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Journeys of Resilience and Sisterhood in Selected Indian Fiction on 1947 Partition

Hina Ali Khan
Department of English
International Islamic University Islamabad Pakistan

Saiyma Aslam
Department of English
International Islamic University Islamabad Pakistan

Abstract

This study analyses and glorifies the journeys of resilience and sisterhood of raped and abducted women during the 1947 Partition. We have selected Indian author Yashpal Singh's *This is not That Dawn: Jhootha Sach* translated into English by Indian author P. Sachidanandan. The second fiction we have chosen is West Bengali author Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning: A Partition Novel* translated into English by Indian author Enakshi Chatterjee. We draw upon Judith Lewis Herman, Irvin D. Yalom and Molyn Leszcz, Paul Frewen, and Ruth Lanius' theoretical conceptions of resilience which explain how the female protagonists of both novels, as victims of sexual violence, successfully undertook journeys of resilience with the support provided by the other females. The detailed qualitative analysis of both texts reveals that raped and abducted women, despite their traumatic experiences of sexual violence and abduction, recovered, healed, and emancipated through the vital support of sisterhood among them. The objective of this research is to celebrate the journeys of resilience and sisterhood of raped and abducted women in their post-partition lives. This research will provide a voice to the silenced lived experiences of these women and will produce the urge to uncover and evaluate their resilience.

Keywords: Partition, Trauma, Sisterhood, Resilience, Remembrance and Reconnections

Introduction

Partition literature highlights the brutalities of mass suicides, migrations, and genocide. Still, it remains mute by providing a "sophisticated account" of sexual violence, its force, and its outcome on the lives of its victims during India's partition (Didur, 2006, p.130). The history of shattered bodies and shattered souls of the 1947 Partition always remains under academic discussion by researchers, fiction writers, and movie makers. Among these discussions the dreadful communal violence is prominent where the sexual violence on the women was used as a "weapon, sport and punishment" (Khan, 2008, p. 133). Rape was considered the easiest way to humiliate and degrade the masculinity of the foe by contaminating their women. As a result, the massive "voluntary and enforced suicides of women" took place to save the honor of

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their families, communities, and nations (Khan, 2008, p. 133). Partition literature remembers and regards these mass suicides as courageous acts of bravery but the "unsaid testimonies" of the resilience of raped victims and abducted women remain shrouded in silence (Joshi, 2020, p. 1305). Feminist scholars faced an "awkward silence" under which remain countless concealed histories of Partition whenever they tried to unearth the memories of raped victims' resilience (Butalia, 2014, p. 117). Aslam (2020) adds how silencing and abrogation of abducted women's statements and narrations for the sake of nations' dignity, indicates how Partition literature did not regard abducted and raped women as "worthy of remembrance" (pp. 54, 50). Thus, the experiences of the raped and kidnapped women of 1947 were reduced into numbers and figures, to hide the dreadful parts of Partition history. According to Das (2018), the governments "absorbed" the unwanted members of the communities and thus helped them (communities) to preserve their dignity by the "exclusion" of their objectionable members (p. 65). To save the standards of piety and honor, there was an unstated restriction on speech that "strategically manipulated" these dreadful events as a "common disaster" (Das, 2018, p. 64).

We argue that due to the covers of silence, the lived experiences of these unnamed and unidentified women remain neglected and disregarded in the Partition literature. This study addresses the critical need to evaluate and analyze how, in 1947, despite the horrors and brutality of abductions and rapes, women of the subcontinent developed resilience and evolved as empowered women. We aim to uncover and glorify the laudable stories of resilience concealed under the layers of silence imposed to preserve the "honor" of communities and nations (Khan, 2008, p. 133). We also highlight those raped victims and abducted woman of the Partition not just evolved as successful women but at the same time became a source of empowerment for other women (Butalia, 1998). We analyze the selective fictional works of Indian and Bengali authors and critically examine the complex journeys of the resilience of raped and abducted women in their novels. The first text is by Indian author Yashpal Singh's novel *This is Not that Dawn: Jhootha Sach* which has been translated by P. Sachidanandan. It has the story of Tara who lives in Lahore with her family before Partition. Tara becomes a victim of Partition's sexual violence and bears imprisonment along with other abducted women. However, despite being a victim of the Partition's sexual aggression, Tara manages to pursue her ambition and thrives as a government officer and helps build the lives of other women too. The second text is West Bengali author Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning: A Partition Novel* translated into English by Indian author Enakshi Chatterjee. It has the journey of Sutara who before Partition lived in the village of Noakhali in southern Bangladesh with her parents and sister. However, after her rape, and murder of her sister and parents in the Partition riots, she survives the social boycott of her brothers and manages to secure a respectable and independent life as a qualified lecturer. We analyze Tara's and Sutara's post-partition lives to discover how both the raped and

