian’s history is unable to deal with violence. The craft of history cannot find the means of representing such loss, and the suppression of strife means that the Partition was not a very significant moment in the history of India. In fact, it is not the history of the country at all. Behind the official and historiographical erasure of the Partition violence are real flesh and blood figures, people who lived through the traumatic days, who faced dislocation and displacement, who coped with the trauma and rebuilt their lives, whose voices have not been heard. In this respect, there is a marked disjunction in the historical literature between the story of the “high politics” of Partition, the negotiations between the British, the Congress, and the Muslim League that led to the creation of Pakistan, and the narrative of popular history, of “history from below.” All this points to the limitations of official history and the historian needs to struggle to recover “marginal” voices and memories by investigating refugees’ experiences. To get to the history from below and to see that the voices of the people are heard the historiographical discourse has become revisionist. Subaltern studies and feminist research has focused on recording the oral
testimonies of Partition survivors and witnesses, much like those of the Holocaust survivors, to unearth the histories and memories of Partition that have been buried under layers of silence. These oral narratives, like those in Appendices 1-10, not only offer a different way of looking at history, a different perspective, but also focuses on the popular experiences of violence and displacement, on the impact of Partition on the lives of hundreds of millions, including the trauma of women. Moreover, the historical archives do not yield the kind of information these testimonies have given.

To complicate the historiographical discourse, revisionist feminist historiographers like Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have investigated women’s experiences of the violence in 1947. These historiographers aim to make women a focus of enquiry, a subject of the story, an agent of the narrative and have shown that the violence of Partition was also a gendered narrative of displacement, which led to the realignment of family, community and national identities. They have also attempted to look at the violence that women were subjected to by men of their own as well as the other community and within their own families.

THE LITERARY ARCHIVES:

The States’ construction of history has been challenged in another way as this grand narrative does not reveal how the Partition affected millions and led to human misery on a colossal scale. Gyanendra Pandey maintains that what the official sources give us is still but a fragment of history. Instead, he advocates the literary fragment, a weaver’s diary, a collection of poems by an unknown poet, …[for it] is of central importance in challenging the states’ construction of history, in thinking other histories and making those contested spaces in which some unities are constituted and others destroyed. Other historians like Mushirul Hasan and Ian Talbot too are of the opinion that in this great human event, human voices are strangely silent, that the social, psychological and traumatic aspects of Partition find little reflection in written history, and that history has failed to address the human dimension of Partition. They too, like Pandey, maintain that literature has stepped in to record the full horror of Partition and can be treated as a kind of social history… because it is
the only significant non-official contemporary record we have of the time, apart from reportage. Historians Mushirul Hasan, Gyanendra Pandey and Ian Talbot, were some of the first to realise that these Partition narratives, in which memory has been articulated, can supplement history.

Gyanendra Pandey, in *Remembering Partition* has commented on the impossibility of narrating violence through history. The fact that literature manages to talk about it, explore it and write about it brings out the difference between history and literature. It probes the silence of the human mind as it brings hidden, silenced memories to the foreindicating a desire to divulge the truth and admits to the negativity of silence. Moreover, the limitations of historiography have been documented and it is now recognized that it works through ideas, hero figures and available facts. Historical accounts can tell us only about statistics. But the human dimension – broken families, ties and relationships, physical disability and disease, the psychological trauma of torture, amputation, rape, abduction, forced witnessing of atrocities and their consequences – can never be fully quantified. Since history does not facilitate a richer, more nuanced, understanding of events and people, literature has stepped in to fill in the lacuna. It looks at individual lives, even if they remain nameless and faceless, and their effort in creating meaning out of the meaninglessness of the world around them. It brings into focus the human agency and engages with the notions of guilt and remorse. Literature is writing about what cannot be written about: the pain and the anguish. As it questions the irrevocability of history through re-interpretation, it also relates to a living human world. It also reminds us that if literary memory is essential in order to remember, forgiving is also essential for the healing process to take place. This ensures the continuity of meaning in life as minds and hearts are freed from all desire for revenge and retaliation.

Literature plays a larger role in challenging official histories since the personal and social histories of the people have been dealt with summarily. It supplements the historical archive, seeks out a forgotten history and through the “performative power of language intersects with the spheres of knowledge, politics and history in its representation of India’s partition.” The huge corpus of Partition Literature in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, English and several other languages forms a huge literary archive that narrates the experiences of the people, which become crucial in reconstructing fragmented histories. This literature is grounded in a sense of
loss, terror and uncertainty and deals with the ambivalence and the conflicting pulls of loyalty which the people experienced for which, they felt, the state had hardly any sympathy.

