

# Deconstructing Partition of India in 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## **Abstract**

It depicts about the unseen details and a different introspection in current scenario.

**Keywords:** Structural Violence, Partition, India, Pakistan, Cabinet Mission, Lord Mountbatten, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Historiography, Communalism.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The end of the British Empire in India in August 1947 resulted in the creation of two separate states of India and Pakistan. The states were created in the midst of violence, hatred, expulsion, exodus and call for revenge. The independence of India in 1947 was marked by the partitioning of the subcontinent and the transfer of populations on the basis of two major religions – Hinduism and Islam. The transfer of population was a desperate attempt to become citizens of societies comprised primarily of members of their own religion, millions of people embarked on one of the greatest migrations in history. The people crossed over boundaries from the states of Punjab, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir. India became an independent nation in the midst of one modern history's most savage and gruesome struggles. The partition of both Bengal and Punjab caused large scale of uprooting of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs<sup>1</sup>. In the wake of partition in 1947, the communal disturbances overshadowed everything else in India. The communal frenzy not only killed thousands of people, it also uprooted and displaced millions from their traditional homeland, their 'Desh'<sup>2</sup>. Millions fled across the newly created international borders in an effort to escape communal violence, mass abductions, rape 'murder'<sup>3</sup>. Many

<sup>1</sup> Amtul Hasan, *Impact Of Partition: Refugees in Pakistan*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2006.p .21.

<sup>2</sup> Anasua Basu Raychaudhury, 'Nostalgia Of Desh, Memories Of Partition; Economic and Political Weekly, vol.39, issue No.52, December 25, 2004, p.5653

<sup>3</sup> Pia Oberoi, *Exile and Belonging; Refugees and State Policy in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006.p. 11

people [about five lakh] were massacred; approximately 12 million people had to leave their homes and moved across the new borders between India and Pakistan<sup>4</sup>. Partition had made their homeland hostile and they started imagining that peace and security were on the other side of the border. Thus partition and consequent displacement forced many to search for a new home away from home<sup>5</sup>. Both Muslims and Hindus had lost homes, possessions and in many cases members of their immediate families. Almost they have to flee from their ancestral lands, unprepared for the hardships ahead. They were fleeing on account of communal disturbances such as burning of villages and the homesteads, unprecedented

violence, rioting, looting and arson. The government often seemed powerless in dealing with the armed mobs.

A large number of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh women's committed suicide to save themselves from the brutal attacks by their opposite communities. There were appalling atrocities including the cold-blooded mass murder of men, women and children in number of villages often accompanied by mutilation by the other community<sup>6</sup>. The two way mass migration between India and Pakistan started accompanied by great sufferings and heart rendering misery. Within few months, fifteen million people crossed over from India into Pakistan and from Pakistan into India to seek shelter. They crossed borders without their belongings. They had left their homes and gone forth on foot, by bullock cart, by railway, by car to seek shelter and

<sup>4</sup> Amtul Hasan, n.1, p.22

<sup>5</sup> Anasua Basu Raychaudhury, n.2, P.5653

<sup>6</sup> Amtul Hasan, n.1, p.25

safety in the other dominion. Many families had lost parents and children on the way with the little hope of recovering them. The partition was traumatic to those people who, having faced physical violence, humiliation, and sexual assault, were compelled to leave their homeland<sup>7</sup>

In this paper I will discuss some of the chapters related to partition of India like why and how did partition happen, partition literature and historiography, imagination of Pakistan and place of religion, violence and partition of the sub-continent, and broader legacies of partition

<sup>7</sup> Anasua Basu Raychaudhury, n.2, p.5653

## Chapter 2

### Why and How did Partition Happen?

The Indian independence act passed by the British parliament in July 1947 provided for the setting up of two independent dominions of India and Pakistan with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947. The following were its debatable causes:

1. The partition of India in 1947 was the outcome of many forces although the main cause was the isolationist policy of Muslims in India

. Under the influence of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the Muslims in India began to think and dream separately from the Hindus. They started feeling that interests were different from those of the Hindus and they had nothing in common with them. They went to the extent of contending that their interests were opposed to those of Hindus. If India was given a responsible government, the Hindu majority was bound to dominate the Muslims of India who were in minority in the whole country. The Muslims also felt that they were educationally backward and consequently could not compete with the Hindus. With the passage of time; they drifted more and more away from the Hindus. The Muslim League ideology also estranged the Muslims from the Hindus. Sir Mohammed Iqbal and Mr. Jinnah also played their part in taking the Muslims away from the Hindus. Particularly after 1940 the Muslims insisted that they

wanted a separate homeland .They were not prepared to any compromise on a permanent basis. This isolationist policy of the Muslims ultimately led to the partitioning of India

2. However, it cannot be denied that the Muslims were helped immensely by the British Government in India. After the mutiny of 1857, the government of India wanted allies in the country and they found the Indian princes, zamindars and the Indian Muslims ready to cooperate with them .The Government of India followed a policy of divided and rule and kept on favoring the Muslims even at the cost of other communities in India .Bengal was partitioned to please Muslims. The Muslims were given separate representation in 1909.They were given weightage in the legislatures .Seats were reserved for them on the India council and the Governor-General's Executive Council

.Whatever the congress offered to win over the Muslims ,the Government of Indian and the British Government offered more to the Muslims .Under the circumstances, the Muslims of India began to look to British Government for everything and were not in a mood to come to any compromise with the Congress or the Hindus .That is what exactly happened on the occasion of the Second Round Table Conference and on many other occasions. The British Bureaucracy in India was determined to have its revenge against the Hindus who were favoring for the liberation of their country .They were determined to crush the nationalist movement in India and if they failed in that effort, they were determined to divide the country. It was this attitude that was responsible for the partition of India at the time of her liberation from the foreign yoke. It is a well- known fact that the British Bureaucracy in India helped the Muslims League agitation in 1940 and 1947.As a matter of fact, it was their encouragement that the Muslim Leaguers had the guts to stage demonstrations without any interference or beating by the government .The truth becomes evident when we compare this attitude with treatment given to the Hindus when they agitated for the freedom of the country. They were only beaten they were actually shot dead.

3. Critics point out that the Indian National Congress was also responsible for the Partition of India .The initial mistake was made by the Indian National Congress 1916 when it entered into the Lucknow Pact .It ought not to have conceded separate electorates to the Muslim. It ought not to have agreed to give the Muslims a fixed percentage of representatives in the legislatures. That was the initial blunder. The Congress attitude towards the Communal Award of 1932 also helped the isolationist policy of the Muslims .Nobody doubts of the patriotism of the congressmen but the fact remains that the congress policy of appeasement of the Muslims ultimately led to partitioning of India. The Congressmen ought to have understood the Muslims character correctly and tackled the problem with the firm hand from the very beginning.

4. One of the major causes of the partition was the communal attitude of Muslim League .The Muslim League was formed to safeguard the interests of the Muslims. The Muslim league developed a narrow communal outlook and cultivated communal hatred in the minds Muslims. This led to the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

5. The communal riots too, played a major role in the partitioning of India in 1947. The Muslim League, Congress and Hindu Mahasabha engineered the communal riots which led to a lot of bloodshed and ultimately divided India on communal lines.

6. Yet another cause which became responsible for the partition of India in 1947 was the efforts of Lord Mountbatten in getting the

Congress and Muslims League's approval for it.

It is true that the Cabinet Mission Scheme ruled out the idea of Pakistan and made provision for Constituent Assembly which was to frame a constitution for free India. However certain events helped Muslim League. The Muslim League was allowed to join the interim without agreeing to take part in the deliberations of the constituent Assembly. Its members in the interim government refused to cooperate with the Congress members of the interim of which Jawaharlal Nehru was the head. They proclaimed their loyalty to the Viceroy whose appointees and nominees they considered themselves to be. They openly talked of carving out Pakistan. The division among the members of the interim government was reflected in the whole administrative machinery. The Muslim League Members of the interim government removed the Hindu and Sikh officers from the key positions in their departments and put in their places Muslims who could be depended upon to help the cause of Pakistan.

It was during the period of interim government riots took place on a very large scale. The ever increasing and ever deepening chain of communal disturbances involving mass murder, arson or loot accompanied by unthinkable atrocities and horrors obliged the working Committee of the Indian National Congress to consider the whole communal and political situation afresh. The only way out of the difficulty appeared to be the partitioning of India. Jawaharlal Nehru referred to his fact in these words on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1947, "There has been the violence; shameful degrading and revolting violence, in the various parts of the country. This must be end."