abducted women healed, recovered, and evolved in their post-partition lives and what role did sisterhood play in their resilience.

Theoretical Framework

To explore the dynamic nature of resilience, this study draws on the theoretical frameworks of Judith Lewis Herman, Suniya S. Luthar, Dante Cicchetti, Irvin D. Yalom, Molyn Leszcz, Paul Frewen, and Ruth Lanius. Yates and others define resilience as a process enabling individuals who have endured trauma to recover and thrive with the support of protective factors (Yates et al., 2015, p. 775). Herman categorizes resilience into three stages: "safety," "mourning and remembrance," and "reconnections" (2015, pp. 62, 162, 175). We analyze the stages of safety, mourning, remembrance, and reconnections to investigate how raped victims through these stages have shown resilience with the major support coming from the sisterhood. Herman's theoretical foundation of resilience helps in understanding how sisterhood provides the satisfaction of being accepted and restores the self-esteem of raped women which contributes to their empowerment. Luthar and Cicchetti's concept of "protective factors" helps to uncover how sisterhood among women has acted support mechanism in the resilience of raped women (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 858). This analysis examines how raped and abducted women demonstrate resilience within these stages, with protective factors from feminist alliances playing a key role. By integrating sisterhood and resilience, this study highlights how the connections of sisterhood, by providing safe spaces, opportunities to grieve, and empowerment, enable these women to rebuild their lives after partition.

Review of the Literature

Partition literature in India and Pakistan depicts diverse experiences and transformations of the people of the Sub-Continent. According to Menon & Bhasin (1998), in the Partition, women of one religious community were sexually molested by the men of the other community to humiliate the enemy by disgracing their women (p. 41). Behind every form of violence upon women, there was an urge to "consume, transform or eradicate" the remains of the opposing community and, as a result, women, according to Gandhi, became "the chief sufferers of 1947" (Khan, 2008, p. 135). Women were not just sexually exploited and dumped but also a large number of women were kept in the enemy's country as "permanent hostages, captives or forced wives" and were called "the abducted women" (Khan, 2008, p.135). Andrew J. Major notices that in India's partition, women became territory to be seized (Major, 1995, p. 60). Among these women, some became "unpaid servants" of their captors, some converted and adjusted into new households and some became wives of their abductors (Khan, 2008, p. 135). Among these stories, massive genocide, mass suicides, and migration have always been highlighted but silence upon the resilience of raped and abducted women remains questionable. According to Gonzalez observation, the major part of the violence that occurred to women during the 1947

Partition was executed by their kinsmen (Gonzalez, 2000, p. 105). According to studies, the intense gendered violence was "forgotten or buried deep" under the "official policy of silence" to save the dignity of the two new nations from shame (Marangoly George, 2013, p. 176). The torment, agony, and terror that women of the subcontinent faced during the 1947 Partition received only a "few lines of cold recording" in the textbooks of India and Pakistan (Khan, 2008, p. 202). In addition, if any woman tried to voice out her traumatic narratives, she was promptly discouraged by her family members. Butalia (2014) notes that during interviews, there were "deliberate erasures" of women's rapes and abduction (p. 116). The confession of rape for them was a confession of disgrace and after that confession, there was a chance of abandonment or rejection from their families.

