

## I. Introduction

Pritam is the first prominent Punjabi women poet and fiction writer, whose writings dealt with the pain she felt at the division of the Subcontinent. Born to a Sikh family in Gujranwala, Pakistan, in 1919, Pritam crossed to India after the partition of the Sub- continent in 1947. She has published over seventy books- novels, short stories and poems. Her literary works have been translated in several languages including French, Japanese and Danish. Her first story collection, in Punjabi language, was published when she was 16 years old. The shimmering effect of the world war 2<sup>nd</sup> and the partition of India became the fertile ground for her literary career.

Her writing reflected the tragic impact of the partition- violence of Indian women and their neglect and suppression in Indian Society. Most of her novels are imprinted with the gloomy and decadent anxiety of that haunted period. Perhaps no other state in India felt the sorrows and vicissitudes of partition than Punjab. It was a great bloodbath, on both sides, the biggest migration the world has ever known hitherto, partition riots have left indelible marks on the body and soul of an entire generation, but very few victims have kept written records or diaries, perhaps because personal experiences were too harrowing to document.

In every riot women are the one who suffer the most; they are the one to bear the consequence of the violence. In partition violence in India many women were subjected to interfamilial violence, they were forced to die at the hands of men in their own families. Because on the body of the women, on their chastity lies the male honor, honor of the family, community and nation. So women were violated not only by the enemy but also by their own family.

The writer was very sensitive to the agony and pain of women who faced rape, abduction, deprivation of love and care. She ruthlessly exposed man's false sense of superiority of gender when she says that no men have ever pealed a woman completely. A woman is a mirror, a reflection of the divine the cosmic, which man defiles with his ugly and beastly designs. A woman is a goddess who needs to be worshiped adorned, pampered, and caressed very gently and fondly. She is an eternal source of joy, love, and inspiration and a symbol of feminine grace but man always exploits her for his own selfish ends.

During the Indo- Pak partition a full scale riot broke out in which lakhs of families were displaced overnight. It may seem altruism, but bears remembering nevertheless, that at least half of the millions who were dislocated, killed, uprooted were women. There are accounts of uncountable rapes of women, paraded down streets making them naked and their bodies being carved with the religious symbols of the other community. Thousands of helpless women were raped and kidnapped as communal tensions set loose in the Indo- Pak border villages. Many women threw themselves into a well in order to preserve the sanctity and purity of their religion, and to avoid conversion. Those women, who in the name of preserving their chastity committed suicide, were given high respect by the society and the women who choose to live another life they were remembered a vile of the society. Men (and some women) framed these acts "as 'a willing sacrifice'." But for Menon and Bhasin, "to submit is not necessarily to agree". There is a free "will" where masculinity "notions of honor and shame" have been so deeply internalized, in the context of gendered relations of power though the people considered it as a free will but those women had no choice, they were forced to die (qtd. in Bacchetta 573).

Amrita Pritam was born in the western part of Punjab, presently in Pakistan in 1919 to a Sikh family, she started writing from very early age i.e. 16. Her first writing was a collection of poems which was published in 1935. During the partition in 1947 she moved to New Delhi, her second home and started writing in Hindi as opposed to Punjabi, her mother tongue. She is herself the victim of Indo- Pak partition. Her first home was in Pakistan but she was forced to leave Pakistan and go to India. She have closely noticed and felt by herself the turbulent situation people have gone through, especially the women who were the worst victim.

She started her writing career from collection of poems *Amrit Lehra* published when she was barely 16 years old. Her early poems are full of romantic ideas and later on she matured into a poetess of revolutionary ideas as a result of the involvement with the progressive movement in literature. She never failed to provoke readers with her rebellious thoughts. *Many of her poems are very touching.* *Aj Akhan Waris Shah Nu* (I say unto Waris Shah) is a heart rendering poem written during the riot- torn days that followed the partition of the country. This poem is addressed to Waris Shah, the celebrated eighteenth century Punjabi Poet and author of the immortal *Heer*.

After the publication of the poem *Heer* Amrita became dear to the heart of the Punjabis on both sides of the border. Over the years, her fame spread worldwide. Everyone looked at this rising star on the horizon of Punjabi literature. Her writings, in their totality, reflect the human predicament, particularly as seen through the eyes of a woman, and are full of passages which have “a terrible beauty”, and ecstasy which haunt us. Her poem transcends geographical and communal boundaries, capturing the pain of the partition in a fast dehumanizing epoch. The Central theme of her romantic poem shows the repudiation of the repeated curse of convention between men and women. A

sense of suffering and illegitimacy characterizes her concept of love and of the creative process.

In her view she finds no difference between Vedas and Upanishads and love, both are equally sublime to her. It is only love that makes one so expansive, so limitless that one can assimilate everything else around oneself including the Vedas and Upanishads. Her works are the fusion of both reality of life and imagination. There is mutual blend of fact and fiction which on the one hand shows the harsh reality of life and on the other hand adds color by her imagination.

In her autobiography the *Revenue stamp (Rasidi Ticket)*, she speaks of her writing ‘as an illegitimate child’ born out of the ‘forbidden consummation’ of ‘an affair’ between ‘the reality of my life’ and the dream of my heart” (37). She gives emphasis on the use of words. She is not satisfied with such writers who use words just for producing a stylistic effect. For her words have a lot of importance to get the real meaning.

*Shadows of Words* is another autobiography which captures her entire lifespan. In this autobiography she expresses her innate belief that since childhood all the experiences of her life have been created and lived under some shadow or another. Death casts its shadows right at the time of her birth. As we go on experiencing many things in life we slowly feel the shadows of weapons, words, dreams, shadows of authoritarian power and shadows of contemplation. In this book she presents an insight into her new inner world viewed from various angles, it happens to be a distinctly adventurous autobiography, which like a serialized photographic frame keeps enhancing those images.

Some of her important poems are Amrit Lehran, Jinnda Jian, Sunehray, Dedh Ghante Kee Mulakat, Do Khirkiyaan, Saat Saval Terwan Sooraj, Uninja Din etc. She has published twenty- eight novels, eighteen volumes of verse five of short stories and

sixteen of miscellaneous prose. She was the first woman poet to be awarded the Sahitya Academic Prize in 1956 for her volume of poems entitled *Sunehre* (Messages). She was awarded the Padma Shri in 1969, an Honorary D Litt by Delhi University in 1973, and the Vapt sarov award (International) from Bulgaria in 1980. Her volume of poems entitled *Kagaz Te Canvas* won the Bharatiya Jnanpith award for 1981.

Pritam is influenced by Tibetan Philosophy. In her poem, *Tervaan Sooraj* we can see her inclination towards this. She has used this concept symbolically. Twelve suns each refers to one calendar month of the year. In her idea 13<sup>th</sup> sun suggests someone who could embody the significance of the twelve suns and reinterpret it. According to Pritam she has found this thirteenth sun in Ayn Rand, Kazantzakis and also in Rajneesh.

After her divorce in 1960, Amrita's work turned explicitly feminist, and she drew on her unhappy marriage in many of her stories and poems.

### **Critics on Amrita Pritam**

The story of *The Skeleton* is widely discussed in terms of genocidal violence during partition- violence of India in 1947. Critics have diversely interpreted this novel since its publication. Commenting on the novel Sujala Singh says:

Amrita Pritam's novella *Pinjar* (*The Skeleton*) is about the ways in which women get situated at the crossroads of an extended array of events, norms, rites and laws which lay claims on their bodies in intrusive and invasive ways. (127)

Women are not free from their tormentors and they are none other than male members. Though there are prescribed norms and rules of the society for both the sexes but male go out of its periphery and women are bound to sit inside. Society gives excuse to any crime committed by the male but if any women try to show any radical nature society takes

action on them immediately. Women's real emancipation and equality is still not found it is confined within the pages of theoretical books and practical life is going on as before. Whenever there is social and political upheavals women became the most vulnerable and least protected victims. The brutality is targeted on women, for the wounds inflicted on them scarred and tainted entire communities. They are raped by mass, paraded down streets making them naked, their breasts being cut off of their bodies or in their bodies being carved with religious symbols of other community. Their body is not their own. It is used and controlled by the society as the way they please. To every challenges, and cruelty women overcome it in a very rational way. They don't show revenge nature. They only try to make the situation better, though for that they may have to give up their personal happiness for the sake of the family, society and country.

