

**Reflection on the Condition of Women during the Partition of India  
in the Selected Works of Sadat Hassan Manto**

By

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**A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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## **Approval**

The thesis titled **Reflection on the Condition of Women during the Partition of India in the Selected Works of Sadat Hassan Manto** submitted by Zarin Tasnim Juthi ID: 17263011 of Summer, 2019 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts.

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### **Abstract**

History bears as a testament of the tragic time where human beings could not fully realize the destructive proportions that were a part of the experience of women during the era of partition. This paper aims to highlight the significance of suffering of women resulting from the patriarchal religious values of the two nations: Pakistan and India. This study will attempt to trace the inhuman conditions of women during the Partition of India, 1947. This study will begin its analysis from the era of the Bengali Renaissance, tracing how the political ideologies of the Bengali Renaissance shaped the reality of women from a more subjugated way to a more subtle form. Although the Bengal Renaissance opposed the European colonial claim that women are subjugated in India through certain religious practices such as Sati, the political theorists and ideologists Bengal Renaissance kept women in another dimension of subjugation. As time passed and religious tension eclipsed throughout the Indian Subcontinent, women became the victims of religious conflicts resulting in many untold horrific stories of rape, suffering, death and isolation. This paper will review the works of some of the prominent Partition theorists to reflect on the miserable conditions of women through articles, interviews etc. to reflect on the suffering and sacrifices women had to make in order for nations to claim its religious identity. Finally this paper will analyze some of the popular short stories authored by Sadat Hassan Manto, a writer who was a direct witness of the Partition, and later conveyed through his stories the suffering of women during and after the Partition of India.

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## Introduction

One of the significant issues in the study of humanities is that people and groups who belong to the margins are not represented by the master narratives of history because the very condition and structure with which the master narratives are constructed and with which they perpetuate themselves involve an inherent hegemony where often one single narrative expresses itself strongly at the cost of overpowering all other narratives. However, when the narratives of the people who belong to the margin begin to surface, the structural “coherence” of the master narrative begins to be disjointed and perplexing. In *Do Women Have a Country?* Ritu Menon States,

Yet the weak have the purest sense of history because they know anything can happen. And when they break their silence, they represent the most powerful challenge to the master narrative, because they disrupt its coherence, pick holes in its account, subvert its triumphalism .(35)

Furthermore the disjointedness and perplexing elements of the narratives from the margin directly reflects the hardships and agony, which the people who belong to the margins encountered and whose voices have been silenced by nationalist version of histories. One such marginalized group is women of 1947 Partition who experienced immense pain and agony and whose voice has been silenced by the nationalist version of history. Women during the Partition of India were victims of the forces of religion and nationalism dominating the Indian subcontinent and the extent to which women were victimized can seldom be found in the Partition archives and in general historical narratives, which reflects upon the impact of the Partition. Women during the Partition of India

were not only killed unlike the men and soldiers, women were “destituted widowed, abandoned, or abducted, and then forcibly recovered and returned to ‘their’ respective countries” and be it Muslims or Hindus, Pakistan or India, women were victims and targets of the ravages men (34). In the play of construction and deconstruction of a single nation into divisible political entities based on religion, the suffering and torments which women experienced cannot be imagined and very little has been documented by mainstream nationalist history. Women were denied the space through which they could create a sense of belonging. They were constantly transferred from one place to another and were not given the chance to stabilize themselves. In addition, the experiences they suffered in refugee camps were extremely frightening and due to this, as it will be discussed broadly in the following chapters of this paper, some women during the Partition married men from their opposite religion, changed their names and even converted into their husband’s religion in order to survive. Many of these women were forcefully taken to their homeland despite their rejection to go, and therefore it is not only that during the periods Partition women experienced trauma, even in the post-Partition period women were the devices of the nation of India and Pakistan through which they blamed one another and tried to show national superiority. This argument will be extensively discussed in the following chapter through a close analysis of Urvashi Butalia’s *The Other Side of Silence*.

In “Engaging Traumatic Histories”, Sukeshi Kamra writes:

If it is true that we have shied away from confronting the fact of colonialism’s routine and extraordinary violence, and it is true that we have been similarly reticent in engaging with Partition violence, then the question to ask might be: is the



reluctance in both cases unique to the instance or does it speak also of a widespread and historical unwillingness to engage with devastatingly negative themes, such as participation in histories of violence? In such a reading, for instance, the testimony of survivors-with its many silences as well as an indefinite horizon of victims-is itself best read as symptomatic of the larger condition, of impossibility, of bearing witness to violence and the absence of a tradition to draw on to do so .(157)

Following the aforementioned quotation, if there is historical unwillingness to engage in the violence of women during the times and aftermath of Partition of India, then a large horizon from history of this subcontinent will inevitably be lost. Hence, in interpretative readings such as looking at women's condition of the subcontinent during the Partition of India, it is inevitable to look at the violence they experienced and history must bear the courage to dig out the terrifying experiences of women during the era of Partition which, as the aforementioned quote suggests, might be symptomatic of a larger condition which pervades the event itself. In the context of this study it can be said that the larger condition is religious chauvinism and patriarchal nationalism which made women victims of atrocious and inhuman events, and these are vividly reflected in the voices of those victims who forced their memory to penetrate into the most anxiety ridden times of their lives. The two political parties, Indian Congress and the Muslim League narrated their own history in accordance with promoting their nationalist agendas, and left out a large section of people who were forced to belong to the periphery or margins. In *Partition: The Long*

*Shadow*, Urvashi Butalia writes, "The long shadow that Partition cast, touched not only those who lived through it, and those who died because of it, but also the generations that came after (XVIII)".

As a result, this study would attempt to analyze and contemplate the conditions of women during the Partition of 1947 and seek through literature and existing research and documentations related to women and Partition of India, and the conditions, which caused women to experience one of the most profound disjuncture in the history of humankind.

Therefore, this study would aim to look at how women were used as symbols for political agendas during the Partition of India through a close reading of the experiences of women in the works of writers and women activists like Urvashi Butalia and through the short stories of Sadat

Hassan Manto. This study would analyze the following short stories authored by Sadat Hasan Manto- *The Dutiful Daughter*, *The Women in Red Raincoat*, *A Woman for All Seasons*, *A Woman's Life* and *Colder Than Ice*.

In India, we don't have any lack of authors recognizing the trauma of Partition. Be that as it may, there are not very many journalists, who could really give us a naturalistic depiction without romanticizing Partition. One such essayist was Saadat Hasan Manto.

A popular radio and film scriptwriter just as a columnist, Manto's persuading depiction regarding the circumstances and characters drove him to wind up a standout amongst the best essayists of unified India ever. Truth be told, in spite of the fact that hailing from Lahore, he is as much a well-known character in India as he is a prized individual in India. In this rundown, we will find out about a portion of his most well-known and charming short stories ever.

## **Women in Partition**

Outside the parameters of elitist's institution, there are several narratives that have been excluded and erased from mainstream national historiography. One of the examples in this case would be the history of women in India. In each episode of the history of this subcontinent, women have been victimized by patriarchy under various guises- sometimes in the form of local religious ideologies, other times in the form of colonial powers using the condition of women to promote its own political agendas, and lastly by local elitist organizations also constructed the position of women according to their own agendas. However, the result of this constant categorization of women in various epoch or events of history in this subcontinent resulted in ruthlessness and violence of unimaginable proportion during the Partition of India.

