Chapter 5

Conclusion and Further Scope

Communal violence is the result of our failure of restoring peace and respect for the other community at human heart; tracing its roots and route to history or political matrix are solely necessary exercises of describing and analyzing the problem. Cultural ideals of India do not stand for the cultural realities in the present epoch. In order to attain a ‘nation’-homogeneity, we have sacrificed the very essence of India-heterogeneity. History of communal violence in India documented the radical shifts from “spontaneous outbursts of riots” to “well-planned and targeted pogroms”, from “religious” motivations to “communal” provocations, from ‘locating space of communal violence within a socio-historical context’ to ‘creating a space for communal violence in the same’ and from ‘blaming the colonial enemy’ to ‘being the enemy’. The concepts like ‘religion’ and ‘community’ still stand very significantly in our day to day life, respectively as makers of our spiritual being of the self and as structure of our society. Communalism is, that is why, threat to the ‘self’ and the ‘society’.

‘Communalism’, in India context, is such a dynamic issue that scholars from various disciplines have studied it from their respective disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. There are four pillars of communalism: (a) not accepting religious difference, (b) one/two nation theory, (c) politics of majority-minority and (d) history and its manipulations. We have reasons to believe that communal violence started as a disease or a problem but gradually it has become an ideology. Communalism as an ideology distinguishes itself from ‘religious fanaticism’ or ‘religious violence’, because in the former case one believes in exclusive existence of one’s community and in the latter one claims supremacy and absolutism of one’s religion only.
Fanatics always act zealously whereas communalists act subtly as well as violently. In this context, there are three potential attributes to communal ideology which causes riots: (1) communal consciousness, (2) assertion of communal identity and (3) latent communal atmosphere.

In our pursuit of understanding ‘communalism’, we could see that the concept of secularism has played historic role in the making the communal tension in India. It is largely because the concept of ‘secularism’ is western and we have adopted it in order to encourage communal harmony. We have directly applied a non-Indian theory without presuming its repercussions on the Indian reality. The notion of secularism is ‘obscure’ and ‘empty’ because it is based on an arbitrary distinction between what is religious and what is non-religious.

The promise is secular ideology will make the state more and more tolerant by “excluding” its interests in the religion of the people. Popularly, secularism tends to increase disrespect for the one’s own religion i.e. you can be either secular or follow your religion. There is no provision for the other option which would allow you to follow your religious belief and to be respectful to other religions and yet you can be secular. West can follow that kind of secularism without much trouble but what about a multi-religious country like India? India is living a paradoxical secularism: India has adopted western secularism as a political ideology but its reality needs the second kind of secularism wherein one is not devoid of one’s religious faith and yet can be potentially secular.

Therefore, the society based on ‘sacred’ world view cannot be operated by a borrowed tool of secularism which essentially negates one’s religious basis. The very idea of ‘India’ as a cultural entity is impossible without religious implications. The conventional (Western) secularism
places reason first and faith second whereas the secular model that we require for India should be faith-driven. Modern India has parallel ‘secularisms’; one that is prescribed by the constitution, one which is continuously contested in intellectual debates and one that common educated Indian lives in his/her day to day life.

The thesis ‘Violence’ and ‘Space’: Perspectives on Post 1970 Indian Novels on Communal Riots is a humble attempt to understand various nuances suggested by the very title.

Violence can be the only word that described the harsh reality of present and past of humans. From the time immemorial humans have always been extremely violent creatures and in the process of modernization they systematised tools and manners of violence. When we take close look novels written on communal riots, we tend to focus more on the ‘communal’ nature and aspects of violence. Here the word ‘communal’ along with ‘violence’ distinguishes it from other forms of violence; ‘communal’ then, is a reason and source of violence in a particular context. Such violence takes the shape of mutual hatred and so many agencies operate it from multiple angles; for example political parties may support communal violence for votes, businessmen would sponsor it for taking occupational rivalries, religious leaders encourage it in order to prove superiority of their religion etc. Communal violence manifests baggage of history, unequal distribution of economic opportunities, sexual harassment and so on. When we talk about Hindu-Muslim riots, we are actually talking about the communal violence in which religion works instrumentally and not functionally.

Violence is a leitmotif in the post 1970 Indian novels. In fact we find a range of various forms of violence, interwoven and overlapping. For instance, novels written during these time period talk about ‘violence against women’ (feminist writings), ‘violence against Dalits (Dalit literature),
‘violence against minority; (minority discourse), ‘violence against tribal’ (tribal narratives) so on and so forth.

In order to understand the nature of communal violence in the post 1970 Indian novels comprehensively, we have used spatial framework.

_Space_ is a theoretical perspective wherein human experience in understood within of the space they occur. ‘Space’ is not only the relative physical reality but it is more of a human experience of relations amongst objects, and, most importantly the manipulations of it. Space is a possibility of reading literature comprehensively. Since literature is an aesthetic expression of the human experience in a language, space is the locus where these human experiences take place. We may understand all kinds of human experiences represented in the literary works through a spatial perspective, but understanding ‘communal violence’ through spatial viewpoint is venture in domains of culture, human geography, anthropology, history, theology, psychology, sociology, phenomenology etc. Space allows decoding these branches of knowledge interacting in literature while dealing with issues of communalism.