The announcement of the British Government in February 1947 that it was determined to put power into the hands of the Indians at a very early date worsened the communal situation in the country and helped the cause of Pakistan. While making the declaration "His Majesty's Government had hoped that it would be possible for the major parties to cooperate the working out of the Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 1946, and evolve for India a Constitution acceptable to all concerned

." However that hope was not fulfilled as no pressure was put on Muslim League to take part in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly. The British Government also accepted the Muslim League's point of view that the grouping of provinces under the Cabinet Mission Scheme was a compulsory one. It appears that it was felt by the Congress leaders in the month of May 1947 that the partition of India was absolutely inevitable

The partition could have been avoided if the Congress would have shown diplomatic skill in winning over the confidence of the Muslims. Besides the Congress also feared that change of Government in England could finish their chances of getting freedom. However it must be pointed out that the new elections in England were due only in 1950. It could have also been possible for the Congress to change

the prevailing communal scenario with a renewed struggle .If the congress accepted the partition to get rid of never ending communal rights ,the same could have been suppressed if the government of India would have been prevailed upon to do so .Hence the responsibility of partition lies largely with the Congress . The communalists blamed them for having accepted partition in the lust for power. Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasized that the Congress accepted partition because communalism had reached to such a volcanic situation where alternative to partition was mass killing of lakhs of innocent people in senseless and barbaric communal riots <sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> M. Zubair, Arshid Hussain; History Of Modern Kashmir and Modern India,pp.90-100

### Chapter 3

#### Partition Literature and the Historiography

For almost 20-25 years after partition, the dominant literature or the dominant subject of the whole partition literature was dominated by the question of who participated in the event of partition. The event is taken positively here, therefore earlier accounts that we have are mostly biographies, autobiographies and memories. These are mostly written by participant observers for example the last British vice-ray LORD MOUNTBATTEN he looked this whole process as a great mission. So for him and those who uses his literature, it was a very difficult job no doubt many people died but it is because of us [Britishers] that we kept it in limit. Most of the biographies, autobiographies and memories focused on final years of British raj, particularly last few months of British raj and this literature mostly ends up with the end of British raj.

We have also large number of official records. The first among these is “At Freedom’s Door” it was essentially a journey of Sir Malcom Darling who was the public servant in Punjab. He writes that the burning question was Pakistan. During the last months of partition throughout the northern India the dominant question was Pakistan i.e. to be or not to be. He says that in conversation with villagers, he could detect the smell of blood and hatred in the year. He says that there was the widespread apprehension that the British withdrawal will lead to condition of collapse carnage etc.

Similarly Sir Francis Taker, who was a chief of eastern command at the time of partition. He gives the other perspective. He gives the much viewed description of communal violence particularly during the Bihar riots and the great Calcutta killings. Taker asserts that British armed forces were successful in carrying out their functions in spite of this intolerable strain of communal violence.

In early 1950’s we find that number of new accounts surfaced regarding the issue of partition and the most notable among them was Cambel Johnson’s mission with Lord Mountbatten . The Mountbatten was sent to India to solve the problem according to him. He therefore says that Lord Mountbatten was the man responsible for finding the solution to the intractable Indian problem. V.P Manon as a constitutional adviser to the governor general at that point of time, he provides a detailed account of Lord Mountbatten vice- royalty and V.P Manon takes a credit of convincing Sardar vallabhai patel that nothing is going to happen and he claims that once he was able to win over or convince sardar patel that he prepared the blue prints of partition as early as January 1947 much before Lord Mountbatten was anywhere in picture. So therefore he says that this blueprint was discussed upon and he believes that it

was his blueprint which later on Lord Mountbatten projected as his very famous 3rd June plan. Likewise panderal Moon in his work “Divide and quite “says that was it possible that the terrible massacres and migrations that accompanied could have be stopped and he finally concludes that by the time Lord

Mountbatten arrived in India, it was far too late to save the situation, in other words they says that we provide the solution to the problem<sup>9</sup>.

Accounts of political figures from both India and Pakistan working on their own framework made this debate more complicated and enriching. This literature produced by political figures from both sides is entrapped in partition and this discourse mainly revolves around the question of nation state. One of the best examples in this context is the book ‘India wins freedom ‘by Maulana Azad. Since Azad was a pre-eminent champion of Hindu- Muslim unity. His autobiography provides a very clear picture about the last few or climax year’s between 1935-1948 and in this process; he highlights how violently he tried to fight for secular Hindu-Muslim united India till he died. However, very interestingly Maulana azad’s accounts gives a very contrary view as he blamed his colleagues of congress especially Pandit J.L Nehru and sardar vallabhai Patel for not hearing his advice in his principled opposition to participation and accepting Lord Mountbatten June 3<sup>rd</sup> plan . He believed that rather than pressures from Muslim league and Jinnah for the creation of Pakistan. It was more about abject surrender by the congress. Ajit Batacharya and others in fact argued that if congress would have resisted for some time given the health of M.A Jinnah as he was suffering from serious disease – may be with the death of Jinnah, demand for nation state may have diminished. Moulana Azad essentially charged sardar vallabhai Patel as the founder of Indian partition and he described his acceptance as abject surrender on the part of congress.

<sup>9</sup>Rituparna Roy;South Asian Partition Fiction in English-From Khushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh-pp.18-21-International Institute for Asian Studies ,Publication Series 2010

From 1970’s onwards vast array of documents became available because British achieves opened up and these achieves viewed this partition entirely from different perspective. In this case one of important work done was “transfer of power series”, in this work almost 7500 documents were given in the hands of researchers. Similarly in 1972 ICHR [ Indian council of historical research] , it launched its project called as ‘ towards freedom’ [ it gave the Indian perspective of partition] , based on these archival sources and most of these archival documents dealt with the last phase of British empire till partition . Along with these transfer works, there are number of works like:

- 1:- selected works of Sardar Vallabhai Patel [1971-1974]
- 2:- selected works of Pandith Jawahirlal Nehru
- 3:- selected works of Rajendra Prasad
- 4:- collected works of Mahatama Gandh [1958-1984]
- 5:- collected works of M.A Jinnah { 1993 }
- 6:- documents related to the partition of Punjab 1984.

With this work they, they started to unlock different perspectives of partition but the other side of it was the question they raised i.e. which view point was used by India/Pakistan/British. Thus the sources remained the same while interpretation was different.

British archival documents essentially deal with the question of ‘transfer of power’. Indian and Pakistani scholars essentially deemed perfectly legitimate to focus on historical movements which culminated in the birth of nation state. These works are firmly rooted within the context of decolonization and nationalism and in this context partition remains a marginal theme because for British it is about the transfer of power, for India it is about independence while for Pakistan it is about creation of nation state.

In almost all documents relating to 1940’s M.A Jinnah has been portrayed as a central figure in the question of partition. However his role has been interpreted differently. In Indian historiography, M.A Jinnah is portrayed as a conventional liberal style politician in a secular style who after a humiliating electoral defeat in 1937 took to communal path and therefore was responsible for the tragedy of partition. However contrary to it the traditional Pakistani viewed at him as the father of nation a figure who fought for safeguarding the interest of Muslim minority and a person who succeeded in creating a Muslim nation in the face of insurmountable troubles. It is this view that was further enforced by biographies like Hector Bolithe and Stanley Wolpert, for them M.A Jinnah is seen as a person who single mindedly persuaded the goal of separate nationhood for Muslims especially after the Lahore resolution of 1940. They described him as a most incorruptible person. Stanly Wolpert held that Jinnah lowered the final curtain on any prospect for a single united independent India. Commenting on Jinnah, stanly argued that few individuals significantly after the course of history, fewer still modify the map of the world, hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation state –M.A Jinnah did all these three<sup>10</sup>.

However, Ayesha Jalal challenged the Stanley’s portrayal of Jinnah and in particularly she tried to argue against his inflexibility of political aims. She argues that “Jinnah never sought a separate nation state but rather he deployed this demand as a tool to put pressure on congress in order to get equal status for himself and Muslim league in the governance of united India<sup>11</sup>. Thus she concluded that instead of religion , it was regional , class and ideological differences and congress’s categorical opposition to what it saw as Jinnah’s unreasonable demand that lead to the partition even Maulana Azad wrote that Jinnah had come to the conclusion that Indian federalism should deal with just three subjects , i.e, defense, foreign affairs and communication . Thus granting maximum autonomy to provinces and according to him, Ghandi accepted this suggestion while sarder Patel didn’t and it was due to this Azad argued that Patel was the architect of partition. Jaswant Singh in his book “Jinnah India Partition and independence” argued that Jinnah didn’t win Pakistan as congress leaders Nehru and Patel finally ceded Pakistan to Jinnah with British acting as an ever helpful midwife. He argued that the two nation doctrine was basically a political strategy but cruel truth is that partitioning of India has actually resulted in achieving the very reverse of the originally intended purpose [i.e. partition instead of settling contentious between communities has left a legacy of mutually enhanced Hindu/Muslim/Sikh or other such

<sup>10</sup>Subhakanta Behera, Politicising Historiography: True Story Of Partition –Mainstream, ol.XLV||,No. 8,February 13,2010

<sup>11</sup>Ayesha Jalal ,The Sole Spokesman; Jinnah, Muslim League and The Demand For Pakistan [Combridge,1985]

identities, hence dialogue are as:

differences]. Basic characteristics of this whole

Whole literature on partition essentially tried to address the grand theme i.e., the end of the empire or British raj i.e. how British raj end, their final years etc. and this is found as a common thread among whole British literature. This literature highlights that how British kept India united till its last years, how they mediated between INC and Muslim league. In fact whole historiography of British revolves around “ how the differences among the Indian leaders regarding equitable transfer of power ultimately lead to the inevitable situation of deadlock where there was no agreement about what should be the nature of Indian political system” thus putting whole blame on Indian leadership . This British historiography is largely about the last days of British rule in India and what are the hurdles that British faced in the transference of power to India. Thus in this whole account, if at some point partition appears, it is regarded as unintended and inconsequential [i.e., partition is not the major theme but rather major theme is ‘how we wanted to transfer power’ what problems we faced and how we kept India united etc.]

