

The Inhumane Humanity: Objectification of Women During the Great Partition

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Abstract

Fictional investigations into the inner anguish and societal problems that afflicted the subcontinent have been inspired by the tragedy of the Partition encounter. Creating Partition tales, in a way, is almost like a required act of 're-memory' for the South Asian people who have either directly experienced Partition or heard about it via family lore and legends. Many imaginative people in India, Pakistan, and contemporary Bangladesh wrote literary and cinematic renderings of the Partition of India and the accompanying violent riots. The emotionally charged subject of Partition and the Holocaust that followed it inspired authors who felt it was their duty to portray the events in their work accurately. Several of the Partition's authors were there when the Partition Holocaust occurred and were even its victims. The researcher has examined the terrible experiences of partition and its effects on women in the current study work. She has also reviewed the position of women as either a blessing or a burden for her family and society at large. The inhumane abuse, brutality, and injustices that women endured impacted how women became aware of and mindful of their place in society, enabling them to speak out for themselves.

Keywords: Partition Literature, Trauma, Women. Violence, Holocaust

Introduction

It is entirely unjustifiable that society has subjected women to incognizance and dichotomy. The inhumane abuse, brutality, and injustice that women have experienced from the dawn of time have left a psychological mark. To give women the strength to speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves, it is necessary to educate them about society. Thus, numerous female authors took the initiative to alter history and tip the pendulum of time toward women. Even now, it still surprises me how few people are ready to help women get an education, care for them, and allow them symbolically soar high.

Society disregards the development of women's perspectives. That is sufficiently clever and hilarious. When appreciating a mother, or simply a woman, comes up, she becomes an easy target of any conflict, whether caste- or community-based. We express appreciation, prayers, and homage to mother earth and the mother country. The patriarchal culture collaborates with the disempowerment of women, sometimes seeing their existence as a misfortune. The murder of a female child's fetus is a serious crime that often occurs.

In Pritam's "Pinjar," the character "Pooro" is a duplicate of a married woman who is destitute, without parents, and forced to become a Christian. The partition of India event sowed division among the races. At first, the partition riots established records for brutality and incredible depravity. In the story, a peaceful past gave way to a violent complex. The book's

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author employs realistic imagery to depict the harm that violence can do to both victims and society. Pooro was not an exception when it came to the forced detention of people's daughters, sisters, and spouses by strangers in their homes during the division.

The partition occurrences are replete with the depravity of human nature that went beyond the pale of wickedness. So, our thoughts stray to the actions of the orthodox and hypocritical society that boasts of justice, equality, and freedom for everyone on an equal footing. The difficult times have shown the true character of a ruthless organization that enslaves women behind the four walls of society's cage and restrictions and steals their serenity, happiness, and independence. Hence, it is genuinely a problem for us to determine if women's status in society is still that of a divinity or a curse, whether knowingly or even unintentionally.

In *Pinjar*, the violence between Muslims and Hindus is shown. It demonstrates how the division led to acts of terrorism, carnage, and the eviction of residents. Women suffered the most when kidnapped, raped, killed, or lost children. The story highlights the diversity of tragedies that might befall a girl without fault, depicting women's purposeful and emotional hardships. *The Skeleton* by Khushwant Singh is the name of the English translation. The competing intricacies of the human psyche, the game of love and hate, the plight and effects of the kidnapped women, and the horror of the partition catastrophe are vividly conveyed in *The Skeleton*. During the book, Amrita Pritam nurtured the character of Pooro as the epitome of female strength and importance. The author focuses on the issues women encountered during India's partition via this novel. Rituals, rape cases, and the kidnapping of young women from the opposing group all occurred.

Urvashi Butalia said in her book *The Other Side of Silence*:

Women jumping into well to drown themselves so as to avoid rape or forced religious conversions, Fathers beheading own children so they would avoid the same dishonourable fate¹ (Butalia 5).

Women were only utilized as a sex symbols for the enjoyment of males. Amrita Pritam wrote the book with the most outstanding care since she recognized how delicate the subject matter was. She recounts the prevailing circumstance at the moment. Several women were widowed or lost their children, and many more were kidnapped and raped by strangers, among other forms of victimization. The pre-partition community hunger and the associated perplexed circumstances provided a further benefit. A young Shaikh man, Rashida, had been selected to apply the irrevocable mark to the Sahukars. He was made to take an oath on the Koran that he would settle old scores by abducting Pooro before she was married. It was a classic case of love at first sight. In the novel, he told:

Allah is my witness that on the very first day I cast my eyes on you, I fell in love with you. It was my love and prodding of the Shaikh Clan that made me do so² (Pritam 18).

