PART III

CHAPTER IV

PARTITION STORIES
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Lakhs of men had died, lakhs of children had been orphaned, lakhs of women had lost their homes and honour. Now all that remained were their stories, stories which were told and heard by people.¹

- Amrit Rai

There is nothing short about short stories, though hidden behind a deceptively modest terminology, Short Story. They have had a rather long history, which has been flowing even today, like a perennial river with renewed shape and size and vigour and variety. Before attaining a distinct literary form, figure, and fame, the genre of short stories has passed through a long tradition of evolution for centuries.

'Story-telling must have been born when a man had the first impulse to express to another his own experiences and feelings. Any attempt to pinpoint the pristine origin of this tradition is doomed to failure. But the history of world literature is replete with many instances of robust story-telling traditions. These are the stories that blossomed in different languages or dialects rooted in the native soil, and essentially belonged to a vibrant oral tradition.'²

'Brief tales there have been since the world began, since the art of the story-teller was first attempted, since the cave-men filled the long evenings around the smoking fire with narratives of the mysterious deeds of the strange creatures of their own primitive fancy, since the earliest travelers who ventured abroad brought back episodic accounts of one or another of their misadventures commingled of fact and fiction. Strange stories were told about animals who talked and who had many of the characteristics of mankind; and by word of mouth these marvelous tales were passed down from generation to generation, growing in detail and gaining in precision, until there came to be the immense mass of beast-fable, surviving in oral tradition chiefly but getting itself lifted up into literature now and again.'³

The story-telling flourished in many countries like Greece, Italy, France, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and India. The oral story-telling produced notable tales such as Homer's The Iliad and The Odyssey, which were told in a rhyming poetic form which acted as a mnemonic tool for listeners to remember the story. They are long narratives comprising of many short tales. Short sections of these tales, which focussed on individual narratives, were told at one sitting. But the overall frame of the story would emerge only through the telling of multiple sections of the tale.

There existed two forms of short stories. They are the anecdote and the fable. Anecdotes, popular in ancient Rome, were a sort of parables, brief realistic narrations that embodied a point or a moral. Many of the surviving Roman anecdotes were later collected in the Gesta Romanorum in the 13th or 14th century. Anecdotes maintained their popularity in Europe even in the 18th century. Fables were folktales with an explicitly expressed moral at the end. According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, a Greek slave named Aesop invented these fables. These fables are known today as Aesop's Fables.
Later *The Arabian Nights* became popular in Oriental regions. It is a collection of Oriental folktales. They are popular even at present. The oral story-telling began to develop into written stories in the early 14th century in Europe. The practice of writing short stories developed through the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Modern stories emerged as a genre only in the early 19th century. The first short stories in English appeared in America. Edgar Allan Poe is the pioneer in the field of modern short stories. He not only wrote short stories, but also set in motion the beginnings of a theory of short story writing in his famous review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*. Poe used the word *prosetale* in order to differentiate the printed form from the spoken form of *folktales*, because the two were so easily confused. Brander Matthews coined the term, *short-story* (hyphenated), which he thought better expressed the writtenness of the form than Poe's expression, for a tale was, in Matthew's opinion, inherently oral. Ian Reid, in his history of the short story, notes that the term *short story* did not appear with reference to a literary product until the 1933 OED supplement. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, and O'Henry in America; Balzac and Guy de Maupassant in France; Hoffman in Germany; John Galsworthy, Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maugham, and D.H. Lawrence in England; and Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov in Russia; and others have enriched the short story form. The publication of magazines and journals enriched the genre of short stories and made it most popular in the 20th century.

In India also, there has been a great and popular tradition of story-telling which is regarded as one of the oldest and richest traditions. The traditional Indian tale was broadly of two forms—the *folktales* and the *fables*. The ancient Indian folktales are the examples of typical Oriental tale, a loosely constructed narrative of adventure and romance. The action in these folktales is normally set against a background of the fantastic and the supernatural. *Kathasaritsagara* of Somadeva and *Dosakumaracharitha* of Dandin are the best examples of the ancient Indian folktales. Most of these folktales were told for the purpose of entertainment. The tales of the *Panchatantra* of Vishnusharma and the Buddhist *Jatakas* are the best examples of the ancient Indian fables. These fables, being true to the universally known traditions of the fable, are characterized by the qualities of an epigram and a moral in the end. Most of the Indian fables are beast-fables in which the beast characters symbolized human beings. With the qualities of their concentration of approach, compactness of structure, and preoccupation with the daily realities of life, these fables are more akin to the modern short story than the folktales of ancient India. Indian epics and mythological legends are full of folktales and fables. The Indian folktales and fables satisfied the curiosity of the listeners and readers by imparting to them some useful knowledge in an interesting way. Every Indian nourished on them in his/her childhood and he/she carried the fond memories of them into his/her adult life. Sukumar Azhikode says:

> The ancient Indian tales very often excel in their technique of narration as well as their imaginative appeal many of the famous fables and stories of the Western world. It has been widely recognized that the early contributions of the Orient to the art of story-telling are far more significant than that of the West. Their influence is found by scholars in Chaucer, Aesop and Henderson.

Before discussing the development of the modern short story in India, it is better to understand the meaning of the modern short story. The art of story-telling might have existed from time immemorial in the world, but the short story in its present form emerged in the 19th century. It was indeed an age of the short story. At the beginning of the 17th century, the drama was the dominating literary form.
In the 18th century, the essay, in its turn, attracted the attention of almost every man of letters. In the 19th century, the essay lost its popularity, just as the drama had lost its supremacy a hundred years earlier, and prose-fiction, borrowing much from both these predecessors, attained a universal vogue. At the end of the 19th century, no competent critic could deny that it had been the era of the novel; but even more indisputably had it been the era of the short story. . . . Probably there is no rashness in a prophecy that the short story will flourish even more luxuriantly in the immediate future than it has flourished in the immediate past.8 These words of Brander Matthews, written in 1907, have become true. The short story has been the most popular literary form in the 20th century and has continued to be so in the beginning of the 21st century as well.

But what is short story? Though the question remains insistent always, the answers are uniformly hesitant. No definitions and no explanations are capable of bringing out what the short story is. 'Yet it readily is identified as a brief prose narrative with an intense episodic or anecdotal effect.'9 'The short story, as its name applies, is defined by its shortness and its story element. How short and how much of a story is defined by the writer for himself. A whole lifetime of experience might be condensed into the four or five or ten pages if the writer is skillful; He might avoid a vision of life as being moral, metaphysical or mythical; he might also include it if he is able to.'10

The short story is a form of short fictional narrative prose that tends to be more concise and to the point than longer works of fiction like novellas (in the modern sense of the term) and novels. Because of its brevity, the short story relies more on literary devices such as character, plot, theme, and insight than the long form of fiction does. So, the short story is a short narrative, usually in prose, which creates a mood, illuminates a character, and develops a single event. That is why, the short story is defined as a moment's monument. It seeks to capture the moral implicit in a situation or a sentiment. It strives for a unified emotional impact, which the novel might not attempt.

The definitions and explanations of the short story are generally elusive. They only specify the norms, elements, and characteristics of the short story. But it is better to remember that all the norms, elements, and characteristics are only approximations. Since literature is not an exact science like Physics or Chemistry, there are wide variations within them. Yet, we can arrive at some generally and normally accepted characteristics and qualities of the short story. It is less complex than the novel. Usually the short story focuses on only one incident, has a single plot, a single setting, a limited number of characters, and covers a short period of time. Because of its shortness, the short story may or may not follow the usual pattern of longer forms of fiction — exposition (the introduction of setting, situation, and main characters), complication (introduction of the conflict), rising action crisis (the intensification of the conflict), climax (the highest point of the intense conflict), resolution (the point of the story when the conflict is resolved) and moral (the lesson to be learnt). Many modern short stories have abrupt beginnings and abrupt endings.

Determining the exact length of the short story is problematic. A classic definition of the short story is that it must be able to be read in one sitting at a stretch. As brevity is an important characteristic, the short story should be really short. The norm varies from 1000 to 20000 words. That is why, we have short short stories and long short stories. Brevity implies a mastery over
language and a control over situations. Every word contributes to the main effect in the short story. Descriptions are useful only when they are absolutely essential to contribute to the main effect. Compression is a great quality of the short story.

Normally, three scenes are used in the short story. The absence of scenic descriptions can be seen in many modern short stories. Instead of scenes, locales familiar to readers are used. Normally three to six characters are present in the short story. Each character is very crucial to add to the total effect of the story. Exploration or development of character is not possible in short stories. They only focus on some periods or stages of life of the characters. There can be a lot of dramatic element (dialogue or conversation) also in the short stories. Ironic reversals, epiphanic moments, sequential narration, first person narration, third person narration, and rarely, second person narration are used in the modern short stories.

There is a difference of opinion among literary historians, critics, and short story writers as to whether the modern Indian short story is the product of the evolution of the ancient Indian tales or a new literary genre born out of modern sensibilities and situations, which came to India from the West. Despite the differences of opinion, the fact, accepted by all, is that the modern short story as a literary genre made its presence felt in India in the beginning of the 20th century. Of all the genres in Indian literature, the short story can be described as twentieth century's own. Several languages witnessed the growth, and in some cases origin, of the short story only in this century.11

It was a very crucial period in the history of Indian life and letters. Being influenced by the Western ideas, the English education, and the Modern and Rational temperament, the Indians were disturbed and agitated in a positive way to overthrow the foreign yoke. They wanted independence and progress. The nation was in ferment. A massive movement for the liberation of the nation was finding its ground. But the British were not inclined to withdraw easily. The struggle ought to be long and gruelling. The first few decades of this (20th) century were the formative years of the Indian short story... .Mahatma Gandhi's entry into the field of the freedom struggle galvanized the Indian society as a whole to an unprecedented level of social action. His use of metaphors and symbols drawn from the common life of India in his anti-colonial struggle ignited popular imagination and ensured widespread participation in the mass struggle. He spoke in the idiom of the people and identified with their plight. All this contributed towards a new aesthetic which brought the folk and the masses within the purview of literature. The short story in Indian languages written in the first decades of the [20th] century captures the tenor and temperament of a nation in ferment.12 "Our short stories portrayed the unjustness of the Raj and the grim fight the people were determined to give to get rid of it."13

The life of the people was full of difficulties. The rich, aristocratic, and influential people were able to lead a decent life. But the vast majority of the middle and lower class people were struggling hard to lead a normal life. There were no jobs for the educated youth. There was the migration of the poor and educated people to the urban centres in search of jobs. The gap between the privileged and the under-privileged was widening. The Russian Revolution showed Indians the emergence of a new society where the privileged sections had been banished and power restored to the working classes. The Indian voice was rising against all kinds of suppression and exploitation. The ideas of the Russian
Revolution gave a new legitimacy to the short story writers' interest in the lives of the under-privileged people in India. "The short story was a new tool in the hands of the creative writer. It lent itself admirably to advocating the cause of the poor, the under-privileged and the have-not. Our short story writers depicted the plight of the repressed and the tormented in vivid colours and infused in their readers a determined will to undo the injustice." It was a mighty silent revolution in Indian letters. The rich, the aristocratic, and the influential disappeared from the centre stage of the Indian short story. It became the story of the common man, and his plight and problems. The poor, toiling, middle, and lower class people were portrayed and glorified in the short story. The difficulties, the poverty, the misery, and the grief of the common people were the main themes of the short story. Most of the short stories written during this time are in the mode of social realism. Munshi Premchand’s stories are the examples of this realism.

The Western ideas; the study of Sciences and the Histories and Literatures of the Western nations in English; and the modern rational temperament awakened nationalistic feelings in the Indians. They wanted to fight for independence and build a new free nation. "The literature produced during the Swadeshi period and also the nationalistic literature of the nineteenth century were a significant part of the project of the nation-building. "The construction of the nation took its model from the European history where the nationhood had been sustained by religious, linguistic and cultural homogeneity. In our anxiousness to discover a similar monolithic symmetry in the Indian situation the Indian intellectuals foregrounded the Hindu India as the basis of a new nation overlooking the simultaneous existence of the many other components. . ." The challenge to the idea of the Indian nationhood subordinating its religious plurality is the outcome of a deep-seated suspicion and false sense of superiority nursed by the two communities—the Hindus and the Muslims. The hostility was partly fanned by the Hindu construction of the pre-British period of Indian history interpreting the Muslim domination as an alien interlude in Hindu India. The creation of characters in the nineteenth century fictions and plays—this feature continued in the twentieth as well—glorifying Hindu valour and vilifying the Muslims, describing the Muslim rule as a period of decay and degeneration, and the British rule promising a new dawn alienated the Muslims. The Muslims were worried about the vengeful domination of the Hindu Raj that might set in future. Feelings of separatism and communalism rocked the Indian society. Many intellectuals and writers protested this atmosphere of hostility. Short story writers like Rabindranath Tagore and Premchand were very much concerned about the Hindu-Muslim unity and wrote stories highlighting sanity, unity, harmony, and humanity.

The freedom struggle, the Gandhian ideology, the disillusionment of the common people with the politicians who dragged the country into numerous problems, the poverty, the misery, the inequality, the rural-urban divide, the Hindu-Muslim discord, separatism, factionism, fanaticism, communalism, the breaking of irrational traditional restrictions, the decaying values of sanity and humanity, and other topics became the themes of the Indian short story which displayed a deep sense of social, economic, and political awareness during the first few decades of the 20th century. The short story has been the chosen and powerful instrument of the subcontinent in the high time of emerging nationhood.

The publication of Magazines and Periodicals of high literary quality gave a spurt to the Indian short story by increasing the number of readers from all the classes. People wanted complete short
stories instead of serials of novels in the periodicals and magazines. These satisfied the needs of the readers.

The Western influence; the spread of education; the modern rational temperament; the progressive attitude; quick means of communication and transportation; the press and the publication of magazines and periodicals; and the widening social contacts contributed to the rapid development of the short story in the first half of the 20th century.

The short story dealt with the contemporary life though the short story writers were influenced by the Western masters. The new values arising from the changing social, political, and economic life of the country left a distinct mark on the Indian short story. Also, the short story went through experimentation in form and technique. The imbalance between the changing times and the old forms resulted in a change of the art, craft, and the thematic content of short stories. It was realized that the short story could be better used as a medium of social change and national solidarity than as a medium for purposes of mysticism, romanticism, and didacticism. The short story focused its attention on the social, economic, and political conditions of the people and the polity. Thus, the short story became purposeful, idealistic, and sentimental. The didactic character of the short story in the early stage was later changed to socialistic character. The early stories neglected the problems of the contemporary society, which was under the process of change. The later stories reflected the contemporary life and the changes that were brought into it. Owing to the influence of Freudian Psychology, the development of the short story has been towards a greater intensification of introvert methods of studying the mental process of the individual mind in the society. The event-oriented short story of the early stage changed mostly to the character-centred in the later stage. Modernism, Progressivism, Communism, Socialism, and Realism influenced the form and content of the short story in India.

This brief survey of the short story in India shows that the form of the modern short story gained currency in the early decades of the 20th century during which the country was passing through a transition because of the foreign rule and the native struggle to throw it out. The Indian short story has shown the awareness of the exigencies of the situation and has marched with the changing country reflecting the various social, political, economic, religious, regional, cultural, communal, and other issues.

Although the Indian short story reflected the contemporary Indian life as a whole, the main preoccupation of it was the struggle for freedom. No sensitive writer could remain uninfluenced by that mighty movement sweeping the country. 'In the stories reflecting the freedom struggle we have vivid pictures of the exploitation and the arrogance of the foreign rulers and also the determination of an awakened people struggling for their birthright. There were desperate revolutionaries, devoted followers of non-violence and status-quoist toadies. The patriotic note of a lot of stories written in the period is, indeed, inspiring. Then came the Independence.'

With the independence, the country was also partitioned. The independence and the partition were the two faces of the same coin. India threw off the shackles of the colonial rule and became a free country in 1947. 'Paradoxically, even as the bells of freedom pealed, they sounded a death-knell
to many. There was fratricide, bloodshed and mass-exodus... People had thought that a new era of
hope and fulfillment would dawn with the magic wand of political freedom and the socio-economic
problems dogging the country for ages would vanish overnight. Instead, the Partition brought in
added problems immediately. They were the bonus for the struggle for freedom. The Partition was
something bad, mad, and sad. It was a terrible shock to everyone. There was no mental or emotional
preparation to face it. More than the joy and spirit of independence, the distress and destruction of the
Partition stunned and benumbed the nation.

The Partition was the detachment of the West Punjab, Sindh, the NWFP, and the East Bengal,
where the majority of the population was Muslim, from the rest of India to form Pakistan. There were
riots, arson, killing, looting, and abduction and rape, which continued even after the Partition.
Religious fanaticism and communal hatred were widespread. The Partition also resulted in mass
migration and displacement of millions of people. The rehabilitation of the refugees and the abducted
and recovered women posed severe problems to the divided countries. The real tragedy of the
Partition was that it put an abrupt end to the communally shared history. 'The loss of life and property
was distressing, but the loss of certain cultural values was most devastating to sensitive writers.' Peace was violated, people were mercilessly murdered, and the Partition was a crime against humanity
and a big blow to the shared culture and the human civilization of the subcontinent.

Suffering and sympathy make us recoil into our own shell. In times of happiness, we become
extroverts and we live with others by sharing our happiness. In times of sorrow, we become introverts
and we live all by ourselves by undergoing the suffering. The times of happiness may be the best
moments of our lives, but the times of sadness are our own, and they are the source of creation. The
Partition of the country is such a sad thing and a great source of creation in the life of our country. If the
sad moments of the Partition had not found expression in the short stories, we would have lost a great
deal of valuable stories.

And the Indian short story was well developed to reflect the terrible tragedy of the Partition in
all its aspects including the new sensibilities created by the partition. 'Partition, in fact, did not merely
mean two new geographical dominions. As the examination of creative literature proves, it gave birth
to a new psychic dominion as well. For the expression of this new sensibility, the traditional literary
forms had to be modified, and the short story was adopted as the most suitable form of expression.'

The Partition Literature, as it is already made clear in the previous chapter, constitutes a separate
and big section in the history of the Indian Literature. The stories that have been written about the
phenomenal event of the Partition and its causes and consequences are called Partition Stories. They reflect a strange world of human life. It is a different world of its own. The Partition stories are different from other stories in the fact that they are based on real events and
incidents of unusual and eerie character. The horrors and experiences of the partition trauma
left a deep and indelible mark on the Indian short story and brought into it the new elements of
sorrow, suffering, bitterness, pathos, and compassion. The partition stories are powerful
portrayals of the fragmented and wounded human society in the sub-continent. They can be
used to reconstruct the relatively unknown dimensions of those tumultuous days when religious
and communal feelings privileged over the secular and human feelings.
Writers should be sensitive. They cannot close their eyes and remain indifferent to what takes place in the society around them. Even when the human life runs smoothly, the sensitive writer should be watchful and observing for topics and themes to write about for the purpose of either entertainment or enlightenment. When that is the case, the sensitive writer will be forced by an internal urge to write when earth-shaking events happen. The Partition was such an earth-shaking event that the short story writers did not have any necessity of transforming the ordinary into a splendid one to attract the attention of the reading public. The great historic tragedy of the Partition inspired the writers and artists, as great tragedies generally do, to create great works of art in language and in other forms of art. It provided ready events/incidents to write stories about. Whatever aspect of the Partition the story depicted was interesting to read. It was a very rare and shocking event which turned even the ordinary men and women into heroes and heroines of literary pieces because of their suffering for no reason. It was such a powerful and fertile event to be the central theme of many short stories. As H.E. Bates points out, 'the first necessity of the short story, at the set-out, is necessariness. The story, that is to say, must spring from an impression or perception pressing enough, acute enough, to have made the writer write.' With the fermentative partition, the short story writer felt the pressure from inside to write about. And if it is true that literature reflects the truth of the time, how could the Indian short story writers remain silent about the agonizing event of the Partition?

Yet there was some silence. 'If nations could suffer trauma, the Partition certainly ignited one in both India and Pakistan. And as in some traumata, the victims dissolved into catatonic shock that displayed itself as silence.' It was a strange silence. The Partition stories are the attempts to give voice to the silence. Many of the writers were themselves the victims of the trauma and most of them saw it at close quarters. The Partition was such a sudden shock that the writers could not think clearly and probe deep into the crisis. That is why, the short stories written in immediate response to the horrors of the Partition are about the violence, the communal carnage, the cruelty, and the suffering which engulfed the victims. Only the short stories that came a little later, after the first impact of the shock was over, are about the ruptured human relationships, the identity crisis, the nostalgia, and the problem of rehabilitation.

The violence of the Partition was so severe and shocking that the writers could only write some short stories about it. 'The communal riots, the holocaust created at that time overshadowed any joy that the freedom from the British could have brought around .... There was no stability for at least five-six years in the country. It was in a state of absolute topsy-turvy.' It is a fact that the tragedy of partition was such a painful event in the history of India that it had stunned the Indian writers to the extent that the process of novel writing was stopped for some years after the division of the country. Thus the Partition stories are the first literary responses to the Partition.

Though the Partition stories are a sort of straight emotional reactions to the situation of the partition, they have their own significance. They are the testimony to enduring human values, which were still there in spite of all the odds. The short story writers had a great human compassion for the distress of the victims and of the nation. The stories have historical significance as they reflect the reality of the times. Besides, the feelings, the emotions, the pains, and the trauma of the people, which are not found in history, are found in these stories. In addition, there is a lot of artistic creativity in them.
The Partition stories are characterized by a note of bewilderment, which was the result of the trauma. The violence was a mad frenzy beyond all reason and rhyme. All the values of humanity and harmony cherished so far and the shared culture built so far were severely ruptured. People belonging to different communities behaved as if they were possessed in killing and looting each other. The sensitive writers felt that they could not do anything to stop the destruction that was going on everywhere. Dr. Alok Bhalla observes:

It is perhaps the fact that the daily life of the Hindus and the Muslims, at the ordinary and the local levels, even as late as 1946, was so richly interwoven as to have formed a rich archive of customs and practices, that explains why there is a single, common note which informs nearly all the stories written about the Partition and the horror it unleashed—a note of utter bewilderment. It is as if the separation and the carnage were so completely without any historical or social reason that most of the writers could only watch as the place they had called ‘home’ or ‘basti’ was reduced to rubble, and the memories of their collectives rites and traditions, stories and songs, names of birds and trees were permanently tinged with the acrid smell of ash, smoke and blood.25

The Partition stories (except a few which are communally oriented which will be discussed in the next chapter) look at the problems and violence created by the Partition with a sense of equality and impartiality and without any discrimination in treating the people of different communities. The writers, whether they were Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs, were all touched by the human suffering, with a concern for man as man and not as a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh. The writers’ religion did not interfere with their judicious and creative sensibility. What was important was their human compassion and not the religion. The writers were also not influenced by their ideology. Whether they were Traditionalists or Modernists or Marxists or any other ists, they were all basically human beings who gave their tongue to the bleeding of the times. ‘Contrary to the communal histories, the stories about the Partition have more to do with the actualities of human experience in barbaric times than with ideologies and seem to be bound together by one common thread—they find the notion that there was always hatred between the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in ordinary life completely incomprehensible.’26

The Partition itself becomes incomprehensible when we look at the harmony and the shared culture and tradition over many centuries. This incomprehensibility can be understood by the fact that there are hardly any short stories about the causes for the Partition. Only in a few stories, we can find some vague attempts to represent the causes for the Partition. (Ex. *The Wagah Canal* by Fikr Taunsi). Most of the stories only reflect the consequences of the tragedy. The writers could not just believe that the Partition had happened. Dr. Alok Bhalla says:

Unlike the communal narratives, which require perpetual belligerence towards beliefs that are different from one’s own and silence over the atrocities by members of the religion to which one belongs, these stories are written by people of conscience who knew that, during the days of the Partition, the monstrous was a part of all the communities. Touched by annihilating violence and death, all that these writers can do is watch with dismay as the familiar social and religious space, which had once sustained them, is shredded by knives and goons. They record with shock as people, in an obscene world become either predators or victims, as they either decide to participate gleefully in murder and loot or find themselves unable to do anything but scream with pain as they are stabbed and burnt or raped again and again. Without sentimentality or illusions, without pious postures or ideological blinkers, they describe a vile and grotesque time in which the sustaining norms of the society as it had existed are erased, and no moral and political reason is available.27
The literature of each period is coloured by its atmosphere; we feel in it a peculiar pulse of life. We find the kind of human life that was there during the Partition of the country in the Partition stories. They are the realistic pictures of the life of that time. In all of them, except a few which are communally oriented, we find a deep compassion for the masses in their misery and suffering. There runs a vein of humanity in all of them. This compassion and humanity make the Partition stories transcend time and clime and become universal in their appeal. Good literature is, at once, of the time and of all the time. So are the Partition Stories. In the very description of the effect of the partition on and beyond the human life, the stories have universal appeal. Jason Francisco says:

It is well that the high politics of the partition hang in the background of the majority of the stories themselves, which dwell in the affective experience of the events and their consequences for ordinary people. It is, after all, in drawing forth the ways of the partition felt, beyond debate about what caused it and what it caused, that it reaches a universal accessibility, and gets lodged in a broad section of humanity's historical memory.

Though the Partition Stories deal with the same themes of Partition and its impact, there is no monotony in them. They deal with the different aspects of the Partition, which is a phenomenal event in the history of the country, and thus, is a storehouse of various sub-themes. The Partition stories deal with these sub-themes and depict the human life of the turbulent times in all its totality. The stories look at the problems of the tragedy from different angles and reflect them in different ways. Thus there is variety in the stories. For example, there are many stories about violence that erupted during the partition. These stories deal with different aspects of the violence like the communal killings, abduction of women, rape, amputation of breasts of women, and so on. Also the same theme/sub-theme is realistically reflected in different ways. The theme of abduction and rape is differently reflected in stories like Lajwanti, Cold Meat, Kulsum, Open It, Exile, A Leaf in the Storm, etc. The Partition stories have been vital to understand the complexity of the human life in those tangled and troubled times. Thus, the Partition Stories reflect the Partition comprehensively in all its totality, reality, and variety.

The Partition created a whole gamut of decentred, displaced, distressed, and defeated characters. "The traditional romantic hero, who, for a change, sometimes put on the face of an idealist or a sentimental revolutionary, now disappeared. He was replaced by the uprooted migrant, the abducted girl, and the man with a guilty conscience." Rahimuddin Choudhury and Amal, in The Dressing Table, are uprooted migrants. Amal's wife is abducted. Mangal in How Many Pakistans? is uprooted, and displaced. Lajwanti, in Bedi's Lajwanti, is also abducted. Sakina, in Open It, is brutally and repeatedly raped by men of her own community. Ishwar Singh, in Cold Meat, is a man with guilty conscience, for he rapes an abducted girl who is already dead. Many of the short story writers were themselves the victims of the partition violence and many of them saw the partition at close quarters, and, hence, the characters and situations in these stories are true to life, familiar, real, effective, and interesting. They are alive in flesh and blood and living tissue. They are concretized in every way. The characters are drawn from all the communities. They are also from all the classes, though a majority of them belong to the middle and lower classes. Shera is a Muslim servant of a rich Hindu mistress Shahini in The New Regime. Mangal and Bano are Hindu-Muslim lovers who, being separated, face many difficulties in How Many Pakistans? Tirlochan and Mozel are Sikh-Christian
lovers whose religions and temperaments separate them and Mozell sacrifices herself in saving Tirlochan's sick bride in Mozell. Most of the Muslim characters are economically backward. They are mostly workers, labourers, peasants, petty artisans, and servants. This reflects their economic condition and social status. They are below the level of the Hindus. All this, in turn, reflects the fact that the poor economic condition, the low social status, and communal and religious discrimination have been major causes for the Partition.

Most of the short story writers felt that the violence that erupted because of the Partition could have been avoided. The widespread violence and suffering were unnecessarily imposed on the people. Because of this feeling, there is an undertone of sarcasm and satire running through the Partition Stories. "Since these stories offer no historical explanation for the carnage and see no political necessity for the suffering, they are brutally ironic in tone and fragmentary in form." This fragmentary form reflects the sense of shattered existence which was very common during the Partition. The Partition Stories are character-oriented, event-centred, sociological, and psychological. Many stories give us a picture of a character and its experiences of and reactions to the event, for example, An Unwritten Epic and Toba Tek Singh. Many others describe an event or incident against the background of the partition, for example, The Riot, Aadaab, and The White Horse. Some stories are sociological; they try to represent the problems of the partition faced by the human society at the time, for example, Pali and The Shepherd. Still some others probe deep into the minds and hearts of some characters and picture the havoc created by the partition, for example, Lajwanti and Exile. Most of the Partition Stories use third person and first person narration, for example, A Holy War and Peshawar Express respectively. In some of them there is the use of the flash-back technique, for example, How Many Pakistanis? This technique is used mostly in the stories, which have been written many years after the partition, recalling the event from memory.

Many questions arise in the minds of the readers of the South-Asian subcontinent. The word subcontinent has been used to refer to India because people belonging to different religions lived here harmoniously. The Indian culture was a pluralistic culture and it had been shared for many centuries. It is a different matter that even after the Partition, the Indian culture has been pluralistic. But why did the Partition take place? Why did the people of different religions and communities, who had lived together with feelings of fraternity and friendship, kill each other in a mad frenzy? Why was humanity destroyed? Why were the human relationships ruptured beyond repair? The Partition Stories are not the answers to these questions. Dr. Alok Bhalla asks this type of questions in his introduction to his editions of the Partition Stories and answers:

They [the partition stories] are rather witnesses to a period in which we fell out of a human world of languages, customs, rituals and prayers into a bestial world of hatred, rage, self-interest and frenzy. The writers of these stories frame the events in a variety of ways and read them according to their own sense of the multi-religious and multi-cultural past of the Indian subcontinent. How we, in turn, read these stories, based upon our own presuppositions, will determine the kind of policies we choose to practise in the future.

By the time the Partition took place, the short story was well developed and was very popular, more popular than the novel. It is a fact that many short stories about the Partition were written earlier than the novels about it. For five years after the Partition, not even a single novel on it appeared.
stories became popular in the absence of novels. Some novels like Anrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (1950), a novella, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Yashpal's *Jhootha Sach* (1958), Rahi Masoom Reza's *Aadha Gaon* (1966), Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1974) and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* (1975) became popular in the later years. 'Yet these novels have not got the sustained attention that the short stories have received in recent times.' Since the beginning, the Partition Stories have been able to attract the attention of the readers. Many new short stories about the Partition have been appearing and arresting the attention of the reading public. Discussing the relative importance of history, novel, and short story, Arjun Mahey says:

If the histories of the Partition were intent on characterizing the event as an irresponsible and avertable tragedy, novels were intent on using similar tropes to focus on the consequent affliction which history could not arrogate. Needless to add, using the same tropes only gave novels a comparable focus; they too, like history, used the notions of cause and effect, of tragedy and of morality, and of numbers. In effect, the two methods reflected and complemented each other; they accepted, by and large, the terms of reference that the other had used. (Here he takes the example of *Tamas* to explain his point). . . . Short stories, on the other hand, have used slightly different emphases, and thus set themselves off from history as a method of staging the partition.  

He continues to analyze some of the Partition Stories through epiphany and irony to make his point that the short stories about the Partition are superior to the novels about it. Though the Partition stories reflect the Partition in all its complexity, they are not tied to the historical context with a burden of accounting for it. Sukrita Paul Kumar says: ‘What is pertinent to note here is that literature is not created either to document sociology, or to provide any historical evidence. It is not written to prove any political viewpoint either. What is paramount is the writer’s commitment to search for truth through a non-partisan narration of life-experience, without compromising essential human values such as social justice, compassion and love.’ Despite the fact that the short story does not offer the scope for an in-depth psychological study or gradual transformation in character as the novel does, it does, however, offer the writers an opportunity to grasp a vital or critical moment in the lives of their characters and illumine it. Most of the partition stories just hit this mark. They represent the Partition as a replica/symbol of a ruptured establishment. The novel is a grand narrative. The short story gives importance to ruptured experience. The Partition broke into pieces the Indian tradition of harmony, plural culture, and continuity between the communities. The fragmentary form of the short story itself becomes the symbol of the break and rupture. Therefore, the Partition Stories have more prominence in the genre of the Partition Literature than the novels or the plays. ‘The Partition of a huge country or the division of a large nation is a vast topic. In fact, it besits the scope of a novel, and it is difficult for the short story to deal with it in its entirety. It is for this reason that the Urdu short story has broken up this vast area and addressed it in sub-themes. What is true of the Urdu short story is also true of the short story in other languages.

‘Indian literature is one though written in many languages—its oneness consisting not of a stale uniformity but of a rich variety.’ Though the Partition Stories have been written in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Sindhi, Dogri, Gujarathi, Marathi, Assamese, Malayalam, Kannada, and also English, they appear to be one. They essentially deal with the partition of India, the effect of which was felt by all the people belonging to different languages in India especially by those of the Punjab and Bengal. Though the impact of the Partition was more on the northern part of India than the southern,
the South Indian people felt it to be their own tragedy. Besides, these stories have been translated into English. The distinctive variations—in idiom, imagery, local history, regional flavour or contemporary allusions—were likely to be largely flattened out in translation. Even the most marked regional nuances might lose their importance when seen in the broad perspective of the Partition. Thus, a riot in Lahore appears like a riot in Amritsar with no remarkable differences. Translation always speaks to another audience in another time. In this sense, these Partition Stories in translation are a dialogue between two historical time frames, the first one being inherent and implicit in the second. 'Translations both uncover as well as discover the pastness of the present and the presence of the past.'

Even after six decades, the Partition Stories have been read by the public; studied and discussed by intellectuals; and researched in universities and academic circles. A period of six decades is not a small period to test the worth of literature. The Partition stories that have stood the test of time for six decades will definitely stand the same in future also. A few of the stories might be lacking in literary excellence and artistic decorum, but on the whole, they have been considered as creative and artistic. Even if one rejects the creative and artistic quality of some of them, they should be important for us as they definitely signify the temperament of the time and the writers' reaction to it, if not anything else. Dr. Asaduddin has this to say about the present relevance of the partition stories:

Because literature transcends time, these stories are relevant for us today as they vividly portray the existential absurdity of hatred. Whatever their formal or stylistic blemishes as specimens of literature, they ably seek to negotiate the complexity and liminality of experiences of people caught in the competitive savagery of partition. In their manifold implications they also voice our civilizational and moral concerns today, when the forces of division and fragmentation are once again raising their ugly head. A few stories.... may seem banal in the advocacy of some ersatz morals but the best among them interface dialectically with history and politics and offer corrective insights into our past, as much as they also illuminate our contemporary situation.

Dr. Alok Bhalla has, in his 33 page long introduction to his famous 3-volume anthology, classified the stories into four categories: 1. Stories which are communally charged, 2. Stories of anger and negation, 3. Stories of lamentation and consolation, and 4. Stories of the retrieval of memories. On the other hand, Jason Francisco, in his review article identified three central thematic areas: 1. Rupture and Loss, 2. Betrayal and Protest, and 3. Repair and Memory. Both the classifications by Bhalla and Francisco are the thematic classifications.

In this thesis the Partition Stories are thematically classified into three groups—1. Vengeance and Violence, 2. Survival and Suffering, and 3. Harmony and Humanity—in the order of their scope, immensity, and intensity. But, many stories do not strictly confine themselves to a single theme. They break the boundaries of a theme and include more than one of the themes. Some stories include all the themes. It is only for the sake of convenience for research studies that the themes are divided into those three groups. There is much intersection and overlapping. For example, despite the fact that there is much suffering in the stories, which treat Vengeance and Violence, the theme of suffering is treated as a part of the second group. Violence always presupposes suffering and so does vengeance hatred. So the first group of Vengeance and Violence invariably includes hatred and suffering.
The suffering in the second group naturally means the suffering of the survivors of the vengeance and violence of the Partition. Similarly, many stories highlight some rare actions and events of care, concern, compassion, harmony, and humanity beyond the bounds of region, religion, creed, and community in the midst of violence and suffering. Though many stories do not treat the partition violence directly, there is always the background of the violence in them. They are the representations of the direct or indirect consequence or the impact of the violence on people and places before, during, and after the actual event. Thus, the foremost theme in the Partition Stories is the theme of *Vengeance and Violence*, which shall be discussed in the next chapter.
Reference and Notes:


5. Matthews, Brander, *op. cit.*


CHAPTER V

VENGEANCE AND VIOLENCE IN PARTITION STORIES

Corpses lie strewn in the pastures
And the Chenab has turned crimson.¹

- Amrita Pritam

No dictionary in the world has ever indicated that words like hatred, vengeance, violence, bloodshed, sorrow, suffering, cruelty, inhumanity, and annihilation are the synonyms of the word freedom. But in the case of India, freedom was synonymous with all these words. The freedom of India brought with it the partition of the nation. The dreams and the expectations of the common people about the freedom of the nation had been shattered to pieces even before the sun of freedom dawned on it. The human life was totally paralyzed by the brutality of hatred, vengeance, and violence.

Gyanendra Pandey expresses the view that the event of the partition is equivalent in terms of trauma and consequence to the First World War for Britain or the Second World War for Japan.² A casual look at some of the titles of partition literature—Swadhinatar Svad (The Taste of Freedom),³ Idai Svatantram? (Is This Freedom?),⁴ Mahanagare Dabanal (The Wild Fire in the Metropolis),⁵ Aag de Khed (The Play of Fire),⁶ Khun de Sohile (Peons of Blood),⁷ Phiars Len (Fierce Lane),⁸ Ahuti (Victim),⁹ Aansu (Tears),¹⁰ Natun Ihudi (The New Jews),¹¹ The Rape,¹² Mool Suta Ukhde (Torn From the Roots),¹³ Raqs-e Iblis (The Dance of Satan),¹⁴ Hum Vaahshi Hai (We are Savages),¹⁵ Aur Insaan Mar Gaya (And Humanity Died),¹⁶ etc.,—hints at the kind of life and times that existed during the partition. The past harmony and humanity were dashed to pieces in the wake of the partition. The whole country—especially Punjab and Bengal—was filled with the floods of communal hatred, vengeance, violence, bloodshed, death, and destruction.

K.K. Sharma and B.K. Johri say in the preface of their book, The Partition in Indian English Novel:

The partition of the Indian sub-continent on the communal basis into the sovereign states of India and Pakistan on August 15, 1947 caused one of the bloodiest upheavals in the history of human race. It shocked the conscience of the civilized people all the world over, and made them shudder with anguish and dismay at man's wolfish cruelty to man in the name of religion. The sudden, rude shock of the partition unnerved men, destroyed their human attributes, and transformed them into wild beasts, who perpetrated extremely barbaric cruelties against their fellow human beings. They looted and burnt down shops and houses, killed small children and made millions of people refugees. Women became a special target of communal fury; they were abducted, raped and paraded naked in the streets, with shaven heads and breasts severed from their trunks. In fact, this event, which resulted in the barbarity of the most heinous kind and in the massacre of not fewer than two million people, was terribly tragic and heart rending because it was deliberate, and not a natural calamity like an earthquake or a flood.¹⁷

The major communities—Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims—had been living with feelings of friendship and fraternity. Despite the religious, social, and economic differences, there had been harmony in the country. Though there were some clashes between the communities here and there and now and then, they were not strong enough to shake the solid foundations of shared culture and tradition. But with the growth of nationalism, differences between the communities crept in. The nationalism built its idea
of Indian nationhood on the models of the Western nations which had been characterized by religious, linguistic, and cultural homogeneity. But the religious plurality and cultural diversity in India posed a challenge to the idea of Indian nationhood. This challenge was a result of a deep-seated suspicion and a false sense of superiority nursed by the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindus did not forget that the Muslims had ruled them before the British, and the Muslims, who had ruled the Hindus earlier, were not ready to be ruled by them now. They were afraid of being ruled by the Hindu majority in the absence of the British. Their notion was that the Hindus were more dangerous than the British, that the Hindus could democratically take revenge on them and that the Hindus ought to be their real target. The Hindus also thought that the Muslim rule before the British was an alien interlude in India, which was a period of decay and degeneration. With these thoughts, all the insignificant religious, social, and economic differences, which had been neglected so far, came up to the surface now. Hardly a day passed without any untoward happening. The British took advantage of this situation and encouraged the Hindu-Muslim differences and supported the Hindus and the Muslims alternately according to their needs. The seeds of communalism sown and nourished by vested political interests, but not very visible at the ordinary level of existence prior to partition, surfaced with an unbounded fury, capturing cities, qasbas and different locations alike in 1947. The communities started striking at each other. The political leadership that promised a new homeland of security and prosperity aggravated the hatred. The majority of the Muslims, who were poor labourers and peasants, were attracted by this promise. Besides, the call upon the communities by the communal organizations to protect their own religions which were in danger proved to be very calamitous by dividing the people along religious lines and by making the communal hatred a mad force in destroying each other. The British stirred up the trouble by making the religious differences take priority over the common political interests by communal electorates, communal representations, etc. The induction of religion into politics poisoned the minds of millions of people. The terrible communal fire caught the people unaware.

Asghar Ali Engineer observes in his book:

The major cause of communal conflict before partition was the struggle between the Hindu and the Muslim elite for political power as well as control of economic resources at the national level. Needless to say, this battle was fought by the Muslim elite—being more feudal in its orientation and motivated by the minority phobia—using the religio-cultural idiom and basing nationalism on religio-cultural complex; it was the only sure way of carving out a separate homeland for itself. However, for the Hindu elite, there was less compulsion to do so and consequently it could appear more secular in its approach. The Muslim League fought vigorously for the partition of the country and finally the concept of two nations was accepted.

The struggle between the Indian nationalism and the British colonialism turned out to be a struggle between the Hindus and the Muslims. It is a great irony that the freedom struggle to oust the British degenerated into communal hatred, vengeance, and violence between them. The double fight led to the freedom and the partition, the triumph and tragedy of the nation—the triumph in the achievement of the freedom and the tragedy in the division of the country.

Even before the triumph, the tragedy started taking place in the country. The communal hatred let loose a hell of vengeance and violence. The hatred was so powerful as to be responsible for the greatest tragedy in Indian history that defeated the very purpose of the non-violent struggle for freedom. It is a great riddle that people, who had proclaimed brotherhood earlier, should suddenly
become enemies and the centuries-old ties of harmony and fraternity should be shattered to pieces. The freedom we got lost much of its prestige and meaning because of the partition tragedy. The hatred destroyed the feelings of friendship and fraternity between the communities and turned them into beasts, mad with communal frenzy and thirst for blood and destruction. The outburst of communal hatred and vengeance resulted in the most devastating holocaust and trauma in the country. The partition brought misfortune and misery to millions of people on both the sides of the new border. The human life suddenly became absolutely unsafe and insecure. Human goodness and innocence were drowned in the tide of hatred, vengeance, and violence. There was mutual suspicion, bloodshed, merciless butchery, riots, arson, loot, abduction of women, rape, uprooting, homelessness, insecurity, and migration all around. The number of persons beaten, maimed, tortured, raped, abducted, exposed to disease and exhaustion and otherwise physically brutalized remains measureless. The emotional pain of severance from home, family and friendships is by its nature immeasurable.

Approximately 10 to 12 million people migrated across the newly created borders; 2 to 2.5 million people were killed/lost their lives; property worth Rs. 800-1000 crores was destroyed; and 75,000-1,00,000 women were abducted and subjected to sexual violence. All these figures are only approximations. The fact might be different. But it is not possible to find out the fact. Descriptions of violence by the survivors consist of the trains full of corpses moving into both the sides of the new border, mutilated and amputated bodies, parades of naked women on streets, forced religious conversions, separation of relatives and friends, ruptured relationships, abandonment of homes and property, and women’s bodies tattooed with marks and symbols of the other religion.

The partition was a restless and chaotic event in the history of the sub-continent. The times were somehow more difficult and terrible than all the previous and later times. It was a time of hatred, vengeance, violence, bestiality, brutality, death, destruction, dislocation, and defilement. Stability and peace could not be seen anywhere in the country. One of the striking characteristics of the time was that it was overpowered by inhumanity. Despair, sense of shattered existence, nothingness, and meaninglessness spread everywhere. The noble qualities of compassion and concern disappeared. The partition wrenched people away from the land of their birth, the death of their ancestors, and their present life. They had to live in constant threat of death and destruction, which resulted in the loss of all that was dear. In the world of partition, the two polarities are violence and nothingness. Violence was almost synonymous with life. To live was to face/suffer violence. Nothingness is a convenient designation for the inexplicable emptiness that lies beyond the irrational boundaries of violence.

The partition violence has some special characteristics. First of all, despite the fact that it was the result of the game of high-politics played by the leaders and men belonging to classes of higher social and economic status, most of its victims were the common people belonging to the lower strata of the society. The innocent people had to pay with their lives and their belongings. Becoming puppets in the hands of the selfish political interests of a few whom they had not understood, lakhs of common people belonging to all the communities inflicted violence on each other and suffered indescribable agonies. They behaved like wild beasts and killed and looted each other in the name of religion and nation. They were not villains. They were not criminals. Yet they became the perpetrators and victims of violence. ‘Communal hatred could be relegated mainly to the lower classes, who, it was believed, could be goaded by unscrupulous politicians and criminal elements of either religious hue into
into a mad fury against each other because of an unenlightened approach to religion.\textsuperscript{22} Generally illiteracy and poverty of the masses were considered to be responsible for this.

Secondly, the partition violence happened on both sides of the border and the people belonging to all the communities became the victims of it. Acts of violence, killings, abduction, rape, mutilation, and migration were invariably seen on both sides. It was not restricted to any place or community. If the Hindus and the Sikhs were targeted on one side, the Muslims were equally targeted on the other. No violent incident was isolated. Every incident resulted in its correspondent incident. Violence spread to all the communities and all the places, (especially Punjab and Bengal) in the North, the West, and the East. The Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs inflicted violence on each other. No community could plead its innocence. All were equally guilty.

Thirdly, though the women did not participate in the partition violence, they were the worst victims of it. ‘Violence is almost always instigated by men, but its greatest impact is felt by women. In violent conflict, it is women who are raped, women who are widowed, women whose children and husbands are sacrificed in the name of national integrity and unity.’\textsuperscript{24} ‘...Violence was horrifying in its intensity and one which knew no boundaries; for many women, it was not only ‘miscreants’, ‘outsiders’ or ‘marauding mobs’ that they needed to fear – husbands, fathers, brothers and even sons could turn killers.’\textsuperscript{23} Many women were killed by their own men in the name of family honour.

Fourthly, the partition violence is, for the most part, retaliatory and retributive in nature. More than hatred, revenge played a major part in instigating the violence. Rumours or unconfirmed reports of stabbing, killing, burning, looting, abduction, rape, and amputation taking place in different corners of this country resulted in the same kind of actions in other parts. Thus, most of the violence was revengeful. That is why, this chapter is titled, \textit{Vengeance and Violence in Partition Stories}.

Finally, the most important of all is that the partition violence was unjustified and futile. No point and no amount of argument could justify the partition violence. Though for some statists and nationalists, ‘the escalating communal and ethnic violence in South Asia is only an unavoidable by-product of state-building and nation-formation,’\textsuperscript{26} the partition violence was not for nation-formation, but nation-division. The struggle for independence and state-building was non-violent, as the whole world knows it. All the partition violence that occurred was for the division of the nation only. It is true that the partition was an event of the creation of a new nation, Pakistan, but it was only by separating from and carving out of India. If at all the people wanted separation, they would have parted peacefully like the sons of a family and not violently like enemies. Despite the fact that the partition was celebrated as the formation of a new nation in Pakistan, it was mourned as the partition of the nation in India. Whether it is formation or partition, the cruel violence and suffering cannot be justified on the grounds of humanity.

Despite the creation of a new nation, the violence became meaningless, for it solved no problems. In fact, the partition created new problems of readjustment, resettlement, and new identities. It did not end the hatred, but perpetuated it. The problem of Kashmir has been a permanent point of contention between India and Pakistan. Both the countries have become permanent enemies.
It was a great problem for any to cut India into two where at every level the communities were deeply mixed. There was a Muslim at every corner of India where there was a Hindu. The partition was the most stupid, damaging, and negative development in the history of the Indian struggle for independence. Nearly 35 million out of 100 million Muslims stayed back in India. All the communal rage, vengeance, and violence of the partition proved to be hollow. All the loss of life and property turned out to be meaninglessly futile. Even the religions that worked as a motivating force behind the partition violence proved to be hollow. Sensible human beings felt that it was not religion that advocated violence. Iqbal, a character in *Train to Pakistan* found religion hollow and devoid of all values. He believed that

India is constipated with a lot of humbug. Take religion. For the Hindu, it means little besides caste and cow-protection. For the Muslim, circumcision and kosher meat. For the Sikh, long hair and hatred of the Muslims.... For the Parsi, fire-worship and feeding vultures. Ethics, which should be the kernel of a religious code, has been carefully removed.  

Ismat Chughtai gives a graphic picture of the rupture of the partition violence in the introductory part of her article, *Communal Violence and Literature*:

The flood of communal violence came and went with all its evils, but it left a pile of living, dead and gasping corpses in its wake. It wasn't only that the country was split in two—bodies and minds were also divided. Moral beliefs were tossed aside and humanity was in shreds. Government officers and clerks along with their chairs, pens and inkpots, were distributed like the spoils of war. And whatever remained after this division was laid to waste by the benevolent hands of communal violence. Those whose bodies were whole had hearts that were splintered. Families were torn apart. One brother was allotted to Hindustan, the other to Pakistan; the husband was in Hindustan, his wife was in Pakistan. The bonds of human relationship were in tatters, and in the end many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan. Communal violence and freedom became so muddled that it was difficult to distinguish between the two.

When the word *partition* is heard, the picture of ghastly vengeance and violence flashes across the mind of the hearer if he knows about it. *Partition* and *Violence* came to be understood as synonyms. Naturally the most significant theme of the partition stories is the theme of hatred, vengeance, and violence and its ramifications. Especially, those stories that were written in immediate response and reaction to the shocking acts of hatred, vengeance, and violence depict the violence in all its forms. The ugly acts of barbarism, bestiality, and bloodshed find a realistic representation in the stories. The stories are full of violence and horror. Alok Rai is of the opinion that rational behaviour and aesthetic imagination are infected by the incomprehensibility of the monstrous upsurge of violence and horror. And one of the consequences of this process, he says, is a kind of literary indulgence in describing the violence and horror, which he calls the *pornography of violence*. But it can be pleaded that it is not pornography of violence, because representation of violence was required to extinguish the fires of vengeance, or at least, to curb further acts of violence. Besides, the stories also represent the sorrows and sufferings of the victims of vengeance and violence. All the sensational acts, scenes of carnage, annihilation, and utter chaos find a realistic and artistic representation in the stories. Even if the stories had less artistic quality, they were essential at that critical time as they are today. While discussing the absence of the artistic quality in Ahmed Abbas' play, *Main Kaun Hoon? (Who Am I?)*, Ismat Chughtai comes to the conclusion that the burning times urgently needed only water and not fruit juice to quench the fire. 'This was the moment when writers provided ammunition in the form
of plays, sketches, stories and poems, scattering them everywhere. Ahmed Abbas scribbled his play, *Main Kaun Hun?* in ninety minutes, rehearsed it, and that same evening arranged performances in several parts of the city. Abbas did not have time to consider the fact that his haste might compromise his art, that it might blemish the power of his pen, that a writer’s greatness might be diminished. If he had thought about all this, he might have turned *Main Kaun Hun?* into great art, but then it couldn’t have doused the fire blazing at this time. This burning world needs dousing more than it needs works of art. The haste might have compromised his art but not his heart.