Similarly in Pakistan historiography, ‘two nation theory’ remained a favorite argument i.e., creation of a new nation remained a favorable theme for Pakistan historians.

Similarly, for the historians of India, the secular composite culture remained a favorite theme. Thus we find that both the narratives essentially get entrapped in the competing concepts of nation state or competing rival paradigms of nation-state. Thus nationalism and communalism remain grand paradigms within the whole historiography of partition.

Smith sarkar observers’ far from being definite and stable signifiers can quickly change and even reverse their signified as one crosses the Indo-Pak. Border’. Signifier is ‘communalism’. In India Muslim league is called communal. Thus Muslims league becomes signified while in Pakistan Muslim league was a freedom movement and Jinnah was the father of nation. Thus for India Jinnah was communal but if we cross border Jinnah becomes father of the nation. In Pakistan, India and Hindu become communal while for India these are secular and composite culture. Pakistan calls it dominate majoritarian communalism/ Hindu nationals. Thus meaning gets chanced just by crossing borders.

Therefore in this whole narrative across the borders which gives different national viewpoints. Some of the viewpoints are such where both the narratives meet and get converge with each other. Both are deeply imbibed in national pride and prejudice highlighting own achievements and degenerating the other narratives and hence they resort to stereotyping the other. Thus the happenings of partition remained highly divergent about what we celebrate and what we condemned across the borders. This whole process of celebration and condemnation somehow, somewhere within the broader theme of the nation state completely overshadows the violence of partition.

In redefining the whole process of partition AITIZAR EHSAN, he describes partition as “a divide 50 years young and 5000 years old”. He further argues that the distinct cultural zone had existed for centuries in the Indus region which is today’s Pakistan. In his work he says that Indian sub-continent was made up of two civilizations Indus and Indic or gigantic. Indus has been one large independence



politico economic zone for the past countless centuries. Therefore there has existed a primordial divide between Indus and Indic civilizations – a palpable divide between two lands. Thus he argued that 1947 was only a re-assertion of this deep divide. Thus partition can be seen in retrospect as a logical outcome of prevailing circumstances of the communal divide and of the political context of last 150 years. As well as the natural culmination of the primordial historical forces. Thus as an inevitability of history, partition was natural divide of Indus and Indic civilizations. However, this divide had only been blurred temporarily by 100 years grip of British Empire. Thus once this grip starting getting weaker-divide reasserted itself.

## Chapter 4

### Imagination of Pakistan and Place of Religion

Pakistan, by most accounts, seems to have happened in a fit of collective south-Asian absent-mindedness, the tragic and the result of the ‘transfer of power’ negotiations gone awry, hastily midwifed by a cynical, war weary Britain anxious to get out of the morass of an imploding empire, leaving unsuspecting millions to face its brutal consequences. The powerful argument in this regard has been made by the historian AYESHA JALAL, who began her seminal work with the question. How did a Pakistan come about which fitted the interests of most Muslims so poorly<sup>12</sup>. In addressing this puzzle, Jalal analyzed the struggle for Pakistan through M.A JINNAH’s angle of vision primarily taking into account the actions and imagined political strategy of this ‘sole spokesman’ of the Indian Muslims in the cause of what she claims was a vaguely defined Pakistan. In a novel and controversial thesis that has become the new orthodoxy; Jalal argued that a separate sovereign Pakistan was not Jinnah’s real demand, but a bargaining counter to acquire for the Muslims, political equality with numerically preponderant Hindus in an undivided post-colonial India. Jalal contended that the British government’s cabinet mission plan which envisaged a weak Indian federal Centre where Muslims and Hindus would share political power equally, came close to what Jinnah really wanted. This was rejected by the congress leaders who Jalal implied, were thus the real perpetrators of the partition.

<sup>12</sup>Ayesha Jalal, *The Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and The Demand For Pakistan* [Cambridge, 1985 ],4

While Jalal comb ride thesis challenged existing common sense about Pakistan’s creation, the spirited counter-response by her oxford counter –part Anita Inder Singh steered the argument towards more conventional congress party waters. Contesting Jalal’s thesis, Singh contended that Pakistan, as it finally emerged in 1947, bore a close resemblance to the demand that was coached in the ML’s 1940 Lahore resolution and indeed corresponded to the logic of the resolution<sup>13</sup>. Arguing that Jinnah’s vision of Pakistan was based on the repudiation of any idea of a united India Singh charted in great detail the process by which a determined Jinnah outmaneuvered a war weary British establishment and congress led by ‘ tried old man’ as Nehru put it to successfully accomplish his goal of partitioning Indian and carving a sovereign Pakistan. Yet, while refuting Jalal’s thesis. Singh nevertheless agreed with her that as far as ordinary Muslims were concerned Pakistan was an extraordinarily vague concept and that is it ‘meant all things to all Muslims’.

Things view ironically, has also found support from the subaltern studies scholar Gyanendra Pandey a fierce critic of great man history and concurrent tendency to reduce south Asian history to a teleological biography of the nation state. Thus while foregrounding ‘ fragmentary’ histories involving ordinary Hindus and Muslims possessing ‘ un-partitioned’ selves multiple identities, shared life-worlds , along with a topping of hard – nosed political rationality , Pandey has noted that the Muslims had fairly widely supported the movement for Pakistan though

<sup>13</sup>Anita Inder Singh, *Origin Of The Partition, 1936-1947*[Delhi,1987]

, as was already becoming evident , few hand clear ideas about what that goal meant<sup>14</sup>. This line of thinking finds further support if one were to turn to regional studies of the Pakistan movement, especially those concerning Muslims majority provinces of British India such as Punjab and Bengal that were partitioned. These studies point to Pakistan’s late popularity in these provinces, besides its insufficient and uncertain compression amongst its Muslims. In the case of Punjab, Ian Talbot’s studies have moreover down played the role of religious ideology and popular agency, instead explained Pakistan’s creation primarily in terms of its rural Muslim elites ‘rationally’ switching loyalties in the treacherous sands of Punjabi politics to a rising ML as Jinnah gained prominence at the Centre, and the unionist party hemorrhaged almost continuously in late- colonial Punjab. Neeti Nair’s recent monograph on the politics of Punjabi Hindus again emphasizes uncertainly about Pakistan as well as the sheer unexpectedness of the partition. Haroon-or-Rashid’s monograph on Muslim Bengal has again underlined the lack of clarity or of Bengal ML was very different from that of Jinnah, for they saw it more in terms of an independent eastern Pakistan or an undivided and sovereign greater Bengal<sup>15</sup>.For Rashid , the struggle for Pakistan therefore foreshadowed the arrival of Bangladesh in 1971. Joya Chatterji’s subsequent study has affirmed this thesis besides adding a further dimension by arguing that it was Bengal’s Hindu Bhadrakal who

<sup>14</sup>Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* [Stanford,2006],135

<sup>15</sup>Haroon-or-Rahheed, *The Foreshadowing Of Bangladesh: Bengal Muslim League and Muslim Politics,1936-1947*[Dhaka,1987]

was primarily responsible for partitioning the province by ruling out alternative approaches to Bengal’s unity.

The picture gets muddled further if one turn to scholarship regarding the ideological moorings of the Pakistan movement. While the role of religious ideology and religious leaders such as ulma and sufi pirs in the process of popular mobilization in Punjab has long been recognized, their appeal has largely been associated only with the emotional dimension and a vague vision of Pakistan, lacking any clear territorial grounding . Even Jinnah’s appeal to Islam in the cause of a vaguely defined Pakistan have largely been viewed as tactical maneuvers and not based on any firm conviction. Thus, Hamza Alvi the Marxist theorist has argued that Muslim salariat leading the struggle the struggle for Pakistan’s creation had secular objectives and their vision of Pakistan had nothing to do with religious ideals. Again, Faisal Devji’s recent intellectual beliefs and the idea of Pakistan has disregarded the importance of religious beliefs and pity in Pakistan’s imagination , while at the same time cavalierly dismissing voices other than those of Jinnah and some Muslim league elites , for whom Pakistan could become meaningful primarily as an Islamic state . Moreover, while Jinnah and the ‘secular’ ML elite occupy a central space

in partition drama, the ulema's contribution to the Pakistan movement has largely been ignored. If they make an appearance in partition historiography they largely figure as a resolutely determined group implacably opposed to Pakistan. And here the Deobandi ulma and their premier organization the JUH are especially singled out as staunch defenders of composite Indian nationalism. Their plea for protecting the integrity of Muslim sacred geography in the sub-continent and their eloquent valorization of the land that would be left behind in 'Hindu' India- dotted with mosques, shrines, graves of saints and martyrs as more sacred to Muslims than the land of Pakistan, has been celebrated on the Indian side as the most resounding rebuttal of the ML's two nation theory. On the other hand, their opposition to Pakistan has been cited to make the case that Muslim nationalism under the leadership of the Qaid was 'secular' in its nature.