Many people interviewed Partition survivors including me. Their testimonies reveal that they attached a profound significance to the event and that their memories have not dimmed even after more than sixty-six years after the event. Their testimonies are notable for the vividness with which they recounted the event to the utmost detail. To make sense of personal testimonies, therefore, we need to return to the vast literary archives that both affirm the experiences of those who suffered during the Partition and functions as a discursive space that allows the silenced subjects to speak, interpret and raise critical questions. In so doing, these literary memories prevent the suffering and the sacrifices of millions in the Punjab from being brushed aside as a survivor, Vinod Goyal, so passionately puts it (Appendix 3). Instead, they continue bearing witness to the experiences of people who lived through the events of Partition and reflect on how the process re-orients our understanding of history, politics and culture.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Having discussed the importance of literature in gaining a greater understanding of the events of 1947, it is imperative to follow and understand the direction literary criticism has taken in recent years and the bearing it has on this study. Before the late 1980s, literary criticism of Partition stories in English was limited to a few scattered essays in journals and anthologies. For the most part, early commentary on Partition Literature documented rather than re-presented the violence. Thus the interpretive function of reading and writing about the Partition, the discursive construction of subjectivity, agency, nationalism and history that are involved in its narrativization [was] not considered. Similarly, literary criticism reliant on ‘universalizing’ liberal humanist rhetoric to frame discussions of writers’ representations of this period sidelined attention to the elite, racist, and patriarchal interests that are often, even in very early literary responses to Partition, challenged. The representations of everyday and local experiences had been pushed to the margin
and a fuller; more rounded discussion of the event was missing. As has already been mentioned, there has been an unprecedented interest in literary and testimonial accounts since the mid-1980s. Similarly, much historical scholarship had gone into analyzing the causes of Partition. The high politics of India’s Partition has also been re-evaluated in the works of Mushirul Hasan, Ayesha Jalal, Stanley Wolpert and Anita Inder Singh and others. In recent years historiography has expanded in scope to deal with the cycle of violence Partition unleashed, the dynamics of migration and resettlement, the reverberations and the tremors which still continue to leave its impact on the subcontinent. However, this historical scholarship does not deal with the personal and social histories of the people and the task of recovering their histories continues to pose a challenge for scholars. In an attempt to rewrite this history from the margins revisionist historians like Gyanendra Pandey, Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin and others have repeatedly emphasized the centrality of personal narratives, testimonies, eyewitness accounts, literary narratives and the role of memory.

With this shift in attention it becomes clear that history and literature are inextricably linked and any discussion or criticism without an inter-disciplinary approach becomes meaningless. In order to get a clearer picture, it is necessary to review the recent historical, sociological and literary sources of criticism as well as journals which deal with the historical, sociological, literary and other inter-disciplinary aspects of Partition.

1. HISTORICAL SOURCES:

G.D. Khosla’s 36 Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events leading up to and following the Partition of India (1989) is about the violence and the brutality that Partition engendered. It is a memoir and, as such, gives only his views without making a systematic, detailed study of the events. He writes about the violence Hindus in the Punjab faced from the time of Direct Action Day. He details the violence in all the districts of the Punjab, Sindh and the North West Frontier Province. He, very briefly, mentions the retaliatory spree the Sikhs and Hindus went on in East Punjab, through in no way does he condemn this. His voice is a partisan
one and therefore, this memoir does not give a balanced picture of the violence committed on both sides of the border.

Gyanendra Pandey\textsuperscript{37} in \textit{Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India} (2001), calls Partition a \textit{moment of rupture} and draws attention to the singularly violent character of the event which was unprecedented in both scale and method. Conventional historical discourse and the official accounts either justify or elide the gruesome happenings as an illegitimate outbreak of violence. There is a wide chasm between the historian’s perception of 1947 and a more popular, survivor’s account of it. The \textit{historian’s history} does not deal with the effect of Partition on the people.

Gyanendra Pandey\textsuperscript{38} in a second work, \textit{Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories} (2006), maintains that the historian needs to struggle to recover marginal voices and memories for what the official sources give us is still but a fragment of history. He advocates another type of \textit{fragment} – literary sources – for it is of central importance in challenging the states’ constructions of history, in thinking other histories and marking these contested spaces in which some unties are constructed and others destroyed.

Gyanendra Pandey\textsuperscript{39} in a third work, \textit{The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India} (2006), analyses the rise of communalism in nineteenth century north India. In his opinion, though there were communal flare-ups in the nineteenth century people, till as late as the 1940s, thought more in terms of \textit{jati} and \textit{biradari} and not in terms of religious groupings. Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other political leaders, while going forward in achieving independence, thought of a free India which would accommodate all religions. In short it would be a plural society. However, political leaders, especially, the Hindu leaders held dual membership of the Congress as well as the Hindu Mahasabha and took up issues dealing with Hindu concerns like the cow protection and the imposition of Hindi which alienated the Muslims. With the rise of the RSS the idea of Hindutva gained acceptance and the country was ensnared in religious controversies leading to a deepening communal crisis. The Congress tried to counteract these influences with its secular policies and by declaring that religious differences would disappear once economic disparities were tackled. Ironically, India was partitioned on religious grounds, showing the limitations of the political thinking of the day.
Bimal Prasad in *Pathway to India’s Partition: Vol.1, The Foundations of Muslim Nationalism* (1999), very clearly and succinctly analyses why the communal divide occurred in India. He does this through a detailed discussion on Muslim and Hindu nationalisms, why and how they arose, what their aims and ideals were and how the British engendered and fostered the rift by playing off one community against the other. The point he emphasizes is that these nationalisms arose due to the rise of a community consciousness between the communities which deepened over the years. In all this, he does not make an emotional appeal or a case for any particular community but deals with it dispassionately giving both sides of the picture.

Mushirul Hasan in *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885-1930* (2000), maintains that it is incorrect to say that Pakistan came into existence because Muslims constituted a separate nation or that their animus with the Hindus started long before the British came on the scene. The fact remains that they never constituted a monolithic community, and, in dealing exclusively with the Muslim League, both the British and Congress leadership wrongly made Jinnah the sole spokesman of the entire Muslim community. What is forgotten is that the integrative forces were at work despite the many Hindu-Muslim conflicts that occurred.

He analyses the course communal politics took in the early twentieth century and tries to give answers to how the breach occurred. According to him Gandhi’s endorsement of the *Khilafat* and the signing of the *Lucknow Pact*, though they brought Hindus and Muslims together, proved to be detrimental in the long run because the former mixed religion with politics and the latter endorsed separate electorates for the Muslims which the British had introduced.