Many people raise objections to study and discuss the violence that was unleashed at the time of partition. Is it necessary to study and discuss the hatred, vengeance, and violence of the past? ‘Why should these be raked up again? Is it not the glorification of violence? Why should these, among the many possibilities of life, be given attention and prominence? Aren’t we making violence permanent by meditating about it?’ (translation mine). According to them, the partition is a closed chapter and it is better to forget it. But is it possible to forget the horrors of the greatest cultural and communal divide in history? Even if we forget it, there are many acts of violence, which remind us of the partition. Everyday, now, we see acts of communal violence happening in different parts of the country. We have witnessed many serial bomb-blasts and communal riots and killings across the country in which hundreds of innocent people have lost their invaluable lives for no reason or faults of their own. The roots of these communal riots are found in the partition. Hence the violence of the partition has to be studied, discussed, and understood in order to prevent it from happening in future and to rebuild the old harmonious society. Unless it is clearly known, it cannot be eradicated. Urvashi Butalia quotes Krishna Sobti, a writer and a Partition refugee, as saying that *Partition is difficult to forget but dangerous to remember.* ‘But does this mean then that we must not remember it? Over the years, despite many uncertainties, I have become increasingly convinced that while it may be dangerous to remember, it is also essential to do so—not only so that we can come to terms with it, but also because unlocking memory and remembering is an essential part of beginning the process of resolving, perhaps even of forgetting.’ (emphasis added). We have to remember it to prevent it from taking tolls in the days to come. Dr. Chenni says, ‘Our history and political studies of the partition have kept the violence aside so that it has not been possible for us to analyze violence even at present. Besides, the partition narratives are not the narratives of violence but of grievance.’ (translation mine, emphasis added). ‘In all the 6000 years of recorded history, there has not been more than a total of 250 years of peace. War, not peace, has been the norm of our existence. Yet, our citizens have generally scorned war and violence as subjects fit for study. Just because violence is sickening [there] should be no reason for refusing to study it. Obviously, to detest a sickness is not enough. To prevent it or get rid of it or control it, one must understand it.’ Hence we should study the partition stories about hatred, vengeance, and violence.

The partition stories recount the trauma of those who were caught up in the vicious circle of communal hatred, vengeance, violence, and horror. There are only a few stories, which voice the opinion that a particular religion is sacred, that the community following the religion is good, and that the members of the community alone had become the victims of the onslaughts of the other communities. These are stories without any humanitarian, moral, or ethical principles. Dr. Alok Bhalla classifies this type of stories as *communally charged.* He has included three such stories in his famous
Dr. Asaduddin says: ‘A small number of the stories offer the contrary view. They dramatize the past as one of distrust and discord. These stories are predicated upon the supposedly essential difference between the Muslims and the Hindus and Sikhs. The endeavour of the writers here are directed towards showing the superiority of their own religion over the others.’

Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi’s *Parameshwar Singh* is a story about a Muslim boy, Akhtar, aged more than 5 years, who gets separated from his parents in the caravan on the way to the new land, the borders of which are 15 miles away. Akhtar wanders further and further and finds himself surrounded by a group of Sikhs. One of the Sikhs pulls out his *kirpan* to kill the boy, but Parameshwar Singh pleads for mercy by saying that Akhtar is created by the same *Waheguruji* as his lost son Kartar is. Parameshwar Singh finds many similarities between Akhtar and Kartar. The Sikhs allow Parameshwar Singh to take Akhtar to his house to bring him up as his own Kartar. The house happened to be the house of a Muslim family, which migrated, and now it has been allotted to Parameshwar Singh.

In the beginning Parameshwar Singh’s wife and his daughter Amar Kaur do not accept Akhtar as their Kartar. Against Parameshwar Singh’s humanity, they exhibit hatred of other religions. They are afraid of Akhtar’s reciting of the Koran. Though his wife changes gradually and starts treating Akhtar well, Amar Kaur does not soften her attitude towards the boy till the end. Even Akhtar starts liking long hair, comb, and turban. After a few days, he looks exactly like a Sikh boy.

Parameshwar Singh loves Akhtar as he did/does his own son Kartar. In his pleading with the group of Sikhs not to kill Akhtar, in his sobbing for his safety, in his befriending him, and in his zeal in bringing him up, Parameshwar Singh is taken to have lost his mind. But he is cautious enough to take precautionary measures in hiding Akhtar in the sugar cane fields of Gyan Singh from being seen by the army officers who come there in search of abducted Muslim girls. Despite all his love for Akhtar, Parameshwar Singh fails to overcome Akhtar’s longing for his mother and his religion.

At the end, having realized the true and powerful love of a mother for her child, Parameshwar Singh carries Akhtar to the borders and leaves him there to let him go towards the direction of the village on the other side of the border from which the *azan* call for prayer is being heard. Akhtar goes towards the village. Parameshwar Singh follows, though hurt by the shooting of the Pakistan soldiers, to cut Akhtar’s long hair and to give his own religion back to him.
set up as a brave and innocent representative of the Muslims going towards their new homeland. For Qasmi, he is innocent because he is a Muslim, and not because he is, like all other children, ‘a moralist with no pretence’. The Sikh children in the story, with whom he plays, are brutes. Parameshwar’s ferocity is tamed and humanized by his encounter with Akhtar’s natural religiosity. They [his wife and daughter] are terrified when they hear Akhtar recite a few verses from the Koran, unable to recognize holiness. At the end of the story, Akhtar walks towards Pakistan, in the direction from which the morning azan rises into the sky—his mother, his nation and his true spiritual home await him there. Qasmi’s story is not only a bit disingenuous, but is also cynically manipulative. The last gesture of humanity by the child, when he runs towards Parameshwar after he is injured by the border police, merely adds to the halo surrounding him. Parameshwar, on the other hand, remains a caricature throughout, and the sarcasm directed towards him, given his name, is always a little heavy handed. His wife and daughter are hysterical representatives of their tribe who not only find Islam incomprehensible, but are hostile to it—they are refractions. Qasmi wants us to believe of the ancient antagonism between the Sikhs and the Muslims... It is apparent that by making the child an embodiment of Islam and then having him waylaid by fanatical and murderous Sikhs, Qasmi not only wants to evoke sublime pathos for the Muslims as victims of an unthinking faith, but he also wants to conceal facts. Qasmi refuses to acknowledge that in the 1930s and 40s inhumanity wasn’t the exclusive right of any one community.

Shashi Joshi does not accept Bhalla’s classification of communal stories and his branding Parameshwar Singh as being one of them. She reads these communal stories in terms of cultural stereotypes and symbolism. She says:

In my reading of the story, the bond between the Sikh and the Muslim boy is palpable. The love Parameshwar offers to Akhtar, though initially rebuffed by fear in the child’s heart, gradually breaks through to the child and the child begins to trust him. Yet, his child’s lost world—the cultural world of his socialization of the Azan and the Koran. Nor can he substitute the child’s mother, whose memory is not an abstraction for Akhtar but a warm, sensuous memory of a woman who read the namaz and gave him a drink of water with a bismillah.... Parameshwar’s wife, who cries for her own lost son, is as real as Akhtar in her rejection of the child. Instead of her Kartar with hair in a bun, with a comb in it, she has a child reciting ‘qi Huwallah-ho-ahad’ under her roof. Gradually, as the child’s hair begins to grow, she begins to soften, and feels happy when she touches his hair, bringing out the strong physicality of the mother and child bond. They day he can tie his hair in a bun, she says, they would name him Kartar Singh. Nevertheless, she weeps: “Kartar is that wound in my heart which will never heal”. And seeing the wildly powerful love between a mother and child in his neighbour’s house, Parameshwar begins to move towards the finale of his story in which he walks Akhtar to the border so that he can find his mother. At one level, the cultural stereotypes embedded in the situation are too strong to be overcome easily, at another, the cultural symbolism that pervades our senses as we seek our emotional sustenance in the familiar sounds and images, is conveyed by the story. (emphasis added)

Dr. Asaduddin justifies Shashi Joshi’s reading of the story: ‘As is evident the story has been structured on the beliefs based on stereotypes. ‘You’re a Musalla,’ yell the Sikh boys and Akhtar retaliates by shouting Sikhra at them. These are not simple or innocent invectives, hurled by children against each other, but carry with them the baggage of cultural alienation and prejudice accumulated over generations.'
Whatever may be the argument about the story, Parameshwar Singh, being communal or not, many themes of the partition—displacement, migration, rape, killing, separation of parents and children, harmony, and humanity—are built into the story as a background.

_Avtar: A Hindu_ by Gulam Abbas is a story about the massacre of Muslims by Hindus, the torturous suffering of the Muslims, their struggle for survival, the repeated Hindu attacks on their refugee colony, and their final salvation by the imaginative Kalki Avtar of Vishnu in a Muslim family. Abbas gives, in the first part of the story, a graphic picture of irreligion, vengeance, and violence at the time of the partition:

"... There is no religion left anywhere in the world. The darkness of sin has spread over it. In every city, in every town, in every village, innocent people are being slaughtered. Villages have been reduced to ash, unborn children have been plucked out of the wombs of pregnant women, impaled on spears and brandished in the air. Breasts of women have been cut, noses of men have been chopped off, people have been roasted alive in fire. Human beings have become more ferocious than the beasts. (p. 190)"

But, from the second part of the story, Abbas takes sides with the Muslims and pictures the horrible cruelties and atrocities committed by the majority Hindus on the minority Muslims. The armed gangs of Hindus killed most of the Muslim men, women and children; looted their property; and burnt down their houses. Only a few escaped with their lives, though hurt. All this happened in a town called Sambhal in Moradabad district. The description that Sambhal 'is not different from the other towns in India. The entire country was in flames' (p. 193) appears to make the story general and non-communal. But the very next sentence ‘Death awaited the Muslims everywhere’ (p. 193) makes it one-sided. Then onwards Abbas goes on describing the difficulties faced by the Muslims at the hands of the Hindus. The Muslims started living in a deserted valley a few miles away from the town. They cleared the land, built up huts, made ropes of grass to pull water from an old well near a ruined temple. They learnt new skills of making ropes, baskets, mats, brooms, clay pots, and toys; and sold them in town and earned their bread. Some Hindu hoodlums repeatedly trouble them by burning their huts. They would rebuild them patiently. Giving up purdah, the Muslim women labour with men. They also learnt to weave cloth. Life was gradually built up. Hamzah, a gracious male child was born to Ibrahim and Ameena. He seemed to be a boy of special and uncommon talents. He grew up and left the place disguised as a Hindu. After one year, he came back and gave a miserable picture of the Muslims he saw everywhere, which seems to be an eloquent plea to make the readers understand the Muslim life:

"... the Muslims everywhere in India were neglected, victimized and helpless. They always seemed to be afraid of something. Their mosques, their graves, the tombs of their apostles had been destroyed. They were too weak to protest and to defend themselves. Hardly a single day passed without there being an attack against the Muslims in one city or the other of India. In these attacks thousands of men, women and children were killed. The homes of the Muslims were looted and burnt. Those Muslims who survived were subjected to the worst kinds of atrocities and were forced to live a life of misery and degradation. God alone knows how much blood of the innocent Muslims has mingled in the waters of the Ganga, Jamuna, Narmada and Tapti." (p. 201).

The violence and torture suffered by the Muslims can well be taken to be suffered by the Hindus as well to make the story balanced. The whole story should be read by exchanging the words Hindu and Muslim. The evils listed can be attributed not only to the Hindus but to the Muslims as well.
You are not human beings. . . . You have violated every law of goodness... You have spilt so much blood in its (religion's) name. You have raped women; stripped them naked and paraded them through the streets of the city; chopped off their breasts and noses; burnt them alive. You have pierced their children with your spears and flung them in the air. You claimed that you committed these crimes in the name of your religious duty. (p. 204)

The questions that Kalki asks of the Hindus can be asked of the Muslims as well:

What crime had your victims committed? That they believed in a different form of worship than yours? That their style of life was different? Is that such a big crime that they should be exterminated? . . . Don't you know that the final goal of all religions is the same? (p. 204)

Dr. Asaduddin says:

Gulam Abbas in *Avtar: A Hindu Myth*, uses the Hindu myth of Kalki to highlight the debased state of the Hindus as oppressors of innocent Muslims. The story is rather one-dimensional in its depiction of reality in the absolute terms of black and white. The rhetorical questions that the narrator asks of the Hindus are those that any sane person would ask of all perpetrators of violence. The implicit answers and the awareness they display have the power to place a misguided humanity back on the rails.42

Dr. Alok Bhalla calls *Avtar: A Hindu Myth* a communal story. He says, 'Abbas invokes Hindu myths to suggest that since the Hindus had over millennia betrayed their gods by indulging in the most reprehensible forms of killings, their gods had now decided in disgust to abandon them and send a new avtar on earth in a Muslim household. There is, of course, no hint of the history of massacre by the Muslims.'43

Shashi Joshi, stunned by reading Bhalla’s comment on the story says:

The story, as I read it, poignantly brings home a truth that within the God-filled cosmology of the Hindus there is no barrier of untouchability between Hindu Gods and Muslim victims. The evil unleashed into the midst of the Muslims in the lonely valley ends in a fantastic, messianic dream-fulfilling sequence of the new Avtar Kalki, born to a poor, besieged Muslim. It is an imaginatively constructed story that encapsulates the heart-rending cry of Muslim grief. The entire story could well have been narrated to us by Mohandas Gandhi and no one would have called him communal. Must Abbas, because he is a Muslim, square the circle of history by trying to balance his account of Hindu violence with accounts of massacres by the Muslims?44

As Literature is a reflection of the life and society as a whole, it should be impartial and committed to humanity. One-sided and partial attitudes are always dangerous. It is true that there is a one-sided view of the partition violence in the story.

Krishna Sobti’s *Where is My Mother?*45 is a story about a Pathan, Yunus Khan, who has lost his dear sister Nooran, whose memory is green in his mind and heart. He has been tearing across the country, killing *kafirs* with a vow to annihilate them for the establishment of a new Muslim nation and sacrificing all his self for his country and his people. He loves his new nation more than he loves himself. He is full of hatred and vengeance against *kafirs*. His blood boils at the thought of *kafirs* and he wants to be sure that no *kafir* is left alive.

Sobti gives a terrible picture of violence:
Yunus Khan watched the flames as they leapt up from the villages burning all round. He had heard those screams before. People always scream when their houses are set on fire. He had witnessed other fires before. He had seen children thrown into fires... and women and men... He had seen neighbourhoods burn all night and had seen charred bodies in every street... cries of ‘Allah-ho-Akbar’ and ‘Har-Har Mahadev’ could be heard at a distance. ‘Catch him, kill him,’ ‘No, no, please...’ Yunus Khan heard all of them. (p. 135-36)

But he is not disturbed and distracted from his aim.

On the way, he finds a wounded, unconscious girl. Despite having seen innumerable dead bodies and himself having killed many men, women and children, he takes pity on the girl. He remembers his own sister and caresses her. The irony is that the child does not know that the hands that have killed her brothers are now caressing her so lovingly. He takes her to the hospital and implores the doctors to save her at any cost. He does everything possible to look after her as his own sister, even though she happens to be a kafir.

Even when unconsciousness, the child shouts with fear because her innocent mind and heart have been shocked by the arson and the murder of her brother. She regains her consciousness and is afraid of Yunus Khan, who wants to take her home. So she pleads with him to send her to the camp, for she thinks that she will be killed if she stays with him. Despite his assurance that no one will kill her and that she is like his own sister, she is not convinced. She hysterically begins to strike him with her fists, saying ‘You are a Muslim... You will kill me’, (p. 139) and starts screaming ‘Where is my brother? Where is my sister? Where is my mother?’ (p. 139).

According to Dr. Alok Bhalla, Sobti ‘plays upon the popular Hindu fear of the Pathan as a mindless killer in order to weave her tale of sorrow... Her narrative structure... doesn’t permit us remember the fact that one of the gentlest of Gandhi’s disciples was Khan Abdul Gaffur Khan, a Pathan and a Muslim.’ But Shashi Joshi raises objections to Bhalla’s view and says: ‘The Pathan is shown to be in the grip of ideology—fighting to create a new country for which the self had to be sacrificed: he was tearing across the country, with no moment to look at the moon and stars, fighting a revolutionary war, a jihad. Where is the mindlessness? In fact, Sobti’s Pathan is a stereotype ingrained as a deathlike fear in the girl whom he rescues. It reveals the power of the stereotype and of prejudice, despite the care the Pathan lavishes on her... To my mind, Sobti’s Pathan is the counterpart to Parameshwar Singh and the denouement of both the stories leaves them equally tragic figures longing for relationships they have lost.’ Dr. M. Asaduddin also analyses Where is my Mother? in terms of cultural stereotype, cultural alienation, and prejudice. According to him, the girl’s ‘You are a Muslim...’ is not just a child’s simple or innocent invective but carries with it the baggage of cultural alienation and intense prejudice.

Despite the fact that the story shows the deeply ingrained cultural alienation and prejudice, as analysed by Shashi Joshi and Asaduddin, it can be read as a story highlighting Yunus Khan’s compassion and humanity winning over his communal hatred and vengeance. Also the suffering of the innocent child because of the death of her mother and brother in the partition violence should be noticed.
Again, Sobti's another story, *The New Regime* (Sikka Badal Gaya), which was written in 1948, is a story about an old, rich, and respected Hindu lady, Shahni's uprooting. She is the wife of Shahji, the richest person of the village. Shahni came to that village fifty years ago. She has been a religious, liberal, calm, and kind person. She has been treating all the people of the village as her own relatives. She looks after her servants as her own children.

Now she is a widow. Her only son has also gone. She is lonely and disconsolate in her big and magnificent haveli. Though her husband ill treated his servant, Shera, and exploited people by charging exorbitant rates of interest and became rich, she has been very generous. Now she has to quit her ancestral house once and for all. She maintains the dignity of her house and her personality by stepping out of her house respectfully without any tears. The whole village assembles there to give her a tragic send-off. But none of them comes forward to protect her. It is very ironical that Shahni has to leave her house in order to save herself from the very people she has helped. Very recently, she has contributed Rs. 300 for the construction of a mosque. No contribution, no goodness, no humanity comes to her help. Even a thought of killing her flashes across the mind of Shera, whom she has treated like her son, though he shuns the thought immediately. But definitely he has been an accomplice in a conspiracy scheme of looting silver, gold, jewelry, and money in her haveli. Shahni knows about this scheme but feigns ignorance. This shows her ability to face adversity. The whole village assembles there to bid her final good-bye. Women, old and young, start crying. Men become dumb with silence. But there was none to protect her and support her to stay back. It is all because of the change of the government and nation and the resultant displacement of people belonging to the other nation. Her having to migrate and leave her house in front of so many people, with whom she has maintained harmonious relationships, is a kind of betrayal. Despite the police inspector's insistence, she does not take any gold or money or even clothes. She says that all the money belongs to the soil and will remain there only. When the land cannot retain her there, she does not wish to take any money belonging to that land. She walks with dignity to the army truck that takes her to the refugee camp. Owner of hundreds of acres yielding rich profit and a big haveli full of gold and money only now, Shahni, turns a penniless destitute in a refugee camp the next moment. What a displacement! What a change!

Dr. Alok Bhalla calls it a communal story. He says:

Sobti's well known story *Sikka Badal Gaya* (The Coin was Transformed) merely replaces the figure of the lost child (of *Where is my Mother?*) with that of an abandoned and lonely old Hindu woman in order to arouse our feelings. When the old woman is persuaded to leave her rich ancestral home and migrate, there is not one amongst her Muslim neighbours, whom she had helped in the past, who shed tears as she walks towards the army truck. They merely wait like vultures to claw through her property and grab what they can in their greed.

Sobti seems to be trying to win the sympathy of the readers for the old Hindu lady, Shahni, amidst Muslims by picturing her as a gentle and generous lady and picturing the Muslims as absolutely callous in not coming forward to protect her and retain her in her house from migrating. Yet the story does not appear to be as communal as *Where is my Mother?* It is mainly about the change that the partition brought in, in which people were forced to migrate from their lands and houses and snap their ties with them and become refugees. It is also about the ruptured human relationships. Sukrita Paul
Kumar says that 'the harmonious interaction, irrespective of what religious group the people belonged to, certainly does not justify the call for the sudden exodus of the minority community. The story focuses on the pangs of separation on the individual level and the utter dumbfoundedness on the part of somebody like Dauji (Daud) Khan who doesn’t know how to respond to Shahni’s departure. ‘Such narratives reveal the confusion both at the individual and social plane caused by the announcement of partition. The history of the human psyche recorded through such stories help one understand many of the resultant problems and the new orientations of modern Indian society."

It has already been made clear that Dr. Alok Bhalla calls those stories, which do not have neutral but one-sided accounts, communal stories. Such communal stories, written by a handful of writers, are very rare. In his introduction, Bhalla mentions Aziz Ahmad’s Kaali Raat (Dark Nights), Hayat Ullah Ansari’s Shikar Guzar Ankhein (Grateful Eyes) and Premnath Dar’s Akh Thu (I Spit on It All) as communal stories as they ‘are much too hypnotized by scenes of carnage to produce anything other than disgust in the reader. The pile of bodies, they seem to suggest, is a sufficient proof of the demented hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims.’ But a second look through the story Kaali Raat (Dark Nights) reveals that it is not communal, for Aziz Ahmad has treated the theme of vengeance and violence with an impartial attitude towards human suffering in general. Kaali Raat (Dark Nights) is not about the cross border migration of people, but about their migration from one place to another place of more security and safety within the country. It is a rhapsodic tale about the attempt of a well-to-do Muslim family to go to Secundarabad (Deccan in South), a place of relative safety, from Delhi, which was in the grip of partition violence. The family of Mr. Baqar Ali Khan miraculously escapes the rampant violence in the city with the help of the soldiers of the Baluchi Regiment and reaches the railway station and gets into the train. Miss Baqar Ali Khan’s wonder that it might be fun to be abducted vanished when she heard a soldier telling her father that ‘the abductors, after raping women, often cut off their breasts or slit open their stomachs with scimitars . . . that a woman’s husband, father or brother was killed in front of her, then some of his organs were hacked off and shoved into the woman’s mouth’ (p. 32-33). It is really tragic that the terrified girl, Miss Baqar Ali Khan, herself becomes a victim of rape and murder after the brutal butchering of her father, mother, and her brothers. Her brother shoots his own newly married wife to save her honour. Thus, the whole family is mercilessly murdered in the train in the midst of their journey.

There is another sub-story about two Sikhs carrying two Muslim girls purdah whose mouths are gagged and hands tied. After the use of force by the police, the Sikhs confess that they have migrated from West Punjab and that they were friends with the Muslims there. ‘Then the disturbances began. Those who were their friends looted their house, dishonoured their women’ (p. 27). One of the Sikhs says that ‘they hacked off his wife’s breasts right before his eyes’ (p. 27) Then, they crossed the borders and started plundering and pillaging and now are going away with the booty, the two beautiful girls, towards the South. It is vengeance that makes the Sikhs indulge in such retaliatory acts of crime and violence. Thus, it is the dark night of vengeance and violence that engulfed the Indian subcontinent immediately before, during, and immediately after the partition. Aziz Ahmad’s story deplores that man has crossed the boundaries of humanity and he has entered the boundaries of bestiality. He treats the vengeance and violence with a concern for the human lives and the dehumanization of all human values. Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal observe in their
introduction: ‘The story (Kaali Raat) includes a number of juxtaposed episodes involving Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, as both perpetrators and victims of violence and savagery. Aziz Ahmad is fair in assessing blame. He weighs human behaviour, which is grossly wanting in tolerance, decency and charity with the potential for goodness, which has been asserted by thinkers, philosophers and heroes of ancient myths.’

The horror of the vengeance and violence of the partition has been a major theme of the partition stories. Most of the writers, despite being shocked to see and hear the horrors of the tragic event, have looked at the cruelties with human concern and compassion. They have treated the partition violence irrespective of religion, region, caste, class, and community. In fact, the technique of balance in treating violence has been used by most of the writers in their short stories. ‘Some looked on a realistic portrayal of communal violence as the most representative aspect of the partition experience. Others, chiefly the progressive writers, who had been a dominant force on the Indian scene since the 30s, were thrown off balance by the carnage. Having put their faith in human rationality, many of them had no words to express their disillusionment. Unable to explain the violence, many of the progressives concentrated solely on painting elaborate scenes of violence in the hope of conveying something of their sense of disgust. In doing so, they consciously avoided taking sides and put the blame equally on both warring factions.’ (emphasis added)

The riots were a natural corollary to the Partition. Riots had been an important aspect of the vengeance and violence of the partition. There were riots everywhere in the Indian subcontinent during those turbulent times. Millions of families were displaced and lakhs of people were killed during the period. People became riotous when they heard of stories of violence on people belonging to their community by the people belonging to the other community. Rumours of violence maddened people with vengeance and this resulted in further violence. It was a vicious circle of vengeance and violence that the people were caught in. Each caused the other. The feelings of trust and tolerance, concern and care, and friendship and fraternity were destroyed and mutual distrust and suspicion, disregard and discord, and insult and animosity were so widespread that riots were started for silly reasons, resulting in killing, loot, arson, and destruction. ‘The great partition riots were one instance when our society, culture and the very basis of civilized life tottered.’

Khushwant Singh’s short story, The Riot, describes the genesis of one such riot in a town because of a silly reason. This town is paralyzed with fear of communal clashes and curfews. People spend sleepless nights for the safety of their lives and property. There has been a long-standing mating relationship between Moti (a dog), that belongs to the Muslim, Ramzan, and Rani (a bitch), which belongs to the Hindu, Ram Jawaya. As the times are full of tension, Ramzan keeps Moti indoors, tied to a cot. Rani comes in search of Moti, but being unable to find him goes back with another partner who emerges victorious in the fight among her suitors. But Moti howls and slips away from the hold of his master in search of Rani. He leaps on Rani’s new lover with an angry growl. The noise outside wakes Ram Jawaya up. Unfortunately, the stone that Ram Jawaya hurled at the dogs hits Ramzan who comes in search of his Moti. He yells ‘murder’ and the whole town comes to life and the stage is set for the unfortunate riot.
Rumours about someone—a Hindu or a Muslim—being attacked, kidnapped, and butchered fly in the air. A party of goondas assaults a woman and kills her children. People come in groups with weapons. There are clashes between the groups. ‘Tins of kerosene oil were emptied indiscriminately and lighted. Flames shot up in the sky enveloping Ram Jawaya’s home and the entire neighbourhood, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh alike. . . . The police rushed to the scene and opened fire. Fire engines clanged their way in and sent jets of water flying into the sky. But fires had been started in other parts of the town and there were not enough fire engines to go round. . . . All night and all the next day the fire burnt—and houses fell and people were killed. . . . For several days smoke rose from the ruins. What had once been a busy town was a heap of charred masonry.’ (p. 333)

The story reaches its artistic and ironic climax, when the reader learns, at the end, that Ram Jawaya’s house is a mountainous pile of bricks and wood, and that ‘in the corner of what was his courtyard, there lay Rani with her litter nuzzling into her dried udders [and] beside her stood Moti guarding his bastard brood’ (p. 334). The amity between the dogs stands in sharp contrast to the animosity between the human beings. The dogs are beyond the bounds of man’s hatred for man. The story hints at the fact that the partition was a grievous mistake and the partition violence was meaningless.

Monto’s The Will of Gurumukh Singh gives a graphic picture of riots, killings, arson, looting, and displacement. ‘Occasionally, there were cases of rioting and killing, but now it had become a regular feature. News of the fights kept pouring in. Besides, knives, kirpans, swords and guns were being used by most people. . . . The riots kept increasing day by day. . . . The Muslims living in the Hindu streets had started running away. Similarly, the Hindus residing in Muslim areas had started going away to securer places. . . . For the past many days, some place or the other was always on fire. Lately, even the fire brigade had not been heard or seen. May be because so many places were on fire. The night presented an entirely different scenery now. Big flames of fire rose like big giants in the utter darkness of the night. These giants emitted fire from their mouths like a fountain, slogans like Allah-o-Akbar and Har Har Mahadev made the night terrifying. . . . At the crossing he had seen a dead body, drenched in blood. In a nearby shop some men, their beards tied up with a piece of cloth, were looting.’ (p. 47-48) Thus, people behaved like mad people and killed, looted, and displaced each other with vengeance. The violence unleashed during the partition riots is unprecedented in the history of the nation.

In the midst of such a fearful situation, a Muslim family—consisting of its head, Mian Abdul Hai, a retired sub-judge, his young daughter, son, and an old servant—suffers and meets its end in the hope that the riots would subside and nothing would happen to them. The young daughter fails even to arrange for treating her paralyzed father. Santokh Singh only comes and gives the family a bagful of sevan on the eve of Id according to the will and custom of his late father Sardar Gurumukh Singh, who had been favoured by the Judge Sahib. Although Santokh Sing extends his respects to the Judge Sahib, he does not come forward to help him by bringing a doctor to treat him. The times were very dangerous. As soon as he comes out of the house, a gang of Sikhs gets ready for looting, killing, and burning the house of the Judge Sahib. May be, even for abduction and rape. The attack has obviously been delayed for Santokh Singh to fulfil the will of his father.
There is another riot story, Adaab by Samaresh Basu. It is a powerful story about two men—one Hindu and another Muslim—who build up a bond of concern and care for the safety of each other. It is a story about a Hindu mill worker and a Muslim boatman being caught up in a grim situation of a riot at night. They hide behind a dustbin at the opposite ends not as deadly enemies, but as neighbours in their attempt to save their lives. The initial suspicion about the intentions of the other subsides. Gradually, a bond of humanity, which is beyond the narrow confines of community and religion, develops between them out of their common predicament. Each tries to support the other in his attempt to reach his home with his life intact. The riot occurs all of a sudden. 'Suddenly, without any warning, the riots had struck. Like thunder! Amidst all the laughter, the chatter in the market place, suddenly death swooped down on everyone: killing, looting, blood flowing like water down the river!' (p. 23) In the midst of the riots and killings, the common people suffer a lot by the death of their kith and kin and the destruction of the means of their livelihood. They do not understand the usefulness of the unnecessary killings. They say:

I don't understand all this. I'm only asking as to what will come about from so much killing... How will the country gain? (p. 25)

and they wail over the loss of humanity: 'We are not human beings' (p. 25) and thereby highlight the need for harmony and humanity by setting an example of their human bond and friendship. It is very pathetic that the boatman is shot dead by the police and he does not reach his home and join his children, wife, and relatives to celebrate the Id.

Analysing this story, Bidyut Chakrabarty says:

What is remarkable here is the articulation of a powerful human voice that cuts through artificially created divisions along religious lines. Not only did the boatman or the worker lose their sources of livelihood but were also the victims of circumstances that did not discriminate between people on the basis of religion. The boatman, identified by the police as 'a decoit' was shot dead as he was running away when asked to stop. Evoking the sufferings of the innocent, the story articulates a common theme underlying the experiences of people in similar circumstances where religion or community emblem hardly matters.92

Thus, the story gives the picture of violence and bloodshed in riots from a common man's point of view and hints at the futility of all the violence in the name of religion and nation.

Yashpal’s A Holy War is another story that describes the devastating havoc created by riots in the social, communal, and individual lives of the people of the subcontinent. The old harmony between the communities was spoiled by the partition. The friendly relationships among the people of different communities were ruptured by the communal hatred and vengeance and the consequent violence. The beautiful city 'was paralyzed by fear and mutual hatred amongst the communities. Communal frenzy had spread devastation and destruction all round.' (p. 194) Curfew was imposed to stop the destruction.

The Hindus and the Muslims lived side-by-side in the Ganga-ki-Gali Lane and there were both Hindu and Muslim shops in the Sayyidmittha Bazaar which ran perpendicular to the lane. By the end of July 1947, the Hindus established their control over the bazaar and some Muslims, who lived there, were killed. Some others abandoned their business and left for a place of safety. But Fazzay, the
dyer refused to leave Ganga-ki-Gali, though his son wanted to. Fazzay had been living there for 40
years and had developed harmonious relationships with all the Hindus in the lane. He was a humble
and peaceful person. He stayed back with the hope that the communal frenzy was temporary, that it
would subside gradually and that the respect he had earned in the last 40 years would save him. But
his son Nasru was not a calm person. 'In his heart, he wanted to do what the other Muslims of the city
were doing. He also longed to participate enthusiastically in the holy war for the creation of Pakistan,'
(p. 195) but was controlled by his father.

But the tables turned later. Hordes of Muslims attacked the bazaar. Many of the shops and
houses of the Hindus had been burnt. Though the Hindus proclaimed their determination to stay back,
the increased incidents of burning, looting, and killing made the Hindus flee the place. But Moolan Tai,
the rich old widow stayed back. Fazzay sighed at the sight of the Hindus deserting the place. But
Nasru was elated. Muslim goondas attacked the bazaar, broke open the big locks of the Hindu shops
and looted them. Despite his father's reproach, Nasru also participated in the loot.

In the dark night under curfew, when Moolan Tai, wrapped in a bed sheet, was stealing away
from the lane, with a bundle, Fazzay prayed Allah to protect her. But Nasru stabbed her and took her
bundle. Unlying the bundle and lifting the lid of the box, he found the stone idol of her God. Moolan
Tai's God did not save her, and Nasru's God did not give him wealth. Fazzay, burning with rage, only
wished that the old woman should have smashed Nasru's head with her stone idol.

Examining the force of the story, Jason Francisco says, 'The story powerfully telegraphs the
pain of the partition, conveying the impairment of judgement in communal disintegration so rapid it
dissolves not only tightly woven communities, but even single families.' Dr. Asaduddin is of the
opinion that Yashpal's Holy War 'offers two perspectives of a situation by counterpoising the views of
the father who believes in the bond of humanity that transcends over parochial communal
considerations, with those of the son, who is driven by communal ideology.' In the clash between
the two ideologies of harmony and hatred, represented respectively by the father and the son,
one emerges victorious; but while the father can die as a pure heart, the son can only live with
a heart contaminated with blood.

Upendranath Ashk's Tableland gives a picture of how riots resulted in death and
displacement and created refugees. The protagonist Dina Nath, an actor and patient of T.B., originally
hailing from West Punjab, starts collecting funds to help the Hindu refugees from Punjab. He was a
man who did not make any distinction between the Muslims and the Hindus. But the terrible news
from West Punjab makes his blood boil against the Muslims. 'Although riots had been going on for a
whole year now, he had been experiencing this sort of agitation only for the last two months' (p. 108).
The fire ignited by the Muslim League's call for Direct Action a year ago has reached Noakhali, Bihar,
Bombay, and some cities in Punjab. When the fire reaches Lahore, the city starts burning. Now Dina
Nath is really worried about the safety of his elder brother and other relatives. His brother's letter
about the brutalities—killing, loot, arson, abduction, rape, naked parades, amputation of limbs like
breasts and noses, and uprooting—on the Hindus in Lahore make him stand on pins.
The situation in the country deteriorates fast. In the sanatorium, whenever the discussion among the patients turns towards Pakistan or India, a hush falls over them. ‘Qasim Bhai alone saw the hand of the British and native reactionary forces behind all the disturbance and communal rioting, and cursed them roundly. Others, Muslims and Hindus, just blamed each other.’ (p. 109) Later in the story, Qasim Bhai says: ‘Most don’t even know what had Jesus’ followers, the British, have played in the calamity which has befallen them. The seed of Hindu-Muslim hatred which the Angrez planted in 1909 has grown into a flourishing tree and is oppressing the land with its venomous sap. They don’t know that what we are witnessing today is simply the climax of the satanic politics of Hindu-Muslim enmity.’ (p. 116)

The communal riots rob DinaNath of his calm, peace, and sleep. He vigorously proceeds in collecting the donations for sending blankets to the Punjab refugees. In the process, he meets all kinds of people—generous, miserly, and Hindu fundamentalists. When he meets a middle aged T.B. patient, a Muslim refugee from East Punjab, he learns that the Muslims have suffered no less than the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Muslim patient recounts how ‘two huge pits had been dug right next to the train station, into which Muslims were dumped alive like sacrificial goats, and how the Brahmin, after the offering to the god of revenge, shouted Jai! Jai! like someone possessed’ (p. 124). His two young sons and a daughter and her husband were tortured and made prey to the fires of revenge. He, his wife and the youngest daughter have been able to escape because they were away in Delhi to consult a hakim about his illness. When the riots break out in Delhi, they somehow reach Bombay and with the help of some Muslims, he has been admitted to the sanatorium. Ashk balances his treatment of violence with the sad story of the Muslim family.

Dina Nath is so moved by the tragedy of the Muslim refugee that he prays God to guide the people to goodness and pays all the 499 rupees he has collected so far to the Muslim refugee and walks out of the room. Dina Nath’s human compassion and feeling for the sufferings of the fellow people and his zeal in collecting funds for the refugees remain long in the memory of the readers.

The most important point to be noted about the vengeance and violence of the partition is that the common people, irrespective of religion and community, suffered most. This is exemplified in Ramesh Chandra Sen’s *The White Horse*. It is a gripping story about how a beautiful horse becomes a victim of the partition violence in Calcutta. It is a period of relative calm ‘after several successive days of bloodbath in Calcutta... but there is tension in the air’ (p. 127). Riots may start at any time and disrupt the human life again. Fortunately, there appears a spotlessly white horse which looks like a lost wayfarer. It appears to be hungry and thirsty, but it ‘brings a fresh whiff of life into the riot-torn locality. The boys are totally absorbed in the horse. The small ones are delighted at its sight. The bigger ones come close and caress its body’ (p. 127). The people of the area name it Chand and look after it with compassion. The white horse is a symbol of peace and harmony, and it brings together people from both the communities.

The harmony is so strong that the people save the Muslim groom and coachman, who comes in search of the horse, from the rioters and uphold feelings of humanity. Unfortunately, the horse becomes a prey to the guns of the army soldiers who come there to restrain the riot. Who is
responsible for the death of the innocent horse—the groom who allows it to wander freely or the rioting crowd that provokes the soldiers or the soldiers who fire? Questions are many, but the answer is elusive. Whatever may be the questions and answers, the fact is that the innocent animal becomes a prey to the violence and dies. It becomes a representative of all the innocent people who became the victims of riots and violence. Bidyut Chakrabarty rightly says:

This is not merely a story of an animal; through a symbolical representation of a horse, Ramesh Chandra Sen wove in the feelings of those who simply became victims in an environment that was not of their creation. Who suffered most? Innocent people, both Hindus and Muslims, bore the brunt of the political decisions, taken by the leaders without taking their views into account.58

Jamuna’s riding the horse even when it falls sick further shows how cruel people tortured poor, common, and ordinary people during the partition.

The story gives expression to animosity, vengeance, and violence on one hand, and on the other, amity, harmony, and humanity between the two major communities—the Hindus and the Muslims: ‘There are two clear voices in the story. The one that is quite familiar delves into the stereotypical description of Hindus and Muslims at loggerheads as a consequence of religious schism. A riot was inevitable as the culmination of Hindu-Muslim animosity. This was evident when the crowd was intent on killing the Muslim coachman who came to Hindu locality in search of Sohrab [horse] as vengeance for brutal murder of Hindus in Metiabruz. Opposed to this was the other critical voice, which spoke in a language without rancour. When a number of people advanced from the crowd to kill the coachman, Jamuna, Nontey, Habul, and other boys formed a cordon around the old man to resist the attackers…What caused them to protect the coachman was a concern for humanity, which becomes the first casualty in communal frenzy. Articulating both the mutually exclusive voices, The White Horse also reiterates the difficulty in conceptualizing partition as the inevitable, and possibly the best, outcome merely of circumstances when Hindus and Muslims became permanent adversaries.59

A few writers have tried to bring out the causes for the Partition and its violence. As it is very difficult to trace the causes for the partition, such stories are very rare. Fikr Taunsvi’s The Book of Divine Knowledge60 is one such story. The sharp satire and irony have made the story very interesting. The story brings out the tragedy of the partition and its meaninglessness. The partition is described to have happened at the behest of the Lord God and thus man’s responsibility for the tragedy is satirically transferred to the Lord God. The story is divided into four parts—The Genesis, The March of the Caravan, The Refugee Camps, and The Rehabilitation.

The first part, The Genesis, is constructed on pure imagination in which the Lord God commands and blesses the Englishman. It describes the origin of the partition, which takes place at the command of the Englishman, who divides the Muslims and the Hindus. Lord God himself orders this Earth to be drenched with blood, the Land to be filled with daggers and swords, the houses to be set on fire, the people to be barbarians, the women to be stripped naked to learn its pleasures and the children to be hanged from the barrels of bayonets. Accordingly, the free men fell upon each other. The passion to defend their endangered religion by slaughtering the people of the other religions appears to be meaningful. ‘The Sons of God (the leaders) cheered them on, glorified their exploits.
From slaves to freemen, from freemen to devils and from devils they turned to being Hindus and Muslims and indulged in strife, murder and killing. '(p. 104). The endless strife and the spate of killings cause sorrow and grief. The future seems bleak and startles the refugees.

The second part, The March of the Caravan, describes the sufferings of the refugees on the way to cross the border for their new homeland of safety. Longing for their homes where their souls dwelt, and grieving for the bonds, which made their lives meaningful, the refugees start for new homes in a new nation. Now the centuries-old bond with their lands and homes is broken. Their wealth is looted and plundered. They have become beggars overnight. ‘Confused and bewildered, they wept. Mothers abandoned their children and wives were separated from husbands. Nobody was left to take care of the old and the aged. Young and attractive beauties, possible victims of lust, were stripped, as if by choice.’ (p. 105) They keep awake at night and travel during the day. Special bands of men, the agents of God’s sons (leaders), attack them with swords and spears and thundering shouts of La-ilaha and Sat Sri Akal. ‘The women disappeared with these special agents, their children became a part of the piles of corpses. Their belongings, their gold and silver jewellry was plundered’ (p. 105). The army appears and showers bullets. The caravan of refugees starts moving by special trains, but their trains are stopped midway and attacked. Both the plains and the trains are littered with corpses. And yet the caravan moves on, crosses the borders, and reaches the new land.

The third part, The Refugee Camp, pictures the sufferings of the refugees in camps; and the final part, The Rehabilitation, brings out how the problem of the refugees was solved eventually. (These two parts will be discussed in the next chapter)

Using the technique of witnessing in a court of law before a judge, Fikr Taunsvi sarcastically brings out the tragic holocaust faced by the refugee for no fault of his in the story, So the Witness Stated, which hints at the causes for the Partition. The innocent refugee is brought to the court of law as a criminal and the real criminals give their witness to the crimes of the refugee whereby they expose their own crimes. In the process of witnessing, the witnesses prove their own guilt and bring to light the innocent suffering of the refugee to no purpose. All the accusations of the witnesses against the refugee are really the accusations against themselves. Their acts of bravery and honesty about which the witnesses boast of are really the acts of irregularity, injustice, and crime against the refugee and the humanity itself.

The first witness is a goonda-turned-leader who says how he was provoked by the leaders to destroy peace and unleash the forces of disintegration and destruction through communal riots. The feelings of hatred fanned by the goondas spread like wildfire. He says that he and his companions came out of their dens into the streets with lances, knives, swords, daggers, guns, and pistols. He graphically pictures the violence:

We thundered like clouds, screamed like a storm, advanced like floods, and in the wink of an eye fell upon the enemy. It wasn’t mere hooliganism... We had a worthy goal. We lobbed bombs, set localities on fire, intimidated people, gave them a good hammering; we dragged people from running tongas, stabbed them with daggers, threw small children into swirling and roaring fires, finished off robust young men in a flash. We bruised and battered the velvet bodies of screaming, crying and beseeching
women, virgins and young girls. We branded their limbs with sanctified words and slogans. We did not hesitate to strip them and parade them around the streets and bazaars. We seized their gold. We ransacked and plundered prosperous homes and spent our ill-gotten wealth on pleasures which are difficult to describe. (p. 258)

The judge thinks of adding a new clause in the law book to book a case against the refugee and the witness requests the judge to give the refugee an exemplary punishment. Otherwise their (the goondas’) hard work will be a waste. Besides, the refugee has no right to make the life of other citizens miserable with his crying. And the big and small leaders cannot sleep a wink as the refugee haunts them. So he should be punished. Sharp irony runs through the words of the witness.

The second witness is a political leader who makes it clear that the aim of the leaders was to seize power regardless of the bloodshed, arson, loot, destruction, and dishonour. The leaders had no idea that it would end up in the creation of the refugee. The witness pleads that it was the refugee who made the leaders take the decision for the exchange of population:

He [the refugee] wailed and screamed, handed over his life’s earnings to the goondas, saw his wife and children being slaughtered with knives and daggers, but didn’t utter a sigh. He saw his home engulfed by a raging fire and yet did not let out a scream. Leaving his swaying fields he wandered around hiding himself. In vulgar haste, he left behind the streets where he once roamed freely and sang songs of love and beauty, appealing desperately, ‘Save me! Save me! I will not live here any more!’ (p. 260).

So the leaders set up camps for the refugees. Since then the refugee has become a great problem. The witness also accuses that even after two years after freedom, the refugee still remains a refugee. The irony is at its height when he says that in two years many achievements would have been done—a hen would have laid eggs more than 30 times, a cow would have given birth to two calves and all those sixty-eight years old would have reached 70. But the refugee has done nothing except wandering aimlessly, shedding tears, searching for his lost relatives, consuming tins of food in the camps and cursing the politicians. The witness humbly requests the judge to stop the disturbances created by the refugee and to punish him severely for his crimes.

The third witness, a camp commander, gives his witness about how the refugee lived in the camp on free ration and is a burden on society and government. The fourth witness, in charge of the department of rehabilitation, gives his witness about how the refugees were treated with discrimination in allotting houses and lands. (These witnesses will be discussed in the next chapter).

Fikr Taunsvi has been sharply sarcastic in describing the tragedy of the partition. At times humour is produced out of satire.

There are numerous stories, which vividly bring out dehumanization, hatred, vengeance, violence, cruelty, barbarism, death, and destruction that took place because of the Partition. N. G. Gore’s *A Mouthful of Water, A Mouthful of Blood* is a story about the destruction of harmony and humanity and the ravages of vengeance and violence that partition resulted in. The story begins with a train journey in which a Sikh soldier, Udham Singh, becomes acquainted with a sweet little, bright, brilliant, and smart Muslim boy, Anwar, who looks like his own Lachman. He likes the boy’s prattle, fondles his hair and calls him a rabbit and a bulbul. He brings water for the little boy. Two and a half years later, by the time of the first Independence Day, the same Sikh soldier develops communal hatred and thinks of Anwar as a snake.
The intoxication of the first Independence Day does not last long, because the fire of communal hatred spreads in all directions like a flood, and city after city, town after town, and village after village start burning. The narrator describes with sarcasm: "The human layer on our bodies was dropping off. Instead, on them were sprouting wolfish eyes, tiger’s claws, tusks of wild boars and the he-goat’s satyr penis! ... Trampling all the loved, sacred, sweet things under the heel, drowning their desperate cries in our monstrous laughter shamelessly, displaying our hands lathered in our kin’s blood, we had become human beasts" (p. 225). The news coming from Punjab starts spreading like wildfire in Delhi. "Into the eyes of Hindus and Sikhs had begun to descend murder and into the eyes of Muslims, the dark shadow of fear!" (p. 225). Stray incidents of stone-throwing at Muslims’ houses and stabbing them here and there begin. They are the first sparks of the wildfire of hatred. And the arrival of battered and bruised Hindus and Sikhs from the Western Punjab makes the wildfire burn with flames. People lose all reason and mercy. There is only one roar—Justice! Revenge! Vengeance! Then start the brutal genocide, carnage, loot, arson, abduction, and rape:

Crunching blows of staves and knives began to fall. Because of this attack the men folk started to run, scurry about and the women began to low like cows, holding their little ones to their breasts. On the tar road flowed runnels of blood, the way water flows from broken pots. Those who fell down would for a while flap their legs, moan and then become silent! (p. 228)

The story turns a full circle, when Udham Singh stabs Anwar with the same fingers that fondled his hair once. The same Udham Singh, who earlier said to Anwar that no one would shoot a chirruping bulbul like him, kills him now with vengeance. The same hands, which brought water for Anwar once, now squeeze out the water in the form of blood.

The narrator feels guilty of secretly approving of the cruel feats of his own community, even though he has not participated in them physically. The story 'records the complicitous mental attitude of those who, though they did not take part in actual violence, murder or rape, derived vicarious pleasure at seeing the humiliation of the other community and the desecration of its women. The urbane narrator has a sneaking admiration for the perpetrators of violence belonging to his own community.'

Monto’s Sharifan is a story about Qasim, who on finding the dead body of his wife and the naked and raped corpse of his daughter in his house, goes out in a fit of fury and vengeance and kills a young Sikh and three other Hindu men. Still his blaze of revenge being unquenched, he unknowingly enters the house of a Hindu acquaintance and after stripping his young daughter’s clothes off, kills her with the name of his daughter ‘Sharifan’ on his lips.

Qasim is a simple man who is a victim of the partition violence. He has pain in his left calf, where a bullet got struck. But he forgets his own pain when he looks at the dead body of his wife. He becomes mad with sorrow and revenge at the sight of his daughter’s naked body. He kills four persons with vengeance. But it is pathetic to see Qasim who flings his hatchet with closed eyes, hits a dead body, falls down, and shouts, ‘Kill me! Kill me!’

Being possessed by mad revenge, he even kills the Hindu girl, Binla, and makes her father his own Hindu counterpart. Qasim closes his eyes and covers his face with his hands when he looks at
his daughter’s naked body. This shows that there is still a spark of humanity in him. When enquired by
Bimla’s father about what he is doing, Qasim merely points, with a trembling hand, towards the dead
body of Bimla. Bimla becomes Sharifan to Qasim. The difference between Muslim Sharifan and Hindu
Bimla vanishes, and they are just human beings and daughters and Bimla’s father and Qasim are just
suffering fathers for the death of their daughters.

M. S. Sarna’s *Savage Harvest* encapsulates the carnage and brutality of the partition
times. Dina, the ironsmith, is forced by his own son, Bashir (and his companions), to produce axes and
spears for arming the fighters of the newly born Pakistan, for which all the Hindus and the Sikhs are to
be killed. He does not quite understand this, but that is what the village heads and even the Imams of
the mosques say. This *jihad* will succeed only if his furnace keeps burning and spitting out fierce
instruments of death.

Despite his wife’s request not to produce the instruments, Dina finds it difficult to do so for fear
of being killed by his own son, who has become a fanatic. His wife says that making axes is worse than
killing, because the killer kills one or two or fifty people while each axe made by her husband kills
several scores. Although she is able to impress her husband with her words, she herself is afraid of
talking ‘to her sons, the great warriors who burn two villages every night’ (p. 262).

An old and deaf woman with snow-white hair, who has been sick with fever for a week,
comes to Dina’s house to get her goat chain repaired and to enquire about her missing goat. She does
not know anything about the riots, arson, and genocide that have taken place for the last one week.
The fever has saved her from the holocaust and her deafness has prevented her from hearing the
wailing voices of the great tragedy. ‘She did not know till now that her village was now in Pakistan.
She did not know that Pakistan was now in her village. . . . That not one Hindu or Sikh was alive except
for a few girls in the hands of the rioters’ (p. 263). She does not know anything about the terrible
changes and continues to speak to Dina and his wife with the same old harmony and sharing. Even
Dina and his wife respond to her in the same vein. They even discuss about inviting her to stay in their
house to save her life at least till the return of her son. They cannot do so because their sons will kill her.
The old woman talks of the return of her son Tulsi, who has gone to Nawachak to attend the
engagement ceremony of Preeto, a daughter of Ram Shah, a respected and rich acquaintance of her.
But she does not know that her son will never return, for he has already been killed. All the Hindus of
Nawachak have been killed and not one of them is left. Also, she does not know that Preeto, along
with her rich father’s estate, has already been taken by Bashir. Dina and his wife cannot even send her
(the old woman) to any other village, because all the villages are on fire. The tragic irony is that they
discuss all these things in the very presence of the old woman, for she is deaf.