India, the newly independent nation, after the years followed by its Partition separating itself from former colonial powers and the nation of Pakistan, wanted to rescue their women from the hands of Pakistanis. These women were constantly labeled as “sisters of India” or “sisters of

Pakistan” based on their religious identification. However, there are many Muslims in India as there were, and still are, in Pakistan and after the years that followed the Partition it must be questioned upon what grounds these Indian parliamentarians were labelling women as “ours” and “theirs”. Besides, through the abduction of women, the political leaders of India and Pakistan promoted their own individual agendas. While India blamed Pakistan for the miseries the women suffered, its failure to recover its women from the clutches of Pakistanis was seen as a sign of weakness. The nation became more important than the human beings. As a result, women became pawns in this national game for power, and were tortured and abused to testify political superiority.

The most important thing to notice is that during Partition it is almost impossible to access or express in an overall sense how much women suffered throughout the subcontinent. However the government of India and Pakistan constantly categorized women based on their religion, and in case of those children who took birth from a Muslim father and a Hindu mother they were not initially thought to be as acceptable. In *The Other Side of Silence*, Butalia says:

...in Hindu society...a children born of a Muslim father and a Hindu mother would not be acceptable, and if the relative of the recovered women did not accept their children, the government would then be faced with the problem of large numbers of destitute, unwanted children .(144)

These attitudes are a clear example of the fact that the government of the two nations, India and Pakistan, were least concerned about the women who were victimized during the Partition due to the male religious chauvinism, and later by the national agenda, which were structured based on patriarchal instructions. Furthermore, after the Partition, the government of India and Pakistan showed absolutely no humanitarian regard for women, and in fact categorized them in order to uphold their nationalist ideals and agendas. In *The Other Side of Silence*, one of the member of the parliament of the then undivided India said, “As descendants of Ram, we have to bring back every Sita that is alive (Butalia 141)”. This statement echoes the patriarchal mission of the Indian men to rescue “their” women from Pakistan and more than accessing and considering the conditions of women it was the patriarchal mission infused in the guise of the national religion of

India. Women became symbols through which nationalistic patriarchal men of India and Pakistan could uphold their own nation. Women were not free during a time when freedom was promised by both the nations of India and Pakistan. Women either had to change their identity and marry a

man in order to ensure their security, or they had to become the mistresses or wives of their abductors and in case of those women who were “recovered” by India or Pakistan after Partition, they were placed in a camp in degrading conditions. Women were given no options regarding their movements from one nation to another, as they were more concerned about their politicized religious interest based on which women were identified as “theirs” and “ours”. This ideology completely dominated the existence of people during and after the partition through the actions of nationalistic patriarchy. Independence, in its real and absolute sense, was never enjoyed by women during and after Partition which gave birth to two free nations, India and Pakistan.

In the book *The Other Side of Silence* written by Urvashi Butalia, she has shown how Pakistani and Indian government are using the aforementioned situations and position of women to enforce their state ideologies and assert their national identities. Women were defined by the nationalities, and that in turn was defined by their religions. When India, after making a formal pact with Pakistan for return of all Indian girls who were left or abducted in Pakistan, did not get the desired response from Pakistan the Indian government was heavily criticized for not taking any vehement action and remaining in a pacifist position. Many people and newspaper were ready to declare an open war with Pakistan if the situation dictated, and Indian women who were abducted were labelled as all the “Sitas” which the Ram, the men of the Indian nation, must recover, and one of the primary reasons for the Indian nation to feel the urgency to recover the abducted women from Pakistan was this very phenomenon was “a challenge to our manhood, no less that to our nationalism” (*Other side of Silence* 147). On the other hand those women who were abducted in Pakistan were sold for rupees and annas and they were labelled as

“‘Mohammad ki joru’[Mohammad’s wife]...” (*Other side of Silence* 147). Women were labelled by various names according to the national ideology for the men either to promote national

agendas, like in India, or to sell in markets for some amount of money and be boastful of the fact that Hindu women are being converted to Muslim. An Indian newspaper by the name of *The Organizer* used this situation to undermine the mentality of the people of Pakistan and depict them as an immoral nation. On the other hand those Muslim women who were left in India but who had families in Pakistan were said by the newspaper to “be sheltered by the Hindus”, whereas in India Muslim women were deprived of many basic human rights and were victims of sexual violence as well. It needs to be contemplated that if, for example, all the Hindu women in India and all the Muslim women in Pakistan during the years which followed the Partition were sent to their own country, to their “homeland”, would these women truly be able to enjoy the freedom they were being deprived from, a freedom that was promised to these women by both the nations. Women were always subordinated in a society whose system of bureaucracy, commerce and sense of nationalism were built on the basis of patriarchy. Be that as it may, for those women who were abducted and who settled themselves in the lands of Pakistan embracing their religion and a new identity, they were being considered by the Indian writers and journalists as stain mark on the sanctity and sacredness of Bharatmata. “To go out was to go to foreign, impure, barbaric lands and so a purification on return was necessary” (*Other Side of Silence* 148), and furthermore “Where women were concerned, the debate entered another realm

Altogether- that of the honor of the nation, and of its men” (*Other Side of Silence* 149). In the first of the two aforementioned quotes, the notion of Bahire (outside) being prohibited for women on the ground of reason that it was “impure” for them echoes the 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalist pseudo resolution of the women’s question; even if these women were brought back to India, and many of them were, not being able to assert herself free. India, after all, was primarily eager to recover these women to assert their sense of nationhood. In addition to that many Hindu women wanted to be in

Pakistan and many Muslim women in India for the basic reason that they had a better class position than they had when they were in their “motherland”. The Indian nation state needed to purify itself by recovering the “Sitas” from Pakistan, and Butalia writes this issue of using women to promote various agendas was and still is,

...nothing new, for even today discussions that are said to be about women often have little or nothing to do with them, but provide an opportunity to rehearse other agendas...women as a person did not count, her wishes were of little consequence.... (*Other Side of Silence* 150-151)

The aforementioned passage sums up the whole purpose of India, as well as Pakistan, to put on the guise of showing humanitarian concern about the position and suffering of women resulting from abduction and violence caused by Partition of India, to actually promote their nationalist agendas. Abduction, rape, forced marriage, unwillingly being separated from their children are some of the many horrific experiences which women faced during the Partition of India and this shows the deep agony of women, those who are dead and also those who have witnessed an unnamed yet profound violence which is now covered by nationalistic patriarchal and religious ideologies.