The thesis has argued, by analyzing select novels on communal riots, that violence can best be understood if put into ‘communal space’. ‘Communal space’ refers to a set of fluid cultural landscape of laws, customs, and beliefs that form the geographies of our lives. It is a spatio-temporal awareness of belonging and not-belonging to a definite community and belief. Communal space is both container/milieu of a group of people as well as a kind of collective-subjective setting in which communal feelings/ideologies and riots occur. It is something that is innate in a very general sense but it can be taught, forced upon, created, shown etc. in a very narrow sense. The boundaries between one’s community and those who are not part of the
community are so sharply drawn and this becomes aggression toward the “other”. Thus, the very process of “othering” is nothing but excluding someone from a definite space.

In order to understand how ‘violence’ is represented in the post 1970 Indian novels, we have taken a close look at the very structure of this communal space. The framework of ‘communal space’ has enabled us to understand what happens to individual-space, gender-space, community-space, religious-space, socio-political space, geographical-urban-space, virtual-space, art-literary space etc. during communal riots within the fictional spaces. For example, these are spaces represented through the stereotype of communal activities-riots; (mis)quoting of history, attacks on women, children and infants, the aim of wiping out the “enemy” and hence physical destruction (of lives, property, tools for work, and standing crops) on a massive scale; gang-rape, the unashamed participation of the police; the hanging of “enemy” people found on trains or buses passing through the affected area etc. That is why our research argues that the intricacies of space which, both individually and collectively provide room for ‘violence’. What we are accusing here is that the ‘space’ itself for being vulnerably available to communalism.

We have found in our study that the select novels show the inability to speak in any given format, be it of language or literature. That is why, it seems, each novel fails in articulating communal violence in a “plotted” manner and simultaneously succeed in doing the same. We have discussed at length various spatial perspectives of communal violence reference to five novels: *Tamas* (1972) by Bhishm Sahani, *Curfew in the City* (1988) by Vibhuti Narayan Rai, *Lajja* (1993) by Taslima Nasreen, *Riot* (2001) by Shashi Tharoor and *Partitions* (2004) by Kamleshwar. We have proposed two dimensions of spatial analysis of novels:

(1) Narrative space
(2) Spatial Perspectives

**Narrative Space:**

We have tried to analyse narrative space of the novels on communal riots focusing on 1) The topographical level, 2) The level of chronotopic structure and 3) The level of textual structure.

**The Topographical Level:**

Literary narratives provide a range of incidents of communal violence at the backdrop of socio-political scenario of the town. Largely, novels written after 1970 portray small urban spaces which were under development and perfect spaces for the communal activities. These towns are the very spaces on which novels develop their plots and characters. Interestingly, there are closed community areas spread across the geography of the town. Such ‘closed space’ can be termed as ‘ghetto’ too, for they are identically different from other mixed-spaces and that is why more vulnerable. As in the novel *Riot*, religious procession of Hindus takes communal colour when comes in the contact of the ‘closed-space’ of Muslims; one can blame neither the procession nor the ghetto but the collision of spaces. Topographically, novels describe in two specific relationships of the Hindu and Muslim communities: 1) these communities live so close in the mixed spaces and so far in ghettos and 2) the centers of the riots are produced from the periphery where the people in power reside. It is like the puppetry wherein though puppets are at the center of the stage, they are controlled by the strings in periphery. For example, the riots that take place in the novel *Curfew in the City* exemplify the fact that it is always easy to instigate a riot from a distance as one is not likely to be affected by it.

These locations of communal activities resemble the real life space of the riots on which the fictional locations are developed. The common elements that link these novels are the patterns
through which a riot/pogrom is penetrated to the demography of the town. Once infiltrated, violence takes on a horizontal route taking away lives, brutal rapes, plundering of property etc. *Tamas, Curfew in the City* and *Riot* render topographical circle of the riot; from beginning of riot to controlling it somehow.

The topographical understanding of communal violence represented in the post 1970 novels shows that there is a constant dialogue between ‘an abstract’ space and the ‘human space’ i.e. among causes of communal violence including the ‘sacred’, ‘historical-colonial’, ‘heterotopia’, ‘political’ ‘psychological’, ‘social’, ‘communal’, ‘gender’ etc. spaces. The characters in all these novels are inevitable parts of the topographical because they are the ones who perform the space of action which is why they become victims and victimizers. The characters like Priscilla in *Riot*, Hermansingh in *Tamas*, Maya in *Lajja*, Salma in *Partitions* and rape victim teenager in *Curfew in the City* are the victims of communal violence due to their very presence as passive objects in the topography communally proactive elements. Thus, it is the very topography of the novels that tag these novels to be ‘novels of communalism’.

Except for the novel *Partitions*, all the novels are written as response to actual riots took place in the different parts of the country. It means that the fictional world of the topographical structure is based on the actual world which makes these novels read like a journalistic reports disguised as literature. Besides, these novels except for *Curfew in the City* blur the fictional and factual boundaries, for the real characters, historical and political figures are brought directly to the plot to play their parts in the communal tension. It is in the topographical structure where fact meets the fiction.
The Level of Chronotopic Structure:

The mutual correspondence of time and space accounts for the chronotopos in literature. The events and incidents that take place in a particular space of the novels reveal various aspects of the communal violence. The chronotopos can be of varied range, as Bakhtin has suggested, macro and micro chronotopos etc. We have studied two kinds of relationships in the novels; synchronic relations and diachronic relations.