The opening page of the novel expresses Pooro's repugnance at the visible bodily manifestation of her violation. She felt as if her body was a pea-pod inside which she carried or slimy, white caterpillar. Pooro views her pregnancy as a reminder of the forgiving, intrusive abduction and branding of her body as a woman at the nexus of society's clawing definition of her being. Fourteen years old girl Pooro abducted by a Muslim man Rashida flees from her abductor, but despite being a virgin she is rejected by her family who refuse to accept her because of the dishonor they fear from the community. She returns to Rashida who marries her and renames her Hamida. The slimy, white caterpillar in her body is conceived through this marriage.

The role of rituals, habits and icons in demarcating boundaries and spaces between communities and religious identities is significant to the novel. Women's bodies are often imprinted with visual markers which serve as declarations of their identities in

relation to the communities to which they belong. The etching of Hamida on Pooro's arm is only one example of this.

Aparna Basu minutely observes the problems women had to face at the time of partition violence. She is critical to women who had been victims of terrible circumstances during and after the partition. She observes women predicament which rejects hollowness of the conventional patriarchal society:

In any case, women lacked the decision making power they had been treated as a commodity handed from one man to another to be used and abused. The old Hindu concept of a married daughter being Parayadhan (other family's wealth) is a succinct example of viewing women as commodities. The concept of women as independent human being with a right to choose their future was alien to traditionalists of both communities. (284)

Women's experiences of partition and the physical and psychological scars abduction left behind have not really been written or spoken about by the women themselves. Many of them were illiterate and even if they could write they found the experiences were too harrowing to report. Women usually do not want to talk or write about rape and sexual assaults. When the government announced partition of India and Pakistan, at overnight, millions of people were turned into refugees. How did people cope with this dislocation? What part did such resettlement play in reshaping or changing the shape of the cities or villages where the refugees had settled? These questions remain unanswered still today. The experiences of women and children remain even more unexplored.

What emerges from this brief exploration of the human dimensions of partition is the agony and suffering of women as a result not only of the massacres and migrations

but of abductions. So many people entered the new era of independence severely traumatized. At the midnight when India awoke to life and freedom thousands were being massacred and driven out of their homes, lives were being disrupted at all levels as families were destroyed their members separated and scattered from each other. In the case of women who were abducted and recovered were in a state of confusion, dislocation and the severing of roots, more than that the loss of community and any network of stable relationships, as well as the loss of coherent identity constituted their experience not freedom at midnight.

When India got freedom i.e. after the partition of India and Pakistan, these two countries, in the name of rehabilitating those women, who had been the victims of the violence made the condition of those women even worst than before. It did not consider of the sentiment of those women, what they actually wanted. In the eyes of state religious identity was more important and in the eyes of the community sexual purity of the woman was more important. So even after women were rescued they were not accepted by their own family. Observing the incident of Thoa Khalsa where thousands of women were raped and thousands other were killed by their Kinsmen in the name of protecting their religious pride Urvashi Butalia writes:

Shame on those women, they would say. But had they ever tried to understand the predicament of these women an oppressed women, one who has always lived in Purdah one who has, before this, not looked at a man other than her father and her brothers, and who now believes herself to be a loose woman, a bad woman, because she has lived with another man for months, she has lost her honor... who will take her back? (57-58)



Those women who sacrificed their life in the name of preserving religious sanctity, their death were valorized and they were often talked by the women giving examples to the others. They were taken as honor of the community but the women who chose to live their life after their rape or abduction they were taken as social outcast. Women faced violence from both their own families and their own communities. Conversion, rape and forcible marriage meant a violation of community honor and purity, which displaced on to the bodies of women, becomes the pretext for the killing of the women, or for their suicide. For every fire that is lit, it is women whose job it is to painfully build a future from the ashes. We women will have no part of this madness and we will suffer it no more. Those who see their manhood in taking up arms can be the protectors of no-one and nothing.

## II. Methodology

### Approach to Feminism

Though the term and concept "Feminism" develops from the early period of 1900s 'Feminism', as a literary discourse develops after the World War 2nd, and especially after 1960<sup>s</sup>. In its broadest term feminism continues to be closely interrelated with the movement by political feminism for social, economic, and cultural freedom and equality. Now it has broaden its field in each and every disciplines of human life and behavior, and becoming a way to look, manner to do and thing to dealt with. Willingly or without any intention it is bearing the color of politics.

The deeds, concepts and the manners of feminism are linked with politics, and many feminists are concerned with social- political as well as economic equality between man and women. Grounding upon this same point many literary texts are being written. In those texts the issue of feminism is shown as a sought to advice greater freedom for women to work and to remain economically and psychologically independent of man. Women thus love the capacity to create and rule independent society. In this context Lois Tyson Writes, "it (feminism) has the capacity to both reflect and create human experiences beyond the control of patriarchy" (*Critical Theory Today* 92). Patriarchal modes generally require prescribed, correct mode of organization, rationalist rules of logic and linear thinking. In contrast female language is fluidly organized and freely associative.

Feminism is related to the feminist social movement that seeks equal rights for women giving them equal states with men and freedom to decide their own careers and life partners. Feminists themselves believed that there are only some bio- logical difference between male and female, and a woman is a social construct, not a real one.

Certainly the natural biological construct imbues each individual sex with distinctive features, bodily qualities and assertions which are supposed to be vital to sustain the true nature of human evolution and civilization. Despite this biological or physical construction, the sex is created by nature. Some social and cultural differences lie in terms of their behavior, education and the attitude of society towards them. By nature, women have some specific qualities, which make them different from male. That's why as if Beauvoir's concern 'man can define human, not woman'.

Women naturally love life, give value to it and nurture it, which doesn't mean that they have weak heart rather a lovely one. The specific and general feminism quality of women makes them different from men. But the patriarchal society foster it as the gender based inequalities that deems man as subscribed and woman as inferior, men as powerful and the woman as powerless. Since antiquity women are gradually felt to launch a united effort against these injustices, inequalities and violence so as to eliminate and avert the hierarchy between sexes.

Feminism is concerned with the marginalization of all women or their being relegated to a secondary position in society as well as in other disciplines of social life. Feminism, in its broadest sense represents one of the most important social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of modern times. After 1960's feminist literary criticism came into existence as a political movement, expressing social, economic and cultural freedom and equality between men and women. As a political movement, feminism, has become successful in giving due place to writings of non- canonical woman writers.

Feminism came into practice as an attack against female marginalization in all forms of social knowledge and practice. This happen because our society, civilization and practices all are pervasively patriarchal, that is male centered , which is controlled,

organized and conducted in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains, such as: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic. By this cultural process the masculine in our culture has come to be widely defined as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative, the feminine by systematic opposition to such traits has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional. Men are always overpowered with the sense of “I am man, she is woman. I am strong, she is weak. I am tough, she is tender. I am self-sufficient, she is needful” (Ruth 54).

### **Women and Violence**

The softer, weaker and more dependent the woman is, the stronger and hence more powerful the man appears, the more servile a woman the more masterly the man and the more the woman withdraws into home and gentility, the more the arenas of government and industry are left to the iron grasp of warriors and warrior values. Patriarchal society from the primitive age took advantage of woman's feminine quality. I.e. woman have the nature of self-control, they hate violence, and they live life for the sake of their family and community.

By birth, women have some special qualities. By nature they are kind, loving, Peace lovers and always stand in favor of humanity. Instead of their hatred towards violence and favor of love and humanity, women are much more sufferer during the period of violence. Women's love of humanity always falls in danger from the hand of violent nature of man. To give outlet to their aggressive nature they create violence in the society by giving it different name like politics, religion, race, sex etc. War in the name of politics is common in every country, but in the country where citizen follow multiple religion, religion is the main cause of war. India is the country where people following

two great religions, Hinduism and Muslim reside and in history we have record of violent war among these two religions. Men fight, burn ways and houses, show war like behavior but women become the real sufferer of / from this. In which context Urvashi Butalia Writes:

Violence is almost always instigated by men, but its greatest impact is felt by women. In violent conflict, it is women who are raped, women who are Widowed, women whose children and husbands are sacrificed in the name of national integrity and unity. (*qtd. in Community state and Gender* 34)

In the times of communal strife and violence, women remain essentially non-violent and are at the receiving end of violence as victims, and that they are left with the task of rebuilding the community. Communal confrontations are normally engineered and led by men and women are often primary victims, having to bear the brunt of the effects of communal violence, whether it is rape or loss of male members of the family. How long the violence may be or how disaster and painful that violence may be women rarely involved in the communal violence. Whether they lose their loving husbands or lovely children, they have the intention to avoid the violence as quoted by Butalia, "Women have rarely been active in communal riots and have a clear interest in avoiding them" (35).