Through Hindu-Muslim relations worsened post-*Khilafat*, Partition was not the creation of the *Ulama* but of the determined effort by informed western-educated Muslims of the Aligarh school. The other areas of conflict were the Act of 1909 which introduced separate electorates; economic inequality; agrarian discontent; Hindu and Muslim revivalism; Hindu Congressmen supporting, identifying and belonging to the Hindu Mahasabha simultaneously; and fears that Muslims would be swamped by a Hindu majority nation, which could not be allayed because the Congress could not break the Mahasabha stranglehold.
Chetan Bhatt in *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (2001), traces the growth of Hindu Nationalism from the nineteenth century to the present day with the formation of the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha culminating in the rise of the RSS in the twentieth century. The RSS articulated a distinctive Hindu nationalist ideology and a political movement with a coherent ideology of Hindu exclusivity, supremacy and nationhood. It became the foundational organisation from which the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) arose in contemporary India. However, these organisations cannot be considered ‘fascist’ because of these Hindutva organisations have embraced long term cultural goals in converting the people to its ideology.

Ian Talbot and Gurhalpal Singh in *The Partition of India* (2009) have taken a fresh approach in dealing with the Partition of India and include Bengal in their ambit. They, like many others, maintain that during this time there was a transition from traditional to communal violence which was more vicious than any other and had elements of ethnic cleansing. The cycle of violence began with the Great Calcutta killing in August 1946, spread to Noakhali and Garhmukhteshwar in 1946, Rawalpindi in March 1947, the Partition violence in the Punjab in August-November 1947 and back to Bengal in 1950. They touch upon the migration and the resettlement of refugees; the Partition legacies which are the rise of ethnic and religious nationalisms and the enduring hostility between India and Pakistan since 1947.

Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya in their study, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (2000), have given a detailed account of the aftermath of Partition in the Punjab as well as Bengal though they focus their attention more on the Punjab. Their work deals with how the Radcliffe Commission drew the boundary lines and all the attendant politics associated with it; the Sikh response to Partition and how they eventually made East Punjab a flourishing agricultural state in Independent India. They touch upon how the East Bengal refugees were rehabilitated. They also deal with what enabled the re-emergence of the powerful civil-military bureaucracy in post-Partition West Punjab. This was due to the highly militarised nature of the Punjab. This civil-military bureaucracy usurped power and remains the real force in Pakistan’s politics to this day. The other area of discussion
is how Partition changed the South Asian capitals culturally, demographically and economically. Finally they touch upon the legacies of Partition.

Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid in *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History* (1989) have edited a collection of essays which deal with the culture and social relations predominantly in the colonial period. The essays are confined to the dominant Hindu community, largely in north India, and deal mainly with the middle-class women.

One essay in particular: *Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past:* by Uma Chakravarty, contends that the nineteenth century women’s question was situated in the cultural and ideological encounter between England and India. On the one hand, Orientalist writers glorified India’s ancient past and built a utopian picture of Indian civilisation which the Indians endorsed completely. On the other hand, Utilitarian and Evangelical attack on contemporary Indian society especially on the low status of women made the reformers and cultural nationalists reconstruct the image of the women from the lost past. The golden age of Hindu womanhood was located in the Vedic age, which the Orientalists had made them conscious of. The reconstructed image of the ideal, Aryan woman was one who was chaste, chose death over ravishment, sublimated her sexuality, was an ideal mother and whose role was the procreation and rearing of a special breed of Aryan men. All this implied that it was a Brahmanical movement which did not include the lower-caste woman in its fold.

Partha Chatterjee in *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1995) maintains that in the effort to resist colonial domination in the nineteenth century the cultural nationalists divided the world of social institutions into two spheres – the material and the spiritual. The material corresponded to the outer world, whereas the spiritual corresponded to the home. The material or the outer sphere was where the colonisers had proved their supremacy in the fields of science, technology, economics and governance. This was acknowledged and accepted by the Indians. However, the home or the spiritual, inner sphere was where the essential marks of cultural identity had to be maintained. It implied that the woman was invested with the duty of preserving spiritual values through her qualities of chastity, patience, self-sacrifice, devotion to one’s husband, reverence for one’s
elders and her religiosity. With this the authenticity and purity of the nation was preserved and the Indian’s cultural superiority assured.

With education the new woman became the ideal companion to the Indian Westernized male. Owing to the discipline of her refinement, she remained untainted by the corrupting influences of the material domain, therefore continuing to uphold the sanctity of the nation. The Hindu home, in the last decade of the nineteenth century fell away from the nationalist agenda because they refused to make the women’s question issue of political negotiation with the colonial state.

Tanika Sarkar’s thought provoking study, Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism (2001), deals with how the Hindu woman’s body was appropriated by the nineteenth century nationalists as the ‘Hindu way of life’, even as they worked with the liberal social reformers for the abolition of sati, raising the age of consent and encouraging widow remarriage. The women’s question came to occupy centre-stage when they recognized that the low status of women was a distortion of their earlier purity and a major symptom of decay. Nevertheless, the Hindu home represented the last bastion of freedom from the colonizers for the Hindu male; the Bengali male in particular, was worn down by colonialism. This was achieved by passing on the moral initiative to the woman whose body was pure, chaste, unmarked and governed by the discipline of the shastras. In short, the household became the embryonic nation and the woman the true patriotic subject. The family was re-imagined as a contrast to and a critique of alien rule. This was achieved through the subordination of the Hindu wife at home.

