iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 13 **Issue:** I **Month of publication:** January 2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2025.66755

www.ijraset.com

Call: 08813907089 | E-mail ID: ijraset@gmail.com

International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 13 Issue I Jan 2025- Available at www.ijraset.com

Partition As Memory: Constructing Women Narratives in Amrita Pritam's Pinjar

Shabnum Ahad[1], Dr Firdous Dar
[1]*MA English, IUST*
[2]*M.Phil. Ph.D English*

Abstract: ***Literature is the mirror of society. It reflects the real picture of society. In the works of literature, there is the representation of the incident that happened in the society. The partition of India is an event in which millions of people in India were affected by the communal riots and division of India. This horrible incident affected all religions and communities. All these events are part of Indian history but history only deals with the facts and figures of the time. Literature deals with the emotions and the feelings of common people of that time. The Partition affected everyone, from ordinary people to artists—the anguish of separation and the fear of beginning a new life in a violent terrain was felt by all.***
Keywords: Partition, Communal Riots, Indian History, Emotions, Separation, Anguish

I. INTRODUCTION

The Partition was the most traumatic experience in the Indian subcontinent, affecting individuals of all cultures, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is a historical event that has an ongoing impact on our present and future. The 1947 partition separated the British Indian empire along religious lines, creating the nascent states of India and Pakistan and souring the joy of independence from 200 years of British rule. The Partition displaced between 10 and 20 million people, resulting in large-scale refugee crises in the newly formed Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It was one of the bloodiest and greatest human migrations in history. The bloodshed that occurred during the Partition has damaged generations on both sides. The Partition affected everyone, from ordinary people to artists—the anguish of separation and the fear of beginning a new life in a violent terrain was felt by all. Partition becomes the major theme of Indian writings as well in Pakistani Literature. Being a Hindu, we often think ourselves to be the victim and the Muslim are the reason, And Being a Muslim we think Ourselves to be the victim and Hindus are the reason. It is not the Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs who are the victims of the partition but the entire nation is the victim of the rulers or the men of power. The Independence of India came with a price: divisions based on religion. Many people were killed and became homeless. It is not just a political event but a literary pressure of the emotions during the division of India and Pakistan.

The storm of Partition brings Chaos and horror in both the countries which resulted in tragic loss of many lives. Thus this is an inevitable loss of properties and economic well-being of both the countries. As Urvashi Butalia in her book The Other Side Of Silence describes partition in the following words: " The political partition of india caused one of the greatest human convulsions of history……..twelve million people between the new ,truncated india and the two wings east and west of the newly creayed Pakistan …..estimate of the dead vary from 2,00,000\- to two million but that somewhere around a million people died is now widely accepted…..75,000/- women are thought to have been abducted and raped by men of religion different from their own and indeed sometimes by men of their own religion" (45)

Amrita Pritam, the living legend of Indian literature in translation, was born in Lahore and raised in Punjab after independence. Most current novelists of her day, from every region of the Indian Peninsula, express meanings and messages about cultural baggage, identity, and diversity. Amrita is the first modernist writer in Indian literature to include life in her writing, indicating that she is an outsider in her own country. As a female novelist in a gender-biased Indian society, she grappled with society's traditional conventions, and the women characters became her way of expressing her conscience about the prevailing norms and her perspective on public opinion at the time. The female characters in her novels are autobiographical agents who have a connection to the author's life experience and perspective on customary behaviours. It is not enough for Amrita Pritam to write about women who have been hurt and subsequently recovered. Her works' themes give the embodied women's bodies a deeper meaning.

The study in this paper will take up analysis from the point of feminine subjectivity as well as in the context of specific gender about her novel Pinjar 1950 and will shed light on the narrative of a prominent writer from Punjab who experienced the partition. Further the study will analyse gender violence mental disorders forced marriage religious conversion new identity from different theoretical perspective.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved

II. PINJAR: THE 'OTHER' SIDE OF PARTITION

Our history textbooks barely capture the horrors of partition. Personally speaking we were exposed to its dark side for the first time only after we have read partition literature in our masters degree. State sponsored history books in schools have been highly censored so they don't talk about trains laiden with decapitated bodies and limbs… brutal murders and rape that accompanied the mass exodus. This is why we need to read Partition Literature as the monstrosity and emotional duress inflicted upon our people need to be documented and acknowledged if not redeemed since its too late already. In the novel Pinjar by Amrita Pritam whose literal meaning in Punjabi language is skelton. The writer through this story brings light upon the problems faced by women during the time of Partition of India. There were rites rape cases abduction of young women of opposite community. The women were used just as a symbol of sex for the pleasure of men .

Amrita Pritam's novel Pinjar explores the problem faced by women during the time of partition of India. The novel highlights the gallery of characters belonging Hindu,Muslim and Sikh religion. The novel centers on a hindu girl the women protagonist Pooro. It is a tale of abduction migration marriage loss of dreams and experience. The story dramatically captured the trouble and despair of Pooro as a victim of situation while the situation moves on an emotional ride with twists and turns which leaves us wonder struck as what will happen the next. The novel focuses on the fact that when a social evil surpassed by the victim is on a sole basis it is difficult to accept the sufferer fearing the disrespect due to the social system. The novel is a tragic tale of conflicting loyalities which is resulted as a horrifying appearance or nothingness metaphorically. The novel shows the female has an appealing body which is continuously abused by egotistical society. The story shows the narrow minded and rationally debilitated society.