Though women have tried to avoid and step violence, the question arises whether they became able to stop it or not". In front of the violent society dominated and headed by violent male, the request and plight of women is not heard, and more over their voice is muffled. In such a society the single attempt of women to stop violence become fruitless as an example of Bhagalpur given by Urvashi.

In one instance of the killing of some 55 Muslims in Urban Bhagalpur, a

Hindu women had tried to protect them, but had been stopped by her neighbours from even giving water to the dying and wounded, though they begged for it. (35)

When the plan of Indo-pak partition announced on 3 June 1947 and as a new political entity Pakistan created as a new Muslim country, the exchange of population had taken place. Within a week of independence about 11 Lakhs Hindus and Sikhs had crossed over from west to east Punjab, and in week following, another 25 Lakhs had collected in the refugee camps in West Punjab. By the time the migrations were finally over, about five million people had crossed the newly created boundaries of Punjab and Bengal, carrying with them memories of a kind of violence that the three communities (Hindu, Muslim and Sheikh) had visited upon each other, unmatched in scale, brutality and intensity. During this time, in the communal violence, many peoples were killed, abducted, and handicapped both from the opposite party and from their own family members, kins and relatives. Among those many were women, who were in the trap from both sides. They were abducted and raped by the oppositional religious groups, who behave and treat them violently. And on the other hand, in the name of preserving their purity and chastity own family members killed them, and in some cases they themselves committed suicide. This real but pathetic condition of the then Indian and Pakistani women is clearly seen in the narratives of Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, who write:

The fear of abduction, or falling into the hands of the enemy compelled hundreds of women to take their own lives, equal numbers to be killed by their own families, and literally thousands of others to carry packets of Poison their persons in the eventuality that they might be captured. And many committed suicide after they were released by their captors for

having been thus "used" and polluted. (*Abducted Women and Questions of Honour 5*)

Women unwillingly became compelled to finish their life to preserve the family honor. The abducted women were taken as a dishonor of family history. So the fear of rape or abduction or falling into the enemies hands had driven hundreds of women to take their own lives, to jump into wells, take poison in case it was needed to kill their own lives. They further beg their male kinsman to help them to die rather than to face dishonor in the society.

Women were much more suffered in the name of religion than any other issues during the period of violence. The main issue of the division of Hindustan- Pakistan was religion and because of this many women were abducted, and misbehaved in the name of religion. During the partition Hindus and Sikhs from west Punjab fled to India and Muslims from east Punjab fled to Pakistan and they were brutally attacked by the armed mobs.

The convoy which brought refugees only carried dead bodies while reaching into the destination and many of them were women. A large number of abducted women were sold, often several times. Sometimes they were presented as gifts to friends and relatives, and distributed to the police and security guards. They were taken and behaved as an objects and token of gifts, to refer the same condition Aparna Basu writes:

After the unforgettable massacre of what came to be called the Kamoke train incident, in which three thousand male passengers were killed, the station House Officer collected the young women in an open space and distributed them like sweets among the police, the national guards, and the local goondas (thugs). Women were sold or given away as gifts in the

same way that baskets of oranges are sold or given as gifts. (*Uprooted Women* 273)

For an abducted woman, there was nobody she could turn for help. She had no option except to live with the person who killed her husband, father or brother. Those abducted women were distributed according to their rank and beauty. Women of first rank usually fell in the hand of police and army; second in common people and third rank (old and who had no charm) were discarded and abandoned. The groups, who abducted those women, had no any sense of guilt rather the honor of taking revenge with them who had abducted their sisters, wives and mothers. In fact they took pride of taking revenge by abducting the women of opposite religious groups.

Though male fight, kill and became brutal, female bear the direct consequences of that injustice, male try to revenge with opposite group from women. In the name of taking revenge with opposite religious group the male members of the group punish the women of the other group, which further invites the suffering of their own mothers and sisters. Not only this but from avoiding women from the abduction, the male members of the family killed themselves. Much more women, "particularly in Sikh families, were killed ("martyred" is the term that is used) by their Kinsmen in order to "protect" them from being converted; perhaps an equivalent number killed themselves" (*Community, state and Gender* 36). There are accounts of innumerable rapes, of women being stripped, naked and paraded down streets, "of their breasts being cut off, of their bodies being carved with the religious symbols of the other community" (37).

Women become the means of expressing men's anger and anguish. And their on their chastity depended the honor of the men folk or women's bodies were the repositories of men's honor. So to preserve their honor and chastity men use violates and



even kills women. But women, with open heart accept the proposal of men offering themselves up for death, and more particularly accept "heroic" death for the honour of the community and male members. Urvashi herself quote an interview taken from Bir Bahadur Singh which reflects the concept:

In Gulab Singh's haveli 26 girls had been put aside. First of all my father, Santa Raj Singh, when he brought his daughter, he brought her into the countryward to kill her...He killed two and the third was my sister, Maun Kaur...My father swung the Kirpan...the Kirpan got stuck in her dupatta....Then my sister, with her own hands moved her dupatta aside and then he swung the kirpan and her head and neck rolled off and fell...twenty five girls were killed, they were cut. (38)

### **Injustice Faced by Women**

Men were so mad and crazy to preserve the religious charity and purity of women that they do not let even pregnant women to be alive. The brain of those women was completely whitewashed that they never thought anything except to protect the purity and sanctity of religion. Women themselves became happy to die for the sake of preserving religion, which only appeared for them to die as a brave and martyr's death. Urvashi further cites the lines of Singh which further goes, "one girl, my *taya's* daughter- in- law, who was pregnant...Somehow she didn't get killed and later my *taya's* son short her with a pistol..." (38).

These all women were happy to die and easily accept death from the hand of their relatives rather than to live with persons of opposite religion. Some others, became happy with others, married and settled life with them, but they couldn't get chance to live with them freely and without fear as their wives. And after partition the state itself dislocated

them from newly settled home in the name of evacuation. Though the state tried to recover and rehabilitate them, their sentiment was never realized and valued by the state. The sentiment and desire of women is always neglected by the state as well. So they became helpless, homeless and support less. And because of this their normal and everyday life style was closed off, and they had to live alone, or many of them become "spinsters" with their families. Others were widowed, lost their homes and possessions, and were left to built lives of their own, for which many of them were ill- equipped. Several of them had to spend their lives in women's homes as permanent refugees.

Women who sacrificed their lives for the honor of family became totally neglected by the community. To preserve religious sanctity many women gave their lives but grounding upon the same surface men folk of the society neglected and devalued them. Referring the communal sacrifice of women in the name of preserving religious purity Urvashi writes an incident of Thoa Khalsa:

In Thoa Khalsa, some 90 women threw themselves into a well in order to preserve the "sanctity" and "purity" of their religion, and to avoid conversion. (...). The tales of the women's sacrifice occupy a prominent place in the ceremony. It is they who are seen to have upheld, by offering themselves up for death, and more particularly "heroic" death, the "honor" of the community. (37)

Stories of this kind of mass suicide, or of women being killed by their own families were common at that time. Even by begging help from their relatives to die rather than to face dishonor and disrespect they happily chose the path of heaven. Among many suicide of that time, by both male and female, the number of women was much larger than the men-offering themselves up for death, or simply being killed, in an attempt to protect the

"purity" and "sanctity" of religion. While most able-bodied men felt they could go out to fight, and kill if necessary, for the women and children, as well as for the old and weak, a "martyr's death seemed to be the only option preferable to conversion to the other religion.

The recovery of women from both countries goes on until the end of 1957. After the three months of partition, on 6 December 1947, India and Pakistan came to an agreement on the issue of recovering those abducted women and rehabilitate in their native country, this act of recovery, and rehabilitation in homeland was actually a expression for returning Hindu and Sikh women to the Hindu and Sikh fold (esp. in India), and Muslim women to the Muslim fold (in Pakistan). Though, India, at that time was already defined itself as Secular, the natural homeland for women were on the same concept these two countries trafficked women from one nation to another. Urvashi further writes:

Women who had been taken away by the "other" community, had to be brought back to their "own" community and their "own" homeland the concepts of belonging and otherness were of course defined for women by the men of the otherness countries. They themselves did not have a choice.