The scene of Bashir’s dishonouring of Preeto amidst her wailing in front of her father’s corpse
haunts Dina. He could not stop his son. He feels he is going mad. He wanders aimlessly in the fields.
The blood of innocent people appears to have dissolved into the streams and rivers. What kind of
harvest can it be after this bloody season? ‘The shower of blood that had reddened everything had
been caused by the axes that he had fashioned. This crop of bones and flesh had been sown by his
spears. And he had just finished making axes for those who were still left. They too would be gone
by tomorrow night' (p. 266). He feels terribly guilty and runs towards his house to throw the axes into a well. As he walks towards his home, he stumbles and falls. He turns only to look at the corpse of the old woman cut by his axe. He screams and faints. Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal say:

*Savage Harvest* focuses on a Muslim ironmonger who makes axes for a gang of murderers led by his son. He meets his nemesis at the hands of his own tortured consciousness when he sees an old frail woman murdered by an axe he himself had made.76

Intizar Hussain’s *The City of Sorrow* gives a nightmarish picture of the partition violence, atrocity, rape, murder, displacement, destruction, and uprooting narrated through the memory of three unnamed persons who are symbolically dead. It describes how both the Hindus and the Muslims rape each other’s women, with vengeance, in front of their own relatives like brothers, husbands, and fathers. It also describes how vengeance, violence, and destruction were rampant in the country during the partition. It is also a picture of the psychological trauma that people experienced.

Written after the war that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh, it begins in a strange and unnatural way with a dead man’s speech, ‘When he heard that, the First Man said, *I have nothing to say. I am dead*,’ and continues in the same style till the end.

The First Man recounts how he forces a young man to strip his own sister naked and rapes her. Later he witnesses how that young man makes an old man strip his wife naked and rapes her with vengeance. The First Man also indulges in killing people with his sword. The circle of vengeance completes when that same young man rapes the daughter of the First Man before his eyes. Even after this, he remains alive and goes to his wife. He is so distorted that his own dog barks at him as it does at a stranger. His father does not believe that he is his own son. The First Man says that he is alive and really his own son. The father says, ‘If you are alive, I must be dead’ (p. 89) and takes a deep breath and dies.

The story of the Second Man is still more gruesome. He is also dead. He says, ‘The doom which had been hanging over others, finally, reached the ruined city too. I walked about stealthily. I knew that our fate would not be different from theirs’ (p. 89). He too has raped a woman who has conceived now. He is afraid of facing her. In fear of being arrested, he tries to hide. There is no shelter at all in the city of ruins. After a long time, he reaches a strange town where ‘dead bodies lay scattered everywhere. There wasn’t a single living human being in sight. The bazaars were shut, the roads were desolate, the houses seemed empty’ (p. 89). Some people who are inside the houses cannot come out for fear of being killed. The houses have become prisons. Finally he comes to an open field where a large crowd is gathered. In the crowd, ‘the children were crying with hunger, the lips of the adults were chapped, the breasts of the mothers were dry; fresh faces had withered, fair women were covered with dust’ (p. 89). When he enquired the crowd, he comes to know that it is the city of sorrow, that they are the doomed ones whose lives have been destroyed and that they are waiting for death. He recognizes that they are the people who had come there from far off places to build their home in that city of peace, which is now a city of sorrow because of the communal clashes among themselves. It is a city in which the people do not understand the meaning of truth and take even truth to be an illusion.
He considers that the city is on its way towards extinction and continues his wandering. He comes to know that the man is none other than himself.

Then follows a long argument between the First Man and the Second Man, each claiming himself to be that man who has been spat on. The argument shows that they cannot be distinguished. Each has indulged in such horrible deeds that each is distorted and disfigured beyond recognition. This signifies the general degeneration of the people and the time into vi√k√r√u√th√i (distortion). Later, the Second Man recalls that his father also died by looking at him.

The fathers of the two die after witnessing their sons’ deeds of vengeance, violence, distortion, and destruction. It symbolically signifies the wide gap between the past—of harmony and humanity—and the present—of discord and destruction. Constructive and humanistic principles led the fathers and destructive communal vengeance led the sons.

The Third Man claims that he is not dead, but is one among the disappeared during the calamity. He makes it clear that he is not one of those disappeared who have been killed. He wishes that he should have gone into the forests of Nepal instead of any city in his life of disappearance.

In discussing about what to do next, the Second Man says, ‘the earth is a place of suffering. Those who have been uprooted, can never find a place where they can flourish again’ (p. 99). And in the end, they (the First Man and the Second Man) discover that even the Third Man is also dead and disfigured.

The Three Men carry with them the burden of their guilt. Their faces are deformed, distorted, and disfigured symbolically pointing at their perverted deeds. They are mentally dead and live a life of death-in-life in a city of sorrow. The city represents all the cities and towns. And people are so mercilessly killed in such large numbers that the three men find no room to bury their corpses. They are left nameless to generalize and represent all the perpetrators of violence.

Commenting on the story, Dr. Alok Bhalla says:

_The City of Sorrows_ seems to be a hermetically sealed nightmare without hope of change or escape. Three men, without names or faces, describe how each of them had raped and killed endlessly and without shame. Now they have become horrors to themselves; they cannot find a place in any society, not a spot on earth in which they can bury their own corpses. Yet, their reflections of a time before the partition, lie outside the structure of the present and exist as moments “which Satan cannot find”. Memory offers a vision, which can counter violence.”

Another story which runs almost like _The City of Sorrows_ is Muntaz Mufti’s _An Impenetrable Darkness_. It is about the cruel carnage and ravage during the partition. The story takes place in a strange atmosphere of thick darkness and eerie silence from which piercing sounds of groaning, sobbing, moaning, and wailing are heard. Horrified victims of violence suddenly appear and recount their terrible tales of woe and disappear. The protagonist keeps on running for a place of safety, inhabited by human beings, where these heart-breaking sounds are not heard.
Running and running, he comes across various places, persons, and scenes, which make him run further and further. He sees a truck of soldiers and remembers that these are days of disorder and disturbances. Mutual suspicion is spread among fellow workers. The protagonist keeps a sword for self-defence, but that makes the people around him look at him with suspicion and fear. He starts walking and gets into a tonga. The kochwaan (the tongawaala) pleads that he is not a Muslim and begs him not to kill him. The kochwaan also tells him that people attacked even his horse, Moti, who is not a Muslim. Then a policeman appears on the scene and tells them that he wants to save some people from dying of hunger, but he cannot reach them because he will be killed in the riots. The policeman is so shocked that he forgets his own name. Then a young man appears and recounts how bullets are fired and his friend is exploded like a firecracker. He says, 'Bhagwan has already deserted us. Now only Shaitans live here' (p. 214). Then an old woman wails for her son and curses those who have killed him.

The terrible scene is where an old man begs the attackers to let him go and keep his young and beautiful daughter with them only. A woman, tired of protecting the child during such times, announces that the child is not hers, when the child is about to call Ma. Being sick of looking at all these, the protagonist runs towards a train bound for Amritsar. ‘A severed head was flashing its teeth near the footrest of the train. A woman popped her head out of the train. Her breasts had been chopped off. A child was still hanging onto them. The woman pointed towards her breasts and said, Amritsar’ (p. 217). The protagonist rushes into a compartment. The walls are covered with splashes of red blood. Down below, bundles of flesh lie in puddles of blood. The severed head on the seat opens its eyes, looks at him and says: No! No! I am not a Muslim, I swear by the prophet’ (p. 217). The bundles of flesh cry out, ‘My leg! My leg! Kill me! Kill me! Pakistan! Pakistan!’ (p. 217). Terrified, he jumps out of the compartment to the platform where ‘human limbs were creeping on the platform (and) severed heads were rolling like balls’ (p. 217).

The protagonist tries to run away from these terrible scenes and sounds. The very earth seems desolate. ‘There was desolation all around—the desolation that comes after a great upheaval and gives birth to a dreadful silence, a silence, which reeks of screams and sobs’ (p. 219). He comes across a tragic scene where a child is waiting for her dishonoured and dead mother to wake up from her sleep. The child describes how the dacoits have massaged the mother’s body to give her some relief from her pain and gone to bring a doctor to treat her. He goes to the fields which appear deserted and where the cattle eat ripe ears of com and chickens tread over the scattered intestines carelessly.

He also comes across a woman, who is raped in front of her own men folk, who do not try to protect her, but do save their skins by keeping quiet and giving up their faith, valour, and honour. But an old woman attends the raped woman. The protagonist meets another beautiful Muslim woman, whose house was ruined; property looted; and parents, brothers and sisters killed by two brothers who finally kill each other for her. She is taken to Pakistan by a Pakistani imposter and dishonoured there. She comes back to India and does not want to go to Pakistan even if she is killed. But another Sikh woman, Kaushalya, is raped by a neighbour of her own community in the guise of a Muslim. She laughs a poisonous laugh saying ‘there is no Muslim, no Hindu, no Sikh. Only beasts live here. Beasts’ (p. 223).
The protagonist asks them to run ‘where human beings live’ (p. 223). But the Muslim woman says that there are no human beings anywhere. While the Sikh woman wants to give birth to a human being, the Muslim woman wants to help her. The story ends with the cry, *human being*, which is repeated by them and followed by the same cry by the vultures and bees. After the total dehumanization, the narrator makes the readers wait, with hope, for the birth of human beings.

Some short stories describe the tragic killings in trains. Bhisham Sahni's story, *The Train Has Reached Amritsar*, as the name itself signifies, describes a train journey. The story brings out the communal differences, hatred, vengeance, and violence on the eve of the Partition and Independence of the country. It was a time of uncertainty and confusion. No one knows what to do, what steps to take. There have been riots in most of the towns in the North, the West and the East. Everyone expects that the riots would stop after the partition. The grim situation is reflected in the train in which there is *India in microcosm*. There are people belonging to all the communities. The train moves towards Amritsar from Lahore. *The narrator very skillfully builds up the undercurrent of prejudice and hatred into feigned friendliness and banter*. The three jovial Pathans, who dominate over others in the compartment, make fun of a mirthless Hindu Babu by calling him a weakling and advising him either to eat meat with them to make his wife happy or to go and travel in the lady’s compartment. The Babu bears the insulting fun with patience. The passengers see the flames of burning villages through the windows and the tension and panic on the platforms of rural stations. At one such station, a Hindu refugee family attempts frantically to get into the compartment. Most of the people inside, except an old woman, are against the family’s entry into the compartment on the ground that there is no room inside. One of the Pathans comes forward and kicks the woman of the family in her stomach and she falls down on the floor screaming with pain. The Pathan also throws out the family’s luggage. The refugee and his daughter disembark, terrified, as the train begins to move. The Hindu Babu seethes with anger and secretly vows to take revenge.

The compartment becomes grim and silent as the train passes through a burning city. The passengers grow more suspicious of each other. When they come to know that the city is the Muslim dominated Wazirabad, ‘the Pathans became less tense, the silence amongst the Hindus and the Sikhs became more ominous’ (p. 152). At the next station also, there is none except a muskhee (water-carrier), who informs the passengers that there has been a communal riot there and many people have been killed. The Babu becomes so terrified that he lays down on the floor in order to protect himself from the possible throwing of stones or firing of bullets at the train. Everyone is uncertain of reaching the destination safely.

As the train crosses Harban spura and reaches Amritsar, which is a Hindu dominated city, the Babu gets back his courage and hurls filthy curses at the Pathans. The Pathans look nervous and forlorn as the tables are turned now. The Babu gets down and comes back with an iron rod to find that the Pathans have relocated with some other Pathans. He burns with anger and roundly abuses the other passengers in the compartment for letting the Pathans escape.

As the train starts pulling away, a Muslim standing on the footboard and banging on the door, urges (probably) his wife, to hurry up and climb the train. Everyone in the compartment is sleeping,
except the Babu, who is restless. As the Muslim implores the Babu to open the door in the name of Allah, he opens the door and in a fit of anger, hits the man with his iron rod as if to settle scores. The Muslim grimaces in terror at the sudden attack and falls on the ground in a heap. The man is brutally killed. Thereby, Sahni balances the atrocity on Hindus and Muslims. The next morning, the Sardarji’s appreciation for Babu, ‘you look frail, but you are brave’ sounds sharply ironical.

Commenting on the story, Dr. Asaduddin says:

The temporal division of space in the story into ‘our area’ and ‘their area’ found in quite a few other stories as well, becomes symptomatic of the psychological alienation and cultural separateness of people living together, but whose lives do not intersect in any meaningful way.

Krishan Chander’s *Peshawar Express,* another story about train tragedy, is an ironical representation of the terrible vengeance and violence of the partition. It is the story of a train journey from Peshawar to Bombay, which witnesses horrible human slaughter by the other community. The people in the train are trying to escape to India because of the sense of grave insecurity in Pakistan. They are anxious to get away from the land where their families had lived for centuries. The same land has forsaken them. More refugees join them on the way. When they feel a little confident of saving their skins, the train stops at Taxila where a group of Muslim people exchange two hundred living Hindus and Sikhs for the same number of the Hindu and the Sikh dead bodies, the absence of which will spoil the village business and trade. Krishan Chander describes Taxila with sharp sarcasm to bring out the tragedy of killing the 200 living corpses. They are killed in Taxila, which once boasted of the leading university of Asia, where thousands of students flocked from different places to study civilization and culture . . . (where) the museum of Taxila housed unique images and inimitable jewelry, representing the finest examples of ancient art . . . (where) the great King Kanishka held sway and enriched the people as an exemplar of beauty, bringing prosperity to one and all . . . (where) Lord Buddha preached the gospel of non-violence and his monks showed the people the true path to peace and salvation . . . (where) for the first time on the border of India had flown the flag of Islam – the flag which stood for brotherhood and equality among men (p. 209).

The sarcasm brings out the horror and pity of the tragedy.

At Rawalpindi, fifty abducted women in veil get into the train. They turn out to be Hindu and Sikh women abducted by the young Muslims. In Jhelum, they drag the women out of the train and challenge the Hindu and the Sikh men to save them if they have guts. The two Hindu young men who jump down are blithely shot down dead by the Baluchi guards. The young Muslims take the women into the jungle.

The guards’ pushing the men out of the train along with the dead body each carries to the door and shooting the women who pull down the windows to protect themselves is the height of inhumanity. At Wazirabad, the gruesome celebration of *Baisaki* by forcing Hindu and Sikh women to parade naked in the train, is equally inhuman. The counterpart of the train from Amritsar, carrying Muslim refugees to Pakistan comes and both of them stop in Lahore. Muslims loot gold, silver, and other valuables from the passengers and pick up 400 Hindus from the train and kill them to make up for the loss of 400 missing Muslims in the train from Amritsar.
Once the train crosses the borders, the boarders become wild and indulge in similar acts of violence, abduction, and rape with similar savage vengeance. They stop the train as and when they like and indulge in such acts. The killing of the beautiful daughter of the Muslim Deputy Commissioner, in spite of her willingness to convert to Hinduism and marry one of them, is terrible. Her book, *Socialism: Theory and Practice*, soiled with her blood ironically brings out the reversal of values.

Krishan Chander's story becomes more meaningful by his technique of making the lifeless train narrate the story of violence and express its deep anguish at the fate of human life. There is a vein of irony in the story in making a *lifeless train feel for the human beings*. This story is also a very good example for the neutral account of violence. Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal say that Krishan Chander balances the Hindus and Muslims butchered with something of an arithmetical precision. But there is a twist in the story which makes it memorable: it is narrated in the person of the railway engine, the non-human machine which alone, while men kill one another, is capable of human feelings.

The long-awaited freedom brought to a whole people not merely the exhilaration of political freedom but also a tragic snapping of their roots grown over centuries within specific geographical, cultural, and social backgrounds. This is exemplified by Salil Choudhary's short story, *The Dressing Table*. It is based on four letters that the painter Rahim wrote from Khulna, where he had gone in search of a job, to his wife, Amina, in Howrah, Calcutta when the partition started. Nanda found these letters in a dressing table (which belonged to Amina) when her husband bought and brought it for her. There were Hindu-Muslim tensions in Khulna where his friend, Amal, was teaching in a college. Despite his belief in humanity and confidence that those turbulent days and the frenzied madness could not last long, Rahim failed to understand the internal force of the communal vengeance. Rahim writes:

More and more people are becoming suspicious of each other, losing faith in each other's integrity. . . . People seem to have lost even the last drop of humanity. Bestiality, in its most terrifying form, has been unleashed' (p. 34,35).

There were incidents of loot and arson. Hindus left Khulna for Calcutta. His friend Amal left Khulna with his wife and child, but at the border his wife was abducted and he somehow reached Calcutta with his child. The attacks on the Hindus in Khulna were countered by the attacks on the Muslims in Calcutta. The plight of the Muslims in Calcutta was exactly like that of the Hindus in Khulna and Dhaka. The Muslims started towards Khulna to cross the border. Many Muslims, including the family of Rahim, were brutally burnt alive. Bidyut Chakrabarty says:

Amina, Rahim's wife, was presumed dead. This is one level of human agony when those who failed to comprehend the sudden changes in their identity following partition experienced the highest form of brutality, including death. The other form was articulated by those who became *udavastu* (uprooted from home) or *sharanarthi* (shelter-seeker) as soon as the drive to identify aliens began. The Muslims poured into Dhaka as they apprehended trouble in Calcutta, while the Hindus came in groups to Calcutta leaving their homes in East Bengal. In a dilapidated house, the author describes, there were at least twenty people inside. Some of them were sitting with their babies, and some lay on the floor. The condition of the women seemed to be worse than that of the building. They were refugees from East Bengal. Thus partition was 'a story of displacement of people, who neither articulated its form nor contributed to its devastating consequences and yet became its innocent victims.'

Rahim never found his dear wife Amina. The arrested Pakistani spy was, no doubt, Rahim, a real human being in search of his Amina.
Manto’s *Xuda Ki Qasam* is a story about a mother’s frantic search for her abducted daughter and its shocking result. 'In the story Manto depicts the real emotions of real people caught up in the dislocation consequent on partition. Told in the first person by a liaison officer involved with the recovery of ‘abandoned’ women, the story portrays an old Muslim woman in search of her only daughter.' The story begins with the following paragraph which gives an account of the precarious conditions of human life:

The country had been divided. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Hindus were moving from India to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India in search of refuge. Camps had been set up to give them temporary shelter, but they were so overcrowded that it seemed quite impossible to push another human being into them, and yet more refugees were being brought in every day. There wasn't enough food to go round and basic facilities were almost non-existent. Epidemics and infections were common, but it didn't bother anybody. Such were the times. (p. 165)

There were many efforts to recover the abducted women and children to be restored to their families and countries. The liaison officer from Pakistan visits India many times for the recovery of abducted Muslim women and children in India. He recounts the story of the protagonist, who is a woman in search of her abducted daughter. He meets her in different towns and cities in the East Punjab during his several visits over many years. The search for the daughter fails, but the mother cannot bring herself to believe her daughter’s supposed death. It is her firm conviction that she is alive and no one can kill her, for she is bewitchingly beautiful. No one can even dream of hurting her. The mother continues her relentless search and the narrator’s repeated attempts to take her to Pakistan fail.

Despite her grief and suffering, she continues her search and grows thin and weak and looks like a bag of bones. Her eyesight dims and she totters about like a blind person, a step at a time. Finally she sees her daughter in Amritsar. The abducted daughter has fared well in life with her Sikh husband, but fears meeting her corpse-like mother and rushes away, pulling her husband. The old mother shouts, *Bhagbari, Bhagbari.* She says that she has seen her daughter in reply to the narrator, who happens to be there at the time. The narrator says, ‘Xuda ki Qasam (I swear on God), your daughter is dead.’ The title is very appropriate in its meaning that the daughter is really dead for the mother. It is a kind of death-in-life. The truth of the daughter’s hesitation to meet her old mother dawns on her and she falls in a heap on the road and dies. At the end, we witness different deaths—of the daughter, of the mother, and of their blood relationship. ‘A tragedy like partition cannot be relegated to statistics alone: there are deaths other than physical, which are equally devastating.’ The story shows how the partition resulted in the rupture of human relationships and death of even the blood relationships. ‘In her shock at discovering the destruction of the relationship on which her entire life had been built, the old woman’s only reaction can be to collapse, presumably in death.’

The immediate impact of the violence of the partition on short stories is best represented in *Black Margins* and other short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto. *Black Margins* are the expressions of Manto’s first shocked reactions to the horrors of violence in the wake of the partition. Manto saw that the vengeance and violence of the partition did not spare anyone and that the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs were equally capable of the most inhuman cruelties. He, except in one or two instances, does not identify any of the perpetrators or victims of the violence by religion in his *Black Margins.*
What was important to him was not what religion people belonged to but where they stood as human beings. Nowhere does he justify violence in the name of religion.

Black Margins are in the form of anecdotes. They vary in size from one line to two pages. Some of them are no longer than a line or two and only two of them run into two pages each. These anecdotes depict how people participated in riots, looting, killing, arson, and rape with vengeance. Some of them also depict the unjust trade and the participation of the officials of the army and the police in violence. All these anecdotes are characterized by sharp satire and black humour. Manto has moulded this form, small in size, to focus on the dark horrors and tragic ironies of the partition in a big way. They are deeply ironic and often quite moving.

In *Wages of Labour* (p. 89-91), a riot breaks out. Looting and plundering are rampant and fire blazes all around. The participants break into stores and pick up things on which they can lay their hands. A Kashmiri labourer picks up a sack of rice and carries it on his back. But the police arrive and shoot him in his calf and take him to the station. He tries to justify himself by saying that many other participants picked up big and costly things and he has only carried a sack of rice for filling his belly. After he fails to persuade the police to let him keep the sack, he demands, ‘Okay, hazrat, you keep the rice. I demand my wages. Four annas,’ for carrying the sack of rice to the station.

The real effect is produced in the contrast between the characters’ understanding of the events in which they participate and the readers’ understanding of both the characters and the events. Many times, the understanding of the readers is made more deep and horrified by the ignorance of the characters and the awareness of the readers. Thus, in *Sharing the Loot* (p. 91-92), rioters, forty or fifty in number, wielding clubs, attack a house to loot and plunder. Just then a man appears on the scene and asks the rioters to be calm and methodic in looting, to avoid friction and breaking of valuable things. He directs them and helps them in a gentle and friendly manner in raiding and ransacking the house. But long before he announces his identity as the owner of the house, the reader has already guessed who he is. The last looter is shocked to know of his being the owner only at the end. In *Miracles* (p. 95), the man, who has stolen two sacks of sugar, falls into a well in the act of getting rid of the sacks and dies. Next day, the water of the well is sweet and the people light candles in honour of the man for the miracle of sweet water. The irony is that the people do so in ignorance while the reader knows the karamat (the secret) behind it.

Sometimes, the very situations, in which the actions are set, are used to produce irony and humour. For example, in *An Enterprise* (p. 96), the board on the shop that escapes the flames which have burnt down all the houses reads: ‘A complete range of building and construction materials sold here.’ In *A Warning* (p. 96), the landlord of a house tells the rioters that he does not care even if they kill him and warns them not to touch his money.

In *Mourning the Dead* (p. 98), the mob attacks the marble statue of Sir Ganga Ram, the great Hindu philanthropist of Lahore, and disfigures it. The rioter who is about to place a garland of shoes around the neck of the statue is injured by the bullet shot by the police and is taken to the nearby Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, for treatment.
In Initiative (p. 98-99), the policeman, who is tired of frequent orders to stand guard at the sites of disturbances, requests the inspector to station him at a place where a fresh disturbance is likely to happen.

In Double Cross (p. 101), one rioter charges a seller of having sold diluted petrol (at black market prices) with which not a single shop could be set on fire.

In Ill-Luck (p. 101), a looter, who is obviously a Muslim, is very sorry about his bad luck, despite his hard work, in being able to get only a lousy case of pork, the most hated thing for Muslims.

In Blind to Reality (p. 101), one man feels disgusted about his co-religionists being ungrateful. Despite his pains in slaughtering fifty pigs in a mosque, he has not been able to sell any of the pork. But in the other locality, people are buying beef in temples.

Socialism (p. 101) is about a situation in which the owner of the truck and its loaded belongings are robbed by looters under the impression that the owner is a robber.

In Beastly Tale (p. 97), the cow’s noisy response to its calf’s mooing exposes the hidden husband, his wife and their child to the rioters who kill them in a beastly manner.

In Jelly (p. 99), a child takes the coagulated blood of a stabbed ice-seller and the ice on the road to be jelly.

Sometimes, ignorance is effectively used in rendering the anecdotes ironic and humorous and making them effective. Legitimate Use (p. 93-94), presents a Pathan who feels brave after firing forty rounds and injuring three men. He joins the band of rioters amidst the prevailing pandemonium and manages to run away with a thermos flask. When his friends say that it keeps warm things warm and cold things cold, the Pathan says that he will use the flask to keep his snuff warm in summer and cold in winter. Again in Use of Ignorance (p. 94), a rioter fires his six bullets killing three persons and wasting the other three. He takes aim at a running child. When his companion reminds him of his being run out of bullets, he says, ‘You keep quiet. How would that little child know?’

In Pathanistan (p. 96), the victim answers that he is a Muslim and names the prophet as Mohammad Khan and he is let go without any harm.

Fertility (p. 101) places before us a man, who comments on his friend’s supposed ignorance and foolish suicide by saying that forcible removal of hair does not mean giving up of religion and that, with God’s blessings, the hair would grow and his friend would have become just the same in a year.

Sometimes, puns are used effectively to produce irony and humour. The use of common words or phrases in an unexpected or unusual way to end the anecdotes is very effective. In Fifty-Fifty (p. 93), a looter spots a wooden box, but cannot carry it alone. Another looter helps him by
carrying it to a place of safety. They settle their difference by agreeing to share its contents fifty-fifty and open the box. Out comes a man with a sword in his hand and cuts the two partners into four parts.

In Appropriate Action (p. 94-95), when the mohalla is attacked, some members of the minority are killed, and the survivors flee for their life. But a couple hides itself in the cellar of their house and after eight days without food and water, they come out and request the people to kill them. Because those people are Jains and killing is an inappropriate action in their religion, they hand over the couple to the people of another mohalla for appropriate action.

In Correction (p. 95-96), the victim's name, Dharmchand, and his knowledge of the Vedas are not considered as proof of his religion by the rioters. When his trousers are lowered, his circumcision is found out and the rioters get ready to kill him. But the victim tells them that the locality in which he lives is full of enemies and to protect his life he has been forced to commit this mistake. And his mistake is corrected by chopping off it.

In Vacation Forever (p. 99), when a chased victim requests the rioters not to kill him as he is going home on vacation, he is promptly sent home on vacation forever.

In Propriety (p. 100), the rioters stop a train in search of Turks. At last one is traced out from the lavatory. When one of the rioters is about to kill him, another rioter asks him not to spoil the carriage and so he is dragged out and killed and the propriety of their action is maintained.

A Concession (p. 100) brings out the sharp irony when a father's request not to kill his daughter before his eyes is considered. And thus, a concession is allowed by stripping her clothes off and throwing her in with the other girls.

In A Raw Deal (p. 96-97), two men buy a girl for forty-two rupees because she is said to belong to the other community. But after they have had her, they are mortified to discover that they have been cheated as she belongs to the same religion as they do. They realize that it is a raw-deal and proceed to pack her off.

In Hospitality Delayed (p. 97), rioters stop a train. Marking out the people of the other community, they slaughter all of them with swords and bullets. They treat the rest of the passengers to halwa, fruits, and milk; and the chief organizer apologizes for being unable to entertain them lavishly on account of the delay in receiving the notice of the train's arrival.

In Supervision (p. 98), after enquiring a co-religionist about the untoward incidents and killings in the area, a military officer keeps the co-religionist's fears at rest by answering him that everything is done under military supervision.

Human life became so valueless that in A Mistake (p. 99), a person kills another person and when his pyjam cord is cut and lowered, the killer expresses his sense of remorse in killing a wrong person.
Commenting on the *Black Margins*, Dr. M. Asaduddin says:

The 32 fragments in *Siyah Hashiye (Black Margins)* are known for their macabre humour, subversive intent, tongue-in-cheek mode and their brilliant metonymies... To me, the finest story is a very brief one, *Mutri* (The Urinal), wherein the whole of undivided India is conceived as a stinking urinal, where politicians are writing obscene graffiti on its wall.92

Discussing the *Black Margins*, Leslie A. Fleming says:

The theme of all of them, is man’s incredible inhumanity to man, and especially to man of ‘the other’ religious community. Told with the barest distant third person narration, in the least emotional, most stripped down language possible, devoid of character development or even of specific communal reference, with actions depicted in as little as a single sentence, the little anecdotes with their grim themes at first produce a chilling effect. The chilling effect lessens, however, when it becomes apparent that, in contrast to other literature of partition, the emphasis of these anecdotes is not on their themes but on their peculiar brand of black humour... In short, all of these anecdotes, despite their themes, are ultimately jokes, which depend for their effectiveness not on the chilling horror of their themes, which are clearly secondary, but on the reader’s understanding of the puns and verbal ironies which they contain.93

Men always instigate the violence, but the women are the worst victims of it. In the name of honour of nation and religion, the women are subjected to indescribable violence. Communal and political tensions were played out on the female body and thousands of innocent women were abducted or raped or kidnapped or killed. Despite the violence endured, silence is imposed on the women. They could not give vent to their experience of the inhuman violence.

Though the deaths of parents, brothers, husbands, and children were acts of violence on women, abduction and rape were the most severe methods of inflicting violence on women. There were also many acts of amputation of limbs of women like breasts, noses, etc. During the partition, men belonging to all the communities molested women belonging to the other community. They, sometimes, dehumanized themselves to such a level as to rape women belonging to their own community to satisfy their devilish desires. ‘Though partition offered a variety of subject matter, the majority of the writers chose to deal with violence of one kind or another—abduction and rape being particular favourites. The less gifted writers tried to excel in graphic descriptions of women being physically abused and mutilated, and too often succeeded in making the painful nauseating. But in the hands of the masters, the theme of rape resulted in some of the most heart-wrenching stories ever written.94 Among these, K.S. Duggal’s *Kulsum*, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas’s *Revenge*, Saadat Hasan Monto’s *Cold Meat* and *Open it* and others have been very famous.

*Kulsum*95 by K.S. Duggal is the story about the rape of a Muslim girl of that name by an old Sikh to tame her to be ready to quench the beastly lust of a young schoolmaster. The schoolmaster, after the evening bell, hurries to the hut of an old Sikh where a rare gift brought from the city is waiting for him.

The schoolmaster gets into the hut and stares at a beautiful, young girl standing like a jasmine creeper against a pillar in the darkness of the hut. Before the pillar, there is a charpoy with its fresh and sparkling linen in white.
The young schoolmaster burns with desire. His gaze flicks from the charpoy to the cute girl and the cute girl to the charpoy in that cozy cote. He now understands why the old man has sent words so many times. 'The gift was fit to be swallowed whole. He would put his lips to hers and drain her into himself... his eyes were ablaze with a strange inebriation.' (p. 95)

The gift appears to be the very substance of the Independence which was won just yesterday and the songs and slogans are still ringing in his ears. And today, just a day after, there is a Muslim *houri* right in front of him. He thinks that yesterday, in that very village, no Hindu and Sikh girls could come out of their houses. The Muslim *goondas* roamed the lanes 'hurling insults at the people in broad daylight, setting thugs on them, abducting their women in the open streets' (p. 95). But that was yesterday, but today the peerless Muslim pearl is just in an arm’s length.

He tries to pull her, but she does not budge. She requests him to marry her first. The schoolmaster is not in a mood to listen to her. He pulls her again. She again pleads with him to marry her first so that she can become his slave for the whole life. Without listening to her pleas, he pulls her time and again towards the charpoy. She tells him that rioters hacked her fiancé to pieces along with her father, mother, brother, and all her relatives. Somehow she escaped and ran like a mad person, when this old man caught hold of her and led her to his hut with a promise of finding a husband for her. She takes it that the old man has sent the schoolmaster to become her husband. She begs him to marry her. She says that she will become his wife and the mother of his children. She paints before him a verbal picture of a happy marriage, family, and children—a heaven on earth.

But the schoolmaster turns deaf to her repeated requests. With tears in her eyes, she pushes him away from her with all her might. He comes out amidst her weeping. The old man becomes angry on hearing the words of the schoolmaster. He rushes into the hut banging the door shut behind him. After three minutes, he comes out knotting his lungi, after raping her, and asks the schoolmaster to go into the hut without any fear.

The schoolmaster goes in, sits by her side on the charpoy and touches her shoulders. There is no protest as she is tamed now. The old man, supposedly the village priest, his praying mat, his rosary, and even the young man being a schoolmaster assume special ironical significance in the story of molestation of an innocent orphan girl against her repeated, humble requests for marriage. The story ends with: ‘A wave of darkness rose in the hut, perhaps it was night outside’, but Kulsum’s life is permanently enveloped in darkness without any hope of a ray of light. The sun will rise tomorrow, but not in the life of Kulsum.

Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal comment in the introduction to their edition of stories:

*Kulsum* illuminates a moment of horror. In this story an old Sikh rapes a Muslim *houri* (whom he has abducted) for failing sexually to oblige his young guest, a schoolmaster. As the old man emerges from the hut tying his lungi, we find ourselves as dumbfounded as the girl, Kulsum. Her earlier plea to the schoolmaster, ‘Marry me first... I beg of you’, repeated many times by the hapless girl, takes on an added poignancy.
K.A. Abbas’s Revenge is another horrible story about rape and revenge. Red colour of human blood and yellow colour of the pall on a dead body haunt Hari Das day and night. He was a prominent lawyer in Lyallpur when the partition took place. The refugees from Lyallpur say that he has lost his wife and daughter in the massacres. But it is not known to anyone about how he has lost them: whether they drowned themselves in the river as so many others had done to save their honour or were they burnt in their house or stabbed on the roads. Hari Das is thought to be mad. He does not talk to people or participate in discussions. But whenever the discussion turns about riots and massacres, his eyes blaze with vengeance.

Hari Das is not mad, though he wishes to be so to forget everything. But it is not easy to forget the horrible scenes—his house was looted and burnt, his wife threw herself into the river, his neighbours and friends were mercilessly massacred and his only daughter was brutally raped by a gang of five men. His 17-year-old daughter, Janaki, was innocent and beautiful. He requested them to kill him, to spare her, to convert her to their faith and marry her. Despite his repeated requests, he was bound to a tree, was purposely kept alive and they, one after another, raped his dearest daughter amidst her blood-curdling screams in front of his very eyes. There was, in her eyes, the frightening expression of fear, hate, helplessness, despair, an appeal for mercy, and the knowledge that it was futile, all mixed together. They raped her till her scream died away into silence. Hari Das closed his eyes, but he could not close his ears. The silence after her death was more frightening than her screams. He opened his eyes and saw the bruised body of his innocent daughter with bloody deep marks of nails and teeth on her cheeks, ears, nose, throat, and naked breasts. With his own hands, he built the funeral pyre for her body. The funeral flames devoured her delicate body. *It was not Janaki, but the honour of India that was being cremated, it was humanity that was going up in flames, decency and kindness and pity that were being reduced to ashes* (p. 17). Though the funeral flames died down, the flames of vengeance blazed in his heart, mind, body, and soul.

He comes to Delhi and spends 10 months with flames of vengeance burning inside his heart. They will never be extinguished till he stabs a Muslim girl right ‘in her naked breasts’. He gets an opportunity in a brothel. The Muslim girl is almost like his Janaki in age, beauty, status, and education, and even in helplessness. She looks at him for mercy when he orders to remove her clothes. But he would not show any mercy as they had not shown any to his daughter. Holding the dagger in his right hand, he snatches her brassiere with his left hand and turns her towards him, for he wants her to see what he does to her. But the dagger remains poised in the air, for there are no breasts, but only two horrible round scars instead. Without his knowledge the word daughter escapes his lips. She has already been a victim of rape and amputation.

Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal observe in the introduction to their edition of stories:

Abbas’s Revenge centers on a father’s craving for vengeance on seeing his daughter stripped, raped and mutilated in his presence. Nothing less than stabbing a Muslim girl ‘in her naked breasts’ would recompense him. He gets a chance in a brothel. With a dagger poised in the air, he snatches the brassiere off the body of a young girl to find ‘two horrible round scars’ where the breasts should have been. A single word ‘Daughter’ escapes his lips. Melodramatic perhaps, but nonetheless moving. 98
Following the stories of *Siyah Hashiye (Black Margins)*, Manto’s earliest attempt to deal more fully with the looting and violence with which he had been occupied in the anecdotes was the brutally shocking story, *Thanda Goshti* (*Cold Meat*). It is a story, which shows the dehumanization of human beings and their transformation into beasts. Ishwar Singh’s passionate indulgence in loot, murder, and rape for a week makes him impotent on bed with his equally hot-blooded mistress, Kulwant Kaur. She becomes suspicious of his association with another woman. When he fails to convince her about his innocence, she becomes violent and wounds him with his own dagger. Thereupon he confesses his attempt to rape a young girl, whom he carries off after looting and killing six men of her family. His lust for money and blood is quenched after the loot and murder; instead of killing the girl, he carries her off to quench his lust for sex. But in his attempt to rape her, he discovers that she is dead and just *cold meat*, which he himself becomes at the end. Even the readers become *cold meat* at the grave confession of Ishwar Singh.

Manto maintains the shocking suspense till the end very skilfully. Leslie Fleming says:

Tightly constructed, without a wasted word or action, with the suspense of Ishar Singh’s dilemma perfectly maintained, technically this story is one of Manto’s masterpieces. The beginning of the story sufficiently and quickly establishes Kulwant’s warmth, so that her later reaction to Ishar’s impotence is believable, while Ishar’s sexual powers are sufficiently hinted at to suggest that only a terrible experience could have robbed him of those powers. “Ishar Singh, his head bowed, was standing silently in a corner. His tightly tied turban had loosened, and the hand holding his knife was trembling a little, but it was obvious from his build and bearing that he was the most suitable man for a woman like Kulwant Kaur”. Although the reader thus understands the personalities of these two and rightly suspects with Kulwant Kaur that something is suspicious, even after she stabs him, what he has actually experienced is still a mystery. Consequently, totally unprepared for Ishar’s confession at the end of the story, the reader confronts with shock the revelation of the depths of depravity to which human beings can descend and becomes, like Ishar and the corpse, ‘ice cold meat’.

Alok Bhalla is of the opinion that *Cold Meat* suggests that ‘the inhumanity of the partition has so obliterated the moral realm that there is nothing left to retrieve and nothing to hope for; people are now so degraded that they can only act as beasts’.

"But there is some ray of hope for humanity in the story. It shows the transformation of human beings into beasts. . . . However, for Manto, Ishar Singh’s impotence is symptomatic of the fact that the voice of conscience had not been totally smothered. This carries some message of hope for humanity. . . . Ishar Singh suffers precisely because he still has some remnants of humanity left in him. In his defence of the story against charges of obscenity, Manto himself says:"

"The story seemingly revolves round one aspect of sexual psychology, but in fact, in it an extremely subtle message is given to man, that, even at the last limits of cruelty and violence, of barbarity and bestiality, he still does not lose his humanity! If Ishar Singh had completely lost his humanity, the touch of the dead woman would not have affected him so violently as to strip him of his manhood."

"But this hope for humanity is absent in Manto’s Open if , which is as shocking as Cold Meat. In the beginning, the story appears to be another story about a train tragedy like *Peshawar Express* by Krishan Chander or *The Train Has Reached Amritsar* by Bhisham Sahni. As usual, the special train from Amritsar (India) reaches Mughalpura (Pakistan) eight hours later. Many passengers
are killed, many are injured on the way, and a few are missing. Sakina, the daughter of the old man Sirajuddin, is one of the missing ones.

Sirajuddin wakes from his shock and finds himself on the cold ground of a refugee camp. He recalls the flames, the loot, the killing of his wife by the rioters before his very eyes, his and Sakina’s running for life, people’s mad rush for safety, railway station, firing, darkness, etc., but finding that Sakina is not there with him, he frantically searches for her in vain. He is in a desperate condition and needs sympathy and help from others, but everyone is in similar condition.

Finally, he finds some eight young men who are self-declared social workers and begs them to find his beautiful daughter Sakina for him. They promise him to find her. He prays for their success. After ten days or so, they do find her, who is shaken to the core, on the roadside in a jungle, treat her well, overcome her fears, make her confident, and take her in their truck to restore her to her father.

After many days, Sirajuddin again meets them to enquire about their search. They reassure him again of their sincere efforts to search for his daughter. He again prays for their success. The same evening, an unconscious girl is brought to the camp clinic for treatment. Sirajuddin walks in and finds out that it is his dear daughter Sakina. The doctor, feeling her pulse, and looking at the window, asks him to ‘open it’. The girl on the stretcher stirs a little; her lifeless hands involuntarily untie the waistcord/band and lower the salwar. Sirajuddin shouts with joy that his daughter is alive, but the doctor breaks into a cold sweat. The ravaging violence on her has been so severe that she is just alive to obey a particular command like a robot.

Sirajuddin finds his daughter at last, but the sharp irony is that he repeatedly prays for the success of the young volunteers and they repeatedly rape her, as if her trauma on the other side of the border is not enough already. What an irony! What an inhumanity! ‘She (Sakina) has been so brutalized and her relationship with language has become so tenuous that henceforth the phrase khol do (open it) will carry just one meaning for her to the exclusion of all others. The ending of the story stands as a telling epitaph to the death of civilized norms. The fact that Sakina’s immediate tormentors were, in all probability, Muslims themselves adds another poignant dimension to the story.’

The story is so structured that although Sakina always remains in the background (disappears actually) and makes only a brief appearance in the middle (and disappears again) and comes to the foreground and becomes the centre of focus only at the end, she is the real protagonist of the story. Despite Sirajuddin’s separation from his wife and daughter, his loneliness, his helplessness, his frantic search for his daughter, and his severe pain, he is not the centre of focus in the story.

The story reveals the dehumanization of human beings (especially men), the destruction of human values, and the ruptured human relationships. ColdMeat and Open It also highlight the fact that during the partition violence, the female body became a contested site for honour and dishonour, defeat and victory, and assault and conquest. It was a trophy for victory or a blot on the collective honour.
The story, as one critic puts it, 'not about guilt but it is powerful enough to make a whole generation feel guilty.' The story makes us shudder at the terrible experience of thousands of girls like Sakina and at the brutality of men who misuse the helplessness of women in such a pitiable and painful situation as the partition. Manto does not describe the rape, but by using a single phrase, *Open it*, brings out the heart-piercing trauma of Sakina. The phrase, *open it*, achieves the effect which a lengthy description cannot.

There are many other stories on the theme of abduction, rape, murder, amputation of limbs of women, forced conversion, and marriage. As a British officer said, 'the partition was more a war on the women’s bodies than anything else' (translation mine). It was most cruel that many men, seizing the opportunity of the anarchic situation and misusing the helplessness of women started raping the women of the other (sometimes their own) community to satisfy their beastly sexual desires. The villainy, cruelty, torture, atrocity, injustice, domination, exploitation, amputation of limbs, abduction, rape, and murder that the women suffered because of the partition are beyond human imagination. It is a disgrace on the world of men.

There are many stories like *Toba Tek Singh, The Wagah Canal, Our Country*, etc., which ironically bring out the meaninglessness, mindlessness, absurdity, and futility of the partition and its violence. Manto’s *Toba Tek Singh* is an allegorical story about the supposed exchange of lunatics between Pakistan and India after the partition. It relates the story of a Sikh lunatic with acid humour. Manto suggests that perhaps the lunatic represents any person that rationally thinks about the partition. The lunatics in the asylum of Lahore appear to be saner than the politicians and leaders who have been responsible for the great event, which has proved to be futile.

The story begins with a series of anecdotes (like those of *Black Margins*), which ridicule the politicians and leaders of both India and Pakistan and reflect the critical problems of identity both for the people and the places. To the question ‘What is Pakistan?’ by a lunatic, another lunatic answers that it is a place in India where razors are manufactured. They cannot imagine that Pakistan is a separate place from India. The narrator sarcastically ridicules all the sane men who have separated Pakistan from India. The inmates cannot understand all the fuss about separation, Pakistan, India, transfer, and uprooting:

Where was Pakistan? What were its boundaries? They did not know. For this very reason, all the inmates who were altogether mad, found themselves in a quandary; they could not figure out whether they were in Pakistan or India, and if they were in Pakistan, then how was it possible that only a short while ago they had been in India when they had not moved from the asylum at all. (p. 2)

They do not understand the newly drawn borders and the uprooting of people from their familiar socio-cultural milieu. The new borders and boundaries arbitrarily dissolved old identities as villages, towns, and cities allotted to this or that side; and the inhabitants moved to this or that side of the new borders. The borders separated friends and relatives, parents and children, husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters. The young lawyer, an inmate of the asylum curses all the Indian and Pakistani leaders for splitting the country into two, for, his beloved in Amritsar is now a Hindustani and he in Lahore a Pakistani. One lunatic climbs up a tree and when he is threatened to come down, still climbs
higher and with desperate rage says, 'I want to live neither in Pakistan nor in Hindustan—I will live on
the tree’ (p. 2). When he comes down, cries bitterly embracing his Hindu and Sikh friends as he is
saddened by their impending departure.

Another inmate, the old Sikh named Bishen Singh, but called Toba Tek Singh after the name of
his village, becomes anxious about its whereabouts:

He began asking people where Toba Tek Singh was, for that was his hometown. But
no one could answer that question for him. And if someone did make an attempt to
figure out the present status of Toba Tek Singh, more confusion would follow. It had
been rumoured that Sialkot, which was once in Hindustan, was now in Pakistan; who
could say where Lahore, which was in Pakistan today, would be tomorrow, and was
there anyone who could guarantee that both Pakistan and Hindustan would not
disappear some day? (p. 3–4)

Even his former friend and neighbour from his village, Fazal Din fails to give a definite answer.
He says it is ‘in Hindustan... Well, no, no, in Pakistan, I think’ (p. 6). And when Bishen Singh learns,
at the border, from an officer that it is in Pakistan, he refuses to cross the border. All the attempts to
reason with him fail. Even the threats to use force do not budge him. As he is a harmless man, he is left
standing by himself between the borders. And at the end,

... A piercing cry arose from Bishen Singh who had been quiet and unmoving all this
time. Several officers and the guards ran towards him; they saw that the man, who,
for fifteen years, had stood on his legs day and night, now lay on the ground, prostrate.
Beyond a wired fence on one side of him was Hindustan and beyond a wired fence on
the other side was Pakistan. In the middle, on a stretch of land which had no name,
lay Toba Tek Singh. (p. 7)

The attachment of Toba Tek Singh with his homeland is so strong in him that he dies without getting
separated from it and refuting the partition. Toba Tek Singh is really sane with his love and longing for
his village, while the men who divided the nation are insane. Discussing the story, Dr. Asaduddin says:

Toba Tek Singh has become a metaphor for the utter absurdity and mindlessness of
partition. The eponymous story is a devastating indictment of the amateur
statesmen and unscrupulous politicians, who draw shadow line boundaries between
peoples and countries. Their actions were so insane that even the hard core lunatics
of an asylum seem much wiser... Bishen Singh, the ‘mad’ protagonist of the story,
contemptuously refutes the verdict of the politicians to be divided between India and
Pakistan and prefers to die on the strip of land, which belongs to neither. This is
Monto’s symbolic rejection of the vivisection of the country and his considered
comment on the mindlessness of it.110

... The character of Bishen Singh is not depicted here in great psychological detail. Of his
background, his psychology, his thoughts, motivations, daily behaviour, we know little. All we really
know and see of him is his frantic attempt to learn from those around him in the insane asylum the fate
of his home, the village Toba Tek Singh... The reason for this is that the story is an allegory, and the
character of Bishen Singh is an allegorical one... The insane asylum is an obvious symbol for the
entire world, and indeed the institution here, with its inmates of various religions, political
beliefs, occupations (one is even a criminal) and temperaments, is a microcosm of Indian
society. Old Bishen Singh, isolated and bewildered, clearly symbolizes everyone caught up in the
partition experience. In his tenacious refusal to give up not only his home for the last fifteen years (the
asylum), but the country to which the very core of his identity, his ancestral village belongs, he stands
for all refugees, on both sides, who were forced to leave their homes and lost their identities... However, the allegorical nature of this story only partly explains its appeal. Three other elements contribute to the powerful effect it has had on readers. The first is Monto’s masterful use of irony... the visit of Bishen Singh’s neighbour informs the reader of the fate of the village Toba Tek Singh, but his confused response to Bishen Singh’s query does not communicate that to Bishen Singh. The reader’s foreknowledge makes Bishen Singh’s discovery at the end and his refusal to leave all the more poignant. Secondly, in contrast to stories like *Thanda Gosht* (*Cold Meat*) and *Khol Do* (*Open it*), with their brutally shocking endings, here Monto has used a delicately ambiguous ending, in which the phrase ‘lay Toba Tek Singh’ refers both to the man nicknamed Toba Tek Singh stretched out on the ground and to the piece of ground itself which has become for him the place Toba Tek Singh, where he most wants to be. Thus, in his death, he has finally reached his home in Toba Tek Singh. Finally, the reader of this story experiences a powerful shift in emotions as the story progresses. The vignettes and jokes with which the story opens are genuinely humorous. As the story focuses on Bishen Singh and his problem the humour is replaced by sympathy and concern for Bishen Singh. At the end, the reader admires his tenacity and mourns his death. With its irony, delicate ambiguity and swift movement from laughter at the beginning to the depth of feeling it evokes at the end, and with genuine emotions with which it deals, it is no surprise that the story has profoundly moved not only Indian and Pakistani readers, but American University students as well.

Commenting on Manto’s stories, Niaz Zaman says:

Moving from the black humour of the stories of the dog who belongs to neither Muslims nor Hindus and the madman who belonged to one country, and now belongs to another, to the tragic story of the girl gone mad after repeated rapes so that she no longer recognizes her father except as a rapist, Manto gives the starkest and bleakest pictures of partition.

Fikr Taunsvi’s story, *The Wagah Canal,* is a humorous and satirical representation of the narrator’s three visits to the border—the Wagah Canal—after the partition. The Wagah is a simple, silent, and gentle canal, which watered the fields and breathed life through the green crops before the partition. But after the partition and the formation of the two countries, it becomes a wasteland where troops, guns, and cannons are stationed. The narrator states that there was no earthly reason for India and Pakistan to be enemies and remembers what the Prime Minister of Great Britain said on the dividing line (The Wagah Canal): ‘It is not merely a line. On the contrary, it is a sacred link which will strengthen the bond of friendship between India and Pakistan.’ (p. 250). The narrator ironically makes fun of the fight between the common people of the two countries for protecting their religions and the elites of the two countries embracing each other. ‘Actually the real cause of a war was the clash of interests between the elites. Otherwise, how else one can explain that when the commoners are virtually tearing each other apart like wolves, the elites, overflowing with love and affection for each other, sit together in cozy comfort over tea’ (p. 251), and discuss how to bear the burden of the refugees and make profit under the new industrial policy. The real cause for partition was the self-interests of the leaders of both the countries. The common people were merely the victims of the holocaust caused by the clash of interests. The narrator is sharply ironical when he says that he is shocked to see the friendly gossiping and playing cards by the guards of both the countries who have been stationed there to protect their borders.
In his second visit, the narrator ironically pretends to be shocked at the people—Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims—carrying on their business in a friendly atmosphere. They exchange eatables, kheema, parathas and fruits happily. Many people freely cross the borders without any fear. They forget that they were enemies yesterday and narrate their tales of woe—tales of ransacked homes, burnt houses, dishonoured women, collapsed business, and separated parents and children, husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters, etc. A bearded Maulvi sells copies of the Vedas, the Geetha, and the Upanishads and a Sardarji sells copies of Quran, Majeed, and Hadith. There is a friendly hugging and exchange between writers from both the countries. The narrator ironically says that the earth does not shake at this. There is a neem tree at the borderline, which has spread its branches and leaves on both sides of the borderline. The narrator ironically suggests that the branches of the tree should be divided as Hindu and Muslim branches. There are more melons, mangoes, and parathas to share with each other than daggers, swords, and bombs to destroy each other.