Apart from that during the Partition of India both men and women suffered from deep experience of an internal duality to leave their homeland and travel to another geographical sphere to affirm their religious identity. The root of this internal duality can be sensed through studying the past phenomenon of the Indian subcontinent. Rabindranath Tagore in his famous lectures on nationalism which is commonly known under the name it has been published, *Nationalism* has mentioned,

India has never had a real sense of nationalism. Even though from childhood I had been taught that the idolatry of Nation is almost better than reverence for God and humanity, I believe I have outgrown that teaching, and it is my conviction that my countrymen will gain truly their India by fighting against that education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity. (Tagore)

Rabindranath Tagore talks about the thousand year old history of India, of religions such as Hindu, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism all coexisting side by side in different parts of the vast geography which constitute the subcontinent. However as time progressed and Indian subcontinent was dominated by the British Empire the concept of nationhood and nationalism started to dominate people's imagination primarily through Western education and ideologies. It is this sense of British or Western sense of nationhood which the upper and middle class, mainly the educated Indians, which including Hindus and Muslims as well as Sikhs and Parsis, embraced. As time progressed and the sense of independence dominated the minds of the local Indians, this resulted in being aware of communal differences, and alongside demanding independence from colonial powers India also got divided into Muslim and Hindu majority area. If one compares the quote of Tagore with the one quote of in the essay "Engaging Traumatic Histories" written by Sukesih Karma, "In the months leading up to Partition, and indeed, after the announcement of the Plan in June 1947, the officers of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) received large numbers of letters from people wanting to know what was happening.

What will become of us, they asked?" (Sukeshi Kamra 165), than the degree of confusion which the people of the Indian subcontinent experienced suddenly being disconnected with their long history can be sensed as before the Partition there was a long past of the people of the Indian Subcontinent to live together amongst people of different religions.



It is inevitable for almost all individuals to sense the degree of insecurity which the people of India suffered from during the times of 1947 Partition. What Rabindranath was writing was an India which was one whole and which perhaps synthesized all of its differences, however what he warned against in his quote is that people must not keep the nation, or his/her communal identity, before ideals of humanity. In 1947 India behaved exactly the opposite of what Tagore has addressed in his essay on nationalism and the result was that the mind of the mass people was anxiety ridden and in deep uncertainty. Suddenly there was a profound and forceful shift of circumstances and social equilibrium, people had to leave their lands, their belongings, their identity and even their family members. Sons and daughters had to leave their parents in many cases, and many boys had to participate in atrocious activities in order to feed themselves and many of the girls were either in camps, or had to embrace the identity of a prostitute or mistresses of a large household, or in some instance they married a man of the opposite religion in order to survive in either in India or Pakistan wherever they have been abducted and taken to forcefully. Such was the condition of humanity during the atrocious times of the Partition of India in 1947 and also the times which followed it. In the book *Partition: The Long Shadow*, edited by Urvashi Butalia, there is an essay on the third chapter of the book known as "A Unique Grace" by Kavita Panjabi. In this essay she has broadly discussed the aforementioned issue of the people who had to leave their homeland during the Partition of India, and after the violence of the Partition ended these people could never go back to their homeland due to the inherent duality from which they suffered. This duality consisted of a deep hatred which made them leave their home, and as a result leave their childhood with which a large part of their existence is associated with, and the longing they have to visit their childhood. Kavita Panjabi's was a Shik by religion, yet her whole family before the Partition of India belonged to a place which is in Shikarpur, a Sindhi area situated in Pakistan. In

her essay Kavita Panjabi explicitly talks about her father wanting to visit his homeland, yet never could due to an inherent hatred. Kavita

Panjabi writes, “His [her father’s] personal sense of homeland, still based in his childhood in Shikarpur, Pakistan, seemed to be at complete odds with his passionate political loyalty to the Indian nation, with the former rarely being articulated in the early years; yet both I now realize, were simultaneously integral his identity” (Panjabi 50). From this quote the deep disjuncture of the people who suffered from Partition, even after its violence has settled down, can be sensed, and furthermore it can be assumed that even at present those people who are Partition survivors has within their mind a mark of this duality resulting in a silence anxiety. Yet what the author herself experienced visiting her father’s homeland in Shikarpur was a wonderful sense of acceptance as a Sindhi Nationalist gave her from his own personal collection music of Sufi musicians which Kavita Panjabi’s father liked, and when Kavita Panjabi visited her father’s home which he left during the Partition, she was welcomed appreciated and was given a gift which she herself played with when she was a child of three. Also in Sindh she visited the shrine of a famous Sufi Saint by the name of Abdullah Shah Gazi in Karachi she was gifted “chadar”, a holy cover symbolizing and presenting the grace of the Sufi Saint himself. All these made Kavita Panjabi realize that in undefined ways she still has a connection with the place which her father was forced to forsake in affirming his identity as an Indian. It can now be asked and contemplated how far people who were partitioned survivors experience such a unique grace which the author of the aforementioned essay experienced. Furthermore it must also be asked whether the survivors of the Partition did even receive the chance to experience such a grace, which possibly might have redeemed them from the inherent duality causing an internal anxiety, as did the father of Kavita Panjabi experienced. However the potential experience of grace which Kavita’s father failed to

experience and all that was left of him regarding his childhood memories are longing, anxiety and hatred. The extent of this suffering was more so in the lives of women who were victimized beyond imaginable proportion.

Therefore being victims of rape, being forcefully put in the position of prostitute or becoming a part of the family which abducted them through becoming wife or servant, and finally belonging to camps, after the turbulent period of the Partition, where they had to experience horrific situations, and also being forcefully recovered by nations of India and Pakistan based on the religious identity of women rather than asking for her own opinion are some of the many inhuman and torment filled experiences women faced and tackled during and after periods of Partition with a silent internal split or duality which many women who were victims never could express. These issues will be further explored in this study in the fifth chapter where Sadat Hassan Manto explores these issues when depicting the position of women during the Partition of India.

### **Research Methodology (Feminist Criticism)**

The Partition of India was joined by terrible savagery, apparently making it one of the most violent incidents in South Asian history in the Twentieth Century. Manto's misguidedly dynamic works likewise point by point the types of violence that influenced women explicitly, including rape on the two sides of the violence – which was seen as a risk to the 'respect' of the lady and her locale, and prompted enormous scale suicides so as to avoid this 'disrespect' Feminist Criticism aims to look at the deprived conditions of women through norms and laws imposed upon societies and cultures by the patriarchal system. In literature feminist criticism explore the male biases which manifests in men having more freedom than women. Furthermore, feminist criticism revisits literature in order to highlight the fact how literary texts convey a reflection of the underprivileged position of women.

Feminist criticism is the literary approach and practice which concerns itself with stereotypical delegations of genders. This movement is divided into three waves. The first wave occurred during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, mostly within the sphere of European societies, to eliminate women suffrage, particularly women who belonged to the working class. The first wave by and large focused on political power, specifically the right of women suffrage which is mostly related to voting right. The second wave feminism was not just limited to voting rights but mainly concerned gaining equality in every aspect of life for women. The most primary objective of second wave feminism was the end of gender discrimination. Discrimination of women was made in religious ideologies and social and cultural practices forming interconnected sphere of patriarchy. Simone de Beauvoir, the French feminist philosopher combined the idea of every feminism with existentialism and she said that humanity is defined as male and that a woman is

defined not as someone absolute to herself, but relative to the man. Hence the very existential reality of women, from the sense of her being a woman to her experience as a social being in the society, was conditioned to be relative, and hence subordinate, to the reality of man.

