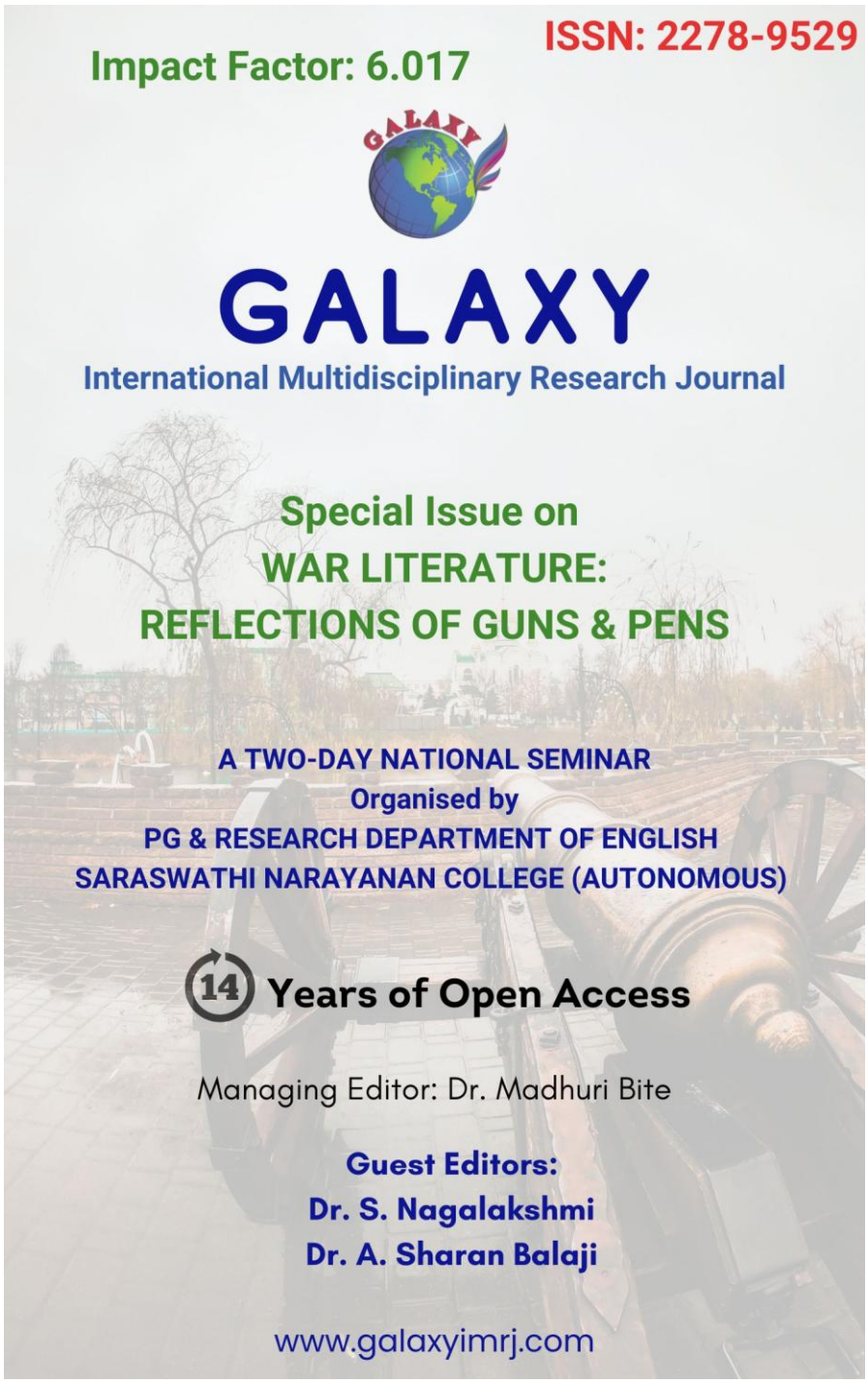


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Exploring the Journey of Women in Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*

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Abstract:

Violence and displacement during the Partition hurt women more than anyone else, making their pain unmatched. As history books tend to focus more on political events than personal accounts, this paper argues that the personal stories of those who lived through Partition should be given the same historical weight as the big political events. Additionally, it shows how important it is to learn about the experiences of women during Partition, since their opinions are rarely heard in popular historical accounts. So, with this background this paper focuses on women's experiences during India's Partition in 1947 by using Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* as a main source. Pooro's tragic trip in the story *Pinjar* is based on many real stories of Partition survivors. Various researchers have looked at the literary connections between Pritam's *Pinjar* and real oral histories from historical perspective, who tell their own stories. Because women's memories are incomplete or broken, they show pushback against erasing history. In addition to talking about how survivors form memories, the study looks at the different effects of being a woman on Partition events. Specific demographic groups were mistreated and faced problems in society, and they came up with their own ways to deal with and improve their situations. So, this paper also looks at the links between people's memories and shared stressful events by comparing *Pinjar* and oral history collections. Works of fiction based on true events, like *Pinjar*, show how major historical events affected the social and mental lives of under-represented groups that aren't well documented in history. Hence the paper analyses Partition by looking at the stories of women and showing how they fought

hard against huge problems. The importance of keeping these stories alive stays high because they are fundamental in building a complete picture of history.