Barbara Daly Metcalf in her Perfecting Women: Maulana Ashraf AliThanawi’s Bihishti Zewar: A Partial Translation with Commentary (1992) highlights the concerns with the Muslim women’s reform within the Islamic framework. Written at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is a guide and a book of conduct for respectable Muslim women and explicates reformist teachings for women. For women to act in the correct manner, Thanawi argues, they must be instructed. They should be given a basic education, know how to behave with their elders and other members of the house, be thrifty, follow the Islamic way of life, remain veiled in public and secluded at home, be chaste and maintain the honour of the home. In short, he instructs women on the cultivating virtues and eliminating false religious practices in their daily lives. Thanawi also implied that, in essence,
men and women are equally endowed with moral, spiritual and intellectual qualities. The goal of reform according to him was to create a properly ordered society in which people knew their place, fulfilled their responsibilities, and received their due. Yet, central to this correct hierarchy is the subordination of women to the men of their family.

**Urvashi Butalia**\(^{49}\) in her path-breaking, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*\(^{(1998)}\), finds that the oral narrative offers a different way of looking at history, a different perspective which enriches history. She focuses on the stories of the invisible, bit-players: women, children and scheduled castes. She details how abducted women were forcibly recovered and made into symbols of national honour, and the problems they faced after recovery. She also highlights violence within families for fear of dishonour to the community.

**Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin**\(^{50}\) in their seminal work, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition*\(^{(1998)}\), look at the violence that women were subjected to both, at the hands of men of the other community and within their own families. Women’s bodies were treated as territory to be conquered, claimed or marked by the assailant. They too consider the recovery of abducted women a deliberate violent action of the state. They show how Partition posed the question of belonging in a way that polarized choice and allegiance, aggravating old and new antagonisms which had far reaching implications for women.

**Ravinder Kaur**\(^{51}\) in her incisive and exhaustive analysis, *Since 1947: Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi* \(2007\), details the last journey of the Punjabi migrants from West Punjab to Delhi. She explores the state’s and the community’s versions of the displacement, the modes of transport they used which showed the class distinctions in the migration in process as well as their resettlement. She deals exhaustively with the governmental policies and practices of resettlement of even the untouchable migrants. On the other hand, the migrants too worked towards restoring their financial losses and simultaneously seeking out those community linkages and practices they had left behind and rebuilding them. Their eventual and complete integration with the Indian state is discussed as also the *ethnic amnesia* pervading the Punjabi Hindus wherein they deny having received help from the government. The significant point she makes is that Partition is not a *dead issue* but a *living theme* that keeps cropping up in the most unexpected places and time.
2. **SOCIOLOGICAL SOURCES:**

T.N.Madan’s[^52] *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India* (1997), deals with secularism and fundamentalism in India through an exhaustive study of the three Indian religions: Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism. He gives the historical background of each of the three religions, deals with the appearance of reform, revivalism and fundamentalism throughout the ages, traces these influences in nineteenth century India, which affected the political situation in the twentieth century and Nehru’s way of counteracting it through secularism and declaring that the real fight was not religious but economic. Post-Partition he traces how Sikh fundamentalism arose with the rise of Bhindranwal and how it was tackled. He also traces how secularism got diluted in independent India with the acceptance of the Hindutva ideology because of the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad which are sister organisations of the RSS.

Shubh Mathur[^53] in *The Everyday Life of Hindu Nationalism: An Ethnographic Account* (2008), briefly deals with how the synthesis between Islam and Hinduism was halted in its tracks due to the rise of Muslim and Hindu nationalisms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She also endorses Chetan Bhatt’s views that, post-Partition, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Vishva Hindu Parishad are cultural organisations that have long term goals in making India a Hindu nation. She proves this through an ethnographic study of the people in Rajasthan wherein they are indoctrinated through educational institutions they have opened up and also discusses the discriminatory treatment meted out to Muslims.

3. **LITERARY SOURCES:**

Jill Didur’s[^54] *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (2006), examines how the literariness of language mediates the readers’ perception of history, memory and fictional representation connected to Partition. She interprets the silences found in women’s accounts of sectarian violence that accompanied Partition: their sexual assault, abduction, and displacement from their families: not simply as an
attempt to conceal a socially damaging experience but as a sign of their inability to find a language to articulate their experience without invoking metaphors of purity and pollution. Her book examines the role that narratives of women’s experience play in constructing the memory of India’s Partition.

Seema Malik\textsuperscript{55} in *Partition and Indian English Women Novelists* (2007) gives a comprehensive and exclusive evaluation of women writers on Partition, who present the whole process from a gendered perspective. Through her study she highlights the marginalized situation of women within the socio-political space of the Partition. She critically analyses the impact of and response to the Partition as inscribed in the agential discourses of women writers. She treats Partition as trauma, shows how history is fictionally represented, talks about violence and its socio-cultural ramification and the narrative strategies they adopt in re-plotting the female destiny.

Anup Beniwal\textsuperscript{56} in *Representing Partition: History, Violence and Narration* (2005), through a range of novels, traces the nature of various levels of the creative responses and consciousness to Partition within the tradition of Indian Writing in English. His focus is on how these novels approximate history, the understanding of their reaction to Partition violence and the structuring of the narratives around the theme of order – disorder – order. He also compares and contrasts the pre- and post-Rushdie writings on Partition.

Vinod K. Chopra\textsuperscript{57} in *Partition Stories: Mapping Community, Communalism and Gender* (2009), studies the nature and dynamics of the shifting paradigms of community, communalism and gender of Partition as reflected in the short stories, which have a variety of themes. He conceptualises the terms community, communalism and gender. He also deals with inter-community and intra-community violence against women and how the writers show traces of human goodness and values surviving the communal divide.