Despite their suffering and disgrace, these brave women discovered and developed ways to support themselves, leading to significant socio-economic progress in their journeys and providing them with new homes in newly established states. For instance, Menon & Bhasin (1998) recount the story of a courageous woman "B" who after her recovery did not return to her old family and preferred to resume her life alone and independently (p. 93). Menon & Bhasin (1998) narrate how "B" now speaks with a sense of achievement about how she completed her education and became an empowered woman (p. 95). In some cases, women had to forget their preferences and ambitions to support their families who were now entirely relying on their hard "labor" (Butalia, 2014, p. 102). They (women) educated themselves, ventured out into offices, schools, colleges, or hospitals, or stayed home, worked, and made a living (Menon & Bhasin, 1998, p. 205). Weber (1995) in "Re(creating) the Home: Women's Role in the Development of Refugee Colonies in South Calcutta" observes that "the working woman with broken sandals became a presence on the crowded streets...and of various forms of public transportation" of both countries (pp. 195-210). Thus, the painful process of India's Partition accelerated social climbing and forced women and girls to broaden their social sphere and enter into the workforce and educational organizations for their survival and evolution.

In this regard, though the partition fiction highlights the brutality of communal violence and mass suicides of women, it still requires more vocal regarding abducted women's resilience in their post-partition lives. Likewise, Misri in *Beyond Partition: Gender, Violence, and Representation in Postcolonial India* analyses different fictional descriptions of brutality executed by families and communities as martyrdom, courage, obligation, and self-sacrifice of women (Misri, 2015, pp. 105-130). Likewise, Shiv Kumar in *A River with Three Banks* illustrates the oppression of women in "political, historical, cultural and social spheres" during the Partition (Sundararaj & Mishma, 2011, p. 201). Shauna Singh Baldwin in *What the Body Remembers* highlights how Sikh women suffered and survived in the chaotic time of partition. In the novel, Baldwin narrates the journey of Roop as a refugee woman who stands beside her husband through the crucial phase of migration and helps him to

adjust to "political agitation" in the new state (Uma Maheswary & Lourdusamy, 2022, p. 119). However, despite detailed narrations of Roop's migration and Kusum's killing, the resilience of raped women remains silent in the text. Likewise, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* (also published as *Cracking India)* highlights how women during the 1947 Partition were brutally molested in the name of religious conflicts. The most noticeable form of female oppression in the novel is Ayah's (Shanta's) abduction, after which she is probably raped. Shanta is devastated after her abduction but refuses to assimilate with her abductor and resolves to leave for her country after her recovery. Basu (2007) notes that Shanta's rape, which is the most highlighted aspect of the novel, is only "imagined" and thus "replicates" the "script of silence" on accounts of raped victims and abducted women (2007, p. 11). Sidhwa ends the story on Shanta's return to her natal country but again remains silent on Shanta's journey of resilience in her new country. In the same text, a minor character Hamida depicts how abducted women, as social outcasts, were "confined to the camp, silenced and (were) not part of the public discourse" (Marangoly George, 2013, p. 201). Butalia (2014) in *Other Side of the Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* reveals how women were victims of multiple forms of violence in Partition and how their narratives were silenced to save the dignity of their community and nation. Butalia (2014) provides narratives of women who witnessed the horrific forms of violence and lived their lives with the remembrance of violence, helplessness, and victimhood. Similarly, Rabia Umar Ali in "Muslim Women and the Partition of India: A Historiographical Silence" analyses different works of fiction and autobiographies and observes that they could not draw adequate attention to women's torment that goes hand in hand with Partition (Ali, 2009, p. 425). Likewise, Das in *Critical Events; an Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* reports how during the Partition women had to bear the violence from other men as well as their menfolk. Das also critiques "the collective censorship" and "crystallized narratives" enforced on abducted women's accounts by their states and their communities (Das, 2018, pp. 63, 64). In "Community and Violence: Recalling Partition" (Pandey, 1997) mentions her visits to the villages in East Punjab to interview the families of victims of Partition violence. Pandey observes that during interviews women were continuously "turning the questions" towards their male companions who in response provided a "sophisticated, rounded account" of horrific events of Partition (1997, p. 2038). Similarly, Menon & Bhasin in *Border and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* highlight the experiences of multiple women from diverse parts of the region who survived the horrific violence of the Partition (1998, p. 240). Likewise, Joshi in "I am Also a We: Archiving the Women's Silence in Partition and Holocaust Narratives" argues to include women's narratives that have been "conveniently picked and dropped" to incorporate "nationalist agendas" (2020, p.1304).