If the view from the Centre and partitioned provinces of Punjab and Bengal makes the partition seem like a rather confused and murky affair, there is some consensus that the road to 1947 may well have been paved from UP some of the earliest scholarship in the field, therefore, traced Pakistan's origins to local political feuds in this province in the decade preceding the partition. The centerpiece in this regard was the fiasco over ministry making in UP after the 1937 elections. The bitterness it created against the congress in the minds of UP's social and political Muslim elite and how in turn they started a mass campaign to discredit its provincial congress govt. as 'Hindu Raj. By raking up controversies over Vanda Mataram, Hindi-Urdu, and the wardha scheme of education. while historians have furiously argued over which side Congress or the ML was responsible for this debacle, it is widely believed that the years of congress cabinet raj were critical in reviving Jinnah and the ML's sagging political fortunes and transforming U.P into an ML, bastion from where the Pakistan movements began its successful journey. The reasons behind overwhelming support from Pakistan among U.P Muslims & the critical role they played as its creation soon became the focus of an intense debate between the political scientist PAUL BRASS and the historian FRANCIS ROBINSON. Brass attributed Pakistan's popularity in UP to its Ashraf Muslims caste for political power through symbol manipulation and myth creation while claiming to defend the rights and interests of north Indian Muslims. In response, Robinson pushed back against this 'instrumentalist' position by arguing that acute sense of separate Religio-political identity among the U.P Muslims provided the fundamental rationale and impetus to the Pakistan movement in the province.

Robinson further substantiated his case by charting the emergence in colonial north- India of a new self-conscious community of Muslims in late 19<sup>th</sup> & early- 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, united by an acute awareness of its distinct religious and political identity in a predominantly Hindu society marked by its own revivalisms. This Muslim community led by the ulma after Mughal collapse, developed in the context of an incipient 'print capitalism' involving mass publication of the QURAN & ISLAMIC classics in Urdu translations, new methods of Muslim mass education through revamped maktabs and madrasas and the rise of a new Autonomus individual Muslim self that began to directly access the holy texts. Combined with improved transport and communication links between south-Asia and core lands of Islam that facilitated greater movement of scholars, pilgrims, and ideas, these developments intensified trends towards more orthodox versions of Islam in India besides deepening the Indian Muslim sense belonging to the ummet, the global community of Muslims. In the light of these historical processes, Robinson argued that it was hardly surprising that south-Asian Muslims tended to organize politically on the basis of their religion,

adding that this was the very reason why the congress party was unable to gain confidence of the bulk of the Indian Muslims who gravitated towards the ML. Subsequently, Robinson's thesis was amplified by Farzana Shaikh's monograph on the development of Ashraf Muslim political culture in colonial north India. Retaining the focus on Muslim political elites Sheikh contended that this culture was based on an unmistakable awareness of the ideal of Muslim brotherhood. A belief in the superiority of Muslim culture and recognition of the belief that Muslims ought to live under Muslim government<sup>16</sup>. Pakistan, therefore appeared inevitable given the incommensurability of these foundational values of Sharif Muslim political culture with those of liberal democracy [numerically dominated by the Hindus] upon which an undivided India would presumably have been predicated.

However, if Sheikh pushed the scholarly pendulum in the direction of theologically ordained Muslim political separatism, AYESHA JALAL responded strongly by 'exploding' the scholarship on 'communalism', squarely criticizing the tendency to assume a unified Muslim approach to politics in the course of blithely charting a linear process of the rise of Muslim separatism<sup>17</sup>. Jalal argued that neither the Muslim self nor Muslim collective interest in south-Asia was ever pre-determined by Islam since Muslims were divided over a range of issues both religious and non-religious. Moreover Jinnah's insistence on separate Muslim nationhood was not an inevitable overture to exclusive statehood and that it was compatible with the Confederal idea allowing the possibility of an all-India entity reconstituted on the basis of multiple levels of

<sup>16</sup>Farzana Shaikh, *Community and Consensus in Islam: Muslim Representation in Colonial India, 1860-1947* [Cambridge-1989], 230

<sup>17</sup>Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850* [New Delhi, 2001]

sovereignty. Jalal, therefore reiterated that this maximal demand for Pakistan needed to be seen as a bargaining counter. And as far as a place of UP in the partition story is concerned, Jalal argued that while a separate sovereign Pakistan may have been the favorite hobby horse of some Punjabi's the idea was never popular among Muslims from the 'minority provinces' such as UP who had a more inclusive worldview.

Jalal's indignant thrust can be placed alongside another strand of partition scholarship that has highlighted the heroic but tragically unsuccessful efforts of prominent UP Muslims working for a united India. The most visible corpus of writings in this regard has been produced by Mushirul-Hasan, who in his many books has underscored the contribution of nationalist Muslims to the cause of an undivided and secular India. Hassan has also pushed the historiographical tiller in a new direction by arguing that the growth of communalism and ultimately the partition was not just due to ML's communal politics, but also the result of Congress's failure to adequately challenge the ML with a rigorously uncompromising brand of secular politics. However, in line with the thinking of both 'elitist' and 'subaltern' historiography, Hasan ultimately locates the ML's successful achievement of Pakistan not so much in the realm of ideas or popular Muslim upsurge for achieving that desired goal, as in the realm of HIGH POLITICS. He has therefore called for greater scholarly attention to be paid to the performance and subsequent resignation of Congress ministries in 1939, the fluid political climate on the eve of and during

the [world] war , the congress decision to launch quit – India movement and the governments readiness to modify its political strategy towards the league.

Hassan's regarding the impact of Hindu nationalist politics on Muslim separatism has been lent some substance by William Gould whose monograph contends that the congress party in UP [including its socialist wing] was dominated by Hindu nationalists, whose ideology, public posturing and political practices created conditions that arguably provoked and sustained the Muslim drive towards Pakistan in the last decade of British rule in India. This monograph needs to be seen as part of a growing Hindu nationalism in India that again pushes one towards more contextual understanding of Muslim separatist politics in terms of reaction to emerging Hindu revivalism , thus pushing back against attempts to portray Muslim separatism as an essential condition or an autochthonous phenomenon.

Given the difficulties in making narrative sense of 1947 in spite of rich scholarly efflorescence in the field , in an influential review essay on the state of partition studies to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event , David Gilmartin tried to reconcile its divergent viewpoints in order to come up with a more adequate framework for explaining the partition. The key for him lay in linking HIGH POLITICS of partition to action and agency of Muslim in their varied contexts thus explaining popular influences on movement's political decisions that come to be taken at Delhi, Shimla, or London. Gilmanton therefore posed the question as to why Muslims with local, multiple identities coming from diverse contexts provided such overwhelming support to an extraordinary vague idea like Pakistan. In addressing this puzzle, he contended that Pakistan was understood by most Muslims primarily as a transcendental symbol of Muslim solidarity rather than as a territorial nation state located in any specific part of India. The Two Nation Theory, in his interpretation embodied a fundamentally 'non- territorial vision of nationality' thus explaining its overwhelming popularity even among Muslims belonging to the minority provinces that would remain outside Pakistan.

But if Pakistan was a non- territorial symbol for the Muslims that Jinnah purported to lead, the question remains as to how, why and when it was transformed into a demand for a sovereign territorial nation-state. To explain this problem , Gilmartin fell back in the realm of elite politics arguing that as Nehruvian congress nationalism increasingly harped upon territorially defined nationhood and citizenship, Jinnah too was forced to face up to the territorial implications of the Pakistan demand in the dying days of the Raj. It therefore seems evident that if an earlier generations of partition scholarship was trapped between Indian nationalist historians failing the congress parties secular nationalism and Pakistani nationalist historians swearing by the ML's two nation theory , between the divergent emphasis of the next two waves of scholarship over the past three decades , partition studies remains a largely stuck at the incongruous and unyielding popularities of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Saadat Hasan Manto's eponymous hero Toba Tek Singh.

## CONCLUSION

We can conclude this whole debate discussed above by saying that regarding the place of religion i.e., how clear the idea of Pakistan was imagined. Two different schools of thought are there – on the first hand Ayesha Jalal and others believe that Jinnah never intended to create a separate nation or Pakistan but rather it was a bargaining strategy adopted by Jinnah so as to equal represent in INC. Same is held

by others that Pakistan was not sufficiently imagined or at least masses whom Jinnah tended to represent don't have a clear vision about ' how Pakistan will be'.