Amrita In this book, Pritam shows how the political division of Punjab alters the balance between Hindu and Muslim relations. Before the split, Muslim residents of these villages were ruled by Hindu moneylenders, but today they are powerless. When the state of law and order deteriorates, Rashida, a Muslim youth from Rattowal village, kidnaps Pooro while she is gathering vegetables in the fields. In the novel *Pinjar* Pooro argued with Rashida

¹ Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, pg-5

² Pritam, Amrita, "Pinjar", Page:18

after her abduction: *“Tell me, in the name of your Allah, Why did you do this to me?”*³(Pritam 16). He continued after a pause, *“Did you know that our families the Shaikhs and the Sahukars has been at loggerheads for many generations? Your grandfather had advanced us Rs.500 on compound interest and taken our house as mortgage. We could not redeem the mortgage. He attacked. the entire Shaikh family ejected”*⁴ (Pritam 17).

This kidnapping and rape of women from one group by the males of another community served as a real-life representation of the other community’s subjection. These behaviors reflect the idea that women are property as well.

Who will marry you now? You have lost your religion and your birthright. If we dare to help you, we will be wiped out without a trace of blood left behind to tell of our fate (Pritam 22).

She further lamented: *“Daughter, it would have been better if you had died at birth”* (Pritam 23). Amrita Pritam emphasizes the need for humans in the book. The main character of Pinjar is Pooro, whom Rashida, a Muslim, abducts. Pooro's journey is portrayed by Amrita Pritam, who also emphasizes the horrors she endured during the partition in her life. She gets kidnapped immediately, and when her father does not take her, she flees to her parents' desert home. When Pooro’s father said he could not let her back because she would bring the family into disrepute, Pooro's dreams of living her life once again were dashed. *“Daughter this fate was ordained for you, we are helpless.”* (Pritam 22)

Another justification for rejecting the kidnapped ladies was the need to protect the other family members. It draws attention to situations in those terrifying days when men were traded to preserve the family's male members. Typically, a daughter would scarify the family. The reaction of Pooro’s mother makes it clear when she reveals that where will they keep her? And indirectly asked her to go away at once and that the Muslims will follow her: *“They will kill your father and your brothers. They will kill all of us”* (Pritam 23). This is a moving account of the mysterious condition of the kidnapped ladies. Amrita Pritam tries to draw attention to the fact that in our patriarchal culture, women must continually demonstrate their innocence and claim their right to dignity. The long-standing conflict between Shaikhs and Sahukars is the root of Pooro's pain, yet the male-dominated culture pays little attention to the misery and suffering sustained in her life. These interactions are how Pooro develops into Hamida. Many women are kidnapped, raped, and exploited throughout the book. The insane lady was also pregnant even though she was just a mass of flesh without a thought. Pooro says:

*‘What sort of a man could have done this to her?’ the women of Sakkar asked each other. They clenched their teeth in anger... ‘He must be a savage beast to put a mad woman in this condition.’ ‘She is neither young nor attractive she is just a lump of flesh without a mind to with it...a living skeleton .a lunatic skeleton...a Skeleton picked to its pones by kites and vultures’*⁵ (Pritam 53).

There are a lot of heartbreaking situations when young ladies and girls fall prey to thugs. Pooro one day notices a group of at least a dozen “goondas” shoving a young girl in front of them. She was naked, wearing nary a shred of clothes. The “goondas” danced around the nude girl while beating drums. Hamida was unable to determine their origin or destination. *“It was*

³ Pritam, Amrita, “Pinjar”, Page: 16

⁴ Pritam, Amrita, “Pinjar”, Page: 17

⁵ Pritam, Amrita, “Pinjar”, Page: 53

a crime to be born a female,” laments Hamida, “It was wickedness to be living in a world so full of cruelty” (Pritam 87). Pooro found a little girl hidden in their pitch in the evening. She knows that the girl is from a nearby village's refugee camp and is awaiting her turn to be transported to India. The medium of the girl novelist narrates a tale of the camp:

The camp was guarded by Pakistani soldiers. After Sunset bands of goondas stole in, picked out women they liked and took them for the night; they were returned to the encampment in the morning. The girl has been forced to spend the preceding nine nights with different men⁶(Pritam 88).

Amrita Pritam emphasizes that incidences of sexual assault and rape against women were motivated by stray happiness. This occurred not only during assaults on refugee camps guarded by military caravans. Pooro accepts her destiny, moves in with Rashida, and even gives birth to Rashida's kid. Pooro takes measures to return Lajo to her parents, who are her sister-in-law. Pooro laments that her parents would not accept her after her kidnapping, but she aids Lajo in reuniting with them. She argues that since the kidnappings have become so widespread, parents have begun to tolerate their daughters being snatched by members of the opposing group, which excuses Lajo's recovery. According to Rashida, Muslim girls have also been found in India.

Several of the females that were found were with their children. She found reconciliation with a different dimension in the end. She represents overcoming obstacles. She placed a stone on her heart and chose to go to Pakistan to live with her husband and kid.

She convinces her brother: “When Lajo is welcomed back in her home, then you can take it that Pooro has also returned to you. My home is now in Pakistan” (Pritam 127).