Tarun K. Saint\textsuperscript{58} in *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* (2010), focuses on the literary representations of the Partition, which offer crucial insights into the traumatic effects extreme violence has had on the collective psyche and imagination over time. The study maps shifts in the contours of literary remembrance and historical trauma in the domain of novelistic representation across three generations. He calls these novels fictive testimony and details what researchers have to say about testimonies related to the Holocaust. These instances of witnessing in
the literary form enabled the restoration of affect consigned to the realm of the inarticulate. Moreover, critical witnessing includes a further element of self-reflexivity allowing for the possibility of self-critique.

**Isabella Bruschi’s**\(^{59}\) *Partition in Fiction: Gendered Perspectives* (2010), reveals how creative writers deal with the Partition holocaust. Through selected writers who are both male and female, she deals with how they perceived Partition. She does this by dealing with male and female novelists in separate sections, as they take up different issues, and compares and contrasts their writings. Nevertheless, the feminine perspective is given more prominence.

**Kavita Daiya’s**\(^{60}\) exhaustive study, *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender and National Culture in Postcolonial India* (2008), takes up cultural texts, like literature and film, and deals with the gendered violence and displacement in the postcolonial public sphere. She attempts to show how Indians and more recently, South Asians in the Diaspora, fashion belongings, perform citizenships, and survive nationalism. She tracks the formation of transnational South Asian public spheres by taking up the Partition as both historical event and discursive formation. She re-examines the discourse about Partition migrants in 1947, who were both refugees and citizens depending on ethnicity and gender. She also explores the postcolonial shape of the feminisation of the nation and links it to the representation of male and female experiences of violence and displacement. One of the claims of her book is that like the female body, male bodies also became symbols of decolonised and postcolonial nationality, albeit in different ways.

**Anjali Gera Roy and Nandi Bhatia**\(^{61}\) in *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Displacement, and Resettlement* (2008), have edited a collection of essays that deal with the themes of displacement and resettlement in the Punjab, Bengal and Kashmir. This eclectic collection of essays tackles these issues through analyses of novels and films, of writing about the experiences of refugees in both India and Pakistan and also through a British soldier’s impression of the Partition.

4. **JOURNALS:**
Rukmini Bhaya Nair’s 62 Acts of Agency and Acts Of God: Discourse of Disaster in a Post-Colonial Society (March 15, 1997), examines three sorts of disaster narrative – the official, the popular and the academic – each of which interprets an under-lying nominal / natural kind divide differently. Her paper also partly addresses the subaltern historiographer’s problematic of how the moment of people’s suffering is to be captured in the writing of history through disasters like the Partition. She refers to Pandey’s In Defense of the Fragment in which he advocates the literary fragment like poetry so that historians can achieve a more textured truth as it represents marginalized voices. But the problem for the historian remains. How is he to give due weight to affect in his work? Bhaya Nair endorses the philosopher Richard Rorty’s viewpoint when he states that concepts like freedom, solidarity and suffering are best understood not by philosophical works but by literary ones. By implication historians too should look in this direction.

David Gilmartin 63 in Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative (1998) tries to answer how Jinnah rose to be the sole spokesman of the Muslim community and make narrative sense of 1947. Gilmartin sets out to link high politics with everyday life through an analysis of the relationship between the reality of the pervasive political division among Indian Muslims in the decades leading to 1947 and the vision of symbolic unity embodied in the Pakistan concept. He offers useful insights into the Pakistan demand, linking the collapse of the moral community to a rise of communalism and a separate territory.

Mushirul Hasan’s 64 Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India’s Partition (2000), gives a balanced view of the Partition of India and its effect on the people. He makes an impassioned plea for understanding the basic oneness of Hindus and Muslims and the syncretism they shared for centuries while analysing what led to the Partition from the Muslim perspective. He does so through the effective use of literary works, which eloquently bolster his point of view that not every Muslim was in favour of Partition. The creation of Pakistan and the Partition of the country had no significance or relevance to the millions living in India or Pakistan. They were caught in the cross fires of religious hatred. He too advocates studying this holocaust, side by side with literary texts to develop an alternative discourse.
Satish Saberwal's study, “Why Did We Have The Partition?” The Making of a Research Interest (2005), is a sociological exploration of the social origins of the Partition out of several decades of his personal experience. Saberwal had grown up taking a difference between Muslims and Hindus for granted. The Partition was a climax within a pattern of recurrent violence in the name of Hindus and Muslims for several generations. He tracks the origin of a sense of difference during the medieval period where there was no general social fusion though the Mughals integrated immigrants and people across religious differences to the cement of power. The colonial period saw a major change with heightened insecurities amidst large changes in policy, economy and society and the rise of influential institutions for religious revival on both sides. As the sense of opposition between religious groups grew, so too did the frequency and intensity across the divide. The violence of 1947 was exceptionally brutal and large in scale; but the underlying attitudes had long been in the making. To understand this one needs to summon the resources of history as well as other social sciences.

T.N. Madan's paper, Secularism in Its Place (1987), explores whether Nehruvian secularism can counter the rise of the Hindu Right in modern India. In his view secularism is a failure because Nehru disavowed religion. In so doing, politics takes precedence over ethics which is a political folly. Hence it is impotent in its ability to chart out a future course of action for ironically it gives rise to religious fundamentalism and fanaticism, which the Indian state is incapable of countering. On the other hand, Gandhi's emphasis on the inseparability of religion and politics and the superiority of the former over the latter is more likely to work in a multi-religious society than an absolute denial of religion, which does not give any one an ethical guideline or direction. He argues that where religion defines a man and a community, secular policies cannot be successful for it is built on a rationalist avoidance of the religious community. This religious community must be taken into account and the legitimacy of religion in human life must not be denied. For secularism to strike roots it should not be forced upon the people as the idea of secularism implies that those who profess no religion be treated on a par with those who do.