While the other school of thought believes that Pakistan was deeply debated and discussed. Thus they believe that religion became a base for partition or creation of Pakistan. Ambedkar in his book "thoughts of Pakistan" gives both views I.e., on the one hand he tried to justify the demand for Pakistan and on the other hand he tried to convince Hindus that how creation of Pakistan was in their interest.

## Chapter 5

### Violence and Partition of the Sub-Continent

#### A: - Direct Violence

One of the issues that come out while looking at the partition is the fact of violence that is why many scholars argue that violence should or must be the core of any discussion on partition. The extent of killings/violence was a distinctive feature of this event [partition]

The estimates of persons killed in partition violence differ widely. Leonod Mosley wrote a book called, "Last Days of British Raj". In this book he said that 6 lakh people got killed during partition. Similarly J.S Grewal estimates that nearly a million people perished during the partition. Micheal Edwards & Ian Stephan who gave account of somewhere 5 or 6 lakh people that got killed during partition. Khosla has highlighted that with the riots of march 1947 in Lahore, Rawalpindi Multan & other places in west Punjab began " the genocide of the non-Muslims" these disturbances were confined to the Muslim majority areas only and the victims were almost invariably Hindus and Sikhs. In May and June, there was another flare-up in Lahore. It was not till the end of July that reprisals began in the eastern districts and mass killing of Muslims took place between August 15 and September 30, 1947. When the arrival of large numbers of non-Muslims to retaliate. Khosla has underlined that the Fact Finding Organization (FFO) examined nearly 15, 000 witnesses and they bear testimony to the murder of 50,000 non-Muslims. The incidents deposed to by these witnesses, however, represented only a fraction of the total devastation caused. Thousands of villages where riots were known to have taken place did not figure in the material collected by FFO. Out of the total of 19,914 villages in west Punjab only 2,094 were covered by the evidence collected by the FFO. The corresponding figures for the NWFP were 2,826 and 362 respectively, while for the Bahawalpur State they were 2,376 and 216 respectively, on these limited data, Khosla estimated the loss of non-Muslim life at a figure between 200,000 and 250,000. He believed that an equal number of Muslims perished in the riots. The loss of non-Muslim property was estimated at about ₹20,000 million.

It is shocking to see the extent to which the gravity of the holocaust is underplayed by some. Penderel Moon has rightly observed that the estimates of casualties are largely a matter of guess work. During and immediately after the disturbances it was freely stated that millions had lost their lives..... An English journalist, Andrew Meller, thinks that

the number killed is unlikely to have been less than 200,000 and may well have been for more. The other extreme is represented by an estimate attributed to Nehru, twenty to thirty thousand people had been killed in the Punjab. My own guess, based on some rough calculations made in December 1947 is not

widely different from that of Andrew Mellor. Slightly varying his conclusion, I would say that the no killed is unlikely to have been more than two hundred thousand and may well have been appreciably less this, though lower than most estimates, is an enormous total for civilian casualties in time of peace. The reasoning given by Moon in his 'note on casualties' brings out how unsustainable is his conclusion. He claims that he had a pretty accurate knowledge of casualties both in the Bahawalpur state itself and in the immediately adjacent west Punjab districts. This may be true so far as Bahawalpur state is concerned but it is doubtful how accurate was the information he had in respect of the west Punjab districts, in view of the civil war which was raging all over. He himself has admitted that the information which he had of the other districts was from old subordinates, especially among to the state of the civil administration in the Punjab at the time as brought out by Jenkins, Chandra and others, referred to above one doubt how reliable was the feedback which Moon got from his old subordinates. He himself has admitted that he had no detailed information about casualties elsewhere. His conclusion that in east Punjab including the Punjab states they [casualties] had been considerably heavier than in west Punjab also has no authentic basis. It is not surprising that Mudie, the governor of west Punjab had independently arrived at the figure of only 60,000 casualties in west Punjab. Looking to Mudie's outburst and based assessments coated earlier, it is surprising that he didn't arrive at a still lower figure of casualties in west Punjab. Altogether Moon's estimate of casualties raises questions and is highly questionable.

Moon has not coated the source from which Nehru's assessments of casualties, as above, which is ridiculously low, has been taken and therefore, deserves no comment, Nehru did However, appear to downplay the killings from time to time. For example in his letter dated 22 August 1947 to Ghandi, Nehru wrote, "during the last month the number killed in eastern Punjab might amount to 7-8 thousand....."

In western Punjab probably the number of those killed is much less, may be half the other figure. This of course applies to recent weeks only. In his letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> august to Ghandi, Nehru wrote, "We should not be surprised if anything up to 10,000 were killed in eastern Punjab. On the other side the figure might be somewhat lower. We really don't know". In his press interview on 12 October 1947 in Delhi, Nehru was asked, "the last time you gave an official figure of casualties in the Punjab. Have you any figure now? The last time you said it was 15,000." Nehru replied, "the last time I gave you no official figures. I gave you the figures supplied to me by the military authorities ..... The actual verified number of deaths was 15,000.... But not know what was

figure is now. " In his letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> August to Mountbatten Nehru said that, according to the message received by him from the Indian high commissioner in Pakistan, "a very large number of persons were being done to death daily ...I do not mention the figure he gave because it is incredible. No doubt the reports he had must have been exaggerated, still he is not a man to be easily led away. Clearly, for whatever reasons, Nehru was in a state of denial."

Hodson writes that it is impossible to be sure, even within a wide margin how many people were killed between August and November 1947. Though a figure of a million casualties was popularly bandied about, the truth was probably around 200,000 men, women, children a terrible enough total even scene

against India's 400 million [the Bengal famine of 1943 was believed to have killed about 1,500,000 people ].

Richard Hough has minced no words in saying, "but there were other debts to be paid – the anguish and sufferings of some 12 million people forced to uproot themselves for fear of the future. Communal strife and frenzy on a scale never known before even in this great suffering land. No one has calculated accurately the number who was shot, burned, hacked, battered and tortured to death. Perhaps 1 million, perhaps 2 million died in the months following the partition – certainly many more than British and imperial [including Indian] troops killed in World War 1. "Ian Stephens believes that about 500,000 persons died in 1947 holocaust. This death toll is comparable with the official tally of commonwealth deaths [in world war II], civilian as well as military, between September 1939 and August 1945 of about 5,40,000 .

The extent to which Attlee, the then British PM, has played down the holocaust is unbelievable. He stated in his autobiography published in 1954, that in the first months of the new order fratricidal strife broke out which caused the loss of thousands of lives, while a great number of people were driven from their homes. The troubles were the legacy of the past in which Hindus and Muslims, in province after province had been guilty of acts of violence. It is idle to ask who began it, though it must be said that most serious outbreak was started by the Sikhs [emphasis added]. He has devoted just six lines to this most traumatic event in the history of India. Francis Williams , Atlee's biographer has claimed that ,Atlee was more directly and personally involved in the policy which culminated in the birth of three Asian members of commonwealth –India, Pakistan and Ceylon ....He was actively engaged at every stage of difficult and often dangerously critical negotiations on the future of India , and the major decisions were his .....He had been in India eighteen years before as a member of the Simon Commission. The experience he then gained, reinforced by much study and consideration of the Indian situation subsequently played an important part in the decisions he made as PM. Can the PM of the time be permitted to be so superficial in his awareness or the understanding of the issues and bereft of feeling of anguish at the happenings? And particularly someone who claimed that he knew India better than any of his cabinet colleagues.

Three months after Mountbatten 's death , on the day that the statue of lord Atlee was unveiled in the house of commons , Alan Watkins , political commentator, wrote in the London daily telegraph " Indian independence we can now see , was inevitable , but under Atlee a lot of people- the precise number is still disputed- were massacred . Perhaps the carnage would have been even greater if independence had not come at the time and in the way it did. We don't know but it seems excessive, to say the least, to hail and act which directly led to the sanguinary deaths of millions of people as one of prudent and enlightened statesmanship."

According to the Mosley, in the nine months between August 1947 and the spring of the following year, over 600,000 Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. But no, not just killed. If they were children, they were picked by the feet and their heads smashed against the wall. If they were female children they were raped. If they were girls they were raped and then their breasts were chopped off. And if they were pregnant they were disemboweled..... It was a time when trains were arriving in Lahore station packed with



passengers, all of them dead, with messages scribed on the sides of the carriages readings. “A person from India.” So, of course, the Muslims sent back trainloads of butchered Sikhs and Hindus with the message. “A present from Pakistan”..... Al India stank-with the stench of countless thousands of dead bodies, with the stench of evil deed, with the stench of fires”. Against this background it is not surprising that after his visit to the Punjab D.F. Karaka wrote a pamphlet entitled Freedom must not stink.