Joshi (2020) concludes that to provide "existence" to the resilience of women, it is necessary to add their "speech and voice" to the Partition literature (p. 1304). Similarly, Aslam (2020) in "Recovered and Restored? Abducted Women in 1947

Partition Narratives" critiques the "erasures" of accounts of abducted women in historical narratives of Partition and argues to break "silence" on the terrors and pains of abducted women (p. 54). Likewise, Shrivastava (2022) in "Genocidal Violence, Biopolitics, and Treatment of Abducted and Raped Women in the Aftermath of 1947 Partition in India" insists upon including the voices of raped victims and abducted women to rethink Partition as "gender-based violence" that fall out on women of the Subcontinent as the disastrous event happened (pp. 32, 23). Thus, the narration of India's Partition will be lacking and partial if it continues its silence regarding the narratives of countless women whose lives were visibly damaged. We examine how raped and abducted women healed from their trauma of violence and have evolved as empowered women in their post-partition lives and how their unity helped them to survive and empower themselves and other victims.

Research Methodology

For qualitative analysis, we analyze the resilience and sisterhood of female protagonists in Indian fictional texts *This is Not That Dawn: Jhootha Sach* by Yashpal Singh and *The River Churning: A Partition Novel* by Jyotirmoyee Devi. To support our research, we draw upon theoretical foundations provided by Judith Lewis Herman, Suniya S. Luthar and Dante Cicchetti, Irvin D. Yalom and Molyn Leszcz, Paul Frewen, and Ruth Lanius. Resilience is a process in which an individual despite his/her traumatic experiences, still manages to deliver a "successful outcome" (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 858). We focus on how raped women through "protective factors" were able to bring "successful adaptation" in the face of "threatening situations" in their post-partition lives (Yates et al., 2015, p. 775). For this purpose, we divide the difficult process of raped victims' recovery and resilience into three different stages. In the first stage, we explicate the first stages of safety in which female solidarity becomes a source of safety which lays the foundation for the resilience of raped women. In the second stage, we explain how grieving and mourning for raped victims helps them to heal from the trauma of sexual violence. In the third and last stage of reconnections, we examine how raped victims through their connections gradually move towards their resilience and evolution. Finally, we discover how raped and abducted women despite their traumatic experiences of partition, evolved and also became a source of empowerment for other women.

Analysis of Resilience in the Stages of Safety, Remembrance and Reconnections

Sexual violence can frighten, control, and humiliate the person and lead to psychological distress in its victims. Trauma is a feeling of "intense fear, helplessness, and threat of annihilation" that occurs as a result of "violence and threat to life or bodily integrity" (Herman, 2015, p. 33). Resilience, according to Bolton et al. (2016), is a "dynamic process" in which individuals despite their traumatic experiences still manage to "flourish" and develop (p. 171). Resilience after traumatic

experiences of sexual violence cannot be done on its own and therefore requires "protective factors" to support the process (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 858). In the first stage of recovery and resilience, victims require immediate transfer to a safe environment and protection for themselves (Herman, 2015, p.160). The second stage is the stage of "remembrance and mourning" in which the victims recall their painful memories and "remember to forget" the traumatic experiences of their past (Herman, 2015, p. 175). In the final stage of "reconnections" raped women heal their wounded dignity through the protective factor and restore their "self-esteem" (Yalom and Leszcz, 2005, p. 81).

