



**The Land of
TWO PARTITIONS
and Beyond**

Acknowledgment

We are highly thankful to Heinrich Böll Stiftung for their conceptual and financial support for the research and final publication of this book.

ISBN: 978-969-8344-11-5

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Preface

Every one of us may have our own interpretations of various historical facts; however, the main pre-requisite is finding the whole truth. It is very unfortunate that soon after the partition of 1947, and that of 1971 the historical context, facts and realities got fictionalized. It is often said that three histories of partition exist in our part of the world, the one that is told and taught in Pakistan, the other that is told and taught in India and/or Bangladesh, and the third that is the real version. This partly happened to serve the vested interests of certain classes who are using the maneuvered history to gain maximum benefits. To me hiding historical facts or distorting them is not only a crime against current generation but a sheer crime against our future generations who would be deprived of being acquainted with truth.

In our Rewriting History Project, SDPI has not followed to develop first histories; we have tried to follow the third one to bring the real version from people's perspective. It is the first book of its nature covering a vast geographical range and communities spread all over the South Asian States. We look forward to bring out more extensive and mature studies on the subject in the light of feedback from the readers. Making the book public, I would like to recall our great poet Faiz, who in his famous poem "Subh-e-Azadi" had said:

*This stained light, this night-bitten dawn
This is not the dawn we yearned for
This is not the dawn
For which we set out so eagerly
(Tr. By Daud Kamal)*

Abid Qaiyum Suleri

Partition 1947: The Four Case Studies

Introduction

Our recorded history is not the history of the masses, it is not the history of our peasants, labourers, brick-kiln workers, blacksmiths, bakers, stone-crushers, road-builders, clerks and daily-wage earners; nor, is it the history of revolutionaries, poets, musicians, painters, sculptors and intellectuals. Hence, it is neither the history of the whole mankind nor the collective flow of life.

Rulers, political intelligentsia, big and small minions of government and despotic overlords created our recorded history. This is the pattern of Pakistan's history. The text in historical narrative in Pakistan, as product and propagator of the state ideology, derives its legitimacy from a narrow set of directives based on a limited approach.

Our history, including the historiography of Partition reflects one-sided accounts, divergent state ideologies, biased judgments and inaccuracies. History of Partition, in Pakistan (and in India) is based on official records, oral accounts, autobiographies, one-sided violence against Hindus and Sikhs (and in India against Muslims) is not the true history. History books in Pakistan, whether dealing with our freedom movement, which resulted in independence, or the War of 1971, which resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh, or our ancient and recent past; unfortunately, lack people's perspective. Instead, it is based on autobiographical accounts of military and civilian rulers, generals and administrators of different levels.

In the absence of a true version of history, the historiography in Pakistan based it on biased approach. Bureaucrats, military generals and politicians presented their own version of historical narratives over the last 60 years¹. This biased approach lacked people's perspective. Dr. Mubarak Ali explained it in the following words:

The elite classes, generals, landlords and bureaucrats have not presented a true picture of Partition and its associated events. In fact, they presented the other side of the story based on their own experiences and lacking the people's point of view. They did not want to accept the responsibility of their inability to present a true picture of history, nor were they willing to accept their failures in the disintegration of our systems as a nation.²

History needs to be re-written and we need to correct false information. In order to cover their mistakes and wrongdoings, the ruling elite produced false narratives. We need to re-write history

¹ Dr. Mubarak Ali, *Yadashon Main Ghalat Bayanian, (Distortion in Autobiographies), Nawa-e-Insan, August 2008, p. 25*

² Ibid, p.25

based on people's perspective; particularly, our literature on Partition needs to be re-written and re-visited. In re-writing history from people's perspective, we must be vigilant in terms of ideology, doctrine and prejudice. Let our generations know the real truth rather than to a single, officially ordained, sanitised truth.

It is unfortunate that our history, particularly with reference to Partition is full of violent episodes, such stories dominate our literature in Pakistan and India; there are many humanitarian stories as well. It should be based on true humanism, secular and democratic ideology.

Many Hindus and Sikhs saved the lives of their Muslim neighbours/friends, even unacquainted Muslims. Similarly, many Muslims saved the lives of their Hindu and Sikh friends/neighbours. There are many stories about members of religious minorities, Christians, Parsis, Bahais, who saved the lives of Muslims in India and Hindus/Sikhs in Pakistan. Our history of Partition is riddled with prejudice, inconsistencies and huge knowledge gaps, in which the element of humanism is ignored; this missing link must be considered, including people's oral accounts.

This paper is based on four provincial case studies. The study will cover the above-mentioned aspects in detail.

Provincial Perspective: Punjab, N.W.F.P, Sindh and Balochistan

The 1947 Partition of India was unique; it was a partition of land, religions and cultures. The two major provinces of India, Punjab and Bengal were divided amid bloodshed and violence. Punjab suffered tremendous loss of lives, displacement and destruction.

Sindh remained comparatively peaceful because of deep-rooted communal harmony among followers of different faiths.

Balochistan declared independence on 15 August but suffered at the hands of federal forces in Pakistan. Hindu-Muslim tension was contained; but still one major communal-based violent incident took place in Quetta. The whole province remained peaceful and Hindu / Sikh communities were not harmed, particularly in Baloch tribal areas.

Communal riots in NWFP started in late 1946 and early 1947. The Muslim League agitated violence and the situation worsened. The province also suffered at the hands of the central government when the elected provincial government of Congress/*Khudai Khidmatgars* was dismissed on 22 August 1947. Political manoeuvring by federal government brought Muslim League into power, which instigated the Hindu-Muslim riots in Peshawar, Mardan and other settled districts. In remote rural and tribal areas, Hindus and Sikhs continued to live peacefully, till the Afghan *Jihad* displaced them from their ancestral homes.

The comparative analysis on the basis of oral interviews conducted by SDPI's Rewriting History Project (July 2006-December 2008) demonstrates the uniqueness of each province; it also specifies that the communal violence was not the only factor, economic interests also played a major role in Sindh and rural Punjab. Another interesting point highlighted in these interviews is that minority communities, particularly the Christians provided many essential services and saved the lives of many traumatized Muslims in Indian Punjab and Hindus in Pakistani areas.

It is unfortunate that the role of minorities in nation building is barely mentioned in our textbooks. The new generation in Pakistan and India is unaware of the services rendered by the minorities in our freedom struggle. From a provincial perspective, minorities in all provinces contributed nation-building services but their role was downplayed. Our recorded history is full of atrocities and genocide carried out by the majority community but stories of humanism by the religious minorities are missing. The struggle for Partition portrays only the substantial contributions by the majority, be it Hindus on the Indian side or Muslims on the Pakistani side. The role of religious minorities and their significant struggle in saving lives of the innocent people on the both sides of the border is downplayed. It is wrongly believed that Hindus and the British were the major culprits for dividing the country; Hindus were blamed for supporting the idea of Partition and that they played no role in the freedom of the country. The truth is that Hindus and Muslims fought for the liberation of their land from British occupation and in their struggle, the religious minorities in both countries played a very unique and vital role.

The new generations have grown up with this view. In fact, along with majority community, all minorities contributed in the freedom struggle, especially the Sikhs on the Indian side and the Christians on both the Pakistani and the Indian sides made glorious contributions. No one can forget the supreme sacrifice made by legends like Bhagat Singh and the Christian missionaries.

The Christians and Parsis were in the forefront of the freedom struggle. Unfortunately, the minority communities are marginalized in every respect, including their role in the freedom struggle. It is necessary to emphasize the role of minority communities by exploring and documenting the historical records in all four provinces.

Partition Studies: An Overview

The territorial division of India and Pakistan is significant because it not only meant independence for India and Pakistan in South Asian history but also marked the beginning of a global trend towards decolonisation.

The Partition resulted in one of the largest migrations in the world history, followed by extreme violence. Deaths toll in India and Pakistan is reported between half a million to one million and 10 to 12 million migrants crossed new borders in Punjab and Bengal. Tens of

thousands of girls and women were sexually assaulted or abducted. Violence was the most dramatic repercussion of Partition but the boundary award contributed to other disruptions: long-term border tensions, infrastructure problems and the lasting conflict over Kashmir.³ After the Partition of 1947, mass movement of population across the borders of India and Pakistan took place in an atmosphere of violent communal disturbances. Millions of people moved across the borders, making this migration to be the largest in the recorded world history⁴.

Migration and the untold miseries of the people is a dominant theme of contemporary literature⁵. These two factors initiated innumerable studies worldwide. Historical studies focused on the causes of Partition rather than its impact on the people and society.

The Partition of the Indian sub-continent was geographically achieved through the Partitions of Punjab and Bengal. Cross border migration in other provinces was comparatively low, particularly in Sindh. Selective and voluntary migrants continued to come to Sindh for a generation.⁶

West Punjab faced horrific communal conflicts, resulting in an immediate influx of refugees; thousands of homeless and panic-stricken people arrived daily from deeply troubled districts of Amritsar, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana. 73% migrants from India landed in West Punjab and it accommodated more than 5 million new migrants, constituting one-fourth of the population; an increase of 43% in Lahore, 49 % in Multan, 50 % in Gujranwala, 65 % in Jhang and 69 % in Lyallpur and Sargogha.⁷

The main trends covered in this perspective are summed up as:

- People suffered individually and collectively; many were forced to leave behind their ancestral homes and most of their assets. Ethnic cleansing was the main motives behind the communal disturbances and armed gangs forced people to evacuate their homes. The migrant faced many calamities.
- Non-availability of transport to go to the refugee camps was another problem. Most migrants had to walk to the camps, very few had bull-carts to carry some of their belongings; this slow movement made them venerable and easy targets. They were helpless against attacks because most had no weapons; only a few people had swords or guns.

3 Lucy Chester, 'The 1947 Partition, Drawing the Indo-Pakistani Boundary', (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/>)

4 Ian Talbot, Literature and the Human Drama of the 1947 Partition, Region and Partition (Oxford 1990)

5 Saleem Ullah Khan (comp.), The Journey to Pakistan (National Documentation Centre, Islamabad 1993) p. xv.

6 Mohammad Waseem, Migration and Assimilation: A Comparative Study of Pakistani Punjab, Region and Partition (Oxford 1990) p. 204

7 Ibid. P.217

- Eastern and Western Punjab had a large number of British army's ex-servicemen; their arracks were well organized and well planned.⁸
- Evacuation became a time consuming activity due to poor transport, blocked bridges and other obstacles. Life in the refugee camps entailed multiple problems: insufficient food, unhygienic conditions, fear of attacks and health problems. The refugees were fearful to leave the safety of the camps, resulting in shortage of food supplies. They depended solely on provision of rations supplied by the authorities. In some places, local *Tehsildars* and government officials helped thugs to attack refugee camps; in Jandiala Guru, Sikh army surrounded a camp of 1500 refugees and shot helpless and unarmed people and hand grenades were hurled inside the camps.⁹
- Communal riots and mass killings occurred on a large scale. Entire villages were burnt down; trucks full of migrants hacked to pieces; trains, buses and caravans mercilessly attacked; lost children and kidnapped girls became a routine matter. Nearly half a million people died within a few months of Partition.
- Over the years, Sikhs projected a political profile distinct from Hindus and Muslims. They floated the idea of '*Azad Punjab*' in 1942 and '*Sikhistan*' in 1944. Earlier, they had demanded constitutional guarantees for Sikhs if India remained undivided but if Partitioned, they demanded an independent Sikh State. Sikh *jathas* inflicted extreme hardships and suffering on the Muslim evacuees from Eastern Punjab.¹⁰
- The incidences of abductions and attacks on women in 1946-7, undoubtedly, reflected attempts to expose the most protected aspect of honour and self-identity;¹¹ during attacks, women jumped into wells to save their honour. Thousands of women and young girls were abducted on both sides of the border and to add to their miseries, when they were reunited with their families, their parents were unwilling to accept them. Many people were killed with *kirpans*.
- The Radcliffe Award on the Partition of Punjab was announced three days after Partition. It denied the allocation of the Muslim majority areas of Gurdaspur, Ludhiana and Amritsar to Pakistan.¹² It impacted the geographical features and future of Pakistan and left thousands of people caught off guard to the dangers of communal wrath.

8 Ibid. p. 208

9 Saleem Ullah Khan (comp.), OP.Cit. p. xv.

10 Mohammad Waseem, OP.Cit. p. 209

11 Ian Talbot, Literature and the Human Drama of the 1947 Partition, Region and Partition (OUP 1990)

12 Mohammad Waseem, OP.Cit. p. 204

- Subsequent wars in 1965 and 1971 made it clear that Radcliffe's boundaries were raw and restless divisions.¹³
- The Radcliffe Line cut through the Punjab's well-developed infrastructure systems, disrupting road, telephone, and telegraph communications. Most importantly, it interfered with the region's vital irrigation system; the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty largely resolved Punjab's water-related problems. However, the water problems related to the most serious issue of Kashmir, remained unresolved and plagued Pakistan-India relations.¹⁴
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- Some people embraced Islam to avoid evacuation from Western Punjab. They were termed as *deendar* (holders of the faith) by the locals and their belongings and properties remained undisturbed.
- In this atmosphere of ethnic strife, many people risked their lives for safe evacuation of migrants of other faiths.
- Majority of the migrants considered Partition a temporary setback. They migrated half-heartedly, with an aim to come back to their ancestral villages, when the situation would calm down.
- Pakistan came into existence with few resources and enormous problems; the greatest challenge was resettlement of millions of refugees.
- Cities like Delhi would continue to haunt Muslims as a memorial of their lost glory. It left an expression of deep pain, sense of loss and longing in the hearts of many South Asian Muslims.¹⁵

The rehabilitation and resettlement of millions of refugees was an arduous and gruelling task and required sound planning and years of hard work. It posed greater difficulties for the economically disadvantaged. Restoration of industry and agriculture was insufficient and expansion was necessary to provide jobs to the millions of people in refugee camps.

