

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effects of Partition in society and it's reflection through the story "*Daughter's Dowry*"

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**Abstract**

Partition literary piece on a whole consists of a wide range of emotions like regret, guilt, loss and mourning. It also brings about the nostalgic thought and feeling of the painful lost past. Considering the official history with its research which tends to have happened till date and the geographical trace along with its different ideologies and the spirit towards nation on one hand and oral accounts on the other are placed fictional narratives which offer psychological insights under history of relationship and how they make us travel beyond the unexpected and unbearable happenings which seems terrific when it comes under the imagination part. Even though many people have faced those unavoidable circumstances; going beyond the moment, they also move into its aftermath and, stepping outside collective at it's inter individual sites in order to explore questions of morality and ethics of guilt and regret. *Bridge across the Rivers* is the collection of short stories related to the partition memories from the two Punjabs which was translated by Tripti Jain. Kulwant Singh Virk's story *Daughter's*

*Dowry*, is based on the fear of death and forced situations which created a complex situation to escape from circumstances and comments upon the survivor's ability to survive and think of the future. Analysis is made about the narrative techniques under literary grounds and also the thematic analysis through this short story about a poor Rakha's family. Here dowry plays a major role to revolve the story till the end.

**Keywords:** Partition, dowry, nostalgic, fear.

Partition is commonly understood as the division of a place into two or more regions or states or countries. Partition does not take place without fights, wars, bloodshed, disappointment, capturing and authoritarian. There are many partitions that have taken place in history. One of the major partitions is that which took place between India and Pakistan. It was one of the forgotten tragedies of twentieth century.

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It occurred when India became independent from British rule. Partition triggered riots, mass casualties and colossal wave of migration. Millions of people moved to safer places. Many people were killed by other communities and sometimes by the same family members. Many contagious diseases swept through the refugee camps. People all over India were struggling to overcome this problem. So I thought that these struggles faced by the past society should be known to the present and to value their freedom struggles where without these things we were not be able to survive with a happy smile right now.

This paper provokes the nostalgic bitter memories, but it reminds the consequences happened. As a citizen of India it's our duty to know the web of complexities faced by the people survived and the people who lost their lives without any proper reasons. This paper reflects the partition memories and the problems of the families which we can't imagine now. Here I have analyzed the theme of partition which would help to know the background history of the story and also analyzed on literary grounds with narrative techniques and literary devices technically. This paper is researched as a remembrance of history and wanted it to be remembered forever and to remain as a symbol of past and pain though we recovered much from that position of life. And mainly this story reflect the typical Indian mother who wants

to present dowry for her daughter's marriage and her thoughts of saving it amidst the different kinds of hardships created by enemies. These were not the problems shoot out from their personal enemies but from the enemies of the society. It is important as it shows how the country's effects and acts as a barrier for each and every family and how it reflects and affects the personal normal life.

The Partition narrative is a connection of political and religious discourse overlaid with emotional experiences and responses like opposite poles. The literature that partition has generated also reflects these complexities and its role and play with the history and memory. This in terms means major incidents like Indian Independence Movement and Partition are reflected in Partition Literary works. People like Aysha Jalal and Sugatha Bose in the preface of *Bridge Across the Rivers: Partition Memories of Two Punjabs*, they have quoted: "The colossal human tragedy of the partition and its continuing aftermath has been better conveyed by more sensitive creative writers and artists – for Ex: In Saddat, Hasan Monto's short stories and Ritwik Ghatak's film than by historians"(n.p).

*Bridge Across the Rivers* is a short story collection related to the partition memory from the two Punjabs. This is a translation work done by Tripti Jain. Jain

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translates in different languages like Punjabi and Hindi to English and from English to Hindi. Her translations of BalbirMadhopuri's *Changiya Rukh: Against the Night*, BhagwatiCharanVerma's *BhuleBisre Chitra* (Hindi) and Jasbir Jain's *Indigenous Roots of Feminism* were published in 2010 and 2014. Her translations of the works of Keki N. Daruwala, Urmila Panwar, Laxman Gaikwad and Lakshmi Kannan have been published in various journals.

The work analyzed is *Daughter's Dowry* by Kulwant Singh Virk. The story took place during the period of partition in 1947 at West Punjab. Dominance played a major role in the village. West Punjab predominantly dominated and ruled by Muslims. The protagonist Allah Rakha was not a Muslim by birth though he was poor. He converted and accepted to be an Islam to save his life. He had been given the name of Allah Rakha, because had Allah not protected him, he too would have been killed. Though his life had been spared, it was difficult for him to survive. The town was full of people yet he could not share his feelings to anyone of them. He and his wife had to find the ways to escape from that situation. That time Kulwant was in Pakistan, and had a responsibility to help such families reach India. Allah Rakha sought his help. The people of Pakistan were annoyed when they saw Allah Rakha with him. For the people it was a betrayal.