As parents were encouraged to get their daughters back during the post-partition era, the skeleton turned Pooro could quickly return to her family. In the character of Pooro, several attributes of women are highlighted throughout the book, including bravery and the will to overcome obstacles and continue to pursue pleasure in other people's lives. It is stressed that women bear the brunt of any failure to protect family honor. The author paints a terrible image of young women of many religions being exploited as sexual objects. She depicts the feelings and events through a voyage of personal and political offenders. The book provides evidence of the potent portrayal of common societal prejudices towards the weakest members of society. The geographical, demographic, political, cultural, social, and economic aspects of these regions—once thought to be the most severely impacted by the event—have all changed due to partition. Several literary works react to this tumultuous hidden past. The brutality of the partition has been depicted in literature written in many different languages, including Urdu, Punjabi, and English. Saadat Hasan Manto, Attia Hosain, Bhisham Sahni, and Anita Desai are just a few examples of authors who have used the vernacular to express the brutality and savagery with which women were raped, and people were slain during Partition. Bapsi Sidhwa and Amrita Pritam make outstanding contributions to the partition literature among these authors who have depicted the tumultuous circumstances of partition.

Social phenomenon holds that women serve as mirrors that reflect God's omnipotence. Women represent cosmic elements. Nevertheless, the human desecration of this picture with hideous and disgusting designs is terrible. A lady embodies the goddess. Such an icon bestows

⁶ Pritam, Amrita, “Pinjar”, Page:88

upon us devotion and reverence.

Nonetheless, we treated and caressed such artwork in a rather severe manner. According to Amrita Pritam, society believes that women are an unending supply of love and pleasure that motivate us to live happy, productive lives. The community sees the woman as a symbol of feminine beauty, yet the man constantly uses her for selfish purposes.

The societal structure lacked compassion. There is just one route for women, and rehabilitation is not an option. Nonetheless, it hurts to be fused to them. Pinjar is a moving tale about how disputes between families, communities, and countries are often shown terribly. The book dealt with the predicament of women during the deadliest moment in modern Indian history, the partition, and the time immediately before and after it. The male dominance of that era's culture is described in the story, along with how women were forced to accept the rulings. The work successfully conveys the reality of the victims by using historical aspects to launch a fictitious story. The author links occurrences during Partition with the image of woman victims. Pinjar paints a picture of a world of social reality that derives its significance from portraying actual reality. The tale's protagonist is a Hindu girl from a family of moneylenders. Using this figure, the author shows how 20th-century women were forced to accept their circumstances and refer to them as their destiny. The story effectively imprints the agony and dread of India's division in the readers' brains. The story paints a vivid picture of Indian life and is highly fascinating.

The account of motherless Kammo, whose father married another woman and who has since relocated to the city. Trauma and helplessness coexisted in the girl's situation since her father's mistress forbade contact with her. Kammo's father also abandoned her. It has been stated that after a mother passes away, the genuine father even behaves like a stepfather, which is trustworthy with our character Kammo. As Hamida offered to help carry the pitcher that dropped down Kammo's arms upon seeing her aunt, the idea of collective awareness that society in general, and Kammo's aunt, in particular, wanted to infringe on her thoughts. Hindu Kammo's direct response to Muslim Hamida, "You will poison my pitcher" (Pritam 38), casts doubt on the idea of humanity's universal brotherhood and the small-minded communal thinking that has tainted it. The tale of Taro, Hamida's next-door neighbor who had been sick since her wedding day and had been married two years ago, makes our hearts heavier with pity.

The helplessness, trauma and pathetic realization by Taro when she utters:

*"There is no justice in the world; nor any God, he can do what he likes; there is no God to stop him. God's fetters were meant only for my feet"*⁷(Pritam 47).

Objectives

- (1) To investigate women's position and the authenticity that goes along with it.
- (2) To gauge the degree of hopelessness, disappointment, and identity crisis that contributed to a change in their perception of themselves.
- (3) To investigate how the partition event has a negative impact on people of all classes, castes, ages, and genders.

⁷ Pritam, Amrita, "Pinjar", Page:47

Findings

- (1) The theme of servitude, sacrifice, and control has been discovered bound for women as the curse to be born as a female child in the tales of Pooro, Taro, Lazo, Maid Woman, Hidden Girl, and Kamo.
- (2) In "Pinjar," the kidnapping and identity dilemma of Pooro, Taro, Lazo, Kamo, etc., as well as the trauma, rape, and dismay they experienced, raise our eyebrows, cause us to cry, and cause our hearts to melt with compassion. They offered more room and a social perspective.
- (3) The separation caused our female characteristics to be divided, distorted, and fractured in addition to dividing the nation's boundaries geographically. The tales of Kamo, Lajo, Taro, Mad Woman, and Hidden Girl are actually a pitiful account of the human cost of division, which was experienced by women as rape, brutality, and exploitation.

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