At every point of the narrative, at every synchronic situation, some objects may be found at rest or static and others in motion or dynamic. Hence, it is really fascinating to read a literary text from a synchronic relations viewpoint wherein one explores the static and dynamic elements, ideas, characters etc. For example, in Tamas there are two pairs of characters; Shah Nawaz and Milkhi, and Ranvir and Itrafarosh. The former in each pair is dynamic to kill the latter that is static. Suranjan and Sudhamoy in Lajja are also static characters as against the dynamic forces of communal violence around them. What happens to Priscilla and rape victim respectively in Riot and Curfew in the City is because they are at the wrong place at wrong time. Chronotopes tell us what could (not) have been in certain time space.

Being in rest (static) is a state of being bound to a particular spatial context sometimes by force whereas being in motion (dynamic) suggests mobility of characters or ideology among various spatial contexts (by choice or force). As in the novel Curfew in the City, Muslims are made static by curfew. Riot and Partitions show the mobility of communal ideology travelling across various time periods and influencing the present state of violence. Besides, in a literary text, static and dynamic elements can be replaced with each other for various requirements of the plot. For instance, nobody bothers about temples and mosques before communal instigation and hence these spaces remain static. As soon as riots erupt, they are the most dynamic spaces to be
protected and for executing the violence. It is quite possible that a character or physical entity is static during a given point in time and becomes active and dynamic in the other. They are complimentary too; dynamic elements are dynamic due to still quality of the static elements and the vice versa. As communal violence takes place because there is an appropriate atmosphere ready for it. The study of these novels suggests that no riot occurs all of a sudden but as a result of the continuous tension emerging amongst the people.

Topographically, space is all neutral and passive with regard to direction, and one may move in it, from and to any point. It is noteworthy that communal violence is a product of the process of constant interactions of diachronic movements among social space, psychological space and political space. Characters move from one juncture of time and space to another and in doing so engage into communal violence. For instance, the moment Suranjan, in Lajja, moves from his house to his friend’s, his sister Maya gets kidnapped by the Muslims; such movements are can be seen as mobility in space and time as causal relations. The incident of killing a pig in Tamas moves horizontally to entire town and causes enormous violence.

Space at chronotopic level is structured as a network of axes having definite directions and a definite character. Axes may or may not be determined by motions which actually take place in the world of the text. Journey which starts from point A to B can also deviate from point A to C, D or E and may or may not reach point B; in that case the dynamic nature of chronotopos is to be understood differently. For instance, in Tamas Shah Nawaz goes to his Hindu friend’s house in order to get golden jewelry, he gets the box and returns to his Hindu friend’s house but in between he kills Milkhi, the servant at the home. How do we understand this axis of movement wherein a Muslim risks his life to help his Hindu friend and simultaneously kills a Hindu on
communal ground? Here the axis starts from point A and reaches B but via a deviation to point C, so to say.

An actual movement is a result of several factors: power, will, hurdle, ideal, character’s intentions, destiny etc. We can easily understand why Ranvir kills the scent seller, but why was the General got killed? Why was Priscilla killed in the Riot? These are complex issues to be understood with diachronic structure. A character’s journey from one place to another might be seen as his/her dialogue with the constantly changing spaces around him/her. So when we look at a literary text, we are more concerned with a conception of the entire space in terms of a field of powers rather than focusing an occasional movement on a neutral topographical situation. As Partitions gives a detailed account of the simultaneous and chronological analysis of the whole issue of Babri-Ram Janmabhoomi issue. Topographically Babri as a place is not that problem to cause communal violence but the field of power mechanisms spread on the web of axes of movements that nurtures the communal disturbance.

The Level of Textual Structure:

The level of textual structure deals with the alternative world created by the text and how this world communicates with the real world. Here, we will discuss not the linguistic space only but the space the texts open up for the new world to stand and expand. The novels dealing with communal violence have been successful in reconstructing the world; for the incidents of communal violence in the real world are so inaccessible to us in terms of time and space, the textual structure of the riots will allow us to revisit riots as many times as we wish.
The Selectivity of Language and its Effects:

Principally, the writers choose to talk about some characters and events in great detail by minimizing others. In the post 1970 novels on communal riots, if we try to classify, writers have tried to talk about three types of characters: 1) communal characters that are very active in executing and justifying the riots, 2) secular characters that are busy pacifying the violence and constantly criticizing the latent causes and 3) the victims. In order to justify these focuses, writers choose their ideological means. For example, Lajja is a narrative about the sufferings of Hindus caused by Muslims in Bangladesh by a Muslim writer whereas Curfew in the City is the mirror image of Lajja wherein the pitiable situation of Muslims caused by Hindus in India is depicted by a Hindu writer. Riot is more of an intellectual and secular discussion on the issue of communalism in India and Tamas, on the similar lines, is historical and sociological commentary on how people should be secular. Partitions chooses a secular stand but presents all forms of violence by accusing every possible agency for communal violence in India.

As a whole, these narratives present discourse of communal violence in language most aptly chosen. The incidents of violence are described in such way that it certainly disturbs the readers, for example killing of pig by Nathu and a hen by Ranvir in Tamas are haunting images of produced by the language. A lengthy discussion on rapes and molestation of women in all the novels are more than sufficient evidences of targeted gender space.

The Linearity of the Text:

One of the most striking elements of post 1970 novels on communal riots is the search for a narrative technique appropriate to articulate the communal space. Not a single novel, that we have discussed, presents a linear narrative style. The very inability to find the “plotted” narrative shows the intensity of soreness of communal violence. How does one talk about such a complex
and multidimensional issue of riot by employing a one-dimensional narration? The main character in all these narratives is almost the same - communal violence. But each text has different textuality to represent it.