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is considered as one of the most established work of feminist literary criticism. The main objective of Virginia Woolf's essay is that financial, social, and educational means are absolutely necessary for a woman to pursue the life of an artist. She has written about the suffering of the women in her society, social inequalities between men and women, and domination of male over female in intellectual sphere.

Kate Millet in her work *Sexual Politics* has extensively jotted down seven patriarchal structures which are essential parts of any modern society and which seeks to hegemonies women. For example, Millet talks about family and makes the claim that in any society, no matter the society is secular or follows a particular religion, the head of the family is taken by a male figure, most dominantly the father or the grandfather. She further states that "Female heads of household tend to be regarded as undesirable; the phenomenon is a trait of poverty or misfortune. The Confucian prescription that the relationship between ruler and subject is parallel to that of father and children points to the feudal character of the patriarchal family...even in modern democracies" (*Sexual Politics* 13). Judith Butler in her seminal work *Gender Trouble* talks about the ways social practices superimpose upon individuals the role of male and female and through acceptance and constant repeating of these gender specified roles human beings are termed as men and women.

As post-colonialism emerged the position of women in post-colonial nations and the inherent problems of attempting to understand their position in the light of Western theories which were used to depict the conditions of women of the West came to be highlighted and addressed by

theorists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Sara Suleri. Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her work *Under Western Eyes* sought to establish the way Western feminist are misrepresenting the women of the “Third World”, and that women needs to be more intimate, needs to share the experience of women of the “Third World” in order to represent their experience in an authentic manner. At present, Feminist Criticism is now becoming transnational in its approach in order to look at the positions of women who, willingly or unwillingly, has to embrace various identities.

One example of this can be found in Gloria Anzaldua’s book *Borderlands* where she writes that as a woman she has various identities and nationalities.

As a result, feminist criticism has multiple dimensions within it through which this method of criticism can be used in literature to highlight the unequal participation of women compared to men, the causes behind such discrimination and the suffering and torments, both physical and psychological, which women had to face in various social epoch and circumstance throughout the history of humanity.

This study would attempt to use the feminist criticism as its methodology to interpret the stories of Sadat Hassan Manto where he depicts the condition of women in the Indian Subcontinent during the times of the Partition of India. Through using feminist criticism this study would explore the vulnerable position of women, how women have looked at as objects of sexual pleasure, how women have been associated with ideologies of nationalism in order to promote the agendas of India and Pakistan rather than receiving safety and shelter based on humanitarian concern during the war trodden times in the Indian Subcontinent as well as after the times of the Partition of India. Women were in tremendously vulnerable position during the Partition of India and through the depiction of the social reality of women as presented in Manto’s stories this study would use

feminist criticism to illustrate and express how women were tortured both physically as well as psychologically in the turbulent times of the Partition of India by the communal war itself, and by the inhuman and savage actions of men in a war trodden subcontinent.

## Literature Review

Several authors wrote on Partition of India, both in the sub and the west. Also regarding the works of literature which are based on the Partition of India, there are various authors who commented on the short stories of Sadat Hassan Manto.

Kavita Panjabi in her essay “A Unique Grace” points out a particularly important dimension about the stories of Sadat Hassan Manto. She mentions in her essay that along with other writers during the Partition of India, Sadat Hassan Manto has shown through his stories how vague and shadowy is the line which has divided human beings through a communal identity resulting in the Partition of India. Manto’s stories, Kavita Panjabi writes, destroys the line dividing the self/other dichotomy constructed during the Partition of India in the form of “desh” and “dushman” and has vividly shown the savage inhuman acts which have been committed due to maintaining the aforementioned divide. The inhuman and agony filled condition of women which Manto’s stories bears a testament of can be seen as another vital issue through which Manto questions the absurdity of creating a territory based on the identity of religion and nationalism. This study will attempt to show, through the stories of Sadat Hassan Manto, that within the blurry lines of division which were maintained with much riots and conflicts, women were treated with most inhuman savagery.

In another essay named “Engaging Traumatic Histories: The 1947 partition of India in Collective Memory” author Sukeshi Kamra mentions Sadat Hassan Manto in a very important context of her study of traumatic memory of the Partition of India. She states that Manto has very vividly shown that the Refugee Camps which promised men from both India and Pakistan to be what she calls “safe havens” actually were places where many inhuman activities took place. One common



example of this is the many women were sold when they went to these Refugee Camps in the hope of abiding somewhere safe away from the violence springing from the communal riots. Furthermore, in this essay Sukeshi Kamra also mentions a research article written by Veena Das and Ashis Nandy titled “Violence, Victimhood and the Language of Silence”. In this article, Manto has been credited with bringing a form, through his short stories, where the subject, object and the instrument of violence can be represented as a whole. As this study aims to concentrate on Manto’s depiction of women in his short stories and how they have been victims of the violence in the turbulent times of Partition, trauma is an important issue which needs to be addressed in order to convey forth the existential agony of the women during the times of Partition. As a result, this study will focus on the aforementioned essay by Sukeshi Kamra when analyzing the stories of Sadat Hassan Manto.

Apart from that in another essay titled “The World of Sa‘adat Hasan Manto” written by Shashi Joshi, the author talks about Manto’s description of acts undertaken by the rioters during the Partition of India. Again in this essay there has been a reference of the aforementioned essay by Veena Das and Ashis Nandy titled “Violence, Victimhood and the Language of Silence”. Shashi Joshi has mentioned a brief passage from Das and Nandy’s essay where it is mentioned that if there were two physically and psychologically damaged women found seeking shelter during the turbulent times of Partition of India, one of them would be a Hindu and another one a Muslim woman. What can be noticed from this quote is the fact that in Partition of India there were no winners, only a collective group of people who used to live under one geographically defined place got separated due to nationalism and communalism and in this process of separation the women of the Indian Subcontinent suffered from unimaginable tragedies some of which Sadat

Hassan Manto has attempted to portray. Two other important points about Manto are mentioned in the essay titled “The World of Sa‘adat Hassan Manto”, the first is in relation with a short story of Manto which will be used by this study. The author of the essay mentions that Manto has shown through his story “Cold Meat” that ordinary people become an active agent of participation in violence. The second thing which the essay includes about Sadat Hassan Manto is that his short stories have very ingeniously constructed the characters as Hindu, Muslim and Shik but immediately as the story takes its course these social and religious identities of Manto’s characters transcend into a holistic depiction of individual torments as human beings are forced to live in an atmosphere of immense communal violence filled with inhuman savagery. In particular women had these experiences of terror and agony much more than men.