We begin with the first stage in which a safe environment is a major requirement for the resilience of the victims. Scheppele & Bart (1983), in "Through Women's Eyes: Defining Danger in the Wake of Sexual Assault" discuss that "women who are raped are likely to have their perceptions of safety radically altered" because the brutality of rape incidents "shatters their basic sense of security" (pp. 63-81). Similarly, in *The River Churning: A Partition Novel*, Sutara after her rape loses her basic sense of security and that "tremendous shock had shaken her to the core" (Devi, 1995, p. 08). In that condition, raped victims feel "helplessness and loss of control" over their "bodies" (Herman, 2015, p. 160). After the trauma of sexual violence, Sutara feels the loss of "possession over her body" (Birkholm, 2019, p. 110) and that anguish "crushed her existence out of shape" (Devi, 1995, p. 16). McCann & Laurie Pearlman (2015), explain that raped victims in their first stage of resilience, require an "illusion of safe environment" to develop and maintain positive behaviour which leads them successfully towards their "future life experiences" (p. 66). Carducci (2020), defines "safety" as the formation of an "environment that is free of danger" and is a foremost requirement for the resilience of the victims (2020, p. 270). Similarly, Sutara, in her initial phase of resilience, manages to develop an impression of safe surroundings with the help of sisterhood and solidarity with her Muslim friend Sakina. For instance, when Sutara intended to leave for Calcutta for her brothers, the entire country was "divided into two religious camps" and people were "frightened" due to "apprehension" of violent riots (Devi, 1995, p. 27). In that scenario, "Sutara needed a companion" to have a "safe" journey to her brother (p. 29). Sakina sends her brothers Aziz and Moinu for Sutara's protection and hides her in the guise of a Muslim girl. For this purpose, Sakina provides her clothes so that Sutara remains safe from the violent riots during her journey to Calcutta. For instance, "Sutara was wearing one of Sakina's striped saris, her blouse, shoes, and glass bangles. Her hair was made into plaits and tied with Sakina's ribbons. Sutara looked exactly like a Muslim girl out with her family members" (Devi. 1995, p. 28). The sisterhood with Sakina becomes a refuge for Sutara that provides her the feeling of safety which helps Sutara to complete her journey from village Noakhali to Calcutta. As a result, despite the "ominous" and dangerous state of partition riots, Sutara safely reaches her brothers in Calcutta (p. 27).

Similarly, Tara from *This is Not that Dawn: Jhootha Sach* forms an environment of safety that develops the foundation of resilience in her post-partition life. After the rape, Tara's sense of security shatters and she loses self-possession over her body. She even tries to commit suicide to end her misery and anguish. Tara "naked from the waist down and with her hair flying, was pounding her head against the wall" to end her life (Singh, 2010, p. 424). Birkholm (2019) discusses that "safety is central" to developing resilience in raped victims because "feeling safe promotes feelings of security and equanimity" that helps in their resilience (p. 110). In that critical phase, Tara's sisterhood and solidarity with Hafiz ji's *Begum* (wife) and his daughter-in-law Khursheed provide her safety and equanimity that helps Tara to heal from the trauma of sexual molestation. For instance,

> *Begum* and Khursheed gave a warm welcome to Tara in her suffering and injured condition. They gave her a hot bath, gave medicine for her wounds and fever. Then they set up a charpoy for her upstairs, in the airy room that opened onto the *gali* (street).
>
> Because of the unrest and the daily curfews, the delivery of milk from the countryside to the city had all but ceased. Still, the *begum* would force Tara to drink about three-quarters of a glass of milk twice a day. (Singh, 2010, pp. 433, 434)

According to McCann & Pearlman (2015), the "illusion of safety" allows raped victims to feel "capable of protecting" their control over their bodies and helps them heal from the trauma of sexual violence (p. 66). Likewise, Tara after being nurtured in the safe environment provided by *Begum* and Khursheed "began to recover in a few days" (Singh, 2010, p. 434). Tara, who had previously attempted suicide, not only begins to recover but also starts to contemplate her survival and future critically. For instance, Tara thinks "How long could she continue to be a burden on them (*Begum* and Khursheed)? But where else could she go? She would have to find a place somewhere" (p. 438). This proves that the safe environment that Tara receives due to the establishment of sisterhood with *Begum* and Khursheed helps her to recover and develop resilience in her post-partition life.