Partha Chatterjee in his paper, Secularism and Toleration (1994), grimly warns of the danger of the Hindu Right entrenching itself in the domain of the modernising state and using all the ideological resources of that state to persecute
those people who do not conform to its version of the ‘national culture’. In their vocabulary, the term ‘communal’ is reserved for the minorities, specially the Muslims, whereas the ‘pseudo-secular’ is that Hindu who defends the right of the Muslim citizen. The question then arises is whether the defense of secularism an appropriate ground for meeting the challenge of the Hindu Right? Or should it be the duty of the Indian state to ensure policies of religious toleration? Chatterjee has given numerous examples to show the failure of state intervention and is not optimistic about tolerance succeeding even after redefining the term. All he can hope for is that at least a few will support democracy and tolerance should a potentially disastrous political impasse occur. The main thrust of his argument is to resist homogenisation from outside and to fight for democracy from within the community.

Smita Narula\(^6\) in *Overlooked Danger: The Security and Rights Implications of Hindu Nationalism in India* (2003), deals with the rise of Hindu nationalism in India. She specifically, talks of the rise of the RSS and its sister organisations. Their policies have resulted in considerable violence against India’s Muslim, Christian and Dalit minorities. She particularly mentions the destruction of the Babri Masjid, which was destroyed due to their propaganda and the pogrom against the Muslims in Gujarat after the *Sabarmati* Express was set on fire in Godhara. The communal carnage that followed both these incidents was chillingly reminiscent of the Partition violence. Through the dissemination and consumption of hate literature the idea that India is a country for Hindus is gaining ground. Muslims, Christians and others are tolerated minorities whose best interests lie in toeing the majority line. In addition to subverting the rule of law within the country, it helps fuel a cycle of retaliatory communal violence across borders besides threatening regional security. The secular fabric is beginning to tear. Implicit in Narula’s argument is that the lessons of Partition have not been learnt or understood, that historical wrongs are attempted to be set right through violence and intimidation and that violence against minorities is a justifiable act.

Jason Francisco\(^6\) in his *Review Article* (1995) has critically commented on Alok Bhalla’s three volume compilation of short stories in *Stories about the Partition of India* as well as his *Introduction*. In his view, Bhalla’s three-volume anthology stands out as the most far-sighted, comprehensive and accomplished effort to gather the short stories on Partition and through them, to consider their continuing impact. It
offers insights of writers from every community (Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) affected by the holocaust. The stories encompass a range of emotions like anger, negation, confusion, betrayal, lament, consolation and determination. They also answer Bhalla’s question, “Why did we not as people resist?” Moreover, it is a testimony which is no less pertinent today as it was in 1947. However, he finds Bhalla’s *Introduction* to the collection overtly political and, in places, polemical. He concentrates his polemic on Pakistani historians who seek to justify Partition as an historical destiny. Francisco also has issues with Bhalla’s silence about Hindu fundamentalism.

Jason Francisco in another study, *In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India’s Partition Burning Freshly* (1996), has critically reviewed three anthologies. They are two volumes of *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* edited by Mushirul Hasan; *Orphans of the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India* edited by Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal; and three volumes of *Stories about the Partition of India* edited by Alok Bhalla. These collections attest not only to the resurgence of literary interest in the Partition, and the emergence of Partition writings as a genre in modern South Asian literature in translation, but also of a different approach to the event itself: an unkindled reclamation, a direct gaze at ugliness. The anthologized material contains three central thematic concerns: rupture, protest and repair. Though none of the anthologies is thematically arranged, these three motifs taken as a progression form a natural response to the Partition, a continuum from pain to healing, thus attesting to the healing powers of literature.

Commenting on the editorial viewpoints Francisco finds Cowasjee and Duggal’s the least editorially weighted of the three. Bhalla intends his collection to stand as a categorical indictment of communal hatred, as well as a vindication of his own Gandhian views and of Gandhi himself. On the other hand, Mushirul Hasan is a sober critic who clearly understands the gravity of the ethical failure the Partition played out and peers critically into the political scenario from the Muslim perspective.

Debali Mookerjea-Leonard’s *Disenfranchised Bodies: Jyotirmoyee Devi’s Writings on the Partition* (2003) contextualizes the desertions of abducted and raped women within the social production of a discourse of honour and women’s sexual purity and examines the rejections through a reading of the Bengali feminist
author Jyotirmoyee Devi’s short story SheiChheleta (That Little Boy) and novel Epar Ganga Opar Ganga (The River Churning). This article is based on insights gleaned from nineteenth century colonial historians who have written extensively about the women’s question. Juxtaposing this historical research with literary writings, Mookerjea-Leonard demonstrates how women were made repositories of the national honour in literary discourse. This adds to the reader’s understanding of the gendered violence that occurred during Partition. These insights are crucial for any meaningful discussion on the gendered violence of 1947.

Kavita Daiya in her Postcolonial Masculinity: 1947, Partition Violence and Nationalism in the Indian Public Sphere (2006), gives a different view of gender through her analysis of two novels: Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children and Khushwant Singh’s Train to Pakistan. So far feminist cultural criticism and the postcolonial critique of nationalist discourses, has shown how women are constructed as signs and symbols of the nation. In the process of examining the gendering of nationalism, these critiques translate the relation between gender and nation, as one between woman and nation. However, in this article Daiya sets out to answer how male bodies are represented, deployed and re-fashioned in the creation and contestation of nationalism. She focuses on the cultural representation of violence suffered by male bodies in the public sphere. In short, she gives novel insights into how violence was inscribed on male bodies.