In his third visit, all the signs and symbols that distinguish one country from the other are there at the border. There is no trace of melons and mangoes, but silence and desolation are present at the line. Friendly exchanges are not seen. Instead, there are tigers, lions, and elephants to protect the significance of The Wagah Canal and its beauty! The neem tree is no more. To the narrator’s question about the tree, the army sentinel asks who he is to interfere in the business of the two governments. In the core of his heart, there is a voice that says: ‘I am a branch of the tree’ (p. 255).

Humour and satire run through the story, which records the writer’s deep anguish over the partition, his acute sensitivity to human tragedies, and his intense feeling for the lost harmony. The story is an ironical comment on the futility of the partition and the meaninglessness of its violence. It uses the technique of first person narration and it looks more like an essay than a story.

Ibne Insha also expresses the meaninglessness of the creation of Pakistan in her very short short story, Our Country. The Pakistanis do not live in Pakistan as the Iranians do in Iran or the English in England or the French in France. But the Sindhis, the Punjabis, and the Bengalis live in Pakistan. Since the Sindhis, the Punjabis, and the Bengalis live in India also, what is the necessity of creating another country? The ironical answer is ‘Sorry, it was a mistake. We shall never repeat it again’ (p. 105). The irony becomes sharp when we think of the repetition of the mistake in the creation of another Pakistan in the name of Bangladesh.

Compared to the other stories about the partition, the Bengali short stories have been strangely silent about the partition riots and violence. Keeping them as background, these stories are concerned more about the far-reaching consequences and impact of the riots and violence. Even in the few stories, which deal with violence, looting and killings are shown off the stage. In this connection, Bidyuth Chakrabarty says:

While in most of the stories in the context of Partition riots in Punjab, violence seems to be an important, if not overarching, dimension of the human experience, Bengali stories are relatively free from violence in its crudest form. As violence is peripheral in most of the Bengali stories, killings are usually shown as ‘isolated’ events with a distant backdrop of partition riots. Even the death toll in Bengal was smaller than in the western part of India and there were no parallel massacres of people in the trains or in refugee camps.
Niaz Zaman comments:

Representative Bengali writing does not deal with riots and murders. Instead, in both the Bengals, East and West, the fiction is concerned with displacement rather than with violence and death. Despite the riots that occurred in Calcutta and Noakhali, the stories that emerged from Bengal have not been about looting and killing as about leaving and loss or, in the writing of East Bengali writers, either the hope of a new dawn or the search for a new identity. In the east, the business of adjusting to the new life took considerably longer and Partition was thus in a sense never really over.115

Debjani Sengupta observes:

In Bengali literature, partition is often seen in metaphysical terms—the hurt is not in the body but in the mind, the soul. Madness is not a trope in the Bangla stories, rather, it is nostalgia and a constant dazed search to know how and why and wherefore. Instead of a pathological experience, Partition is seen as a cosmological occurrence, a loss of a world rather than a loss related to prestige. Hence, Partition narratives from the two Bengals are less violent, less pathological than the narratives from the West.117

Hasan Hafizur Rehman’s *Two More Deaths*118 adds two more deaths to a number of partition deaths, but in a different way. These deaths do not take place in riots, but in the midst of migration to a safer place. The tragic irony is that the lives meet their end in the very attempts to protect themselves. The fear that is unleashed by riots and violence cause the deaths.

The narrator starts his train journey from Dhaka to India. Although the partition is just over, the times appear to be dangerous. As the train pulls into the station, a Hindu family consisting of a man, a woman and a girl of nine or ten get into a compartment which is full of Muslims. Finding no place, the woman tries to sleep on the floor near the door. It is a grim situation in which people look at each other with suspicion and are afraid of talking to each other. The faces of people are lined with terror. The Hindu family is trying to flee for safety. The narrator feels that the Hindu family has not bothered to hide that they are Hindus. ‘Have they forgotten that even a train can be dangerous?... For a Hindu, it is not a safe place... The man tries his best not to look at us at all—to steel himself to forget his anxieties and terrors’ (pp.124-125). Later it becomes clear to the narrator that the Hindu family had to flee in a train for safety because there were no other alternatives. Most of the people are sleeping in the compartment. Though the Muslim narrator longs to help the Hindu, he keeps silent for fear of disturbing the grim silence. Men could not help each other, though they wanted to. The partition resulted in such times. Humanity, pity, sympathy, and compassion were crushed. The narrator says, ‘But I don’t remember ever facing a more intolerable moment. I know this is because of the riots. The inhumanity we have all witnessed has crushed our souls’ (p. 125). At last, he signals the Hindu to come and makes him sit by making a little room for him. The Hindu is embarrassed and afraid of asking any other person to help his pregnant woman.

The woman, who is in labour pains and being unable to contain her pains, crawls into the toilet room. The narrator eagerly waits to hear ‘the wailing of a new born baby and the agonized cries of the woman’ which will shatter the heavy silence. This deathly quiet will be broken by the first mewl of a newborn. . . .But everything remains silent as ever’ (p. 131). The walking and the jerking train journey in the winter season result in the deaths. When there is death all around, the Hindu family has embarked upon its last resort to save lives, but only undergoes suffering and death ultimately. Though
the narrator longs to help, he cannot do anything in such a grim situation. He feels that the helplessness is hateful and guilty. The story "speaks of a pervasive melancholia that comes from a cramping sense of guilt. The silence could be the other side of it."^119

Stories like Manik Bandopadhyay's *The Final Solution*^120 and Pratibha Basu's *Floatsam and Jetsam*,^121 though mainly deal with the sufferings of the survivors, yet record the violence and violations caused by the partition; and the fears and horrors that the violence unleashed during the riots that accompanied the partition.

The partition, instead of solving any problems, has created many in India. The feelings of mutual suspicion, mistrust, and hatred created by the partition among the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs of India have not been shaken inspite of the secular and democratic system of polity. Many short stories, written after nearly four or five decades, show that the deep chasm created between the two major communities in India has not been fully cemented even today. The communal riots that break out here and there and now and then for silly reasons prove the point. Amarkant's story, *The City of Death*^122 makes the readers recall Intizar Hussain's *The City of Sorrow*. *The City of Death*, published in 1973, is a story about riots, terror, mutual suspicion, hatred, vengeance, and violence. The whole city is under curfew because of the riot. Here and there some people are stabbed. People keep indoors for safety. But the common people are forced to go out for work lest they should starve. The riot has ruptured the human relationships. Yet a bond of humanity develops in the auto, when the Hindu protagonist goes for work with a fellow commuter who is a Muslim. The story brings out the terror of a riot effectively.

Joginder Paul's story, *Asylum*^122 published in 1981, describes how the marriage of a Muslim youth with a Hindu girl triggers a riot and results in the destruction of the harmonious relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims. The new couple is mercilessly killed. The supporter of the couple, a Muslim woman, is raped, and all the Muslims of the village are uprooted and they seek shelter in a camp.

Thoppil Mohamed Meeran's story *Vettamangalam Elephant*^124 published in 1994, dwells on the intercommunity intermingling and the fusion of religio-cultural practices of the past and laments over the present fact that the elephant procession, once a joyous occasion for all the communities, now fills the Muslim community with terror and awe. The narrator feels sad at heart about his children who are caught in the communal hatred without any access to the vibrant cultural tradition.

Ramesh R. Dave's *Try to Understand Me, Sir*^125 published in 1995, brings out a pathetic picture of an honest and secular minded doctor who is doubted in treating a patient of the other community. The city is in the grip of riot, loot, arson, and violence in the wake of demolition of the Babri Masjid. The Muslim doctor, who has married a Hindu woman, does not even get an auto to reach the hospital. Even the neighbour’s little son asks him whether he is a Muslim. The child is under the impression that Muslim men carry bombs in suitcases and explode them. The patient's relatives pretend to be Muslims when they come to know that the doctor is a Muslim. They do not even allow the doctor's blood to be used in treating the patient. Sick of all this suspicion, terror, and hatred, the doctor resigns his job.
The linking of the partition violence with the present day violence is clearly established in Jayanta De’s *The Pendulum* published in 1995. The father of the protagonist, Madan Mohan Roy, taking the son of his son’s Muslim friend, Shamsuddin, to be a Hindu, recounts the story of the partition and the violence that the Hindus/Sikhs and the Muslims inflicted on each others. The boy himself has the experience of being a refugee in Bombay, where he was treated as an infiltrator from Bangladesh. Being irritated by the words of Madan Mohan Roy’s father, he charges two hundred rupees for the repair of the old clock. Later, Shamsuddin himself comes to Madan Mohan Roy to return the money. Avoiding his father, Madan Mohan takes Shamsuddin out of his house to meet some of their old friends. Though the story ends with a note of hope for friendly atmosphere between the Hindus and the Muslims, it makes it clear that the gap created by the partition has not yet been cemented completely. That is why, communal riots occur now and then and here and there. So, it can be said that the Partition is not completed, but is continuing. It means that our history has not taught us a lesson.

There are many other Partition stories, which deal with more or less the similar theme of Vengeance and Violence of the partition. They are all secondary in importance to the ones discussed so far. So, instead of looking at the stories of similar theme, it will be useful to look at the representation of the *Survival and Suffering* of the victims in Partition Stories in the next chapter.
References and Notes:

Note: All the textual citations are from the mentioned volumes unless otherwise stated.


5. Mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 377 (It is a description of the incidents of the riot on 16, August 1946 in response to the Muslim League’s call for Direct Action. It is in Bengali).

6. Mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 371 (It is written by Nanak Singh in Punjabi in 1949.)


8. Mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 377 (It is written by Nabendu Ghosh in Bengali in 1941).

9. Mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 375 (It is a play written by Lal Chand Bismil in Hindi in 1950).


11. Mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 379 (It is a play written by Salil Sen in Bengali in 1950).


15. Mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 47 (It is written by Krishan Chander in Hindi in 1948).

16. Mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 49 (It is written by Ramananda Sagar in Hindi).


33. Chenni, Rajendra, op. cit., p. 16.
38. Ibid., p. xv-xvi.
42. Asaduddin, M., op. cit., p. 320-321.
44. Joshi, Shashi, op. cit., p. 143-144.
46. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. xvii.
47. Joshi, Shashi, op. cit., p. 144.
54. Ibid.
56. Ibid., p. xxi.
57. Orphans of the Storm, op. cit., p. xii-xiii.


74. Manto, S.H. ‘Sharifan’. *Writing on India’s Partition, op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.


89. Fleming, Leslie A., *op. cit.*, p. 82.


95. Duggal, K.S. 'Kulsum'. *Orphans of the Storm*, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-97.
100. Fleming, Leslie A., *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.
106. See *Ibid*.
CHAPTER VI

SURVIVAL AND SUFFERING IN PARTITION STORIES

Oars have left all boats
And float in the current
Peepal branches with swings
Lie broken.

- Amrita Pritam

In the terrible floods of hatred, vengeance, and violence during the partition of the nation, nothing had any importance except survival and existence. It is quite natural for any living being to try to survive in times of danger and destruction. Saving life or survival became the most urgent need of the day. All the other superfluities of community, culture, and tradition (and even nation and religion) lost their significance in the face of the overpowering fact of the need to survive on an individual and family/group basis. That is why, the history of the partition of India has witnessed such a stupendous exchange of population across the newly created borders. 'In the space of a few months, about twelve million people moved between the new, truncated India and the two wings, East and West, of the newly created Pakistan.' Only for survival, people moved to safer places where they could be surrounded by people of their own religion and nation. In moving towards the people of their own kind, safety and survival were of primary significance. Nation and Religion were expected to give support, security, and safety to the refugees, who crossed the borders. It is for safety and survival only that many people became perpetrators of violence and made others victims. Killing others to save themselves is the shocking irony of the partition tragedy. Both the perpetrators and victims of the tragedy traveled in carts, cars, buses, trucks, and trains, ‘but mostly on foot in great columns called Kafikas, which could stretch for dozens of miles.’ A number of people lost their lives during the travel/migration and those who reached the safer places were able to survive.

But to survive was to suffer. Survival meant suffering in the aftermath of the partition. Even before and during the partition, suffering was intense and widespread because of the unbound and unprecedented violence. This chapter is confined to the discussion and study of suffering of the survivors only. The whole of the partition is a gigantic incident of suffering in India, which was truncated for the formation of Pakistan. The partition is the division of the nation to India and so the division resulted in distress for its people, who suffered much after it. But the partition is the creation of a nation to Pakistan and so the creation should have been a matter of great delight for its people. Yet, the refugees who fled India to Pakistan suffered a great deal. Shorish Kashmiri observes in Humiliated and Harassed They Left:

If the masses thought that the journey to Pakistan would be like a stroll in a garden, this was an illusion, something which people begin to nurse because of emotionally-surcharged slogans raised in communal politics. . . But the truth is that the promises made by the leaders were like the promises of a girl who makes and breaks them day after day.

The delightful promises made by the leaders were not materialized and the refugees had to suffer after their survival in Pakistan also. Survival meant suffering in both the countries.
The victims of the partition, who lost their lives, suffered a lot. All the accounts of their suffering were closed with their deaths. They completed their lives before clearly comprehending what happened and what would await their surviving posterity in future. The survivors, following the example of their martyred relatives, had to suffer in their lives the pangs of the partition till their own deaths.

The survivors had to suffer as they reached their places of safety as refugees with bare hands. They had to leave their homes, lands, business, and other movable and immovable property to save their lives. Millions of houses were looted and set on fire. They were forced to abandon their villages, home, and hearth. Even small pockets of money and jewels and small bundles of clothes and beddings were looted on their way to safer places. They became destitute overnight and reached their destination as refugees. The material loss reduced them to the position of orphans and most of them joined the refugee camps started by the governments to help them. The sudden loss of dignity and social status added to their suffering.

The material loss was compounded by the emotional loss of birthplace, homeland, heritage, tradition, and culture. The attachment with one's homeland has always been deep, strong, and great. The birthplace or homeland has been reverentially called motherland. The loss of such motherland—along with the centuries-old, ingrained heritage, tradition, and culture—added to the suffering of the survivors. The very roots of their lives grown deep into the motherland, heritage, tradition, and culture were snapped at once. They had been living in their homes on their dear motherland with their own honoured heritage, age-old tradition, and revered culture. Such a secured and happy life was ruptured by the partition and it left the survivors in deep distress to suffer.

The brutal killing of nearest and dearest persons in the partition carnage was a matter of great suffering for the survivors. The untimely, unnatural, and cruel death of close relatives and friends filled the lives of the survivors with tormenting grief forever. They had to live with only memories of the departed. Parents lost their children, children parents, husbands wives, wives husbands, brothers sisters, sisters brothers, etc. Bruised and battered, they reached the land of safety. "Each new arrival had a new tale to tell each ghastlier than the one we had heard earlier. Children would come minus parents and parents minus children. Survivors who were not physically maimed were so gravely wounded emotionally that survival seemed a torture." "The emotional pain of severence from home, family and friendships is by its nature immeasurable." Losing everything that was near and dear, the survivors became so dispirited and downhearted that there appeared to be nothing in their lives. Life seemed to be purposeless. A sense of nothingness enveloped their minds and hearts. There was no interest in living. Still, they lived because they could not deliberately put an end to their lives.

The survivors found themselves in severe economic difficulties. They lost everything, which was theirs. They reached safer places with only clothes on them with empty pockets. Their displacement and dispossession were the causes of their economic difficulties and destitution. For the time being they found shelter in refugee camps. They were able to get free meals to fill their bellies. With the passage of a few weeks, even there was no room in the camps for the newly arriving refugees. Many of them started living on railway platforms, bus-stations, and footpaths. They could not get work/jobs to earn their livelihood. Filling bellies became a great problem. Malnutrition and contagious
diseases gave their own contribution to their grief and suffering. Rehabilitation and resettlement of the refugees became a huge problem for the new governments. The pathetic sights of millions of refugees, the heart-rending condition of children whose fathers were killed and mothers abducted and raped and the miserable people handicapped both physically and mentally were common on both the sides of the new borders.

The ones, who did not leave their native places and migrate to safer places but chose to stay back, had to convert to the religion of the region. Along with forcible conversions, they had to marry the persons of the local community. "... A few who survived were converted to Hinduism. They were compelled to give their daughters in marriage to low caste Hindus." 17 Forcible marriages could never bring real happiness of wedded life to partners. Forcible conversions could never bring the sense of association/oneness to the converted. Being separated from their relatives, they became strangers in their own birthplaces and homelands. They were looked down on by the local community. They felt like fish out of water. A sense of loneliness filled their lives with grief. Urvashi Butalia, in her famous book, The Other Side of Silence, writes about her Ranamama. He was her mother’s youngest brother. At the time of partition he chose to stay back in Lahore, along with his aged mother Dayawanti, while all the other members of the family migrated to India. The family was divided and the divided members could not correspond for long and meet each other for decades. After 40 years, when Urvashi Butalia meets Ranamama for the purpose of her research on the partition, she comes to know how he has been living in Lahore. Ranamama tells her:

"... The only way I could have stayed on was by converting. And so, well, I did. I married a Muslim girl, changed my religion and took a Muslim name. ... One thing I'll tell you. I have not slept one night in thee forty years without regretting my decision. Not one night. ... Somehow a convert is never forgiven. Your past follows you, it hounds you. They never forgive you for being a convert."

Continuing her explanation, Butalia says:

"... Although he had told me that his home in Lahore was the only home he had ever known, it was to India that he turned for a sense of home ... while he continued to live on in the family home in Pakistan, his Watan (a Punjabi word which can mean home, country, land—all and any of them) became India."

His inner self was divided. This divided self made him an introvert. He could not forget his own religion and relatives and he could not identify himself as a Muslim in his mind and heart. This crisis of identity made him suffer intensely. He became a stranger in his own family. His own children grew suspicious of him. "For several of his family members, he was only the inconvenient owner of the property, to be dispatched as soon as possible." 18 In such a situation what a terrible life of suffering Ranamama had lived!

If this was the condition of Ranamama, what about his aged mother Dayawanti, who had been a mother of nine children—six daughters and three sons—and the wife of a successful medical practitioner? Before the partition, the death of her elder son, Vikram, and her husband had already made her retreat into her inner self and seek solace there. Then the partition separated her from her children and converted her to Islam. What an intense suffering she might have undergone till her death eight years after the partition! She died without even knowing anything about her children in India. The separation of relatives in families resulted in grief and sorrow for them for the rest of their lives.
In this connection Urvashi Butalia says:

I began to realize that Partition was surely more than just a political divide or a division of properties, of assets and liabilities. It was also, to use a phrase that survivors use repeatedly, a 'division of hearts.' It brought untold suffering, tragedy, trauma, pain and violence to communities who had hitherto lived together in some kind of social contract. It separated families across an arbitrarily drawn border, sometimes overnight, and made it practically impossible for people to know if their parents, sisters, brothers and children were alive or dead. A mother and daughter, separated in the violence of Partition, found each other fifty years later through the agency of a newsmagazine. . . A brother and a sister were brought together after fifty years at the border by the same newsmagazine. A father whose thirteen-year old daughter was abducted from Pakistan by Hindu men, made several trips to India to try and track her down. On one of these, he was arrested on charges of being a spy and jailed. His daughter was never returned to him.\(^1\)

It was a permanent separation of relatives. Most of them suffered and died with a heart-breaking longing to see their parents, children, sisters, or brothers. Partition brought in on such a permanent sorrow for the survivors. Partition is a story of broken families and divided hearts. It is a story of how people, who had lived together for hundreds of years, separated in such a way as not to be able to see faces of each other for the rest of their lives. Such a separation is bound to have brought in unbound sorrow. Stories of close relatives and friends meeting each other after five or six decades are now and then published in newspapers.\(^2\)

Millions of survived refugees suffered from severe mental trauma, which was a result of the permanent separation from all that was dear and near, and the deep sense of loss after they were forcibly uprooted from their birthplaces and homelands. To add to this, they suffered from a sense of alienation in the new homeland. Because of the loss of dignity and social status, the refugees were looked down on by the natives. They were ridiculed by their native neighbours. A common charge was that towns and cities became dirty due to the flooding of the refugees. The condition of the poorer refugees like petty traders, masons, carpenters, labourers, and others was beyond description. In Pakistan also, the refugees were derisively called by the term \textit{Mohajirin}. They were humiliated and often ridiculed by the natives. Thus, whether it is in Pakistan or India, the refugees could not develop a sense of belonging and a sense of rootedness. They were marginalized. They had to suffer all the difficulties of their own destitution and the native derision for sheer survival.

As a tolerable atmosphere was not there in the new places and as the refugees could not develop a sense of being rooted, they were tormented by the piercing memories of \textit{home} and \textit{homeland}, the acute agony of having lost them forever and a piercing desire to see them once again. The most pervading emotion that tortured the survivors was nostalgia, the memory of the happy past. It was memory that prolonged and intensified the suffering of the refugees. They were torn by nostalgia, an intense desire to build up new life, and a necessity of getting a new identity in changed circumstances. The English word \textit{refugee} and other words/phrases in regional languages like \textit{Mohajir} in Urdu, \textit{Nirashrith} and \textit{Anath} in Hindi, \textit{Udbastu} in Bengali, \textit{Mool Suta Ukhde} (Torn from the roots) in Gujarati, etc., signify the whole Partition history of the horrors of uprooting from the ancestral homes and property and the agonies of insecurity, humiliation, and suffering.

Even in refugee camps, the refugees suffered a lot. They lived in these camps in adversity and hoped for allotment of houses. Eight to ten families lived in each tent pitched for the purpose—all
huddled together. The food that was served was not of good quality. They had no proper clothes and
beddings. Their tents were exposed to the sun and rain. Life, in such unhygienic conditions, gave way
to epidemic diseases like cholera. Thus, malnutrition and contagious diseases added their own
contribution to the sufferings of the survivors in refugee camps.

The governments set up departments of rehabilitation to rehabilitate and resettle the refugees. They waited for a number of days, day and night, to get an allotment of a house and/or a piece of land. They had no money or capital to resettle themselves in life. There were no jobs and work for them. So, they had to wait for the government allotment of houses for residence, lands for agriculture, and loans for business. Some powerful, rich, and influential refugees got an allotment of spacious houses, big plots of land, and huge loans, while the vast majority of them got only tiny inconvenient houses, small pieces of land, and little loans of money. The allotment could not be impartial and the seeds of corruption and bribery were sown then in this nation. The refugees’ suffering in camps and the problem of rehabilitation are better expressed in the two stories by Fikr Taunsvi, which are later discussed in this chapter.

Women suffered the most in the tragedy of the partition. Women, who were considered to be the honour of their community or nation, were the main targets of inflicting violence/humiliation on the other community. Apart from thousands of women who were killed in the holocaust, more than 75,000 women were abducted and subjected to sexual savagery. These women survived, but were violated sexually by men of the other community and sometimes by men of their own community. Some of them were forcibly married and some others were stripped and paraded. Still some others were passed from hand to hand and sold openly. Some women were mutilated and disfigured. Limbs like breasts of women were branded with triumphal slogans or amputated. Wombs of some women were ripped open and foetuses killed. Women suffered all this inhuman cruelty for sheer survival.

The Governments’ Scheme of Recovery of Abducted Women proved to be their second dislocation in most cases. Somehow the abducted women had been used to their fate and lot. And their lives were again ruptured by the forcible recovery. Many of the recovered women were not accepted by their families. Such women were placed in camps and ashrams. Some of them had small children and some others were pregnant. Life was full of torture for them forever.

Women, who had male relatives like fathers, husbands, brothers, sons, etc., were, somehow, able to resettle their lives with the gradual passage of time. But those women who had lost their close male relatives ended up as prostitutes.

The children who lost their parents/guardians in the tragedy immediately became orphans and suffered a great deal. The children who were born of abductions and rapes were a great problem. Deciding the nationality to which they would belong posed great difficulties. People wanted to adopt only male children. Girl children were adopted with the intention of getting maids for domestic work. Having lost parents/guardians and their love and affection, such children suffered greatly.
It was women who suffered most. Yet it was they who picked up all the available tools to rebuild the home and life of their families. Despite the suffering, a radical recasting of women's identities was made possible by the partition. Forced by the pressure of the circumstances, women made a great psychological shift. 'The upheaval of migration uprooted them from their domesticity and they moved to the outside world, wanting to work and once again reconstruct their homes.' The seeds of equality of women with men were sown at the time of partition. Learning to earn made them courageous and stand on their own feet. In this connection, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin say:

Very large numbers of women who had never before stepped out of their homes joined the workforce after partition. Force of circumstances, economic necessity and the urgency to rebuild homes and futures pushed many women of all classes into earning and supplementing family incomes. This also resulted in delayed or no marriage at all for an appreciable number, although we have no statistics to prove this. Apart from the women who were trained and provided employment by the Women's Section (of the Dept. of Rehabilitation) there were thousands who rehabilitated themselves, so to speak, enabled to do so by the breakdown of traditional constraints on their mobility. They educated themselves, ventured out into offices, schools and colleges or hospitals—or stayed home, worked and made a living.¹

The partition resulted in nothing other than division, difficulties, distress, dislocation, dispossession, destruction, grief, sorrow, and suffering. This immeasurable human suffering of the survivors (and of course, of the victims/sacrificed) finds no expression in history. It is only the hi-story (i.e., the story of leaders, rich, high flown people at the high levels of the society and politics behind the partition) and not the low-story (i.e., the story of the vast majority of the common people at low levels of the society) of the people. The need to construct a glorious biography of the nation (both India and Pakistan) made it necessary that such a biography should remain unsullied by the memory of the tragedy of the partition. To glorify the triumph of nationalism, the tragic face of the freedom struggle required to be rendered invisible. In history, partition could be remembered only as a political and constitutional negotiation. History deliberately neglected the division, destruction, survival, and suffering caused by the partition. But literature has given expression to all the sufferings of the survivors. Short stories about the partition picture all the human survival and suffering in all detail, immensity, and intensity. They bring out all the aspects of survival and suffering discussed so far.

Manto's The Dog of Tithwa is a sad story of a dog caught between the Hindustani and the Pakistani troops at the Indo-Pak borders in a place called Tithwal, which is now in Pakistan. The two troops are entrusted with the task of border security. The beautiful nature appears to be disturbed by the occasional gunshots during daytime. The soldiers, being lonely and bored, long for a little fun and frolic. At such a time, a free and innocent dog, in search of a stray morsel appears on the Hindustani side, and the soldiers befriend it. They treat it with biscuits and consider it a poor refugee. On a piece of cardboard, the Hindustani soldiers write, 'This is a Hindustani dog' and tie it to the dog's neck. The rules of national boundaries of human world extend to the world of animals.

The scene shifts to the Pakistani side, where the dog reappears after a few days with the identity tag hanging from its neck. The Pakistani soldiers remove the tag and hang another tag saying, 'This is a Pakistani dog' and send it back to the enemy. The dog gets a new identity now. The problem of shifting identities of the victims of the partition is ironically hinted at here.
Looking through the binoculars at the dog, which is coming from the enemy side, Jan Harnam Singh of the Hindustani troops fires at the dog. The Pakistani troops retaliate by firing. Thus, both the sides begin a game of firing at the poor dog that starts running helter-skelter in a state of panic. Both the sides enjoy the confused and terrified state of the dog and laugh uproariously. shows the complete dehumanization of people and the reign of cruelty. Finally, the dog is killed by a shot from the Hindustani side. It becomes a martyr to the Pakistani soldiers and it dies just a shot death according to the Hindustani side. The unfortunate dog represents all the unfortunate victims of the partition and their merciless slaughter and suffering. A much simpler allegory, Toba Tek Singh, through the obvious symbol in the dog of all those caught in the crossfire of conflicting loyalties, the story makes a chilling assertion about the fate of those unable to commit themselves to one side or the other: those already committed will eventually kill the other. The sardonic remark, “Now even the dogs will have to be either Hindustani or Pakistani”, testifies to the absolutization of difference; the logic of national boundaries seems even to the creatures of the animal kingdom. The dog is explicitly described as a refugei vagabond status reminiscent of many refugees wandering about looking for shelter and food. The reader can make the inferences on the reality of widespread suffering on account of displacement as personified in the figure of dog. 

Manto has used the technique of balance in a very effective manner in this story. Even names and designations appear to be balanced: Harnam Singh-Himmat Khan, Banta Singh-Bimmat Khan, Jamadar-Subedar, Hindustani dog-Pakistani dog, and Chapad Jhimjhim-Sapad Sunsun. In the midst of the story is the innocent and unfortunate dog. To complete the balance, both the sides fire and laugh a terrified dog. Even the pathos of the dog and frivolity of the soldiers are balanced. The technique of balance has rendered the story interesting, in which, says Arjun Mahey:

a stray dog on the Indo-Pakistan border adopted by the peace-keeping border force of both countries, is killed by soldiers from either side who, out of boredom, and for fun, take stray shots at it and accuse it of treachery. The irony is that, the time when the enemies agree about something, is when they want to kill a creature which has been an unselfish friend to both; the indictment of treachery is one that can only recoil back onto them. The tones of pathos and savage frivolity are balanced and captured by the simple tactic of overlapping images of the dog’s woe with the soldiers’ indifferent brutality, counterbalancing simultaneously the ideals of death and diversion.

Syed Waliullah’s The Story of the Tulsi Plant pictures the plight, as the title signifies, of a Tulsi plant in the courtyard of a deserted house in East Bengal, which is now occupied by a group of Muslim refugees from West Bengal. The garden of fruit trees is sharply contrasted with the deplored condition of the refugees and the deserted house as well. The Muslim refugees live comfortably in a big house till they discover a small Tulsi plant, brown and dying, in a brick platform in the courtyard. It is to be uprooted immediately, some of the refugees maintain, because they can tolerate no Hindustani symbols. Some others think of the woman who must have tended that plant with reverence and light a lamp every evening at the base of the plant in devotion. They speculate where she is living now. The image of train that occurs in the story symbolizes the departure of the Hindu family with the mistress of the house. ‘But wherever she was, when the shadows deepened every evening, eyes would be brimming with tears at the memory of the deserted Tulsi plant in the house far away’ (p. 195). One of the Muslim refugees insists on not removing the plant, as the juice of its leaves...
effective in curing colds and coughs. And the other refugees are not hard-hearted. So the plant remains. Despite their heated discussions about which community is responsible for the partition, the plant remains there untouched.

The surprising thing is that the plant has been secretly cared, watered, and the weeds have been cleared by one of them, who has understood, with human compassion, the pain of the mistress of the house who tended the plant and of the forcible displacement of her family. In this connection, Bidyut Chakrabarty observes in his article:

What it is relevant to note is the underlying theme, articulated in the pain and agony of the Hindu family that had vacated the house and that of those who had occupied it. Their plight was the same. Both the families are victims of circumstances beyond their control and became homeless refugees with an uncertain future in an unknown place.^

The Muslim refugees are again displaced by the government order to requisition the house, illegally occupied by them. The government does not consider their pleas and protests. The refugees, now, do not remember either the tulsi plant or the tearful eyes of the grihakarti who tended it. The plant, again, is neglected and its leaves turn brown. The Muslim refugees are really worried about where to go after vacating this house. ‘This is where Waliullah is at his best in focusing on the trauma of human beings who became the first victims of partition. Just like the tulsi plant, which had a fresh lease of life due to the support of those who had occupied the house despite initial reluctance, the refugees, whether in Pakistan or India, were equally helpless in the radically altered circumstances. They were as ‘vulnerable as the Tulsi plant’...” Thus the tulsi plant symbolizes all the refugee victims of the partition who suffered accountable loss and indescribable anguish. The refugees are as helpless and vulnerable as the plant. ‘The life and well-being of the tulsi plant could not be insured by its own powers of self-protection’ (p. 198) and the refugees had no powers of self-protection. They were at the mercy of the situations beyond their control and suffered a great deal.

Intizar Hussain’s *An Unwritten Epic* is a story written in the form of diary entries by the writer who plans to write a new epic to immortalize in literature the loss and sufferings of the people of a village called Qadirpur with its bully, Pichwa, as the hero. The narrator’s intention to write the epic is an attempt to record his own inner struggle to come to grips with the events of the Partition after he migrates to Pakistan. Although his intention is not materialized, he is able to record the survival and sufferings of Pichwa, the fallen hero of the proposed epic.

During the riots, Pichwa makes all the possible efforts to protect Qadirpur with his battalion of wrestlers, when there are attempts by the Hindus of the nearby Lachmanpur village to attack Qadirpur. He takes extra care in arranging bandobast for the haveli in which all the women of Qadirpur are assembled. The instruction to them to jump into the well inside the haveli or hang themselves in case of an eventuality shows how women suffered and were forced to die in the name of honour of the community or religion. Pichwa ‘gets worked up about Pakistan though he does not have the faintest idea about its location and the consequences of such an eventuality. His frenzy has no personal or ideological reasons and he fights Hindus not out of any religious zeal but to prove that he is the best club-wielder.’ When the partition is announced and Pakistan is created, he wants to put up a
Pakistani flag on the peepal tree, which is near the Idgah. His intention is to irritate and insult the Hindus for whom the peepal tree is sacred. The people of Qadirpur have to reason with him and explain that Qadirpur is in India and not in Pakistan. He just cannot believe how Qadirpur (going by the name) can be outside Pakistan. Then he flies the flag of his wrestling party and does not allow the Congress flag to be flown on the peepal tree.

After the partition, many changes take place. Most of the Muslims, including Naim Miyan, Munshi Sanaulla, migrate to Pakistan. Even Pichwa, the hero, flies to Pakistan, but his heroism is not at all considered there. All his dreams of grand future are dashed to pieces. He is not received there as one who belonged to the new homeland. He remains an ‘outsider’. He cannot gain the former status in Pakistan. His attempts to get even a job and a house meet with failure. Even Naim Miyan, who has become an influential person, treats him as an outcaste and scolds him. ‘Everyone just marches into Pakistan expecting to get something, as if his father had buried a treasure here. They just don’t realize that there isn’t much room in Pakistan’ (p. 69). Being lonely, rejected, and frustrated, Pichwa longs for Qadirpur. He is displaced when he leaves Qadirpur and misplaced when he reaches Pakistan and destroyed when he gets back to Qadirpur. He returns only to be killed and hanged on the same peepal tree in Jatunagar, the new town in the place of the old Qadirpur. The change of name shows the total destruction of the old establishment and there is no hope for a renewal of it. The narrator’s compromise with the present authoritative system shows the end of human and literary efforts for such a renewal.

Dr. Asaduddin and Dr. Alok Bhalla express similar opinion about this story. Dr. M. Asaduddin says:

Finding that the village he [Pichwa] fought for is situated in India after Partition, he leaves for Pakistan with grandiose dreams of prosperity but feels greatly disenchanted to discover that he is a non-entity there. He has lost his status and identity, which was a social construct, and cannot find a place in the new dispensations in Pakistan. Thwarted in his efforts to carve a niche for himself, he feels nostalgic for Qadirpur and comes back only to find that it no longer exists and has been replaced by Jatunagar, the city of the Jats. He is murdered and his head hangs from the peepal tree. The violence in Qadirpur set off by Pichwa reaches its nemesis. The narrator’s own struggle to redeem the devastation of Partition, through the recuperative power of writing, goes on conjointly with the struggle of Pichwa and all his efforts to create a hero who could ‘fight the wind with a lamp.’ The wasteland of his memories becomes a burden and his world gradually becomes barren. There seems to be no possibility of renewal in the future.

Dr. Alok Bhalla says:

The cycle of degradation set off by the partition is completed, when the writer compromises with the local bosses and gets them to allot him a flour-mill which had been abandoned by its Hindu owners. While the narrator himself gives up the struggle for humane and literary values, Intizar Hussain sees in the very persistence of memories the possibilities of a different future.

Ibrahim Jalees’s *A Grave Turned Inside Out* describes the double migration of a Bihari Muslim woman, Ayesha—first with her husband from Patna (Hindustan) to East Pakistan and second with her husband’s friend from East Pakistan to Karachi, West Pakistan. The family migrates to East Pakistan with the expectation that there will be no pains of penury as promised by the Quaid-I-Ajam, the creator of the Promised Land. But there is not much change in their life. Their ‘hope of finding there a new world of Islamic brotherhood and economic equality’ is not materialized. They find
themselves, once again, in the same narrow lanes as the ones they had left behind in Patna. The family
learns Bengali and becomes a part of the culture and life of its new nation.

But, again during the language riots, after the formation of Bangladesh in the second Partition,
their Bihari identity creates problems for them. They are not treated as equals of the native Bengalis.
They become the victims of the riots. The same kind of violence, killing, abduction, rape, and
displacement, which happened in Bihar (during the first Partition), happen in Dhaka also (during the
second Partition). Ayesha’s husband is killed, her beautiful daughter is abducted, and she herself is
hijacked by her husband’s friend, who has evil intentions in his mind, under the garb of a lie of finding
her daughter in Karachi. Ayesha finally reaches Karachi with the expectation of a new life with her
dear daughter. She finds herself again in a hut in a slum, a Bengali settlement adjacent to a graveyard.
But two goondas masquerading as officials of the Land Department arrive and ‘in order to punish
Ayesha for illegally grabbing government land made a grab for the land of her body’ (p. 151). She is
raped and killed amidst her cries of protest and pain.

The people of the settlement give it out that Ayesha has died because of snakebite to save her
honour. The narrator is very ironical when he writes that the wives of the husbands, who come
forward to save Ayesha, request them not to make them widows in order to save a widow. The irony
is very sharp when the narrator says: ‘Yes, Ayesha had been bitten by a snake who had left behind his
underwear behind…. He was a funny snake….! He wore an underwear….!’ (p. 152). The hut itself
sinks into the earth and becomes her grave.

Ayesha’s life is compared to the inside of a grave turned out which means that she has been
living a life-in-death. The life itself is death-in-life. There are many people who live like this. Though
they live on the surface of the earth, they actually seem to spend their lives in graves.

The story is beautifully structured on the similarity of the two migrations and a vein of irony
runs through it. ‘The four walls of their small houses are but graves turned inside out. When these
people actually die, their grave-like houses sink into the ground, resume their original purpose and
remain proper graves forever’ (p. 142). And that is what happened in the life of Ayesha also.

Sultan Jamil Nasim’s *I Am Game* is a story, which moves on the same lines as *A Grave
Turned Inside Out*—Dakha, Khatmandu, and Karachi. The mother in the story is a widow with a
daughter called Afroze. ‘East Pakistan had become Bangladesh and those whom she regarded as her
own had become aliens. So much so that due to quirks of fate, people had become aliens in their own
country. With all the props of help gone, Afroze’s mother had to shift to a refugee camp where she
found herself face to face with starvation and where women were not above trading their bodies to
come by some money’ (p. 144).

With the help of her aunt’s son, Majid, she migrates to Karachi with Afroze, settles down in a
small house, sends Afroze to school and starts earning by tailoring. Despite her difficulties, she is still
beautiful. ‘No doubt, she had suffered much and undergone great hardships during four years since her
husband’s death. But neither these hardships nor the passing years had taken toll of her beauty.
she was as beautiful as before. But by the same reckoning, Time had worked the other way in her
daughter’s case. While it had stood still in her case, it had taken wings in her daughter’s case and she
was fast maturing into womanhood” (p. 146). When she requests Majid to help her in arranging
marriage of Afroze, he proposes to earn money by prostituting Afroze. The mother rejects his
proposal at once with hatred for her bhai, Majid. She has undergone all the sufferings and hardships
of life for the sake of her daughter only. And now her life itself is in danger of being spoiled. She takes
a firm on-the-spot decision to save her daughter. But after a few months of difficulties and starvation,
frustration overtakes her. All her principled life loses its integrity and she makes the last attempt to
save her daughter by bringing herself ready for prostitution instead of her daughter. ‘The mother, a
hard working woman of staunch principles, is so bruised and battered by circumstances that she is
ready to prostitute herself in order to save her daughter from a similar fate.’

Umm-e-Ummara was born in Bihar. After the Partition, she migrated to East Pakistan and
after the second partition, i.e., the creation of Bangladesh, she migrated to Karachi, Pakistan. Her
story More Sinned Against Than Sinning is the story of the migration of a Bihari Muslim family to
East Pakistan, its settlement there, its assimilation of Bengali culture and its final destruction as the
outsider by the natives. The family is a well-to-do family whose head has been working in East
Pakistan for some years. The notable point is that the family migrates without suffering any violence, as
it is a rich family. And rich people suffered less violence than the poor and common people. But the
pain of separation from the native place is similar to all classes of people. The Bihari family, especially
the mother, suffers pangs of pain to go away leaving behind the dear things—haveli, the lands, the
property—and snapping the deep roots in the culture and traditions of the life and clime. ‘This earth
no longer belongs to us’, says the head of the family, ‘we are aliens in this country’ (p. 102). The
narrator—the daughter of the family—does not understand ‘why Baba thought that his own home was
a place of exile’ and wonders ‘how a world, which was so familiar, had suddenly become a world of
strangers.’ (p. 103).

The family migrates and settles down in East Pakistan and happily learns the Bengali language
and assimilates the Bengali culture and becomes a part of the Bengali soil to strengthen its roots. Yet
the head of the family suffers from a sense of alienation. He says, ‘My experience has taught me that
even if we take root in this soil, we will always be regarded as transplants. A grafted tree can never be
regarded as anything else’ (p. 111). Despite the involvement of many of its members in the liberation
struggle of the East Pakistan from the oppressive rule of the West Pakistan, the family finds no
acceptance in the country. The homestead of its eldest son is burnt along with his beautiful and lovely
children. The younger son lives in fear of being arrested. The narrator’s belief that ‘the roots of the
tree of hatred were shallow and weak... that the differences between natives and outsiders would
vanish... that the walls of hatred will soon break’ (p. 113) is dashed to pieces. The strange fact is
that both the perpetrators of violence and the victims of it belong to the same community and
religion. Dr. Asaduddin says, ‘What is of special significance about these stories (A Grave Turned
Inside Out, I am Game and More Sinned Against Than Sinning) is the fact that the oppressor and
the oppressed belong to the same religion. Religion is not the cause of hatred, vengeance, and
violence in these stories.
Kulwant Singh Virk's story, *Weeds* gives a graphic picture of human life in Pakistan after the partition. It begins with, 'This is a story about Pakistan. Pakistan had only been created about three or four months before. Every town there seemed desolate and ruined' (p. 203). Household articles—trunks, cots, stools, tables, sofa sets, almirahs, pictures, etc.—were laid outside the police stations and in public squares. They had been displaced from their original places and houses and dumped in heaps in strange places. Along with the household articles, their owners and their families had also been uprooted and displaced. The narrator gives a graphic picture of the destruction:

All the towns and villages in Pakistan seemed desolate and forlorn. Its ruined and burnt houses were now inhabited by people who had been uprooted from their own homes elsewhere. They often sat at the doors of their new houses and looked out at the world with despair and sorrow in their eyes; and when they walked, they placed their feet upon alien soil with fear and apprehension. In those strange, confused times only the earth still seemed to have stayed firmly in its place. Everything else was out of joint. (p. 203).

The uprooted refugees moved from one place to another till they could find a hovel, which could give them shelter.

The human life was so ruptured that even those who had not been uprooted but stayed in their own homes felt as if they had lost their bearings. 'Communities had been scattered, friends had lost each other, factories had been abandoned by their owners, labourers had run away' (p. 204). All the towns and villages were filled with strangers—the refugees. They could not get along with the local people and their customs and traditions. The natives treated them as aliens. Sometimes they themselves felt alien, 'for they could no longer recognize the places where they had been born and had grown up. The old havelis were now occupied by strangers, the rivers and the canals, which flowed past their towns and villages, were polluted. Indeed, they had not been able to perform their daily rituals in the rivers and the canals, because for days the water flowing through them had been reddened by blood and befouled by the bodies of men and women who had been mutilated and killed.' (p. 204).

Thus, the life after the partition was full of difficulties and sufferings. Yet there is a hope in the story that the human life would grow and be stable again. 'No matter how grim the tragedy, the human spirit can never be extinguished.' (p. 205).

The narrator visits a remote village in Pakistan as liaison officer from the Government of India to trace and recover abducted women, children, and forcibly converted persons. One abducted woman has been living in desperate conditions. She has been running a temperature for many days. There is no one to look after her though she has been living in the family of her abductor. She was abducted after the people of her village and the members of her family had been slaughtered. She has been raped, humiliated, and converted to Islam. She has not even dreamt of coming back to her native land. She has been living a sad and solitary life having none to call her own. She asks the liaison officer to do her a favour as a Sikh brother, for she too had been a Sikh once. She requests him to recover her dear sister-in-law who has also been abducted and now been living in a nearby village so that she can have someone who will be her own. She hopes to find a match for her sister-in-law. The story ends with the hope that the human life will grow again despite all the disruption, destruction, and suffering in the same way as the weeds sprout again and again despite the farmer's repeated attempts to weed (uproot) them.
Mulk Raj Anand’s *The Parrot in the Cage* brings out the survival and suffering of an old servant woman. She is an orphan without any relatives of her own, except the parrot in the cage, which she has been looking after as her own son. Though she is an orphan, she has been living independently by earning her living as a maid, cleaning utensils in the big houses in the lane in Lahore.

The partition riots and violence begin. The Hindu-Muslim (communal) hatred/vengeance is so strong that even the old orphan Hindu woman has to escape disguised as a Muslim woman in a *burqa*. The escape had to take place in such urgency that she could not even tie the rupees, she has earned, in a knot on her *dupatta*.

She reaches Amritsar with her caged parrot. She waits for the Deputy Commissioner to beg him for some money to buy food. The heat of hunger inside and the cracking flames of the hot sun outside assail her. When the Deputy Commissioner arrives in a car, creating a cloud of dust behind, she shoots herself forward to beg him. But she cannot elbow her way in the midst of the rushing storm of refugees. They are all hungry and eager to get help from the Deputy Commissioner. When the crowd of refugees turns uncontrollable, the policemen charge them with lathis. The refugees run helter-skelter in panic. The old woman is brushed aside and she falls on the ground. The keeper of the gram-stall nearby, who has been observing this old woman, fears that she is dead, comes near her and finding her still alive, lifts her up. He makes her sit under the shade of the tree and gives some gram to the parrot. The parrot has been mechanically asking the old woman where she is and what she is doing. She now answers it by saying that she does not know where she is and does not know what to do. The Partition uprooted, dispossessed, and displaced millions of people, turned them into refugees overnight, and reduced them to a state of confusion, panic, and anguish. They did not know where to live and what to do for livelihood. Suffering and suffering alone was in store for them. It was a hell of torture for the refugees before getting into the refugee camps set up on both the sides of the border by the governments.

Kulwant Singh Virk’s story *You Know Me?* brings out the tragic life of a dislocated refugee who lives his death-like life as an alien who does not have any relatives, friends, or even acquaintances. The narrator’s casual question about the hill in his native in West Pakistan injects life into the worn-out, battered, and featureless refugee, who immediately asks, ‘You know me?’ The very cheer of having found someone who knows him speaks volumes of his sufferings as a lonely alien in an alien land. This acquaintance makes him a normal human being and revives the zeal of life in him. He starts plying a rickshaw, earning more money and takes a room on rent. He develops the acquaintance into a kind of friendly attachment. After the suggestion of the narrator, he starts saving money to marry. He feels conscious for the first time after he has crossed over to this country. He has been in a kind of coma so far. Like *Weeds,* this story also ends with the hope of renewal of human life despite the rupture and loss.

Amrit Rai’s *Filth* is a story that ironically brings out the hypocrisy of four appear-to-be gentlemen from their indulgence in conversation about the bravery of men in killing men of the other community and dishonouring their women during the partition riots. The gentlemen are cultured and civilized people. They are decent in their dresses and demeanours. ‘Indeed, they are, in every way, respectable citizens of society. . . . It’s another matter that in the privacy of their homes, they torment
their wives, stare lustfully at the wives of other people, tell each other such filthy jokes that even a horse-cart driver would stop his ears with hands in embarrassment, and that when they are with people of their own kind, they don’t mind vomiting out all the dirt that is inside them. Of course, when it suits them they keep their lips sealed. . . . When their great souls open their hearts, however, they infect everything around them with all that is foul and stinking’ (p. 113).

The four men, who ‘are genuinely upset when they hear news of violent riots or killings’ (p. 113), indulge in talks about the riots in Punjab and communal killings and abduction of women in these riots. Earlier, ‘only a few girls used to be kidnapped, and there were only a few incidents of brutalities, now more than a lakh of women had been abducted and the incidents of barbarities were so many that it was difficult to keep count of them. Also, whereas in the past, only Muslim goondas had been courageous enough to do such deeds, now even the Hindus and the Sikhs had a hand in them and had proved to the Muslims that they were not only as brave as they were, but were even greater goondas!’ (p. 115). The four men listen to each other’s stories about killing men of the other community and abducting and raping women of the other community, ‘smacking their lips with an epicurean delight’ (p. 115). A vein of strong irony runs through the story. It is very ironical when the narrator says:

Then Harbans told them softly, in whispers, passionate stories about Muslim women who had been abducted in West Punjab . . . how many had been sent to brothels . . . how the heads of those women who had protested had been separated from their bodies, and how even those who had quietly submitted their youthful bodies had finally been sent to Hell. (p. 118).

The story ends with an ironical suggestion that there will be a new animal in the Calcutta Zoo next year and the hint that the new animal is none other than the MAN. The story is also a comment on how the serious and sad stories about violence, communal killings, abduction, rape, and sufferings of the partition victims become the subject matter of casual conversations in a train journey.

Kamaleshwar’s How Many Pakistans? describes how the creation of one Pakistan multiplies itself into numerous Pakistans and disrupts the intermingling of Hindus and Muslims and separates them with piercing pain and severe suffering. The protagonist Mangal and his love Bano have been friends since their childhood. By the time the partition results in communal tension, Mangal and Bano ‘suddenly cease to be children’ (p. 175) and their meetings become the subject of gossip in the village. Their love affair becomes the talk of the people and the tension mounts up. Despite the absence of any opposition from the families of the lovers, marriage is out of question. For the sake of saving his life and to prevent the supposed riots, Mangal has to leave the village at late night hours. And the lovers never speak to each other. The narrator laments, ‘O God! You don’t know how many Pakistans were created along with the creation of that one Pakistan. In how many hearts in how many places. The creation of that one Pakistan solved nothing. It merely confused everything. Now nothing is what it seems to be’ (p. 173). The Pakistan separates them and always interferes in between them and keeps them separated. ‘Alas, Pakistan is the name of that reality which separates the two of us . . . It’s the blank void between our families . . . ’ (p. 174). The tracks of their lives take different routes, for their roots of life have been destroyed. The protagonist says:

The truth is that Pakistan had pierced through my heart like a sword that day. I know that people had been forced to convert; had changed their names; had been
killed... shame, fear, anger, tears, blood, madness, love— all these had been burnt into my soul that day. To tell the truth, even if I had been able to possess Bano after that day, it would have been worthless. I would never have been able to recover the past again. (p. 178).

The past of harmony, cordial relationships, and calm establishment has been ruptured beyond recognition and recovery. In spite of the protagonist’s running away from the village, the riots occur. Both the families have to migrate from the village, Chinar, along with many other families. The relationship between the two families is so cordial that they live together in a house in Bhiwandi. Bano’s father has not stopped writing *Bhartrhari Namaha*. He is a perfect example for Hindu-Muslim harmony.

After five years, Mangal goes to Bhiwandi to see his father. The whole town is under the grip of communal riots. Bano has escaped the riots with life though her baby died. Bano had given birth to a child in Dr. Sarang’s Nursing Home, three days before the riots erupted. The rioters had set the Nursing Home on fire. Pregnant women had jumped out of the second story to save themselves. Some women had even thrown their newborn babies out of the windows. Two women had died. Five children had been burnt to death. Bano’s baby, too, had died when she had thrown him out into the street below. There was a massacre. Bano had somehow managed to escape and reach home safely. Now, her breasts were full of milk and she was in agony’ (p. 186). Mangal unexpectedly looks at Bano who writhes in pain. It is Pakistan, which has caused her baby’s death and her agony. Her husband, Muneer, has been in the habit of selling his blood for his drinks and shivers all through nights. ‘Each one of us was in agony, each of us had made our own Pakistan. We had all been disfigured. Mutilated. Crippled. We were only half alive.... What an awful age we live in.... And what a strange creature man is! Disfigured, crippled, bloodied, he continues to live’ (p. 187), groans the protagonist. He leaves for Pune without even talking to Bano.