Partition of Punjab led to emergence of a majority Muslim society in the west. The bulk of refugees from East Punjab settled in the new land within a year and their property claims were settled based on exchange of revenue records with India.

The study conducted over resettlement of evacuees of 1947 Indo-Pak Partition, are marked by the following trends:

- In some areas, people welcomed the refugees and offered them accommodation, land, food and helped them to set up different businesses.

13 Lucy Chester, OP.Cit. p. 204. (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/>)

14 Ibid.

15 Ian Talbot, OP.Cit. p. 244

- Refugee's experiences in their new homeland varied a great deal. Some had relatives to make the transition easier, enabling them to restart their occupations. The less fortunate were on their own and faced short-term exploitation and months of demoralizing inactivity in the camps.
- The condition of refugee camps was miserable. There was severe food shortage because corrupt government officials sold donated food items in the black markets.
- In some areas, prejudice against the refugees existed because they were considered a financial burden. This happened in Sindh and Punjab.
- When Hindus and Sikhs migrated to India, the 'enterprising' people living in the vicinity selectively confiscated their urban and rural properties. When the government started allotting evacuee property to the incoming refugees from India, the local occupants of the evacuee property were forced to vacate it.
- The process of claim compensation was neither organized nor transparent; bribes, contacts with the government officials and sometimes forgery were considered necessary to speed up the process. The influential people benefited and were easily compensated. Many people without any property in Eastern Punjab fraudulently became owners of huge properties in Pakistan.
- Most of the well-to-do migrants were poorly compensated in Western Punjab; one of the reasons could be unwillingness to pay bribes or adopt other unfair means.
- Some migrants thought they would return to their homes in Eastern Punjab because they found displacement too stressful; they were unable to set up their business or find employment in their new homeland. Consequently, they wasted time and effort to go back and could not establish themselves in Pakistan.
- The politically astute and educated people were aware of the problems entailed in Partition could not be averted. They started a new life in Pakistan soon after their arrival.
- Those who adjusted to the changing scenarios in their new homeland projected an example of optimism and hard work. They took to their previous occupations or got engaged in new enterprises.
- Some people left their belongings in the supervision of their friends and neighbours and thought they would return under favorable circumstances, which became impossible later.
- Due to massacres and horrific communal riots, their sense of insecurity, threats to Muslim identity and dependence on armed forces increased manifold. Migrants' political identity carried extra weight because of their presence in cities in large numbers.
- The impact of *en masse* migration to West Punjab made it the major province of Pakistan. It acquired center-stage in terms of military, bureaucratic and economic power.¹⁶

Partition inflicted great suffering, on a scale rarely seen in human history, though the estimates of casualties remain controversial. Independence of India and Pakistan is not the only legacy of Partition but also the violence that ensued. The trauma left their scars in the

16 Mohammad Waseem, O.P. Cit., p. 216

hearts and the minds of many South Asians. The conflict between India and Pakistan is integral to South Asia.

The unending propaganda by the two governments and those generated by media and educational institutions reinforce cross-border resentments. Fifty six years after the Independence of the Indo-Pak subcontinent, 32 years after the creation of Bangladesh and 14 years after the withdrawal of the last Soviet soldier from Afghanistan, Pakistan is still a country in which refugee-based politics, resettlement process and armed conflicts involving millions of refugees still continue.¹⁷

Case Study: 1

Partition of Punjab

Accounts of Pre-Partition Days

The rural Punjab, the real Punjab was the center of merriments, festivals, folklore, sports and cultural gatherings. The Muslims and Sikhs enjoyed harmonious relationship throughout rural Punjab.

For a comprehensive study, oral accounts of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims were essential. Muslims lived side by side with the non-Muslim communities in the Western and Eastern parts of the Punjab before 1947, suddenly turned against each other.

Though these interviews are limited to villages in the districts of Kasur, Sheikhpura, Faisalabad, Jhelum, Sialkot, Gujranwala and Lahore, the retrieved accounts can help depict the overall picture of the combined society.

The Socio- Economic interplay:

One important factor that encouraged tolerance and inter-religious harmony among non-Muslims and Muslims was their socio-economic interdependence. Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus lived together on the same streets, shared cultural functions and had mutual interests.

Community elders of their respective religions, the *Chaudhrys* and *Sardars* of the villages helped the poor members of the community. They pledged to undertake the marriage expenses of the poor families or absolve land revenue of the poor farmers.

During the month of *Ramaḡān*, they arranged *Sehri* and *Iftāri* for the poor. The Sikhs and Hindus rendered financial and moral support to the Muslims.

In his autobiography, *Mera Shehr Lahore* (My City Lahore), Yunas Adeeb described in these words: People evolved ways and means of circumventing the constraint of orthodox Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism and created a way of life that was based on mutual respect and affection. Hindus showered

17 'Pakistan: Economic Policy Analysis', The McKeever Institute of Economic Policy, 3060 Curran Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602 USA.

flowers on the *Muharram* procession and Muslims flocked to the great *Ramleela* festival held in Minto Park behind the Badshahi Mosque and many took part in the *Diwali* and *Dussehra* celebrations.¹⁸

The tradition of exchanging gifts and food was a symbol of brotherhood and friendship. The community fabric was strong and based on respect for other religions and their principles. The Sikh and Hindu women observed *pardah*. Poverty kept rural Punjab engaged in trying to earn a living.

Hindu and Sikh accounts from East Punjab

During Partition, East Punjab was engulfed in violence and massacre. In East Punjab town of Rupar, communal tensions amplified at this time. The local *Rashtriya Swyam Sewak Sangh* leaders advised people not to patronize Muslim businesses and fanned anti-Muslim feeling. An eyewitness relates:

“At the time of Partition of India in 1947, I was 11-years-old. My family lived in a second story apartment, close to the Muslim section of town. The dismal tales of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan, who started trickling into our town, amplified the feeling. Muslims who lived in the majority Hindu-Sikh neighbourhoods started migrating to the predominantly Muslim area. One afternoon, two Muslim men were attacked in our street; one died instantly and the other sprinted to the safety of the Muslim area.”¹⁹

Muslim homes in the neighbouring villages were set ablaze; the residents were forced to seek refuge in Rupar, expanding its Muslim population by several hundreds. Fearing an attack by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs gathered on rooftops, armed with bottles filled with nails and lime. In the event of an attack, the bottles were partially filled with water, shaken, and tossed at the assailants.

Dr. Pritan Rohila stated, the Sub-Divisional Officer mounted loudspeakers on a jeep, moved through the Muslim area. He announced that an attack by a large group of Hindus and Sikhs was imminent and that he could no longer assure their safety but he promised them military escort to the town of Sirhind, where they could board a train to Pakistan. Feeling unsafe, many Muslims decided to leave their homes. They gathered a few of their most precious possessions and left. In various parts of Easter Punjab, many Muslims were looted. Mob of Hindus and Sikhs looted their abandoned homes. Panic-stricken, they ran to save their loved ones and in the process, lost their meagre possessions. Muslim women and girls were abducted. A large group of Muslims hid in the fields to save their lives but the mob pulled them out and ruthlessly killed them.

Muslim Accounts from West Punjab

The Muslims in this area disagreed with the decision of Partition but were powerless. They assisted and escorted Hindu and Sikh families to the border. This message of love was another image of the

¹⁸ Yunas Adeb, *Mera Shehr Lahore* (My City of Lahore). Atish Fishan Publications, Lahore 1991, pp. 118-119.

¹⁹ Dr. Pritam Rohila, A Partition Related Tragedy at Rupar, Punjab, Delhi, Association For Communal Harmony in Asia (ACHA), 2006, p.1

Partition. Such incidents created a tremendous impact on the overall attitude of the society. They provided housing, food, and safe passage. The Mayor of Lahore in 1947 and his Muslim friends rescued Hindu and Sikh friends “from their vulnerable residences and conveyed them to safe places under a hail of bullets.”²⁰

History is full of such acts of bravery, in which the lives of children and houses of Hindus and Sikhs of the Civil Lines were saved. Civil Surgeon of Shiekhupura stated that Muslims provided shelter, even at the risk of their lives.²¹

Accounts of Harmony and Violence

A thorough study was conducted in Miana Gondal, a village of Western Punjab, which acquired centre stage during the Indo-Pak Partition of 1947. Located between Islamabad and Lahore, Miana Gondal is in district Mandi Bahauddin, situated between Phulurwan and Bhalwal in district Sargodha, near Tehsil Pind Dadan Khan in district Jhelum. Miana Gondal is a small village at the junction of three districts. A dispensary, a post office and a primary school for boys was established in the late 19th century.

Prior to Partition in 1947, the village was home to Hindus and Muslims but had a Muslim majority. Hindus and Sikhs were in majority in the surrounding villages, which made the inclusion of those areas indispensable to this study for a deeper understanding of the local scene. The area witnessed the Indo-Pak Partition disturbances, influx of migrants and departure of evacuees that had an everlasting impact on the socio political and economic situation. Today it covers an area of 8173 acres, with a total population of 17,872 (9,243 males and 8,629 females), out of which 106 are non-Muslims; whereas, the adjoining villages of Chak 26 and Wariat have a population of 3,974 and 3,205 respectively and their current non-Muslim population statistics is 153 and 12 respectively.²²

It is noteworthy that the studies on the Indo-Pak Partition of 1947 are concentrated mainly on the prominent areas of Pakistan such as Lahore and Lyallpur (Faisalabad). Secondly, most of these studies focused on the violence as the primary issue and references to lifesaving incidents are rare. Another prevalent theme is the communal tension, which was the primary

²⁰ Excerpts from Ashis Nandy, Colloquially: "The Defiance of Defiance and Liberation for the Victims of History: Ashis Nandy in Conversation with Vinay Lal", in *Dissenting Knowledges, Open Futures: The Multiple Selves and Strange Destinations of Ashis Nandy*, ed. Vinay Lal (Delhi: Oxford, 2000), p.1-3

²¹ Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, London, Yale University Press, 2007, p.139

²² District Census Report of Mandi Bahauddin, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 2000

force behind regional disturbances. These approaches rendered many untold stories and undiscovered facts.

This study, however, is an attempt to point out the deficiencies and shortcomings in the approach adopted by other researchers by focussing on an individual village in interior Punjab, highlighting the incidents of humanity, charity and compassion.

In Miana Gondal, the non-Muslims (mostly Hindus) were businessmen. They were a peace loving people and avoided quarrels and confrontations. Arguments never ended in violence or physical assaults but just an exchange of threats and epithets such as calling each other *Choorba or Mussalli*.²³ They employed *kebojis* (detectives) and if any villager was robbed, sometimes the stolen items were brought back.²⁴

Ghulam Hussain in a nostalgic tone related that prior to Partition, all the communities lived in peace and harmony and with mutual dependencies. They had good relations with each other and the village was a perfect example of mutual dependencies and friendly atmosphere.²⁵

Chaudhri Sher Mohammed testified to the above by recalling his family's relations with the neighbouring Sikhs. They had brotherly relations with two brothers, Gopi Singh and Shahibzada and shared the agricultural land with them; helped each other in various agricultural chores such as ploughing, weeding, watering and harvesting. Hindus of Chak-26 helped their family to recover the land occupied by tenants.²⁶ Evidently, the class conflict and the financial hierarchy transcended the communal consciousness.

Community members visited each other on deaths and marriages occasions, according to their own traditions. According to Fatima Bibi, Hindus and Sikhs were economically stable and helped Muslims by lending money on these occasions, of course, they charged interest but it was a great facility at that time. On happy occasions, Hindus sent gifts and sweet to the Muslims as well.²⁷ Muslims visited their fairs and festivals such as *besakhi* and *devali*. During *besakhi*, people participated in tent pegging, horse races, wrestling and *kabaddi*.²⁸ Haji Ahmad Bakhsh stated that people had freedom to practice their religion; nobody interfered with the religious activities of other communities.²⁹

Religious differences did not allow Muslims and Hindus to eat together; Hindus were permitted to eat chicken and mutton but were strictly forbidden to eat beef. Hindus were more careful in this respect; if a Muslim passed by a *choka* (cooking place), their women cleaned it with *gobri* (a paste of mud and cow dung). There may be two reasons for this, cows are considered holy in Hinduism; secondly it was a practice among the villagers to coat the

23 Interview with Mr. Ghulam Hussain

24 Interview with Mr. Bashir Ahmad

25 Interview with Mr. Ghulam Hussain

26 Interview with Mr. Sher Mohammad

27 Interview with Ms. Fatima Bibi

28 Interview with Mr. Chaudhri Mohammad Nazir

29 Interview with Mr. Ahmad Bakhsh

floors of house and courtyard with *gobri* because it conveyed a sense of newness and cleanliness. If Muslims touched their clothes even accidentally, Hindu women called those clothes *bhit* (foul). Muslims also did not accept any edible items from Hindus.³⁰ Fatima Bibi disclosed that the Sikhs of Chak-26 remained dirty most of the time and never ate *halal* meat. However, those of Chak-28 were different and had no objection to eating *halal* meat.