Basudeb Chakraborti’s paper, The Essentials of Indianness: Tolerance and Sacrifice in Indian Partition Fiction in English and in English Translation (2009), explores tolerance and sacrifice in Indian Partition fiction in Chaman Nahal’s Azadi, Khushwant Singh’s Train to Pakistan, Bapsi Sidhwa’s Ice-Candy-Man, Bhisham Sahni’s Tamas, Saadat Hasan Manto’s short stories, and two Indian films, Mr. And Mrs. Iyer, directed by Aparna Sen and Meghe Dhaka Tara (The Cloud Shrouded Star), by Ritwik Ghatak. Chakraborti maintains that tolerance and sacrifice have been the essential foundations of Indian culture since the ancient Vedic times which is visible even in Indian Partition fiction.

Despite these narratives recording man’s bestiality and savagery the writers attest to the fact that man is essentially sincere and committed to upholding humanity to survive and sustain it.
In conclusion, it can be said that in conjunction with the fresh insights subaltern historians, in particular Gyanendra Pandey, have to give in challenging conventional historiography and in advocating that literature be included in its ambit, that literary critics started reinterpreting these texts. They started focusing on the silence of the subaltern and realized that literature offered an alternative record of the period, excavated forgotten histories and recovered marginal voices. This is exactly what David Gilmartin, Rukmini Bhaya Nair and Mushirul Hasan advocate. Critics like Anup Beniwal, Jason Francisco and Vinod K. Chopra have based their commentaries on these texts taking the political the aesthetic and the social situations into consideration, simultaneously keeping in mind the new frame-work. Tarun K. Saint has added an interesting dimension to the literary criticism of Partition by treating these works as *fictive testimony*.

The silence of the gendered subaltern has found resonance in the works of revisionist, feminist historians like Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin. Taking their cue from such feminist research Jill Didur, Seema Malik, Debali Mookerjea-Leonard and Kavita Daiya have given interesting and novel insights about the plight of women during Partition. They have shown how Partition was also a gendered narrative of displacement, which led to the realignment of family, community and national identities. To understand why women’s sexual purity was so important and how they became repositories of family and national honour, Jill Didur and Debali Mookerjea-Leonard have leant heavily on the works of Partha Chatterjee, Tanika Sarkar and Uma Chakravarti, who have dealt extensively with the issue of the women’s question in the nineteenth century. In addition, Daiya focuses on how violence was perpetrated on men and its effect on them.

With historiography expanding its scope to include in its ambit the rise of communalism and religious nationalisms in particular, and sociology giving crucial insights into the rise of fundamentalism and the limitations of secularism and tolerance in India, literary criticism has become more vibrant and responsive as the critics’ understanding of the cataclysm is enhanced. Another aspect historiography deals with is the resettlement and rehabilitation of the Partition migrants, and Ravinder Kaur’s exhaustive study in this sphere gives a fresh interpretation of the migrants’ travails. Literary criticism has expanded in scope to focus on this too. All these influences have come together to have a bearing on the present day critics, who
use them to stress on the everyday experiences of the marginalized and show how these literary archives bring out the differences between the official record and the people’s experiences. This means that literary criticism has become inter-disciplinary in nature and is something Satish Saberwal strongly recommends. Moreover, articles like Smita Narula’s bring into sharp focus the ever lurking danger of the rise of fundamentalism that every literary critic has pointed out to. However, this calls for a more vigilant, ethical and critical reading of Partition Literature if it is to enhance our understanding of the times and if we are to learn the lessons of Partition.

AIM, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

It now becomes clear that the commentary on Partition from the last decade of the twentieth century has undergone a sea change. The socio-cultural and historiographic problematic of Partition in earlier critical endeavors either remained on the fringes or were diluted by the general nature of their critical exploration. As has been noted in the previous section, any exploration of the Partition experience cannot be isolated from either the historical, literary or inter-disciplinary surveys. Taken in tandem they give a more complete, rounded picture of the holocaust.

This research focuses on four novels in English written by South Asian writers. They are Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (1975), Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man* (1988), and Shauna Singh Baldwin’s *What the Body Remembers* (1999). The aim of this research work is to show through these novels, how history intersects with fiction to give a clearer picture of the violence, and the trauma the people faced, for it is a well documented fact that of all forms of literature the novel is the most nurtured by history and holds a mirror to the age.

With recent historiographical discourses leaning on literature to illuminate the story of Partition, this research proposes to focus on showing how these novels form a literary archive. Through literary witnessing, to use Tarun K. Saint’s term, which is a form of memory, it will be shown how they supplement and question the historical archives. It will show how a communitarian consciousness developed, how people started classifying themselves in terms of religion: Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. In
the process of identifying the people of the antagonist religion as the Other, it will show how national identities came to be associated with religion.

This study will also refer to nineteenth century colonial historians dealing with the women’s question and feminist historiographers dealing with the violence women faced during Partition to re-interpret the gendered aspects of Partition. This has been done by several literary researchers, Jill Didur and Seema Malik in particular. With the exception of Rajinder Singh Bedi’s Lajwanti, Jill Didur has taken up women writers for discussion from the Punjab, Bengal and Pakistan. Seema Malik has taken up only Indian English women novelists for discussion. Debali Mookerjea-Leonard has only dealt with the Bengali feminist author Jyotirmoyee Devi’s short story That Little Boy and novel The River Churning, whereas Kavita Daiya has dealt with both male and female novelists. This research will deal with both male and female narratives and will look into the perspectives both have to offer, enriching our understanding of the gendered violence of Partition. Taking the cue from Kavita Daiya this research will also focus on violence men faced: psychological as well as sexual.