In the second stage of mourning and remembrance, raped victims develop resilience through the process of grieving and remembering which has helped them to heal from their trauma of sexual violence. According to Lifton (1974), "unresolved or incomplete mourning results in stasis and entrapment in traumatic process" (p. 12). Likewise, in *The River Churning: A Partition Novel*, Sutara suffers from the trauma of "the scenes from that terrible night" in which her house was set on fire and she was raped (Devi, 1995, p. 86). The painful memories of the "screams of Ma and her terror-stricken face" lead to her entrapment in a painful process (p. 86). The raped victims for their recovery need people who "suspend their preconceived judgments" and simply listen to their (raped victims') painful experiences (Devi, 1995, p. 86).

Moreover, the "intense experiences of shame" related to sexual violence "further" leads to the "silence" of the traumatized individual" (Frewen & Lanius, 2015, p. 353). Likewise, Sutara as a rape victim needs a witness who "beyond the issues of shame and doubt" would simply listen to her grief and would "mourn her loses" with her (Herman, 2015, pp. 68, 69). In the process of recovery and resilience, raped victims through their grieving share their pain to "repair the injury" of their trauma (Herman, 2015, p. 175). Likewise, Sutara through her sisterhood with her colleague Kaushalyaati finds a companion who listens to her painful past without passing criticism or blame. For instance, "she (Kaushalyavati) and Sutara had never discussed their personal stories (Devi, 1995, p. 77). "Today for the first time Kaushalyavati broached the topic… Sutara did not know how much to tell her, but once she began, she had to go on" (Devi, 1995, pp. 77, 78). According to Sigmund Freud (1914), for "reconciliation" with traumatic experiences of the past, "repressed memories" must not remain hidden and "contemptible" and must be taken out as "enemy of his (victim's) mettle" (pp. 148-156). The process of "mourning," in which individuals tell their story, works as "reconstruction" for the victim by "transforming" their "traumatic memory" into a memory of courage (Herman, 2015, p. 175). Likewise, through her sisterhood with Kaushalyavati, Sutara speaks about her unspeakable traumatic memories so that they can be integrated into her present and future life. For instance, Sutara recalls "My father had gone out to seek help. He never came back. My mother jumped into the pond in fright and we have not heard from her since. My sister was also not traced while I was lying unconscious" (Devi, 1995, p. 78). Sutara's "action of telling the story" reaches its "conclusion" and she realizes that "traumatic experiences truly belong to the past" (Herman, 2015, p. 195). For instance, after sharing her story with Kaushalyavati, Sutara feels that she had "lifted the burden of the worry and neglect of years" (Devi, 1995, p. 113) and she learns to confront "the task of rebuilding her life in the present and pursuing her aspirations for the future" (Herman, 2015, p. 195). Similarly, in *This is Not that Dawn: Jhootha Sach* Tara and Banti together recount and confront the horrors of their traumatic experiences. For instance, Banti tells Tara,

> They all jumped on me. I lashed out with my hands and feet, but what could a woman do to fight off such hefty men? Those bullies tied up my feet and hands, then tore off all my clothes. Can't tell you how they hurt me, in front of all that crowd, with hatchet handles and the ends of *lathis* (sticks). I just fainted. (Singh, 2010, p. 521)

According to McCann & Pearlman (2015), in the process of "mourning and remembrance," listeners work as a "container" that "absorbs the poison" of victims' "inner experiences of terror and intolerable hurts" (pp. 137,138). Similarly, Banti empathetically listens and "reflects" on the "empathetic understanding of victim's wounds" which leads to the resilience of the traumatized individual (McCann & Pearlman, 2015, p. 137). For instance, she responds to Tara's mourning in a kind and

understanding way by saying, "*Bahina* (sister), what woman was spared? Those animals didn't treat women as women… It would've been better if they'd just slit our throats. No words can tell what we went through" (Singh, 2010, p. 522). Tara and Banti through their "mourning", "absorb the poison" of each other's "inner experiences" and learn to face the "task of rebuilding" their lives (Herman, 2015, p. 175). Both women share their wounds from the past and decide to build a home together. For instance, Banti states, "You're like a younger sister to me. Maharaj made us sisters in times of sorrow; we should now always stay together. When I find my family, we'll both have a roof over our heads (Singh, 2010, p. 670). As a result, "Tara and Banti, holding hands and their bundles under their arms" together start their journey to find a home for themselves (Singh, 2010, p. 675). According to Richard Mollica, after the "transformation" of traumatic experiences, they no longer remain the experiences of "shame and humiliation" but rather become narratives of "dignity and virtue" (2012, p. 312). Thus, the process of "mourning and remembrance," through sisterhood, has helped them to "re-create the flow" of their lives and to eventually revive their "sense of continuity with their past" (Herman, 2015, pp. 176, 177).