Allah Rakha was one amongst the persons of small groups who had been spared because of their uprightness. Mrs. Rakha told her daughter happily about leaving Pakistan and about her daughter's marriage in future which she wished to be held at India. The luggage had to be loaded and there was no question of any help for any quarter. So Allah Rakha had to do all the work. They packed everything and set forth for the departure though they got frightened by the hostility around them. She found metal pitcher and kettle missing in the truck which she had to give as dowry for her daughter. Tucking the large metal pitcher under one arm, she picked up the kettle in the other hand amidst this dangerous surrounding. Her strides were confident and strong in between those fears. Her determination had an effect on the crowd which stood around. Getting into the truck she gathered up her daughter in her arms and sat down on the truck.

The story *Daughter's Dowry* was narrated in first person point of view where author includes himself in the story as a character. The story was in the form of omniscient narration. Author as an omniscient narrator was tied to a protagonist and his family. This is evident through the line "At that time I was in Pakistan, and had the responsibility of locating such families and help them reach India"(Virk 47).

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Author used Audience surrogate by expressing the question to confuse the audience "where could he go?"(Virk 46).

The setting of the story was at a small town, West Punjab, Pakistan during the Independence movement of India at 1947. "The situation in West Punjab was dominated by the Muslims"(Virk 46).

Then the author employed different types of Imagery such as visual imagery which pertains to graphics, visual sense picture or sense of light. "Some of those standing in the lane had rifles and the belts slung across their shoulders with glistening bullets " (Virk 48). Here the glistening bullets were categorized under visual imagery. He also employed organic or subjective imagery which pertains the emotion, feelings or character of persons. "I also went after her because my presence had a dampening effect on the simmering tempers." (Virk 49). In this line the author's presence made Mrs. Rakha felt to be less strong. So dampening and simmering tempers referred to the emotions of Mrs. Allah Rakha employed in a subjective way.

Then the author applied symbols where it takes single meaning and was associated and considered with different other things but used for the efficient understanding of a circle of readers in the exaggerated way. "The atmosphere was charged and fearful."(Virk 48).People presented in that locality around Rakha's

family was symbolized by the word atmosphere.

The semantics and lexical usage of characters to greet their guest made us visualize their culture as those words were written as such in the original language. "Salam-u-laikum" she told in the manner that she had been taught at school. "No, girl, Sat Satsri Akal"(Virk 48).

The theme of the story was Nostalgia which is a Greek word means homecoming. Nostalgia was associated with a yearning for the past, It's personalities and events, especially the golden old days or a peaceful warm childhood. Here Allah Rakha's family was forced and pestered to move to Pakistan, their longing for the early past life in India and their good days passed India. This family was facing this struggle because of the partition of Punjab. It also related to the theme isolation as the family was isolated at Punjab. Though they were having all the facilities, the family was not comfortable with that convenience. The homecoming took into its fold a migration in search for the safety of life of the protagonist and his family. It also worked through the theme of fear and death. Then it commented on the importance of belonging to a community and the sharing of cultural practices. The refugee woman's walk became more confident when she had the two items meant for her daughter's dowry, firmly in her possession. But by analyzing the minds

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of people in that culture, the readers were made to realize that the woman's mind was looking far into the future of her daughter as she was a mere child whose marriage is not likely to be celebrated for several years. Here the author was an officer at that time and this story about rescue operations where he was at the place to rescue Rakha's family. The theme of humanity was also underlining here. This story expressed the experience of migration to Pakistan and struggles to return back to homeland. Repeatedly it stressed that belongings made a home. Human beings found it difficult to relocate in a new land, new nation, especially when they were torn away forcibly. These realities were far more important than customs. The illogicality of political demand was revealed at every steps. The individual had been bypassed in whole process. This was how this story related multiple themes.

The narrative creates legible structure and shares a common ground with history. The experience of both history and narrative is sensible. Both history and this narrative made us travel to the past and

consciousness of time. The retelling of a narrative is very different from the retelling of history. The engagement with partition is much more than a convenient incident to hang a plot on. It continues to be a concern because similar revisionary politics and communal undressed continue to surrender life, the freedom struggle and the partition or intimately oven into each other and also despite cultural initiatives, relationships between the two countries continued to be against each other and every peace initiative is followed by a fresh eruption and consequent description of communication trade and travel.

Reference

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