Local Hindus were mostly shopkeepers and middlemen of agricultural produce. Some were farmers; a few were able to sell their lands before migration. Hindus monopolized the local business and owned most of the shops. They possessed commercial wisdom and business awareness. On the contrary, Muslims were ignorant and illiterate and despite manual labour in the fields, they remained in debt to Hindus moneylenders.³¹

Hindus maintained good relations with all their customers. For instance, priority was given to women from other villages over local customers in their grinding mills and the women were escorted to their homes after sunset for safety reasons. Additionally, in keeping with the practice of old times, they added a small item free of cost to the total shopping called *jhoonga*, or free bonus.

Ghulam Hussain Mohammed stated that if Hindus overcharged, Muslims remained unaware of it because of their illiteracy. They worked hard on tobacco, wheat and rice fields but Hindus enjoyed the profits.³²

Muslims were always in debt of Hindus; they borrowed all year to meet their needs. When they were unable to repay in monetary terms, they gave them the entire crop to payoff the loan and started borrowing again. Even big Muslim landlords were defaulters and complained about this state of affairs. They complained that they were at the mercy of the Hindu moneylenders, but did nothing practical to break this vicious circle.³³

Ghulam Hussain further narrated that the Hindus convinced the Muslims to sell their entire harvest to save labour and storage. They bought small amounts for their daily needs but the Hindus charged at double the price.³⁴

Muslim borrowed money for marriage expenses from Hindus or other times of need; the interest added the principle amount resulted in financially crippling the Muslims.

Therefore, at the time of Partition, one of the reasons for the forced evacuation of Hindus was that most Muslims owed money and some of the big Muslims landlords owed hundreds of thousands of rupees.³⁵

30 Interview with Mr. Ghulam Hussain

31 Interview with Mr. Sher Mohammad

32 Interview with Mr. Ghulam Hussain,

33 Interview with Mr. Sher Mohammad

34 Interview with Mr. Ghulam Hussain

35 Interview with Mr. Sher Mohammad

During the Partition riots, some non-Muslims converted to Islam to remain safe and not to leave their homeland and properties. Local Muslims called them *deendars* (holders of the faith). Ahmad Bakhsh related that Muslims and Sikhs were killed on both sides in Gobindpura. Some non-Muslims ran away, while some converted to Islam but after the riots subsided, all of them left for India.³⁶

Case Study 2

Partition and the Pashtun Land

Introduction

It is imperative to understand the background on pre-Partition situation with reference to communal harmony in NWFP; stories were compiled to understand the real situation. It is a collection of people's reflection on problems which divided them and details their pre-Partition relations with reference to communal harmony between the Hindu and Muslim communities in the province. Millions of Hindus and Muslims lived together peacefully for generations throughout India³⁷.

People of the NWFP are known for their rich culture, tradition and hospitality. In small villages of District Kohat and Bannu, many Hindus and Sikhs resided in communal harmony in the pre-Partition period. They participated and celebrated the *Urs* of Muslim saints and offered *chadars* for the shrine.

Muslim rulers who persecuted Hindu subjects made no effort to divide territories on communal lines. Common Muslims and Hindus had cordial relations and celebrated each other's festivals. Muslim poets, writers and philosophers praised the positive aspects of Hindu societies in their writings; Muslim musicians composed *raagas* in praise of the Hindu deities Krishna and Shiva. Urdu literature, from Amir Khusrau to Hasrat Mohani, showed respect for Hindu saints and spiritual precursors.³⁸

The Hindu porters, doctors, teachers and businessmen carried the legacy of communal harmony for decades in this part of the province; despite disagreements on certain ideological issues, there was no animosity or hatred. The Hindu and Muslim communities participate in each other's festivals and ceremonies.

Political Overview: Direct Action Day

³⁶ Interview with Mr. Ahmad Bakhsh

³⁷ Michael J. Nojeim, Gandhi and King: The Power of Nonviolent Resistance, Greenwood Publishing Group, New Delhi, 2004, p. 52

³⁸ Rafiq Zakaria, *The road to amity Indian Muslims: Where Have They Gone Wrong?*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, October 2004, p. 38

The riot first started in August 1946 in Calcutta. Hindus killed a massive number of Muslim; Muslims retaliated with similar viciousness. Hindu-Muslim communal harmony of hundreds of years faced an irreparable devastation. Violence first erupted in Calcutta, Bengal, on 16 August 1946, one year before Independence. It then spread to the rest of the province, especially in Noakhali on October 1946, as well as in Bihar. 16 August 1946 is remembered as The Direct Action Day or The Great Calcutta Killings.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League, on 16 August 1946 launched a “direct action for the achievement of Pakistan” following his refusal of the Cabinet Mission’s plan and his decision to boycott the newly elected Constituent Assembly. Hussain Shabeed Subrawardy (Chief Minister of Bengal) declared it as a provincial public holiday. The Muslims in Calcutta were asked to stop commercial activity and stage a by protest in the streets of the city. Muslim volunteers forced Hindu shopkeepers to close their shops in the Northern part of Calcutta. Hindus retaliated by blocking the Muslim League’s processions toward the Ochterloney Monument. Violence spread quickly as both the police and Subrawardy prevented the military from interfering in the riots³⁹.

The council of All-India Muslim League was convinced that it was the right time to launch *Direct Action* to achieve Pakistan. Jinnah dramatically told the Council:

“What we have done today is the most historic act in our history. Never have we in the whole history of The League done anything except by constitutional method. This day, we bid goodbye to constitutional method, today we have also a pistol and are in a position to use it.”⁴⁰

The League’s *direct action day* celebration on 16 August 1946 sparked communal riots in Calcutta; spreading to East Bengal, to Bihar and the Punjab. Violence flooded the province with stories of Hindu atrocities and huge massacres took place in Bombay and Bihar. The Pashtun did not participate in the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay on 1 September; a great number were killed. The police killed them in villages and on the main streets. An investigation team was sent to address this issue. The Frontier League sent a three members committee to investigate. After reviewing the situation, the committee blamed the Bombay Congress Government⁴¹.

The Calcutta killing had a powerful impact and repercussions on other parts of the country. Hindus retaliated against Muslims in Bihar. Bombay was in the grip of a mass frenzy that claimed the lives of Pashtuns.⁴²

In October 1946 the Noakhali Anti-Hindu massacre took place. Retaliatory violence against Hindus spread in Noakhali district and in some parts of the adjacent Tripura district where 82% was the

³⁹ Amit Kumar Gupta, *North West Frontier Province: Legislation and Freedom Struggle (1932-47)*, New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1976, pp. 191-94

⁴⁰ Stephen Allan, *The Independence Movement in India’s North –West Frontier Province, 1901-1947*, UMI Dissertation Service, 1977, p.244

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 346.

⁴² Parshotam Mehra, *The North-West Frontier Drama: A Re-Assessment*, Delhi: Manohar, 1998, p.96

population was Muslim but the big landlords were Hindus. As a result of the riots in Calcutta, a massive anti-Hindu conformation was organized by Muslim locals to cleanse the region from Hindus; either by killing them or by forcing them out and the death toll was immense. It was claimed that nearly 75% Hindus left⁴³. The magnitude of killing of innocent Bihari Muslims was tremendous; women were raped, murdered and tortured by the angry mobs and Muslim homes were destroyed, mosques were burnt and the *Quran* was desecrated⁴⁴.

When the Muslim League Direct Action Day campaign started, the situation worsened in the Frontier Province; incidents of killing and massacre took place in Hazara district. Local Muslims targeted Hindus, Sikhs and Christians. They looted their shops, burnt their homes. Gurdwaras were attacked and their holy places were desecrated.

The target killing and organized massacre of the minorities disturbed the peace of the province. The most unfortunate part was that the British bureaucracy supported the League.

“On December 1946 in the villages of Batal, Uggi, Sum Ilahi Mung and Garbi Jallo, serious and unprovoked attacks on Hindus and Sikhs occurred. In Batal 11 Hindus were killed, Hindu and Sikh houses were looted. The bazaar of Uggi was attacked and Hindu and Sikh shops were set on fire. Trouble spread to other parts of Hazara District including Garbi Habibullah, Mansehra, and Havelian. By the end of December, in Hazara, general uprising took place against the Hindus and Sikhs, who were killed and robbed, and their houses were burnt and sacred places desecrated. This holy war was carried out in the villages of Mobri, Dival, Akbroota, Pipal, Jaba, Gobra, Phulgara, Dhanak, Muhari, Karchhan, Malach, Dakbali Sair, Bafa, Sibalain, Samadbra, Jabori, Sankirai, and Bhata. Anti-Hindu-Sikh rioting continued to January 1947.”⁴⁵

After Bihar, the wrath of Muslim League turned to Punjab and the North West Frontier Province. The League members seized the land and property of the Hindus and Sikhs, over-threw the elected government and started communal riots in various districts of the province.

There was a clear link between the atrocities committed in Bihar and NWFP. Large-scale riots in the various parts of the Frontier Province were a direct reflection of what happened to the Muslims’ in the Bihar. The incidents of violence against the non-Muslims in NWFP were the reaction of killing of Pashtuns in Bombay. The riots in Bombay flooded the province with stories of Hindu atrocities. The authorities sent an investigation teams to Muslims (Pashtuns) targeted areas. Bombay had a large number of Pashtuns, mostly temporary labourers. The Pashtuns did not take part in Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay on 1 September but a great number of them were killed, which resulted in the killing of Hindus and Sikhs in Frontier Province. They openly declared all the Muslims to unite and

⁴³ Sengupta, *The Noakhali Anti-Hindu Massacre, Bombay 2007*, p. 138

⁴⁴ For details see, Mazluman-e-Bihar Ki Ankhon Dekhi Kahani, un ki zubani, (Autobiography of innocent and helpless Muslims of Bihar), in *Khatun, August 14, 1973*, pp.5-6

⁴⁵ S. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Muslim League on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab: 1947*, New Delhi: voice of India, 1991, p. 54

organize and avenge the blood of every Muslim killed. Muslim League exploited the situation by using blood stained cloths of the victims, torn pages of *Quran* and skulls of alleged Muslim victims of Hindu atrocities.

The Congress or the British government officials did not extend any cooperation to Dr. Khan Sahib. The governor was also not in favour of Dr. Sahib's support and protection to the Hindu and Sikh communities. When the anti-Hindu riots erupted in Peshawar, they locked themselves in their homes. Ten thousand *Khudai Khidmatgars*, in their red shirts arrived in Peshawar to protect the Hindus; the Hindus felt safe and came out and opened their shops. They trusted the *Khudai Khidmatgars* with their lives and property.⁴⁶

The tactics and propaganda warfare of the League was evident from its alliance and support from the British Raj. Exploiting the human misery, the situation in Frontier Province was further compounded by shortage of food. The League gained maximum political mileage from this situation, openly alleged that Hindu shopkeepers diverted food grain to the black market. In December 1946, the food situation in the area worsened and a series of communal riots broke out. The mobs attacked the Hazara districts and burnt down shops and bazaars. Many Hindus and Sikhs were killed; those who managed to save their lives were shifted to Hasan-Abdal, Attock, Abbotabad, Havellian and Haripur.

Bacha Khan describes this story in his words as quoted in D. G Tendulkar's book *Faith is Battle*:

*"The communal riots were started in Multan, Lahore, Amritsar Ambala, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and the other places in Punjab, and they fast approached Peshawar. Innocent people were being slaughtered in the lanes and the Bazars of the Peshawar city. During these disturbances the Khudai Khidmatgars had fully come up to my expectations and ten thousands of them, true to their pledge, rushed to the assistance of their Hindu and Sikh brethren in distress and helped to protect their lives and property."*⁴⁷

The Khan Sahib ministry and Governor Caroe came under heavy attack from all sides: Hindus and Sikhs, for inadequate protection. The League was blamed for tyrannical repression of local Muslim. The attack in Hazara appeared well organized, instigated by Mullahs across the border to avenge the anti Muslim riots in Bihar. Thus, began an exodus of over 10,000 Hindus and Sikhs to Kashmir and Punjab⁴⁸. The Muslim League exploited the situation by encouraging the people to defy executive authority.