*(Community, State and Gender 45)*

The Inter Dominion Treaty of these two nations was clear to forcibly recover and restore the women, who were abducted and living besides the border of the country, with their own families. The choices and wishes of those abducted women are not taken into consideration. Butalia quote some articles of the treaty which goes in this way:

Conversions by persons abducted after March 1947 will not be recognized and all such persons MUST be restored to their Respective Dominions.

The wishes of the persons concerned are irrelevant and consequently no statements of such persons should be recorded before Magistrates. (45)

Some clauses of the treaty were clearly stated that women kept in the camp, after rescuing, could not raise any questions in court, nor could they question against the state and its officers even if they did not agree with their rescue. Many members of the rescue operation were women, and it sounds that in the eyes of state, women were better placed to handle the delicacy of the situation, and to persuade those who were reluctant to give up their new homes and to return to the national parental fold. Which shows that the women's will was not taken into consideration at all; they were once again reduced to the goods and chattel status without having the right to decide their own future or mould their own life. It was generally assumed that all abducted women victims, being held captive, wanting nothing more than to be restored to their original families as soon as possible. But as Menon and Bhasin quotes, "women or abducted person rescued from surroundings which, prime facie, do not give them the liberty to make a free choice as regards their own lives" (*Abducted Women* 23).

The date of the treaty was until the 31 December 1949, so to fulfill the gap Gopala Swami Ayyangar, the then Indian minister of transport, in charge of recovery; moved a bill in parliament on 15 December, named the 'Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration)' Bill. But this bill also actively discouraged women from taking their children with them, and forced those women who were pregnant, to have abortions done before they returned to their respective families. The Government took the policy to put those pregnant women to the camp and to send home only after having abortion. The statistical data shows that while bringing / returning 820 women from Pakistan, until July

1952, only 102 children had been recovered to India. Again, the sentiment of women is neglected even in the case of pregnancy and abortion.

Both the countries directly fall under the religious grip and their way to look is shaped by religious code and conduct. Both Hindus and Sikh believe that the women recovered by the abductors become impure, and it is great shame to accept such women both for community and for religion. Family tend to remember women who took their own lives to save the family honour and forget those who decided to live despite "dishonor" or who left their families. In the view of family such women had no right to live. In the eyes of the community, it was women's sexual purity that becomes important. For the state their religious identity was paramount. The state was trying to establish its own legitimacy and authority but for the communities their ideological inheritance had a powerful bearing.

### **Dual Policy of Government**

Though the government of India tried to recover its women, but often against the wishes of the victims, and rehabilitate them, most often in camps, since the families were unwilling to accept those women defined by the Muslims. Though government tried it's best to recover and rehabilitate the abducted women, Family itself didn't become ready to accept them. Raising the same issue of the then government Butalia writes, "In the years immediately following partition, the sexuality of women, whether insolence or violated become a subject of concern for the Indian state and more specifically for the Hindu Community" (*Abducted and Widowed Women: Questions of Sexuality* 102). The most difficult of all was the problem of what to do with the children born of mixed unions. Many families who had earlier reported their women missing, now refused to take them back because they had been polluted" through sexual contract with men of other race.

Women were faced with the impossible "choice" of having to give up their children if they wished to be taken back into their families. It was the responsibility of the state to settle the children thus abandoned into orphanages and homes. Due to these reasons the Recovery operation finally had to be closed down.

Menon and Bhasin quotes the public appeal made by Mahatma Gandhi and the other made by Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India Gandhi said:

I hear....that the Hindus are not willing to accept the recovered women because they say that they have become impure. I feel that this is a matter of great shame. That woman is as pure as the girls who are sitting by my side. And if anyone of these "recovered" women should come to me then I will give them as much respect and honor as I account to these young maidens. (60)

This proved that the condition of the abducted women became so worst at that time, the prime minister of India, Nehru and the supreme leader, Mahatma Gandhi both became compelled to appeal the public to accept those women. Male fought, struggled and brought the women back but they themselves didn't become ready to accept those recovered women in their life and family. From this activity women were totally discarded and compelled to live a disastrous life. The suicide rate of them increased drastically. Many children and women were forced to live mean and pathetic life. Highly charged with an emotion, Gandhi's appeal made some impact on Hindu society. But the speech of Nehru misjudged the sentiment and feelings of Hindus. In the view of Nehru families of Hindu society and culture should be proud and happy by accepting those abducted women which the Hindu society couldn't digest easily while giving public speech on January 1948 which goes in the following way:

I am told that there is unwillingness on the part of their relatives to accept those girls and women (who had been abducted) back in their homes. This is a most objectionable and wrong attitude to take and any social custom that supports this attitude must be condemned. These girls and women require our tender and loving care and their relatives should be proud to take them back. (qtd. in Bharati Ray 64)

The repeated appeals of Gandhi and Nehru merely indicate that the number of families refusing to give up their beliefs was significantly large. In the eyes of Hindu Community, it was women's sexual purity that became important and for the state women's religious purity was paramount and matter of consideration. So the state itself was trying to establish its legitimacy and authority upon the individual. Even the handful of families "broadminded" enough to take back those women, in the vast majority of cases, merely allowed them to live in the household, but did not rehabilitate them in the home in the manner in which they had earlier been a part of. It was an act of kindness, generosity and sacrifice on the part of those who accepted the "recovered" women.

But many of them were not accepted by the families. The women who had children were in worst condition. When they did return, often families would not take them back. For those who had children the situation was pathetic and worst, for they were forced to choose between their children and their families. Being unable to support children on their own, several chose to give them up and return to their natal families. This left the state to deal with the problem of unwanted children, a factor that contributed in a major way to the winding up of the recovery operation.

The main reason of Hindu women not being accepted by the community was the stigma of pollution or sexual impurity of them. To erase this belief

from the mind of common people the India Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation circulated a pamphlet which was claiming, "Just as a flowing stream purifies itself and is washed clean of all pollutants, so a menstruating woman is purified after her periods." (qtd. in Bacchetta 574)

Though to compare menstruation with the stream with the stream is ironic, that became able to bring slight change in people's thinking and behavior. Government people tried to link the situations with the incidents of 'Rama' and 'Sita' of ancient religious book 'Ramayana'.

In this way in each and every activity and incident after months of partition women became victim but the women who were mistreated and misbehaved by the male, state and Government, became tolerant and showed their fortitude nature. By birth women are calm and non violent and this nature of them are manifested in each and every step of their life however in pathetic and miserable condition they may be. During the period of Indo- Pak partition violence women once again in the history proved their feminine quality. Stating this same quality of women Butalia writes. "In times of communal strife and violence, women remain essential non- violent and are at the receiving end of violence as victims, and that they are left with the task of rebuilding the community" (34).

In that period of high communal strife women concerned themselves into the rebuilding of the community and to bring harmony among people, and religion. Hiding the inner pain within their hearts, outside they showed happy and cheerful appearance and relinquished the pain of others. Veena Das, referring the remarks of Manto, an Urdu Writer, Writes:



Manto portrays women having two bodies one is the natural and the second is the body which the fruits of violence have to be nurtured (...). A woman hides the faults of her husband inside her womb, and how women defend the collective silence around the violence and brutality that they have to often face from their men. In case of the partition women had to witness not only the aggression of men defined as enemies, but also the betrayal by their men. (Das 72)

Hiding their own pain women try to heal the wounds of others, rather than to fight and quarrel, and to invite further destruction in the society, women easily accept the life the life in the way as it comes. Women are sensible enough to think that nothing good comes by the fight and quarrel. They become patient thinking about not only their future but the future of their children family and community. They don't complain if it brings further tension.

After abduction many women were bound to settle a new life with the family of opposite religion. Many Hindu women became the wife of Muslim men and many Muslim women became the wife of Hindu men, though some of the women returned to their original family after the rehabilitation. But there were many women who had children born of Muslim fathers and vice-versa. They were torn about what to do with their children, and were forced to choose between their children and their families their own happiness they chose to live their life with children discarding their family because they don't want their children living as an orphan. For the sake of their children's future they sacrificed their happiness. Furthermore they didn't want to be dislocated again, Urvashi Butalia writes, "The recovery operation lasted several years and during this time, women had perhaps "settled" into families, some had "accepted" their fate, some had had children and

therefore many did not want to face a second dislocation" (*Abducted and Widowed Women: Questions of Sexuality* 95).