Pritam highlights the enduring and the agonizing barbarity of human frenzy and human disaster in the novel. The mournful process of abduction is aggravated by the rejection from her parents when Pooro succeeds in escaping from the clutches of Rashid. Her parents do not let her in .Instead they say " you have lost your faith and birthright, If we dare to help you, we will be cut down and finished without a trace of blood left behind to tell our faith"(23). The novelist tries to show the real picture of partition .Pooro represents thousands of women who were victims of violence .W hen she is pregnant she feels that her body is polluted, she tells that a worm is in my womb. D.R.More praises the novel for its "poetic presentation of the theme of the exploitation of the weaker sex on the background of the partition tragedy".(235)

The novel Pinjar shows that communal hatred was mainly and deeply rooted in the minds of Hindus and Muslims . The novel highlights the large scale of women molestation during Partition. Even in refugee camps women were not safe during these days. The refugee camps were called the safe places for women …what an irony !

The novelist narrates the situation of the refugee camps as follows:

"There was a refugee camp in the adjoining village set up for the hindus and the sikhs . The camp was aguarded by the military. But daily some hooligans would come and take away young girls from the camp at night and bring them back next morning" (89).

Through the characters Pooro kammo lajo Pritam tries to unveil the facets of brutality against women and her trauma. Here Pritam highlights that women are considered merely bodies nothing more than the bodies and violation of womens bodies becomes the moral perversion of the community itself. Women had to constantly prove their innocence and assert their right to dignity in our patriarchal society. Like Pooro many women and girls are abducted and forced into change of religion and marriage with the abductors during Partition.The conversion of hindu girl to a muslim girl is an ugly incident.The character of Pooro is completely changed into Hamida. Rather after being sexually violated or abducted she no longer fits into the traditional roles a women is allowed to play in society: "virgin,wife,or widow"Outside of the confines of these defined roles,what is a woman really allowed to do in a patriarchal society?.

She must be defined by her relationship to the men around her and her purity or motherhood; after those relationships have been severed and she is no longer considered pure or fit to be a mother, she is no longer accepted as a member of society.Taro's mother says to Pooro "Once we give away a daughter our lips are sealed .Its up to her husband to treat her as he likes. Its a man's privilege,"(47).

The safest option is to remain silent. Silence provides a degree of preservation,a hope that she may re-integrate into society, if she never speaks about the unspeakable.

The following assertion of Pinjar is analyzed by reading the critical appreciation of Chandra Mohanty,who is postcolonial feminist. She writes in her seminal essay Undern Western Eyes about the differentiations done to women. She states that these women are depicted in writing as victims of masculine control. The issue here is that women throughout the world are feeling the same problem of bondage in patriarchy. Mohanty gave her description about the third world women as subjects "outside" social relation instead of looking at the war these women are constituted these social structures. Third world women is different from western feminists in many ways as third world women are religious,family oriented,illiterate,and domestic.

ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 13 Issue I Jan 2025- Available at www.ijraset.com

Hamida(Puro)realizes that the ultimate victims in all clashes are women "It was a sin to be alive in this world full of evil,it was crime to be born a women"(65). Therefore, such was the condition of women during Partition.They were just like a skeleton who lost their identity and remains silent.What only matters was that to which community you belong,Hindu,Muslim or Sikh.

Pooro suffers from a sense of alienation that leads to identity crisis. In her dreams,when she met her old friends and played in her parents home everyone 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 he other, She was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name,(25).

The Pinjar differs from the other Partition novels, where the other novels focus upon the violence originated from the ethno religious realm,The Pinjar expands its boundaries to figure out a deeper gendered dimension lying behind the communal atrocities inflicted upon women.

III. CONCLUSION

Amrita Pritam is known for her contribution to the partition literature. In her writings, the reader can find the living history of the event of partition of India. Through her writings, readers can visualize and realise the actual trauma of the people during the partition of India. This paper is an attempt to show how the Partition through the lens of Pinjar sheds important light upon the issues of feminism, loss of identity of women, the sexuality of women, violence against women and their trauma and how they were alienated from the self body as aftermath of the Partition.