Keywords: historical representation, personal narratives, femininity, recollection, suffering, strength.

Introduction

History remembers 1947 as a very important year because it was the start of the tumultuous Partition process that made India and Pakistan into two separate countries. Divided by colonial customs and religious conflicts, it caused millions of people to move, spilt thousands of tonnes of blood, and caused lasting trauma for future generations. A lot of historical readings focused on big political changes, but they didn't look at the complicated personal stories of the women whose lives were forever changed by this heartbreaking events. So many academic studies, researchers and literary writers, using historical approach, depicted through their writings about what happened to women during Partition. In this way Amrita Pritam through her novel *Pinjar,* wrote about the terrible things that women went through the traumas especially during the pre and post war time.

It was during the Partition process that lines were drawn across the land, which broke up social groups and family ties as well as people's freedom. Women who had to deal with the disruption went through a different kind of suffering. Both men and women watched violent crimes happened, but women were more often the victims of attacks. Sexual abuse, kidnapping, and being forced to convert were all used as weapons in the community war and hurt many women's bodies and minds in permanent ways. This could be rightly justified as, "Those whose bodies were whole had hearts that were splintered. Families were torn apart …The bonds of human relationship were in tatters, and in the end many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan. (qtd. in Bhalla 2007: 189)

India became a completely different country after the 1947 Partition. It had terrible effects that broke up families and destroyed whole neighbourhoods, and it changed the culture of the whole region. When India and Pakistan got their freedom, there was a lot of violence between communities, people had to move, and the whole area was deeply traumatised. Partition's story is told through political talks and territorial disagreements, but the effects were especially harsh on women because of their gender. Before talking about what it was like for women during Partition, the author talks about the historical situations that made them weak and the systems that made their situation worse.

Partition happened because of many things, including the fact that Britain ruled over many colonies, which made nationalism stronger and religious strife worse. Defence methods put in place by the British made culture and religious differences worse, which made Hindus and Muslims even more hostile towards each other. An academician, Gyanendra Pandey says, "the colonial state...wrapped itself in a vital task to construct and handle these [communal] identities". It was supposed to bring peace to the world, but the partition plan led to violent fights between towns. Not only did the Partition split up land, but it also split up identities, family units, took away homes, and shared history stories. Most of the effects of the social disruption were felt by women, who had to deal with many conflicts between family tasks and new, serious threats to their safety.

Law and order processes broke down during Partition, which made women more vulnerable to threats. Women lived in fear and violence during this time of chaos because the government system wasn't working and people were living in fear. Women were forced to become slaves because there were only few laws that they had no one to protect them in their fights against fear, violence, and being moved against their will. Criminals who preyed on women were able to do their things easily because there were no rules and no one could stop them.

Women had a hard time surviving during this time because society was changing quickly, male systems were strong, and there was a lot of violence in the community. Partition forced women to leave their homes and cut them off from their friends and family, while also putting them in new situations where they could be abused or mistreated. Understanding the historical background helps us fully grasp the depth of the Partition experiences of women as well as the long-lasting emotional effects of this painful event. The stories that women talk about what they went through during Partition are very important because they show how divided the country was and how vulnerable women were because of their gender.

To trace the fact in form of story, the novel *Pinjar* has a lot of literary promise to help readers understand how hard things were for women during Partition. The story shows through Pooro's forced marriage how many women went through chaos and breakup during the Partition events. In her novel, Pritam looks at the mental instability and loneliness that many Indian women went through during this time in history. Victimisation is shown along with women's unwavering strength and determination in the novel very clearly. While going through hard times, Pooro shows a fierce drive to live and learn how to deal with them in order to find her identity again.

The Migration of Pooro

Amrita Pritam's literary novel *Pinjar* uses Pooro's life to show how Partition forced a lot of women to move. People who lived through this time and heard about it through oral histories and historical records would strongly recognise the stories told about Pooro, even though her story is made up. Pooro's life, which included being kidnapped and then married against her will, and her search for her own identity show how women lived during this very

unstable time in history. The analysis looks at Pooro's life to show how Partition caused women to be displaced in many ways and how these effects are still being felt today.