Sending them away brings grief and the dislocation of their accepted family life without in the least promoting human happiness the woman's will was not taken into consideration at all; she was "once again, reduced to the goods and chattel status without having the right to decide her own future or mould her own life.

### **III. Textual Analyses**

#### **Sacrificing Behavior of Women**

Pooro, the victim of circumstances during the turbulent times of partition of India is an example of thousands of such women. The novelist successfully presents the main character Pooro, how she overcome the wrath of hostile communities and rewrites her destiny in the milieu of changing relationship of nations, communities and individuals. To fulfill the selfish interest of some of the political and religious leaders they create war in nation. In history, there occurred many wars in the name of religion.

India is the country where people following two hostile religions live and there is always clash between them. It is heard that sometimes Hindu community break down the mosque of Muslim and sometimes Muslim community break down Hindu temple. Then start the killing and murdering of each other. In many places we have heard the whole village slaughtered by Muslims at night when they are asleep and vice- versa. Highlighting those incidents religious leaders start provoking the people to divide the country into two so that Muslims and Hindus could separately live in their own way.

It is difficult to date historical events in any precise way as their beginnings and endings are not finite. The partition of India into two countries, India and Pakistan, is said to have taken place in August 1947, yet its beginning go much further back into history and ramifications have not ended. Within a short space of time, millions of people were turned into refugees. Migration started taking place even before August 15, 1947 is a year that is marked in India as the year of independence. Within a week of independence about 11 lakhs Hindus and Sikhs had crossed over from west to east Punjab, and in the week following, another 25 lakhs had collected in the refugee camps in west Punjab, Huge foot convoys were organized by the military evacuation organization.

However, partition often overshadows the importance of independence because of its much more direct impact on the lives of people. Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar (The Skeleton)*, a dark narrative of the cross-religious abductions of women also deals with the same issue. In the story the protagonist, Pooro, a Hindu woman is abducted and forcibly married to a Muslim man, Rashida. Pooro flees from her abductor before she was married with Rashida, but despite being a virgin, is rejected by her family who refuse to accept her because of the dishonor they fear from the community. Pooro's forefathers had committed the same crime many years before which had befallen now in the name of taking revenge / avenge.

Pooro's father did not accept her because he was afraid that the other members of the family might be in danger and that his forefathers crime will be disclosed again and his reputation might fall into crisis. Pooro pleaded her father to take her with him to Thailand, but her father did not listen to her he said to his daughter that she have lost her faith and her birthright and nobody will marry her now. He requested pooro to go to the place from where she had come, "who will marry you now? You have lost your faith 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" (14).

Pooro sacrificed her life for the sake of the life of other members of the family and the pride of the family. She was free to choose and decide her life but she gave importance to the protection of the family, considering this she returned back to the abductor though she was not willing to go. But her family did not care for her happiness. They could have tried to protect her but they did not take any steps in this direction because they did not want to put their life in danger. Rather they were ready to abandon her. They did not hesitate to say, "it were better if you had died at birth" (14). How could

she bear such remarks from her own parents? Her father put all the blame to the fate saying, "this fate was ordained for you; we are helpless" (13).

Though Pooro remains scarred, she comes to accept her new identity and prosper in a provisional, post- traumatic sort of way, she was renamed as "Hamida" which was inscribed in her skin in dark green letters and everyone began to call her by that name. Pooro wonders at her luck a Muslim through marriage and a Hindu by birth. Pooro often dreamt that, "she met her old friends and played in her parents home, everyone still called her Pooro. At other times she was Hamida. It was a double life: Hamida by day, Pooro by night. In reality, she was neither one nor other; she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name" (15). Pooro was already married with a Muslim man Rashida and she was ready to be his wife. But this did not satisfy her husband Rashida. He robbed her identity and renamed her "Hamida". For him this naming is an act of registration within a social code and functions as a durable mark of legitimate identity.

Her repressed desire to remain Pooro came out in the form of dream. She always repressed her desires gave less priority to her wishes and more importance to value the life of others. She might have revolted with her husband, denied to be tattooed as Hamida, but she did not do so. She is tolerant to every injustice that falls on her which shows her feminine fortitude quality. If she had denied to be renamed as Hamida other members in the Muslim community might have rejected Rashida. So to save her new home, her husband she let any crime fall upon her without showing any reaction against.

### **Women: A Tool to Satisfy Male's Ego**

The time went by and one day Pooro gave birth to a son. When Rashida knew that he overcame with joy and emotion. He was very happy because he had won the battle- "He had won over the Hindu girl. The gamble had paid off. Pooro was no longer

the girl he had abducted and made his mistress- not a woman he had brought in as a housekeeper. She was Hamida, the mother of his son" (20). He became happy not only because he bore a son but because he had the upper hand above the Hindu. He was able to violate a Hindu girl and quench the fire which was burning aflame inside his heart. At first when Hamida felt her son's soft face nuzzling into her bare arm;

A cold, clammy feeling ran through her body- as if a slimy slug was clambering over her. She clenched her teeth; she wanted to slake the slug off her arm, flick it away from her side, draw it out as one draws out a thorn by taking its head between one's nails, pluck it out of her flesh like a tick or a leech and cast it away. (20-21)

That type of feeling came to her because she had conceived not because of her will but was forced to. But after some days when her breast filled with milk and her child started to suck milk a strange, strong emotion welled upon her. She started looking continuously at the face of her son whose face resembled like that of her husband. She remembered all the crime committed upon her by the patriarchal society. How she was kidnapped by a Muslim man, how she became able to flee from him but despite being virgin how her father had rejected her. Now she gave birth to a son who was forcefully implanted inside her against her will. She wanted to throw her son away like one draws out a thorn from one's body.

Pooro saw her baby looked more like his father; shaped like him and now is sucking milk forcefully whether she liked it or not. Upon the face of her own son she saw the image of those male members of the society who made her suffer, whether they are her own father or her own husband. Looking at the face of her son she remembers the whole male members of the society, and he resembles all of them. For, her the son is the

heir of male patriarchy of the society. Like his ancestors, her son her son will dominate another woman. From his hand many women/girls will loose chastity and virginity and will be compelled to live painful life like her. She felt the sucking of milk by her son as the sucking of the blood of women by men. Because of this she starts to hate all men of the society. She linked the boy with his father (Rashida), all mankind, all men, and with bitter disgust she says, "Men who gnaw a women's body like a dog gnawing a bone and like a dog eat it up" (21).

Pooro has strong sense of hatred towards men that she saw men as dog and their behaviour towards women as dog's quarrel for a small piece of bone, and she compares men's behaviour with women in the same way as dogs behave with the thrown piece of bone. There was internal conflict going on inside her mind, as how could a mother discard her own blood. When she slowly started breast feeding slowly, slowly:

A strange, strong emotion welled up in Hamida's bosom, she wanted to put the child against her cheek and cry to her heart's content. The boy was a toy made of her own blood, a statue carved out of her own flesh. In all the teeming world, this boy was all that really belong to her. She did not care if she never again saw the faces of her mother, father, brothers or sisters.... She would gaze at the face of her son in whose veins mingled the blood of her parents- the parents who had cast her aside (21).

Pooro, born as a Hindu girl became Muslim after she was abducted and married by a Muslim man. She was rejected by her parents. They did not let her remain Hindu and did not care even if she become Muslim after marriage she could neither accept Muslim religion nor could restore herself as Hindu. In her heart she wanted to be a Hindu but people around her though her to be a Muslim woman. She is living an obligatory life in

the whirlwind of tears. She suffered a lot in her life which taught her many things. She learnt to become serious and thoughtful and wanted to express everything into words, but could not do so.

Women have to speak not what they want, but what society allows them to. Every time they speak they have to hesitate, Ponder upon what they are going to speak for the prescribed norms of society. If somebody shows rebellious nature, she is taken as a disease which needs to be cured immediately. If not cured they think that she will spread it every where which becomes hard to control. Pooro's "emotions rose like foam on the crest of a wave, were battered against the rocks of experience and subsided once more into the water" (25).