After five months, the protagonist receives a letter from his father about his coming back to Bhiwandi. He also comes to know that Muneer and Bano have left for Bombay on their way to Pakistan. On his way to Bhiwandi, he stays in Bombay with his friend Kedar for a few days. Along with Kedar, he visits a house of prostitution where he meets Bano at the door of a room asking Kedar, ‘Is there someone else?’ His attempts to find a place where there is no Pakistan prove futile. ‘Pakistan is everywhere. It inflicts wounds on you and me. It humiliates us. It defeats us everywhere’, laments the protagonist. He, having lost his village, his home, his love, and his cultural roots, wanders with a broken heart like an orphan. Though he works in Bombay and later in Pune for his livelihood, his life never takes roots into the new land. The lives of the two lovers have been destroyed permanently.

Sukrita Paul Kumar says:

Even though Kamaleshwar’s story *Kitne Pakistan? (How Many Pakistans?)* may here and there demonstrate, as some critics opine, a hypnotic fascination with horror, it is a story that gives us an insight into how that horror creates a particular kind of a human psyche. Most stories on this theme remain trapped in mere descriptions of horror that can only feed further horror. A zone of silence between two lovers caused by a rupture of communication is described by Kamaleshwar as what may be represented in the idea of the ‘birth of Pakistan’. The author successfully describes various shades of the meaning of Pakistan in poetic terms. ... Many Pakistans erupt
in individual psyches with the creation of one Pakistan complicating and disturbing the harmony of thousands of relationships. . . . The desperate quest for a place where there would be no Pakistan ends with the conclusion that everywhere there is a Pakistan that constantly beats one up, humiliating and desensitizing one. The story does well in projecting the process of internalization of the creation of Pakistan depicted in the narrator's monologue.\textsuperscript{37} 

Dr. Asaduddin is of the opinion that in Kamaleshwar's \textit{How Many Pakistans?} one can see how the lives of the Muslims and the Hindus were intertwined and how the geo-political partition divided humanity into a thousand fragments.\textsuperscript{38} The creation of Pakistan and its ravaging effect on the smooth flow of human life and emotion find an artistic representation in this story.

In Giani Gurunukh Singh Musafir's \textit{The Broken Shoes}\textsuperscript{39}, the protagonist, Vairag, has been using the broken shoes for the memory of Nooro who has made them and who is now in Lahore (Pakistan) because of the partition. \textquote{Memories know no barriers of national frontiers. Memories disregard passports and visas} (p. 195). Vairag has kept Nooro safe and warm in his memory. His bhabi's efforts to throw the broken shoes away fail, for the next day they will be found in the same place.

Vairag developed tender feelings towards Nooro and built up good relationship with her parents. He went to the extent of eating in her house, and thereby, broke the Hindu restriction on eating and drinking in Muslim houses. Now the restrictions and prejudices in respect of eating and drinking are got over. \textquote{But we have become}, his bhabi laments, \textquote{victims of the most heartless restrictions of borders and boundaries, passports and visas. One cannot go even to one's place of birth freely anymore.} (p. 199).

When Vairag and his bhabi go on a pilgrimage and arrive at Rawalpindi railway station, Nooro and her father, Seraj, come to visit them. Nooro has now become Noor Bhari and has a baby. Seraj presents to Vairag a pair of shoes made by Nooro before her marriage. All of them make their pilgrimage to Panja Sahib. After the pilgrimage, they no longer talk about the broken shoes because there is a new pair.

Had the partition not taken place, Vairag would have married Nooro and set a good example for Hindu-Muslim amity. But the Partition takes place and they have to suffer the pangs of separation.

Imadadul Haq Milan's \textit{The Ballad of Sonadas Bari}\textsuperscript{40} is another story, which describes the indirect effect of the partition on a native of East Pakistan. The protagonist, Sonadas, does not remember his parents or any other relatives. He is old and is in the employ of Gaganbabu, an efficient businessman. Sonadas was a beggar, who used to beg by singing and entertaining people in the market place. He could not marry because he could not feed his wife. When old age embraced him, no music was left in him. Then he started living in the go-down of Gaganbabu, running errands for him. Gaganbabu has given refuge to Sonadas. Otherwise he would have died a long ago.

Gaganbabu has been an efficient businessman by using all and any vile means to make profit. He has not worried about the way the other go-down owners sniggered him. He has a sweet tongue
to mesmerize his customers. He has been making much money out of his business. After the partition, he bought a three-storey house in Kolkata and sent his wife and children to live in the house. But he stayed back to continue his business. Year after year, he has been stowing money away to Kolkata. He has been refusing to accept the rumour in the market that Gaganbabu too will leave one day to join his wife and children in Kolkata. He has often said, 'I won’t leave. I was born here, grew up here, this is my land. Why should I leave? I won’t. I can’t.' (p. 171).

Sonadas knows all the tricks and vile means used by Gaganbabu in his business. He sees, hears, and knows everything, but pretends neither to see nor hear nor know. Because, if Gaganbabu gets angry and throws him out, where can he go at this age? So, he honestly does everything for Gaganbabu without complaining.

But one day, Gaganbabu actually leaves for Calcutta, selling his go-down and making Sonadas a refugee. He becomes a refugee in his own homeland. In this huge world and at this old age, there are no people and places for him to go. He really becomes an orphan. He can die, or become only a beggar again to live. Either way, he has to suffer.

In Homen Borgohain’s story, In Search of Ismail Sheikh, the narrator, in the process of his search for Ismail Sheikh, accidentally enters the haveli of a whore on whose bed lies Alberto Moravia’s novel, Woman of Rome. Being curious about this, he is tempted to exchange a few words with her. She, too, has been in search of a man whom she can confide to. Deciding that the narrator, who does not want to hurt her by probing into her personal life, is the right person, she confides in him.

There is an interesting contrast here: it is a search that brings the narrator to her: while she has been running away from a man, the narrator is running after a man. She thinks that the man, if he finds her in her present position, will kill her. She is not afraid of death, but of the terrible shock that he will get on seeing her. That man is a Brahmin and a Sanskrit scholar, who is none other than her father, Annadacharan Mukhopadhay. As refugees from East Bengal, the father and the daughter arrive in Calcutta and take shelter in the Sealdah station. She gets separated from her father when she sees him eat the leftover morsel given by a prostitute. She says, ‘I took a leap into the heart of darkness, not out of hatred but deep sorrow. In that single leap I descended from the sacred height of a Brahmin’s house to the depth of a prostitute’s room’ (p. 231-232). Not willing to burden her father, she becomes a prostitute. She thinks she can never see her father again. But, one day, she sees him carrying two women on a cycle rickshaw in Gauhati. Without being noticed by him, she notices a restless gaze in his eyes for his daughter. The father is after his daughter, but she turns away from him. The migration separates the father and his daughter and both of them suffer the pangs of separation. While the father suffers the pangs of poverty with hard work beyond his age, the daughter also suffers by selling her body to customers. The Sanskrit scholar becomes a rickshaw puller and his daughter a prostitute. The Muslim goondas ruined her life and forced her and her father out of East Bengal. There is no help or end to their suffering.

The story of the suffering of the Hindu daughter and her father is balanced by the story of the suffering of Ismail Sheikh, a Muslim, who migrates to Assam from East Bengal. He was a slave to a
landowner, and learning that hundreds of acres of land was fallow in Assam, migrates with hundreds of
landless peasants like him to Assam. They set up settlements in the dense forests of Assam. They
struggle hard to build up their life. The Brahmaputra overflows and devours their arable land. In the
cholera that breaks out, he loses his wife and a twelve-year old son. The landless refugees, now,
appeal to the government for land, but there is no response. ‘For sheer survival, they decided to
transgress the law and encroached upon the government-protected pasture land’ (p. 235). The
narrator, an official entrusted with the task of removing such encroachments, orders all the huts to be
demolished, against his wish not to ruin these pitiful and harmless inhabitants. Ismail Sheikh requests
the narrator to spare his hut so that his children, who are down with smallpox and who have not eaten
a square meal for a long time, can die peacefully. The narrator orders to do so, but his hut has already
been pulled down. Ismail Sheikh, who is shattered to hear this, says:

Dear God, I wandered around the world for their sake, abandoned my country, lost my
wife to cholera, today you didn't even leave a thatch-roof over these motherless and
sick children for them to die in peace. (p. 236).

The next day, the narrator is shocked to see the dead bodies of Ismail’s children, lying in the courtyard.
But Ismail Sheikh is not found. From that day, the narrator has been searching for Ismail to apologize
to him on behalf of the inhuman law and the law-enforcing agencies.

The narrator gives an economic dimension to both the stories of migration of Annadacharan
Mukhopadhay and Ismail Sheikh. The college student, the only one, other than the narrator, to whom
the prostitute has confided, could not understand why she is sorry for her father’s becoming a
rickshaw puller and herself a prostitute. He argues:

People from the lower classes change their vocation in life on a daily basis. Circum­
stances force a peasant from a village or a factory worker to take to driving a rick­
shaw... If a Brahmin is compelled to pull a rickshaw, it may be tragic for that indi­
vidual, but not for the society at large. For five thousand years, the high-caste people
have, after all, lived off other people’s labours without doing manual work. In the
beginning, they did so, on the ostensible plea that they were transmitters of knowl­
dge. Later they used their status as a deceitful ploy. Now, of course, the social
structures are collapsing. It’s good if a Brahmin is driven by hunger to become a
rickshaw-wallah. This is how people’s thinking would change. (p. 232).

The narrator also looks at both the migrations equally. Annadacharan had been driven out on
the point of a sword. So also Ismail on the point of an invisible sword, which he calls the conspiracy
of history—a history that is controlled and guided by a handful of landlords and capitalists’ (p. 234)
who made people like Ismail their slaves for ages. The tears shed by Ismail’s wife and Annadacharan’s
daughter at the time of leaving their birthplace had no religion. ‘They were neither Hindu nor Muslim
tears’ (p.234). The pain of separation from their birthplace and the suffering that filled their lives
afterwards is similar for both the Muslims and the Hindus. ‘The blood that painted the highways of
Dhaka red had a religion. It was Hindu. At the same time, the highways of Delhi were also being
splashed with blood. That blood was Muslim.’ (p. 234). The religion had been used by upper castes
and classes in all communities to exploit the people of lower castes and classes. The higher castes and
classes had been enjoying all the comforts, luxuries, and pleasures to the distress and suffering of the
lower castes and classes.
The narrator is of the opinion that religion was made to act like opium in making the people forget humanity and sympathy. He says:

The gold accumulated in Hindu temples for ages can release millions of people from the hell of poverty. But keeping guard at the door of the temples, stand the brokers of religion, the Brahmin priests. . . . The Muslims of East Bengal stained their hands with Hindu blood in the name of religion. The fact is that the leaders had made them drunk on the wine of religion. If not dead-drunk, how could one rape a woman about to give birth to a baby? (p. 235)

The narrator who runs into the prostitute in his search for Ismail learns about Annadacharan. The amazing thing is that both Ismail Sheikh and Annadacharan Mukhopadhay are one and their tale is similar. Both are victims of the conspiracy of history. He wants to find out both of them now. He wants to find out millions of Ismals and Annadas. More than that, he wants to find out their enemies who have been responsible for their suffering and are the enemies of humanity as well.

Fikr Taunsvi’s The Book of Knowledge is an imaginative story that brings out the tragedy of the partition and its meaninglessness. Man’s responsibility for the tragedy is satirically transferred to the Lord God. The story is divided into four parts. In the first part, Genesis, Taunsvi describes the origin of the partition and in the second part, The March of the Caravan, the sufferings of the refugees in the process of migration to new homeland for safety and survival. (The first two parts have already been discussed in the previous chapter).

The third part, The Refugee Camps, brings out the sufferings of the refugees in camps, where they live in adversity. Their tents made of cloth are exposed to sun, rain, and winter. In each tent live more than ten families. Wheat flour, grain, and clothes are supplied. But the wheat flour is full of stones and the cloth is not sufficient to cover their bodies. Their faces are pale and their eyes are full of bewilderment. An expectation of burnt rotis, dal, and rice always peeped in their half-open lips. ‘And the women with silken bodies, who had never stepped out of their homes, were clad with rags’ (p. 107). They learn to be patient, hungry, and clothedless. Diseases like cholera and malaria break out and many of them die of the diseases. Yet they are silent. Silence is imposed on them, for the narrator ironically says, ‘it is written in the holy book that silence is the sign of profound wisdom and insight’ (p. 108). They are ordered not to create trouble for their country.

Even after six months, they live like savages. They are accused of being a nuisance for the whole country. They are considered to have become lazy, being fed on the rations supplied freely. They want to work, but finding no work, they grope in dark. Their efforts, put in according to the advice of the leaders, are in vain. They are humiliated and disgraced. The new land has not become their motherland. Their souls still dwell in their former homes; only their bodies are in the tents. Finally the tents are removed and the refugees are dispersed.

The final part, The Rehabilitation, brings out how the problem of the refugees was solved eventually. The department of rehabilitation divides the refugees into different categories. In villages, ‘the land lay devastated and barren. Not a grain grew on it, as if it had been cursed. Homes lay broken, battered.’ (p. 109). The refugees are sent to these villages. The refugees want to share the
land. The narrator sarcastically says that this will create harmony and fellowship between the people. ‘But this was not in conformity with God’s command.’ (p. 110). So, some prominent refugees are given large estates. The same old order is restored and the common people retain their age-old status. They are asked to labour hard for the welfare of the leaders. They are taught to find solace in keeping their leaders happy. They sigh and cry with all their helplessness, sorrow, and subjection. Yet, they begin work and grow grains. The narrator says, with humour and satire, that the granaries of the landlords are filled to the brim, but the granaries become empty in no time and famine and black-market are created. The refugees do not understand that the famine is man-made and suffer hunger and thirst.

As with the lands, the houses are also divided into categories—big and small, lofty and low, grand and dilapidated houses. They are distributed according to the categories of refugees. So, most of the refugees are forced to live in houses, which are not even fit for animals.

In cities also, the rehabilitation programmes prove to be similar. Lofty, grand, big and spacious buildings with gardens and big industries and trucks of loaded wealth are distributed among the respectable, dignified, white-capped, and high-class refugees of a superior kind. The common refugees are allotted ordinary and broken houses not permanently but for a short period of a day or two. Most of them are not even allowed to stay in their allotted houses for 24 hours. The allotments are cancelled and re-allotted. Many times, they are forced to stay on the roadsides with their belongings. Their resentment and protest are easily put down by the army, the police, and the prisons. So, they remain a harassed lot.

In case of loans and employment also, the ordinary refugees suffer a lot. The superior category of refugees is benefited greatly. Though small in number, they have great influence. The leaders receive honour and respect at the cost of the convenience and happiness of the vast majority of the ordinary refugees. The narrator ironically says that despite the loss of their lands, homes, children, and women, the refugees love their new country (even before its birth). The sarcasm is at its height when he says that even this book of divine knowledge, bequeathed to the refugees, is considered as unlawful and an instrument for instigating violence. The refugees must accept this truth. Otherwise, the Lord God will make them suffer in perpetuity. The story ends with ‘Amen’. The story is full of satire and irony. The greatness of the story is that it produces humour out of the satirical representation of the sufferings of the partition refugees.

In K.S. Duggal’s *A New Home,* the narrator, who is a high-level government officer, is allotted a spacious bungalow in just about ten minutes. The family conveniently settles down in the bungalow. The narrator and his family migrate to India in a car guarded by a Muslim constable till the border. They do not suffer any violence except undergoing the loss of their house and property. This story, again, proves the fact that the rich, powerful, privileged, influential, and educated refugees suffered less than the common, ordinary, poor, and uneducated refugees during and after the Partition.

Fikr Taunsvi’s *So The Witness Stated* satirically pictures the tragic holocaust faced by the refugee for no fault of his. The innocent refugee is brought to the court of law as a criminal and the real
criminals give their witness to the crimes of the refugee whereby they expose their own crimes. The first witness, a goonda-turned politician, gives his witness about how he and his companions, provoked by the leaders, created havoc in the lives of people with stabbing, arson, loot, rape, and amputation. The second witness, a political leader, makes it clear that the aim of the leaders was to seize power regardless of the bloodshed and the suffering of the people. (The first two witnesses have already been discussed in the previous chapter).

The third witness is a camp commander aged just seventeen years and nine months. He is the son of a government contractor who black-markets for his earning and living. He says that the refugee insulted his country by wearing dirty rags when he first came to the camp. His ironical accusation that the refugee was not even aware where he had come from in the beginning shows the severe shock and suffering of the refugee. According to the witness, the crimes of the refugee are his being happy to receive free water, food, clothes, and shelter; his sharpening of his greed; his stealing of government things; his visiting the free kitchen three or four times a day; his entering in the ration cards the names of his dead relatives; his refusal to work; and his enjoying the fruits of idleness. Besides he has started a highly degrading thing—the prostitution of the surviving girls. His selling of rotten fruits resulted in cholera which took the toll of hundreds of people and his deceitful selling of water sweetened with jaggery as refreshing cold drink add to the list of his heinous crimes. So the witness requests the judge to hang the refugee, for if he is allowed to live, he brings a bad name to the high-class refugees like himself (the witness).

The fourth witness is the one who is in charge of the department of rehabilitation. The witness pities himself that he has ignored his devoted wife for the sake of this evil-incarnate refugee. His department is so full of refugees that once a dozing refugee was crushed under his car. It is the fault of the refugee, for it was not the time to sleep and besides it is the age of awakening! The crowd of refugees is considered to be non-existent. The refugees are ordered to stand in rows and then to rearrange the rows on the basis of districts and to fill up dozens of forms just to keep them busy. The refugees are treated according to the status of their categories. The highly respectable category merely informs the department of rehabilitation about their taking possession of land, houses, and industries. The department approves of the possessions. The second category of refugees, who are neither respectable nor dirty, is neither able to take possession itself nor get their request recommended to the department. No one knows the whereabouts of this category. The third category is made up of people like this refugee in the court. Lands and houses are allotted, cancelled, and re-allotted to these refugees. They are not allowed to stay in a house for a day. They are forced to stay on roads for many days and the police threaten to arrest them. Loans of Rs. 20 or Rs. 30 are arranged to make them employed gainfully. An employment exchange is set up just to give them a promise of job sometime in future. Landlords and industrialists are requested to engage them as tenants so that they can earn, live decently, and educate their children. But the refugees are shameless and troublesome to the government. The witness leaves the court for lunch by ridiculing the refugee’s flaring of his nostrils at the mention of lunch. Fikr Taunsvi ironically brings out all kinds of suffering of survivors.

Gulzar Singh Sandhu’s Gods on Trial shows that even religious conversion for survival failed sometimes in its purpose. The Sikh narrator’s Muslim teacher, Badru, and his son, Noora, wear
yellow scarf, the symbol of the Sikh religion, around their necks as a mark of their conversion. 'The partition of the country had torn India into two parts and conversion had been made a condition by the Sikhs for those Muslims staying on in India, in retaliation to a similar declaration by Muslims in Pakistan for any Hindus or Sikhs there' (p. 252-253). Most of the Muslims along with Badru's family convert to Sikhism to protect their lives and to continue living in India where they have been living. But the communal vengeance is so strong that in the initiation ceremony, the converts are fed with pork as Hindus and Sikhs are made to eat beef on the other side of the border. Badru's family is spared from this public insult owing to the humanity of the narrator's father. Badru's saintly personality is appreciated by him.

Despite their conversion and wearing the symbols of Sikhism, Noora is speared to death; Badru's raised hands to exhibit the bangle, a Sikh symbol, are cut clean from the elbow; and both of them are sent to Pakistan by the rioters. *Sending one to Pakistan* is a common phrase for killing a Muslim. Badru's daughters, Jaina and Rahmte, are abducted along with the other Muslim girls of the village and many of them are killed. The rioters kill all those with a new yellow scarf and bright steel bangle. They are so rash with vengeance that they kill, by mistake, Ghanshiam Das, the life-long friend of the narrator's grandfather, who has been carrying a new yellow scarf to one of his Muslim friends. The converts fail to save their lives. In fact, those who have not converted themselves to Sikhism are safer than the converts, for they are cautious and not caught so easily and hence not killed. Killing anyone who wears a yellow scarf even if he is a Sikh or a Hindu becomes such a norm that the narrator's grandfather orders *prasad* to be offered to the Pirs' tombs along with the Martyrs' tombs of the Sikhs, for he says, 'Who knows if tomorrow the Pirs don't turn out to be more powerful than our Martyrs?' (p. 258) The Gods are on trial by their devotees about their ability to protect. The qualities of harmony and humanity in the narrator and his father attract the readers' attention. The narrator balances the suffering of the survivors in the hands of the rioters on both the sides of the border by making their actions retaliatory and revengeful.

Mohan Rakesh, in his story, *God's Dog*, condemns, in fierce language, the exploitation of common people by officials. The outburst of a refugee Sikh at the inordinate delay and injustice done to him exposes the absence of humanitarian outlook among the officials of the government and the indifferent attitude of the bureaucracy towards the misery of the people who have already suffered because of the violence, loss of property, uprooting, and migration during the Partition. The Sikh refugee petitioner's request for an allotment of land was honoured after seven years and a pit, three acres wide, was allotted. The petitioner again petitioned for the cancellation of the allotment of the pit and a re-allotment of land half that area. Still the official class has been considering his application. The petitioner comes to the Commissioner's office with the widow of his brother, who was killed in Pakistan during the partition riots; her son, who is a TB patient; and a daughter, who is of marriageable age. Her unmarried elder daughter, who was abducted, is still in Pakistan. The petitioner starts cursing at the inordinate official delay in moving files and threatens to take off his clothes and enter the Commissioner's chamber. He calls himself *God's dog* and barks at all the *babus* of the office by calling them dogs. All the efforts of the babus to pacify him fail. Finally, the Commissioner calls him inside, gets his files, and signs. The petitioner emerges out with a smile on his face. What he could not get through petitions and prayers gets through his angry outburst. The refugee Sikh's words—'Let me
go and find out, if Mahatma Gandhi struggled for freedom so that these people could misuse the freedom he won for us? Corrupt it? Give it a bad name? Tie it up in their petty files and let it rot? Make people curse it in their hearts?’ (p. 124)—show how the very ideas and principles of Gandhiji were forgotten, how corruption set in, and how human values were thrown to the winds after the partition.

_The story draws our attention to the sufferings of the surviving refugees of the partition because of the bureaucratic exploitation, corruption, and a kind of native imperialism._ The story ends with the resumption of the same activities in the same old manner thereby hinting at the fact that it is very difficult to change the established system of exploitation, corruption, and delay.

Another story by Mohan Rakesh, _The Claim,_ is a story about the claim by the refugees who have lost their property because of the riots and migration. Riding in the _tonga_ of Sadhu Singh to the Claim Office, the three passengers—a woman, a Sikh man, and another man—discuss about their own claims. The readers come to know that people usually claimed double the value of their lost property so that they could get the real worth of their property. Those who claim honestly will be under a loss. But all of them have been suffering more or less because of the migration, uprooting, and loss of property. Their financial sources have been destroyed and they have been haunting the Claim Office for getting their claims allowed. Again, the official delay adds to their suffering.

But the tongawala, Sadhu Singh has not claimed anything to compensate for the loss of property, because he has not lost any property. He had been living with his beautiful wife Hiran in a house and in its courtyard he had planted a mango tree nine years ago, which started giving good fruits. He had also shared many dreams with his wife about their beautiful to-be-born children. But, the riots started and he could not protect his wife from the rioters who abducted her. He crossed the borders and he could not claim anything. He has only lost his beautiful wife, dreams, and the tree. ‘The mango tree would have grown big by now. The smell of the walls of the house must have changed. And Hiran—? Who knows whose children are in her lap today?’ (p. 41). Sadhu Singh has been suffering a lot, but he allows the claims of his horse—to fill its belly—so that he can fill his own belly.

_Narain Bharti’s The Claim_* is a moving story about a claim—as the title signifies—for the loss suffered by a refugee. This story can be compared to Mohan Rakesh’s story with the same title in which many refugees put forward their claims for their lost property, lands, and houses. But the protagonist, Sadhu Singh, feels sad, for he cannot put forward his claim for the loss of his abducted wife, his dreams about his to-be-born children, and the mango tree, which he tended. In Narain Bharti’s story also, many refugees put in applications, stating their claims for the loss of lands, houses, and other property left behind in Pakistan. The protagonist, Johamal, an old Sindhi refugee puts in his claim for the whole of Sindh, which he has been forced to leave behind because of the partition. He represents all the refugees, who have survived and who suffer for the loss of their native land, homes, and property; and their intense yearning to go back to their own homes and lands; and regain the lost honour and harmony. ‘We have left our world, our honour, our friendships; everything that was ours has been left behind there. When will God have mercy on us and allow us to inhabit our homes again?’ (p. 220).
When the typist asks for details about his lost property and proofs for it, Joharmal says, 'Okay, write. Joharmal, son of Wasiomol, surname Nangdev. I have left the whole of Sind in Pakistan. I am now putting the claim for the whole of Sind, it should be given back to me. The proof of the claim is that Joharmal is a Sindhi, his language is Sindhi and his culture is Sindhi. Each part of my body is replete with memories of Sind...' (p. 221). Joharmal’s logic is that when the Punjabis have got Punjab, the Bengalis have got Bengal, why should not the Sindhis be given Sind, where their forefathers lived their lives and they grew up?

Joharmal remembers his friendship with Muslim friends, whom, he says, are dearer to him than his fields. He wants Sind with all its culture and harmony. The typist and other people who are there accept Joharmal’s claim to be a just and real claim. The story ends with a hope of getting the real claim allowed when there is true democracy in India and Pakistan and the artificial wall is demolished. But till then, they should suffer the pangs of alienation from the native land. And we know that the artificial wall has not been demolished even after 60 years.

Moti Lal Jotwani’s *Kinship with the Soil* is a story about the loss and suffering of the partition refugees, particularly Sindhis. It expresses the Sindhi survivors’ nostalgia for the lost land. Like Joharmal of *The Claim* by Narain Bharathi, the protagonist of this story, Vasantani, deeply craves for the lost Sind.

Vasantani, a Sindhi writer, going towards the Federation House which houses cultural societies and associations of people from all the states of India who are living in the city, thinks about the condition of the Sindhi refugees. The homeless Sindhis do not have a separate land/state of their own. So, they are scattered in different parts of the country. After the Partition, since they have been busy in solving the problems of food, clothing, and shelter, they have not been able to build a strong association for themselves. They are the worst sufferers of the Partition. ‘Undoubtedly the partition of the country hurt the Sindhi life most and the sense of loss haunted the Sindhi memory throughout their struggle for survival in India’. Vasantani has expressed it thus:

Bengalis got half of Bengal which fell in Indian Territory. Likewise Punjabis got half of the Punjab, but what did Sindhis get? Our whole of Sindh became Pakistan. (p. 152). These words of Vasantani sound almost as the echo of the words of Joharmal in *The Claim* by Narain Bharathi:

We hear that the Punjabis got Punjab, the Bengalis got Bengal. What crime have we committed that we are denied our Sind.

Vasantani also suffers for the loss of Sindhi tradition, culture, and literature. He longs to listen to Sindhi *Kafi* or *Wai* (poetic forms of Sindhi literature), but these are the days of Ghazals. Even Sindhi poets have started writing Ghazals and not *Kafi* or *Wai*. Even ‘the birth of children does not imply any traditional conceptions of filial duties towards the parents. Children are either unwanted or are born as a result of sexual pleasures of the parents and if such children, in the future, do not carry out the traditional duties expected of them, then what is their fault?’ (p. 155). Sindhi Literature and Art, despite their flourishing and developing in different states, are like flowers in the pots. ‘But these flowers are blooming in the limited sphere of their pots and they are kept on the terrace, far above the
ground, therefore our kinship with the soil has broken. As such the characters painted by us are all artificial. They are the prototypes of those who stroll through Connaught Place of Delhi or Flora Fountain of Bombay' (p. 155, emphasis added). They have no individual identity or personality. They appear to be lost among the crowds.

Feeling very sad at heart for the loss of land, literature, culture, and tradition of the whole community of Sind, which is the result of the Partition, Vasantani hurries down the staircase without attending the meeting. His friend Krishna’s flash vision of the death of Vasantani in attempting to establish kinship with the soil symbolizes the suffering and death of all the Sindhi refugees.

Vishnu Prabhakar’s My Native Land is a story about the deep nostalgic longing for one’s native land from which one is forcibly displaced. The story also brings out the suffering of the surviving refugees in rebuilding their lives in a new land after all the loss and uprooting.

Puri is a famous lawyer in Lahore. His family is forcibly uprooted during the partition riots and violence. It arrives in Amritsar along with numerous refugees. Puri begins his profession and gets success in it through hard work. Some lawyers say: ‘These refugees have guts. Their families struggled for centuries to carve out a place for themselves. In the twinkling of an eye, their properties were reduced to ashes. But without shedding a tear, they set about creating a new world for themselves. These people have guts’ (p. 132). The very difficult situations, in which the refugees find themselves, make them courageous to face the severe problems of resettlement. The narrator gives a clear picture of the resettlement of the refugees thus:

... To begin with, any place was good enough for these deprived persons. They lived in tents along the roadside, in ruins haunted by ghosts and in deserted villages. They did not give up. They were determined like the atheist friend of the Christian padre to change hell into heaven. The earth was boundless; there was no question of accepting defeat. (p. 132).

Without accepting defeat, Puri resettles his family successfully in Amritsar. But deep inside his heart, he suffers anguish because of his separation from Lahore, his native land. He cannot live away from it. So, he visits Lahore many times, disguising as a Muslim refugee from Amritsar. There are many objections from his sons and wife to his repeated visits to Lahore for two or three months at a time. To the objections, he replies, ‘So you want to know why I go there? It’s because it’s my country. I was born there. The secret of my life lies hidden in its soil. The story of my life is inscribed in the breeze of that place.’ (p. 131). Despite all the loss of his house and property, he is drawn to his native land like a magnet. The memory of the land haunts him forever. That is why, he wanders in the streets of Lahore, disguised as a Muslim refugee. People in Lahore pity him for his loss and suffering. ‘Empathy is rarer than sympathy. Sometimes it is not possible to feel for the sufferings of the other man. But suffering, whatever its intensity, is suffering’ (p. 133). Many shopkeepers offer him rots and kababs. Puri tells them that he went to Amritsar, his native land where he has been jailed for three months. His love for native land makes them nostalgic about Delhi and other cities from which they have migrated to Lahore.

During one such visit to Lahore, when he is about to enter the campus of the Law College in which he has studied, a man recognizes him as a Hindu, once a prominent lawyer in Lahore and
thinking that he has come to spy on them, he fires at him with his pistol. Puri falls down. People gather around him. One among the crowd, Hasan, Puri's classmate and colleague, recognizes him and rushes him to the hospital where he dies saying, 'Hasan, so you ask me why I came here? I never went from here. I just can't. This is my country, my native land.' Earlier he said, 'the secret of my life lies hidden in its (Lahore's) soil' (p. 131). Also, his body lies hidden in its soil. He becomes one with his native land, body and soul.

Gulzar Ahmed's *A Mango Leaf* is another story about intense longing of migrants for their homeland. The longing is beyond all the prejudices of language, religion, and community. It revives the old feeling of harmony. The old gentleman Shyam and the other gentleman, who have settled down in Hong Kong, request the narrator when he meets them in Hong Kong: 'Give our regards to all the Sindhis, convey our respect to our country' (p. 213). Living away from the native land has not diminished the longing for it. The old gentleman has such an intense longing for his land that he asks the narrator to parcel a mango leaf from the tree, which he had planted, to him. The attachment with one's native land is very great and the partition made people suffer the pangs of separation from it.

Asif Aslam Farrukhi's *The Land of Memories* shows the power of memory that keeps alive forever. The memory of the homeland is so powerful and painful in Aslam Miyan that it brings him back to that homeland of memories even after thirty years of the Partition and migration. He also brings his teenage children to see his land in which he was born and brought up and where he lived till his youth.

Aslam Miyan is so reverential that as soon as he gets down from the train, kneels on the ground and applies a bit of dust to his forehead as a tilak. The whole of Fategarh—with all its lanes, roads, buildings, and trees; and its entire people—is alive in his memory. He remembers the names of all yakka drivers—both Muslims and Hindus. He happily gives explanations about everything to his children. But they are not very much interested in this journey to India. It does not seem to be a foreign country to them—'the same dark people, familiar features, similar crowds, deafening noise, corruption, chaos, poverty, filth'—with which they are very familiar. They feel as if they are loitering through Lalukhet or Gharibabad. It is because Pakistan and India are much similar and this proves the fact that there was no necessity of the Partition.

Aslam Miyan is sorry to learn that his big ancestral home, Manjhiy Miyan's Kothi, was pulled down seven years ago to build an officer's colony. The big banyan tree in front of his home was also cut down. He notices that there are many physical changes in terms of buildings, houses, bazaars, roads, and trees. The loss in terms of this physical change is compensated by the cordial treatment of the yakka wala Allamu and Bhupendar. Allamu does not take any money as the fare and even gives a four-anna coin each to his children, for he has seen them for the first time. Bhupendar, Aslam's childhood and teenage friend, hugs him tightly amidst sobbing, takes them home, arranges for their stay and treats them with warmth and affection. Aslam's children have to change their opinions about the Hindus. The Hindu, Bhupendar, mingles with the Muslim, Aslam, and his children very freely and this Hindu-Muslim mingling is a revival of the old Hindu-Muslim harmony that existed before the Partition.
Bhupendar takes Aslam and his children to the new sections of the town where there are well-kept and clean houses and life seems to flow along normal and peaceful daily routine. Despite Bhupendar's cordial treatment, Aslam feels sad and lost. His homeland appears to be a 'graveyard of memories' (p. 52), where the golden days of his childhood and youth are buried. He says:

...I feel as if my past has no relation to my present life. It has a separate life of its own in which we have no role to play; it is independent of us, unconnected to us. It makes no difference to this place that we, who were born and brought up here, no longer live here, do not belong to it. Here life continues, absorbed in its own rhythms, oblivious of our presence. (p. 52).

The situation is reversed when he is taken to the old and familiar part of the town and its people. Aslam looks fresh and youthful; his eyes shine with joy; and he is excited to see familiar places and people. ‘It seemed as if he could not decide whether he should dance with joy or lean his head against a wall and weep’ (p. 54). He embraces everyone who happens to pass by much to the embarrassment of his children. Bhupendar wipes tears from his eyes at every such embrace. Finally, they get into the house of a relative, Shafaat, who is dead now. Aslam feels happy to see the children and grandchildren of his relative. His children, though enjoy the parade of all the children before them, get bored of being with the poor relatives who appear to be strange creatures. Aslam’s children also appear to be strange tourists to the children of his relative. The partition has made blood-relatives strangers to each other. Finally, feeling sick of all this, Aslam’s children come out of the house. While Aslam likes all the people and the place, Tariq asks his father, Aslam, ‘Is this the place you had praised so much? Is this what you brought us to see? This qasba, this small town?’ (p. 57). The narrator, Bhateejay, who felt to have passed through these lanes and neighbourhoods before, to have ‘a dim memory’ of all the details, and to have a ‘dream of some previous life’ (p. 53), also feels sick of all this. Aslam gets shocked at his children’s reactions. It is only he who is a survivor of the partition violence and migration and has been suffering with a longing memory to see his homeland and not his children who are born after the partition and migration. Aslam has his roots in India and his children do not.

Mohan Rakesh’s The Owner of Rubble is about the visit of an old Muslim to his earlier home in Amritsar after seven and a half years of the Partition. Abdul Gani Mian went to Lahore before the Partition and had thus survived; while his son, his son’s wife, and his grandchildren were killed during the Partition. But being nostalgic about his homeland and his home, which was built six months before the Partition, he comes to Amritsar from Lahore using the Hockey match between India and Pakistan as an excuse. He comes only to see his house. ‘He goes back not to repossess the house, but out of a non-egotistical longing to see again the place where his life had once had its anchoring.’ He comes to the lane where he had lived, but the former neighbours fail to recognize him, and regard him with suspicion as a kidnapper. The old feelings of brotherhood and harmony have not been revived. ‘The Partition...has broken all the affective and communal bonds which had once existed between different communities.’

But a young man, Manori recognizes him and takes him to show his house, which is now in ruins—a heap of rubble. Gani Mian has come in search of his glorious past, his roots, and his house. Though he has accepted the murder of his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren, he is shocked to
see his house in this ruined state. 'Ironically, a half-burnt frame of the door too sticks out of it (rubble) as though inviting him to enter and pick out his memories from his own wreckage. With the touch of his head against it, he only manages to create another refugee; he disturbs an earthworm who runs in fright to save himself. It fails to get another hole or a home.  

The debris has been now in the proprietorship of Rakkha Pahlwan, who was a close friend of his son, Chiragdin. He chose to stay there in the lane on the strength of his friendship with Rakkha. But self-interest and greed to grab the property of others turned many men into barbaric cheats and deceivers. Rakkha killed Chiragdin in the name of religious and regional concerns with an eye on his house. Even Chiragdin’s wife and two daughters were also abducted and killed. The people of the lane know this and expect that something will happen now.

Fortunately, not to add to Gani Mian’s suffering, he does not come to know that it is Rakkha who has destroyed his family. His innocent pleading with Rakkha that he should have protected his son unnerve the so-called brave man. Gani Mian reconciles himself to what has happened and innocently blesses Rakkha and leaves the lane with his own suffering. Rakkha is reduced to ashes. Ironically, his name contains in it a pun on rakh, which means ash. ‘Rakkha, the wrestler, is reduced to a crouching figure, unable to move before such trusting innocence. Later, when Gani Mian, still ignorant of the truth, blesses him, Rakkha is not only disarmed, but he is also reduced to an absurd and helpless figure! Gani Mian’s visit brings a change in Rakkha, ‘for he suffers now for the brutality of the action he had earlier got involved in.’ The impact of the visit on him can be seen further in his talking to Laccha, about his pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi as if in repentance. The dreaded criminal has become so weak that even the dog barks him away from the debris in the night. He seems to give up his right over the debris.

But, Gani Mian’s suffering and nostalgic pains do not end with his visit to his home and homeland. He will have to suffer till the end like all the other survivors of the partition violence. Sukrita Paul Kumar says in her book, Narrating Partition:

In narrativising the pathos of having to accept a drastic change of circumstance, the writer succeeds in presenting a delicate aspect of a human sensibility—that of a strong bonding of an individual with the place of birth, a bonding that makes that place his homeland. Pushed into a state of permanent exile, the individual remains forever lost and seeking.  

Ritwik Ghatak’s The Road is filled with ‘the pulsating throb of millions on the march’ (p. 21) to cross the boundaries. The protagonist Israel is ready to leave his native to the new country Pakistan. He gives vent to his agony and anger at having to leave his house, his friends, and his native, snapping all his deep-seated roots. Yet he is prepared to go: ‘Damn it – that was my room! I had spent so much time there. If today someone comes and occupies it, won’t I get angry? I feel like finishing off the bastard! But I know there’s no justice here. That’s why I am leaving for Pakistan. That room, this road, you and so much else ... won’t my heart break to leave all this behind? But I need a place to live ... that’s why I must go’ (p. 8). He is now a displaced and distressed man. His son, who was very bright in drawing and painting and who could have become a great artist, died of cholera in the refugee camp. Israel is lonely at this time of deep agony. The company and help of his friends, though appear
to mitigate his pain a little, cannot make him consoled. Yet, he shows his humanity by cleaning his room for the new occupant—an old woman who is a refugee immigrant—and buying food for her with the help of his friends. Finally he joins the millions of people who are on the march to Pakistan.

Syed Mohammed Ashraf’s Separated from the Flock is a story about the meeting of two old friends, who are the survivors of the partition, after thirty years in Pakistan. The narrator brings out the suffering the two friends have been experiencing—the suffering because of their separation from the land of their birth and childhood and the loss of all that was dear and near to them and also because of their inability to go back and see the old homeland.

The narrator is the Superintendent of Police in Lahore. He goes duck shooting on a lake in Shahganj. On the way, his driver, Gulam Ali, makes him remember the old days before the partition by asking whether he once lived in U.P in India. The partition of the country resulted in his migrating to Pakistan from U.P. where he had lived till his teenage. The memory of the previous homeland has been haunting him all these years. He has been living with the pain of separation from the land of his sweet childhood and romantic teenage, and the deep desire to visit the land again. He cannot make Gulam Ali understand his feelings. ‘Leave aside Gulam Ali, even I don’t understand everything—how could I? The hard, deep lines of the partition have erased the signs of all other feelings—feelings which belong intimately to that place where a human being first opens his eyes on earth and catches a glimpse of the sky’ (p. 2-3).

Later, on the way, he accidentally meets his old childhood friend, Nawab, who has also come duck shooting on the same lake. Nawab tells him about his struggle for a living after his migration to Pakistan and his setting up of a rubber chappal factory in Karachi. He also tells him that he learnt about his promotion as Superintendent of Police and transfer to Lahore, but he could not meet him because he was not sure that the police officer was his friend. Then it occurs to the narrator that ‘our identities had become so indistinct that our names could no longer be connected to a person with a recognizable face’ (p. 9-10). Of course, the narrator does not blame his friend because he was also not sure it was his friend Nawab when he saw an advertisement of ‘Nawab and Sons’ in some paper.

The two friends remember their old misadventure in duck shooting, as they now get ready for it. But as they wait for the fog to clear, the narrator wants to know whether Nawab, after migrating to Pakistan, has ever thought of going back home. He wonders whether he has really forgotten that land . . . those lanes, houses, fields, fairs . . . school, the ponds, the trees, etc. But the very important point to be noted here is that the narrator still considers India as his home. The new land has not become home for him. Even after so many years, there is no sense of association but alienation. Nawab appears to be a little troubled, but comes out with an answer with great effort, ‘A day out of Karachi means a loss of two thousand rupees for me. A trip to India would cost me forty to fifty thousand.’ (p. 12). Then the narrator wonders what answer he can give to a similar question. The necessity of earning to live keeps the innermost desires locked. The two friends are puppets in the hands of the circumstances. The narrator says, ‘It occurred to me that neither of us had any control over our lives; that we were helplessly trapped by circumstances over which we had no influence; that we are utterly defenceless. . . . Both of us are paralyzed.’ (p. 12). The hearts of the two friends become heavy with all the recalling of the sweet past.
As the sun appears and the fog lifts, Gulam Ali opens fire in a hurry. The ducks flap their wings and fly in panic. Yet, Salimullah, the manager of Nawab, fires twice and two ducks drop like stones into the lake. They frantically beat the water with their broken wings and desperately try to get away. The narrator and his friend look at each other and a vision of migrating birds rises before their minds: 'We saw thousands and thousands of birds... innocent, gloriously plumaged birds... absorbed in their daily activities... nuzzling their heads together in affection, dancing as if in some elaborate ritual of their own - then we saw the snow fall and ice-cold winds blow over the plains, flocks of ducks bury their eggs in the snow, bid farewell to a part of themselves which they had hidden there, and fly south - fly to their summer home in search of the sun and warmth - some birds lost their way as they flew on towards their new home, got separated from their flock - but they flew on towards their destination, continued to look for the sun and the warmth necessary for their survival' (p. 14). This picture of the migration of birds brings before the readers the great migration of the refugees of the partition in search of new land and their separation from their near and dear ones. Looking at the two ducks (held by Salimullah) whose wings are broken, the narrator identifies themselves with them and bids farewell to them:

Farewell, innocent ones, farewell - Forget your friends and companions, forget all those whom you loved once - stop grieving for those you will leave behind - those eggs buried in snow - forget everything - your wings are broken, you'll never be able to fly again - never return - never ...(p. 14-15).

Some time is required for the ducks to come back and settle down on the lake. In the meantime, all of them go to Gulam Ali's house. His wife is also from U.P., and she wants to see the narrator, the Sahib. Quoting the example of his friend, Vaziruddin, Gulam Ali has already requested the narrator to reject his wife's request for help in getting a permit to visit her native, Hardoi, U.P. Jameela, Gulam Ali's wife, is very excited to see the narrator. Despite the wall that divided them, he is still her countryman, someone who once lived in the land where she was born. With a heavy heart, he rejects her request. 'That simple woman had placed all her trust in me as a brother and I had betrayed her. She shed her last tears for her home and for her dreams' (p. 17). Jameela and Vaziruddin's wife have been suffering the pangs of separation from their homeland and nurturing dreams of visiting again, but their dreams have been shattered to pieces. They have been living like fish out of water. The narrator's earlier soliloquy brings out the pathos of such people who are separated from their homeland:

Gulam Ali... you and your friend will never understand what happens to a man who has been separated from the place where he was born, where he was suckled by his mother, and where he felt his father's affectionate hand ruffle his hair. You won't understand how strongly attached a man is to the place, where he has spent his childhood surrounded by daily acts of kindness and joy; you can never feel, Gulam Ali, how precious those moments of innocence are, how one nurtures them with one's blood, how they are a part of everything that one has become. You will never understand. (p. 4-5).

The narrator hates anyone who reminds him of the past which he longs to recover. He does not blame Gulam Ali because he has made him conscious of the fact that he will never be able to go back and that he will continue to long to return to India forever. It is his own sorrow of separation, nostalgia, and helplessness, which pierce through his very being.

On the way again to the lake, the two friends remember their beloveds from whom the partition has separated them forever. The narrator hoped, at the time of the migration, to go back...
after three or four years, marry her (his beloved Begum) and bring her to Pakistan. But all his desires and longings are washed away like castles of sand. He learns from his friend that his Begum is now a widow and his friend’s beloved, Ghazala, died. The partition has separated both from their lands and loves, and dreams and desires. The pain of separation and the resultant suffering are beyond words.

When they take position to shoot the ducks, the narrator feels that he and his friends are like the birds whose wings are broken. He says:

We are birds with broken wings and we can never fly back to those fields of desire - we are more helpless and defenceless than those birds because once their wings are broken, they are ritually slaughtered - but people like us - our torment never ends, we die slowly, we are tortured at every moment of our lives, we are hunted without mercy and we can only beat our wings in the throes of death, but we cannot die. (p. 22).

The two friends raise their guns to shoot, but do not press the trigger. ‘They become aware of their presence amidst migratory birds in the lake whom they had come to hunt for their sport, and they instinctively lower their guns in a gesture of renunciation of violence. Here suffering is not forgotten, for it can never be, but what is aroused is a new awareness of the gratuitous infliction of pain on the unsuspecting creatures of the earth by hunters like themselves, and of their responsibility in ensuring that the long enduring patterns of life are never again destroyed. Their own loss does not have to be repeated.’ They let the birds fly away freely. The narrator speaks to them ardently:

You have escaped. Your wings are not broken. As you fly over India, grieve for those who had migrated from there and had to find another home in a strange land... There are people with broken wings everywhere - like Gulam Ali’s wife and Vaziruddin’s wife and - Nawab. Each one still dreams of those fields beyond the mountains. (p. 23).

The partition survivors—the narrator; his friend, Nawab; Jamila; and Vaziruddin’s wife—suffer the pangs of separation from their native lands, loves, relatives, and friends; the pains of nostalgic longing for the past; and the anguish of burning desires and dreams of going back; and the sorrow of being unable to realize the same. They have to live with this severe suffering till the end of their lives. The partition made whole lives sorrowful. The survivors long for that harmonious life before the partition. ‘...It is their memory of a very personal past, which is prior to the partition and far removed from politics and sorrow, which seems to them to be more worthy of their better selves and more representative of a good society.’

Badiuzzaman’s The Last Wish is another interesting story in which the protagonist, Kamal Bhai, meets his death in Karachi, with his last wish—of getting buried in his native land, Gaya—buried deep inside his heart. Before the partition, he was an ardent follower of the Muslim League. Appreciating Iqbal’s poetry and worshipping Quaid-e-Azam, he fought for the creation of Pakistan. He believed that the Hindus and the Muslims were essentially different. In his heated arguments with a nationalist Muslim, Ahmed Imam, who was nicknamed Gandhi Bhai, he maintained that ‘the Muslim way of life was radically different from that of the Hindus. Their culture, language, mode of dress, food habits, religion, customs and traditions were very dissimilar. The Muslims were a separate nation. Their culture could not remain safe in undivided India’ (p. 143). He did not accept Gandhi Bhai’s counter-argument that, except for their religions, there was no difference between the Hindus and Muslims; that the difference, if any, was superficial; and that there were far greater differences between the numerous Hindu sects and the same was true of Muslim sects.
After migrating to Karachi, Pakistan, Kamal Bhai feels the pull of his own country. The meaning of Gandhi Bhai's words dawns on him and the readers as well: 'He will have no country to call his own. Like the wandering Jew, he will roam from place to place. He will belong nowhere. He will pine for the soil of his own country and long for its lulling breeze' (p. 144). Kamal Bhai himself understands that he believed in a falsehood. He says:

... Migrating to Pakistan was a grave error.... I am neither here nor there. Sometimes I think that a united India would have been to everybody's advantage. (p. 140).

He spends his days in earning a livelihood. But the nights turn out to be an oppressive hell of suffering with his longing for his land of birth. His emotional attachment with Gaya, his birthplace, pinches him deep. A mysterious sense of desolation pains him at heart. Finally, when he falls ill, he only requests his wife to take him to his birthplace and bury him in the graveyard where his Abba and Bare Abba lie buried. But his last wish remains only a wish.

The killing of Gandhi Bhai, the nationalist Muslim, who always pleads against the division of the country and 'keeps the flame of communal harmony burning' (p. 143), by a Hindu, soon after the partition, is the surprising and shocking irony, which reflects on the senseless vengeance and violence of the partition. Gandhi Bhai has to pay with his life for his belief in harmony, humanity, and brotherhood.

The author uses the technique of balance in creating a character, by name Lalvani, a Sindhi refugee. Lalvani has migrated to Gaya (India) from Karachi (Pakistan). He is an Assistant Station Master at the Gaya Railway Station. He verifies the passport of Kamal Bhai, stamps it, and enquires him about many persons in Karachi. 'Life can be so strange and play such tricks. Lalvani, whose veins were saturated with thoughts of Karachi, was in Gaya. And, Kamal, who pined for the breeze of Gaya, was destined to stay in Karachi for the rest of his life' (p. 141). Kamal lives in Karachi till the end of his life, longing for the native land. The pull of one's own country is beyond the pull of language, culture, community, and creed. The victims of partition migrants suffer with this pull till the end of their lives.

In Badiuzzaman's another story, The Alien, the protagonist, Chakkoo, becomes a Pakistani without his knowledge. But his longing for his native (Gaya), his wonderful memory of each and every happening there, and his happiness over such happenings make him more native than his friend who has been living in his native place since his birth. The separation of Chakkoo from his relatives is the cause of suffering for himself and the relatives as well. This story also proves the point that the pull of one's own country cannot easily be snapped. It also draws our attention towards how the immigrants, the mohajirin, were looked down upon by the native people of the same religion and community in Dhaka, Pakistan, and this ill treatment increases the amount and intensity of their suffering.

The survival and suffering of abducted women forms the theme of many Partition stories. The ambivalent emotions caused by abductions, forced marriages, and separations are vividly portrayed in these stories. Jamila Hashmi's Exile is one such story about the survival and suffering of an abducted woman who is left unnamed, probably to make her the representative of all such women. Common and innocent people suffered during and after the partition by conditions that were beyond their control.
A Sikh, Gurpal, abducts the Muslim protagonist. She becomes a bahu to his mother, a kind of slave to relieve her of all the household chores. Without any drums, songs, and celebrations; and even fine clothes and jewels, she becomes the wife of Gurpal and gets a daughter and two sons by him. But the memory of the past haunts her and her waiting for her brothers has not come to an end. She longs to see her brothers and sisters-in-law. ‘Why does anguish never diminish? Why do human beings continue to dream even after they have endured so much sorrow, traversed over such difficult paths? Why do they continue to long for happiness?’ (p. 39). But ‘the very fact of separation stands like a wall between people who once loved each other. Once separated they are fated never to see each other’s face again’ (p. 41).