Nehru's Frontier Visit October 1946

⁴⁶ S.R. Bakshi, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: The Frontier Gandhi*, Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1992, p. 202

⁴⁷ D. G Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is a battle*, Bombay: Popular Parkashan, 1967, p. 406

⁴⁸ D.G. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is Battle*, Bombay, Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1967, pp-406-410

Under the situation described above, the Nehru visited the NWFP on October 1946. On 16 October when Nehru arrived at Peshawar about 5000 Muslim League volunteers, wearing green uniforms headed by Abdul Qayum Khan raised Anti-Nehru slogans; at one point Dr. Khan Sahab took out his revolver and threatened to shoot. Nehru's trip to the Frontier was made against the advice of numerous responsible sources. Nehru's decision to go despite these warnings entailed a major miscalculation of the relative strength of the Frontier Congress and League.⁴⁹ Mukulika Banerjee wrote:

Even after the end of the war, the Muslim League and its proposal for the creation of Pakistan remained of limited appeal in the settled districts of frontier and the relationship between the Hindus and Muslims remained calm. Congress won strongly in the 1946 elections, gaining 30 out of 50 seats. But the Muslim Leagues continued berate Badshah Khan for his statement in favor of a united India, saying he incited Muslims to forget their religion and identity. The regime even sponsored the creation of Anjuman Asfiay, a Group of Religious Leaders, who with great ceremony passed a fatwa declaring Badshah Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgar's (KKs) kafirs, (infidels). When communal riots broke out in northern India in late 1946, however, the League sent delegates to the affected towns that returned to the Frontier with eyewitness accounts of atrocities committed against Muslims, and their reports were given wide publicity in the Province. Despite the best efforts of Badshah Khan and the KKs to argue against communal ideology, the continual slogans of 'Islam in Danger' began gradually to become more influential among the Pathans. The Muslim gained in strength. It was this atmosphere that Jawaharlal Nehru made his fateful visit to the Frontier in October 1946. Ostensibly his mission, in his role as Minister of External Affairs and commonwealth relations, was to review living conditions in the Tribal Areas, where untoward events included British air raids on the clan who had kidnapped, a government political officer. The underlying agenda, however was to assess the truth of the reports he had been fed, often by British intelligence that the influence of Badshah Khan and the KKs in the Frontier was waning. When Nehru visited the Frontier in 1938, he received a good reception even in areas, which were not Congress stronghold, such as Dera Ismail Khan. In 1946, he met with a very different reception in Peshawar, as thousands of Muslim League demonstrators waved black flags and yelled slogans against his 'plan of Hindu domination' of the subcontinent. Badshah Khan, true to his principles of avoiding confrontation, ordered the KKs to keep away from the area. Things got still worse as Nehru moved on to visit the Tribal Areas of Waziristan.⁵⁰

Soon after the Nehru landed the Peshawar, Badshah Khan held a press conference and blamed the British for backing Nehru. During his visit to the tribal area, one of *Mehsud* tribesmen said, "We are free people and we do not want to lose our sovereignty." Nehru replied "I am amazed, how you people who get government money act in this manner and talk of freedom. We are struggling for India's freedom. We want you also to be completely free of foreign rule."⁵¹

From Waziristan, the Party moved to the various parts of the tribal areas, including Jamrud, Jandola and Malakand. He received very strong resistance, though he was told to not to visit these areas because the situation in those areas was unfavorable. At Dargai, on the journey back from Malakand, a big crowd pelted stones. Although Badshah Khan managed to block a stone

⁴⁹ H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 279-81

⁵⁰ Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition & Memory in the North West Frontier*, James Currey Publishers: UK, 2000, pp. 183-184

⁵¹ *Ibid* p. 185

aimed at Nehru, ‘an earthen pot filled with soil hit Dr. Khan Sahib. With great difficulty they reached Peshawar.⁵²

The most astonishing fact revealed in the Rajmohan Gandhi’s book the British authorities supported the violence during the Nehru visit. Quoting (Erland Jansson), Swedish scholar’s personal interview with the authorities:

‘Faridullah Shah, the assistant political officer in Khyber, told Jansson that Colonel Khursheed, the PA, instructed him to do something against the Nehru visit, for if the tribesmen receive (Nehru) in a docile way, all Muslims of this part of the country will go under the authority of the Hindus.’⁵³

Violence was organized in all parts of the province; The League supported it and riots against the Hindus became daily routine. Hindu properties were looted. League appropriated the properties of Hindus and Sikhs.

Basanti: The Case of a Sikh woman

In the wake of violence and turbulence throughout early quarter of 1947, the religious violence engulfed not only the Frontier province but also other parts of the country. There were riots in district Hazara, Peshawar, Tribal areas, Bannu, Kohat, D. I. Khan and large-scale killing in Rawalpindi and Multan in Punjab. The sad part of the story was the League’s political confrontation, through which it launched a communal polarization and strong campaign to force out the Parties that are against it. In the Frontier, Dr. Khan Sahib confronted the situation bravely.

Basanti was a Sikh pregnant woman. She was abducted in January 1947 when the province was going through serious tension between the Hindus and Muslims. She was abducted from her village in Hazara district and her family members were killed. After her abduction, she was forcibly converted to Islam and renamed Aasia and married to a Muslim, M. Zaman. Later, she was recovered by the provincial police and sent to Dr. Khan Sahib’s custody, where her new husband and her Sikh relatives were present. She wanted to go back to her family and convert to Sikhism.

Basanti was brought to Peshawar and she produced before the district magistrate where she swore that she wanted to rejoin her faith. Dr. Khan Sahib’s protection of the Sikh women became the centre of controversy. He was charged with not following the right path of Islam and criticized for allowing his own daughter to marry a non-Muslim (son-in-law Jaswant Singh, a pilot in the Royal Indian Air Force was an Indian Christian and not a Hindu, as the League charged)⁵⁴.

⁵² Rajmohan Gandhi, *Ghaffar Khan: Nonviolent Badshah of the Pukhtuns*, Delhi: Penguin Viking, 2004, pp.162-163

⁵³ Ibid, P. 167

⁵⁴ Opcit, Parshotam Mehra, p. 105, see also Rajmohan Gandhi’s, *Ghaffar Khan: Non-violent Badshah of the Pakhtuns*, Penguin, Delhi, 2004, p. 173

The restoration of Basanti to Islam became a central demand and became the source of the League's civil disobedience movement in the Frontier. Qaiyum Khan defied orders and was arrested in a protest that accused Dr. Khan of forcing the Muslim women to reconvert to Sikhism.

"On 24 February, a mob assembled at Peshawar supposedly to free the Sikh girl, whom they alleged, Khan Sahib was not providing shelter. A procession of at least 5000 men marched towards the Government House, broke the police cordon and marched into the Governor's house and Khan Sahib's garden. They broke loose and besieged the house on all sides. Later, when the Sikh woman's conversion was revoked, the Muslim League exploited the situation, alleging that the case bore a striking resemblance to that of Islam Bibi in the 1930s, which led to the rising of the Fakir of Ipi".⁵⁵

Thus, Frontier Muslim League, partly stimulated by developments in Punjab and partly yielding to the cry of *Islam was in danger* over the incident of the Sikh woman from Hazara, launched its political offensive.

League's Civil Disobedience Movement and Attacks on Hindu-Sikh communities: Feb-March 1947

During the League's Civil Disobedience Movement, hundreds and thousands of Hindus and Sikhs moved from Hazara, Peshawar, Bannu and other parts of the province. These uprooted men and women, who had lived for centuries in these areas, told horrifying stories.

There was no fear of '*Islam in danger*' in the NWFP, it was the main reason for League's failure in mobilising the Muslim public opinion in its favour. The popularity of the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, a social-reform movement led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was another major reason obstructing the rise of Muslim League in the Frontier. After the tragic firing incident of the Qissa Khwani Bazaar on 23 April 1930, which resulted in the killing of more than two hundred people in one day, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* affiliated their organisation with the Indian National Congress (INC) and continued this affiliation till 1947. During the War period, an important feature of the British policy was to install as many non-Congress ministries in the provinces as possible to show to the outside world that despite the non-cooperation of the INC, the general public opinion in India was still to their favour and generously contributed to the Allied war efforts. In this connection, after hectic efforts, they installed a League's ministry in the Province under Sardar Aurangzeb Khan. Although he remained the League's Chief Minister of the Frontier Province for about two years, his various practices, including nepotism and misuse of official power, tarnished the organisation⁵⁶.

Muslim League's failure to establish massive mass support and obtain strength in legislative assembly of NWFP, the Frontier Muslim League started devising ways to dislodge Dr. Khan Sahib. The Muslim League resorted to civil disobedience movement against the Frontier

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 105, see also, D. G Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is a battle*, Bombay: Popular Parkashan, 1967, p. 407

⁵⁶ Ibid

Congress ministry to prove that the overwhelming majority of the Muslim population supported the League's demand for Pakistan. The Frontier League started civil disobedience movement on 19 February 1947. After the fall of the Unionists Ministry in the Punjab on 2 March 1947, it was now the only province of the proposed Pakistan where the League was not in power. It was essential for the Leaguers to wrest it from the Congress control. The movement continued till 4 June when the Partition plan of 3 June was officially announced. The Leaguers expressed their jubilation at the announcement and immediately called off the agitation against Dr. Khan Sahib's ministry.

*Throughout the Feb-March 1947 communal tension rapidly intensified and in retaliation for the attack on Muslims elsewhere in India and tribes began to launch attacks against settled districts, attacking Sikhs and Hindus, some of whom were kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam. Simultaneously, the League came out in open defiance of the Congress ministry and utilized classic civil disobedience techniques of boycotts and pickets. When rioting swept through Punjab, Peshawar began to suffer sabotage, arson (sometimes directed against Sikhs and Hindu Religious buildings) and bombs, all of which badly affected the life and economy of the city, particularly its Hindu dominated trade. Badshah Khan said that the League was preaching hatred and his response was to march 20,000 Red Shirts from all over the Province into the city, who conducted processions and patrolled the streets and bazaars, restoring calm and greatly reassuring the minorities. Throughout March and April the KKs came under increasing harassments and attacks by armed League supporters.*⁵⁷

According to an estimate presented by Civil and Military Gazette Report of 1947, Since 20 March, about 7,000 Hindus and Sikhs, nearly a quarter of the minority population of Peshawar city left for Punjab and other parts of India.⁵⁸

Another important tactics adopted by the League was the role of women in creating agitation based on deception. Women members of the Muslim League in *burkas* took out processions and attacked the government offices. The Pashtun code of conduct forbade the use of physical force against women; they exploited the situation. The League women organized numerous meetings and processions. No women agitator was arrested, physically assaulted or harassed by the Congress ministry.

Muslim women demonstrations caused Khan Sahib's government much embarrassment and were difficult to counter. There were no women police at that time and allowing men in uniform to tackle the women would have been outrageous. The women demonstration caught the Frontier Congress in a cultural trap.

Famous political leader Feroz Khan Noon's English wife played a prominent role in the women's protest demonstrations. She addressed 20 meetings and covered 250 miles in the districts of Kohat, Mardan and Peshawar.⁵⁹

The Black April:

Dera Ismail Khan Massacre

⁵⁷ Mukulika Banerjee, Opcit, p. 186

⁵⁸ Civil and Military Gazette report, in the issue dated 3. 4. 1947, p.20

⁵⁹ Parshotam Mehra, Opcit, p. 116 and also see, D. G Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is a battle*, Bombay: Popular Parkashan, 1967, p. 407

The wave of attacks was initiated on Hindus and Sikhs travelling from the other parts of the province, and the Trans-Indus Frontier District of Dera Ismail Khan. The Frontier adherents of the Muslim League fell upon the handful of Hindus and Sikhs with the primitive fanaticism characteristic of the Muslims of this area⁶⁰.

The Frontier Muslim League started an agitation on the lines of the Punjab agitation of January-February. This agitation included arson, murder and kidnapping of Hindus and Sikhs. Following the Rawalpindi massacres and looting, during March/April, the entire Frontier Province was ablaze with similar outrages against Hindus and Sikhs. The murders, looting and migration of the Hindu and Sikh population spread over to D. I. Khan, Peshawar and Hazara District. Many shopkeepers were harmed by the angry mobs. Arson was reported and attempts were made to burn the godowns of minority businessmen. In Dera Ismail Khan, armed men kidnapped Hindus.⁶¹

In the Frontier Province, notwithstanding the genuine and heroic efforts of the Congress Ministry under Dr. Khan Sahib to stem the tide of communal warfare, it was discovered that the Muslim League and the British officers made no efforts to stop these attacks. By April, a large number of Hindus and Sikhs abandoned their homes and took shelters in the refugee camps.

Armed mobs attacked Hindu and Sikh refugees in trains and buses many were killed. On 15 April, the Frontier Government issued a statement:

“A Procession started from the Muslim League office this morning and divided itself into different parties. One party went towards the courts and the post office and caused damage to the buildings. The other parties went into the city and set fire to shops and residential houses in different parts of the town. Half of the city of Dera Ismail Khan is burnt. Last night unknown person who indulged in looting and arson raided the village of Paora near Dera Ismail Khan. Three persons were killed in Paora and 54 shops and houses were burned. Fires are still raging in the village.

Raiders kidnapped four Hindus, including women last night from Hayat Khel village, six miles from Pezu in Bannu District. Another Hindu woman was murdered.”⁶²

The extent of the massive loss of innocent Hindus and Sikhs is not officially known or recorded but according to unofficial sources about 400 shops and houses were burned. From 16-19 February, the situation in Dera Ismail Khan was very severe; looting and burning was extensive and civilians were killed. Places of worship, houses and shops were burned in Gomal area of D. I. Khan.⁶³

⁶⁰ Gurbachan Singh Talib, Opcit., p. 117

⁶¹ Ibid p. 118

⁶² S. Gurbachan Singh, Opcit, p. 117

⁶³ Ibid p. 117

Parshotam Mehra in his book details serious riots and mass killing in D. I. Khan. According to him, 18 people were killed and 900 shops and private buildings were torched. From D. I. Khan the riots spread to Tank and the entire town was burnt down.⁶⁴

Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan took a very serious note of the situation and atrocities committed on Hindus and Sikhs in the Frontier and accused the Frontier Governor Sir Olaf Caroe of an open conspiracy with the Muslim League. He stated:

*If the Governor wants, he can stop all lawlessness in the Frontier in two days, but how can he when he himself is guiding the violent and communal League movement.*⁶⁵

3rd June Plan and Referendum

On 3 June, Congress and Muslim League parties agreed upon the Plan, in which a referendum would be held in NWFP to determine which constituent assembly the Frontier Province, would join. Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress waged a successful campaign for the removal of Sir Olaf Caroe, Governor of NWFP. Nehru and Dr. Khan Sahib deemed Sir Olaf to be partial towards the Muslim League. Rob Lockhart replaced Sir Olaf. It was under the new Governor, who enjoyed the confidence of the Congress Party in the Frontier that the referendum would be held.