As part of the storyline they depict some of the archetypal images and incidents of communal violence, for example murders of innocent, rapes, looting the property etc. But in doing so, they emphasize India’s failure in dealing with any of these incidents. **Partitions** uses local problem of communalism and partition based on that to talk about the global issues of different types of partitions and violence.

**The Perspectival Structure:**

Literary narratives are subject to their political leanings when they deal with a subject like communal violence. Generally, literary criticism dictates, a text is read by keeping in mind three types of perspectives: writer’s, textual and the reader’s perspective. A literary text is a perspective to look at the problem of communalism.

Within the perspectival structure, ‘here-there’ relationships occur in two ways: between the location of the act of narration and the “world” as a whole; and, within the “world”, between things perceived at a certain instant as in foreground and those perceived as in the background. For example, in **Tamas** killing of a pig for five rupees does not appeal to us unless it is thrown on the steps of the mosque to rouse communal tension. The incident of pig becomes the most significant one than the hitherto significant movements like freedom, congress party, Gandhi etc.; rather the latter events work as background to the former. Because the event is set as “here” and rest are sent to the space of “there”. Such shifting of focus tells us how the town can be instigated by an insignificant act. Sometimes the space of “there” is directly dragged to the space
of “here” as in *Partitions*, the history of four hundred years is excavated and Babar is summoned in present time—“here” to render his testimony.

**Places:**

What roles do places play during communal riots? Places like houses, lanes, ghettos, religious places, markets, towns etc. have been the spaces where violence takes place. Sometimes the places are the properties for which the communities fight. For instance, except for the novel *Curfew in the City*, all novels revolve around the problem of place called Babri-Ram Janmabhoomi.

After all, it is just a place! Thousands of people have lost their lives for this place; many of them have never visited it. The literary narratives have tried to talk about the places like temples and mosques, houses and lanes as important places to take care during communal riots. In the novels like *Tamas* and *Partitions*, it is shown that such places become space of communal activities themselves. Is it possible then, to plan our cities—urban space—places in such a way that it reduces the communal riots and increase communal harmony?

**A Zone of Actions:**

During communal riots, a zone of actions can be any place where enemy is found alone and helpless. In *Riot*, religious procession is the zone of action for the rioters and the police because it is so vulnerable that a small cracker is taken as bombarding. The entire movement of demolition of Babri Masjid and the preparations for it is the zone of action where people are instigated. Strangely, *Curfew in the City* is the novel about curfew itself which is taken as a zone of action (violence) by the police! A zone of actions is a result of and cause to the events happening before and after. For instance, *Tamas* is a narrative about what happens after a pig is
killed and before formations of peace committees during elections; anything can happen in the zone of action during this time. Killings, rapes, damaging temples and mosques and ponderings are the results of the actions.

Apart from these narrative spaces, we have also discussed certain thematic perspectives of communalism. Following are these spatial perspectives with regard to the communal violence.

‘Sacred Space’ and Communalism Violence:

The archetypal incident of killing of a pig in *Tamas*, raises so many questions of the nature of communal violence. Killing a pig is a direct attack on the ‘sacred space’ of Islam as the killing of a cow is on Hinduism. Here the pig is not only killed but it is thrown in front of the mosque. As mosque or temple is a physical centre for religious-spiritual power so to say and a religious space considered as source of people’s emotional and moral strength along with collective faith. That is why an attack on the centre certainly has repercussions at peripheral locations of the community. Hence, such an attack disturbs three layers of spaces: (1) individual space, (2) space of religiosity and (3) communal space. Individually, a person feels threatened and challenged or rather emotionally instigated; soon “my” religion is different from “yours” starts and thirdly there is a shift from “attack on my religious sentiments” to “attack on our religious sentiments by other religion i.e. members of other community”. Thus, the first thing that such incidents do is they start separating and distancing ‘our space’ from ‘their space’ which is in other words process of identity formation and assertion.

We observe in the novels that time and again all ‘sacred spaces’; temple, mosque and gurudwara are manipulated during riots in three different topographical manners. Firstly these spaces are ‘localized spaces’ that is why they are always there in the consciousness of all communities and
so can be easily attacked. Secondly, they are materially ‘confined spaces’ in a limited geographical area so they can be used to store weapons or hide people. Lastly, they are religiously ‘recognized spaces’ and that is precisely why they are destroyed. On can also consider spatial analysis of various religious symbols, processions, colors, music etc. and their place in the above mentioned ‘sacred spaces’.

All religions, ‘sacred spaces’ attempt to absolutize and universalize reality and in doing so, negates absolutization of its co-sacred space. Strangely, the issue of conversion in Lajja, plays very significant role in understanding ‘sacred’ and violence because conversion is nothing but a ritual through which one can leave one’s ‘sacred space’ and becomes member of the other ‘sacred space’. So while Maya is leaving her house due to lukewarm attitude of her brother Suranjan about family’s safety, she is asked about her future plans and she says, “la ilaha illalahu Muhammadun Rasulullah” is all you need to say to become a Muslim. That’s just what I’ll do, and I will call myself Feroza Begum” (12). In fact, such conversion of ‘sacred space’ can save one’s life; if one refuses to change one’s ‘sacred space’, it can be fatal. Here, ‘sacred space’ means a set of religious rites and rituals and wearing identity markers. These are sufficient parameters by which one becomes enemy of the other community and may become victim/victimizer during communal violence.