In a journal article titled “Saadat Hasan Manto’s Women Heroes: Seeking Truth in Persuasion” written by Pratyusha Mukhopadhyay, a very important story of Sadat Hasan Manto has been discussed. The name of the story is “She is Alive” where Manto has lucidly depicted, in all its horror and tormenting acceptance, what was the place and position of women during the Partition of India. Author Pratyusha Mukhopadhyay has mentioned in her essay that how Manto has used this story to depict the issue of raping women both by the abductors of women and also by the rescuers of women. Urvashi Butalia in her work *The Other Side of Silence* has clearly shown how women were abducted, and then were rescued from the first group of abductors only to be sold to another group of abductors. Manto’s story “The Girl from Delhi” very clearly shows how women were used as a commodity amongst perpetrators. Another important point has been touched by Pratyusha Mukhopadhyay in her essay and that is the ability and authenticity of Manto to depict the condition of women. In the essay there is a quote of the noted Urdu poet Fahmida Riaz and she states that Manto saw men and women equally, and it can be assumed based on a considerable

historical source and readings of the short stories, that Manto saw men and women as victims of a dividing process known as the Partition which unleashed the bestial nature of men and an intense and profound agony of women. In addition to this another research journal titled “Manto as the spokesperson of the Subalternised: A Feminist reading of selected short stories of Manto” author Marilyn Roohi Massey mentions that women in Manto’s stories are doubly victimized. Firstly, they are victimized by the violence of the Partition of India where men and women both equally lost their homeland, their identity and had to experience a deep disjuncture. Secondly, women had to depend on a male figure for her survival, oftentimes in the form of prostitute, as is shown in numerous of Manto’s stories, or as women who are survivors of abduction and physical abuse living under the shelter of men. Furthermore, there are stories of Manto, as will be discussed in this study, where Manto has shown the position of a women who does not belong to any “refugee camps” or under the protection of any male figure. Manto’s depiction of the extent of their suffering are expressed through a silent yet vivid perception.

Marilyn Roohi Massey’s research article explores how far can Manto be viewed as an accurate depicter of the agonizing position of women during the Partition of India, and the author of the research journal reaches the conclusion that Manto’s stories hold a very important place in the process of realizing the intense suffering which women experienced during and after the

Partition of India. If women during 1947 and after during the post-Partition period are seen as Subalterns, as the author of this journal article argues they were, than Manto can be said to be one of the important stepping stones through which a comprehensive realization of the suffering of women during the times of Partition can be possible.

In another journal article written by Dr. S. Z. Abbas titled “Women as Prostitute Paradigm in Manto’s Short Stories” mentions the importance of the position of women as prostitution in Manto’s short stories. The author mentions that Manto’s addressing of the upsetting experiences of women transcend the social crises and Manto brings forth the fact that Partition has resulted in suffering and torments of numerous women at whose cost the nation of India and Pakistan were created. It is this shame running through the borders of the nations of the Indian Subcontinent which Manto’s words capture very accurately, and Manto has also shown that with utter indifference from any moral or humanistic point of view, women were sold off as prostitutes or were seen as commodities. Men of the different religion took women as abductors and raped them or made them mistresses, whereas men of the same religion often times sold women to survive in the crumbled down post-destruction economy resulting from the Partition.

Ayesha Jalal in her book *The Pity of Partition: Manto’s Life, Times and Work across the IndiaPakistan Divide* has vividly mentioned the abduction of women during the times of Partition and the response of Manto to this inhuman and barbarous activity through his short stories. This study has taken some parts of the aforementioned book where Jalal has mentioned some personal events which are intense in its occurrences and which did influence Manto, the writer, to pierce deeply into the harsh realities of women.

The writer has taken all these resources in order to trace, through some of the short stories of Sadat Hasan Manto, the tragic and distressing position of women during the Partition of India.

### **Manto's Stories**

A large part of Sadat Hassan Manto's work has been to infamy the political borders which, during the Partition of India, divided people through mass killing and various forms of common violence such as burning houses and raping and abducting of women. As mentioned before in the previous chapters of this study, the reality of savagery and inhuman brutality filled with agonizing and tormenting experiences, which women had to face during the Partition of India can arguably never be expressed in its totality. The interviews, essays and stories which now exist documenting the experiences of the Partition of India can only act as a fact of the inability to comprehend the extent of suffering which people in the Indian subcontinent, particularly women, had to face. The agonies not only concern themselves to only rape and abduction, but also existed in the lives of mothers who were forsaken by their daughters for survival, and also for women who covered their battered bodies in an attempt to seek some shelter from the violence of Partition. Furthermore, young women who had to leave their homeland and survive in the midst of threats of being sold by men as prostitute, and also women who accepted their lives as prostitutes yet had to bear within them a psychological burden of living a life full of uncertainty and anxiety.

In Sadat Hasan Manto's short story "The Dutiful Daughter" the author illustrates the suffering women experienced after the Partition of India. The story begins with a statement that India had been divided, and Hindus and Muslims in hundreds and thousands are moving from India to Pakistan and Pakistan to India. Along with that there are hundreds of volunteer groups who are moving from India and Pakistan to recover Muslim women in India, as well as Hindu women in Pakistan and making them move towards these two nations based on their religion. At one point of this story the narrator says,

It always amused me to see that such enthusiastic efforts were being made to undo the effect of something that had been perpetrated by more or less the same people. Why were they trying to rehabilitate the women who had been raped and taken away when they had let them be raped and taken away in the first place?...When I thought about these abducted girls, I only saw their protruding bellies. What was going to happen to them and what they contained? Who would claim the end result? India or Pakistan? (Manto 73-74)

From the aforementioned passage it can be realized that how devastating and inhuman the position of women as they were left alone were moving from Pakistan to India or vice versa. Women suffered being victims of violence and prejudices based on religious differences, and also were filled with a deep sense of shame when these women were offered to go to their homeland to their families as for some women their families never accepted them, and for others they never wanted to go back again to their homeland and wanted to stay where they were. Truly Partition of India left a deep scar in lives of women who belonged, and who still belongs, to the Indian subcontinent.

As the story progress the narrator listens from one liaison officer about a woman whose religion was Muslim, and who looked in various parts of India, for his daughter. She refuses to believe that her daughter is dead. The mother things her daughter is amazingly beautiful and no one can kill her. After long arduous search and after being unimaginably downtrodden and in a condition almost near death, the mother finally sees her daughter in Amritsar, and the liaison officer tells the narrator that when her daughter, who is married to a Sikh, sees her mother she tells her husband "Let's get away from here". The mother calls her daughter, and without even a single response from her long lost daughter, she collapses to death. This story shows how agonizing the experiences of women must have been. In the story the mother was relentlessly looking for her daughter who already has embraced a new identity being married to a Sikh man and perhaps also

have embraced a new identity perhaps for survival in a land which will be harsh to her if she embraces her mother and her old identity of being a Muslim. The daughter refuses to even acknowledge her mother deliberately and runs off with her husband away from her mother as soon as possible. As mentioned in the second chapter of this study through Urvashi Butalia's work, there have been many women who were initially abducted but through time embraced the identity of her abductors and refused to being recovered by volunteers after the Partition. Furthermore, it has also been mentioned in this study that a large part of the recovery program of the women after the Partition of India had within it a hidden motif of promotion of national identity of India and Pakistan and women represented the "honor" of the mentioned nations. For women who were identified as Muslims or Hindus were forced by the recovery programs to come back to the nations of India or Pakistan, and as a result there were women who, as like the daughter in the story, embraced a new identity to live a normal life. However, in this story the agony and intense experience of grief of the mother also has been highlighted by Manto to show the Partition has made women of all generations suffer to that extent that they die of their grief and sadness. The mother wanted to recover her daughter, and the girl she recognized as her daughter already embraced a new identity and upon the realization that her daughter already had died to her old identity as a Muslim women. The mother was in absolute grief and died upon being rejected by her daughter. The extent and depth to which women after the Partition of India suffered from tragedy, some expressed and known, some unknown and lost in the oblivion of time, is not comprehensible and only can be realized with a painful apprehension that for women, humanity was completely denied and whatever empathy they received, it was not based upon humanity, but based upon the symbol they carried as being Muslims or Hindus.