Wingate has estimated that “the direct slaughter was not less than a quarter of a million, & if the consequent dearth’s through starvation & hardship are added, the figure can’t have been less than 2 million.” Judith Brown says, “Possibly a million died in all.” Peter Clark relying on the estimate of French in liberty or death (P.349), states “up to million people died” in the trauma of communal violence that accompanied the partition. Ziegler, in his book Mountbatten (P.437) opts for Panderal Moon’s estimate at the lower end of the range from 200,000 to 1 million. Robert’s in his article ‘Mountbatten ‘eminent churchillians (PP. 128-132) challenges as this as too low.

Khairi states that according to, “modest estimates, between half a million and a million were massacred, 100,000 women were abducted nearly 20 million had to run for their lives across the border to become refugees.” Though Mountbatten claimed November 1947 that only a 100 thousand had died and only a small part of the country was affected.

According to Butalia, estimates of the dead varied from 200,000 ( the contemporary British figure) to two million [a later Indian estimate] but that somewhere around a million people died is now widely accepted. Margaret Bourke-white has brought out the enormity of the human cost of Muslims homeland. According to her, more Muslim lives had been sacrificed to create the new Muslim homeland than American, e.g., had cost during the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> world war.

Dennis Judd has stated , train loads of way laid and murdered refugees[ In the Punjab] steamed into their final destinations, the flies swarming over the corpses and the stench of death hanging over the carriages like a miasma..... The divided province of Bengal suffered equally cruel though less widespread killings. There are varying computations as to how many Indians lost their lives during these terrible mass migrations but a figure of close to a million seems a reasonable estimate. Philip Warner asserts that the Punjab massacres , which was a Sikh versus –Muslim and Muslim –versus Hindu war but had also other factors involved ,resulted in the death of “at least half a million” . Philip Woodruff quotes the same figure,” one estimate by a cautions authority, is half a million dead.”

Lionel carter adopts the estimate of casualties (200,000) given by Moon, without any independent examination .French has at the outset admitted that the no. of people killed has never been established though Indian and Pakistani newspapers today 10 to put the figure of those killed anywhere from 700 thousand to an arbitrary 2 million. The BBC radio reporter, WinWord Vaughan Thomas, who travelled through the Punjab by jeep with poet Louis Macneic at the time, said subsequently, I think I would go on record, stick my check out and say nearly a million killed. Louis Hern of The Times thought, after talking to many of the senior military officers involved including Rees that about a million had been killed or had died from wounds. French says,” my own opinion, based both on written records and on

conversations with officials and survivors in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is that the no. of people killed is unlikely to have been much lower than one million.

Gyanendra Pande concludes from the widely differing estimates of the death toll, “is it, a question of what one can live with? “ With communal war raging all over, there was no way in which the number of dead could be counted anywhere with any authenticity .This was particularly true of the rural areas. Often dead bodies were left by the roadside for birds and animals to feed on or just left rotting at the site of the killing. At times, dead bodies were thrown In rivers, canals and streams. Sometimes, they were torched immediately after the killing .In such circumstances; any figures of death toll are only guess- -estimates. Comparisons are often made by western writers of the death toll in partition holocaust with that in the great Bengal famine in 1943 when, according to varying estimates , 1.5 to 3 million people had died of starvation .Another reference figure was the total population of India [400 million] at the time .These figures are branded about to show that the death toll in partition riots was not something for which one should lose one’s sleep .As if the value of human life has to be computed of on the basis of per capita income or the per capita gross domestic product of a country , and in a poor and starving country that India was , it had no value It is interesting to note that the ‘ Breakdown Plan ‘ for phased withdrawal from India which had submitted to the British govt. had estimated the likelihood of 30,000 communal killings during the implementation of plan .The figure of 30,000 possible casualties seemed to be mind-boggling at the time .By comparison , the holocaust brought about by the Mountbatten Plan is mind-blowing<sup>18</sup>

Finally , a reference must be made to a very pertinent observation of French that ,it was in the interest of the governments of Atlee ,Jinnah , Nehru to play down the scale of the massacres , since they bore a degree of responsibility for what happened .Mutual genocide never attracts attention in the way that a one –way genocide does , so the terrible ,squalid deaths in countless streets and fields were sidelined .In October [1947] the visiting listowel [secretary of state ] condemned ‘ exaggerated reports’ , about the carnage which led Cirad Chaudrhari to describe as “ the weak man with the sponge following the footsteps of strong man with the dagger”

### **B: Indirect/Structural Violence**

There was the mass movement of people across the borders. The scale was such that the movement of people had never happened before. It was unprecedented in human history to see such kind of exchange of people between the borders. Somewhere about 18 million people [figures vary] resettled after partition. The refugees unfortunately still remained refuges be they Muhajir in Pakistan or those who came to India became refugees.

<sup>18</sup>Madhav Godbole; The Holocaust Of Indian Partition

As is often the case in civil wars that are driven by ethnic or religious hatred and fear – it was women who were frequently singled out for especially humiliating treatment at the hands of men of the rival community : molestation ,rape , mutilation , abduction , forcible conversation , marriage , and death . The orgies of violence , , abduction and rape , the mutilation and disfigurement of living and death , the forcible recovery of women all this ripped apart the very fabric of society . The story of the partition ,the

uprooting ,and dislocation of people was accompanied by the story of the rape , abduction and widowhood of thousands of women on both sides of newly formed borders .While men belonging to the other community were killed , women were let off in a show of compassion : instead ,they were abducted .Thus ,only the form which the violence took differed

The mass movement of the people on foot, by bus, car, and car left women, children, the aged and infirm, the disabled, particularly vulnerable. During the 1947 partition of India, an estimated 75,000 to 100,000 women were abducted by the members of other religious communities to be raped and murdered, sold into prostitution or forced into marriage. Many a woman were abducted they were mercilessly treated with inhuman activities i.e. either raped or forcibly married .Women were forced to accept new religion. If someone refused, she either molested or treated badly on both sides of the Radcliffe line. Women were distributed in the same way that baskets of oranges or grapes are sold or gifted. Some were sold in the market places for ₹ 10 or 20 a piece, others were sent as gifts to friends and acquaintances .Many of them suffered daily physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their abductors .The traumatic violence meted out to numberless women at the time of partition demolished all sense of self, existential or social, granted to them by established patriarchal system

.If they did not die a physical death, they died a psychological death. Ritu Menon and Kamla-Bhasin have rightly observed that material, symbolic and political significance of the abduction of women was not lost either on the women themselves and their families and their communities or leaders and governments. As a retaliatory measure, it was humiliation of the rival community through the appropriation of its women. As vessels of the honor of the whole community the shame, and horror fell on everybody associated with the girls: these were not individual tragedies<sup>19</sup>.

Leonard Mosley estimated that about 100,000 young girls were kidnapped by both sides, forcibly converted or sold on the auction blocks<sup>20</sup>. According to another estimate around 75000 women were abducted or raped on the both sides of the border. Zia-ul-Islam states that in eastern Punjab nearly 55,000 Muslim women were abducted. Gopala swami Ayyangar later called these ‘rather wild figures’. The abduction, molestation and rape of women were weapons to humiliate the men as being unable to protect the community honor. The use of rape in military campaigns to demoralize the enemy is not a new feature. Given that violence towards women during the partition was as assault not only on her body, but on her family, her culture and her nation, a display of the wounded, an admission of violation, were tantamount to an admission of public defeat for the community whose

<sup>19</sup>Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making Of India and Pakistan*, Penguin Viking, New Delhi,P.134

<sup>20</sup>Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days Of British Raj*, Jaico, Bombay,1971,p.284

women had been violated. The murders brutality, ill treatment of women and small children in evacuee trains had exceeded all bestialities created by the warped Nazi mind. These riots brought to the surface both at the levels of action and imagination. Certain primitive fantasies of bodily violence, prominent among these were those relating to sexual mutilation- the cutting of male genitals and the sadistic fury directed against female breasts which were hit repeatedly by iron rods, stabbed with knives, lopped off

by scythes and swords. The widespread collapse of law and order in 1947 was attended by a collapse of moral values, or perhaps in some case an intensified expression of normal, immoral behavior, so that large no. of men lost their sense of humanity and deliberately trampled on the virtues of women whose only crime was that they belonged to a different religious community. Thus one of the signatures of the violence of 1947 was the large scale abduction and rape of women. Women's bodies were made the passive witness to the disorder of the partition. The bodies of women were the surfaces on which texts were to be written and read-icons of the new nations. But women converted this passivity into agency by using metaphors of pregnancy-hiding pain, giving it home just as a child is given in home in women's body. There were various methods of humiliation such as breasts and noses were cut off, their bodies branded or tattooed with signs and symbols of 'other religion', pregnant were forcibly aborted and often women were made to strip naked and paraded through the streets in towns and cities. Between December 6, 1947 and April 27, 1948 nearly 3,912 non-Muslim women from west Punjab were recovered and 7425 Muslim women were recovered from east Punjab. By September 20, 1957 the number of abducted women and children recovered from Pakistan stood at 10,007 and from India at 25,856. The young women were battered and sold like a cheap chattel. Murders, abductions, rapes and conversions became a common scare. No community lagged behind and criminalization of human instinct assumed the prominence<sup>21</sup>. Women were sites upon which communal politics was played. Conversion, kidnapping, rape and killing got communal coloring. As the law enforcing agencies collapsed, self-defense became the only alternative. Tens of thousands of girls and women were seized from refugee columns, from crowded trains, from isolated villages in most wide scale kidnapping of modern times. A section of people became more aggressive, ruthless and careless about moral values and in such situation women became the worst victims. The Ajit in April 1947, in a printed pamphlet narrated the plight of women rather pathetically: "hundreds of women have been abducted, women jumped into the wells and scarified their lives preserve their honour"<sup>22</sup>.