In the final stage of reconnections, raped victims feel "utterly abandoned" when they are rejected by their intimate relationships (Herman, 2105, p. 52). Likewise, in *The River Churning: A Partition Novel*, Sutara spends six months at Sakina's home in village Noakhali but receives "not a trace of concern" from her brothers living in Calcutta (Devi, 1995, p. 17). Sutara notices that "her family was not bothered about her" (p. 09). In a state of abandonment, rape victims who are rejected by their families and intimate relationships feel "cast out of the human and divine system of care" which is necessary for their survival and resilience (Herman, 2015, p. 52). Leenerts (2017) discusses how "Sutara's sufferings are typical: despite Gandhi's and Nehru's repeated pleas, families were often reluctant to accept recovered women (p. 96). Arguing how Sita[1] Remained pure despite her time away from her husband, the government published pamphlets urging families to treat such women like Sita but to little avail" (Leenerts, 2017, p. 96). Likewise, Sutara was treated like untouchable filth when she reaches Calcutta to her brothers. She was kept "away from household work" like a "low caste" who might not touch and not "pollute everything" (Devi, 1995: pp. 30, 36). Sutara in her brother's house was "forbidden to enter the kitchen, forbidden to touch the common water pitcher" (Leenerts, 2017, p. 95). The women of the household keep reminding Sutara that "her (Sutara's) inauspicious presence

[1] Sita was the consort queen of the god Rama in the Hindu epic *Ramayana***.** *Sita was abducted by King Ravana, but she kept her chastity intact during her abduction. After her rescue from abduction, she declared her sexual purity by enduring the trial of fire. Till now, Sita is worshipped and regarded as a symbol of piety (*Britannica, 2019).

blights the marriage possibilities of all the younger ones in the family" (p. 95). According to Herman (2015), a raped woman is "intensely aware of the fragility of all human connections in the face of danger. She needs clear and explicit assurances that she will not be abandoned once again" (p. 62). In that phase of "brutality", "chaos" and "despair", the social support, caregiving, and compassion from Sakina provides Sutara with a "sense of hope" (Southwick et. al, 2014, p. 6). Despite being "the unacceptable girl" for her brothers, Sutara still receives letters and visits from Sakina (Devi, 1995, p. 64). For instance, "in Sutara's friendless life, Sakina's letters, so loving and warm, were like a treat" (p. 74). Likewise, the "affection" in Sakina's letters and visits, provides a "pure, selfless and loving" bond that helps Sutara recover from her past experiences (p. 76). "She (Sutara) was a social outcaste" for her brothers but "her (Sutara's) mind had not turned bitter and revengeful" due to Sakina's persistent care, delivered through letters and visits (Devi, 1995, p. 90). As a result of the "tenderness" of Sakina's sisterhood, Sutara, despite being a "victim of Partition," finally "completed her M.A" with the "scholarship" (Devi, 1995, pp. 76, 70, 67). Sutara's studies strengthen her: she flourishes in exile, eventually earning an M.A. and landing a job teaching history at Yajnaseni College. As a result, Sutara discovers that she has healed from the trauma of "intense humiliation and suffering" and gathers the courage to evolve as an "independent" and "respected college professor" (Devi, 1995, pp. 74, 133). She begins to "acknowledge" that the "damage" that has been done by the rape incident is not "permanent" and engages in "rebuilding" her life (Herman, 2015, p. 204). Thus, despite being an "insulted, tortured, neglected and deserted" raped woman, Sutara with the help of solidarity and sisterhood, develops as a resilient and empowered woman in her post-partition life (Devi, 1995, p. 69).