Khudai Khidmatgars' objected that since the Congress and the Muslim League agreed on Partition and were bound by the Congress' decisions (Bacha Khan represented *Khudai Khidmatgars* in the Congress Working Committee), Congress accepted that NWFP would be part of Pakistan, then holding a referendum served no purpose; in his opinion a referendum would only worsen the existing communal and political tension and create an atmosphere of confrontation.

The Muslim League and the British had their own motives; Muslim League was keen to convey the impression that Pakistan had made its demand and that the *Khudai Khidmatgars* opposed Pakistan, and because of this reason a referendum was necessary. There was another reason for singling NWFP from the other provinces.

In all other parts of India, assembly members of the Muslim majority provinces were asked to vote. Bengal and Punjab assemblies voted for the Partition and thus the provinces were divided. Sindh assembly was asked to vote for Pakistan. The NWFP assembly could have been asked also. The reason was obvious. In NWFP, the *Khudai Khidmatgars* were in Majority in the assembly. If they opted for Pakistan, the credit would have gone to *Khudai Khidmatgars*. The Muslim League was not prepared to concede that credit and nor were the British.

Partition and Dismissal of Congress Ministry

The historians must ask a simple question: Why the colonial masters in NWFP called referendum, when an elected assembly was in place. Its counterparts, Bengal and Punjab

⁶⁴ Parshotam Mehra, *Opcit*, p. 112

⁶⁵ *Ibid* p. 120

were divided, their geography was changed but a referendum was not called, though the situation demanded it; whether Bengalis or Punjabis wanted to be Partitioned or join any state undivided. Only NWFP was asked to go to polls. The question 'Why' must be asked? Muslim League and their British masters wanted a democratic cover for their action. On 22 August 1947, the Governor NWFP, under instruction from the Governor-General of Pakistan dismissed the Congress ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib in the North West Frontier Province.

Bacha Khan was bound by the Congress decision. There was no need of a referendum. The elected assembly was being subverted to give Muslim League political advantage in future government in *Pashtoon* land. For Bacha Khan, a referendum was meaningful if it gave a genuine choice to the electorate but when it was clear that its purpose was to bypass the public opinion, it became a futile exercise. The elected representatives of the state boycotted it. *Khudai Khidmatgars* were of the opinion that if the British were insistent on holding the plebiscite despite the general acceptance that NWFP would go to Pakistan, then following the same principle of self-determination, the province should also have the freedom to a third option, of an independent Pakhtoon land. Mountbatten, however, refused to include this alternative. The *Khudai Khidmatgars* decided that between the available two options, the decision was already made and the referendum was therefore pointless and they would boycott it. *Khudai Khidmatgar's* took this as the demand of the most popular political party who had won an election and was in government in the state was ignored. It was solely conducted to give the Muslim League a political credibility in NWFP⁶⁶.

It is interesting to note that in Sindh, it would be decided by voting in the legislative assembly, The NWFP was treated differently. Why were the people of NWFP not given the right to decide their future through their elected representatives? Mountbatten and League's rejected the demand and *Khudai Khidmatgars* announced that since the decision on Partition had already been taken, they would boycott the referendum.

The dismissal was a legalized dictatorial act. The story of Dr. Khan Sahib's refusal to take the new oath seemed baseless. On the contrary, it is claimed that on the day, Sir George Cunningham, the Governor of the Province, took the oath of allegiance. Dr. Khan Sahib and his colleagues were invited to attend the ceremony but were not asked to take an oath.⁶⁷

On the behest of British Raj, the Governor dismissed Khan Sahib's ministry on the evening of 11 August or the morning of 12 August. George Cunningham took over on 12/13 August, and at once called the Muslim League to form a government. His appointment as governor was considered as constitutionally improper. Cunningham fully endorsed the India office stance:

- (a) Dismissal without any choice of dissolution would be unconstitutional when the Ministry still had a majority in the Legislature, and

⁶⁶ Ahmad Salim, *Pakistan of Jinnah: The Hidden Face*, Lahore: Brothers Publishers, 1993, p. 28

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* pp, 29-30

(b) Section 93 was obviously not required for law and order purposes and so was also unconstitutional⁶⁸.

The situation during Cunningham's governorship was unstable. There were incidents of violence in various parts of NWFP. The Muslim League lost ground and was convinced that if there were an election, the Congress would win again. Even Cunningham realized that the Muslim League would still like to have a coalition of the Congress and Muslim League. In order to materialize this objective, the grounds had already been prepared.

The Governor strongly believed that Dr. Khan Sahib and his colleagues might resign and avoid the necessity of dismissal. Dr. Khan Sahib clearly preferred to do this but he was overruled by Mehar Chand Khanna and Qazi Ataullah. The premier intimated him that they had decided not to quit. Cunningham dismissed his ministry.

Later that day, Abdul Qaiyum was sworn in as the head of a two-member Ministry and took over the all-important portfolios of law and order as well as finance. The new Premier took over the charge to restore law and order as well as confidence among the people. He pledged that it would be his foremost duty to protect the life and property as well as legal rights and privileges of the minorities.⁶⁹

The Partition Memories

Oral accounts of the Partition as described in the preceding paragraphs, illustrate different accounts of the violence against the Hindus and Sikhs. From the eyewitness accounts and interviews, it is evident that the lives of Hindus and Sikhs were protected during the Partition struggle in the Frontier.

Re-writing history from people's perspective is significant for turning the course of South Asian history and geography in an unprecedented manner. Visiting and re-visiting this issue is required because perspectives are different. Responsible factors must be located to evaluate the different aspects to place the onus on one force. Political and economic organisation at regional level must be reassessed, and to understand the experiences and emotions interwoven with the events during Partition. It is now proven fact from the oral accounts that violence against the non-Muslims was not as intensified as it is depicted in our recorded history.

For many decades, the personal memories of the survivors of Partition's violence and displacement remained inside the private domain, to be shared and inherited within the families as a personal legacy. It is only in the recent years that a large number of survivors and their descendants began narrating their memories and personal experiences publicly. It is argued that religion played a central and divisive role during Partition but in fact, it is either a historical blame stemming from faulty information and analysis or a deliberate fabrication.

⁶⁸ S. Settar & Indira Baptista Gupta (e.d.), *Pangs of Partition, Vol 1, The Parting Ways*, Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, Delhi, 2002, p. 168

⁶⁹ Hindustan Times, 25th August 1947

Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs demonstrated that they were united during the first war of independence in 1857; the joint struggle was a revolt that shook the foundations of British rule in India. For almost a year, the entire province was free from colonial rule. Hindus and Muslim soldiers fought the British soldiers. When people in Patna, Lucknow and Meerut revolted, broke open the jails and stormed the British armouries, they did not do it as Hindus or Muslims but as one people fighting a common and hated enemy, the British.

The notion of Hindustan and Pakistan are not concepts given by the people. It was started when a rebel administration was formed and all its public manifestos were issued in the name of both Hindus and Muslims. Hindus and Muslims were equally represented in the main governing bodies and proclamations were issued in popular languages. Hindi and Urdu texts were provided simultaneously.

Millions of people found themselves on the wrong side of the border and hundreds of thousands lost their lives during the mass migration and communal bloodshed. Generations of families, whose lives were shaped by Partition, look back at the traumatic events of 1947 and its impact 60 years later.

On September 4, 1947, Governor Cunningham recorded that violence was greater than before. The attackers targeted the Hindu and Sikh settlers in various parts of the North West Frontier Province. The numbers of attacks on Hindus and Sikhs increased steadily; some were isolated cases but most were organized incidents. On 26 August in Haripur district, a large number of Hindus and Sikhs were killed. Sikh and Hindu communities of district Mardan and Kohat were also killed.⁷⁰

The international and national media quoted many incidents of the violence that took place during Partition. The series of conflict broken out in various parts of the province engineered by armed mobs. The large number of migrating Hindus and Sikhs were looted and maltreated; their properties confiscated and assets looted. The convoys carrying women and children were not spared and most were reported killed.

One of the Partition stories is linked with a distressing incident in which a Sikh soldier accidentally killed a Punjabi Muslim soldier. The aftermath of this incident was horrific and dreadful. Mobs killed a large number of Hindus and Sikhs, looted and burnt down private property. This situation also had a very negative impact on the image and position of the army.⁷¹

From the detailed study on this issue, it is now a known fact that the sense of separate religious identities among the people became intense after the British conquest. Before that, they lived without any consciousness of majority and minority and in a spirit of tolerance.

⁷⁰ Singh, Uma, 1995, "Internal Violence in Pakistan", *International Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 161-169.

⁷¹ Parshotam Mehra, *Opcit*, p. 175

Muslims were the first to feel the difference as a minority; social and economic reasons initiated that feeling. Later, it was used as a political weapon.

Ironically, the very fears that beset the Muslims of India at that time are today a cause of concern for the Hindus and Christians and other minorities of Pakistan. The only difference is that the Indian Muslims began their political action with the demand for separate electorates, while the religious minorities of Pakistan are pressing for joint electorates⁷².

The Hindus, Christians, Parsees, Bahais and even the handful of Buddhists of Pakistan wanted to live as an integral part of the Pakistani nation. They believe that their respective faiths do not stop them from a mixed communal existence. The cultural and social fabric was so strong that for decades the situation remained calm and friendly⁷³.

The facts revealed during extensive interviews with Muslim and Hindu survivors from the North West Frontier province that before Partition there was communal harmony among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The oral evidence recorded through interviews shows that:

“Almost nobody in the districts near to the tribal areas had any idea that their land would be partitioned; much less that they would have to abandon hearth and home. Hindus and Sikhs in the villages and in small towns of Bannu and Kohat were equally unaware of what lay in store for them, although many of them had moved eastwards in the beginning of March 1947.”⁷⁴

On the whole, communal inter-relationship of Hindus and Sikhs with the Muslims in Kohat, Bannu, and Peshawar was cohesive in nature. Even after Partition, there are many recorded memories that the Muslims protected life and assets of the non-Muslims. During Partition, neighbours were almost never involved in the raids on Hindu and Sikh houses.

“The social fabric and communal harmony was very strong. For centuries the Hindus and Sikhs had lived on this land, most of them associated with the business. The Hindus and Sikhs, however, owned some of the property in the city and the district.”⁷⁵

Children of all the communities studied together in the schools. Yar Mohammad Khan narrated his personal experience that some of his Hindu and Sikh teachers were excellent teachers. Children played and sat together in the schools and Hindu, Muslim and Sikh class-fellows spent time in Hindu temples during recess.⁷⁶

“Though the news about eruption of violence was heard and one could imagine that there was fighting in the north but as a community they couldn’t understand it. Life in the villages was based on mutual respect, respecting women

⁷² Gilmartin, David, “Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 1998, Vol. 57, No. 4, pp. 1069.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Interview with Mr. Gul Nawaz Khan, Bannu

⁷⁵ Interview with Mr. Mohammad Khan, Bannu war

⁷⁶ Interview with Mr. Yar Mohammad Khan, also interview with Sona Singh Peshawar

*and elders. They did not have any problems; they were one community. Most of the Hindu families stayed in Frontier after 1947.*⁷⁷

When Partition took place, they had to uproot and lost everything. They left the land where they lived for centuries. The communal harmony between Hindu and Muslim people contributed in bridging the gaps, the inter-dependency of businessmen, consumers, farmers and worker was the main source that led to make a peaceful society before Partition.

Hindus and Sikhs were very rich and good businessmen, teachers and doctors and most of their employees were Muslims. At the time of Partition, the employees turned on their masters and demanded money⁷⁸.

*“Before Partition the economic activity in most parts of the Frontier, Hindus and Sikhs predominantly controlled province. The role of Muslims was limited to the agricultural sector. Hindus and Sikh community had well-established business base and they understood the art of dealing business matters.”*⁷⁹

Social interaction among Muslims and Hindu community in the Northern Province was of very significant in nature. They lived in harmony and respect was given to the non-Muslims. Non-Muslims and Muslims participated in each other’s ceremonies, sharing good times with each other. They always supported each other in time of trouble and difficulties. Neither Hindus nor Muslims interfered in each other’s religious affairs; everyone was allowed to follow his religion and practice freely without limitations. Muslim and Hindus even ate in the same pan⁸⁰.

The significant and vital role of the minorities in the creation of Pakistan and their pre-Partition contribution cannot be ignored. The overall attitude of the Hindus and Sikhs was very constructive.