Women are mentally and physically violated. A lady is raped by a man but the blind society gives penalty to her instead men are privileged by birth. Women are considered weak and are nourished in the same environment. On the contrary, men are given liberty to do anything. They can go to any extent, can do anything they like, can tell anything they want to and are considered smart. Females are supposed to remain under the protection of male members- wife under husband's protection, sister under brother's protection and daughter under father's protection. It exists as a hierarchical power relation where man dominates women in every social, economic cultural and religious milieu of human life. The partiality historically exist, sustains itself in the form of male domination against female subordination through ideological practices. The patriarchy fosters the gender based inequalities that decides man as superior and woman as inferior, and man as powerful and woman as powerless.

Parents always bear the threat that their young daughter's would be raped and misbehaved by others. So that young daughters and their chastity always become the



course of parent's tension and headache. Their chastity becomes the matter of social honour. And once she is violated nobody looks at her face. She is compelled to leave her home or commit suicide so that society cannot point out against her family. Daughter is a headache to her parents, they, all the time, watch out her activities and do not give her sufficient freedom, compel her to live in home and do household activities, Pooro in the story develops friendship with a young sallow- faced girl named Taro who had large melancholy eyes. Though the girl was married she had been ill since her wedding day. When Pooro wanted to know something about her, flood of tears fell down to her cheeks, she burst out: "when parents give away a daughter in marriage, they put a noose round her neck and hand the other end of the rope to the man of their choice" (27).

Until marriage she was living under her father's control and after marriage that power of domination automatically goes to her husband. Now it is the husband who protects her, who decides what she should do and what not. A woman has to get used to every kind of situation because nobody knows where her life lead her to, "When a girl is given away in marriage, God deprives her of her tongue, so that she may not complain" (27). Though she has many things to say, many sorrows to express no one became ready to give ear to her. Neither anyone became ready to hear of her feelings nor that arouse any sympathy towards her. Patriarchal society gives no respect to the feeling of women. They think that women need nothing more than food and clothing and that is enough for them. A husband's duty towards his wife is to provide her food and cloth and any male who can provide food and cloth can bring any number of wives he likes. It is his privilege. Women tolerate any torture give to her without any complain.

Taro in this story is not satisfied with her married life. She thinks that "my husband has no use for me, because another woman is mistress of both his heart and his

house" (27). No one bothers about other people's sorrows. They think that food and clothing are enough that a woman need. She has to sell her body "for a mess of potage and a few rags" (27). Our society is structured in such a way that son in law is given a very high position. Once parents give their daughter in marriage they can't complain anything against their son-in law even if he tortures or neglect their daughter. Their lips are sealed and it is up to the husband to treat his wife as he likes. It's a man's privilege.

The fortitude nature of women is also revealed from the life and behavior of Taro. Though she was totally rejected from the house and insulted by every members of the family, she accepts that easily and takes that as her fate. She herself is becoming weak, pale and ill but is happily accepting that. Her skin had become the color of spring onion and face was becoming like stick of turmeric but still she was conscious and serious on household works neglecting her health. Despite her great pain and suffering, Taro tried to share smile with others. Pritam writes, "Hamida and the girl began to exchange smiles when they passed each other in the village" (26). Taro lives very pathetic and miserable life and "each time she turned to her parents, she was thinner than before" (26) and only skull and bones stuck out of her flesh, but neither anyone thinks and cares about her nor she herself. She endures all pain and suffering in the name of not giving pain and suffering to the family members. Enduring all pain, swallowing and drinking own tear she try to show smiles in her face.

Parents-in-law of Taro married their son with her though they were already aware about their son's behavior. They only care their own fame and honor and married their son with Taro, a girl from the social rank of their own. For they say, "we feed and clothe the girl. We give her money to spend. What has she to grumble about?" (27). Though,

Taro knew all these things she endures it all and don't raise any questions against them. She accepts it as her own fate and reward of the society.

Through the centuries, patriarchy has determined and shaped almost entirely the nature and quality of our society; its values and norms, the place and image of women within it, and the relation between the sexes in which men are valued above women. Men are always overpowered with the sense of superiority.

### **Physical and Psychological Torture**

The incident of the arrival of a mad woman in the middle of the novel bears a significant symbolic meaning in the text. The hysterical laugh of her, semi-naked and dust covered body and each and every activities of her were shown and narrated in such a way to criticize the male dominated society. How barbarously men treat with women and how their hearts become dull and feeling less towards the feelings and desires of women. Though there rise many debates and different people debate and guess differently but it is true that who raped and impregnated the mad woman was certainly a man. The person who became lustful towards her body brought her to that painful situation; it is a hidden face of the society. Pritam does not think it necessary to point out a single man for that activity because that is the common nature of male.

The woman became mad because of misbehave and violent sexual behavior of men. When the local woman of Sakkar knew that the mad woman was pregnant, they gave food and cloth to her but male organized a meeting (Panchayat) and decided to send her away, because, for them she could be the issue to raise questions upon their fame and honour. Hamida brought her (mad woman's) son, when she died after giving birth to a son, "In the name of Allah!" muttered Rashida as he severed the cord. Hamida wrapped

the baby in the dupatta" (32). But the violent nature of men is again seen when Hindus tried to take the son of the mad woman from Hamida.

Hindus, after discussing about that matter, they came to the conclusion that the mad woman was Hindu and that would be shameful to leave a child of Hindu woman with Muslims and allow that child to be a Musalman. Forcefully they brought the child from Hamida (Pooro) when he was six months old. They not only seize the boy from Hamida and Rashida but also the right of the boy to live. They neglected the life of infant and became unable to take care of him and sustain his life when the boy became seriously ill, after a few days they again returned him to Hamida. How shamelessly they played with the life of others. Hamida easily accepted the Hindu boy when he was returned back from the Hindus who had shown their possession over the boy. How women are always ready to sustain life and ready to care life of others? Hamida and her husband easily accept the boy given to them even when he was seriously ill and going to die. "Take him! We leave his life in your custody! If you can save him, he is yours!"... The child was in a state of coma" (41).

When Hamida accepted the child of the mad woman, her son Javed was only two years old, so there was the problem of mother's milk. It was really difficult to sustain life of the child without mother's milk. Hamida took it seriously and her heart was filled with strong affection of motherhood. She found the image of her own son, Javed, on that newly born or newly found baby. Her heart became full with maternity love that she became ready to do everything for the sake of the child. She did everything to bring milk for the baby. Pritam narrates this incident in the following way;

Javed had had her breast for two full years and had not been very long weaned. Hamida had heard that white cumin-seed brought milk to

women's breasts. She swallowed a palmful with a tumbler of milk. Three days later Hamida's breasts filled with milk. She offered them to the child of madwoman of Sakkar as if he were her own son. (34)

In one hand women try hard to save the life of other and on the other, men try to destroy the family, property and happiness of others. To take revenge with Rashida, about the abduction of his sister the brother of Pooro (Hamida), Trilok set fire of the entire harvested crop. The issue of the abduction was imprinted in his heart in such a way that he became ready to do any crime and take revenge against him. Trilok had come there to take revenge with Rashida and bring his sister back after 11 years of abduction, but being unable to find out the home he set fire on the stacks. Her brother "had asked a peasant about his ancestral home" (48). Ram Chand told Pooro (Hamida) that "He had come to take you back by force if necessary, but he could not find out where you were living. He was so enraged that he burnt down Rasida's crops" (54).

This incident had seriously wounded the soft and calm heart of Hamida and she vision the further destruction. Hamida dreamed that, "the whole world was ablaze: everything from the grass on the ground to the tallest Peepul was aflame. She saw a handsome youth sitting calmly by the fire warming his hands" (49). That incident became the issue of bringing further riots among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. That became the spark blazing among the hot fuel which easily caught that.

### **Victim of Religious Conflict**

Men started to collect weapons and set out to destroy the lives, property and houses of others; and to abduct, rape and misbehave the girls and women of other religion than their own. Before her own eyes, "Hamida saw men collecting steel weapons and having their edges sharpened" (49) and clouds of dust float over the roads. The stories of

men being slaughtered in hundreds and thousands in number, rows of houses being burnt down and neighbours slaughtering each others throats spread all over the country. Neither any person's life nor his / her property became safe from the violence and riots. As on the incident of partition of India and Pakistan human being also divided in the name of religion. Muslims chose and favored Pakistan as their homeland and promised, "We will not let a trace of Hindu blood remain in our country" (49) and so was the condition in India also, where almost all Hindus and Sikhs were leaving or coming from Pakistan. All of sudden the condition became so worst and it seemed that men almost became hysterical and mass hysteria guided them.