She always remembers her parents’ house that was like a paradise. She did not know what to ask for from God. But ‘the wheel of life revolves between happiness and suffering’ (p. 44). In her abductor’s house, she suffers a lot in the beginning. But as days pass by, she wins the appreciation of both Gurpal and his mother. Now she is treated as Laxmi of the house. Alok Bhalla says in his introduction to his volumes of short stories:

She lives her life with such scrupulous regard to her ‘duty’ as a ‘wife’ that she soon comes to be praised as the ‘devi’ of the family by her former tormentors. While she scorns at the term, she also knows that it has disarmed and humanized the father of her children and has helped her recover her sense of herself as a human being. Her life becomes a challenge to those who had abused and rejected her to live up to the ideals they celebrate only during public festivals every year.66

Her brothers do not come to take her back home. Her dreams of going back are not materialized. After the birth of Munni, all her dreams loosen their hold over her. She cannot walk across to the other country:

Besides, I have travelled far with Gurpal and I no longer have the strength to go any further. After all, how long can one keep walking? In any case, there is no other place to which I can go. Where else can I go after so much suffering? Who will accept a woman who has been despised? Besides, Munni is now with me. She now stands as an obstacle between me and my relatives on the other side. The distance between them and us is very great. (p. 45).

At the behest of his mother, Gurpal takes the protagonist and the children to the Dussera fair. When the effigies made for Dussera are burnt, all the men assembled there appear to have assumed the shape of Ravana, watching with delight Sita’s weeping because of her exile for the second time. The protagonist thinks of Gurpal as Ravana and herself as Sita. In the myth, Sita is ultimately saved to join Sri Rama, but this Sita remains with Ravana only. On the way back from the fair, when Gurpal remarks about children getting separated from mothers in fairs, she says that children get separated from their mothers even outside fairs. Gurpal, pinched at heart now, says that those times have changed now and asks her to forget the incident of her abduction. But how can she forget that painful incident which has spoiled her joy by separating her from her dear and near ones. ‘Human beings are forever doomed to suffer pain because they can never forget’ (p. 48). She cannot forget her abduction and the murder of her father and mother. She cannot forget that her defilement and dishonour have kept her brothers away from coming to take her back! The memory has been haunting her and will haunt her forever. She is exiled permanently. She will have to suffer the pangs of separation till the end of her life.
Even when the soldiers come to recover abducted women, she herself hides from them. She feels that her life has taken roots here and have spread wide and deep. Every girl has to leave her parents’ house for her husband’s house. ‘So what if my brothers had not been present at my wedding? Gurpal had after all spread a carpet of corpses for me. He had painted the road red with blood and illuminated it by setting villages on fire. People had celebrated my wedding with screams and lamentations. According to the changed customs of the times, the air was filled with the bitter smell of smoke, fire and singed flesh’ (p. 50-51). Though she accepts Gurpal as her husband and hides from the soldiers to remain there only, she cannot forget the past. Her ‘heart is very stubborn’ and it ‘refuses to forget the past’ (p. 52). She still dreams of her brother’s dismounting from a horse and embracing her.

Hashmi’s use of the myth of Sita and her impartial treatment of the sufferings of women are appreciated by critics like Asaduddin and Alok Bhalla. Dr. M. Asaduddin says:

This Hindu myth that Jamila Hashmi takes recourse to (as do many other Muslim writers like Intizar Hussain, Ashfaque Ahmed and Ghulam Abbas), along with the Dussehra celebrations, marking the destruction of Ravana, foregrounds a racial memory and a consciousness in which the tragedy of women cuts across religion and community.

Dr. Alok Bhalla says:

In Jamila Hashmi’s Exile, the narrator tells her own story of abduction, rape and marriage. The narrator uses the story of Sita’s exile, abduction, rescue and final rejection in order to understand her own predicament, as well as, to draw attention to the fact that a society whose epic celebrates the defeat of evil every year has succumbed to evil. The story opens on Dassera day and deliberately locates itself within a sanctified space. But the modern Rama and Laxmana are greasy and tinsel-crowned actors. This enables the narrator to counter-pose the public remembrance of the acts of Rama, both to those of her Sikh husband who now urges her to forget the past, as well as, to those of her brothers in Pakistan who refuse to come to her rescue. The failure, thus, is not only of the Hindus and the Sikhs to remember that evil can only be defeated by one who has a firm grasp over righteousness, but also of her Muslim brothers who suspect her purity and reject her. She sees herself as a modern day Sita (it is significant that though she is a Muslim, she draws upon the mythic traditions of the Hindus and so points to the fact that these myths were the common heritage of both the communities...), who has to suffer, as always in times of crises, the ancient and repeated humiliation of women.

Yet another critic, Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar, says:

There was a large number of women who were not ‘recovered’, women who apparently reconciled themselves to the new circumstance, but they carried within themselves a gnawing sense of the irreparable loss of a perfect past. To get a glimpse of the inner self of such a woman’s mind, Jamila Hashmi’s oft-quoted story, Exile, comes to one’s mind. The protagonist of the story is doomed by memory and the inability to forget. The desirable past is unrecoverable. The inner monologue is a recalling of that past which counterposes itself with the present. It is in the present that she has children from her ‘abductor’ who has actually married her. She reacts inwardly to his mother who addresses her as bahu (daughter-in-law) and creates a semblance of order. But this Sita, unlike the mythical Sita, as the story tells us, has had to accept ‘Ravana’s home’. Suspended between her past and the present, she is in fact banished from her own selfhood. This is yet another kind of death, seeking regeneration, a replanting. The story ends thus: ‘Life too flows on, carrying with it, as it always does, the smell of death.’

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In Rajinder Singh Bedi’s *Lajwanti*, the abducted woman, unlike Hashmi’s protagonist in *Exile*, comes back to her husband, Sunderlal, who rehabilitates her and treats her as a Devi and not as a wife.

Sunderlal zealously works for the rehabilitation of abducted and recovered women. He arranges processions for the cause of rehabilitation. His wife had been abducted and he longs to see her again and rehabilitate her. The incident makes him introspect his own attitude towards his wife. He realizes how cruel he had been to her and decides to honour her and treat her well if he finds her again. He pleads with people for abducted women. ‘...The women who were abducted are innocent. They are victims of the brutality and the rapacity of the rioters... A society which refuses to accept them back, which does not rehabilitate them... is a rotten, a foul society, which should be destroyed...’ (p. 57). He implores people to take such women back into their homes, to respect them, and treat them kindly without reminding them of the humiliations they have suffered either by word or gesture. He argues with Narain Baba and his followers and rejects the traditional idea of a Ram Rajya:

...I believe that in Ram Rajya, a man cannot commit a crime against his own self. To inflict pain on oneself is as unjust as it is to hurt someone else... Even today, Lord Ram has thrown Sita out of his home because she was forced to live with Ravana... Did Sita commit any sin? Wasn’t she, like our mothers and sisters today, a victim of violence and deceit? ... Is it a question of Sita’s truthfulness, faithfulness or is it a question of Ravana’s wickedness? ... Once again, our innocent Sitas have been thrown out of their homes... (p. 60).

Sunderlal is genuine in his concern for abducted women and his feelings for his Lajo. ‘The sight of his genuine personal suffering at the loss of Lajwanti always silences the morally self-righteous and the priest-beguiled critics of the committee. His concern and gentle regard for these women, whom the others refuse to acknowledge, is not hypocritical.’ Many people refuse to take back their abducted and recovered women on the ground that they are dishonoured. They wish that those women should have taken poison or jumped into wells and died to preserve their virtue and honour like those thousands of women who killed themselves to preserve their chastity during the partition. These recovered women are considered to be cowards, clinging to life. The people have not understood that it needs greater courage to live amidst such suffering than to commit suicide.

When Lajo arrives, Sunderlal sets an example for others by taking her back and giving her a place in his home and heart. Many people appreciate his precept and practice. He treats her with much gentleness and love and calls her Devi instead of Lajo. Lajwanti longs to tell him everything about her black days of suffering ‘so that she could feel clean again’ (p. 65). But Sunderlal does not want to listen to her story. He silences all her efforts to tell him by saying, ‘Let us forget the past! You didn’t do anything sinful, did you? Our society is guilty because it refuses to honour women like you as goddesses. It ought to be ashamed of itself. You shouldn’t feel dishonoured.’ (p. 65). Her sorrow remains locked up in her breast. Suspicion and apprehension replace her initial happiness, ‘not because Sunderlal had begun to mistreat her once again, but because he continued to treat her with excessive kindness’ (p. 66). She wants to quarrel with him for silly reason and be his ‘Lajo’ again, but Sunderlal fails to understand her feelings. ‘She had returned home, but she had lost everything... Sunderlal had neither eyes to see her tears nor the ears to hear her sobs...’ (p. 66). ‘...Just as his earlier violence had denied Lajwanti the right to a life of kindness, his new solicitude fails to satisfy
her desire for affectionate regard. He begins to regard her as a *devi*. She, on the other hand, longs to cease lamenting for the past, to be accepted as a victim of historical circumstances, to be treated as a human being with flesh and blood who has endured a lot but will not wither when touched, and above all to be embraced as a woman who is physically alive and longs for the generosity of love. Sukrita Paul Kumar says:

... The girl, who is Lajjo to her husband before Partition, becomes for him the defiled Lajwanti (touch-me-not) after she has been through the gruesome experience of abduction during Partition. The husband can have reverence for her, but not love and passion. He can respect her and deify her, but cannot bring himself to have a normal relationship with a 'dishonoured' wife. The loss of honour of the woman has transformed their relationship.

Though Lajwanti returns home and is received and rehabilitated by her husband, she is never given a chance to become her old self; though she yearns to become so. After the abduction, she loses her old identity and never gets it back. Her identity has transformed into the personality of a *devi*, venerated by her husband. She suffers quietly. 'She suffers a tremendous alienation from her husband, but cannot even think of a separation.' She suffers because she can never have an association with her husband. She cannot become Lajo, but remains Lajwanti, the touch-me-not, whom her husband does not touch. Dr. Asaduddin says:

He (Sunderlal) cannot accept her as his wife because he had raised her to a high pedestal and had worshipped her like a *devi*, which hindered her integration into the family structure and to leading a normal life. Abducted women, during Partition, were not just victims of violence and rape by 'enemies', but were also made to suffer in their own homes and at the hand of their own people. Thousands of women were rejected by their husbands and families, and had no option but to live out their lives in ashrams and brothels.

The story, *Nirashrithe*, by H.V. Savithramma (1913-1995), is much similar to Bedi's *Lajwanti*. In *Nirashrithe*, Chandru, like Sunderlal, longs to take his abducted wife back if she comes alive to Hindustan. He is full of grief over the death of his daughter and the abduction of his wife. He tries to find solace in treating patients in Refugee Camps and in meeting and listening to sermons of Gandhi. He becomes ready to accept his wife, Tulsi, when he actually confronts her, but declines to do so when he comes to know of Tulsi's child, born during the period of her abduction. Chandru abandons the house of Tulsi's father, who brings her (his daughter, Tulsi) and her daughter home from the refugee camp. He accepts Tulsi's child as his grandchild. Tulsi has to live separated permanently from her husband. She is lucky enough to be accepted by her parents.

In Lalithambika Antharjanam's *A Leaf in the Storm*, another abducted woman, Jyothi, is recovered. Unlike Lajwanti and Tulsi, she is unmarried, and therefore, there is no question of restoring her. Her parents being dead and having no brothers and sisters, she is put up in a refugee camp. Added to this suffering, she is carrying unwanted pregnancy because of the gang rape on her. She desperately wants to die. She requests the lady volunteer to give her no bread, but a gun or a dagger or even a little poison to kill herself. There are many other suffering women in the camp. There is an old woman who has lost all her nine children and fifty grandchildren because of her insistence on staying in her own village so that she could breathe her last there. The riots started, all her children and grandchildren were killed, her house was gutted, and the women of her house were abducted, and she
alone has survived to suffer the misery. There is another woman, whose husband was killed and who was violated before his body. She could only see the blood stained hands of her three children. She lives, suffering the incomprehensible loss. And there are many children wailing over the death of their parents. All these survivors suffer for no fault. There are many people who suffered much to survive. ‘Among them are people who ran for life, for several miles. Many have arrived with bruised feet, broken limbs and withered bodies. Not to speak of their fear of fever and epidemics. Despite all this, they seem to have got used to this way of life’ (p. 138) and this bay of suffering. All this suffering around Jyothi makes her a little stubborn. But her fasting for four days has made her very weak and tired. Yet, when the camp-doctor comes, she requests him to abort her forced and unwanted pregnancy. But he, who is a follower of Gandhi’s principles of Ahimsa, declines her request. By speaking like a Vendantin, he makes her a little strong in facing the adversities of life. She starts eating regularly. ‘The crowd in the refugee camp grew day by day. Different costumes... different languages... men, women, children. The young and the old. And the number swelled. And new stories;’ (p. 140), the stories of survival and suffering. In the midst of such a storm of suffering, she is a leaf in the storm, and ‘in that ocean of mass movement, she was but a wave’ (p. 140). She witnesses many births and deaths in the camp, more deaths than births. After sunset, many campers would gather under the big leafy tree at the backyard of the camp and exchange their tales of sorrow and suffering and curse all the well-known leaders, who were responsible for the division, destruction, degradation, desperation, deprivation, desalination, depression, displacement, and disaster. ‘Some of them blamed even the ‘toothless grandsire’ of Indian politics – that kindly soul! Poor people. They were not amongst those who made others suffer, but those who suffered themselves’ (p. 140).

Jyothi listens to everything and moves about slowly. What moves inside her belly is a challenge to every cell of her being. It grows drawing on her life-blood and will emerge one day without anybody’s permission. Only a few people know that she is pregnant and unmarried. But most of them do not know her whereabouts. She was the only daughter of her rich parents. She grew to be a bold, beautiful, young, and energetic girl, who went to college, despite her parents’ initial objections. She gave up her purdah, loved her freedom, and refused many proposals for marriage from rich grooms. ‘The freedom she had earned was not only for herself. It was also the freedom from slavery for her community, indeed for the whole human race. She wanted to free the bonded, those who were enslaved by convention. She wanted to make them happy and contented... ’ (p. 142). But her dreams had landed her in prison. In her fight to uphold her ideals she had to suffer police brutality. For days she had gone without food or rest. Ignoring all warnings, she had dedicated herself to the uplift of women. ‘I trust my brothers,’ she used to say, when others tried to dissuade her venturesome spirit’ (p. 143). And now she has received this reward by the brother of her own bosom friend, Ayesha. Ayesha and her father Qasim arranged for sending Jyothi and other fourteen women in veils under bundles of hay in a cart across the border to a refugee camp. But the cart was stopped midway and Ayesha’s brother and his gang dragged out the concealed women and Jyothi was gang raped. Later, she was recovered and exchanged for the reclaimed women by the other side at the borders. She thought that she moved from one prison to another prison. Abducted women were exchanged just like things—twenty for twenty and fifty for fifty.
Weeks pass, and her belly grows big. She suffers overwhelming pain. She wonders whether it is the agony of life or death. 'Suddenly she thought of the prison in which she had lain unconscious. An awful lot of men must have come into that cell. Those devilish faces... reddened by fanatic hate and frenzy! To which one of those faces does this bear a resemblance?' (p. 144) She is alone when she suffers from labour pains and gives birth to her baby under the tree at the backyard of the camp. There are no lights in the camp-sheds. Only the groaning of the sick and the cries of the children are heard. Jyothi’s first instinct is to choke her baby to death. She tries to cover its parted lips to hush its silence. But she is afraid of doing so. The next impulse is to run away, leaving the baby there only. She even moves a little away from the baby, which is another post-partition refugee. But ‘it was rather difficult to sever life’s bond so easily’ (p. 145). She slowly returns and takes the baby into her arms. The mother in her is awakened. She caresses the baby gently and moves towards the camp. ‘Her life blood flowed like fresh milk’ (p. 145). ‘At first she wants to abort the child (as many women in such camps were advised to do by the social workers), both to avoid social stigma and to seek revenge. But the moment the child is born, she is filled with enormous compassion for the life she is carrying and the responsibility she has to sustain it. In a moment of visionary understanding, she decides to nurture and nourish it and so ensure the ongoingness of the earth. There is no forgiveness in this decision, but there is an awe-inspiring sense of sympathy for those who are more helpless and a refusal to inflict further wounds. Instead of thinking endlessly about days under the curse of evil, she realizes that, the longer she lives in the world, the more profoundly is the sense of its immortality aroused in her...; the more ‘natural’ it is for her to love the child.’

Dr. Alok Bhalla comments:

What happens to the woman in Lalithambika Antharjanam’s A Leaf in the Storm is typical of what many women had to suffer during the partition. Still tormented by her experiences, her rage is intense. She understands the bitter irony of the fact that during the Partition, as during all processes of ‘ethnic cleansing’, the bodies of women have become the contested sites for men of the warring communities to prove that they have the proper claim to be called God’s own people and, hence, the right to possess or to kill the women whom they find in their kingdom. After all, it was ‘natural’ for men of distinct religions to claim the women of ‘enemy’ Gods - they could violate them to prove their own religious faith, sell them to establish their own purity, or put them in brothels as examples to other heretics...''

Dr. Asaduddin says:

... Jyothi is burdened with an unwanted and forced pregnancy, which she can neither get rid of nor come to terms with... The story, however, ends on a hopeful note with Jyothi giving birth to a child and accepting it as her own.\textsuperscript{82}

Discussing partition stories, Jason Francisco comments:

Lalithambika Antharjanam’s A Leaf in the Storm is... a sensitive and powerfully told story of survival. Jyothi arrives pregnant and despondent in a refugee camp, having been betrayed, abducted and raped in her transport across the border. The life inside her, ‘conceived in... inhuman rape and ignorance’, tortures her as she watches births and deaths in the camp and grows increasingly bitter at the corruption that put and keeps her there. She is likewise tortured by her own idealism, her ardent, long-cultivated desire for ‘freedom from slavery for her community, indeed for the whole human race,’ which has been rudely dashed and has been reticulated back into her very body as the physical pain of her pregnancy. When the child is born, she herself
is thrust into a profound and spontaneous confrontation with the value of life. Miraculously, almost despite herself, she chooses life, taking the child in her arms, letting her life-blood flow like fresh milk.

Jyothi gives life to the child and her motherhood gives a new life to herself. Dr. Sukrita Paul Kumar analyses the story in terms of the significance of motherhood:

Though the Indian Government set up a number of rehabilitation projects for what were called ‘unattached women’, the state support for Partition widows and single women was certainly not adequate to cope with the sheer immensity of the number of women seeking support in this context. *A Leaf in the Storm* captures the fate of such an ‘unattached’ woman, an unfortunate victim of multiple rapes. The story... is predominantly an internal monologue, revealing Jyoti’s different intensely emotional and reflective responses to the baby in her womb, the baby conceived in the stupor of her rape by one of the many abductors. From a state of anger and deep bitterness to the moment when she reaches out to her baby, the movement tells the story of a rape-victim slowly shedding the gory experiences from her consciousness, and developing warm feelings towards the child... Towards the end of the story, Jyoti’s mind lays claim to the child. It is as though the child who has given birth to her maternal instincts has fully aroused the mother in her. Her universe becomes positive and the ‘dimmed stars beam from the heavens’ (p. 145). The triumph of motherhood, of having acquired something, of relating and providing for another life define Jyoti’s life with fresh affirmations. The complex struggle of living gets support from the strength of spontaneous maternal instincts. Not only has the new life been given refuge by the mother, the woman herself acquires a fresh life and sustenance from her pregnancy which she had earlier abhorred. It is not as if the violence and sexual assault on her is thus legitimised, but the woman has moved on—the denigrated woman enters the world of positive motherhood rather than getting stuck in the mire of victimhood. She will perhaps soon be prepared to defy all social norms to safeguard her child and keep the stars shining.

Motherhood makes her strong enough to undergo any suffering to protect her child.

Ramanada Sagar’s *Pimps* is another story about the restoration of women after they have been allegedly defiled by men of the other community during the partition. Nirmala, the protagonist, recounts her tale of woe in this story.

The village in which Nirmala lives with her child and husband and other in-laws is attacked by the Muslims of the village on the other side of the river, Ravi. She falls to their captivity while her husband runs away to save his life. Many other women of the village serve as slaves in their own houses to these outsiders. As the village falls on the Indian side after the new border line is drawn, the outsiders loot the houses and take the women in boats across the river to their own village on the other side.

The very sight of her child, Prem, playing on the bank of the river near its waves and the apparent danger in which he is playing prompts Nirmala to jump from the two-storey building down to the land, run to the river, and dive into it to swim across the raging waves. She swims courageously, neglecting her injury because of her jumping, and her hunger, for she has not eaten well for the last couple of days. The very thought of her son clinging to her bosom boosts her up.

But all her dreams of warm welcome and appreciation of her daring and courage in escaping from the enemy are dashed to pieces when she knocks on the door of her house. *After a piercing silence, the door is opened by her husband, but the door of his heart is permanently closed for her.*
He does not seem to be her husband. Even her father-in-law, clad in the patka bearing Lord Rama’s name all over, does not bless her when she touches his feet, but merely mutters ‘Ram, Ram’ as though to purify himself from her polluting touch. The deathlike silence appears ‘to brand her with a hot seal in every part of her body as a proof of her sin’ (p. 197). She is considered by her father-in-law to have gone mad. She is asked to speak in low voice; otherwise it will wake up people who will come to see her. Each man, whose wife or daughter was abducted, has been telling that she jumped into the river to save her honour. They do so to save their family honour. And for this reason only, Nirmala is not taken back into her house. She is now a defiled and dishonoured woman. It is a sharp irony that her name is Nirmala, which means pure. Her father-in-law even gives the example of Rama who abandoned even Sita, the chaste woman. So the woman who has lost her chastity will not be taken back. The father-in-law also consoles her:

There is no reason to feel sad. We have taken our full revenge. We have carried away many more of their women than they had ours (p. 198), and proudly says that they have two such abducted women in the house. It is the male-dominated society, in which woman is always the puppet in the hands of men. She is there for the enjoyment of the men. The men go to any level of inhumanity and cruelty in the name of family honour and male prestige. Nirmala’s husband, who ran away like a coward while his wife was being abducted, also passes for a male. Nirmala considers her husband and father-in-law as pimps and procurers and begins to run away from them.

But where can she run? She has lost her house, her husband, and her son. She is a rejected woman, rejected by the whole society. There is no shelter for defiled women in the society. Nirmala becomes a representative of all such women:

But where could I go after all? From my experience I had learnt that the same fate awaited a decent woman everywhere – be it India or Pakistan. Both the countries belonged to men who had ripped apart the thin veneer of decency and began to dance around the naked body of women. There was no safe haven for a woman. Like the land they had also divided our bodies among themselves... The whole stretch of Indian land was stained at places with the blood of women who were raped by both India and Pakistan in tandem. They were partners in this brutality. (p. 199).

She wants to go beyond the clutches of these men. She jumps herself into the Ravi that is held by India on one side and Pakistan on the other to be washed away to death by the raging waves. But the Ravi leaves her behind probably because she is not chaste like her. She has to live and suffer till her death. This is the punishment given by men to all such women for no fault of theirs. Women suffer at both the ends—in the hands of the abductors and their own men who should be their protectors. In this story, ‘Sagar shows how women are always at the receiving end—first they suffer at the hands of the aggressors and then at the hands of the members of their own community where they do not find acceptance or succour.’

Mumtaz Mufti’s The Dunghills pictures the survival and suffering of another woman Sarwari, who saves her life by hiding herself in a pit of dung during the riots. She is raped by Kala, the village sweeper. She is also raped by the old soldier, who takes her under his wing. She becomes sick of her life that has fallen into the pit of dunghills. Men who come near her appear to be leeches from dunghills and suck her for fleshly pleasures. She crosses borders to Pakistan, her own country. Everyone is
sympathetic towards her. Everyone wants to help her. Even the motherly love of the old woman, whose trap she falls into, proves to be a deceitful betrayal. She calls her Amma, but the same Amma makes her a professional prostitute. She eagerly wants to escape from her clutches, but there is no hope. She has to suffer till the end of her life.

Qudrat Ullah Shahab’s *Ya Khuda* (O God) is a long short story about the survival and suffering of Dilshad on both the sides of the new border. As the canvas of the story is wide, it includes more details and other explanations, which are complementary to the main plot. The author has made the story gripping with his sharp, critical, and ironical look at the human life during and immediately after the Partition, especially at the life of women-victims of the terrible tragedy.

The story is divided into three parts. In the first part, Dilshad’s suffering at the hands of the other community in India; in the second, her suffering at the hands of her own community in Pakistan; and in the third, her independent life in the midst of her community are depicted.

There are no Muslims in the village, Chamkor. Some of them have run away, some have died and some have been killed in the communal riots and violence. The entire village has been cleansed. But there is only one Muslim girl, Dilshad, the only daughter of Mullah Ali Bakhsh, who has been killed and thrown into the well in the mosque by one Sikh, Amrik Singh. He rapes Dilshad and keeps her in the mosque, as her house has been burnt down. Not only Amrik, but many Sikh men of the village visit her in the mosque. ‘Just as a perpetual sufferer from cold occasionally takes a pinch of snuff, in the same way the Khalsas of the village exasperated by their superstitious wives and sisters, and to ease the tension in their veins, went over to Dilshad’ (p. 272). She suffers the death of her father, her separation from her community, and the brutal ravages of the Sikhs on her body, in silence:

Dilshad was like an asteroid wandering alone in the endless expanse of the universe. Her universe had been destroyed; there were no suns or moons left any longer, nor any shining stars. She was cast adrift, alone and friendless, leaning against the door-jamb of the mosque worried, scared and lost. (pp. 272-273).

Though there is no other Muslim in the village save Dilshad, the mosque becomes more populated than the gurudwara. Sikh men get into the mosque by turns. They sit under the arch of the mosque, drink whisky and bhang, and lustily feast on the pleasures offered by Dilshad’s youthful and beautiful body. The author ironically says that, by doing so, the Sikh men feel proud of themselves for having taken revenge on the other community.

When Dilshad becomes pregnant, the first thought of the Sikh men is to kill her and throw her body into the well, but Amrik Singh takes her to the nearest police station and hands her over to the police under the guise of a social worker. The police inspector, Labbhu Ram, though being disappointed at her protruding abdomen, decides to get whatever he can in the given situation. After meal that evening, lying down on his cot, he calls Dilshad to massage his aching feet. ‘The pain in his feet rose to the calves, then to the thighs and finally settled in the crotch area. He kept guiding Dilshad’s hands to the more painful parts of his body and receiving satisfaction’ (p. 274). The police inspector, who is to protect her from the exploitation, himself exploits her in beastly cruelty.
Dilshad suffers all this exploitation in silence without a word of protest:

None of this was new for Dilshad. In the last few months, her life had unfolded in such a way that she had become like a balm—a universal panacea for everybody's aching limbs, to be applied wherever and whenever anyone needed her. And every part of her body was able in minutes to relieve the agony of excited, panting and restless human beings. But how sore she herself was and how much pain she was herself suffering, no one knew. (p. 274).

After keeping Dilshad in the station for fifteen days—during which Dilshad’s repeated massage subsides the inspector’s bodily pains—she is sent to the Ambala Refugee Camp. On the way, the head constable, Daryodhan Singh, also suffers many bouts of pain in his limbs, but Dilshad goes on alleviating his pain efficiently. In this way, a journey of ten hours is safely covered in twelve days.

Dilshad joins many other women and girls like her in the camp. Every day, new women and girls who have been abducted and separated from their people arrive there. Dilshad is sustained by her child in her womb and her look at the west. She even touches the railway tracks behind the camp and becomes ecstatic, because the other end of the tracks is in the West Punjab, where her brothers, sisters, parents of her own community, and a life of dignity and comfort are waiting for her. Even Rahim Khan, who loved her, may be waiting for her. The very thought of the West breeds hope in her mind.

After two months of Dilshad’s arrival in the camp, ‘when the appetites of the camp commander Major Preetam Singh’s muscular and healthy soldiers—the jawans—were thoroughly sated’ (p. 276) by the unfortunate refugee women and girls, the train arrives there to take them to the other side of the border. Thinking of their horrible past and dreaming of their hopeful future, they cross the borders. Dilshad gives birth to a female baby in the train.

In the second part, she finds herself in Lahore when the train stops the next morning. The sweeper woman and another sturdy man send her out of the compartment with her baby. There is a tea-stall and a fruit-stall where different fruits are neatly arranged and the tea is boiling. She feels strangely feverish in her stomach and painful all over her body, but she has no penny on her to buy anything.

Her dreams of Pakistan full of brothers and sisters is dashed to pieces, when two neatly-dressed young men on the platform run away from her after seeing a baby in her lap. Dilshad is ready to go with them anywhere they take her, for she regards ‘all the land in the West as her home and every young man in the West her brother’ (p. 280). But they do not regard her as their sister. They want to use her for their sport, but her child poses an obstruction to their way. So they run away from her in search of other butterflies.

Dilshad stays on as if she is not a human being like others. Her contact with the world around is re-established only when an English family gives her five rupees. It also gives a piece of woollen flannel for her baby. The English boy, who is responsible for this act of sympathy by his mother, appears to be an angel of mercy to Dilshad. The two elderly men, who observe this act of sympathy by the English family, raise many objections to it and to Dilshad’s acceptance of it. They enquire about her whereabouts and her destination. But she does not know anything:
Dilshad wished she knew the answer, or knew where she would find the clue to where she was going. In her imagination all the world in the west was her destination. She had come over to join a vast brotherhood of those who were like her, but everything and everybody here was intent on asking her who she was, why she was there, whether she had any money in her pocket, whether her body could still give pleasure... (p. 283)

According to the suggestions of many people, she reaches the Mohajir camp, where the inhabitants' suffering is beyond human imagination. They suffer and die because of absolute callousness. There is a heap of woolen clothing—blankets, beddings, sweaters, waistcoats, shawls in the store room—on which the storekeeper lies and hums strains of the famous poet, Iqbal's poem, The Complaint to God. It is sharply ironic that the storekeeper asks Dilshad and others in need of woolen blankets and beddings (quilts) to come the next day as the stores office is closed. Humming the strains of 'The Complaint to God', the storekeeper turns deaf to the claims and complaints of the refugees. It is man's absolute callousness to man which results in the suffering and death. The old man (who uses his only blanket to cover his grandchildren, Zubeida and Mahmood), the woman (who bares herself to cover her dying daughter with her clothes), and her daughter die because of the bitterest cold and heavy downpour: 'The bare body of that woman was the worst insult to all that had been achieved by mankind.' (p. 289). Again it is sharply ironic that the dead bodies are covered with blankets the next day. It is very pathetic that the living refugees look at the dead with envy because they do not have such blankets. Mahmood and Zubeida have lost their only relative, their grandfather. Zubeida tells Mahmood that their grandfather has gone to bring back their parents who had gone to see God. He will bring nice toys when he returns. Dilshad herself suffers, with her tender baby, the sharp cold and rain. She is also shocked to see the sufferings of others in the camp.

Many great and dignified lords, ladies, and noblemen who are self-declared social workers and leaders come to the camp and express their deep distress over the unfortunate deaths. They promise to help them in all possible ways. Mr. Mustafa Khan Simabi, who is more magnanimous than others, also promises to help Dilshad in searching her lover, Rahim Khan. A few days later, he takes her in his car to meet Rahim Khan who is in his bungalow. But only on reaching the bungalow does she come to know that Rahim Khan is not found. Yet Mustafa himself plays Rahim Khan. After a few days, she comes back to the camp. She learns from Mahmood that Zubeida, the 12-year-old girl, has also gone in a car to see her grandfather who has sent him a glass top and rubber ball to play with and colourful sweets to eat. The narrator says with stinging sarcasm:

Lahore was not Lahore but Medina; its inhabitants not its usual citizens, but the warm-hearted, hospitable residents—the ansaar—Medina. In this city, a new Rahim Khan came into being for Dilshad every day, a new grandfather for Zubeida. There were new fathers here for daughters, new brothers for sisters, bodies meeting bodies, blood mingling with blood... (p. 293).

In the third part of the story, the author turns his sarcastic and photographic eyes on various people and places in Karachi. He ironically depicts the arrival of refugees; their wailing over their loss and nostalgia for the lost cities like Delhi; their separation from lovers and other near and dear ones; the migration of Hindus to India; the discussion of two foreign secretaries over drinks about Parsi girls, veiled women, the shared objectives of their two brave countries, and their intention to help the displaced refugees of Pakistan, the counterfeit coins; the conflict of Pakistani national language between Urdu and Bengali; the exploitation of the poor refugees by the police; and particularly the
conversation between two men about their income out of supplying poor and beautiful refugee girls to brothels. Supplying girls becomes a thriving business for many people. The poor and displaced refugee girls, shaken to the core, become the victims of this business. Most of the uprooted and displaced women end their lives as prostitutes. And Dilshad and Zubeida are no exception. Selling fried gram flour pastry and yogurt dumplings, Dilshad and Zubeida carry on with their flesh trade, each looking after Dilshad’s baby and Zubeida’s brother by turns. Dilshad’s belief in her religion and her community do not help her build up a dignified life. Then what about her daughter who grows amidst gram flour pastry and clients for the flesh of her mother’s body? A whole generation of women and their children lost their roots, identity, and dignified life and its pleasures.

Lalithambika Antharjanam’s *The Mother of Dhirendu Muzumdar* vividly brings out the anguish and suffering of an old woman, Shanti Muzumdar, who is torn between divided feelings—devotion to her husband, Niharendu Muzumdar and affection to her eldest son, Dhirendu Muzumdar. Her husband is a follower of the British and her son a freedom fighter. Her family is a patriotic, famous, and rich family in East Bengal. Great dignitaries and leaders of the time visit her house. She has nine children—seven boys and two girls. She sacrifices five children for India and four for Pakistan. Her husband dies. She alone survives. She bears all this loss with a strong love for the land where all her ancestors took their births and embraced their deaths and have united with its soil. She too wants to breathe her last on that soil only. As her name, Shanti Muzumdar, itself indicates, she loves all the people of the undivided nation as her own children and grandchildren. She says, ‘Here no one is a Hindu, no one is a Muslim... We are one.’ (p. 203). Even her daughter marries a Muslim and begets a lovely daughter Nazeema. She suffers intense pangs of pain at the division of the country which destroys the feeling of oneness.

As if her suffering is not enough, the new government treats her with suspicion and confiscates all her lands and property. The soldiers kill her granddaughter by throwing her onto the road. Though Muzibur Sahib, the great leader of East Bengal reveres her as the mother of Bengal and begs for her blessings, she is forcibly sent to India by the soldiers at the age of ninety. ‘And here she is supposedly a refugee! Supposedly a beggar woman! Supposedly an outsider!’ (p. 204). The great mother of East Bengal is a refugee, beggar, and outsider in Calcutta, the land of Tagore and Netaji. What a downfall! What a suffering! She sings *Saphalam, Sujalam... Sasyashyamalam, Mataram... Vande Mataram...* in the same way as she used to sing with devotion for the nation.

Suraiya Qasim’s *Where Did She Belong?* is a story about the identity of a woman in the context of the partition that means nothing to her. Munni Bai does not know about her parents or her community. Her guardian Ma, who runs a brothel, tells her that she was found crying and lying on the road equidistant from a mosque and a temple and that she has called her by the name, Munni Bai, used by both the Hindus and the Muslims, and that she has to do what she does to eat during the day what she earns at night. Of course, parentage and community do not matter in her profession in which only looks and youth are important. And she has both. She is a ravishing beauty at seventeen. She has been famous in Lahore. Every customer prefers her and her only. She is the chief source of income to Ma. Ma and her companions celebrate all the Hindu and the Muslim festivals in their brothel which is open to all the communities. So the identity does not matter to Munni Bai.
Deep inside her heart, Munni Bai does not want to do what she has been doing. But there is no other alternative for her. In the privacy of a closed room, she is totally at the mercy of the master of the moment. Some deal with her brutally which she suffers in silence. With the passage of time, she gets used to every kind of treatment. But her soul suffers deep inside her.

During daytime, she thinks of two customers in particular—Raj Kamal, a Hindu and Jafar Khan, a Muslim. Each claims her to belong to his community, for such a bewitching beauty cannot belong to the other community. Each professes this love to her, promises to stand by her in times of difficulties, and even to marry her.

'Then began those memorable months of disgrace by the end of which the Hindus had won, the Muslims had won, but humanity had lost' (p. 115, emphasis added). Ma and her wards leave Lahore well in time and reach a refugee camp in Delhi without any suffering. Though they are grieved to see countless refugees mourning for the death of their kinsmen, they have no kinsmen but only clients. Jafar Khan and Raj Kamal do not turn up to see Munni Bai either in Pakistan or in India.

Clients haunt the brothel of Ma, which she opens in G.B. Road after a few days. She hires the house left vacant by Salma, the famous prostitute, who has now gone to Hira Mandi in Lahore. It is a perfect exchange of people that the governments of both the countries agree to. Munni Bai immediately becomes famous in Delhi also. Rich Rajas and Nawabs repeatedly visit the brothel for her and spend lavishly for the fleshly pleasure, which she gives them.

Despite the enormous destruction of property, the Rajas and Nawabs have enough money to spend on nightly and fleshly passions. Munni Bai wonders 'Who lost and who died in the partition?' (p. 117). Partition does not result in any change for her. She cannot understand that the partition mainly resulted in the loss of the subsistence of the common people, uprooting, displacement, and suffering.

Duggal's Pakistan Zindabad is a story about the forcible rehabilitation of a woman called Rakhi. Her real name was Ram Rakhi, but now she is called Allah Rakhi. This shows that she survives the partition riots and killing in which all the Hindus and the Sikhs of the village are killed. Some of the villagers escape. She converts to Islam and marries Sher Baz Khan, who wants to kill her, but lets her go because of the interference of his mother and sister. She adjusts herself to the house and the village in such a way that she becomes the darling of her husband and is appreciated by the other members of her family and all the people in the village. She loves her village, the farms, the trees, and the waters of the village so much that she wonders how her parents and the other refugees can live away from it. She has a deep sense of association with the village, its people, and even their religion. Except that her parents and her brother have been separated from her, she has not experienced dislocation and uprooting. She is happy and spends many months in bliss.

Then one day, suddenly her brother appears and she is forced to leave the village for India. She now experiences pangs of pain and separation more than she did when she was separated from her parents and her brother. She begs her husband to save her. She is prepared to sacrifice a hundred brothers to be with her husband. She even suggests that they should run away. But her husband is not
in a position to do anything. All the conversions that took place during the partition riots are null and void. Rakhi should be sent to India to get back an abducted Muslim woman in exchange. It is the order of the government. No one can do anything to save Rakhi. Her husband falls unconscious being incapable of bearing the grief. Rakhi is in the grip of severe grief of separation. Added to this, she is pregnant now. Yet she must be sacrificed, for the government says no sacrifice is too big for Pakistan. She falls down in her room.

But after some time, she comes out dressed in a rich bridal suit. Sher Baz Khan brings her trunk of clothes and other articles. He also gives her the hand-fan on which Rakhi herself has embroidered Pakistan Zindabad and she leaves for India. She had escaped the dislocation during the riots, but she cannot escape it during the rehabilitation.

Tejwant Singh Gill says in his essay, Manto and Punjabi Short Stories:

This is the story of a young Hindu girl, who, in order to escape the turmoil, seeks shelter with a Muslim family. Otherwise a desperado, the young man of the family falls in love with this girl and marries her. So powerful is the marital bond between them that she refuses to go to India when the armymen come to recover her for repatriation. Her forthright reply to them is: 'I won't go. I shall never go. These trees are ours and so are their leaves. This plant that I have been watering is yet to grow'. In this plea is latent the effort to undo the partition through invoking a deep attachment for the marital bond and one's natal home that reclaims the natural ambiance for its support. Though a source of sustenance to the man and woman concerned, it cannot replace the political division arrived at for malevolent reasons by the politicians.^^

Manik Bandopadhyay's The Final Solution is a story of the sufferings of a displaced and uprooted refugee family, but with a difference. The protagonist, Mallika, finds the final solution to all her problems.

Mallika, her husband Bhushan, their two and a half year old son Khokon, and a widowed sister-in-law, Asha, somehow survive and reach India. They spend a few days and nights, huddled together like herds of cattle in the shelter of a railway platform. Such scenes were very common during those days. Many men from different Help Societies, Associations, and Newspaper Offices visit them and express their concern over their difficulties. Many people from such societies, associations, and organizations try to use such destitutes for their own profit.

Pramatha, a middle aged man from 'Help and Welfare Society', comes forward to help the family. Mallika, though understands a look of villainy in his eyes under the guise of sincerity and concern, accepts his offer of finding her and her sister-in-law some job to earn their livelihood. He gets jobs only to women. She accepts the offer only to save her child from dying of hunger and help her sick husband. Pramatha gets them a room and grocery and milk for the child.

Women were the most exploited class during and after the partition. The conditions of living were so critical that even Asha, the sister-in-law, who was not ready to get into prostitution even if she died, offers to go to Pramatha when he sends for Mallika. But, it is Mallika who is wanted.
Mallika, though has some inkling about the kind of job that Pramatha will get her and his flesh trade, is shocked when he himself tries to enjoy her before introducing her to the profession of prostitution. Pramatha has already given shelter to many refugee families and has been using the women in his flesh trade and earning his commission. His trade has grown big and been fetching him a good profit. Mallika emerges victorious in finding out the final solution to all her difficulties and problems by strangling Pramatha to death and thereby she saves many other helpless women from his clutches. She even decides to go to the railway station every evening in her frayed sari, hiding a sharp knife, to kill the sharks that pick her up. Their very suffering made the women bold to come out of their houses to earn a living and find solutions to their problems in different ways. Mallika is a rare woman who finds out such a rare solution to her problems. She saves her child and husband from hunger, disease, and death; and her sister-in-law and herself from dishonour.

Pratibha Basu’s Flotsam and Jetsam is a story of suffering of women survivors. The protagonist of the story, Bindubasini, had to migrate to India from East Pakistan, overlooking her cordial relationship with the local Muslims who could not be trusted in the changed circumstances. She had to migrate along with her widowed daughter-in-law and two granddaughters, leaving behind her big house, lands, and all other valuable possessions. On the way, she is robbed of her gold ornaments and three hundred rupees so that she is a destitute when she sets her foot on the Indian soil along with other refugee families.

Many volunteers, social workers, and charitable organizations help those families by providing milk to the children and flattened rice and molasses to the grown-ups. Men refugees busy themselves in searching for work, collecting refugee certificates, and writing applications to the government for an allotment of land. Women refugees find jobs of domestic service and boys of running errands. Small children start begging. Only Bindubasini cannot find a way out. To add to her difficulties, her granddaughter Bulu suffers from high fever.

Keshabananda, from the society of ‘Friends of the Orphans,’ comes to her help. He takes them to his ashram in a desolate corner of an unfamiliar part of Calcutta. Bulu dies of cold and fever. On pretext of sending Uttara, her daughter-in-law, to a job of governess in an old rich man’s house, Keshabananda sacrifices her at the altar of Rajiblochan’s lust. Rajiblochan is his boss and employer who has been doing all sorts of dirty professions like prostitution and black-marketing. The influx of refugees makes Keshabananda’s job of getting hold of girls for prostitution easy.

Keshabananda also sacrifices Milu (Mrinalini), the rosy-cheeked fourteen-year old granddaughter of Bindubasini to Sashisekhar, a film producer, who has been in the habit of tasting chaste and virtuous girls. Finally, Bindubasini is taken in a vehicle on the pretext of leaving her to stay in a room above the garage of the rich employer of Uttara and is pushed out of the running vehicle, while she is taking a little nap, on the outskirts of the city where there is no human habitation. The violently thrown Bindubasini falls on a big, rough piece of rock and loses her consciousness. Vaguely thinking of her dead husband, son, and younger granddaughter; and living daughter-in-law and elder granddaughter, she dies like an orphan.
Bindubasini migrates from a village in East Pakistan to a big city, Calcutta, in India. The profit motif of the city has lost all morality and humanity. Her forced destitution and helplessness result in the dishonour of her daughter-in-law and elder grand-daughter and the death of her younger grand-daughter and herself. They were able to escape from enemies with their honour in tact, but the people of her own nation, which they take to be their own homeland, dishonour their honour. They find no solutions to their problems except dishonour and death.

Selina Hossein’s *An Evening of Prayer* pictures the sufferings of a few Muslim survivors who are on their way to the new nation, East Pakistan. Like most of the Bengali stories, this story also does not describe the violence and violations that the Partition had brought along with it. But it describes the deep sense of displacement and loss and the suffering that the loss has brought in. The sense of loss and displacement leaves behind deep psychological scars on the victims.

The story hints at the loss and suffering of all the Muslim people who are now on their way to Rajshahi in East Pakistan. Khala, the elder woman in the group, lost 16 members of her family a few days ago and is now leaving the country with her son Fazale Gazi, only. ‘Their family was hacked to death, their home looted... and... burnt down’ (p. 156). The whole village respected her for her goodness and generosity. Now she is leaving the country to an unknown land without a penny in her hands. Nasurullah, the village master, is running away with his wife and two sons. His wife has been running a temperature for the last few hours. They also have lost everything and have become refugees.

The story mainly revolves round Pushpita and her family. Her husband, Ali Ahmed, taught literature. He is a man who respects and believes in humanity and harmony. His wife’s name, Pushpita, and his six-year old son’s name, Pradipto, which are common Hindu names, hint at his attitude to Hindu-Muslim unity. But people became beasts during the partition. They were unreliable like the river they are floating on. ‘... Men too were unreliable. Those who were like brothers had turned to enemies – knives and death had glittered from their cruel hands.’ (p. 158). The very identity of being Muslims is the sufficient cause for their loss and displacement. Ali Ahmed thinks to himself later in the story, ‘Religion is a felt belief, deeply so. Yet we turn upon each other in its name, like beasts, like mangy curs.’ (p. 165). This resulted in indescribable agony and suffering.

Added to the difficulties of displacement and uprooting, Pushpita is pregnant and she may go into labour at any time. Even in such a time, she had to travel from her village to the river and the boat. She faces the ravages of pain. Her husband asks her to be patient, but how can the to-be-born baby be asked to hold back? The boatman skillfully steers to carry these people to the bank.

When they get into the train, the pains begin again. Khala asks the chain to be pulled and the train is stopped. All the men in the compartment go to another compartment. Khala looks after Pushpita, forgetting all her loss and pain. Yet Ali Ahmed suffers a lot at finding himself, his wife, and children in the state of being refugees. He thinks that he is like a hunted animal, ‘like a dog being driven out of his territory’ (p. 165). For 31 years, he lived like a man in this country, but now he is nothing more than a frightened dog, hounded out of his own borders, incapable of a whimper of protest’ (p. 165).
Pushpita gives birth to a male child. Ali feels that his child is born to a new life in the country with a new name. The child is the image of his heart and so he names him Pratik—Pratik Ahmed. ‘Pratik’ means symbol in Bangla. The child is a symbol of amity, humanity, and harmony in which Ali Ahmed himself has an unshakable faith.

The partition resulted in the separation of relatives and the separation sometimes resulted in strange and critical situations. Each of the separated relatives presumes the other to be dead and there will be critical moments when the supposedly dead relative suddenly appears after many years before the other. Ram Lall’s story, *A Visitor from Pakistan*, and Vishnu Prabhakar’s story, *I Shall Live*, present two such situations in which two women, thinking that their husbands were killed in the carnage of the partition, start living with other men and they are struck with wonder and woe when their former husbands present themselves before them.

In *A Visitor from Pakistan*, Saraswati is shocked to see her former husband Baldev, whom she has taken to be killed in Pakistan during the partition, when he presents himself before her after many years. Her survived parents are also shocked to see him. Baldev also believed in what he was told about the death of his wife and her parents. When he learns that his wife is living, he rushes immediately from the other side of the border to see her.

Saraswati is now the wife of Sunderdas and has two children from him. Sunderdas risks his life again and again to protect Saraswati and her parents, who search every camp for Baldev. When they hear that Baldev’s parents and brothers were killed, they think that Baldev alone could not have survived. Sunderdas has shared all the sufferings of Saraswati and her parents, seen through all of their trials and enabled them to resettle in India. He is a savior of them. And when he comes forward to marry young widow Saraswati, her parents could not just refuse.

The reader can easily imagine the mental torture that Saraswati undergoes when she sees Baldev and she breaks down and weeps when Baldev wants to know her mind. She is saved by the appearance of the man who brings the government order to Baldev to leave. He leaves empty handed for Pakistan. He remains just a visitor from Pakistan. He has been suffering because of his separation from his wife and all the other relatives. He will have to endure loneliness, separation, and sorrow in future also.

Vishnu Prabhakar’s story, *I Shall Live*, is again a story about the separation of relatives, their suffering, and their final coming together. Raj was abandoned to her fate at the time of dangerous days of uprooting and migration. ‘During those days everyone was scared. People were running away from their homes to save their lives. There was a lot of killing. Bodies were piled up everywhere. All sense of humanity had been drowned in a river of blood.’ (p. 211, emphasis added).

Raj is abandoned by her husband and children whom she supposes to be dead in the carnage. During her venture of migration from Lahore, she protects a child by risking her own life. After reaching India, she starts living with Pran, who has saved her with the child from a pile of corpses. Pran looks after her and the child with care and concern. They fill his otherwise empty and lonely life
with some delight. Raj names the child as Dilip. She looks after the child with motherly love. She tries to forget her sorrow by looking at the innocent face of the child. She develops a deep attachment with the child, but gives him to his parents when they come to claim him. The readers can imagine the agony of the real mother who has lost her child, (Ramesh), and the anguish of Raj who has to lose the child Dilip (renamed so by Raj), now after looking after him for several months. She has saved him at the cost of her own safety. She has built her hope of life on this child only to see that hope shattered. She protects the motherhood of Dilip’s mother, but the separation from the child adds to her own suffering.

But there awaits a consolation for her. Her husband comes and requests Pran to send his wife with him. He accepts his wife again though she has lived with another man. There is another surprising consolation to her. She thinks that both of her sons had died during the riots. But one of her sons is living with her husband. Though she scolds her husband in the beginning, she honours his request and goes with him. It appears to be the end of her suffering. But Pran has to live alone in suffering. He himself has lost his wife, children, and other relatives while fleeing from Lahore.

Happiness cruelly deceives Pran. What does he gain finally? He finds a little happiness in the company of Dilip and Raj, after losing his own family. But he is deprived of that happiness too. He is left alone again. He suffers during and after the partition. But his suffering and loss do not make him bitter and unsympathetic towards the suffering of others. In fact, the suffering of others evokes more sympathy in him. He restores Dilip to his parents and sends Raj to her husband. Despite the burden of suffering on themselves, it was people like Pran who made life tolerable and meaningful in the quagmire of loss, rupture, and suffering.

Shaukat Osman’s Alefa is the story of Alefa, who longs to marry someone to escape from the loneliness that annoys her, and how her marriage fails to take place. After the death of her husband, Ashek Ali, Maliha Begum works as a primary school teacher and brings up her daughter, Alefa. When she attains the age of puberty, she arranges her marriage with the help of her husband’s friend, Kalim, who finds a decent and working groom. The groom is a refugee from Bihar and wants to settle in East Bengal. That is why, he has been in search of a local bride. The groom is very generous to marry Alefa, the daughter of a poor teacher.