Raped victims in the stage of reconnections, through their sisterhood, have been able to recover their dignity and self-esteem which have contributed to their resilience and evolution. "Self-esteem" is an individual's need for positive "recognition or validation" and violent incidents of rape leave "profound effects" on the "self-esteem" of its victims (McCann & Pearlman, 2015, p. 74). Irvin D. Yalom & Leszcz (2005) explain how the establishment of reconnections, after traumatic experiences, helps to restore the "self-esteem of the victim through complex process of "mirroring" (p. 613). According to Yalom & Leszcz (2005), in the process of "mirroring", raped victims re-develop their lost dignity by receiving a positive, "reflection" of the self (p. 72). Similarly, in *This is not that Dawn: Jhootha Sach*, Shyama, a doctor in refugee camp, not just helps Tara to heal, but at the same time respects Tara as a "very brave young lady" which restores Tara's wounded dignity and self-confidence (Singh, 2010, p. 724). In the repetitive process of receiving positive reflection of self, the individuals engage in an "adaptive spiral" through which they reach out to others (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005, pp. 72, 81). Yalom & Leszcz (2005) further accentuate that "adaptive spiral" through repeated display of affection, eventually increases the "self-esteem" of the victims and reduces their "need for self-concealment" (p. 81). Shyama acknowledges Tara's attempts to re-establish her

autonomy and helps her to regain her dignity and self-esteem. For instance, Shyama introduces Tara to an influential social worker in the following words, "Tara is a graduate, from a good family… She (Tara) has been through a great deal. She's a courageous and responsible young woman" (Singh, 2010, p. 724). As a result of this restoration of her dignity, Tara takes the initiative to reconstruct her life. The "initiative" is an ability to begin "endeavours" to "pursue new beginnings" (McCann & Pearlman, 2015, p. 140). Shyama encouraged Tara to apply for the Public Service Commission and reawakens her potential for growth which helps Tara to develop and evolve in her post-partition life. Similarly, Tara with the help of solidarity and sisterhood achieves a sense of emotional stability and becomes director of the Women Welfare Centres at the rehabilitation department. Thus, Sutara and Tara are the women who despite being raped and traumatized, "seize the opportunity offered by the dislocation of Partition to make their careers and lives anew" (Prakash, 2019, p. 317).

Conclusion

Raped and abducted women of India's partition, despite their harrowing experiences of sexual molestation, developed as resilient women by receiving an encouraging reflection of themselves from other women and rebuilding their lives based on that positive reflection of self. At the first stage of resilience where safety is crucial for the victim's recovery, sisterhood provided safe refuge to women and facilitated their resilience by healing their damaged perception of security. At the second stage of healing, where victims require to grieve their painful experiences, sisterhood provided compassionate listeners to raped and abducted women with whom, without any fear of shame, they mourned their suppressed memories of horrific sexual violence. This study found that grieving with sympathetic listeners enabled individuals to confront the unspeakable horrors of their past and restore their dignity, helping them reconstruct their lives. This study shows that at the last stage of resilience, where raped and abducted women were disowned by their families and needed new connections, the female alliances provided them with a sense of acceptance that reduced the impacts of terror they endured. By examining the post-portion evolution of Tara and Sutara from the selected texts, we found that raped and abducted women were able to recover their shattered self-esteem when they finally received their "positive reflection" from fellow women. We discovered that constructive consideration of themselves that they received from other women healed their wounded dignity and led to their post-partition advancement and emancipation. However, the layers of silence surrounding their lived experiences need deeper exploration, particularly from the perspective of Muslim women who navigated the challenging path of resilience within the patriarchal society of Pakistan. It is essential to include the stories of Muslim women who, as survivors of rape and abduction, not only endured but also thrived in a newly established country with limited resources and nascent institutions. Through literature, we can uncover, analyze, and give voice to the silenced experiences of these women, addressing a critical gap in Partition history created by enforced silence.

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Hina Ali Khan is a Visiting Lecturer, Department of English at International Islamic University Islamabad Pakistan.

Dr. Saiyma Aslam is an Associate Professor, Department of English at International Islamic University Islamabad Pakistan.