*“They played a positive and a pro-Pakistan role. They also played a remarkable role in many professional activities. There were Hindu doctors and teachers in most of the schools; their interaction with the fellow Muslim teachers and with the students can be termed as very compassionate and ideal. They treated them on equal terms. They served the community and performed their duties without any discrimination on religious grounds.”*⁸¹

The *Nawabs* and *Khans* also made tremendous efforts in the uplift of communal harmony. The overall attitude of the business class, mostly dominated by the Hindus was also very friendly towards the Muslim community. Muslim neighbours of the area also supported them in their domestic and other affairs of normal day life.⁸²

⁷⁷ Interview with Mr. Ghulam Gul, Bannu,

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Interview with Mr. Mir, Taus

⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Haroon Sarab Diyal, Peshawar also interview with Shiyam Babu, Nowshera

⁸¹ Interview with Aziz-ur-Rehman Sarhadi

⁸² Interview with Gul Aslam Khan, Kohat, also interview with Shiyam Babu, Nowshera

The Partition of Indian-subcontinent engulfed this communal harmony and caused a drift in the social fabric that had existed for centuries. Riots broke out across the country, whereas the situation before the Partition was very peaceful. There were many non-Muslim families who decided to stay in Pakistan because of their historical roots because their ancestors came to this region hundreds of years ago. Among them, Miss Shakuntala, settled in Kohat at that time decided not to leave their homeland. They lived in harmony with Muslims and had friendly relationship.⁸³ In the aftermath of Partition struggle, angry mobs killed many Hindus.

“In this sad episode of violence, the role of the police force was very significant and encouraging. They provided full protection to them, and always reached and apprehended the miscreants⁸⁴. Generally the local population never intended to wage such attacks on the Hindus. Hindu or Sikh communities of Hazara and Bannu districts were very peace loving and they neither participated nor supported in any criminal act or violence.”⁸⁵

Hindu and Sikh places of worship were secured and not targeted in the most of the areas, although there were some incidents in which many of their holy places were desecrated. In the wake of Partition, the reaction of the Muslim community was responsive and retaliatory because of the atrocities committed against the Muslims in India. That is why a Hindu or Sikh found alone was prone to a serious danger⁸⁶.

Apart from the business class, most of the Hindus were teachers or associated with the medical profession. There were two famous Hindu doctors. They were very good doctors and provided treatment to their patients without any fee, but only charged them for medicines sometimes they provided medicines free of cost.⁸⁷

Resident of Peshawar, Mr. Sona Singh narrated the historical roots of the Sikh and Hindu communities in the region. Sikh community in particular, settled in Tirah during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb. He recalled the memories of Partition:

“At the time of Partition, I was quite young but I remember that there were no riots in this area. If we were attacked, our Muslim brothers saved our lives. I also heard from my elders that few of our relatives were killed during these riots but the attitude of the Muslims with non-Muslims was very affectionate and peaceful. They never interfered in our religious matters and holy places were guarded.”⁸⁸

When the Pakistan was created, Hindu resident moved to India. Most of them were transported in busses. The *Khaksars* protected the Hindus and Sikhs in Rawalpindi. There are many heroic incidents when Muslims saved the lives of Hindus and Sikhs. Ghulam Hussain's role in protecting the lives of Hindus cannot be ignored. He was very an active member of the Congress committee and had strong affiliations and loyalty to the Congress. His act of bravery would always be remembered when he would confront and challenge the angry mob

⁸³ Interview with Shakuntala, Peshawar

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Interview with Rajesh Kumar, Mardan

⁸⁶ Interview with Mr. Gul Aslam Khan, Bannu and interview with Mr. Gul Nawaz Bannu

⁸⁷ Interview with Mr. Khan Shirn and Interview with Mrs. Altaf Afzal and Arbab Hamayun Khan, Peshawar

⁸⁸ An interview with Mr. Sona Singh, Peshawar

alone. He saved the lives of two Hindu girls who were returning home from schools, when two scoundrels attacked them. He escorted the girls safely to their home.

It was a time of peace and harmony. Each individual within the society shared and played a vital role as a responsible torchbearer of communal harmony. People considered it their moral duty to help other in need. There was communal harmony among Muslims and Hindus and respect for sacred places of worship. Muslims never attacked their places of worship and nor they had made any attempt on the mosques.

Diljeet Chodhury referred to another historic and significant event, in which lives of Muslims and Hindus were saved; recalling his memories about the loyalties of Pathans, he narrated the remarkable incident of trustworthiness of Pritam Singh Chowdhury, who was commissioned into the 5th Battalion of the 11th Sikh Regiment. He narrated:

The life of his servant Lal Khan, in the aftermath of Partition was not safe because of the mass killings. Pritam Singh ordered his batman Lal Khan to return to Pakistan because his life was in danger in India. Lal Khan refused to leave and opted to serve his superior. Pritam Singh had to order him at gunpoint to leave for Pakistan; such was the loyalty of the Pathan. Narrating another story, he described how Muslims rescued his mother when she was in Rawalpindi. She was caught by a mob and rescued by his Muslim neighbours. To save his life he had to shave his Kais and Beard. With the help of Muslim neighbours, he came to India in December 1948. Such was the wafadari (faithfulness) of the neighbours⁸⁹.

Survivor of the Haripur massacre, Manmohan Singh Kohli narrates his story in which his life among other Hindus and Sikhs was saved from the angry mobs. In the wake of serious tension and violence, the families of Hindus and Sikhs were shifted to the Kakul Military camp near Abbottabad, which was a refugee base. He narrates his story:

A train carrying soldiers of the Pakistan Army pulled up opposite our train. A few men of the Baloch Regiment came out. We thought all these soldiers were sent to kill us. The mob of Muslims was now within a striking distance. Who would ultimately take our lives? Baloch soldiers or the mob? It did not make any difference to us. I was mentally prepared to accept the worst. A senior Army officer, apparently the battalion commander, alighted from the train. In utter disbelief, my father, who had just completed the ardaas, recognized him. He was none other than Brigadier (later Field Marshal) Ayub Khan. Though he belonged to village Rehana near Haripur, he had a house quite close to ours in Haripur and was a good friend of my father. My father, on seeing him, jumped out of the train with joy and rushed to him. After a warm embrace, my father hurriedly apprised him of the situation. Ayub Khan saw the mob approaching and acted swiftly. Soldiers were ordered to encircle the train and drive away the mob. Within minutes the mob disappeared. The firing from the railway station building also stopped. We were grateful to them for saving our lives⁹⁰.

⁸⁹ Memory from, BBC London, Diljeet Chowdhury's memories of Partition of India 1947, memory of 368 days between 01/06/1947 and 03/06/1948, for more detail please see, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/memoryshare/southyorkshire/A25616298>

⁹⁰ Manmohan Singh Kohli, Train to India, in Arnold Toynbee's, *East to West – A Journey Around the World*, by Oxford University Press, London, 1958. P. 1-4

“Situation in the Hazara area was also not very different from the other districts of the Frontier, with the Partition mass migration was quite obvious but there were many Hindu and Sikh families living in Darband, Batagram and Dam Taur who opted to stay rather than migrate.”⁹¹

Mr. Khan Shireen further describes the story of harmony and peaceful coexistence among Muslims and Non-Muslims in the Frontier province:

“During Partition when riots broke out in Punjab and other parts of Pakistan, the Frontier province remained peaceful; no one was harmed or killed. Hindus, who migrated to India, returned a few months after the Partition to collect the valuable they had left behind. The non-Muslims who remained in Pakistan had freedom to practice their own religion. Those who left their homeland were very unhappy.”⁹²

This social and communal harmony among the Muslims and non-Muslims during Partition period was not just limited to the village or district level. The overall attitude of the Muslims, in most of the settled districts of Frontier province was very good. One of the factors involved in this harmony was the socio-economic inter-dependency among Muslims and Non-Muslims, as the non-Muslims and Hindus dominated the business and trade in most of the districts.⁹³

“Hindu and Muslims were friendly with each other. There was no discrimination between them. There were many Hindu shops in Ander Bazar (interior market). In the wake of Partition, Hindus and Sikhs, the dominant business class left the Peshawar and some other districts. When the violence escalated in different parts of the province, there were many Muslims who came to the forefront and saved many Hindus and Sikhs and provided them shelter, food and in many case tried to help them to migrate to India”⁹⁴

In the same context, Sardar Kuljit Singh Khurana, survivor of the Partition violence, managed to cross the border without any injury, explained his detailed account. The facts revealed gave a clear picture of his experiences of Partition:

“The sudden uprooting was compensated by the belief that migration was only temporary and it helped to endure the violence, which was political and not culturally or religiously motivated. I remember abductions of women and children, the memories of refugee convoys and camps; the hazards of border crossing and nostalgia for pre-Partition bonds between Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Despite problems, many Hindus and Sikhs managed to cross the border in order to save their lives. In this regard, the Muslim neighbours and friends played a very significant role in providing and facilitating their safe journey was remarkable.”

Belonging to a rich and famous business class, Kuljit's family never thought of leaving their home district Mardan where they lived in peace and harmony with their Muslim friends. They left for Amritsar with the impression that they would return in a few weeks. When violence erupted across province, his family unwillingly decided to move from their town Hoti-Mardan (where majority of Sikhs were settled) to Amritsar. Muslim men escorted them

⁹¹ An Interview with Mr. Aziz-Ur-Rehman Sarhadi, Dhodial

⁹² An Interview with Mr. Khan Shireen, Mansehra

⁹³ An Interview with Arbab Hamayun Khan, Peshawar

⁹⁴ An Interview with Mr. Inayat Masih Gohar, Peshawar

with special orders from the local influential people to protect the lives of Sikhs and if someone intends to kill one Hindu, in response kill 10 Muslims⁹⁵.

This single instance gives ample justification of the level of communal harmony and friendship among the non-Muslims and Muslims in the Frontier province. There was minor trouble in District Nowshera, which was under British control.

Some Hindu and Sikh families were forced to move to Indian Punjab during Partition. There were also reports that some were killed during the struggle. The non-Muslims never wanted to leave their towns as they had lived for centuries.

“One of the local Hindu Businessmen, Bishan Dass, an upper class businessmen was the focus of my attention. As a child, I remember his shop full of sweets. He was a good and a fair businessman; his shop was always full of people because his fair prices and affectionate character. I saw the horrific scenes of flames emerging from his shop, which was burnt by the angry mob. At that moment, I felt as though my life was ablaze. I witnessed with grief when his shop was looted. When Partition happened, they migrated and lost everything. I cannot forget it. His shop was my whole universe. As a child all I could do was to ask only one thing, why? Why was his shop burnt? That shop was not an ordinary shop but occupied a very special place in my life, just like other children, it fascinated my childhood friends and me. Muslims and non-Muslim community used to buy sweets from him. It was not only the Bishan Das’s shop, which was ruined, but also our childhood.”⁹⁶

He further elaborated:

“I still remember my friends and feel sad about what happened to them. Our forefathers also remember the love, care and affection shared between the non-Muslims and Muslim community. There were Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in our area and they all looked after each other.”⁹⁷

The communal harmony in NWFP lasted for many years. Muslims and Hindus had a strong bond among them, especially during the religious festivals. After Partition, the Hindu and Sikh families who left Peshawar, still remembers their strong connection to Peshawar. Famous India film actors such as, Pirtihvi Raj, Dilip Kumar, Rishi Kapoor, Raj Kapoor, and Sagar Sarhadi had strong affiliation with the city of Peshawar and its people:

“They still speak, Hindko (local language), their affiliation with the local language and with the people of Peshawar has strong roots. They had ancestral links in Peshawar.

⁹⁵ Sardar Kuljit Singh Khurana, *Escape without Injury from the NWFP to Amritsar*, in Ian Talbot with Darsham Singh Tatla (ed.), *Epicerter of violence and Memories from Amritsar*, Delhi, 2006, pp 130-134

⁹⁶ An Interview with Mr. Younas Qiyasi, Peshawar

⁹⁷ Ibid

*These prominent actors visited many times and shared their love and affiliation with the people of Pakistan. Many of them still remember their neighbours. On his visit to Peshawar, Dilip Kumar wished to visit his ancestral birthplace and had tears in his eyes. Anil Kapoor and Rishi Kapoor also visited Pakistan and particularly Peshawar. Before returning, they took a handful of soil with them.*⁹⁸

This communal harmony was based on centuries old relations. Community structure and inter-relationship was based on human values.

The people to people contact can bridge the gap between the two countries and also guarantee lasting peace between the Hindus and Muslims. In this regard, mutual dialogue between the people of both the countries is essential. The political division divided the nations but it cannot diminish the love, affection and harmonious relationship that still prevail in the hearts of the people. It is not based on political or ideological affiliation but on human values and personal contacts.

Case Study 3:

Sindh: Partition and Peace

The harmony among the Hindus and Muslims of Sindh, established over centuries became perilous due to many traditional and non-traditional factors. Traditional factors included the economic exploitation of Sindhi Muslim at the hands of Hindu moneylender. The British Civil Code offered protection to the Hindu *bania* (money-lender). It jeopardized the continuity of non-violent social infrastructure of Sindhi people. Related to these were the non-traditional threats that directly affected the lives of the people. They included social unrest caused by communal hatreds; increasing poverty amongst the Muslims as well as threats to human lives from disturbances and riots; incidents of riots in 1831, Larkana riots in 1928, Masjid Manzilgah issue.