Neighbour fought with neighbour and slaughtered each other. Fear came not from the people living far from their homes rather from the near by one. Younster started to abduct and rape the sister and mother of their own friends. No trace of humanity was found and seen there rather a strong feeling and attachment of religion guided them all. The streets ran with blood and cluttered with human corpses but no one showed interest to bury and cremate those dead bodies. Cities and villages were barricaded between Hindus and Muslims. The story of abduction, rape and violation made the women worry than men, and like other women, "Hamida's ears burned with rage when she heard of the abduction of Hindu girls by Muslims and of Muslim girls by Hindus" (50).

Women became the real sufferer by the incident, both physically and mentally. The Hindu women who were leaving for India were abducted forced to marriage, some were murdered, some stripped and paraded naked in the streets; and then same was the condition for the women leaving for Pakistan from India. The situation became so horrible and they fled in such a hurry that "they left their cows tethered; their buffaloes

lowered piteously" (50). The consequences of the riot became so worst that millions of men and women left their homes and fled towards the safety places but many women were captured by the people of other religion on the way. Pritam Writes:

One day Hamida saw a band of dozen of more goondas pushing a young girl before them. She had not a stitch of clothing on her person. The goondas beat drums and danced about the naked girl. Hamida could not find out where they were going. (51)

In this way women were treated mercilessly, and insulted bitterly. Villages became empty and deserted. In the village of Hamida only the non- Muslims left were the three charred corpses in the street" (51) which remained there since last 3 days upon which pie-dogs and crows were dancing. Seeing these entire mischievous acts upon women and suffering of women, Hamida felt it was a sin to be alive in the world full of evil and horror and, "it was a crime to be born a girl" (51).

The love and respect to the humanity of Hamida is manifested several times in the novel. She brought the girl who had hid herself in the middle of her sugar- can field who was in very painful condition. She was one of the Hindu women evacuating to India with other thousands of such men and women. But, despite the guard of Pakistan soldiers, she was abducted by some Pakistani Muslim goondas and she had been forced to spend the whole nine nights with different men. Though all of her friends and relatives had already left the place she was abducted by the barbaric men of the area to quench their thirst. Managing the time to release she became able to escape from there and trying futile attempts to save her life. Hamida not only took her and gave shelter but also managed her secure release from there towards her destination. Hamida hears the story with great anger and shame, and different questions came into her mind. "Could the earth soaked

with human blood produce golden corn? Could maize remain fragrant if its roots were fed with stinking corpses? Would whose sisters had been dishonored bear sons for the despoilers?" (51).

Condition of refugees was very painful and they were suffered by hunger and thirst so much that they were ready to loose everything they had for the sake of one full meal. They were exchanging gold and silver with maize and floor equal in weight, "under the very eyes of the constables, sold their maize and barley for their weight in fold and silver" (52). Though they, themselves, were ready to lose everything for the sake of life still their fate was cheating them and their journey was not becoming easy and comfortable.

Hamida provides necessary things to Ram Chand and his family, a Hindu convey to India. Through out the whole night Hamida exchange her feelings and get information about her parents, brothers, and sisters and about the family members of Ram Chand himself. She became obsessed and sad when she knew that her sister- in- law, Lajo, a sister of Ram Chand was missing on the way to India. She strongly promised to rescue her life even if she has to put her life in danger, and to reunite Lajo with kin and family members. The incident which occurred in front of her and the story which she heard made Hamida very sad and disgust. She spent many days and nights staring at the beans of the roof, wept staring at the ground and dreamed looking at the horizon. In her thoughts and imaginations, "she wondered over the plight of the women- people's daughters, sisters and wives- who were forcibly held by strangers under roofs like hers. Amongst many such, one was Lajo, Ram chand's sister and her own sister- in- law" (55).

The memory of her parents and brother as well as Ram Chand's family once again brought her down to the concern of relatives and kin from the pinnacle of humanity.



Forgetting all her past event she totally concerned and devoted herself about family matters. She wished that the girl whom she had found in the sugar- can field would have been Lajo, her sister- in- law, "if only the girl she I had found in the sugar- can field had been Lajo" (55). The love and remembrance of her family members haunted her frequently and she passed many days thinking and dreaming about them. Hamida requested Rashida to help her to find out Lajo. She asked forgiveness from the side of her parent's home and fell, "at his feet to ask his forgiveness" (55). She further pleaded, "never before have I asked you a favour. Find out about Lajo; you know how best to go about it" (55).

Hamida played an important role to calm down the anger and disgust of Rashida towards her parents and brother and made him agree to go for the search of her sister- in- law, Lajo. Lajo had left her home with her brother but not been able to join the convoy. Obviously, someone had grabbed her in the same village, "a gang had abducted a few girls from a passing convoy. And ... Lajo was one of those girls" (55). Hamida along with Rashida and children set out for Rattoval, place where Lajo and her family used to live and from where Lajo was kidnapped. Hamida disguised herself as a merchant and she entered inside the courtyard of every home carrying khes on her head to sell. Hamida did her best to find out the house where Lajo was locked. That was the real house of Ram Chand, the brother of Lajo, and now a musalman had captured the house and imprisoned Lajo in her parents home. Hamida detectively observed every houses of the village and minutely studied the behavior and activity of the people. She made her every effort to find Lajo. For instance, she "peered into the rooms. She engaged the women in conversation and made jokes about what each had got away with. She asked them about

the homes evacuated by the Hindu" (56) and in this way became able to locate Lajo's place.

To find out the situation of Lajo, Hamida entered to the previous house of Ram Chand, where an old woman was sitting on charpoy at the courtyard and in order to begin the conversation Hamida asked her a glass of water to drink. Hamida even enquired about the physical weakness and emaciate appearance of Lajo. Slowly the old woman revealed the fact and asked for the help of Hamida to solve their problem she said, "Can you give her a charm or something- something which will make her feel more at home here? She refused to cohabit with my boy" (57), her conversation made sure that Lajo is confined inside the house. Hamida promised to come next day with some sorts of charm (medicine) for Lajo which helped her to avoid all sorts of danger for her.

Hamida became able to take advantage of the situation, and with the help of her husband she made Lajo free from the chain. She saved the life of Lajo and gave her new spirit. The fortitude nature of women is also seen when we know the feelings of the old women of Rattoval whose son had kidnapped Lajo. When Lajo fled from her home the old woman became obsessed and expressed her feelings with Hamida, "Allah is my witness, I said that very day, "we should respect other people's daughters and sisters. That is exactly what I said to him" (65). Though the old woman was not ready to abduct Lajo, her son didn't obey her and went ahead according to his own whim. Being a woman she had the feeling of love, humanity and respect toward other people's feelings, and she had seen the pathetic condition of women who is abducted. But her son showed the violent and destructive nature and kidnapped Lajo. For the old woman, to bring wives and sisters of some other men is a sin and things men should not do. She complain

with her son as "my dear, most precious son, you have brought a load of sin into the house. How will we ever unburden our conscience of this crime?" (65).

Women always stand in favor of life and humanity; they try their best to stop the brutality and violence prevailing in the society. Women's life always falls in danger by the activities of men how hard they try to stop and prevent that. Like all other, the old woman whose son had abducted Lajo also believed that a happy home can't be build with stolen bricks. But the youngster, who can't think of anything else except live a lustful life doesn't pay attention to the advices given to them by the elders. The old women is worried about the activities of such boys, "Who will listen to an old woman?" (65) The old women even made the release of Hamida easily from her home when her son, Allah Ditta, was in the mood of discussion.

Hamida brought Lajo securely from Allah Ditta's home and gave her help and protection. Because of her continuous effort Lajo became able to join her family. In another way Hamida put her life in danger and became the savior of Lajo. Lajo had always feared that her family members would not accept her, and even if family accepts society would be obstacle there. Her expression, "my parents did not have the courage to face the taunts of their neighbours and relatives, they have to stifle their instincts" (65) reveals the real suffering and torture to family members given to them by the society, when they stand in favour of women. Society has a fixed eye to look others even to the family members. The social code and conducts, norms and behaviors is so strong that they strongly influence each and every person and shape their behavior. If someone tries to go beyond the boundary of the society he / she must lose the connection with the society. So individual must obey the rules of the society, which is always bias and violent towards the women.