In response to this tumultuous period, a body of fictional exploration has arisen, attempting to define the inner turmoil and social complexes, plaguing the subcontinent. The fictions were written as an urgent and immediate response to the trauma of violence and dislocation that attended the event. This testimonial literature of the partition resounds with the exigency of being summoned by the contemporaneity of its present context and attests to the impossibility to standing outside an all pervasive violence by bearing witness to the very contagion of such

<sup>21</sup> Jasbir Singh; Women, Violence and The Partition [1947], The Punjab Past and Present, Patiala, vol. XXXV, October, 2005, p.411

<sup>22</sup> Narinder Iqbal Singh; Communal Violence in The Punjab [1947], pp.211-212

trauma. Examining the partition from a literary perspective provides keener insight into the vacillating personal experiences and national histories. For the historian and researcher who wish to excavate the experiences of ordinary people, of women, children, the marginalized and poor, official documents and government records have little to offer. Creative writers reveal the other face of the freedom, the freedom drenched in blood and gore. They bring to light, in a way official chronicles do not, the woes of divided families, the trauma of raped and abducted women. Numerous texts, some having been analyzed

with much scholarly rigor in recent years. Retrieve from silence the many untold stories of women that have died unspoken on the lips of their hapless protagonists.

Historians talk in aggregates. Statistics fail to impart even a fraction of enormity of the tragedy that was the partition. Cold statistics fail to hint at the trauma of husbands and wives, sons and mothers separated by the Redcliff line. A sense of individual and collective guilt and shame has led to suppression and denial of memories of the partition. This seems almost clearly with respect to the stigma attached to rape and abduction. Women had memories of the events of 1947 that they were forced to suppress. Stifle or store away but the literature can somehow liberate these stories from hiding. Given the overwhelming stigma still attached to women who were perceived to have been sexually contaminated by men of other community during the sectarian violence that accompanied the partition, it was unlikely that they would ever satisfy about their experience. In the face of this silence it may well be the task of literary historiography to unveil. Uncover, liberate from silence and oblivion these women's stories.

Bapsi sidhwa has rightly observed that women were the living objects on whose soft bodies victors and losers alike vent their wrath and enact fantastic vendettas, and celebrate victories. The events of violence, brutal rape and abduction of women and painful inscriptions of nationalist slogans on the bodies of women made sudden appearances. The ravaged bodies of the women became envelopes to carry the message of conquest from one group of man to another. Murders, looting, abductions, and sexual assault appear to have been frighteningly common place occurrences as displaced individuals and communities responded with violence to the threat to their lives, security of their property and cultural continuity. It was the time when communal passions swept the whole Punjab community clean of all decency, morality and sense of human values.

The women were helpless. The untold brutalities were committed on women. 'Hindustan and Pakistan was inscribed on their thighs and breasts. Hindu-Sikh women on that side and Muslim women on this side of the border were helpless. Young and beautiful women were in more trouble. They have to satisfy the lust of the whole country .60 and 70 year old men fulfilled their lust with young women. No one was considered as daughter or sister. Sometimes it was a routine that first women was molested, raped, and then killed. The blood soaked body of the woman would be lying on the ground.....this happened in the country of Guru and Kabir.

Much of terror and violence fell on the womenfolk in Hindus, Sikh, and Muslim families. Women became target of communal violence as early as March 1947 when a number of Sikh villages like Thamali, thoa Khalsa, Doberan, Kallar and others in the Rawalpindi district witnessed many cases of abduction and rape. During the partition mayhem, this phenomenon reached unimaginable proportions. The women bore the children often only to have taken then away forcibly. Sometimes families traded in their own women in exchange for freedom. Thousands of women were rejected by their husbands and families and they had no option but to live their lives in Ashrams and Brothels. During and in the aftermath the patriarchal character determined the fate of the women. Abducted women were recovered and restored despite their reluctance in certain cases.

One can say with some degree of confidence that never could men in their aloneness have been capable of contemplating the styles of violent homicide, rape and mutilation of human bodies as when they

experienced themselves encapsulated within a collectively. Violence at the height of the crisis became the subject, the object, the instrument and the purpose of the action. The damaged bodies and psyche of women who became the sites of worst violence at the time of the partition serve as living, if muted and distorted testimonial to their token status in the war over contending factions. For women, the trauma of rape, molestation and abduction was so grave, and made even worse in many cases because of the cultural taboos surrounding it. Anthropologist Veena Das writes that woman's body became as a sign through which men communicated with each other and the political programme of creating two nations of India and Pakistan was inscribed upon the bodies of women<sup>23</sup>. When the question of ethnic or

<sup>23</sup>Gyanesh Kudiasya and Tai Yong Tan, *The Aftermath Of The Partition in South- Asia*, p.22

communal identity comes to the fore, women are often the first to be targeted the regulation of their sexuality is critical to establish difference and claiming distinction. Then the question of where women belong of whether they emerge as full-fledged citizens or remain 'wards of their immediate communities, is contingent upon how the politics of identity are played out, and how their resolution takes place between community and state.

## Chapter 6

### The Legacies of Partition

On 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> August 1948 the Golden Jubilee celebrations of independence in India and Pakistan were concluded. Valedictory ceremonies were organized with fanfare in the capitals Islamabad and Delhi. In Islamabad Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif declared that while 14<sup>th</sup> August will be remembered as independent day for Pakistan, 28<sup>th</sup> May will be remembered as a day when the security of the country is guaranteed forever. In his address to the nation he justified Pakistan's nuclear explosions of 28<sup>th</sup> May 1998 as essential for the nation's survival and well-being. We have that power which only six other nations in the world have, Sharif declared, "this strength has given us protection and confidence, he claimed"

In Delhi, at the traditional flag-hoisting ceremony at the Red Fort, prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee brought the Golden Jubilee celebrations to an end by highlighting the achievements of Indian science and its promise of ushering the nation into the new millennium with a vast scientific network and a strong scientific manpower. Yet, in both countries the enthusiasm, exuberance and fervour, which had marked the inauguration of the Golden Jubilee celebrations just a year before, were noticeably absent. The hope had been sadly believed that the half-centennial would lead to soul-searching and introspection by the regions political elites about the nature of partition, its tragic aftermath, its long-term consequences and its debilitating legacies. Unfortunately, the Golden Jubilee year will be remembered in history as inaugurating an era of armed nuclear hostility in the region as both India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons with several explosions which were carried out in May 1998. As a result the prospects of peace and stability in the region have been dramatically altered and yet again, it has been demonstrated that the bitter legacies of partition continue, as a political analyst observed.

The nuclearisation of India and Pakistan is..... an extraordinary moment in the narrative of partition: both its telos, in that it confirms that national jingoism and the blood thirsty hatreds that propelled the

mass slayings and movements of populations in 1947 and after, and its inversion, in that it reminds us that our fates as nations have never been separate, that when we look across our borders we look into a mirror that we are locked in an embrace so close that we must draw the same fated breath.

As the bombs exploded first ‘ours’ over two days , over two days then ‘theirs’ over a few more, it seemed hard to avoid a feeling of dejavu: you kill one of ours we will kill two of yours , you explode fire, we will explode six. Hadn’t us heard this vocabulary in 1947, and suffered its apocalyptic effects even then [perhaps a million dead, ten million dislocations]? An eye for an eye, a neighborhood for a mohala a population for a population, and now potentially a nation for a nation.’

While those in power lauded the coming of age of nuclear arms based ‘security’ , informed citizens in both the countries strongly condemned the explosions as populist self-seeking and phobia-driven, Ashis Nandy, a well-known political commentator describes the ideology of nuclear arms-based security as ‘ the most depraved’ shameless and costly pornography of our times, geo politics , political sociology or ethics’. Instead, Nandy looks upon nuclearism as a well know, identifiable, psycho-pathological syndrome .He and many other scholars do not hesitate to trace the nuclear stand-off in the region to the fault-line created between India and Pakistan at the time of partition.