Pooro's story begins in a safe place, where she lives with her family and the people she loves. When there is violence in the neighbourhood, the safe world she lived in falls apart, and she is taken away. Her being taken away is worse than physical harm because it cuts her off from all the roles she used to play as a daughter and from her family history. This first kidnapping causes Pooro problems that go beyond her physical surroundings; it also affects her mental and emotional health and separates her from her family. The daughter is forced to live with Rashid's family, which means she can't make her own decisions and has to accept this new way of life.

Pooro has more problems now that she has to move because she is forced to marry Rashid. As an example of how women are exploited during intercommunal fighting, the forced wedding is more than just one person's bad luck. Even though they were weak, women were seen as strong symbols by which groups showed their honour and social identity. The fact that Pooro was forced to marry shows how women were used as tools during the Partition, since men decided her fate and communal strife made their power stronger.

Losing her family and her old name was the worst thing that ever happened to Pooro. She struggles to connect the memories of her past life with the present, even though it's hard for her to accept the way things are now. Putting her present position and her past self into separate compartments describes the feeling of identity being broken that often comes up during displacement. People are forced to leave their homes and social networks when they are displaced, which means they lose a lot of things, including their belongings, their culture, and their community ties. Pooro's inner turmoil shows how many people feel when they are

forced to move because they can't forget the past, which gets in the way of making the necessary changes to live in the present.

Through the story of *Pinjar*, like the protagonist, many Pooro's became a symbol of a victim. In course of time, the terrible things that happened to her didn't break her heart because she gained the strength to stay alive. The woman learns how to fit in with her new surroundings and does a good job while getting close to Rashid's family. During Partition, women showed a lot of strength by being able to get through hard times. When women were in this tough position, they found new ways to stay alive and showed that they could adapt to their surroundings so they could rebuild their lives.

It turns out to be a very complicated choice for Pooro to stay with Rashid instead of going back to her family. It's not a support for forced marriage, and the choice doesn't show that she doesn't care about her past. It shows that she is independent and aware that her life has changed by her choice to stay with Rashid. It also shows that she is realistic about her future. As a result of the Partition, women had to deal with endless problems that limited their choices, making their lives very hard.

There were many reasons why women had to move during the Partition time, and Pooro's journey shows them all. Moving and losing a home, along with the violence that comes with it, as well as the fight for individual identity and the strength of human nature, are all shown in the story. While giving a powerful look into the personal effects of this historical tragedy, Pritam uses Pooro's story as an example of the many women who were touched by Partition. Pooro shows through her story the pain women went through and how determined they were to live and heal after huge problems.

Pinjar -Reflection of painful Journey of women

Pinjar is a work of literature by Amrita Pritam that gives a thorough look at Partition-era stories that most people have avoided talking about. While history records tell us a lot about Partition in general, *Pinjar* goes into great detail about how it affected women emotionally. Through Pooro's made-up story, Pritam creates a deep study of the connection between displacement, trauma, and survival strength, which is a reflection of the painful journey that many women had to go through because of Partition. The most important thing about the novel is that it uses human stories to counteract oversimplifications of history.

This novel is different from other history accounts because it looks at how Partition changed the minds of people who saw these events. Along with changes in politics and history, the novel looks at the emotional effects of Partition on individuals. Through her story, Pritam shows the wide range of feelings that regular people, especially women, went through at that time. An analyst named Simona Sawhney says that historical reports don't look into the emotional side of important historical events like fiction does. *Pinjar* does a good job of showing how the Partition affected people's feelings right away through its strong storytelling.

Pinjar shows how people's sense of identity and connection stayed unclear during this time of national unrest. It changes Pooro into a different person when she moves away from home. Despite the fact that her life has changed irreversibly, the woman fights to connect with her true self in the world. Several Partition accounts to talk about identity issues that show how people lost their sense of self after being forced to leave their homes during this time in history. *Pinjar* is not just a story about being a victim because of these events. By showing how much pain women went through during Partition, the novel shows that they were able to get through it. Because Pooro has been through so much pain, she shows that

she can survive by choosing to live. One can better understand how Partition affected women's lives by reading Pritam's account of Pooro's fight against victimhood ideals.

Conclusion

The author of *Pinjar* paints a powerful picture of how women survive the terrible effects of the Partition. According to Amrita Pritam, the story of Pooro shows how hard it was for women during Partition and also shows that they were strong enough to keep fighting no matter what. The novel is still important because it uses its story to connect with personal stories and oral testimonies that aren't usually included in official records. Through its fictionalised accounts of real events, the novel keeps alive the memory of women who were hurt and their strength as a group as they overcame the trauma of Partition and helped society recover. This piece of literature is an important reminder of the bad things that happen to people when they are divided. It also helps us understand how important it is to read these stories to develop empathy and understanding as one work to make society more peaceful and fairer. Rita Chowdhry, a researcher on Partition, says that literature is an important way to keep memories alive that pass down pain from one generation to the next and in this way P*injar* is very important because it keeps alive and current the important ideas about Partition history that come from women's experiences.

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