Ravinder Kaur and Anjali Gera Roy and Nandi Bhatia have dealt extensively with the Partition migrants. Kavita Daiya’s exhaustive study also deals with the plight of the Partition migrants and the rehabilitation of refugees through film, cultural and literary texts. This study too will deal with the enforced exodus and the travails of the refugees as depicted in the novels for study.

Another aim of this research work is to show in what respects the male and female writers complement and differ from each other as they unfold the horrors of Partition. In other words, it will examine the male and female perspectives on Partition. An attempt is also made to see how the two writers, Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal, who witnessed Partition, convey their experiences with that of Bapsi Sidhwa who was a child living in Lahore when Partition occurred and Shauna Singh Baldwin, who was born in 1962, much after Partition.

In short, the study shows how these literary texts deal with the human and social problems that arose with Partition. The everyday experiences of the people will be reinterpreted by placing the community and state narratives under erasure in order to allow other narratives to emerge, and interrupt and question the hegemony of the dominant narrative.
This study does not claim to be a definitive study of the violent transition to independence that is called Partition. It does not deal comprehensively with the literature, novels and short stories, about the Partition in various Indian languages – Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Sindhi, and Bengali. It deals only with four novels in English. Nor does it deal with other cultural representations of Partition like film, journalistic accounts or memoirs. There are also difficulties in speaking of the different Indian and Pakistani stories. Therefore, despite the fact that a Pakistani novelist Bapsi Sidhwa is chosen for analysis, the discussion that follows deals mainly with the Indian side of the story – more specifically the Punjab. It does not deal with the literature of West Bengal or Bangladesh as that experience was completely different and does not fall within the scope of this research. Since Gyanendra Pandey has effectively demonstrated that *Partition was violence* this study will track key issues related to that violence.

Having dealt in brief with the main political contours that shaped the political destiny of undivided India and how communal politics divided the country, it is necessary to analyse how the rise of a community consciousness among the Hindus and the Muslims led to communalism. Gyanendra Pandey, Mushirul Hasan, T.N. Madan, Subh Mathur and Bimal Prasad have shown that the communal divide forever destroyed syncretism in the country. The novelists too deal with this phenomenon in a variety of ways. Khushwant Singh shows the failure of Indian nationalism to keep its promises; Nahal depicts a composite Punjabi identity being wiped away due to the rise of a communal consciousness; Sidhwa, though she offers an unbiased perspective of the cataclysm in denouncing communalism and does not subscribe to the two nation theory, clearly states her loyalty to Jinnah and the newly created nation state of Pakistan; and Baldwin advocates a distinct Sikh fundamentalist identity separate from both the Hindu and the Muslim communities. In short, they deal with how communalism created an unbridgeable chasm within communities.

It is also necessary to explore not only the women’s experiences of Partition but also the men’s. With reference to the women’s experiences Uma Chakravarty, Partha Chatterjee, Taniaka Sarkar and Barbara Metcalf have shown that women became repositories of chastity and national honour in the nineteenth century. During the Partition holocaust their bodies became sites of violence where ethnic communities sought to establish their dominance over each other. Urvashi Butalia,
Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have effectively shown how this emphasis on women’s chastity and purity led to the gendered sexual violence during Partition. Gleaning valuable insights from these historians this study analyses how the novelists deal with familial violence as well as the treatment of abducted women. Kavita Daiya has brought an important point to the fore: that violence done to male bodies has received little attention unlike women’s experiences of the Partition. This study also analyses violence enacted on men, both psychological and physical, and sees if these fictional encounters are successful or not.

The enforced exodus and the resettlement of the migrants is another important aspect of Partition history. Ravinder Kaur, Anjali Gera Roy, Nandi Bhatia and Kavita Daiya have dealt in detail about the experiences of the Partition migrants, their last journey, their resettlement and rehabilitation and, finally, their assimilation into the Indian mainstream so unlike the mohajirs in Pakistan. Of all the novelists Nahal deals with the exodus in great depth, whereas Khushwant Singh highlights how the refugees were a source of anxiety for, because of the tales they told of their harrowing experiences, they became a potential source of trouble. Baldwin deals exclusively with the Sikh concerns and experiences of the migration as well as shows the class differences in the migration and resettlement experiences. Migration and rehabilitation is not Sidhwa’s main concern. Nevertheless, she does touch upon the issue but not in detail. However, she deals with the fate of unclaimed Partition children who became refugees which none of the other writers have done.

To sum up, it is noticed that memory, history and literature are inextricably linked and affects the writers’ viewpoints. The shift in Partition historiography, which now deals with the effect of violence on the common man and with literature corroborating it, is another point which is noteworthy. Though none of these novelists deal with the aftermath of Partition, it still continues to influence subcontinental politics in the international arena as well as within the newly formed countries. Partition memories are excavated at the most unexpected of times showing that Partition is not a dead issue. In India, the worst fallout is the weakening hold of secularism in recent times. Perhaps an ethical reading of history and Partition literature could combat it. Nonetheless, the human face of Partition is shown in its various facets in the novels taken up for study, and deals with the violence that affected the subaltern.
REFERENCES:


6. Ibid., p 122.


10. SwarnaAiyar, (1998):‘August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947’, in Freedom, Trauma, Continuities: Northern India and Independence, D. A. Low and Howard Brasted (eds.); New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp 15-30. This term has been borrowed from the title of her paper. In this research paper she gives a detailed account about the trains of death ferrying passengers from India to Pakistan and vice-versa. She also maintains that in the Punjab the highly militarised nature of the society gave it its violent character. The massacres,which were conducted in a military style, lent it a distinctiveness that was both extraordinary and unparalleled anywhere else in India.