Though women are aware about it there is nothing they can do against. By nature and by birth women have fortitude nature and they can tolerate all sorts of problems and obstacles. Hamida also represent the women of same sort in the novel. Even though Rashida committed crime by abducting her, she tolerates all sorts of sufferings and pain and try to enjoy with him, "Rashida certainly committed a crime in abducting me. But thereafter he has been good to me" (69). Hamida never came to the mood of discussion and quarrel and proved herself as a true women having calm nature. Hamida, the heroine of the novel bears good human qualities and the whole novel revolves around her, everything is shaped by her activity, behavior and thinking. Though the novel is written and narrated from the third person, many incidents are written in first person narrative technique. And throughout the whole novel here is the presence of Hamida (pooro) and her activities have direct impact upon it.

Hamida rescued Lajo securely, gave shelter to her and safely delivered her to her husband and relatives. Further more she tried her best to secure her (Lajo's) future life, on the beginning of her meeting with her brother and Ram Chand at Lahor, she warned her brother saying, "I beseech you, never, never let the slightest slur be cast on Lajo" (72) which further proves her love and respect to humanity. Though Trilok always tried to take revenge against Rashida, Pooro (Hamida) tried her best to secure his life and future. How vast difference there is between these two, brother and sister? (I.e. male and female)

She not only values the life of her family she have respect to all Hindus and Pakistani people also. At the time of departure she was just a single person to live at the next side. Only a single word, "I am Hindu" was sufficient for her to come to India and stay with her parents and brother at her parental home, but she thinks Pakistan as her own home and return to the Pakistan, "my home is now in Pakistan" (72) she said. Her

brother, Trilok, had the intention to take her to India but she chose Pakistan as her new and real home, where there are her husband and children. She tries to erase the physical boundary between and among human beings and humanity. First of all there come life, humanity and only after that the issue of nation and religion comes later. Life, love and humanity are the things which we can't divide by any national and religious boundary.

At the very end of the novel when Hamida and her husband Rashida meet with Trilok and Ram Chand all become speechless and remain silent. Hamida and Rashida requested Trilok to take care of Lajo and not discard her but even at that time also Trilok only remembers the misdeed of Rashida i.e. the abduction of his sister, Pooro, by Rashida. Trilok's attitude towards Rashida never became positive though he had owed him heavily and indebted him by rescuing his wife and bringing back to him, Trilok, "overlooked the fact that Rashida had abducted his sister" (72). This shows the violent nature of men, who can't digest even the good deeds of their enemy, and they always carry hate and anger in their heart.

Quite opposite to this, women give value and importance to life and humanity and this become further clear from the behavior Pooro. Despite her great (keen) interest to meet her people and change her mind to go there, She chooses to live at Pakistan caring and nursing her children. Instead she placed Lajo in her place and told to her brother, "When Lajo is welcomed back in her home, and then you can take it that Pooro has also returned to you. My home is now in Pakistan" (73). How broad her mind is, she thinks and behave positively even in the last moment she is worried about the future life of Lajo, upon whom she has seen the glimpse of her own family members and relatives. The choose of Pooro as a central character full of love and humanity to teach the modern men, full of decadence and demonic nature is a true and successful style or politics of Amrita

Pritam. Pritam played with the nature of women and used it as a tool of expressing her ideas and made it as a weapon to attract the attention of people and raised her literary career. The fortitude nature of women and the behavior of many women characters along with Pooro (Hamida) are truly matching in the novel and it is becoming the unmistakable hallmark throughout the length and breadth of the novel.

#### IV. Conclusion

While writing novel in the context of the partition-violence Pritam has created a representative character like Pooro, who represents all the females of the society. Pooro is the central character of the novel, around whom all the story and plot is circled. Though the story is narrated from the first person narration, Pooro is the mouthpiece of the writer. In the novel Pooro is shown in traumatic situation and is able to overcome all the difficulties in a very rational way. Pooro is able to win the heart of the every individual reader by showing her feminine quality. In every steps of life she overcomes every obstacle that comes in her way by sacrificing herself.

The writer very successfully presents the plight of women at the time of violence. While riots were in full swing, there were people who still hoped in humanism to survive and were waiting for their dreams to come true. Relationships, social mores and cultural standards were put to test when two communities were fighting out of insecurities for an unknown future. Yet there was light at the end of the tunnel. Love, sacrifice and understanding of human emotions paved a road for co-existence and peace. The protagonist Pooro symbolizes the light of hope. For the every problem she tackles in such a way that by her forgiveness behavior she can handle it.

Pooro's sacrificial behavior is seen throughout the length and breadth of the novel. She becomes ready to return to her abductor when her parents pleaded her to save their life by returning to the same abductor. For the sake of her parents and brothers and sisters she become ready to put her life in danger, the every incidence which comes in her way, she comes out through it without harming any other person. She is tolerant for any injury she gets and there is no limit of male injustice which befalls on her. When Pooro is renamed as Hamida she is very shocked at first, she identifies herself with her previous

name Pooro. At day time she was Hamida and at night she was Pooro. Her husband who symbolizes the male violence does not hesitate to erase Pooro's identity as Hamida though it is not possible to erase one's identity by just itching one's name on the hand. But Pooro does not question her husband because she understands his problem that if that society recognize her as a Hindu woman it will be impossible to survive.

When the riots broke out countless number of women were raped, abducted and killed. In the name of saving family dignity their own parents and relatives killed them rather than let them fall into the hands of enemy. Women's life was in danger not only from their enemy but also from their own kin and relatives. We can see the plight of women in the novel. To save their chastity some are asking for a gun or a poison to take their life. Some are crying bitterly running here and there for help, they themselves don't know that they are doing. The scene is horrible, lifeless body of a child, new born baby deserted. But nobody is touched by that scene. They all look blank as if they have lost their emotion. They look callous to the suffering of others.

The writer is able to fill the readers with rage after reading the novel. Readers are bound to bow their head for Pooro's sacrificial behavior. Like Pooro there are many such women who are the victims of male violence. From the beginning of the novel to the end we can see women living a life of threat and male always seeking a chance to cause harm. Women are becoming the means to express men's anger.

Pritam gives numerous examples of demonic activities presented by male in the novel. Rashida a muslim boy abducted Pooro a Hindu girl after she was engaged to Ramchand. He abducted her just to take revenge of his aunt, who was despoiled many years ago by Pooro's forefathers. At the time of great turmoil in the country women were not allowed to go away from home at night. Only at broad daylight they used to go



around and return early. In the villages where there was dominance of Muslim community, they started to enter into the houses of Hindus at night and burn down houses, slay them and abduct the young Hindu women. As an answer Hindu also invade the Muslim community committing the same crime.

To prove Pooro's fortitude character Pritam brought another story in the novel. One day when Pooro was going to the well to fill water she saw a woman hiding behind the sugarcane field. The woman was raped by a group of boys and in the dawn light she managed to flee from them. Pooro brought her home and somehow she became able to take that girl to the convoy camp. There is seen another example of male brutality upon the woman who enters into the Sakar village. She was powdered with dust all over the body, her upper part was naked, and she was giving a hysterical cry and running madly here and there. Her appearance showed that she was raped by a gang of boys. Male brutality criss- crosses every boundary of humanity and social norms. To fulfill their lustful desire they did not leave even a mad woman.

By referring many examples of male violence upon women and by presenting women as calm and tolerable creature Pritam tries to avoid further destruction by enduring all sorts of social hegemony imposed upon them. They don't raise voices against the cruelty of men and forgive their hostile nature. By bringing tolerable and humanistic characters like Pooro in the frontline of the novel Pritam tries her best to attract the attention of every individual reader. Female characters of Pritam live under the shade of male and their identity lies at the edge of knife and falls in danger when there lays violence in the society. Amrita Pritam examines female characters from every step of human behaviour and tries her best to prove their fortitude quality. By presenting them as tolerable and modest characters and showing their feminine quality. Pritam tries to win

the consent of individual reader. In the same way, in this novel, *Pinjar*, she uses Pooro as a means to fulfill her inner goal and motive.

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