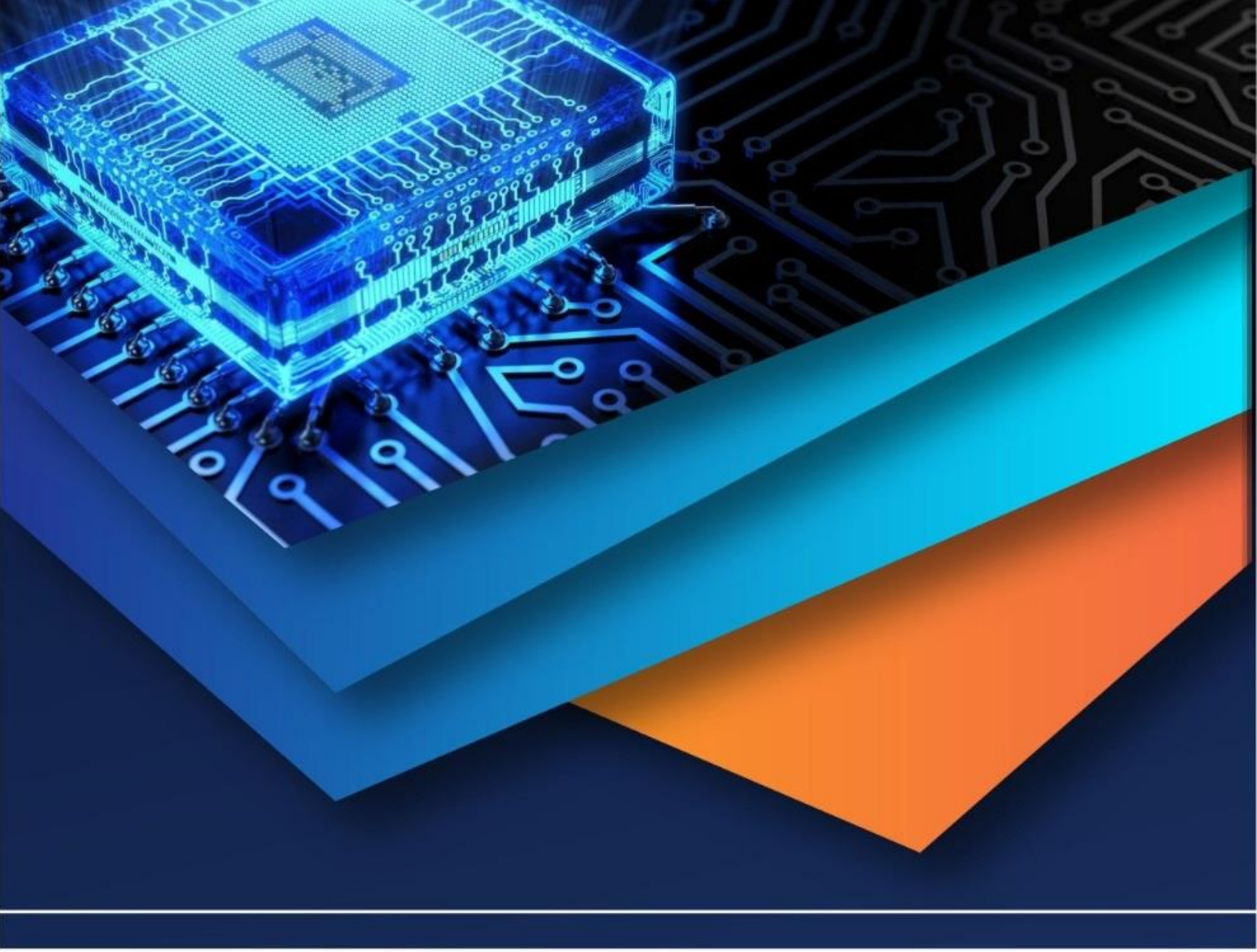
This story is a unique glance of the Indian Partition. Pinjar represents the harrowing situation of women.The novel is no doubt an excellent novel that highly explores novelists capacity to communicate lot of things in a very short few words. Pritam has highlighted the deep human psyche during Partition. Pooro, the central character symbolizes that even a skeleton has to live in the face of adversity..The title Skeleton is highly symbolic.

It symbolizes the unique philosophy of life that man is responsible for his actions and chooses his destiny.Thus the novel pinjar is a saga of women's sacrifices, courage and suffering.Pooro is really an ideal charcter puts behind a lot of impression of goodness and knowledge. Pooros overall action proves a strong answer to the questions of religion and to the gender -biased society.The novelist thus struggles for the emancipation of women and identity.

REFERENCES

[1] Butalia,Urvashi.The Other Side Of Silence:Voices from the Partition of India.Penguin Books,1998.
[2] Daiya,Kavita.Violent Belongings Partition,Gender,and Nationa Culture in Posstcolonial India.Temple U P,2008.
[3] Kaur,Jaspreet. "Silence of Women in Amrita Pritams Pinjar."IJLLIS,Vol.8,no.3,Mar.2019,pp.82-83.
[4] Mini,Gill. "Amrita Pritam: Voice of Defiance"IJEL,Vol.7,no.6,Nov-Dec.2017,pp,17-20.
[5] Pritam, Amrita.Pinjar: The Skelton and Other Stories.Translated by Khushwant Singh,Tara Publication ,2015.
[6] Suri, Girija.The Gendered Experience of Partition and the Politics of Postcolonial identity Formation in Amrita Pritams Pinjar."Vol.5,no.1,Spring,2015,pp.75-82.

©IJRASET: All Rights are Reserved | SJ Impact Factor 7.538 | ISRA Journal Impact Factor 7.894 |



10.22214/IJRASET

45.98

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.129

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.429

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Call : 08813907089 (24*7 Support on Whatsapp)