Riot is an important novel dealing with the sacred space attached to Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri Masjid. People have always identified and established places and monuments as their ‘sacred spaces’ for worshiping their deities from the time immemorial. As the time passes, these ‘sacred spaces’ become parts of the collective unconscious of a given community. Thus, a ‘sacred space’ exists simultaneously on some physical space and in the mind of the people. If these ‘sacred spaces’ are attacked by the believers of different faith, psychological ‘sacred space’
of people get disturbed and they tend to become communal and violent. The belief that Muslims have attacked the ‘sacred space’ of Hindus is likely to cause violence on massive scale and the vice versa. As against secularists’ views and proofs about Babri Masjid not being built on Ram Janmabhoomi or the Ram Janmabhoomi does not exist historically, do not stand guard on what people ‘believe’ about it.

The fad or will to erecting a Mosque over temple seemed to be a kind of zeal to establish superiority of Islamic ‘sacred space’ over the Hindu ‘sacred space’ to which Hindus were to reacted, opposed and fought. These replacements also served as the considerable portion of people’s historical memory of ‘sacred space’ that now their ‘sacred space’ is not just a space for offering prayers and religious rituals but a communal space; space of protection and revenge. Ram Charan Gupta further argues, “Would Muslims be happy if some Hindu king had gone and build a temple to Ram in Mecca” (53)? Needless to say that such a situation is vulnerable to political manipulations and exploits. Violence works through ‘sacred space’ and by political means.

Political space triggers people’s psychological sense of the ‘sacred’ wherein the historical memory of attack already exists, it simply provokes to that ‘sacred space’ through inflammatory slogans, hate speeches, processions etc. and people are easily carried away by the provocations. It is in this context that the controversy of Ram Janmabhoomi is brought back for political reasons, then communal violence takes place and entire social space gets scattered.

It is difficult to say that mandirs and masjids became centers for conspiracy before attacks on them. May be because people feel “nearer” to the God or in the ‘sacred space’, they feel encouraged and excited that they used these spaces for intrigues. However, as we have argued
that in *Tamas* ‘sacred space’ of temple or gurudwara becomes more vulnerable because it renders both the God of the enemies and the enemies themselves to the attackers. On the contrary, the attacks on the sacred strengthen people’s ‘sacred sense’ and add wounded memories in their collective unconscious which will encourage them in the next riots.

Communal violence takes place when people do not understand the true spirit of the ‘sacred space’ because if they do, they become neither aggressive nor violent. For, they should know that ‘sacred space’ cannot be destroyed just by damaging temples/mosques. ‘Sacred space’ is simultaneously located in the past, present and future, in the memory of an individual and community, in the scriptures, monuments and traditions. The good part is, as we have seen in the post 1970 novels that people are developing some secular sense of the sacred but the process is so slow and there are sizable numbers of people who work in the opposite direction. Precisely, post 1970 India witnessed communal violence due to the latter kind of people who keep on rekindling the flame of communalism for shabby politics.

‘Historical Spaces’ and Communal Violence:

History is the strong link between ‘social spaces’ and ‘political spaces’ because all social institutions and their interactions are based on certain historical facts and events as well as all political ideologies and their practices are products of historical vicissitudes. No event of past is detached from the present context and perhaps that is the study of historical space become inevitably significant. As we saw examples of Sikhs and Muslims in *Tamas*, they too were fighting with a heavy historical space in the mind. For example, Sahani describes, “This confrontation too was looked upon as a link in the chain of earlier confrontations in history. The ‘warriors’ had their feet in the twentieth century while their minds were in medieval times”
(282). Thus one of the strongest reasons for communal violence is this split of historical space which can be ‘used’ anytime by anybody to appease political spaces.

We have always tried to see what history says about our socio-cultural make up (as a social commentary) rather than looking at it in terms of what it does as a social institution (as a functional agency). The best example in post 1970 is the Babri controversy, history itself has destroyed its own legacy. In Lajja the argument is the present condition of communal tension and violence between Hindu-Muslim in India and in Bangladesh has a common root to be sourced. Some political decisions taken in the remote past are actually taking lives of the minority in both the country. Time and again, history is excavated by all sorts of people to find out material that they can use to nurture communal violence. Can there be more severe manipulation of history than this? Taslima Nasreen seems to argue that why, then, now the politicians in Bangladesh want to repeat the history of ‘divide and rule’? Why do they turn blind eye to the pathetic consequences that it is bearing?

The chronotopos of partition is also brought to the discussion because the character of communal violence after 1970 has its roots in partition and preparation for it. Many times Muslims in India are accused of dividing India, but looking at the historical space which also shares its role with political space, we come to know that Muslims could not have been responsible. As professor Sarvar in Riot argues, “Muslims didn’t partition the country-the British did, the Muslim League did, the congress party did. There are more Muslims in India today than in Pakistan. This is where we belong” (111). There are fractions of history that people know and live. Such attitude towards Muslims is in itself a kind of violence; subtle, ethical and psychological.
Partitions offers some of the gruesome facts about the colonial space because now there is consensus among the historians that though Mughals unintentionally started communalism, British systematized it and employed all the strategies to divide Hindus and Muslims. For instance, when Babar accused of destroying the Ram Mandir, he refuses the charge by arguing that the politics was played in the colonial era which is supported by Fuhrer.