Outside the sphere of the nuclear arms, the legacies of partition continue to manifest themselves in a variety of ways. As has been argued through this paper, partition engendered processes. That went beyond its immediate consequences and continue to influence developments in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. For from resolving the ‘communal ‘problem, partition aggravated the difficulties of minorities in several instances. Overall its legacies are still evident as they have cast their long shadows on aspects of state and society in the region<sup>24</sup>. In this concluding chapter, a survey spells out some of the ways in which partition continues to leave its mark on south Asia. Some of the serious legacies are:-

### **1:- Kashmir Issue**

When partition happened most of the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of India was living with princely India. Basically there were two types of India –one was British India which was directly governed by Britishers and the other was princely India, in which there was a concept of paramountcy i.e., they were internally sovereign and autonomous, however their foreign policy was guided by Britishers. However, when the June 3<sup>rd</sup> plan was

<sup>24</sup>Gyanesh Kudaisya and Tan Yong Tan, *The Aftermath Of The Partition in South Asia*,pp,220-240

announced, in effect it didn’t applied to princely states. It leads to the lapse of paramountcy, that concept of paramountcy, directly applied to the British India. In case of princely India technically speaking June 3<sup>rd</sup> plan lapse of paramountcy meant independence because they weren’t integrated with the British administrative system. However, British parliament as well as the Mountbatten made it clear that the option of independence should be considered only theoretically. Thus only option for them is to either accede with India or with Pakistan.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> plan made clear that while making the decision they have to take into consideration their geographical proximity and secondly people will also needs to be taken into consideration. The ruler was a sovereign authority. Thus most of the princely states, the fate were sealed with this. However three states created the problem i.e., Hyderabad, Junagadh and Jammu and Kashmir. The Hyderabad and Junagadh were geographically located In the heart of India and obviously it was difficult for them to announce independence and in addition to its majority population was the Hindu in such states and ultimately they signed the instrument of accession with India despite their wish for Pakistan.

In case of Jammu and Kashmir, it became a serious problem because J&K was located at a place which was geographically linked with both India and Pakistan. Another problem was that there was Muslim majority but ruled by a Hindu ruler i.e. Hari Singh. Hari Singh had basically two issues –based on his religion , he was having affinity with India .But considering the fact that he would have special position for himself as well as for his kingdom ,if he will go with Pakistan .While J&K signed a standstill agreement with Pakistan ,India did not .By and large Maharaja Hari Singh was in a confused situation and ultimately he decided to remain independent but the tribal invasion made Hari Singh to sign instrument of accession with India to be subject to the ratification of public through a plebiscite.

Thus right from accession, Pakistan, questions this issue and three wars were fought 1948, 1965 and 1971 between India and Pakistan. Thus the issue between India and Pakistan- it moved from communal to a territorial issue where both started questioning about the legality of the territory. while Pakistan believes that India has robbed Kashmir and largely it should have gone to Pakistan .At the same time India defends its position on the basis of instrument of accession and accuse Pakistan for taking territory [POK] by force

## **2:-Security Concern in South Asia**

Rivalry between India and Pakistan which transmitted from the rivalry between Muslim League and Congress is essentially inbuilt in the structures of two nations. In the context that existence of one is taken as threat to another. Religion was the first factor that got integrated with the creation and sustenance of Pakistan. Second important factor was the threat of India on the basis of which Pakistan got integrated and nationalism got developed Same is the case with India and according to the official policy documents of India; Pakistan is the number one enemy. Pakistan has been declared as the measure threat to the security of India despite the fact right from partition, economically, military etc. India was very powerful as compared to Pakistan, and historically Pakistan has an upper hand

Thus right from beginning they [Indo-Pak] focused more on strengthening their weaponry. They are matching the strength of one another. Even they approach for a foreign help for increasing their strength e.g. Pakistan imported F16 from US and other economical-support to match with India

It is due to this reason that major GDP portion goes security concern and it reached at its apex in 1998 when both countries went nuclear. Even Pakistan surpassed France in terms of nuclear weapons. Ultimately such a huge arms race between the two have posed a serious threat in whole South-Asia.

## **3:- Water Issues**



It is not only India and Pakistan but India and Bangladesh also are involved in this problem. When Bangladesh was created with the help of India, Bangladesh allowed India-India wanted to create a barrage known as Farraka barrage and it was completed in 1975 but it has seriously impacted the survival of Bangladesh. Since India produces hydro-electricity there, it can curtail water supply to Bangladesh in dry seasons as well as it can open the barrage during rainy seasons leading to floods in Bangladesh. Thus there is a serious tussle between the two over this water issue.

Similarly Indus –water treaty between Indian and Pakistan, though it is only treaty that survived despite wars. By this treaty both regions have their own concern. Thus doing anything to this treaty, both countries get negatively affected although Pakistan gets more affected.

#### **4:- Problem of Minorities**

When partition happened a large chunk of Muslims from northern India who were Urdu speaking and well educated migrated to Pakistan. They were upheld as heroes and the founders of Pakistan. They were regarded as the people who followed the footsteps of Prophet MUHAMMAD (s.a.w). They essentially concentrated in Sindh province and after independence since they were very well versed in Urdu and Urdu became the official language of Pakistan. They [mahajirs] controlled the whole polity, bureaucracy of Pakistan for a long period of time

However immediately after it happened –HYDERABAD and SINDH population rose all of a sudden and naturally problem started in Pakistan politics because original Sindhi's started looking upon the mahajirs. Thus by 1960's, 1970's Z A Butto and others switched over to pro-sindhi politics that started alienating mahajirs. Therefore this created great tussle between Urdu speaking Punjabi, Sindhi etc. The Karachi was termed as a city of death because of severe conflicts. This discriminatory polity ultimately led to the formation of political party known as MQM-1984 [Mahajir kuami mahaz] to champion the cause of mahajirs in Pakistan.

Similarly in India, almost thirty five million Muslims were left behind after partition. After the creation of Pakistan, one of the serious questions was about problem faced by Muslims- along with the economic and educational problems, there is a serious problem of proving their patriotism, because right from beginning the various ideologies like RSS never termed Muslims as patriotic as Hindus can be. The cultural minister of present BJP [2017] government said that A.P.J Abul Kalam even though was a Muslim was a great nationalist. In other words what he means to say that Muslims cannot be nationalists. One of the worst hit was a Urdu language. It is completely relegated. Similar problem is in Bangladesh with Biharies.

#### **5:-Diaspora**

Sikhs and Sindhis created a large Diaspora for India and Pakistan. It is a symbol of partition. Sikhs have historically remained a marsh race. They had used habit of migrating and when partition happened (worst sufferings were Sikhs), many Sikhs settled in Gurdaspur and many places of Punjab but many could not get settled there and a large number migrated to Canada, Europe etc. and hence created Diaspora community. Similarly happened with Sindhis, they were originally business people, so they also migrated to different parts of the world and got settled.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

The partition of India was the partition of British India on the basis of religious demographics that led to the creation, on August 14<sup>th</sup> 1947 and August 15<sup>th</sup> 1947 respectively, of the sovereign states of the Dominion of Pakistan [later Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Peoples Republic of Bangladesh] and the Union of India [later Republic of India].

The partition of India ranks, beyond a doubt, as one of the 10 greatest tragedies in human history. It was not inevitable. India's independence was inevitable, but presentation of its unity was a prize that in our plural society, required high statesmanship, that was in short supply. A mix of other reasons deprived us of that prize – personal hubris, miscalculation and narrowness of outlook. About 14.5 million people crossed the borders [figures vary] to what they hoped was the relative safety of religious majority. Based on 1951 census of displaced persons 7,226,000 Muslims went to Pakistan from India, while 7,249,000 Hindus and Sikhs moved to India from Pakistan immediately after partition. The newly formed governments were completely unequipped to deal with migrations of such staggering magnitude, and massive violence and slaughter occurred on both sides of the border. The partition occurred with many visible effects like losing great part of motherland, refugees to the country with no or minimal resources. But there were also the hidden effects of the partition also which go unattended by the government, the major being the lost identity of the refugees. Both in Pakistan and India, the refugees were humiliated in the hands of the residents. In Pakistan these people who are called as Muhajir are treated as lower to the other inhabitants, the very same happens in India also. Today in India even this community enjoys a good standard life but they almost lost their identity. Talk of India Multan's who have left their mother tongue and have accepted Hindi widely. The same has occurred with many other communities.

August 15<sup>th</sup> marks this bloody partition, where Hindu not only lost a major chunk of their motherland, but also left thousands dead and millions as refugees. On the midnight of August 15<sup>th</sup> 1947 Pandit Nehru made historic speech where he said 'long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom a moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.' I am forced to ask the question H.V. Sheshadri asks 'Did the tryst with destiny which our leaders had made long years ago include this crucial twist of history also? Was it a picture of a divided Bharat which had been the cherished vision of our freedom fighters including Pandit Nehru?'

Finally, Mahayogi Sri Aurobind in his birthday message on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947 said "India today became free but she not achieved unity the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into permanent political division of the country. It is hoped that this settled fact will not be

accepted as settled forever as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts India may be seriously weakened, ever, crippled, civil strife may remain always possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded her position among nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even fractured. This must not be; the partition must go, unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of the India's.