Sindh's separation from Bombay presidency left the Sindhi Hindus discontented because their economic and political interests would be at stake in a government dominated by Muslims. Partition of Sindh did not prove to be beneficial to the ordinary Sindhi, the status of *hari* (tenant) never changed. Although, he underwent a change of masters, from Hindu capitalists to Muslim *Waderas* (landlords).

This study identifies the key factors that increased communal bitterness and then systematically explores the changes that directly affected the lives and social obligations of the individuals. It assesses the communal atmosphere after the Partition of 1947. The absence of large-scale violence made the Sindhi experience different from that of the Punjabis and Bengalis. Sindhi Hindus were alarmed because of the measures adopted by Sindhi Muslims wielding political power during pre and post-Partition time. An assessment is also made about the influx of refugees in Sindh. *Mohajir* Nationalism was promulgated and Sindhi culture and its indigenous people became handicapped at the hands of people from Punjab and India.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Relative Isolation and Communal Fabric:

Sindh enjoyed religious, cultural and social harmony. Historically, Sindh acquired a rural character but this did not prevent the establishment of important pockets of urban development, which grew as administrative centers linked to trade. Daybul, Lahri Bandar and Karachi became the most important ports on the Indian Ocean. The importance of River Indus as a major channel of commerce through Sindh encouraged the establishment of towns and cities along the river.

Lines of communication in Sindh ran from east to west, linking the subcontinent with Western Asia through the Bolan, Mula and Lak Phusu passes which led from Sindh into Balochistan. Important caravan routes also crossed the Thar Desert to destinations in the Rajputana States and the coastal regions of Kacch, Kathiawar and Gujarat. Towns developed alongside, acting as trading centers and refueling stations for traders.⁹⁹

The mountain ranges of Kohistan and the Eastern desert proved effective barriers and Sindh remained relatively isolated from events taking place in northern India. Arabs conquered Sindh and it remained under Muslim political hold. However, due to Sindh's isolation, it never got drawn into the wider political framework of Northern India during the period of the Delhi Sultanates or the Mughals. Sindh was ruled either by local tribes, like the *Sumros* and the *Sammās* or by the semi-independent representatives of governments whose centres of power lay in Kabul or Delhi. The preservation of 'stability' along its borders remained their main concern and they delegated authority to local power holders in order to achieve their aim. This pattern of political control remained virtually unchanged right up to the time of the British arrival: the Talpur Mirs ruled Sindh at the time of the British conquest in 1843 under the Afghan autonomous kings but in practice, they like their eighteenth century *Kalhora* predecessors, ruled as 'independent' chiefs.

As far religious harmony in Sindh is concerned, Hindus and Muslims co-existed in relative harmony for decades. Sindh's relative isolation was important from the religious point of view. As a 'marginal' region located away from the main centres of orthodox Hinduism and influenced only indirectly by strongly centralised Muslim states, Sindh developed its own distinctive religious character. Before the advent of Islam, a mixture of Buddhism and Hinduism dominated religion in Sindh. The bulk of Muslim conversions were performed by *sufis*, which meant that popular Islamic practice in Sindh displayed strongly mystical and synergetic trends. Sindhi *Sufism* was a harmonious blending of both Vedantic and Islamic cultures and is exemplified in Sachal's axiom: "I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim." The evening prayer of a Sindhi was: "God's blessings be on Hindus, on Muslims and on others." Sindhi Hindus bowed without hesitation in *durgahs* and Sindhi Muslims spontaneously referred to God as *Varuna Zindab Pir*.

Therefore, even when the province became predominantly Muslim, Hindus and Muslims continued to share much of the same cultural framework and many of their religious

⁹⁹ HUGES, A. W., *A Gazetteer of the Province of Sind*, Karachi, 1876, p. 85

practices overlapped. By the nineteenth century, Sindhi Muslims outnumbered Hindus by three to one. With the exception of local *Ismaili* and *Memon* groups, Hindus made up the bulk of the trading and commercial community and dominated the economic matrix. Although, economically, administratively and even politically, communities changed positions but Hindus, especially *bantias* had a firm grip on the economy of the province. The social effects of rural debt were aggravated in Sindh because the creditors were almost all Hindu, the debtors almost all Muslim. The British rule initiated critical changes in the relationship between debtors and creditors, especially by conferring full property rights on landholders. This put them in possession of a valuable asset, which increased their creditworthiness. The catch was that creditors could seize their land to recover their money, a power that was unthinkable in pre-British times.¹⁰⁰

This gave creditors the opportunity to acquire land cheaply. *Waderas* did not generally have a strong business sense. They could not appreciate the commercial value their land had acquired. Expressing their status through the size of their estates rather than the efficiency of their husbandry, they often sacrificed profits to buy additional tracts of unproductive land, mortgaging themselves in the process. According to British officials, this left them prey to predatory *bantias*. Forbidden by their religion to lend money on interest, Muslims had traditionally left all financial affairs to the Hindu minority. The Hindus had established a reputation as shrewd merchants and bankers but scorned by the majority community.

Most of the Muslims lived in the rural areas, earned their livelihood from the land and were largely illiterate. Although many *Sayed* families lived in towns, it was the countryside, which provided the basis of the power of Sindh's religious elite. *Pirs* belonging to important shrines wielded enormous social influence and people who did not have a *pir* as their *murshid* were considered non-believers. Thus, *pir* and the *dargah* provided the main transmission belt along which Islam reached the people of the region. This process of conversion made such a deep impact that intense devotion for *sufi* saints and their lines of descendants became the hallmarks of religious practice in Sindh.¹⁰¹

The resultant harmony of communal relations and the valuable economic service rendered by the different communities to the province as a whole held prospects of undisturbed continuity of the status quo. Regional attachment was considered more important than communal consciousness. Even during the British attack, the Hindu community joined hands with the ruling Muslims to offer a stern resistance. Although the history of Sindh marks relative communal harmony unrivalled in the northern part of the sub-continent, certain levels of ambivalence were also demonstrated in the Hindu-Muslim relationship through incidents like riots of 1831, Larkana riots in 1928, Masjid Manzilgah issue and so on. Thus, it becomes imperative to consider these issues in detail for a true understanding of the constituents of the socio-political and economic fabric of Sindh.

Hindu-Muslim Riots of 1831-1930

¹⁰⁰ Regulation V of 1827, Chapter V, Section 15, The Bombay Code, 7

¹⁰¹ ANSARI, Sarah F.D., Sufi Saints: a State Power, Vanguard, 1992, p. 13

In 1831-32 Hindu-Muslim riots broke out in Nussarpur. Built in 989 by Nasir Muhana, about sixteen miles northeast of Hyderabad, the town was the residence of influential *Lagari Nawabs*.

These riots were caused over a Hindu boy who was badly treated by his teacher and the Muslims gave him refuge in a mosque. This infuriated the Hindu community and the Hindu shopkeepers of the town closed their shops against Muslims. The Hindus usually protested in this manner because the population was dependent on them for necessities. The Muslims retaliated by polluting the wells used by the Hindus. Seth Naomul Hotchaund states that the next day a man called Sayed Nooral Shah walked through the bazaar swearing at Hindus. Hotchaund's younger brother, Parshram, protested and argued with the Sayed against his unbecoming conduct. Nooral Shah charged Parshram with blasphemy; he stated that Parshram had abused him and the Prophet (PBUH). He visited Tatta, Shah Bandar, Mathiari, Halla and Hyderabad, stirring Muslims and soliciting co-operation and aid from every true Muslim in the name of the *Koran*. This incited the religious sentiments in Muslims who consequently gathered against the Hindus.

Parshram moved from Sindh to Jessulmere. The Muslims assembled in large numbers at Hyderabad, raised a clamour, and prevailed upon Mir Muradali to address Seth Hotchaund to send his son Parshram to Hyderabad. Parshram was not in Karachi; therefore Seth Hotchaund proceeded to Hyderabad accompanied by two thousand Hindus. The Mir referred the case to the *Pirs* of Nussarpur. At Nussarpur the *qazi* doubting the Muslims' intentions refused to listen to the Muslims or to permit a discussion at his place. The Muslims, however, forcibly lifted away Seth Hotchaund and went to Tatta and Bagani, a town in the Shah Bandar Division. In Bagani, the Muslims began to meditate upon his circumcision and conversion to Islam by force.

In the meantime, Mir Muradali was apprised of their intentions. He repented immediately and Seth Hotchaund was set free, thus, ending the episode of riots in Nussarpur.¹⁰²

The colonial era, starting in 1850 in Sindh, no doubt changed the status of Hindu moneylenders as British law gave them protection and stability against the creditors. Hindus filed a number of cases against Muslim debtors in the courts. The accusations and counter accusations in this regard were indicative of communal antagonisms, which sporadically erupted into violence. The occasional conversion of Hindus to Islam was a common trigger for public disturbances. It provoked angry claims from representatives of the Hindu community that force was used. This was a measure of their increased security since they would hardly have dared an open challenge on so sensitive an issue if the British were not present to intervene. Muslim representatives angrily refute the charges and the debate was taken to the streets. Disputes over conversions provoked riots in Sukkur in 1872, in the Sehwan area in 1884, in Hyderabad bazaar for no apparent reasons. A dispute over playing music in a temple in Thattha provoked violence in 1891.¹⁰³

¹⁰² BHOJWANI, Rao Bahadur Alumul Trikamdass (tr.), *Memoirs of Seth Naomul Hotchand*, Oxford 1982, pp.64-67

¹⁰³ District Sup. Police, to Collr., Hbad., 26 Aug, 1882 (P.S.C., J.D., file 1, 1882, vol. II. Pt. II, compn. 47, 78-84; Comm., Sindh, note, n.d. (As quoted by CHESSMAN, David, *Landlord Power and Rural Indebtness in Colonial Sindh 1865 – 1901*, Curzon, p. 185

In 1893, a *Moharram* procession in Sukkur turned into an anti-Hindu riot and the Hindu Town Inspector of Police was badly beaten.¹⁰⁴

These constituted evidence of friction between the two communities, but there were no specifically *anti-bania* riots in Sindh, which took place in Deccan in 1875.

In March 1928, Hindu-Muslim riots broke out in Larkana. The riots were caused by the activities of the Hindu fundamentalists of the *Shuddhi*, *Arya Samaj* and Hindu *Mahasabha* Movements. The members searched the countryside to find and 'reconvert' or *shuddhi* (purify) any person they suspected who had converted from Hinduism. A Hindu convert woman, married to a small landowner in a village near Dokri in Larkana District for more than fifteen years and the mother of several children was reportedly kidnapped by *Arya Samajist* workers. Her family requested the Collector to issue a warrant. The police brought her to Larkana but the Collector was very indecisive and kept her as *amanat* (i.e. in trust) in the house of a local notable, Nawab Lahori. The Collector delayed taking action to diffuse the situation and it escalated into a confrontation. The husband and the children of the woman complained and asked for her return but the Larkana administration took no notice.

The incident caused great resentment in the villages around Larkana. The police action was considered an attack on the home and family of a respectable man. A number of villagers entered the town to cause a disturbance and precipitated a minor riot. The extremist elements, particularly the workers of Hindu *Mahasabha*, attacked any Muslim they found alone. In the scuffle, sixty-nine people were injured, eleven Muslims and the rest were Hindus, but one Hindu died as a result of his injuries.¹⁰⁵

Under pressure from Hindu political workers, the police arrested a large number of indiscriminate suspects. The Muslims felt helpless and unprotected. The most important Muslim leaders of the town, Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto and Nawab Lahori refused to come out of their houses. However, Khuhro responded immediately. He protested to the magistrate about his extremely arbitrary actions of arresting Muslims without proof on the behest of their opponents and enemies. He immediately organized a relief committee.

The Defense Committee succeeded in the release of the arrested people, except ten leading citizens who were committed to the Sessions Court.

The communal friction and extremist organizations like the *Shuddhi* and *Mahasabha* Movements were bent upon stirring up communal trouble. This case was the beginning of the strife between Hindu and Muslim communities in Sindh.

Difficulties arose in other towns as both the communities organized themselves for confrontations with each other strictly on communal and religious lines. Hindu households were armed and young men were trained for combat. The atmosphere was charged with hostility and the failure of the extremists in Larkana was regarded as a defeat, which had to be avenged. The tactic of the communal organizations was to create tension with displays of arms and militancy. Vociferous newspaper propaganda depicted Hindus as victims of *jat* or 'uncouth' Muslims. The majority Muslim population

¹⁰⁴ CHEESMAN, Op.cit., p. 185

¹⁰⁵ KHUHRO, Hamida, *Mohammad Ayub Khuhro – A Life of Courage in Politics*, Ferozsons, 1998, p.73

remained involved and helpless because the bureaucracy was Hindu and influenced the higher levels of administrative system.

From 1929 to 1931, there were frequent incidents of violence particularly in Sukkur, one of the major commercial centers of Sindh. The Hindu community was in a majority in the town and more aggressive in their proselytizing. In August 1930, an incident occurred in Sukkur, in which Muslims were beaten and injured by Hindus. Muslims of surrounding villages poured into the city to avenge the outrage. This resulted in a riot and incidents of looting in the city. The administration, following the Larkana pattern, made mass arrests of the villagers and charged them with the most serious crimes. There was a public outcry about police intimidation and use of force against the suspected people.