Thus, fictional narratives also offer a unique access to the history and that is why fiction is gaining more and more attractions of anthropological inquires on issues like communal tension in India today. Now we do have Supreme Court’s judgement on the disputed land, but the question is how does one divide living histories among communities and communal mind-sets? What has happened to Babri Masjid and communal feelings and riots afterword? Histories have played a vital role in producing hatred. History that we teach through textbook is different from the one that is academic’s history, history presented by media is different from history of our scriptures and history transmitted by politicians is different from the history people live with. We are sure we cannot escape from history; the question then, is how to manipulate it for constructive reasons?

‘Heterotopia’ and Communal Violence:

We have made an attempt to take a close look at how ‘heterotopia’ becomes such a location wherein communalism evolves. It not only decodes the patterns of communal violence but also renders a taxonomic account of the genealogies of communal spaces. Interpreting post 1970s novels from a heterotopic perspective is to study how exactly novels enter into the dichotomy of literary space and communal space, of real and imagined spaces, of authentic representation and fictional spaces etc.
In the communal context of *Tamas*, we can say that heterotopia of deviation is psychologically and politically coloured both at the individual and collective level. Here, ‘deviation’ is by choice unlike in what Foucault says wherein people go crazy and they are sent to heterotopia of deviation in order to control them. In other words people are good in so far as they feel they are safe and economically doing well but they deviate to violence in the opposite situations. In *Tamas*, individuals who could live peacefully for decades become so violent within the ‘heterotopia of deviation’ that the entire town turns out to be a corpse. The deviations of individuals are driven by a set of motivations, which are consistent motivations in most of the communal riots: economic, political, safety, revenge, historical, religious etc. For instance, the way Nathu gets involved in the killing of a pig is quiet unlike of him but he chose deviation to the communal which led to enormous violence but as soon as he realises it, he steps back.

The conflict between Sikhs and Muslims in the novel is example of how simultaneous creation of real and imagined spaces can bring about violence. Rumors on both side nourished imagined space-heterotopia of illusion to such an extent that it became the real space and motivated members of both group to kill or be killed. During such a tumult, the role historical and narrative memory play an important role; stories of the past are constantly retrieved to instigate violent instinct. Words like ‘sacrifice’, ‘revenge’, ‘our blood’, ‘bravery’ are repeatedly used to excite the choice of deviation.

*Lajja* discusses the issue of problem of heterotopia with reference to the demolition of Babri Masjid. Interestingly, the concept of heterotopia is so visible here that the space of Babri becomes an inevitable dialogue that people are harassed and killed. People share the spaces across the territories due to heterotopic conditions of collective consciousness. Members of community have no choice of not belonging to the heterotopia; as long as they belong to their
respective religious community, they automatically share the heterotopia and all those dimensions that come with one’s heterotopia. Though Hindus have hegemonic control over their communal space i.e. they can destroy an architectural edifice within their communal space and Muslims in and outside India get disturbed by the act. For, they feel their heterotopia penetrated on communal ground, Muslims having hegemonic control in any country wherein Hindus are in minority, would certainly make all the possible attempts to compensate their heterotopic loss.

There is no rational reason why space of Hindus-real space is attacked because of Hindus somewhere in an unreal space. What connects the two is heterotopia that builds and blurs the boundaries of the real and unreal spaces of human geographies.

In Riot, there are two communal aspects of heterotopia: (1) the communal insistence on Indian Muslim to go to Pakistan and (2) Indian Muslims’ sense of belonging. Wherever there is any communal tension in India, the popular notion about punishing Indian Muslim is to call them “Pakistani”. There are inflammatory slogans shouted wherein they asked to leave India and go to Pakistan. Bangladeshi Hindus are asked to go to India in Lajja. So for fundamentalist Hindus in India, Muslims belong to Pakistan despite the fact that they are Indian citizen, they do not want to go, and their ancestors were born and buried in Indian soil so they are as much part of India as any Indian. In addition to that, Indian Muslim of today cannot be held responsible for some Muslim during partition, a remote past. Thus Indian Muslims belong in two countries; in India by all means and in Pakistan because some communal elements consider them to. The demands of Hindu fanatics that Muslims should go to Pakistan has its “justification” in the past, and the reasons of Indian Muslims of not going there is in present. That is what we call split space of communal existence and violence. Secondly the way Indian Muslims think about India sufficiently proves their sense of belonging to this country’s space. For Professor Mohammed
Sarwar says, “I love this country because India shaped me, my mind, my tastes, my friendships, my passions” (112).

The issue of building a mosque over a temple is a complex one. What we see here is the problem of interpretation of space; Hindus have interpreted it as a kind of “message” Muslim rulers wanted them to remember whereas it could have easily been just an extension of territories of one’s kingdom by the mark of Mosques. Or let us imagine that the previous interpretation is correct, even then one cannot superimpose ‘an undo’ on that temporarily remote space. Within the fabrics of chronotopos, communalists are trying to rejuvenate static heterotopia of the past by creating dynamic heterotopia of the present.