In another one of Manto's short story named "The Women in Red Raincoat" the inhuman Condition of women after the times which followed Partition of India was expressed. In this story a man who in India undertakes riots and loots items from houses and shops suddenly comes across a woman wearing a red raincoat whose face is covered. He takes her to his house, experiences a sexual urge by being with her and in this process when he gets exposed to the face of the woman he sees the face of an old woman with painted face "lined with creases". She covered the signs of desolation and malnourishment with paints and flowers, and in fact this old abandoned woman used to be that man's art teacher when he was a child, who also was famous artist known by the name of Miss "M". At the end of the story the man states that she has died. Manto's stories has within it a silenced, yet vivid and strongly visible element through which one can at least imagine the magnitude of suffering and agony women during the Partition of India experienced. Now in spite of all these events taking place, the government of India and Pakistan did not, out of a genuine humanitarian concern, attempted to undertake projects which would create a space for women where they can improve their condition and live normal lives. In a research article titled "Manto as the spokesperson of the Subalternised: A Feminist reading of selected short stories of Manto" by Marilyn Roohi Massey, a very important point has been stated regarding the issue of Manto's depiction of women who in any way possible had to depend upon a man in order for survival. "The women in Manto's stories were Subalternised....by the patriarchy due to which they were treated as objects of possession and these objects were at the time of Partition looted and plundered by the men of other communities to concretize their revenge on the first community" (Massey 39). In the aforementioned quote it has been mentioned how women were doubly colonized, firstly by the patriarchal system which has been diffused within human societies for many generations. The patriarchal system has treated women as possession or objects, and as a result the tendency in the Partition of India to "loot" or abduct objects by rioters included women. In the story "The Women



in *Red Raincoat*” the woman had to cover her mutilated body in order to be accepted by any man for her own survival. The woman Miss M who was once an art teacher now was homeless and was wandering the streets like a mad person. She deliberately gives in to the man and also participates in a sexual activity in order to make the man feel that she is worth to be kept in this house. This becomes evident at that point of the story when the narrator of this story sees the actual figure of Miss M, an old woman who covered herself with plastic flowers and paint in order to hide the features of her physicality. Immediately after recognizing the fact that the woman is old, the man told her “You may leave if you wish” (Manto 185). After this both the woman and the man knew that she cannot stay, and Manto makes this point very clear in his story, after which Miss M leaves the house and later the narrator of the story learns that she has died. It can be assumed that if the woman in this story was not old and was young, then perhaps the narrator of the story would have accepted her and kept her safe from the violence which took place on the streets during the Partition. However, due to the fact that she was old she had to leave the narrator’s house. Miss M used objects such as plastic flowers and paint in the story to cover up her old features, and as a result she herself became an object which had depreciated to the extreme. Manto has vividly suggested through this story that how during the turbulent times of the Partition women were perceived as objects to fulfill certain functions, and the most primary function of women as objects was to fulfill men’s sexual desire. In this story the moment the narrator recognizes that he cannot use Miss M to fulfill his sexual desire, she gives her back her red raincoat which he himself had taken off when he was not aware of the physical age, and in this action of giving the woman her red raincoat signifies a command that she must leave the house. As a result, Manto has shown the deep agony women had to experience during the unsettled times of Partition.

In the story "Open It" Manto has described a tragic event through which again the vulnerable and tragic position of women during the times of Partition of India can be sensed. In the story a man by the name of Sirajuddin is shown to be in a battered condition who has lost his wife while coming to a place known as Mughalpura in Pakistan from Amritsar. Sirajuddin lost his wife but his wife told her to take care of their daughter whose name was Sakina. Sakina was seventeen years old and when Sirajuddin arrived in the refugee camp in Mughalpura, he requested to the volunteers of that camp to rescue her daughter. Sirajuddin prayed that the rescue volunteers of the refugee camp find her daughter. As the story unfolds it is shown that the rescuers find Sakina and bring her back to Mughalpura. However rather than bringing Sakina back to her father, the volunteers rape her and the father continuously asks the volunteers about her daughter and prays for the volunteers so that they can find her. After a couple of days, the daughter Sakina was found in rail tracks in an unconscious state. Sirajuddin went to the hospital and was elated to see his daughter, however his daughter Sakina, a girl of seventeen, had completely become lifeless due to the physical violation done to her by the volunteers. She was tied to a stretcher and the doctor said to open the ties of the stretcher so that the father can reunite with the daughter. At the end of the story Manto writes about Sakina, "...with lifeless hands she slowly undid the knot of her waistband and lowered her shawl" (76). The joyous moment of the lost child reuniting with her father was a moment which was responded by Sakina in a lifeless manner because after being raped and physically abused, all her hopes have been destroyed and Manto is suggesting through this story that there remains no difference for Sakina whether to be alive or dead as the conscience of a seventeen-year-old girl was battered and ransacked by the physical abuse done to her by young men who were supposed to be his rescuers. Such was the gruesome reality of the Partition of India which Manto has depicted through his stories. His stories remain today as a testament of the inhuman and savage acts which were done upon women during the Partition of India by Hindus, Muslims and Shiks equally. In all

of the aforementioned stories of Manto there was a profound depiction of the sufferings which women experienced and as Ayesha Jalal in her book *The Pity of Partition* states, “Blending hard facts with realistic fiction, Manto was able to document the multifaceted nature of human sufferings at the time of partition that has eluded professional historians owing to the methodological limitations of their craft” (Jalal 78). Whether the mother’s loss for her child, or an old woman’s desolation and dejection, or the rape of a seventeen-year-old which made her life equivalent with that of death, Manto’s stories provide the experiential and harsh truths which women were forced to accept as their reality living during the times and after the Partition of India. The historical and other methodological narratives of the Partition are oftentimes fueled by particular set of agendas and seldom do they can convey the hardships and sufferings, the torments and grief which women during the Partition of India have suffered from.