But the elders of the locality take it otherwise. If the groom, a government officer with a salary of 250 rupees, is ready to marry a poor teacher’s daughter, there must be something wrong with him. They try to ruin the marriage, when they come to know that the groom is a Bihari Muslim, by fixing the bride money at ten thousand rupees, which is a big amount for him. When the groom agrees to pay ten thousand rupees, they demand four hundred rupees for the local mosque, the primary school, and the graveyard. When the groom’s friends protest this injustice, there begins a clash about the customs and prestige of Bengal and Bihar. The local elder, Rabbani Sheikh, an old Pakistani, in spite of his thought of Muslims of the world as one nation, cries, ‘Kick the Bihari brutes out. Come to marry in Bengal? Kick them out’. (p. 278). They stop the marriage but none among the local grooms comes forward to marry poor Alefa. She and her mother have to suffer long before a match could be found for her.
The bridegroom suffers such humiliation just because he is a refugee from Bihar and not a native of East Bengal (East Pakistan). It is difficult for a refugee to marry a local girl inspite of the fact that their community and religion are one and the same. The story hints at the fact that assimilation of the Bengali Muslims and Bihari Muslims has not been possible. Not tied by identities of language and culture to the Bengali Muslims, the Urdu speaking Bihari Muslim immigrants, who crossed the border during and after the partition, have been unable to take part in the fluidity of identity that ties the two Bengals together. Or the native East Bengalis have been unable to treat them with a broad outlook and humanity. They have to suffer, and their children will have to remain second-rate citizens of the country for many years to come.

That women survivors were the worst sufferers of the partition has been discussed so far by analyzing many stories. The next worst sufferers were their off-springs and other orphan children. Many children either lost their parents and guardians or got separated from them and so they suffered much. They could not enjoy the bliss of childhood. The lost, separated or abandoned children found themselves amidst strange persons and places, which increased their lot of suffering. Like abducted and recovered women, some adopted children had to undergo a second separation from the adoptive parents. ‘Closely connected with the plight of women is the plight of children who were lost, adopted by surrogate or childless parents and then snatched once again when the real parents or their relatives turn up, much against the wishes of the adoptive parents and, sometimes, of the children themselves.’

It is the second displacement, the first being the separation from their parents/guardians and homes. Many stories like After the Storm, Post Box, Parameshwar Singh (which has already been discussed in the previous chapter), Death, Pah, The Abandoned Child, etc., explore, in moving details, the trauma of the children who survived the partition violence and suffered.

Attia Hosain’s After The Storm gives the picture of a refugee child, who, despite all her loss and suffering, is lively and spirited. She has lost her mother and other relatives during the partition. She has become an orphan. She wears the discarded clothes and works as a servant of the narrator. She does not show any signs of her suffering in her behaviour. But her physical features show signs of suffering. The narrator says, ‘I could not tell her age... Her eyes had no memories of a childhood. Her body was of a child of nine or ten, but its undernourished thinness was deceptive, she could have been eleven or twelve. There was no telling how many years of childhood, life had robbed her of’. (p. 102). Every morning she brings fresh flowers and every evening garlands to the narrator. She even talks about earrings, bangles, and sweets; and is fond of bright colours. She is active and lively. Being a child, she likes bright colours, bangles, and sweets, but who is there to provide them to her. She has to burn her desires and dreams and suffer. Of course, she makes it with a smiling face and a lively spirit.

Discussing partition stories, Jason Francisco rightly comments:

After the Storm is an exquisitely told vignette of the first meetings between a resettled housewife (or so it seems—the narrator’s gender is not given) and a child-servant who lost her family during the riots. Winsomely and innocently the girl cannot help but seed new life—despite the brutality she has witnessed—bringing flowers and garlands, mixing her responses to questions about the violence she has seen with talk of sweets and bangles. The story avoids sentimentality superbly. We truly feel that we are being led by the child into liminal realms of the human spirit so pure that they survive unspeakable trauma and educate us in the release of our bigotry and grief.
In *Post Box* by S.H. Vatsyan *Ajneya*, we find another abandoned child of about five years who tries to post a letter to his father without writing his address on the letter. Like the child in *After the Storm*, this boy is bright and active and unlike her, his eyes still have the innocence of childhood. But they are ‘full of suffering’ (p. 106).

In response to the narrator’s enquiry, the boy, Roshan, narrates his story of survival and suffering. On the way to cross the borders for safety, Roshan’s father leaves his mother, his grandfather, and him midway in the company of other refugees, and promising to join them in Lahore, goes to fetch his Bua (aunt) and Phupha (uncle) who are old and who have lost their grown-up sons in the war with the Japanese. On the way, Roshan’s group of migrators joins other people who are also going towards Lahore. There are many attacks on them and his chacha dies along with many other men. Roshan witnesses the terrible scene of his mother’s death at the hands of an abductor, who throws his mother down on the ground and smashes her face with the blunt end of his axe. She screams with pain. ‘Roshan had shut his eyes, and when he opened them he had seen that her eyes, nose, jaws had been reduced to a bloody pulp. There was nothing left of her face. Yet the man, who had planted one foot on her chest, continued to hit her with his axe’ (p. 107). Some of the survivors in Roshan’s group drag him away with them. They run for life and the women who lag behind are abducted. Finally, after ten days, Roshan reaches Jallunder. He is the only survivor of the group, which first sets out from his village, to reach safety. Some strangers help Roshan to reach the camp.

He is now unhappy and wants to see his father. That is why, he wants to post the letter, but he does not know his father’s address. The narrator offers to help the boy by announcing his name and whereabouts over the radio so that his father, if he listens to the radio, can come to meet him. But Roshan insists on sending the letter. All the efforts, of the narrator to make him understand that letters will not go without address, fail. Despite the narrator’s advice to go back to the camp and stay there, Roshan remains there near the post-box, anxiously waiting for someone who would tell him how to send his letter to his father. It is pitiable to see the suffering of the boy, waiting near the post-box.

Ved Rahi’s *Death* is a story about how suspicion and apprehension creep into an innocent friendship between a Hindu boy and a Muslim boy because of the Partition. Madan and Saleem go to school together from fourth standard to seventh standard. Saleem takes Madan to his house and introduces him to his parents, brothers, and sister. All of them treat him as one of the family. But Madan does not take Saleem to his house because of the restrictions in his family against Muslims. Yet, their friendship grows to intimacy.

After seventh standard, they are separated. Madan goes to a High School, but Saleem joins the Military School. Because of the school restrictions, Saleem cannot go to his house often, but Madan keeps going to Saleem’s house. One day, Saleem’s mother asks him to stop coming to their house, as his coming to their Muslim locality is not free from danger. Communal hatred and riots begin to happen. Many people are killed everyday. Fire begins to rage all around. The independence and the partition are announced. Saleem’s family leaves for Pakistan in such a hurry that they cannot take Saleem with them. His parents, brothers, and sister suffer a lot to leave him alone. Even Madan is sent to Amritsar with some relatives.
After six months, when Madan comes back to Jammu, he immediately meets Saleem. Their hearts are heavy. They have suffered a lot because of their separation from each other and from their relatives. Madan takes Saleem home and tries to make him feel at home. But his explanation about their purchasing the present house makes Saleem terrified. The house belonged to a Muslim family, which was murdered during the riots. Only one son of the family, who was in Srinagar at the time, survived and he sold the house rather cheap and went to Pakistan. This explanation about the horrors of the partition makes Saleem grow suspicious and apprehensive. He hurriedly goes back with Madan. He asks him, ‘Can you murder me?’ Screaming, he runs towards his hostel, saying, ‘No, no, you cannot murder me’ (p. 237). Though he has not lost his trust in Madan’s friendship, his innocent mind is infected with suspicion and apprehension. It is an indescribable shock and suffering to both the children/friends.

In Bhisham Sahni’s Pali, we find yet another displaced child, Pali, who gets separated from his parents, falls into the hands of a childless Muslim couple and finally gets restored to his parents. Circumstances beyond human control and communal and religious fanaticism play their own part in adding to the suffering of both the child and his parents. The story begins with the following lines:

Life goes on and on. Its ends never meet. Neither in the mundane world of realities nor in fiction. We drag on drearily in the hope that some day these ends would meet. And sometimes we have the illusion that the ends have really met. (p. 120).

Anuradha Marwah Roy comments on the opening lines thus:

The suggestion of life held hostage by hostile external forces, the fortuitousness of events and the powerlessness inherent in the human condition is unambiguously made in these opening sentences.  

Manoharlal’s family joins the streams of people who get into the lorries, stationed one by one in front of a refugee camp in a small town on the other side of the newly created borders. It is a wholesale uprooting enforced on the unfortunate minorities. Pali, a boy of four years, the son of Manoharlal gets separated from his pitaji. Manoharlal frantically searches for his lost child, in vain. The lorry cannot wait, for the people want to cross the borderline before nightfall for safety and survival. ‘The hearts of the refugees had dried of all sentiments. The same Pali had once got lost and the whole mohalla had gone out in search of him’ (p. 121). But now they cannot wait for Pali. Their safety and survival are more important than the life of one child. Manoharlal and his wife are left with no other alternative but to start their journey for sheer survival.

Kaushalya, Manoharlal’s wife, weeps continuously for her lost son. His words of hope and consolation do not have any effect on her. Though he hopes to find the boy again, he pessimistically resigns to his fate: ‘What can we do if we don’t find him? God has been benign enough to spare a child for us. We must be thankful to him for that. You know Lekhraj’s three children were killed before his very eyes. It is God’s will. We must resign ourselves to it.’ (p. 122). But the motherly heart of Kaushalya still suffers for her son. She cannot resign herself to God’s will, which has still something else in store for them. On the way, though many other Lorries pass safely, some marauders with swords and spears attack their lorry. The baby in the lap of Kaushalya is forcibly snatched and killed. Manoharlal and Kaushalya have left their home and property. They lose their son. They are robbed of their possessions by the marauders and their baby is killed. What a suffering for survival!
The narrator says:

There are some wounds which heal with the passage of time, leaving a mark on the mind. But there are certain griefs which slowly eat into the heart like termites, completely ravaging the body. There is nothing a man can do about it. (p. 129).

The pessimistic attitude does not mitigate the unbound pain and suffering of Manohar and Kaushalya. Manohar silently resolves to go back to his old town in Pakistan to locate his child and bring him back.

At the other side, Pali reaches the home of Shakur Ahmad and Zenab, a childless Muslim couple, who happily decide to adopt him and bring him up, if he is not claimed by any. Pali weeps for his parents for two days and finally forgets his sorrow by taking protection and consolation on Zenab’s bosom. ‘A woman’s bosom is the greatest shield against man’s afflictions and the greatest source of love and affection. Zenab had, it seemed, made a citadel of love for the child. For the first time in her life, Zenab was overwhelmed by a sense of joy, which only a woman bereft of a child can experience. A tiny delicate body was clinging to her as if the child was specially made to fit into the contours of her body.’ (p. 123). None comes to claim him. Shakur and Zenab feel happy. Pali also becomes a little communicative on the third day. At the insistence of the Maulvi—and not the Muslim couple—he is circumcised and converted to Islam. He is renamed as Altaf Hussain, who gradually adjusts himself to the new ways of life. The irony is that while Altaf Hussain fills the life of the Muslim couple with happiness and joy, he, as Pali, has filled the life of his Hindu parents with sorrow and suffering.

Being unable to bear his sorrow and stand his wife’s distressed distraction, Manohar repeatedly appeals to the government’s establishment to trace his lost child and himself makes many trips with the government search party to the old town in Pakistan. After many abortive attempts, he, finally, traces his son after two years. But the issue of returning the child takes on a religious slant, with a Hindu-Muslim question. The Maulvi, the police constables, and others think that ‘by not sending away the child they were doing a service to religion—something which was considered to be a pious act’ (p. 132). The Muslim couple tries to avoid the search party for many months.

At last, the magistrate conducts a trial in which Manohar has to give proofs. Manohar undergoes torturous suffering when Altaf does not recognize him. Finally, he is relieved when the boy recognizes him and his wife as pitaji and mataji in an old photograph. But he also recognizes Shakur and Zenab as abbaji and ammi in another photograph. Manohar’s venture is about to fail. But his request to Zenab—‘Bahen, I’m not begging you for my child. I’m begging you for my wife’s life. She has lost both her children. She misses Pali very much. His absence is driving her insane. Day and night she keeps thinking of him. Please have pity on her’ (p. 137)—yields fruit. Zenab understands the mother’s pain and sends Altaf with Manohar. She is both humane and human. What religions cannot solve is solved by human compassion. ‘Her final heroic action—giving up her adopted son for the sake of the grieving Hindu mother—only serves to darken her life for all times to come.’ But she never minds her bleak future. She only hopes to see him once every year at the time of Id, as Manohar promises to send him to her.

The boy Altaf has, again, to undergo suffering in readjusting himself to the Hindu way of life. The process begins as soon as he crosses the border. The social worker whisks off his rumi cap and
throws out of the jeep. At home, the Maulvi’s Hindu counterpart, the Pundit, performs the boy’s *mundan* with a *havan*. And the boy’s head is shaved and a tuft is left. Pali is first converted to Islam and then purified into Hinduism. “The image of Pali, a little innocent boy, first shorn of his foreskin, then of his hair by carping zealots, is infinitely moving.” In this clash of religions and communities, Pali, his Hindu parents, and adoptive Muslim parents undergo indescribable suffering. The separation, conversion, and purification torture Pali who becomes a puppet in the hands of religious and communal fanatics.

This story has many similarities with the story, *Parameshwar Singh*, by A.N. Qasmi, discussed earlier. In that story also, it is mother’s love for her child that prompts Parameshwar Singh to send Akhtar, the Muslim boy, to his parents.

Gurumukh Singh Musafir’s *The Abandoned Child*, as the title signifies, is a story about an abandoned child, abandoned by the parents for survival. The main focus is on how the two families (of the parents and the protectors) suffer for the love of the child and finally decide to live together, with the child as the centre of their lives.

When the marauders attack the village, Qasim and his wife, Zeenat, are forced to abandon their child Mubina for the sake of the survival of the child and themselves. If the child’s cry attracts the attention of the attackers, all of them will be killed. The whole village is deserted by the Muslims, who cross the borders to the land of safety for survival.

When the Sikh Sardar from the nearby village comes to loot the houses of the deserted village, Moula, a Muslim, who is under the protection of the Sardar, finds the abandoned child. With the Sardar’s permission, Moula and his wife, the childless couple, happily takes on the responsibility of bringing up the child. They rename her as Sakina. When the circumstances go beyond control in the Sardar’s village because of the arrival of the Hindu and the Sikh refugees from the other side of the border, even Moula and his wife have to leave the village for life. Despite his looting the deserted houses of the Muslims, the Sardar shows his humanity by risking his own life in helping Moula and his wife to cross the border with Sakina. At the risk of great danger to their own lives and against the advice of the Sardar, Moula and his wife take the child across the border.

The intense suffering of the mother, Zeenat, because of the separation from her child, prompts her brother to begin the search for the abandoned child. The search ends with tracing down Moula and his wife. But they stick on to the story that the child had been found but was dead on the way. Zeenat’s suffering is so intense that she faints. Moved by her suffering, Moula’s wife brings Sakina and places her on Zeenat’s bosom to wake her up. The sweet smell of the child’s hands wakes her up. Zeenat treats Moula and his wife as Sakina’s father and mother and becomes herself Sakina’s *massi* and invites them to live with them. “The woman (Moula’s wife) put her arms around Zeenat. Their tears mingled. With their arms around each other, it became difficult to tell the mother apart from the *massi*. (p. 190).
This story runs like *Pali* by Bhisham Sahni with some differences: Here the two families belong to the same community and country, while the two families in *Pali* belong to two different communities and countries. However, the humanity of Shakur and his wife in *Pali* and of Moula and his wife in this story and the suffering of both the families in both the stories move the readers intensely.

The survivors of the partition feel doomed because they cannot forget the happy past in the cruel present. Even if they have settled down in new homelands and thrived well, there has always been the memory of the past, pinching them deep inside their hearts and minds; and the intense nostalgia, tearing them with yearning for the lost homeland of happiness and harmony. There is no end to the pinching memory and the painful nostalgia till death. So the survivors have to suffer till their death. Suffering is a part of the lives of the survivors. Somavanti, one of the refugee survivors, sharing her personal experience of the partition with Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin says: ‘Even today, there is no peace. No peace outside, no peace inside. There is no peace even today. I don’t sleep, there is a feeling of being unsettled.’

There are many other short stories that depict the same theme of survival and suffering of the victims of the greatest tragedy in the recent history of South Asia. Their survival, after the loss of all the property, home, hearth, native place, motherland, nation, culture, and tradition filled their lives with agony, pain, and suffering. The analysis of the short stories proves the fact that the survivors faced innumerable difficulties and immeasurable pains. Disintegration of the established social patterns and structures and, as a result, the ruptured social relationships and lives resulted in indescribable and incomparable human suffering. Communal and fanatic feelings rose high in the process of the struggle for independence that turned out to be the communal struggle for political security and power. The age-old harmony and humanity with which the different communities had been living were ruptured and division, destruction, and suffering set in. Even after the terrible tragedy, the survivors wished that the old harmony should be restored and humanity should be recreated. This makes imperative the discussion of *Harmony and Humanity in Partition Stories*, which will be taken up in the next chapter.
References and Notes:

Note: All the textual citations are from the mentioned volumes unless otherwise stated.


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11. Ibid., p. 7.


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57. Ibid.


59. Ibid.


63. Alok Bhalla, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. xxv.

64. Ibid.


73. Alok Bhalla, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. xxv.

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CHAPTER VII
HARMONY AND HUMANITY IN PARTITION STORIES

Literature, as its very name in Sanskrit implies, makes for fellowship, togetherness, reconciliation of people. It exalts generally the qualities of mercy and compassion and not hatred and oppression.

- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Though the Partition is the story of large-scale violence, mass migration, ethnic cleansing and huge human suffering, there is a small ray of hope to be a little confident. Humanity was not completely dead. In the midst of cruelty and bloodshed, there were many incidents of great patience, compassion, sacrifice, harmony, and humanity. When most of the people of all the contending communities lost their human qualities, behaved like beasts, and were madly busy killing each other, 'some people somewhere provided the healing touch and shared their love and compassion with the hapless victims of the communal riots' and violence. Such people, with a strong belief in the golden principles of harmony and humanity, were above all the petty communal feelings and vengeance. Because of such noble people, there were many instances when both sides sympathized with each other, showed concern to each other, and helped each other in all possible ways. This kind of help would, sometimes, be hardly more than offering a cup of water and other such minor things. 'But what mattered more than these material things was the emotional understanding of the other's plight, and this concern was precious indeed.' This concern, at times, was so great that some people tried to save—and saved—many lives of the victims of violence from their own communities by risking their own lives.

The Indian people of different communities, cultures, languages, and religions had been living for centuries before the partition with feelings of friendship, fraternity, harmony, and humanity. Most of the writers recall that peace and harmony in their writings on the event of the partition. India has been famous for its quality of reception and absorption for ages. Muslims had come to India and become a part of the grand Indian culture. Hindus, Sikhs, Sindhis, Muslims, and Parsees had been living together harmoniously. Hindu and Muslim rulers had not practised and encouraged communal and religious discriminations. '...Neither Muslim nor Hindu governments of India ever believed in political separation or discrimination between Hindus and Muslims... The ruler was concerned with the welfare of all his subjects... Mutual respect characterized the relations between all segments of the Indian people. There were no decisive barriers. The Indians intermarried and had close ties both in the imperial court and in society in general. It is true that the Muslims who founded the governments of Delhi and the Mughal Empire came from outside India, but when they settled in the subcontinent, they almost completely broke their ties with the areas they had come from and became an inextricable part of Indian nationhood (hindustani qawmiyyat). They included the native inhabitants of India in the government just as the members of one people would be included. If there had been no harmony between Hindus and Muslims, Muslim rulers would have attempted to create—and would have been successful in creating—a separate Muslim nation/homeland when they had virtually been ruling over a major part of North India. But the prevailed association and harmony had not necessitated such an attempt. 'Geographically, the country was indivisible and by historical association, the communities were inseparable. Their cultures had nourished each other so long that they were indistinguishable.'
But it does not mean that there had been no differences at all between the two communities. There had been differences, distrust, mutual suspicion, clashes, and conflicts between them. But they had been very rare and momentary. In this connection, Dr. Alok Bhalla says:

The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims were not, of course, always free from suspicion, distrust or the angry rejection by one group of the habits and practices of the other. Occasionally the conflicts were even harsher and fell below the realms of mere nastiness and stupid abuse into murder and arson. But such moments of active malevolence and communal frenzy were rare and transient. The experience of a life lived together was sufficiently secure and rooted to enable the communities to have evolved mechanisms for containing tensions and even outrage. So that even if there were disruptions, the rich heterogeneity of the life of the two communities was never seriously threatened - the Hindus never ceased from paying homage at dargahs, the Muslims continued to participate in Hindu festivals, traders of both the communities carried on with their usual exchange of goods and services in the bazaars, learned men sought each other out to gather information and knowledge about the best of both the traditions and princes never stopped to consider the religion of the mercenaries they recruited into their armies.6

In order to prove his point, Dr. Alok Bhalla continues:

Had there been a history of irreconcilable hatred or non-negotiable aversion between the Hindus and the Muslims, it would have been reflected in the cultural and social practices of the two groups. The pain of living together would have been extensively recorded in popular kissas and tamashas or chronicles and songs. While popular lore did not talk about Muslim conquests and destruction or about Hindu intolerance and retaliation, there are hardly any accounts of conflagrations between the two communities in their ordinary lives which were so serious as to have threatened the very structure of a life of interdependencies in the various regions of the subcontinent [Dr. Bhalla here rejects the possibility of constructing a theory of communal hatred on the basis of the writings of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Bankimchander Chatterjee as they were late in historical time and were seriously challenged from within their own communities]. ...Indeed, one can assert with confidence that the dominant concerns of the Hindu and the Muslim intellectuals throughout the 19th century and till about 1935, were more with creating free spaces for enlightened thought than with confining people within their narrow religious identities. Organizations which nurtured violent hatred towards each other and incited communal passions did exist, but at the very margins of the functioning social and cultural order. People who commanded respect were the ones who acknowledged the dependence of the Hindus and the Muslims on each other and encouraged acts of well-doing'. ...One could add endlessly to the catalogue of people who thought that the notion of a unified state, with its multiplicity of religious, social or moral ideals, had legitimacy, not only because it made good sense, but also because it was derived from a long practice of living together.7

There had been cultural, social, religious, linguistic, and political synthesis between Hindus, Muslims, and others in India. It had been the cradle of composite culture of all the communities. As the vast majority of Muslims had been originally converts from Hinduism, the Hindu influence on their beliefs and practices had gone right to the heart of their everyday life. Many Muslims had retained their Hindu traditions and social norms. Islam had also influenced Hinduism. Many Hindus, especially in rural India, had revered pirs and fakirs and celebrated Muharram and similarly many Muslims had revered the Tulsi plant and many Muslim women had cultivated the habit of wearing the vermillion mark on their foreheads. In North-East India, especially in Bengal, a new God called Satyapir—a combination of the Hindu God, Satyanarayan; and a Muslim Pir—had been evolved. In North-West India, especially in Punjab, Sufism (a result of the impact between Islam and the Hindu philosophy of the Vedanta), which had its votaries in both the communities, had been very popular.

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The cult of Satyapir and the doctrine of Sufism had been strong forces in bringing harmony between the two communities. The co-operation among the different sects of Hindus and Muslims had resulted in the evolution of a common language, Urdu. The political unity of the two communities had been exhibited in the combined struggle against the British colonialism in 1857, the first struggle for independence of the country. Even Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the Champion of the Muslims, who did not co-operate with the Hindus in political matters, maintained that differences in political outlook were not incompatible with patriotism; and that brotherly relations with Hindus had nothing to do with political views. He tried to combine the best spirit of both the communities. He, therefore, declared:

To be a Hindu or a Muslim is a matter of inner faith and belief. It has nothing to do with the worldly matters and mutual social intercourse. India belongs to both of us. Both of us breathe the air of India and in equal measure drink the waters of the Ganges and the Jamuna. We share the happiness and sorrows of birth and death in an equal degree. Socially and culturally, we have given to, and taken from each other. We have evolved a common language – Urdu. We, by virtue of living in the same country, are one nation.8

Sikhism has also been well known for its synthesis of Hinduism and Islam. ‘The Granth Sahib includes the religious compositions of many Muslim and Hindu saints and therefore, the holy book is considered as the best example of religious tolerance, spiritual unity and communal harmony.’9

Thus, the perspective of synthesis, peace, and harmony before the partition has been put forward and justified by almost all the writers on the partition tragedy. The peace and harmony had been evident in the deep intermingling and interdependent human life; its social, cultural, political, linguistic, and religious expression; and also in literature, architecture, music, trade, and commerce of the different communities in the united India.

Gradually, there was a growth of differences about the political power and welfare of each community. Mutual suspicion and distrust were set in between the two communities. The Muslims were worried about the Hindu domination after independence and the Hindus were worried about the Muslim separatism. There started a tendency towards the communalization of politics. The colonial rule encouraged the differences between the two for its own interests. The leaders of the communal and separatist forces took the help of religion. The common people did not understand their high-politics but were motivated by it. The Indian tradition of brotherhood and harmony was at stake. The unity and disintegration of the country is better explained by Radha Kamal Mukerjee in the following words:

Indian history and tradition have, on the whole, largely promoted some kind of social and cultural unity among peoples of different races and religions. The catholicity of Indian culture is itself responsible for the existence of many communities and religions of diverse customs and manners that are now being bolstered up into creating these so-called political Islands’. Thus any kind of territorial separation of communities like Hindustan, Pakistan, Khalistan or any other ‘stan’ is bound to create more difficult political and social problems in the future than those which it now seeks to solve. No country in the world has a stronger regional tradition than India and regionalism means here a solidarity of the people on the basis of language, culture and economic interests that unite rather than religion which now has begun to sunder.10
The foregrounding of religious differences for gaining political power widened the differences. Conflicts and clashes began and the terrible event of the partition took place with terrible violence, intense suffering, and huge destruction. The country was disrupted, the life and relations were ruptured, and the orderly threads of people which were interwoven to form the fabric of India was torn. Human values had been maintained by all the communities, but these very values were the first in the casualty list, when it came to the self-interests of the communities. The communal harmony between the Hindus, the Sikhs, and the Muslims was shattered to pieces by innumerable riots, killings, abductions, rapes, loot, and arson. Severe violence occurred during the partition because a single harmonious people was torn into separate nations in a spasm of religious hysteria, mutual suspicion, distrust, self-interest, greed, hatred, vengeance, and bloodshed. Thousands of innocent people who had been living together for generations in harmony and fraternity flew at one another's throat. The traditional bond of goodwill, friendship, and tolerance was ruptured by a series of cruel events. The whole of North India became a battlefield of contending loyalties and interests. The colonial rule failed to stem the spate of violence. Complete anarchy was let loose. Cooperation and co-living, compassion and kindness, fraternity and friendship, and harmony and humanity were wiped out.

But with the spate of violence blew the breeze of virtuous deeds. Humanity was not completely dead, though harshly crushed under bestiality. In the midst of anarchy, inhumanity, cruelty, violence, abduction, and rapes, some rare deeds—of care, concern, compassion, sacrifice, friendship, fraternity, harmony, and humanity—which were beyond the bounds—of regional, racial, religious, cultural, and communal considerations—took place. Such real incidents, along with the past harmonious co-existence and composite culture and their rupture, were later recalled and recorded by many survivors and witnesses of the great tragedy and/or their relatives.

Promila Das, who had to leave East Bengal in the wake of the partition riots, narrated her nightmarish experience as follows:

My husband was a doctor who lived in Shillong while his parental family was living jointly in a village named Kashipur in East Bengal. I used to live with my husband in Shillong and would regularly visit my in-laws' place in Kashipur once or twice a year along with my husband. Once when I was in Kashipur and my husband was away in Shillong, unprecedented communal violence engulfed the whole of our province. At midnight, a gang of Muslim marauders attacked our house, looted and seized all available assets in cash and kind. Over and above, they butchered every member of my family—male, female and child. I fled secretly through a backdoor, ran breathlessly and reached a neighbouring Muslim house. They were kind enough to hide and protect me as a family member. It was they who informed my husband who rescued and took me back to Shillong.11

The case of the aunt of Monmayee Basu's mother is recorded as follows:

Many of the propertied and moneyed people attempted to stay on even after partition, because they were extremely unwilling to detach themselves from their home and property. My mother's aunt, Sonapishi's case, is an example. She had acres of land and a beautiful palatial house in Dacca. While all her family members moved out, she (her husband was no more) stayed alone hoping against hope to preserve her property. But in the end, it was her Muslim servants who advised her to migrate, as it was rapidly getting unsafe for the Hindus to stay on. So she finally sold her property at a ludicrously low price and came away escorted by her Muslim servants, dressed in a burkha supplied by her Muslim neighbours.12
Urvashi Butalia quotes the following story told by Amrik Singh, a school-teacher from Doberon:

In Doberon . . . there was one girl. One Krishan Kaur, she was taken away by a Musalaan by force. She kept crying and shouting. He took her some two kos away from our village. He had an old father . . . . He (the boy) kept the girl inside; he wanted to do all kinds of things with her. But the father was sitting outside. He said, ‘Son, don’t do these things, she is my daughter, if you do anything to her, you will be doing it to my daughter, you can take it as that. Take her back to where you brought her from and leave her there. I will not sleep while she is here. I will keep guard’. So the father protected the girl’s honour. When the son fell asleep, the father said to her, ‘Daughter, now you go away.’ The girl then ran. She came back to our village.\(^{13}\)

The famous journalist and writer, Kwaja Ahmed Abbas—whose family, trapped in Panipat but protected; and the lives and honour of his mother and sisters were saved due to the concern, compassion, and humanity of Jawaharlal Nehru, who sent a truck with an armed escort to bring them to Delhi—has recorded thus:

My family was in Panipat, but there were also parts of my family in Delhi . . . . One day the RSS boys came to the Babar Road locality in trucks to carry away the Muslim property. A minute earlier a kindly Sikh gentleman hid my cousin and his family in the interior of his house, and when the looting began, the Sardar’s children joined in the process and brought home much of the household articles which they claimed as their neighbourly right! Asked as to where the ‘Musallas’ had gone, they had no compunction about the virtuous lie they told—that they had run away to a refugee camp. If somehow the looters had come to know that they were there, not only their lives were in danger, but also the life of the old Sardarji who was standing guard over them holding a drawn sword in his hand.\(^{14}\)

After many months, Abbas wrote a story called Sardarji on this incident.

Major Khushdeva Singh, a medical doctor in Dharampore, a small town in Simla Hills, saved a number of Muslims from the wrath of the refugees who had come from Pakistan and who wanted to evacuate them for their houses and loot them for their property. He has recorded what happened in and around Dharampore in an article,\(^{15}\) which was published in 1973. He did all he could to avoid the merciless killing of the local Muslims. They had an unshakable faith in his humanity and generosity. As the tension was mounting up, he called a meeting of the citizens of Dharampore on 14 July 1947. Saying a few words, he stressed the importance of maintaining peace and sticking to the old traditions of communal harmony and brotherhood. He sensed that the Hindu people were not convinced or converted. While the Muslims felt that they should not depend upon the government for their protection, the Hindus felt that when the Hindus and Sikhs had been forcibly evicted from across the border, they should not allow the Muslims to stay on. When the situation got worsened, Dr. Khushdeva Singh called a meeting of the Muslims and asked them to leave the village for safety. But they would not listen to him. In the meantime, a Muslim, called Pir Bux, was killed by two refugees. Dr. Khushdeva Singh arranged for the burial of the dead body and took the dead man’s orphan children to his sanatorium for safety. The killing of Pir Bux had a chilling effect on the local Muslims and they got ready to leave the village. Getting a promise from the refugees that they would not indulge in violence for two days, Dr. Khushdeva Singh arranged for the safe evacuation of all the local Muslims in two military trucks. He sent them to the nearest camp at Dagshai without the loss of a single life. Later he received a number of letters from those Muslims. One of them reads:

No words can express the innermost feelings of gratitude and thankfulness which sprout from my grateful heart every moment, when I cast a look upon my children and wife who have escaped from the very brink of the other world; you are doubtlessly an angel doing humanitarian work which befits a true doctor.\(^{15}\)
Another letter by one called Riasat Husain reads:

I have got no words to express my thanks to you for your noble act and I am extremely happy to see that even in these days when most of the people of all communities have become mad, there are noble persons like you who are still sticking to the golden principles of humanity and are above communal feelings.\textsuperscript{17}

Many survivors and witnesses of the partition also recalled the harmonious and friendly atmosphere that existed before the event. Monmayee Basu, having interviewed many women victims of the tragedy and recorded their responses, says:

They all unanimously agreed that the relation between the two communities was extremely cordial earlier. The Hindus were economically much better off, but economic factor could not in any way impinge upon their amicable, brotherly relationship. During Holi and Durga Puja, the Muslims cheerfully participated and were always invited for almost all festivals and other functions in the Hindu houses.\textsuperscript{18}

Speaking about the oral testimony of those Bengali women victims who were interviewed, Bidyut Chakrabarty says:

\ldots the oral testimony of these women reveals \textit{the human dimension of the 'event'} \ldots there are innumerable instances of Muslims protecting and rescuing Hindu families. Not only have these instances challenged the 'cultural incompatibility' between the two communities, embodied in Jinnah's two nation theory, \textit{they have also fore-grounded the human over other narrow and parochial considerations.}\textsuperscript{19} (emphasis added)

Continuing his discussions, Bidyut Chakrabarty finds that the experience of the Hindu and Sikh women in Punjab is a little different from that of the Bengali women. He says:

In contrast to the Bengal experiences, what emerges from the oral testimony of Hindu and Sikh women in Punjab is a mixed bag. On the one hand, Hindus and Muslims had lived together without large-scale friction for generations although culturally segregated in watertight compartments.\textsuperscript{20}

But the cultural segregation had not come in the way of co-living for generations and it was only when the colonial rule encouraged the differences between them that it appeared to be intense and forceful. This was the time when the past harmony started breaking into pieces. This situation is better recognized by Kamlaaben Patel, a famous social worker during the times of the partition:

At the time of partition when I went to Punjab for the first time, I realized that there was a lot of socializing and warmth between the two communities. They used to embrace each other and when they were forced to separate, they longed to see each other again. If they were alone together they would embrace, but in public they would shout slogans against each other.\textsuperscript{21}

The deeds, which highlighted harmony and humanity, are beyond the bounds of class, community, region, or religion. In the midst of huge violence, there were many virtuous deeds. Suffering, bestiality, and depravity; heroism, nobility, and humanity accompanied each other in the upheaval of the partition. \textit{"The upper classes were running away while the poor were dying. Girls were stripped of their clothes just as bananas were peeled. The skulls of the young ones were broken like almonds. The old were thrown into the fire like dry wood; the middle-aged were made to smoulder like cow dung cakes. \ldots There were still some people in Pakistan who protected Hindu and Sikh families like their own. In India, too, there were people determined to save the lives of Muslims."}\textsuperscript{22} Even ordinary individuals rose to the occasion and risked their own lives to protect
neighbours and friends of the other community. Natural human compassion filled their hearts and inspired them to break the narrow barriers of community and religion. They were the human beings in the real sense of the word.

These kinds of incidents of harmony and humanity with all other topics, issues, and problems of the partition, its background, and aftermath have been represented in short stories. But the predominant theme running through all these stories is the propagation of communal harmony and restoration of humanity. Communal narrow-mindedness and religious fanaticism are deplored. There are vivid descriptions and depictions of the evil consequences coming out of religious intolerance and madness. Even in the stories which predominantly depict the violence and suffering of the victims, there is an undercurrent of harmony and humanity. Despite the anger, madness, suspicion, hatred, and vengeance that engulfed the people in the subcontinent, the short story writers recorded their unfailing faith in pity, sympathy, kindness, compassion, friendship, fraternity, equality, harmony, and humanity. They were beyond the bounds of petty communal feelings. Literature was generally free from the communal and parochial bounds. Even when the differences and clashes started between the major communities, many writers tried to build harmony through literature. While there were tendencies towards the communalization of politics, literature was generally free from communal frenzy. The Muslim apprehension of the Hindu domination and the Hindu anxiety for the growth of Muslim separatism which controlled the political relation between the two communities had an impact on literature. But the writers in general were free from communalism and tried to project a balanced view of life. During this period of the beginning of Hindu-Muslim divide, Premchand, one of the major Indian writers, wrote stories like Muktidan, Ksama, Mandir Our Masjid and Himsa Paramo Dharma between 1924 and 1926, the year that witnessed one of the bloodiest riots in the 20th century. He wrote these stories with a view to reinforce the Hindu-Muslim unity. In various other languages, several writers were involved in creating a body of literature highlighting the historical reality of the existence of different communities and religions in harmony. This quality of the Indian literature was continued in later times during and after the partition. It is true that many writers portrayed the fury and evil consequences of communalism and fanaticism, but it is difficult to find any one who used literature to arouse beastly passions. Short story writers who have written stories about the partition have been rather more secular, humane, and humanistic. With the exception of a few stories which Dr. Alok Bhalla classifies as communally charged stories, the underlying tone of all the other stories is humanistic and harmonious.

Most of the short stories express the view that the partition was a grievous mistake and heinous crime. That it was unavoidable or necessary is not indicated in any of them. Any search for separate perspectives of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and other writers would be futile. The perspective of all the short story writers belonging to different communities and religions has been one and the same perspective of mutual trust and co-operation. Most of the short story writers have been neutral and secular as far as community and religion are concerned. They were beyond the bounds of caste, colour, creed, culture, religion, and region. In this regard, it is better to say that all the writers belonged to one community of human beings and one religion of humanism. In this connection, Mushirul Hasan says:
One does not, likewise, discern a 'Hindu', 'Sikh' or 'Muslim' viewpoint. Most writers and poets speak a language that would make sense to the 'elites' as much as the 'subalterns', the 'Hindus' as well as the 'Muslims', the urban dwellers and the rural folks. Most of them invoke symbols of unity rather than discord. They dwell on pan-Indian values and traditions, which bear the hallmark of the country's composite and syncretic development. And when religious idioms are pressed into service the purpose is to soothe rather than inflame passions.

Despite the differences, all the short stories look at Hindus and Muslims as one people. 'Whatever may be the reason, many Indian writers and a good few Pakistani writers did show Hindus and Muslims as one people.' Almost all the short story writers had a strong faith in the Indian society that was above communal feelings before the partition and wrote about the ruptured harmonious society with deep distress. A common factor of these stories is the longing for the lost harmonious and unified society in which the victims and witnesses had lived with feelings of friendship and fraternity. This longing is not an attempt to escape from the hard realities of the present but a way of protesting against it. The longing proves the fact that the divisive politics and the division were not accepted by the common people. It was a terrible mistake committed by a few but imposed on the whole population of the subcontinent.

The short story writers have written stories to highlight good qualities of sympathy, pity, kindness, compassion, friendship, fraternity, harmony, and humanity without any fear of the communalists and fanatics. A keen observation, a great sensitivity, an extraordinary objectivity, a firm faith in humanity, and a neutral and secular mentality were required to identify and articulate the plurality of the experiences of the partition in short stories. It is their great commitment to humanity that has resulted in the creation of stories about the composite culture, mutual co-operation, harmony, and humanity. ‘What is paramount is the writer’s commitment to search for truth through a non-partisan narration of life-experience, without compromising essential human values such as social justice, compassion and love. In an atmosphere of combative feelings, hurt, vengefulness and repugnance, the writer felt the need to nostalgically recall the value of the earlier sense of community and connectedness with the neighbour, which had transcended any kind of communalism.’

The short story writers ‘captured moments of compassion and love from within the scenario of the brutality of degenerate humanity. And if there was a representation of bizarre violence, it was portrayed in such a manner that it aroused disgust.’ This disgust would have a positive effect on readers in shunning violence and learning tolerance. In fact, the maintenance of a complete balance between the violence and mercy of the two communities is an excellent quality of the short stories on the partition.

Discussing Partition Stories, Dr. M. Asaduddin observes in *Fiction as History: Partition Stories*:

The majority of the stories are anchored in the composite Indian culture and history and are set against the background of the high politics of partition. ... These stories recreate a shared past wherein Hindus and Muslims had been living in harmony for centuries. Small strifes occurred as they do in any society, but these did not seriously disturb communal harmony. For the writers, this assimilative strength was one of the primary features of Indian civilization and the cause of its resilience. It was an unbroken continuum, which was violently ruptured by the ‘madness’ of partition. The writers are as bewildered as their dramatis personae: they do not have either the courage or the necessary rigour to fix the agency/agencies that cause or perpetrate the violence; and they do not find anything in the past history of the people that could warrant such descent into bestiality. The only way they explain this is that it was a temporary madness, whose eruption was caused by an uncomprehending mess of events.'
It was not easy to identify the exact causes of the partition and the corresponding violence and suffering. The writers of short stories confined themselves to the depiction of the consequences of it. That is why there are only a few stories about the causes while there are a number of stories about the consequences. In these stories of the consequences, the writers of short stories have struck a balance between the depiction of violence and virtuous deeds of harmony and humanity. Even in stories, which deal mainly with the vengeance, violence, suffering, and survival, there is an undercurrent of humanity and harmony. To a majority of readers, the partition stories are mainly about inhuman violence and cruelty. The tone of humanity is drowned in the clamour and thunder of violence, especially in the stories about violence and suffering. Only sensible readers recognize this tone in almost all the partition stories. Alok Bhalla, Saros Cowasjee, K. S. Duggal, M. Asaduddin, Mushirul Hasan, Khalid Hasan, and others, who have edited many collections of partition stories, have recognized this basic tone of humanity and harmony. Mushirul Hasan makes his intention in editing the stories explicit in his preface:

...The effort is simply to draw attention to The Other Face of Freedom; to explore shared memories, shared symbols and shared experiences of India’s composite and collective past.

Khalid Hasan, in the introduction to Saudat Hasan Monto: Kingdom’s End and Other Stories, observes:

...Though most of the stories here could be said to relate to the Raj and the Partition of the subcontinent, you will find no princesses or burra memsahibs or deputy collectors, only ordinary people trying to keep their humanity in tact in a world brutalized and turned upside down by communal blood-letting.

That many ordinary persons belonging to different communities rose above the macabre communal politics of the times and steadfastly espoused the principles of compassion, co-operation, friendship, brotherhood, harmony, and humanity in the midst of widespread cruelty and violence is exemplified in the story The Refuge by S.H. Vatsayan Ajneya. That the mutual trust, brotherhood, and harmony were destroyed by the divisive politics is also exemplified in it.

Devenderlal, a Hindu, and Rafiquddin, a Muslim, had been old and good friends. In Lahore, in their locality, the Hindus and the Muslims had been living together harmoniously for ages. But in the wake of the partition, the mutual trust, co-operation, humanity, brotherhood, and friendship were ruptured. When the Hindus in the locality started disappearing, Devenderlal also wanted to run away. But the noble-minded Rafiquddin, being motivated not just by friendship but also universal justice, brotherhood, and harmony, did not allow him to and took the responsibility of protecting him. He said, ‘We will not let you go... It is the duty of the majority to protect the minority and to make sure that they don’t abandon their homes and run away. If we can’t protect our neighbours, how can we possibly protect our country? I am sure that the Hindus in Punjab, where they are in the majority, must be thinking and acting in the same way’ (p. 73). Devenderlal’s wife had left a few days ago for her mother’s house in Jullunder and he had already written to her not to return. As his servant also fled, he was alone in his house. Rafiquddin’s assurances persuaded him to stay on.

But a massacre started in the city suddenly and in all probability some groups of killers would soon enter their locality. Rafiquddin asked Devenderlal to move to his own house with some essential things. Hiding in his friend’s house, Devenderlal watched his own house being broken into and looted. By nightfall, the city was in flames. Rafiquddin also watched everything in silence with a sense of defeat.
‘The atmosphere was vicious, horses of rage were whipped into murderous frenzy by hatred and envy, religious groups spread poison everywhere and the flames of communal frenzy were fanned by the police and the bureaucracy!’ (p. 75). Even the kind-hearted people who helped the distressed people became the victims of communal frenzy. Because of the threats by the communal people of his community for hiding a Hindu, Rafiquddin was worried about the safety of his friend, Devenderlal. He also did not want to put Rafiquddin and his family in trouble for his own sake. He wanted to leave his friend’s house. But Rafiquddin shifted him to the house of one of his close friends, Sheikh Ataulah, in the neighbourhood. Devenderlal was hidden in a scarcely lit narrow room adjacent to the garage behind Ataulah’s house, and it was hidden from the main road by trees. Devenderlal found himself imprisoned in the solitary confinement in the newly created free Pakistan. His only companion was a cat that visited him often.

Devenderlal was given food only once in the evening, but it would be enough for two meals. He only heard some voices of the residents of the house and guessed them to be so and so and their nature. The voice of Zaibunnisa, the young daughter of Ataulah, was quite attractive and pleasant. It was she who was quite human and humane. It was she who put in one of the folds of the phulkas a piece of crumpled paper on which a sentence was scribbled: ‘Feed the dog before eating the food yourself’ (p. 80). There was no dog but the cat, which used to come and eat the pieces of food offered by Devenderlal. It ate the meal and writhed in pain, groaned, gasped for breath, and died. Obviously the food was poisoned.

Devenderlal was shocked. His friend tried to make him stay back, but had to turn him out of his house. His friend’s friend only offered shelter for a few days but also gave him poison. The daughter of his friend’s friend gave a warning. Bestiality and humanity were at war. Though bestiality had its temporary victory over humanity, the ultimate victory was that of humanity. Devenderlal escaped from there and reached Delhi in safety. When, after a month and a half, he made an appeal to his family over the radio from Delhi and announced his address, he received a letter from Zaibunnisa from Lahore, which was the glory of humanity:

I cannot but praise God a thousand fold for having helped you to escape. I hope that you are once again united with the people to whom you appealed over the radio. I want to ask your forgiveness for what my father did or tried to do. It was I who foiled his plans. You don’t owe me a favour – my only request is that, if you come across someone in your country who is in a similar situation, don’t forget this incident. I make this request, not because that person may be a Muslim, but because you are a human being. (p. 82–83)

This appears to be the message from Humanity itself. Zaibunnisa became a real human being by saving the life of Devenderlal by risking her own life and thereby upheld humanity.

Krishna Sobti’s Where is My Mother? (already discussed in Chapter V) can also be discussed as a story that glorifies Yunus Khan’s humanity and compassion. Having lost his sister in communal violence, Yunus Khan has been killing kafirs relentlessly for the ideology for the establishment of a Muslim state. He knows no compassion and takes no rest in his attempts at achieving his purpose. Tearing across the country, he indulges in arson and murder. He vows to make sure that no kafir is left alive. His communal hatred and vengeance are so strong that he forgets all humanity and pity in his acts of violence on the kafirs.
He is on his way, which is full of dead and burnt bodies of men, women, and children. He comes across a fatally wounded and unconscious Hindu child. He is strangely overcome by human compassion. He takes pity on her without bothering about her community and religion. It is very ironical that he himself has killed her brothers. He moves her to the hospital, begs the doctor to save her. He looks after her with all care and concern. Even after he comes to know that she is a kafir, he decides to look after her as his own sister. It is the height of his humanity. He surrenders all his cruelty and ferocity to the inner call of compassion. 'All his attempts to reach out to her are met with paranoia. When she pleads: “Send me to the camp. They will kill me here — they will kill me…” the steel bonds of his ideology snap and “Yunus Khan was forced to lower his eyes. He no longer felt like a brave, powerful and ruthless soldier. He felt miserable, helpless… weak”. Compassion and pity break through his jihad. The image and memory of his dead sister, Nooran, which first compelled him to save the girl, re-emerges and fills his voice with kindness only to be met by the girl’s terror of him. Yet it is the victory of humanity and compassion over inhumanity and cruelty.

In Minto’s Mozel, Mozel, the protagonist, is a young Jewish woman who sacrifices her life for the sake of her lover, Tirlochan, and his fiancée, Kirpal Kaur. Mozel works as a sales girl in a shop in Bombay. She is a footloose, unattached, knowledgeable, westernized, and worldly woman with no regard for any religion or community. She exhibits a remarkable boldness in being free of any religious restrictions or sexual restraints. She does not feel the necessity of having any sense of security, being confident and courageous of protecting herself against any adversity. She is a woman whose existence is not circumscribed by the need for any physical or psychological security offered by the sense of ‘belonging’ either to a religious sect, a socio-political community or more importantly, even to a family. She moves with many friends without any inhibitions. That she is a prostitute is never explicitly stated, despite her doubtful character and fickle-minded behaviour. She stands out as the exact opposite of the less sophisticated, sheltered, and God-fearing Kirpal Kaur, who is bound by religion, community, and family. Kirpal does not know the modern temperament and the westernized ways.

In between the two female characters stands Tirlochan Singh, the only prominent male character. He falls in love with Mozel and wants to marry her. He tries to fulfill all her outlandish desires and dreams to get her as his wife. But Mozel, owing to her capricious and whimsical nature, feels that she is not the right woman to be his wife or rather that he is not the right man to be her husband. His religious mentality does not suit her religious neutrality. She is sure that he will not give up the signs of his religion for her sake. So she agrees to marry him only if he cuts his hair and beard. But he really surprises her by getting his hair cut and beard shaved. She also shocks him by disappearing with an old friend in his new car, having no other choice. Thus, she disrupts the proposed marriage from taking place.

Tirlochan suffers pangs of intense agony and forgets Mozel by falling in love with Kirpal Kaur, a girl from his own religion, community, and village. He starts tending his growing hair and beard for her sake. When Mozel tells him again that she will definitely marry him if he shaves his beard again, Tirlochan wants to say that ‘he loved a decent, chaste and pure-hearted virgin and he was going to marry her; that compared to her, Mozel was a harlot, an ugly, stupid, inconsiderate woman’ (p. 164). But he is not petty or mean to say so openly. He only says that he has made up his mind to marry that simple, religious girl.
Despite her unwillingness to marry Tirlochan, Mozel loves him in her own way. She loves him as a human being. The real demonstration of her love for him is expressed at the end of the story. She always wishes good for him. It is she who encourages him to go with her to break the curfew to save his fiancée from a neighbourhood in which she is surrounded by hostile Muslims. Amidst loot and murder, she courageously leads him to his fiancée’s house, disarming a policeman and two rioters on the way. In order to save the lives of both Tirlochan and Kirpal Kaur she runs naked to stunt the looters and make them run after her. In the process, she slips and falls down the stairs—her body hitting every stone stairs and the steel banister—and dies. Even at the last moment of her life, she refuses to cover her naked body with Tirlochan’s turban saying, ‘Take away... This religion of yours’ (p. 172), so that he can wear his turban lest the religious-minded Kirpal discover his cut hair and beard. She sacrifices her own life in saving Tirlochan and his fiancée and in uniting them in bonds of love and marriage.

Though the story appears to be an ordinary story of triangular love, Mozel’s courage, frankness, and humanity raise it above the ordinary level. ‘In the communal conflagration, she stands as a symbol of religious neutrality; as both, an outsider mocking at narrow bigotry and as an insider of the community of lovers, who can take risks and even die to sustain the love between others. The story leaves behind the force of a protagonist who suggests the need for some basic reorientations and liberation from bigoted religious notions.’ During the wretched times of the partition, people, like Mozel—who could look, beyond the petty bounds of religion and community, at people as just human beings, who deserved all compassion and concern—played a great role in maintaining the last remnants of the broken harmony and battered humanity.

K. A. Abbas’s *The Death of Sheikh Burhanuddin* is another interesting story in which humanity springs from a person, whom the narrator, Sheikh Burhanuddin, takes to be a cruel killer under the guise of sober and friendly bearing. Sheikh develops dislike for Sikhs very early in his life. As a boy, he is amazed at the stupidity of Sikh men who imitate women and grow their hair long. He dislikes the long beard of Sikhs. With revulsion he calls Sikh men ‘women with long beards’ and this revulsion and dislike develop into hatred as he grows. He has contempt for the stupidity, idiocy, and filthiness of Sikhs. During his college days in the Muslim University at Aligarh, his aversion to Sikhs is further developed by Ghulam Rasul’s funny anecdotes about Sikhs. Ghulam Rasul is his room-mate in the hostel.