The very title **“Partitions”** questions creations of new heterotopia of hatred across the cultures. Largely, it dwells upon the space of partition. When a character is persuaded to go to Pakistan, he argues, “You have told me to go away. Even if I manage to scrape together the money for the fare, how do I take my fields on Pakistan (46)?” For him, going to Pakistan is going with his entire being; with everything that makes him what he really is. It is certainly not possible to carry along fields to Pakistan but it shows how painful was it for people to relocate themselves in the new space. This argument lingers in one more such discussion wherein a character compares the space of God with his own, “Gangauli is my home town; Mecca is not my city. This is my home and the Kaaba is Allah’s. If God - glory be to Him - loves His abode, wont He understand that we too cherish our homes…can Lahore ever become Kaaba (49)?” The heterotopia that pro-Pakistani wanted to create became difficult because people posed real life problems of shifting the space.
Not only this, ‘sacred space’ which is assumed to have caused Pakistan but the novel tells us that it is rather completely opposite, “Islam does not accept boundaries. It negates nationalism” (101). If that is taken to be true, people who stood for the creation of Pakistan, actually produced a false heterotopia in which people are called to live in the name of religion. Can such heterotopia create the same life as people used to live before the shift? Communal violence occurred during partition because some people tried to put Islam in the boundary called Pakistan; unfortunately many believed in it. Therefore, the false heterotopia has the potential to make difference to the lives of people to the extent that they can kill and get killed. Echo of this false heterotopia can be seen to be taking shape in the hearts of people.

‘Political Space’ and Communal Violence:

History of communal violence tells us that ‘political space’ has been *a priori* in which communal violence emerged and developed. ‘Political space’ becomes stronger in executing communal violence simply because religious organizations are their handy tools. Such space provides ideas which these organizations execute. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate the two spaces. We have also argued in *Lajja* and *Riot* that religious organizations are motivated by political ideologies to an extent that they try to undo historical wrongs like demolition of Babri Masjid. However, *Tamas* depicts them more as organizations who train members of their community assuming that riot is going to erupt; in the preparation of riot, actually a riot occurs.

*Lajja* evokes some of those basic questions of ‘political space’ that are generally found to be discussed in an academic setting; ownership of state, principles of democracy, secularist promises, majority and minority, language policy, national religion to name a few. ‘Political space’ in Bangladesh, as *Lajja* espouses, is completely controlled by religious fundamentalism which leads to exploitation and oppression of minority religion. People’s faith in Islam, history
and trans-territorial commitments is the most important polarizations that political space makes full use of.

The plot of *Riot* is woven by using threads from the fabric of ‘political space’. Tharoor has analyzed the political support to communal violence in the best manner possible by using technique of multiple narratives. The novel defines, “communalism” as “the sense of religious chauvinism that transforms itself into bigotry, and some time violence, against the followers of other faith” (44). This definition assumes ‘religious chauvinism’ which is a political ideology in the current politics of India. Many people wonder how democracy works in India, for it has a range of variety in almost every aspect of life: language, food, religion, dress, traditions etc. In some sense it is the war between democracy and heterogeneity of Indian life which is the space wherein communalism can have status quo. *Riot* argues that Ram Janmabhoomi Procession and the violence that it led to could have been stopped provided there was a political will.

*Partitions* tells us that in majority cases of communal violence, it is the personal reason which turns, made to turn, into the communal shape. Political space always looks for such “mutual obstinacy” to be manipulated for personal gains. British not only partitioned the country but created a political space which keeps on partitioning hearts and heads of the people of both the countries. In the end, Jinnah became the common and permanent villain for those Hindus and Muslims who suffered in communal violence of partition.

The political space has always manipulated history and told us that Muslims emperors created the gulf between and Hindus and Muslims by destroying temples. But *Partitions* gives us some historical sources in the form of dialogue telling us new story. Babar confesses in the court of Adib, “I had come to conquer Hindustan for myself, not in the name of Islam. I sought a
kingdom and acquired it”(57). Thus political space made us identify Mughals with Islam but it was not so.

‘Socio-Psychological Space’ and Communal Violence:

‘Socio-psychological space’ is location wherein the dialogues between social institutions like religion, economy, identity, community and psychological realms of human mind and behaviour take place. It is here that we studied how community and individual are one and separate when it comes to communalism.

_Tamas_ is a microcosm of Indian society by all the measures; cultural and political to be specific. It tells us so nicely the process of communal riots. It further complicates the issues of class, caste and religion which are very pillars of the socio-psychological space wherein communal tension develops. As communities live in closed mohallas, there is a subtle tension of space-encroachment and resistance was also growing within the social space of the town. Reason being, if communities live in closed mohallas, they feel safe and protected psychologically but create illusion and assumptions for the other community which also lives in the similar space about the conspiracy. In the mixed population, vulnerability of victims increases physically due to proximity of opposite spaces. _Tamas_ is about this psychological space which develops gradually and penetrates into the veins of social space that it paralyses it.

_Lajja_ is a story of a family which loses almost everything due to a communally damaged society. Besides, it presents a weak society wherein people are more concerned with names, religious identity than love and bonding. Both Suranjan and Maya, brother and sister, have to sacrifice their love for inter-religious marriage is next to impossible in Bangladesh. It is this social space
that we have explored wherein the institution of marriage needs communal approval and failure in which gives birth to the ghostly characters like Suranjan.

The feminine space within the socio-psychological space gets oppressed in/out communal disturbance. Characters like Kironmoyee and her daughter Maya are the consistent victims. Kironmoyee always plays a scarifying mother and wife without ever asserting herself. Her only priority is the wellbeing of her family. For her suffocation, nausea, fear, anxiety, demoralized self etc. have become the stable psychological space.

Suranjan who is intellectually disillusioned and frustrated is in need some sort of avenge or psychological relief from the burden of loss of his sister due to his carelessness. Finally he gets hold of a prostitute, for him she was not a whore but a girl who belonged to the majority community. He wanted to rape one of them, in revenge for what they had done to his sister. The narrative tells us, “Suranjan had cooled down now and a heavy weight had been lifted from him” (201). His catharsis found different manner for purgating his frustration. Suranjan is a product of that communal space where being intellectual from minority is the second danger on existence.