In another of Manto’s stories whose English translated title is *Colder Than Ice* a conversation takes place between a Sikh woman and her husband. As their conversation unfolds the Sikh man nervously expresses, in a very exasperating manner that she attempted to have sex with a Muslim girl when he, along with other men of his group, went to loot Muslim households in Punjab. After sometime the man realizes that he has been attempting to have sex with a girl who was already dead and this leaves him horror stricken and an unrecognized sense of gloom. The man’s body became colder than ice remembering the response he made to his blind lust which made him attempt to have sex with a dead girl. This story of Manto reminds the readers of the horrible times which people faced during the Partition of India, however this story also acts a good reminder of the unimaginable acts of wrong done to women by men. Ayesha Jalal discovered three issue which were the cause of the activities of violence in Punjab and they are, “Three potent factors—*zan* (women), *zar* (wealth), and *zamin* (land)—ingrained in the material and patriarchal culture of rural

Punjab played a critical role in shaping the nature of the violence that engulfed the region in 1947” (Jalal 12). It can be seen that apart from wealth and land, women were another element which shaped the nature of violence occurring in rural Punjab. As a result, women were seen more as a means and as objects rather than as human beings, through whom violence can be undertaken and the lust of men can be satisfied in a situation filled with destruction and death. Jalal also talks about Manto’s deep anxiety when he saw the condition of women. There were lost women who were pregnant and neither they themselves nor the newly born nations of India or Pakistan knew what will happen to them. Furthermore, Manto was disgusted by the fact that women were in a vulnerable position and they were forcibly taken by men. His stories have a strong element of realism in them through which Manto bring forth the defenseless and susceptible position of the women during Partition. As mentioned before during the Partition in some way possible almost all women were somehow dependent upon men, and the most common profession which women were bound to take was the profession of prostitution. In one of Sadat Hasan Manto’s story “A Girl from Delhi” Manto exposes the tragic and inhuman destiny which has waited for many girls and women during the times of Partition of India. In this story Manto shows the life of a young girl who was forced to leave Delhi with a musician named Ustad Achhan Khan who was also the concierge of the young girl’s mother. The young girl’s name is Nasim Akhtar and she was forced to leave Delhi due to the fact that the Hindu rioters were picking up Muslim households and shops and were burning them. As Nasim Akhtar goes to Pakistan, Lahore, from Delhi. In Pakistan Achhan Khan offers her to stay in the house he is staying but Nasim Akhtar wants to live independently saying, “Delhi is behind me...I just want to live a normal woman” (Manto 236). As the story progresses an older woman by the name of Jannatey regularly visits Nasim Akhter and soon enough Jannatey herself wants to sell Nasim Akhter as a prostitute to a group of men whose occupation, as it can be judged from the story, is to buy young women and make them as prostitute. Jannatey approaches

Nasim Akhter as wanting Nasim to get married to a good man, and Nasim agrees having complete faith in Jannatey. However as Manto writes, "...her [Nasim Akhter's] happiness was not to last beyond twenty-four hours, because the very next day [of Nasim's marriage] she heard her husband talking to two old courtesans from Hira Mandi. They were haggling over her price" (Manto 238). Immediately Nasim Akhter had to, without a choice, escape from that place and move back to where she only known acquaintance, Achhan Khan, was staying. Again the pattern of women being in a vulnerable position has been shown by Manto and furthermore through this story another common pattern of Manto's depiction of women can be noticed, that anyhow they need another man for their survival. If one can assume in this story that Achhan Khan also had motives like Jannatey, then Nasim Akhter would be a helpless girl like Sakina, lifeless and abused, in "Open It". Manto's stories exposed the existing savagery within the human beings who fought with their lives to have an independent nation, independent from the former colonial power of Britain, and also to be independent in the sense of having two separate nations of people from two different religions. The shocks which the women felt during as well as after the Partition of India was observed by Manto, and he exposed the inhumanity and savagery which was present in the treatment of women during the Partition of India. Even the rescue volunteers and the well-wishers wanted to sell off women since during and after the Partition of India selling women as prostitutes or mistresses was a business with significant amount of profit.

Manto's literary sense of realism and hard depiction of what he witnessed remains in his story as a verification of the viciousness present within the new nations of India and Pakistan. If two new independent nations were born through the Partition of India, then Manto's stories questions how far were the women independent in these two free nations. Manto has vividly shown that women were never free, neither in the colonial era, nor in the era where great nationalistic struggles took

place all over the Indian subcontinent, and also as Manto's stories and works like Urvashi Butalia's *Other Side of Silence* suggest, women were victims of the vicious and unrestrained acts which occurred during and after the Partition of India. In all of the aforementioned stories a vivid clear illustration has been shown of the victimizations of women which directly contrasts with the national ideals preached by the two independent nations of India and Pakistan. Manto's depiction of women springs forth from a deep, non-judgmental, empathetic conscience of the injustice which were done to women and he could do nothing but remain a passive witness. It is this passive witnessing which provoked him perhaps to write short stories which have within them the depiction of the deluge of anxiety, agony, pain, torments and a sense of disability of being exhausted by being victims.

In all of Manto's stories there are addressed many social taboos which remained simultaneously present with the grand narrative of the Partition as is recorded by historians and other studies of humanities. In another of Manto's stories titled in English as "A Woman's Life", he shows the inner turmoil of a woman who has accepted the life of a prostitute. At one point of the story the protagonist of this story whose name is Saugandhi becomes enraptured with an unnamed agony as she goes into a delirium from having the strong feeling of being used by a man who claims to love her and yet only borrows her hard earned money, as well as being rejected from a man who refuses to accept her as a company for the night. In "A Woman's Life" Manto attempts to deeply contemplate the loneliness and unpleasantness of not being ease with oneself. In this story

Saugandhi was a woman whose past has not been mentioned by Manto, and through this perhaps Manto is trying to convey a message. During the Partition of India there were many women who either wanted to deliberately erase their past and live a life with a minimum degree of material stability and be safe from the chaos which diffused throughout the Indian subcontinent, and there

were some women who accepted their fate in a very stoic manner of being a prostitute or living with their abductor by remaining their servant or mistress. As a result of this there were many women for whom it was irrelevant to be reunited with their family members or their homeland due to a strong religious division within the mentality of the people of the Indian subcontinent which followed after the immediate years of the Partition of India, and furthermore women felt ashamed to go back to their families from being labelled as a prostitute or as women who were raped and sexually violated. While in no documents of the Partition of India it is stated that there were formal organized legal actions taken for women who were raped victims or who had to forcefully participate in activities such as prostitution for survival, on the contrary India and Pakistan's national narrative demeaned the women who survived the ruthlessness of the Partition of India as women who were corrupted as they were sexually overpowered by men of different religion. Therefore, the character Saugandhi in the discussed story of Manto had no origin in the narrative of the story. The narrative solely focuses on the life of Saugandhi as a prostitute who accepted her life and attempted to ease herself through various little things. One such a thing through which Saugandhi eased herself with was a man named Madhu. He claimed to love Saugandhi and always took money from her, money which Saugandhi earned from selling her body. It was this body, and the utility of this body, which was the only identity left of Saugandhi in the turbulent times of the Partition. This fact becomes visible when Saugandhi gets rejected by a high personage and she feels she is ugly as "the bloom of her early youth was gone" (Manto 53). It is this rejection, which ransacks Saugandhi from the only identity she was left with, the identity of her body. Due to this incident of rejection Saugandhi experiences a deep internal agony which makes her mind enter a delirium and she almost becomes mad. At the end of the story, Saugandhi was visited by Madhu and Saugandhi orders Madhu to leave her house and tells Madhu she cannot "mother" him anymore by lending him more money and also she rejects all the false promises which Madhu earlier used

to make. While it is evident reading the story that Saugandhi knew the promises which Madhu used to make were false, yet she gave a space of her life to this man because she felt love for him. However, very soon by that one incident