Sheikh leaves college when he gets the job of a clerk in Delhi. He starts living in government quarters in Delhi. He marries and begets children. When the partition disturbances begin, the quarters next to his is occupied by an uprooted Sikh family from Rawalpindi. The Sikhs at Rawalpindi face all sorts of violence at the hands of the local Muslims and migrate to Hindustan. The neighbour of Sheikh is an old Sikh man with many children and grandchildren. Sheikh does not encourage the Sikh’s attempts to develop friendship with him. For, he suspects cruel conspiracies behind his friendly smiles and approaches. He even tries to avoid him by imagining that the Sikh will, one day, thrust his kirpan into his belly. He is sure that the Sikh certainly has a grudge against Muslims and that he is surely waiting for an opportunity to take revenge on them to get even with the violent disturbances faced by his family in Rawalpindi. Being worried about the safety of his children, he even orders them not to play with the children and grandchildren of the Sikh.
The increase in the number of refugees from West Punjab into East Punjab results in the massacre of Muslims in retaliation. Sheikh immediately sends his wife and children by air to Pakistan, but he stays back to get his provident fund settled and to transport his furniture to Pakistan a little later. When the rioters are about to search the street for Muslims and their houses, the neighbouring Sikh asks Sheikh to come into his own house for hiding to save his life. Having no other choice, Sheikh goes to his house for hiding though unwillingly. When the rioters loot Sheikh's house, the Sikh, his children, and grandchildren claim a big share as neighbours and pick whatever they can get hold of and carry home. Sheikh, in his hideout, boils with rage and vows to take revenge if he survives. But when the Sikh, his wife, children, and grandchildren offer to Sheikh all the things that they have pretended to loot, he is dumbfounded. The great humanity of the Sikh is not limited to this only.

When the rioters try to break open Sheikh's steel almirah, Mohini, the Sikh's nine-year-old girl, gives them a clue as to the whereabouts of Sheikh. The old Sikh, locking Sheikh in the inside room, comes out to face the mob. In his attempt, the Sikh gets seriously wounded and dies revealing a truth to Sheikh that he has only paid his debt in saving him by sacrificing his life as Ghulam Rasul, Sheikh's friend, had sacrificed his life to save the Sikh's life and honour of his family. The ending of the story leaves Sheikh shaken and silent at the humanitarian sacrifice of both the Sikh and Ghulam Rasul.

_The Infidel_ by Ateen Bandyopadhyay is a powerful portrayal of friendship between two persons—one Muslim and one Hindu. It was in Noyapara, a Muslim majority village in East Bengal that Hashim and Paran had been living harmoniously with deep friendship. During the partition, unbound violence broke out and spread far and wide in the subcontinent. Riots and violence overtook Noyapara also. There was a spree of killing during the night. A blaze swept through the village, and cries of human beings pervaded every nook and corner of the village. Paran woke up to see his house in flames and his wife, Karan (Kioni), missing.

Paran reached the house of his close friend Hashim for protection. But the times were so full of hatred that even those who tried to give shelter to the _others_ were killed by the people of their own community. Yet Hashim and his wife, Jubeida, willingly took the responsibility of saving Paran's life. Jubeida made a new plan to save him. According to the plan, they should somehow manage to take Paran to the river with a big pot. Holding the pot over his head, Paran should move, his body being immersed in the water of the river, breathing through the hole in the pot, as it would float on the water. Paran could freely move along the water with his head raised above the water and without holding the pot over his head. But, in times of danger signalled by the knocking of a stick on the ground by Hashim, he should keep the pot over his head as if the vessel was floating on the water. In this way they planned to take Paran to the nearest town where he could get into a refugee camp and save his life.

Hashim and Jubeida took him to the river in the thick night. Jubeida was full of tears at the time of bidding good-bye to Paran who was leaving his home, land, and village forever and could never return. Hashim and Paran start their journey—Hashim on the bank of the river and Paran in the water. Hashim felt that he was on a pilgrimage now, ‘traveling to Mecca and Medina, places of love, where there was no difference between human beings. Everybody was Allah's creature and deserved human
compassion. It would have been a sin to prevent anybody from staying alive.' (p. 94-95). Hashim had understood the spirit of Islam in its true light when the whole community had misunderstood it. *Such people who understood their religions in terms of compassion for all human beings, tried to keep alive the spirit of humanity.*

Hashim and Paran were almost near the town in the morning when two youths came and questioned about Hashim’s whereabouts. Suddenly, they noticed a vessel floating on the water in the river. All of Hashim’s attempts to divert their attention from the vessel failed. The young men hit the pot with a spear so forcefully that the spear pierced Paran’s head. Paran rose from the deep only to drown again, hugging the pot, and died with the name of his wife on his lips.

Sensing the danger of losing his life, Hashim ran along the bank, jumping the cracks. The two young men followed the infidel (Hashim) and wanted to kill him for his attempts to save the life of a man belonging to another religion. Was he really an infidel or *kafir*? In fact, he was a firm believer in his religion, which looked at all the human beings equally. Hashim was successful in saving his life by making them fall into a deep crevice, though he broke his leg in the attempt. His mind was full of the memory of Paran and his wife.

Despite Hashim’s failure to save the life of his friend Paran, the story highlights his humanity and the friendship and harmony between the two families even in the crucial times of the partition.

*Parameshwar Singh* (already discussed in Chapter V) can also be discussed as a story, which glorifies Parameshwar Singh’s humanity, and the harmony that builds up gradually. Parameshwar Singh’s firm belief that Akhtar, a Muslim boy, is created by the same Waheguruji who has created the children of the Sikhs; his sobbing for the safety of Akhtar; his efforts to befriend him; his care and love for him; his allowing Akhtar to recite Koran; and his protection of the boy against all odds show his humanity in the midst of communal hatred, vengeance, and violence. Despite Akhtar’s liking for long hair, comb, and turban, Parameshwar Singh’s firm resolution not to change his religion and his finally leading Akhtar towards the borders so that he can find his mother are the best proof of his humanity and religious harmony. Even the permission given by the village *Granthi*, Sardar Sano Singh, to bring up Akhtar as a Sikh boy and the acceptance of the same by the villagers show the basic human compassion and religious harmony towards the Muslim boy Akhtar, that too at the time of partition when communal hatred was running high. The army officer says to the villagers: ‘What is religion, my friends? Every religion of the world teaches us how to become more humane. But you, in the name of religion, make man more inhuman. You steal his humanity from him, trample on his dignity and then proclaim that you are Sikhs or that you are Muslims, that you are the followers of Waheguruji or the slaves of Rasool!’ (p. 173). Through this speech, he pleads for religious harmony.

R.C. Sen’s *The White Horse* (also discussed in Chapter V) brings out amity, harmony, and humanity between the Hindus and the Muslims in the midst of riots, vengeance, and violence. An innocent, spotlessly white horse appears in a tense and riotous atmosphere. ‘The white animal brings a fresh whiff of life into the riot-torn locality. The boys are totally absorbed in the horse. The small ones are delighted at his sight. The bigger ones come close and caress its body.’ (p. 127).
The people of the area, irrespective of community or creed, look after the horse with care and compassion. The white animal is a symbol of peace and harmony, bringing together people from both the communities.

Then, there comes an old Muslim in search of his horse. He is the groom and coachman. He is anxiously looking for the tense riots to cool down so that he can run his hackney cab, without any fear, on the streets to earn bread for himself and fodder for his horse. ‘The man was thinking of the peaceful old days’ (p. 132). He wishes that the harmony that existed in the past should be recreated again.

‘The sleeping ogre awakes again... Rumour spreads like wildfire... killing has started (p. 132). The rioters rush towards the old Muslim groom. They are intent on killing the old Muslim groom in vengeance for the brutal murder of Hindus in another locality called Metiabruz. Though the old Muslim does not seem to find reassurance in the hundreds of pairs of cruel eyes turned in his direction’, he ‘tries to find reassurance from the boys’ (p. 132). And Januna, Nontey, Habul, and other boys, again irrespective of creed or community, make a cordon round the old man. Even an old man, Hrishikesh Babu tries to quieten the rioters. There emerges harmony among the people of the locality and they protect the old Muslim with a great concern for humanity in the midst of hatred, vengeance, and violence. Though the innocent animal becomes a prey to the religious and communal frenzy, the voice of harmony and humanity, as the story suggests, is not completely dead.

The story, Getting Ever" by S.H. Vatsayan ‘Ajneya’ takes place in a moving train, a symbol of the huge migration and the death of the old structural certainties. Suraiya, a Muslim refugee, gets into the train with her elder daughter and little son. Her relief in getting into it is soon ruined by the presence of only two Sikh men, a father and his son, and no others in the compartment. It is not strange that, given the violent times of ruptured human relations, she is afraid of the Sikhs. She is suspicious of them and finds evil and cruel intentions in all their manners, words, and their very appearance. When, in the next station, two Hindu men enter the compartment, Suraiya gets frightened and starts to gather her things to move to another compartment. But the elder Sikh, who has understood the plight of the woman, asks her not to go and promises to protect them: ‘Stay where you are. You have nothing to fear here. You are like a sister to me and these children are as my own. I will see you safely up to Aligarh. There is little danger beyond that point and anyway some of your own people will also be entraining there’ (p. 121).

The conversation that takes place between one of the Hindu men and the elder Sikh removes Suraiya’s suspicions about the intentions of the Sikhs. When the Hindu starts giving a vivid description of the atrocities on the Hindus and the Sikhs in Delhi, and how their women were dishonoured before their eyes, the elder Sikh responds by saying that ‘all people have wives and daughters’ (p. 122) and thereby tries to curb the Hindu’s communal feelings. Missing the tone of the elder Sikh, the Hindu persists in his descriptions about the retaliatory actions by the Hindus and the Sikhs in dishonouring the Muslim women. The elder Sikh rebounds harshly to the Hindu, after apologizing to Suraiya for having to hear all this about the dishonour of women: ‘A woman’s dishonour is a woman’s dishonour — it is not a Hindu’s shame or a Muslim’s shame, in her the mother of all mankind has been dishonoured (p. 124).
Suraiya now feels that the Sikh man is really decent. He keeps the Hindu by recounting his own bitter experiences. He himself is a refugee, having lost all the property and all his relatives except the son who is with him now. But he can never take revenge for his own loss and suffering, 'because there can be no adequate vengeance for all that' (p. 124). He has nowhere to go and has taken shelter in the train. He has been escorting people back and forth between Delhi and Aligarh with the intention of getting even in his own way, 'so that whatever happened to me should never happen to another... my only aim is that no one - Hindu, Sikh or Muslim - no one should ever have to see what I have seen. And whatever befell my family members before they died, may it not be the fate of anyone’s wives and daughters ever to have to behold’ (p. 124). He does not care even if someone should kill him.

The elder Sikh exhibits great tolerance, patience, concern, and compassion. Despite his loss and agony, he does not take to vengeance and violence, and thus, becomes a model of harmony, fraternity, and humanity to be emulated by everyone. He is one of the rare characters in the whole of the partition stories.

During the partition violence, the most vicious crime committed on women was their abduction and rape. Nearly 75,000 women were abducted and raped. Some were married by the abductors themselves. And some were rehabilitated and some ended up in prostitution. Even amidst such barbarity, there were some rare and precious incidents of humanity. K. S. Duggal’s *He Abducted Her* is an example for them. Normally rape and murder immediately follow abduction. But in this story, the broken normalcy surprises the readers.

It is a story about abduction. Yet the abductor shows his humanity and leaves the abducted woman without doing any harm to her. Shahzad Khan takes part in a spree of riot, loot, and murder; and abducts a beautiful woman by name Rajkarni, the only daughter of a rich and respectable Hindu. He finds nothing wrong in his carrying her off to some lonely side of a hill and a stream. He has done it as everybody does. He takes out all the looted ornaments and silks and keeps them in front of her. But she does not even look at them. Inside her heart, she longs to see her father and playmate though she is uncertain of their living.

Her very silence and callous rejection of the ornaments and silks make Shahzad Khan feel guilty. He runs away from her without even touching her. He could have raped her and/or killed her. He appears to be cruel and inhuman in taking part in riot, loot, and abduction. Yet humanity is not completely dead in him. He does not harm her in any way. The abductor behaves like a perfect gentleman! He exhibits great humanity in running away from her.

Selina Hossein’s *An Evening of Prayer* (also discussed in the previous chapter) highlights harmony and humanity against all the violence and suffering that the partition brought in. It is a story about the migration of some Muslim families to the new nation East Pakistan. The very identity of being Muslims is the cause enough to lose many members of their family, house, lands, and other property. Overnight, they have become destitute frantically moving towards the new borders for safety.
Ali Ahmed taught literature. He has been a man of amity, humanity, and harmony. His wife’s name, Nishpita, and his six-year-old son’s name, Pradipto, are typical Hindu names and are witness to Ali Ahmed’s belief in Hindu-Muslim amity. But such a man is forced to leave this country for a new country. He starts his journey with his pregnant wife and son, leaving everything behind. He thinks that he is like a hunted animal, ‘like a dog being driven out of his territory’ (p. 165). For 31 years, he lived a human life like a man, spending all the time striving for all that is good. But now he is nothing more than ‘a frightened dog, hounded out of his own borders, incapable of a whimper of protest’ (p. 165). The country is divided on the basis of religion, but ‘religion is a felt belief, deeply so. Yet we turn upon each other in its name, like beasts, like mangy curs’ (p. 165). He suffers intense pain, as he has to take his pregnant wife on this difficult journey on road, river, and train. He asks his wife to be patient when her pains begin on the boat. But he knows that the to-be-born baby cannot be asked to hold back for sometime. His wife contains her suffering with great fortitude. And they get into the train, which takes them to the new nation. When the labour pains begin again, the chain is pulled down and the train stops. All the men move to another compartment. Pushpita gives birth to a male child after the birth of the new nation. Ali feels that his child is born to a new life as the image of his heart. Forgetting all the loss, uprooting, displacement, humiliation, and the deep psychological scars, he names his child Pratik—Pratik Ahmed. ‘Pratik’ in Bangla means symbol. The child is a symbol of amity, humanity, and harmony. Ali Ahmed becomes a great human being by not giving into any vengeance for all the suffering, humiliation, and loss he has undergone.

In Ritwik Ghatak’s The Road (also discussed in the previous chapter), the protagonist, Israel, gives vent to his anger and agony at having to leave his native, his house, and friends, snapping his roots. He eagerly wants to tear into pieces the one who has occupied his room. But on finding that an old woman, a refugee immigrant, has occupied it, he helps her by cleaning the room and buying her food out of the money he takes from his friends. Out of humanity he does so. His friends also exhibit humanity by consoling and helping him.

Ashfaq Ahmed’s The Shepherd is the longest of all the short stories about the partition, running into 40 pages in Bhalla’s edition and 57 pages in Muhammad Umar Memon’s edition. It recreates in a poignant and pathetic way the glorious syncretic tradition of the undivided India, its pluralistic culture, and its harmony; and the rupture of all the synthesis, pluralism, and harmony at the time of the partition.

It tells the story of Chintaram, better known as Dauji, who is the symbol of the Hindu-Muslim synthesis, unity, and harmony. He is a great lover of knowledge and a dedicated teacher. Born as the son of a Hindu milkman and after working as a goatherd for eighteen years, he becomes a pupil of Hazrat Maulana in his garden-school where ‘religion was no bar; faith was no obstacle’ (p. 21). This brings about a great change in the life of Chintu, the goatherd. He serves his master with devotion and learns with unquenchable thirst and great passion for knowledge. He not only learns Mathematics but also studies Persian and Arabic literature along with the Muslim scriptures extensively. ‘Thus, he integrated himself literally into the Indo-Persian-Arabic-Muslim ethos and its liberal human tradition, which grew out of a mutual regard for the other’s religion and a synthesis of the essentially good, moral and religious elements in each culture and religion.” The goatherd, Chintu, is transformed into Munshi Chintaram, a great scholar, humanist, and lover of learning and teaching.
The tragic thing is that no one appreciates his scholarship and his passion for dissemination of knowledge except his Muslim guru, Hazrat Maulana and the Doctor Sahib whose children become his students. His own wife, Bebe, is too ignorant to appreciate his scholarship. His son, Aminchand, is too happy to leave his father for joining in a college and later rightist political activities that are against his humanistic, harmonious, and secular sensibilities. His daughter’s ability to recite the Kalma, acquired under his tutorship, is not appreciated by her father-in-law. Even the society, at large, fails to understand his value and appreciate his abilities. So he earns his living by drafting petitions and filling up applications in the local court. Besides, he himself is not after money as his way of looking at life is inspired by spirituality.

The boy-narrator and son of the Doctor Sahib, Golu’s failure to pass the class X examination and his father’s deep distress at it brings him into contact with Dauji. The Doctor Sahib, forgetting his brief rift with Dauji, sends Golu to him so that he may pass his X examination in the second attempt. He even orders him to stay in the house of Dauji with him, in the true spirit of Guru-Shishya Parampara. The room of Aminchand, who has now gone to college in the city, is allotted to him. He is treated as one of the family. Devoting all his time, Dauji teaches him with concern and love. Once Dauji takes him under his wing, the boy becomes the centre of his existence. All his sleeping and waking hours are spent in trying to hone his ward’s academic skills. Golu’s playful, non-serious nature; his abuse; and his tears showered on Dauji do not hurt the teacher in him, and his enthusiasm in teaching his shishya does not wane in the least. He hopes that his pupil will get a first division and when it is missed by a single mark, it is he (Dauji) who becomes more sorrowful. This shows that his true vocation is teaching and his work of writing petitions and filling up applications is only a kind of drudgery done to run his kitchen.

Dauji’s struggle for learning, love of knowledge, scholarship, devotion to dissemination of knowledge, belief in secularism, spiritual outlook, civilized behaviour, and gentleness are great qualities which make him really human and humane. His great reverence, indebtedness, gratitude, and humility in remembering and honouring his guru, Hazrat Maulana, are his high virtues. Amidst ecstasies of reverential joy and gratitude, he often admits that all his knowledge and scholarship are the great gifts from his Muslim guru. He is happy and proud of having carried the physically handicapped guru on his shoulders to different parts of the village. Though a conscientious Hindu, Dauji is a great believer in the good of all religions. This is shown in his devotion to his Muslim guru. He is beyond all the petty bounds of caste, colour, community, creed, or country. He is the symbol of the Hindu-Muslim synthesis. He is a perfect man.

There is a turn in the story with the news of disturbances spread throughout the country in the wake of the independence and partition. Many refugees come to the village of the narrator with tales of terror and grief. Disturbances start in the village. A few houses are set on fire and fierce fighting ensues in the streets. Many Hindus leave the village to cross the newly drawn borders for safety and survival.

Finding himself in the newly created Pakistan, Dauji, a Hindu by birth but a great symbol of shared culture and Hindu-Muslim synthesis, becomes the victim of the frenzied fanatics and
communalists who have come to the village as refugees. Golu's pleas, to let the old man go, fall on deaf ears. Dauji could have easily avoided the onslaught of violence by leaving the village and migrating to Hindustan. But, being unwilling to migrate to escape violence, he stays back to counter it with his simplicity, morality, and humanity like Gandhi. Rano, the local rowdy and the leader of the group of refugees that attacks Dauji, takes perverse pleasure in humiliating Dauji. He uses this chance to get even with Dauji, who, he thinks, was responsible, on an earlier occasion, for his punishment by police after he had made obscene references to Bibi, the daughter of Dauji. Rano hacks away Dauji's bodi (choti, the tuft of hair on his head), which stands for his Hindu identity. As a special concession, in view of his age, Dauji's life is spared to look after Rano's goats. He is ordered to recite the Kalma in order to humiliate him. But he does not feel humiliated to do so and asks 'which one'? The irony is that Dauji is more Islamic than all the Muslim fanatics, who humiliate him. The illiterate and ignorant Rano, taking Dauji's question to be impertinent, slaps his head so hard that he (Dauji) nearly falls to the ground. After reciting the Kalma, Dauji begins to ‘walk behind the goats as if he is an angel with long and flowing hair’ (p. 40).

Dauji becomes a symbol of all the innocent victims of the tragedy of the partition. All the harmony and humanity of the past is ruptured by the great event. Dauji becomes a stranger in his own home and village, for his home is forcibly occupied by migrants and is finally left at the mercy of a strange, crazed mob, consisting of the newly arrived, communal-minded migrants, which symbolically pronounced a future of death-in-life for him, assigning him to Rano as a goatherd. The horizons of knowledge that he hankered for, and took delight in, were thus closed to him forever. He was left an abandoned and isolated figure, without books, family or home, grazing Rano's goats for the rest of his life. At the end of the story, Dauji is an emotionally shattered and spiritually broken man, whose stoic silence only serves to reiterate what he had been throughout his life—the metaphorical outsider, unsung, unwept, chained by, and yet a gem of the human race.

A Tale of 1947 by Manto is a story about the rupture of the old friendship, fraternity, harmony, and humanity during the precarious times of the partition. Mumtaz's three close friends—the narrator, Jugal and Brij Mohan—were Hindus. Jugal's response, on coming to know of his uncle's killing in Lahore, that, if Hindu-Muslim killing started in Bombay, he might kill Mumtaz, shook the innermost belief of Mumtaz in his friendship for him. His friendship, which had been beyond the bounds of community, religion, and region, could be tainted by them in the changed circumstances. Being sick of the communal hatred and the consequent violence, he suddenly decided to leave Bombay for Karachi. He felt sorry about the people who killed each other in the name of religion. 'Only the naïve can believe that religion can be eliminated with a gun. Why can’t they understand that faith, belief, devotion... is a thing of the spirit; it is not physical. Guns and knives are powerless to destroy it' (p. 158), he said and thereby gave expression to the futility of violence for the sake of religion and community.

There is a story within the story that is more touching. Mumtaz, at the time of taking leave of his friends at the port, told his friends about a man called Sehai, who was a pimp. But he looked after his girls, whom he supplied to his customers, as his own daughters. He made no discrimination between his Hindu and Muslim girls and customers. He never thought of any evil things to do to
to anyone on the earth. He even arranged the marriage of a Hindu girl with one of his customers. His behaviour was inspired by the noble principles of goodness, harmony, and humanity. But such a man was brutally killed when he entered a Muslim locality to handover to Sultana her jewels and rupees. The killing of Sehai shows the victory of bestiality over humanity. But Jugal’s wish that he were Sehai shows that he was changed and his belief in friendship beyond the bounds of religion and community was revived. And humanity was upheld.

This story is based on a real incident in the life of Manto. His best friend and actor, Shyam, after listening to the horrifying account of a refugee family from Rawalpindi from where he too had come, was deeply moved. To Manto’s question, ‘I am a Muslim. Don’t you want to kill me?’, Shyam replied gravely, ‘Not now, but while I was listening to them and learning of the atrocities committed by the Muslims, I would have killed you.’ In this story, the character of Jugal is based on Shyam and that of Mumtaz on Manto.

Manik Bandyopadhyay’s Childishness brings out how mutual trust and harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims were ruptured even because of silly reasons. Particularly when there was a tense atmosphere around, the so-called co-existence and mingling of the two communities were prone to mutual suspicion, hatred, and violence between them. The greatness of the story is that it finally brings out the innocent friendship of the children in contrast with the narrow mindedness of the grown-ups and upholds the harmony of the children to be emulated by the grown-ups.

A Hindu and a Muslim family had been living together side by side, with mutual concern, trust, friendship, and love. The two families had cultivated social and cultural contact in different ways and forms. The two wives used to drink tea in each other’s house. Their children used to play with each other. Despite the tense atmosphere in the surrounding localities, the communal divide had not affected these families in the least. Even the superstitious aunts used to speak to each other about things good and bad. But the arrival of refugees from other localities in the two families began a split. Even the children’s playing together was prohibited by the grown-ups. The two children’s game at riots, in imitation of the elders, almost brought the people of both the sides to the point of a real riot. But the timely intervention of the Peace committee of the locality avoided the imminent danger. Though the children were wounded with skin-deep wounds, it was still a game to them, for, after an hour or two they were found together playing happily. And thereby the innocent harmony of the children is upheld against the petty hatred of the grown-ups.

Thus, the story ‘ironically contrasts the normal childishness of children with the gory childishness of adults’ (emphasis added) and thereby it ‘underlines the structural ingredients of an environment in which the people’s voice is fractured, foregrounding, on occasion, the human over parochial considerations.’

In Shaikh Ayyaz’s Neighbours, there is a plea for harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. The story takes place in a village in Sindh. Khanu, the barber, knows all the people of all the communities, as they visit his hair-cutting shop. He is sensible enough to maintain good relationship with all kinds of people, both young and old.
In view of communal riots and violence in Bengal, Bihar, and Punjab, there is a rumour that the Muslims will start riots in Sindh also. Because of the tense conditions, the National Guard is on parade in the middle of the main street. Many rich Hindus are leaving Sindh for Jodhpur, Jaipur, or Udaipur. But the vast majority of the poor and common people have nowhere to go. Khanu, the protagonist, understands that the term Sindhi includes all the Hindu and Muslim residents of the region of Sindh, while the term Hindu refers only to the Hindu people who followed Hinduism. That’s why, he loves the expression Jai Sindh and not Jai Hind which is sectarian and communal. He tells himself that ‘the water of the Sindhu river did not know the difference between the two sects’ (p. 189). Nature—the Sun, the River, the Land—does not make any discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims and God does not treat people differently and so it is sacrilegious for people to treat the human beings with discrimination. Khanu knows that ‘the lives of the Hindus and the Muslims were so intimately woven together that they were a part of the same cloth’ (p. 190). This realization saves him from ignoble deeds, which can ruin his peace of mind and result in the rupture of human values. He also realizes that the lives of the Hindus and the Muslims have been so intermingled that it is difficult to separate them. Their cultures have been mingled and unified.

Looking at the intimacy between his wife and the neighbouring woman, with whom he has played in his childhood, Khanu sanely argues, ‘Can I kill her? No, never. It cannot be. If the Hindus in Bihar have killed the Muslims, Pesu Ram’s mother has nothing to do with it.’ (p. 191). Khanu upholds harmony and humanity in the midst of growing mutual suspicion and hatred between the two communities. His love of Homeland is tinged with fraternity and unity. Had other people like him thought in the same way, the partition would not have taken place, or at the least, it would have been a little less bloody.

Syed Waliullah’s The Story of the Tulsi Plant (already discussed in Chapter V), besides symbolically representing all the refugees of the partition as vulnerable as a tulsi plant, effectively recognizes the basic human bond between the Hindu and the Muslim refugees of the partition.

A group of Muslim refugees from West Bengal occupy a deserted house in East Bengal. They live comfortably in the house till they see a small dried and insignificant tulsi plant in the courtyard. The plant reveals the fact that the house belongs to a Hindu family, which has been forced to migrate for safety. The first reaction is to uproot the plant because they can tolerate no Hindu symbols. Despite this initial reaction by one or two of them, they decide not to uproot it. One of them says that the leaves of the plant are a powerful medicine to cure colds and coughs. Some others recognize the pain of the mistress in deserting the plant, which she tended with devotion. They speculate where she is living now shedding tears for the plant every evening at the time of lighting a lamp at the base of it. The Muslim refugees leave it unharmed and some of them, who have understood the pain of the mistress who tended the plant and the forcible displacement of her family, even water it, remove the weeds, and tend it secretly. The family which left the house is Hindu and the group of refugees who have occupied it are Muslims, but ‘are they really that different from each other? Both of the groups are homeless refugees, both forced to vacate their homes for an uncertain future in an unknown place. For the Hindu housewife, tending the plant might have been a religious duty, for the refugee who tends it, it is a reminder of their common humanity, of the need for roots, for the ordinary rhythms of life which political events
and upheavals disrupt. Despite religious and political differences, Waliullah suggests, the human bond remains somewhere underneath.¹⁸

But the people, who make decisions at the government level, do not care for the human bonds and they again displace the Muslim refugees by their decision to requisition the house, illegally occupied by them. The *tulsi* plant again begins to wither. In spite of their humanity, all the refugees are as helpless and vulnerable as the *tulsi* plant in spite of its being a medicinal plant. Discussing the story, Niaz Zaman rightly highlights the tone of humanity in it:

> Using the fact of illegal occupation—both Muslim and Hindu were occupying houses unlawfully on both sides of the border—Waliullah moulds it into a story of human feelings and small kindnesses. Waliullah suggests the antagonism of Hindus and Muslims, but also speaks of the human level which is not antagonistic. The rituals performed by the two religions might be different, but a common humanity reaches across these barriers.⁹⁹

Ismat Chughtai’s *Roots*¹⁰¹ is a different story in which the long-standing harmony between a Hindu and a Muslim family remains intact against the partition rupture. ‘The British had left and before leaving, they had wounded us so deeply that it would take years for our wounds to heal. The operation on India had been performed by such incompetent hands and with such blunt instruments that generations had been destroyed. Rivers of blood flowed everywhere. And no one had the courage to even stitch the open wounds.’ (p. 9).

It is just after the partition and the wounds are not yet cured. There has been tension in the air. All the Muslims have gone into the hiding. But Civil Lines area is peaceful as usual. Ignorance and poverty arouse worst passions in the name of religion. The arrival of refugees from Punjab adds to the fury of the passions. The people of the minority community are afraid of the critical circumstances. The harmony has been destroyed. Some people have already left for Pakistan. Most of the people have not understood the real problem between India and Pakistan. Some people, who reached Pakistan, have begun to come back on finding their dreams of buying things at cheaper rates shattered to pieces, because they needed money even to buy things at cheaper rates and the money was not available.

Even after the call to throw all the Muslims out, there are some Muslim families who are determined not to leave for Pakistan. The narrator’s family is one such. There has been a perfect harmony and understanding between the narrator’s Muslim family and the Hindu family of Dr. Roopchand, whose house is just opposite to the narrator’s. There have been supporters of the Muslim League, the Congress, and the Hindu Mahasabha in both the families. Recently, however, the support for the League and the Sabha has increased and the Congress has been completely eliminated. There have been heated arguments on matters of religion and politics, but they would put forth their views in a sportive spirit.

The fun, happiness, intimacy, and attachment between the two families give us a picture of the harmony before the partition. All of these are seriously damaged by the partition. The schism between the two families starts with flying the flag of the Sabha on Roopchand’s house and the flag of the League on the narrator’s house.
When the conditions get worse, the Muslim family prepares for leaving the land for Pakistan. But the widowed mother of the family stays back. She seems to say to all the members of her family:

What is this strange bird called 'our country'? Tell me where is that country? This is the land where you were born, which gave birth to you; this is the earth on which you grew up; if this is not our country, how can some distant land where you merely go and settle for a few days become your country? ... This game of destroying an old country and founding a new nation is not very interesting... I sit here like a flickering lamp. A small gust of wind will extinguish me, and put an end to all this turmoil about choosing one's country. (p. 16).

She has a strong attachment with her home where she wants to breathe her lost. All the other members leave her alone in the house for the new land. Being lonely and deserted, the mother suffers a lot in the house.

The attachment between the families is so great that Roopchandji's daughter-in-law enters the narrator's house through the back door to give the mother food. They look at each other with sympathy and understanding and without speaking. Dr. Roopchandji suffers so much that he feels as if someone is slowly scraping the skin off his body. He cannot uproot the Muslim family from his soul because it has gripped him like the roots of an ancient tree. He follows the migrating Muslim family in his car.

The old mother feels very sad at the fate of her family, which has fought for this land for fifty years, shed blood for it, and today, all of a sudden, it is asked to leave the land and establish a new nation somewhere. She imagines, as in a nightmare, all kinds of violence on the members of her family on the way. She imagines that 'her young and beautiful daughters were being paraded naked in the streets, that their bodies were being cut into pieces, that her sons and grandsons were being skinned alive' (p. 19). Roopchandji brings back all of them to the house of the old mother when she is through her terrible nightmare. The revival of the harmony between the two families is a good example to be emulated. Dr. Roopchandji is a memorable character that symbolizes harmony and humanity. People like the members of the two families are needed at present to uphold and practise harmony, brotherhood, friendship, and humanity.

Homen Borgohain's *In Search of Ismail Sheikh* (already discussed in the previous chapter) is a plea for humanity. The narrator, while searching for Ismail Sheikh, accidentally enters the room of a prostitute. Being curious about the prostitute reading *Woman of Rome*, a novel by Alberto Moravia, exchanges a few words with her. In the exchange, he learns that she too has been in search of a man whom she can confide to.

There is an interesting contrast here. It is a search that brings the narrator to the prostitute: while she has been running away from a man (her father, Annadacharan), the narrator is running after a man (Ismail Sheikh). While she has been afraid of meeting her father, Ismail Sheikh is afraid of the narrator. Both Annadacharan and Ismail Sheikh are refugees from the East Pakistan. Annadacharan has been separated from his daughter. She is now a prostitute. She is afraid that her father will be severely shocked to see her in her present condition. Ismail Sheikh has lost his wife and a 12-year old son in the outbreak of cholera. He again loses his two little children when his hut is pulled down by the
government authorities led by the narrator. They die of smallpox and severe cold. That’s why, the narrator has been in search of Ismail Sheikh to apologize to him.

Though Annadacharan and his daughter were forced to migrate from the East Pakistan by the Muslims and Ismail and his family migrate from the same place on their own, the narrator ascribes their displacement/migration to the conspiracies of history. In case of Annadacharan, it is communal hatred; and in case of Ismail, it is communal disparity, which play a vital role in their uprooting. It is the humanity of the narrator, which makes him wander in search of Ismail Sheikh to apologize to him. He wants to find out Ismail’s whereabouts, instead he finds out Annadacharan’s whereabouts. He thinks of them as one. He thinks of all such migrants and sufferers as one. He says:

But the amazing thing was that they (Annadacharan and Ismail) were one, their tale was the same. Both were victims of history’s conspiracy. Leaving the girl in the darkness, why should I go in search of Ismail alone? I must also find Annadacharan Mukhopadhay. But if I did, I also had to find the others. Who could find out millions of Ismals and Annadas of the world? Actually, to know one of them was to know them all. What was needed was to discover their enemies, who were also the enemies of humanity. (p. 237).

Thus, the partition is a crime against the humanity itself. So the narrator wants to discover the enemies of the humanity to save it from them. It is not important whether Annadacharan and Ismail are Hindus or Muslims. They are, beyond every consideration, survivors, sufferers, and human beings.

Narain Bharti’s *The Claim* (also discussed in the previous chapter) is really a claim for the lost shared culture, friendship, and harmony. The protagonist, Joharmal, an old Sindhi refugee puts in his claim for the whole of Sind, his native land where his forefathers lived their lives and he grew up, and where he left behind his world, his honour, his friendships, and everything that was his. He expresses his anguish at being alienated from his land, people, and friends. He identifies himself with the culture of that land where he was born, brought up, and where he has lived the major part of his life. And now in his old age, he cannot bear the loss. He remembers his Muslim friends and feels sad at losing their friendships. This is very significant in the context of the partition in which people became mad with communal prejudices. For him, his Muslim friends are dearer than his fields. Having got alienated from his friends and lands, he feels that there is no meaning in his existence. No compensation of money can bring back that happy life which he shared in his own land with his friends. He feels very sad for not being able to revive those old friendships. ‘I shall never again meet my brothers, Rajab, Ramzan and Mehboob, the barber. Can I get back their friendships?’ (p. 222). His suffering for the loss of and longing for the native land, with all its shared culture, harmony, and friendships are also the suffering and longing of all the refugees. Joharmal, amidst his loss and agony, is a real human being beyond all the petty communal prejudices. He is a symbol of harmony and humanity amidst violence and suffering.

India is a land of memories to Aslam which he comes to see with his teenage children nearly three decades after the partition and migration in Asif Aslam Farrukhi’s *The Land of Memories* (also discussed in the previous chapter). Though the country was partitioned, the memory was not partitioned. Memory of the homeland has been alive in Aslam and pulling him towards it. Immediately
after getting down from the train, he kneels on the Indian soil and applies a bit of dust to his forehead as *tilak*. His memory has been strong enough to force his uninterested children to come to India to see it.

He is very sad to learn that his old house *Manjhlay Miyan’s Kothi* and the big banyan tree before it are no longer there. And there are many physical changes in buildings and bazaars, lanes and houses, and roads and trees. The loss in terms of the physical change is compensated by the friendly treatment of the yakkawala Allamu and Bhupendar. Bhupendar, Aslam’s friend, hugs him tightly amidst sobbing, takes them home, arranges for their stay and treats them with warm affection. Aslam’s children are struck with wonder to see the Hindu Bhupendar move with them so freely. They heard different stories about the Hindus. This Hindu-Muslim mingling is a replica of the old Hindu-Muslim harmony which was ruptured by the partition. When the narrator, one of Aslam’s children, asks Bhupendar about this strange Hindu-Muslim mingling, he gives a grand picture of the old harmony:

Thank you for certifying that your chacha is not a bigot. The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims of this town were so harmonious that even your certificate would not have sufficed. Each community, whether in their day-to-day interactions with each other or during their festivals, respected the customs of the other. Every year during Id, when your father, grandfather and uncles returned from the Idgah after namaz, Hindus stood at the doors of their houses and sprinkled *itar* on their clothes. Your grandfather used to come to our house every year on Id, embrace my father, eat *sewayin* and give me a silver coin as *eidi*. Similarly, your grandmother sent us *halwa* during Shab-e-Barat. She used to hire a Hindu cook to make *halwa* and send it in a platter carried by a Hindu, especially employed for that purpose. Nobody thought that the Hindus were being unduly concerned about pollution taboos. Each one respected the individuality, the feeling and faith of others. During *Diwali*, the house, which was lit the brightest, was *Manjhlay Miyan Ki Kothi*. And during the forty days of *Muharrum*, *sabeel* was made at our house and *sharbat* was mixed with milk. (p. 51).

Bhupendar takes them around the town and shows different parts, lanes, people, friends, and relatives to them. He highlights humanity by shedding tears of joy when Aslam Miyan meets and hugs everyone on the way. Though Aslam feels sad and lost at times to see the changed present which does not seem to have any relation with his past, it’s Bhupendar’s and others’ friendly treatment which makes him find some solace. The treatment recalls the old harmony and proves the fact that the partition was unnecessarily imposed on people.

Despite his being happy to find himself back in his homeland, Aslam is shocked to see his children’s negative response and getting sick of it. His children and their cousins have become strangers to each other. To avoid this, the borders should be thrown open for people to see their friends and relatives in the other country so that a friendly and fraternal atmosphere will be developed in place of suspicion and hatred in the days to come.

There is a similar replica of the old harmony in Maheep Singh’s *The River and the Bridge*. The memory of her village and its people has been green in the narrator’s mother even after fourteen years. They have been on a pilgrimage to the gurudwaras in and around Lahore. Now they are on their way to Panja Sahib.

The narrator remembers the terrible past when the country was partitioned and the narrator’s family migrated to India from a village called Sarai in Pakistan. People have still carried the memories
of their wounds: Sarai, 'the land which had once been a part of our lives and was now so utterly alien to us' (p. 80). But the mother does not think of it as alien. She remembers the village and its people with nostalgia and anxiety. She keeps awake till two o'clock after the midnight when the train stops at Sarai station.

A number of people have assembled on the platform. The narrator remembers stories of how rioters stopped trains and massacred the passengers. But the crowd of people is from Sarai and it assembles to greet the narrator's mother through the window. They inquire after her family and thrust a number of bundles—full of almonds, walnuts, and raisins—as gifts into their hands. They pray Allah to bless all of her family with good health, long life, and prosperity. All of them request her to come back to her village with her children in all earnestness. 'There is no doubt about the sincerity of their impassioned plea to their former neighbours to return to their homeland.'\(^5\) The train moves on the bridge over the Jhelum. This meeting recreates the old harmony between the Hindu and the Muslim community. The Muslims of the village, Sarai, show rare humanity in their treatment of the woman, who passes through her village as a pilgrim.

Again, in this story also, as in the previous story *The Land of Memories*, there is the similar conflict between the people of the old generation, who have their roots in their old homeland and the people of the new generation, who have not been born and brought up in the old homeland. Here in this story, the narrator, like the narrator of the previous story, does not feel attached to the old homeland as his mother does. *The older generation is like the bridge, which connects the two banks (of the river), which are like the new generations on both the sides of the border (the river).*

Gulzar Ahmed's *A Mango Leaf*\(^6\) (also discussed in the previous chapter) is another story which highlights the never-ending longing for the homeland Sindh. The Muslim narrator is treated by Shyam, the old gentleman and the other Sindhis, with much hospitality and respect in Hong Kong just because he belongs to Pakistan in which Sindh is a state. Evidently, Shyam, the old gentleman and others who treat the narrator with such hospitality are the migrants who migrated to Hong Kong after the partition.

Shyam remembers his native town Shikarpur in Sindh. He is full of longing and love for his native. All the other gentlemen embrace the narrator and request him to give their regards to all the Sindhis and their respect to their country, Sindh. Shyam, who accompanies the narrator to the airport, requests him only to pray that he (Shyam) may see his country Sindh sometime in future. He also requests the narrator to parcel to him a mango leaf from the tree which he planted in the courtyard of his house in Shikarpur. As the plane flies, the narrator longs to meet his Sindhi brothers. The narrator's visit has revived the old feelings of brotherhood and harmony among the people who have been separated from their native lands.

Debyendu Pallit's *Alam's Own House*\(^7\) is a story about the relationship between two families—a Hindu and a Muslim—after the partition of the country into two, and later, into three nations. The Doctor Saheb (father of the protagonist, Alam) of Kolkata and Anantasekar of Dhaka exchange their houses and property. Anantasekar's family comes to the house of the Doctor Saheb.
in Kolkata and the Doctor Saheb’s family goes to the house of Anantasekar in Dhaka. The Doctor Saheb takes the decision of leaving Kolkata only after he notices that only Jamais and Karims come to him as patients for treatment and even their numbers are also dwindling as they start leaving for Pakistan, either East or West. Rams and Kanais start consulting Dr. Gupta, his friend, for treatment. Doctor Saheb leaves Kolkata for Dhaka with a heavy heart. But Alam stays back in Kolkata to complete his final year study of his M.A. degree. At the insistence of Anantasekar, Alam continues to stay in his own room in the house which now belongs to Anantasekar. The family of Anantasekar treats Alam as one of their own family.

There develops a love between Anantasekar’s daughter, Raka, and Alam. Finding a job in the university in Kolkata, Alam continues to stay in Anantasekar’s house even after the completion of his M.A. degree. But the sudden death of his father brings his stay in Kolkata to an end. Throwing up his job, he goes to Dhaka. Through letters, he maintains his relationship with the family of Anantasekar intact. There is an exchange of a lot of letters between Alam and Raka.

After three years, Alam comes to Kolkata on the pretext of participating in a seminar arranged by the Friendship Committee to promote friendly relations between the people of West Bengal and Bangladesh. Feroz, the co-participant from Dhaka, is of the opinion that the cultural identities for the two countries are separate. He says, ‘Friendship is fine, but it is dangerous to use it as a bait. We wear clothes to hide our nakedness, but why must the colour and cut be the same? What of our individuality?’ (p. 62). But Alam believes that the difference is only political as the two countries have one language, one dress, and similar food and climate. To Feroz’s view that the difference is not just political but also religious, Alam wants to say, ‘Religion is imposed. As a fad, it is blind and therefore, easy to believe in. We have never understood the relation between the rich and the poor or between the exploited and the exploiter, but we do seem to understand the binds of religion. It is irresponsible and makes it easy to escape reality’ (p. 63-64). But afterwards, he further reflects about this view, and being unable to be firm about his view, he feels that some questions are without answers.

Alam argues for the oneness of culture. It is because he was born in Kolkata and wants to marry a Kolkata girl, Raka, now. But he also suffers from a sense of rootlessness as the country of his birth is not his homeland. The same sense of rootlessness makes Raka take a decision not to marry Alam. She does not want to suffer from that sense of rootlessness. She has only invited Alam to come to Kolkata because she has been quite certain that he will not come. But when he actually comes to Kolkata, she has no courage to face him. So, she leaves Kolkata for Delhi.

But Alam is received well in the house of Anantasekar. Snehamashima, Raka’s mother, treats him well as she used to treat him earlier and hands over a letter from Raka to him. In her letter, Raka expresses that despite her love for him, she does not want to be uprooted again. She sacrifices her love for a sense of belonging to her motherland. She asks him to forget that love but foster their friendship, if he likes to. In all probability the reader can hope that their friendship continues.

Though the marriage is not materialized, the friendship continues. Continuity of friendship manifests in mind and not in body. The highlight of the story is the friendship and harmony between the
families of different religions, communities, and countries. This kind of friendship and harmony will heal up the wounds of the partition and end the hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims and they will live with human concern and compassion to each other.

_The Four-Poster Bed_ by Narendranath Mitra is a long story about the Hindu-Muslim life immediately after the partition in East Pakistan. Being provoked into a fit of rage by his daughter-in-law’s gentle but pinching letter, Rajmohan sells her four-poster bed, a wedding gift by her grandfather, to Maqbool, a milkman, boatman, and labourer, often employed by him. He sells it for a meagre price much below its real price just to satisfy his anger by making the grand, artistically carved and lion-face legged four-poster made of teak lie in the lowly hut of Maqbool. But afterwards, he realizes his foolishness and longs to get back the prestigious four-poster.

Rajmohan is a rich old man who lives alone in his big house. His only son lives with his wife and children in Calcutta. But Rajmohan does not want to leave his birthplace. It is not just because of his deep attachment with his birthplace but also with the ancestral house, land, and property, he stays back even when most of the Hindus leave for Hindustan. The cupidity of unscrupulous people is one of the factors that contributed to violence during and immediately after the partition. But Maqbool, though allows some thoughts of killing the old man and grabbing his possessions and making his house a Pakistan, does not actually resort to any such evil actions in spite of many hardships he faces. He cannot find any sort of work, which can fetch him some money to buy food grains. Rajmohan stops buying milk from him and stops employing him for labour work in his orchard. Hard days begin for Maqbool. He sells his cow and loses his boat. He, with his wife and children, spends many days without even a square meal a day. The story brings out the futility of the partition of India, as it has not solved the problems of Muslims even in Pakistan, which has been created exclusively for them and their welfare. Fatima, Maqbool’s wife, does not understand why, in Pakistan, with a Muslim government, Muslims should starve. In response to her, Maqbool philosophically ruminates the hard truth: ‘The poor like us have no Hindustan or Pakistan... there is only gorestan—the graveyard’ (p. 61).

Despite his hardships, Maqbool does not give back the four-poster to Rajmohan. All the attempts of Rajmohan to get it back fail. Maqbool does not accept even the offering of a price more than what he has actually paid. Some others like Chadan Mridha and Gedu Munshi also try to buy it by offering prices more than the price offered by Rajmohan. But Maqbool sticks on to the four-poster and does not budge an inch.

Finally, being exhausted, Maqbool becomes ready to part with the four-poster for sheer survival. He asks Rajmohan to take it back before he resells it to fill the bellies of his children, his wife, and his own. Rajmohan declines to do so after he sees Maqbool and his wife on the bed. So far, the bed has been empty. ‘Today my four-poster is no longer empty. Today, I see them, I see my beloved Radha-Govinda on the pedestal’ (p. 67). The Muslim couple—Maqbool and Fatima—appears to be Govinda-Radha to the Hindu, Rajmohan. It is this bond of humanity beyond the petty bounds of region, religion, community, and culture, which is the highlight of this story. Even after the partition and the migration of most of the Hindus from East Bengal, the Muslims and the remaining Hindus live together harmoniously as they do so in India. There have been some clashes and conflicts here and
there and now and then, but they have not totally destroyed the shared culture of the undivided India. Bidyut Chakrabarty praises the story in *Fluidity or Compartments: Hindus, Muslims, and Partition* in the following way:

> Woven around a four-poster bed, Narendranath Mitra’s *Palanka (The Four-Poster Bed)* is a powerful portrayal of Hindu-Muslim quotidian life in East Pakistan immediately after partition. What is emphasized here is the human bond that held the communities together even when most Hindus left for West Bengal. . . . The story is woven around the familiar voice of communities that were socio-culturally demarcated. What finally triumphed was the human bond that matured and crystallized by being together even in circumstances when inter-communal relations were not at their best. . . . What is most revealing is the fact that despite fractured voices, perhaps a product of the prevalent socio-cultural differences, highlighted conveniently to further separate the communities, the human bond continued to bind Hindus and Muslims together even when the political map of the subcontinent had entirely changed.” (emphasis added)

The sense of harmony and humanity, with which the short story writers have written their partition stories, is a great quality which proves that the partition was unnatural and the partition violence meaningless; and also emphasizes the need for tolerance, co-operation, friendship, and fraternity among the different communities of the country. There is hardly any short story writer who can be taken to task for deliberately fanning hatred against another community. ‘Since 1930s, one notices that writers with secular credentials have tried to be very cautious.” By the time the demand and movement for Pakistan received a momentum in the 1940s, the writers of all kinds started giving expression to the values of religious tolerance and Hindu-Muslim co-operation in their writings to resist the divisive forces. The genre of short story (being a modern and recent literary form) was best suited to express the shattered experience of the partition. The sense of fragmentation created by the partition finds a congenial form in the short story.

Almost all the short story writers use the technique of balance. If there is a Muslim villain in the story, he is balanced by a Hindu or Sikh villain, often conspiring together. *Aadab* by Samaresh Basu, *The Peshawar Express* by Krishan Chander, and *The Riot* by Khushwant Singh are the best examples for the technique of balance and to show that the short story writers have looked at the partition experience with equality, fraternity, harmony, and humanity, without any bias towards any religion or community. They have successfully withstood all the provocations of religious fanaticism and political opportunism and upheld the human values in their stories about the partition through a sensitive sharing of the anguish experienced by the *other* and stressing thereby the basic human bond between the contending communities. In fact, the short story writers have made it a point to valorize the humanity and nobility of the *other* community to which he/she did not belong.

The tone of humanity in the Partition Stories renders them meaningful and relevant to all the times. The stories with their treatment of unbound violence, horrible cruelty, and terrible suffering would have become meaningless unless they have a humanistic outlook. The grief and suffering of one generation loses its intensity, sense, and relevance to the next generation. But the humanistic outlook makes them meaningful for all the generations and times to come.
The depth of human sensibility that permeates all good writing links the literature of one period with that of another. This humanity enables literature to transcend time, prevents it from ageing despite the passing of centuries. This humanity makes literature relevant in time as well as free of time. The literature that is most relevant to its time becomes, on the strength of this humanity, meaningful for other times too. But when the wellsprings of humanity begin to dry up in literature, it grows irrelevant even in its own time, let alone later times. Most of the partition stories (with the exception of a few stories which are communally oriented) are imbibed with the human values.

The humanism of the stories is a kind of ideal diligently pursued by the short story writers. This idealism is not a blemish but the strength of the stories. They are powerful enough to shake the readers and have a telling effect on them. They make the readers reflective and relieved. The artistic creation of the bitterest experience of the country with a humanistic tone will create feelings of tolerance, compassion, friendship, fraternity, harmony, and humanity among the readers. These stories can be considered as the best stories among all the Indian short stories.
References and Notes:

Note: All the textual citations are from the mentioned volumes unless otherwise stated.

22. Kashmiri, Shorish. 'Humiliated and Harassed They Left'. *India Partitioned, op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.
34. Sobti, Krishna. ‘Where is My Mother?’ Alok Bhalla, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 135-140.
59. Ibid., p. 133.
64. Singh, Maheep. ‘The River and the Bridge’. Bhalla, Alok, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 79-84. This is also found as ‘The Water under the Bridge’ in Writings on India’s Partition, op. cit., pp. 176-181.
70. Das, Sisir Kumar, op. cit., p. 383.