*Riot* espouses various socio-psychological dimensions of communal space while relating them to the other spaces like historical and political. There is a common prejudice and “us/they” psychology at work within the social space of the country. Violence is subject to preconceived notions like majority and minority within the socio-psychological space. It occurs at the level of appeasing minority by the politicians of one party which makes the minority an aversion for the opposite party; for both the parties minority is a political issue for votes. Majority or minority is name given to the power-holding class of the people, the same can be used for violence against the powerless.
The issue of class cannot be neglected during communal violence; here curfew is imposed to stop violence but it causes another type of violence on the masses. Riots disturbs the economic stability of the social space and that is why perhaps we have to agree with the assumption that if one is rich, it does not matter whether one is Hindu or Muslims. And if we conduct survey of the people who have lost their lives in communal violence, most of them belong to the lower middle class.

The very fabric of social space is composed of psychological spaces of the individuals. Therefore, in order to strengthen socio-psychological spaces which give birth to the communal violence, the agencies of political spaces should be ‘secularized’ in the best sense of the term.

*Partitions* goes deep into layers of socio-psychological spaces in order to find out the roots of communal violence. For example, it gives a taxonomic account of the four aspects of human nature necessary to balance the socio-psychological balance, “All Hindus and Muslims are aware of the four things dear to every human being: the first is one’s religion, the second, one’s honor and pride, the third, one’s life and the life of one’s loved ones. And the fourth, one’s freedom and one’s ancestral property” (311).

When there is any danger found hovering these things, people tend to be violent just to make sure that they assert themselves properly and powerfully. If we take a close look at the nature of these four aspects, we would realize that during communal violence, people attack and protect these aspects only, for they are makers of one’s individual and collective identity. By putting religion as the first thing that people like to protect shows the importance of religion in the socio-psychological space.
Hatred accounts for a range of aspects of human life: memory, collective history, political polarizations. As we have discussed in the political space that during acts of communal violence, personal experiences of communalism are given communal turn and in doing so hatred plays significant role. Communal hatred disturbs the social space; it is operated at the level of communal identities.

‘Curfew’ as a ‘Controlling Space’:

Communal riots are often followed by curfews imposed by the authorities in order control the situation of communal violence. Curfew in the City is an articulation of a different kind and times. So far we have discussed literary works as analyses of communal violence; causes, political spaces, effects on socio-psychological spaces, gruesome violence etc. but Curfew in the City takes on a different trajectory altogether in telling us what happens after riots during a curfew.

It simply tells us about the nature of curfew; it is meant for the sustainance of the communal peace by pushing the “rioters” back to their homes by imposing law and order. Apparently, this is how curfew works, however, reading Curfew in the City tells some of the latent aspects of curfew from an insider’s perspective (Writer himself, as a Senior Superintendent of Police, observed curfews). Can the space of communal violence be controlled by imposing the space of curfew? To what extent? What are the side-effects/ by products of a curfew? These are the few questions that we have interrogated in the thesis.

During communal riots, power is generally in the hands of the rioters from both the communities but as soon as the curfew if imposed, the power shifted to the police and army. Curfew in the City portrays dismal picture of how police “uses” that power to oppress the minority by
discriminating them in almost every possible manner. Rumours as mentioned above keep the bias of the police intact towards Muslims. Curfew as a “controlling space” “partially” controls the communal activities and actually suppresses people to live a bare minimum life.

Curfew which is supposed to harmonize the violence is actually used here to “teach lesson” to the Muslims by increasing violence. If curfew is not functional for its intended purposes, it is not the ‘curfew’ in the true sense of the term. On contrary it becomes extension of the communal riot and turns out to be a ‘pogrom’ wherein a community is targeted. How are Muslims “taught lesson”, one wonders? Well, there are two very specific ways: (1) to deprive them from their earning means and (2) through “searches” supposedly hidden weapons. The community is skillfully punished with the help of ‘curfew’; people cannot protest or else they will be considered to defy the law of the curfew. Secondly, curfew disturbs the economic balance of the family which ultimately makes their condition worse. Noticeably, social space of a community is controlled by the space of the curfew; it is often a political decision to extend the curfew for longer period of time.

The words “constitution”, “law” or “right” seems to be dry during the curfew for those who have been given power by the same words. After ruined by the rioters in some or the other ways, Muslims have to face such agony as long as there is a curfew. Perhaps, that is why the rumour we discussed earlier about Muslims attacking the police seems to have some truth in it. Hence, the law and order is “used” to impose all that the Hindus want Muslims to go through in the space of the curfew. In other words, a curfew is an opportunity for police as members of the majority community to take revenge to the Muslims with the help of legality. Loyalty of police is at stake here and Rai, being a police officer, does not hesitate to expose the police.
Further Scope:

Researchers aspiring to work in the area of communal violence and in the area of Space Theory of literature can study:

2. Religious sects and their literatures that have come into existence to harmonize Hindu-Muslim problem.
3. How a communal riot affects the space of every day life of characters.
4. Spatial ownership of communities.
5. Nature of space-encroachment in literature.
7. Romanticization of communal violence.
8. Aesthetics of Literature on Communal riots.
9. Literature written on the basis of Journalistic Reports on Communal Violence.
10. The politics of ‘silence’ and communal violence.
11. Narrative Spaces and Life Spaces.

If space is the problem, let us produce a parallel space of harmony and secularism to tame the demon of communalism, and it is possible!