Saugandhi's life gets ransacked and her maddening self-bursts forth into a wild state of being. Through this story the internal life of a large number of women who had to embrace the life and destiny of a prostitute has been shown, which is a life filled with vulnerabilities and a profound internal uneasiness from which perhaps many women could never redeem themselves during and after the times of the Partition of India. Mukhopadhyay in the aforementioned journal article quotes the words of K. N. Daruwala where he states, "Manto's commitment to truth was so passionate and complete that it has to go unchallenged" (36), and furthermore the author of the journal article adds with the quotation of Daruwala, "...the voices of such women heroes are undoubtedly rare in contemporary Indian literature" .(36)

However, the deliberate sexual act of many women in the stories of Manto, essentially through the participation of prostitution, can have a different dimension as stated by Akhtar and Flemming in their journal "Is Manto Necessary Today?" In the journal they write, "Sex operated on two levels in Manto's stories. On one level he brought out the inconsistencies of life through sex. On another level sex becomes a means of protest" (Akhtar & Leslie 2). What is necessary to notice in the aforementioned quote is that sex for many women has been perceived by the two scholars as a means of protest, however this protest was not a moralistic one or neither something which many perceives to be economically fashionable, and this information has also been mentioned by the authors of the journal article. However, the protest of women through sex was the protest against destitution, poverty and against the insecurities of life which filled the sense of existence of



numerous women during the blustery war trodden times of the Partition of India. The women of the India subcontinent during the times of Partition had shown, through the experience of their mortifying and horrific life overpowered by sexual abuse, the falsity of the nationalistic narratives of the nonviolence of Gandhism as well as the promises made by the Muhammad Ali Jinnah for none of these nationalistic pledges and so called “humanitarian” covenants could give the women a life of happiness and security which was their right. It is only through Manto’s stories that readers can have a sense of the hardships which women during the Partition of India suffered from. Hence it can be concluded that Manto’s stories are one of the vital existing works of the Partition of India which has conveyed the epistemic crises of the women during the Partition of India.

## Conclusion

Crispin Bates, a subaltern historian, has mentioned in his journal titled “Subaltern and Raj: South Asia since 1600”, a quote which highlights the attitude of political parties, and hence the attitude of the leaders of the then political parties, during the chaotic times of the Partition of India. The quote states, “The dominant moderate leadership in effective control of the Congress machinery and of the Ministries was in practice developing an increasing co-operation with imperialism...acting more and more openly in the interests of the upper class landlords and industrialists, and was showing an increasingly marked hostility to all militant expression of forms of mass struggle” (Bates 153). The word to mark in the aforementioned quote is “imperialism”. The ministers and capitalists, the rich landlords and the industrialists, all paved the way through which an exercise of imperialism can be undertaken through which the struggle of the mass people faced immense hardships and destruction in the form of militarism. Intellectuals and historians must revisit the events of the Partition not in a macro perspective, but in a more micro and focused perspective highlighting the hardships and sufferings of the people, the women and children who were the victims of the people of their own nation. Colonialism in India never was diminished by the leaving of the British. On the contrary, colonialism undertook a more devious form through which the industrialists, the upper class and the politicians exercised unimaginable traumas to the people who, left in such a hectic situation, lost themselves in the frenzy of various opposing forces. If the aforementioned quote of Bates is examined carefully, it will be seen that all the groups who controlled the violence of Partition using various coercive means had their own agendas to fulfill. For example, the capitalists and industrialists had their own agendas, the politicians had their own purpose which they took by violence and other coercive means. It must be questioned that was there, during and after the Partition of India, any group who was collectively formed to serve

humanitarian purposes. The reason for the author of this study to ask this question is that the master narrative of history is framed and constructed by agendas of nationalism, religious biases, etc. and hence they fail to reflect the human condition during the times of the Partition of India. If other narratives of the events which took place during and after the Partition of India are sought and expressed by researchers such as

Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, Ayesha Jalal, or by revisiting the place people were “thrown out off”, if that can be used as an apt expression in this context, of their father’s or mother’s homeland at present and trace these places through the memories which are present in the form of stories or photographs, such as the words of Kavita Punjabi brilliantly illustrates, how will the readers read these works? In what frame of mind will the students, intellectuals and historians of the present era return to these works of Partition which show the condition of the common people who either survived with an undreamed traumatic condition bearing with them a ghastly memory, some of them still do not know where are the bodies of their family, or if dead.

Sadat Hassan Manto’s short stories are perhaps one of the best literary representations of the suffering the common people experienced during and after the Partition of India. In particular, Manto’s stories expose the falseness and dishonesty of the ideologies which have dominated people based on their communal and religious identities and which has caused suffering and torments towards human beings in a large scale. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to present some of the research works done on the subject of Partition of India which has attempted to dig out the experiences and conditions of women, filled with trauma which can only be realized with a dead silence after reading their accounts of struggle, trauma and hardships, in the chaos which has put the conscience of humanity below and uphold the beastly attitude of communalism.

However, including with these research works on the Partition of India the author of this study has taken some of the short stories written by Sadat Hassan Manto which reflect the downtrodden conditions of women and what are the possible causes behind such an upsetting situation. The answer which Manto's stories has suggested that there never were any women who was Indian or Pakistani. Yes, there were women who embraced religious identities and there were also women who had forsaken their religious identities, switching largely between Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism for survival. There were women who were forced to be taken away from their new families after the Partition without their consent, and there were also women who were raped by their own rescuers and as a result even though they were "recovered", their soul inside lost all its vigor and liveliness. Therefore, the suggestion of Manto was to see these women who they were behind the veils of them being a "prostitute", behind the baseless communal identification of being a Muslim or a Hindu or a Sikh, as a voice and as a conscience which has lived a life full of torments, suffering, guilt, a body which has been raped innumerable times, internal and unexpressed dejections. The aim of this thesis was to highlight, analyze and contemplate the conditions of women during and after the Partition of India as reflected in the research works, the academic journals and combine them with the literary representation of Sadat Hassan Manto through which the existence of the sufferings of women were focused, rather than the identities and veils which were put forth in front of the women during and after the Partition of India through the guise of nationalism, political and religious biases. "I am little concerned with beauty or perfection. I don't care for the great centuries. All I care about is life, struggle and intensity". This can be said to an apt expression for the life of Sadat Hassan Manto as a realist writer, who was uncompromising in his depiction to challenge the power hierarchy in one of the most turbulent times of human history and bring forth women during the Partition as suffering human beings whose voice remains as a testament of the presence of death and destruction behind creation of the great nations of India and Pakistan. The

author hopes with utmost humility and a sincere reliance in her research that she has been able, as much as possible, to convey forth her main line of argument in the chapters of this study.

Why did this unconceivable situation occur to women during the Partition of India, what its causes and effects are at present. More importantly how can the revisiting of these accounts of the conditions of women in the Partition help to define now, at present, what is the definition, if there are any, and to be precise if there are definitions with various multifaceted layers, of the “Indian Woman”, the “Pakistani Woman”, the “Bangladeshi Woman” and the women who belonged to the indigenous tribes and who were forced to accept an identity of the then newly formed nation, a process which was essentially accidental and only was interest to the politicians and upper class people.

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