Another element, which contributed to the communal friction, was the Indian 'religious exclusiveness', which restricted social relations between the communities and the practice of *achhoot* or 'untouchables.' This was not confined to the lower castes of Hindus but also forbade socializing and eating with non-Hindus. During the British 'neutral' rule, when Hindus had the economic upper hand, 'religious exclusiveness' came out into the open. The collapse of Non Co-operation and *Khilafat* Movements unleashed an intolerant mood in India.

Inter-communal marriages were absolutely taboo. However, in the rural areas it was a fairly common practice that lower caste tribal girls were sold by their parents or by middlemen to well off villagers who converted and married them. The *Shuddhi* Movement, therefore, not only threatened such households (at least half a dozen in a big village,) but also created communal hatred far greater than the actual number of people affected.¹⁰⁶

The century old British rule saw erosion of the traditional social equations in Sindh and created raw edges in the relationship of the Hindu and Muslim communities. To a large extent, this was the result of the new legal and taxation systems, which allowed the *baris* and small landholders to fall into debt and worse, lose the land, which was the sole source of their livelihood. Those suffering the hardships of the new system found a ready scapegoat in the *bania* and the urban businessmen. The growing power of the latter and their intrusion into agriculture, where they became owners of large tracts of land and orchards, led to resentments across the spectrum of the traditional rural society.

Economic Matrix and role of the Moneylender

The Sindhi Muslims trembled before the Hindu moneylender's reed-pen.¹⁰⁷ The Hindu *bania*, the trader and moneylender tyrannized the debtor, imposing harsher and inequitable terms. The Muslim *zamindar* was the perennial debtor. Debt was an intolerable burden on Sindhi Muslims in general and the *Waderas* in particular.

Hindus took advantage of the protection provided by British rule and establish themselves as landholders. Evidence was provided in 1896 by an investigation into six 'representative' villages from

¹⁰⁶ KHUHRO, Op.cit., 185

¹⁰⁷ BURTON, Sir Richard, Sindh Revisted, vol. 1, p.299, cited in CHEESMAN, Op.cit., p. 161

each of the forty-seven irrigated *taluqas* in Sindh.¹⁰⁸ The Report estimated that Hindus held twenty-eight percent of the occupied area in 1895-96. This represented a revolution in land ownership because half a century earlier, they had virtually nothing. Moreover, of the 30,839 acres, which they acquired in the selected villages between 1890-91 and 1895-96, only 7,683 acres, roughly a quarter was new land; 24,143 acres was taken from Muslims. Another fifteen percent of the land was mortgaged to them. Altogether, then, by 1896, Hindus owned forty-two percent of the occupied area.¹⁰⁹

The growth of indebtedness had potentially serious political consequences. People who lost their land or witnessed the suffering of indebted neighbours might lose faith in the British Raj. They might cease to cooperate over crime and taxation matters; they might even oppose the British authorities. British officers, therefore, developed a skeptical view of *bantias*, regarding them as troublesome and bent on eroding the foundations of the British administration. The political sensitivity of debt increased with time. It became explosive in the twentieth century, when Muslim indebtedness fuelled resentment against Hindu *bantias*, boosting the popularity of the Pakistan Movement.

Significance of credit in economic development cannot be denied. Some moneylenders were greedy but it was necessary to lend money so cultivation could continue.¹¹⁰

Bantias were tradesmen and their interest in land grew out of their trading activities. Some *Waderas* hoped to boost their *izzat* (respect) through large holdings but they were more interested in land as an investment. It guaranteed access to raw materials. Hindu merchants were keen to start their own farms. Much of the profit gained from the growth of Sindh's export trade, based on the produce of Sindhi farms, was invested in land. To keep a low overhead, they preferred smaller and concentrated land holdings than Muslims.¹¹¹

As merchants, Hindus were middlemen. They bought produce from the cultivators at the threshing floor; kept a certain amount for retailing locally and the rest was sold to the dealers. As traders, they were a natural source of credit, providing the investments that enabled agriculture to develop. The system evolved to suit those engaged in trade. The merchants saved time and labour and it provided the *bantias* with secure trading contacts. Naturally, the producers were at a disadvantage but they had little choice. They did not have connections among the large dealers. Secondly, they could not sell their produce and regulate their accounts at the same time. Before they sold their produce in the open market and paid off the season's debts. Many found themselves as impoverished at the end of the season as they were at the start.

Transactions problems arose when the farmers sold their produce. First, the *bantias* established the value of the crop, with reference to the price they expected to sell in the market and it was compared with the outstanding debts. The money credited to the cultivator represented the difference between the value attributed to the crop and the debt owed. The calculations were complicated by fluctuations in price throughout the year. The cultivator borrowed seeds at the beginning of the season, when

¹⁰⁸ COMM.R., Sindh, To Govt., Bombay, Aug. 12, 1896, Note A (P.G.D., R.D.L., 1899 July – Dec., Conf. 798-9

¹⁰⁹ CHEESMAN, Op.cit., p.162

¹¹⁰ CHEESMAN, op.cit., p.163

¹¹¹ Ibid. p.164

prices were high and repay at harvest time, when prices were low. The *bania* maintained a record of the prices prevailing at different times. As one can imagine, the arithmetic was extremely confusing, 'even if the *bania* was honest and not taking advantage of the complication.'¹¹² With illiterate clients who were ignorant of business matters, the *banias* usually twisted the record to their own advantage and succeeded in buying produce at excessively low rates.¹¹³ Even if the client were literate, it made little difference because accounts were kept in a specialist *bania* Sindhi script, which was incomprehensible to most non-*banias*.

Hindus occupied an ambiguous place in Sindhi society. Evan James gave an interesting account of the improved circumstances of the Hindus. Sindhi Hindus in the 1870s had an inherent fear of Muslims; they were fearful to ride horses because it might offend the superior community. When James returned to Sindh as Commissioner in the 1890s, he noticed that the Hindus, who two decades earlier had 'never dreamed of riding aught but a camel, now bstride good horses as their former Bloch masters, and never thought of alighting to say salaam to those that pass by.' Idols and religious pictures, he remarked, were now openly displayed in shops and temples, something that would have been unthinkable during his earlier time in Sindh.¹¹⁴

The old order was changing to the advantage of Hindus. Lewis Mountford, the Manager of Encumbered Estates, accused Hindus of deliberately enforcing their power as a community through the civil courts. Most of the subordinate judges were Hindus. Mountford claimed that *banias* took a warped view of reasonable interest charges, tending to be overly sympathetic towards the claims of creditors. In other words, Hindus ran the courts for Hindus.¹¹⁵

When it came to crimes against Hindus, there is little doubt that *Waderas* were unwilling to assist the British authorities to enforce justice. Since British rule depended on the influence of the *Waderas*, matters that reduced their willingness to collaborate were potentially a threat to their rule. The problem was acute in the Hyderabad region.

Evan James warned in the 1890s that good relations between Hindus and Muslims would break down all over the province. This was a result of the improved social position of Hindus and Muslim resentment at the working of the Civil Code.¹¹⁶ In this context the Sindh government tackled the problem of indebtedness. At worst, it seemed that *banias* deprived indebted *Waderas* of their land and therefore, of their power. At best, indebtedness created a bad feeling among *Waderas* and a sense of disenchantment with British rule. The Sindh authorities accordingly devoted themselves to relieving the debts of the Muslim landed magnates, the *jagirdars* and great *zamindars*.

However, the new circumstances enhanced the deep roots of communal harmony. All Sindhis initiated a number of movements against the British during the second and third decades of the 20th century. For instance, the Movement for separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency resulted in Sindh's achievement of provincial autonomy under the last Reforms Act of 1935.

Separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency

¹¹² Settl. Offr. 6 Jan, 1873 (B.N.S. 194), Kotri S.R., 38

¹¹³ Depy. Collr., U.S.F., To Commr, Sindh, July 18, 1904, cited in Cheesman

¹¹⁴ Commr. Sindh, Note, n.d., (B.S.C.) JD, File 1, 1894, vol. II, pt. 1, compn. 23, para 3

¹¹⁵ CHEESMAN, Op.cit., p. 165

¹¹⁶ Commr. Sindh, Note, n.d., (B.S.C.) JD, File 1, 1894, vol. II, pt. 1, compn. 23, para 3

The separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency was one of the major issues in the first few decades of 20th century. Sindh was part of the Bombay Presidency with a large and populous region including Maharashtra and Gujarat and an overwhelmingly Hindu population. However, constituted as a separate province, Sindh had a Muslim population of over 75 percent. Therefore, it was a question of Muslim rights. It was also an important issue for the bureaucracy of the Bombay Presidency and they were unwilling to let go an administrative prize and its related privileges. This debate was conducted on the financial issues. The Bombay officials argued that Sindh would not be financially viable and self-supporting and it would be unable to repay the debt incurred for the construction of Lloyd Barrage at Sukkur, (under construction at that time). This was a strong point with the opponents of separation.

Although in the system of 'Dyarchy' was introduced in the Reforms of 1919, Sindh got a larger representation in the Bombay Legislative Council, its constitutional position remained essentially unchanged. In view of this, Sindh leaders continued their efforts for autonomy. Apart from lobbying the Bombay government, Rais Bhurgri and his friends came to the conclusion that the issue must be brought to all India political forums. All India National Congress was aware of the issue since 1913 and All India Muslim League was asked to play its part.

In December 1925, in its seventeenth session Muslim League passed the resolution that Sindh should be separated from Bombay and constituted into a separate province.¹¹⁷

A number of dramatic political events took place in India at the end of World War 1, including *Jalliamwala Bagh* incident and *Khilafat* and Non-Cooperation Movements. The political atmosphere assumed communal spirit after the failure of Non-cooperation Movement. The *Shudhi Sangathan* Movements started; communal bitterness and strife spread throughout India in 1920s and affected the peaceful, tolerant atmosphere of Sindh. Local branches of *Shudhi* and other movements were organized and sporadic incidents of violence occurred in different places. This rise of communalism affected the demand for the separation of Sindh in a fundamental way. Hitherto, Hindu leaders put their considerable weight behind the demand for separation. Seth Harchandrai Vishindas was a close associate of Rais Ghulam Mohammad Bhurgri and their group was the main protagonists of autonomy.

On 9 March 1924, Rais Ghulam Mohammad Bhurgri died at the age of forty-five. He was one of the most important Hindu leaders; as one of the architects of the Lucknow Pact, he commanded respect both in Congress and Muslim League ranks. His death left a vacuum and time was not favorable for the growth of leadership acceptable equally to both communities. Besides, there was the change in the attitude of Harchandrai Vishindas and he withdrew his support from the separation movement.

Hindus opposed separation because in Bombay Presidency, Hindus were in majority, whereas in separated Sindh they would be a small minority of about 15 percent. The fact remained that they were a mainly urban, educated and wholly affluent community with a monopoly over government service by the *Amil* class and worldwide trading connections of the *bhaiband* class, appeared not to reassure them. The Sindhi Muslims were as backward in Sindh as Muslims were in the rest of India.

¹¹⁷ Khuhro to Iqbal, November 21, 1952, Khuhro papers

At this critical junction, Muslims badly needed new dynamic leadership to champion their cause and to work for autonomy. Fortunately, leadership of men like Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Noor Mohammed Vakil, Abdullah Haroon, M. A. Khuhro, G. M. Sayed, Syed Miran Mohammed Shah, Allahbaksh Soomro and Ali Mohammed Rashdi became available.¹¹⁸ These two generations of leaders made the strong case for the separation of Sindh, both on financial and political grounds. The earlier protagonists brought up the issue on both Congress and Muslim League platforms and the latter leadership took Sindh successfully through the last and crucial stage of the struggle for autonomy between the years 1928 and 1935.

In response to Delhi Muslim proposals of March 1927 advocating the separation of Sindh, the All India Congress Committee met in Bombay to consider among other things, the important questions of Hindu Muslim unity. Pundit Moti Lal put the following resolution before the AICC:

“The proposals that Sindh should be separated from the Bombay Presidency and constituted into a separate province has already been adopted in the constitution of the Congress on the principle of redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis and the committee is of opinion that the proposal may be given effect to.”

Pundit Moti Lal pointed out that the separation of Sindh would not affect the Hindus adversely. On the other hand, distinguished leaders of Sindh expressed their disapproval of Sindh should be tied to the chariot wheel of Bombay. As for the financial commitments of Bombay in Sindh, such projects as the Sukkur Barrage ‘it was only a matter of book entry’ and the Congress was not concerned with it.¹¹⁹

All India Congress accepted and supported the separation movement more than once, not all-Hindu opinion concurred with Pundit Moti Lal on financial as well as communal grounds. Jayakar, the *Mahasabha* leader, insisted that the separation of Sindh be made part of a complete scheme, whereby the entire country would be redistributed on a linguistic basis.

Moreover, the resolution did not propose any comprehensive scheme for the entire nation; it was simply an answer to the Muslim proposals. In spite of all counsels of moderation, the Jayakar amendment on Sindh, Balochistan and NWFP was carried in a slightly changed manner. The amendment read:

“With regards to the proposal that Sindh should be constituted into a separate province, the Committee is of the opinion that the time has arrived for redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis, a principle that has already been adopted by the constitution of the Congress. The Committee is further of the opinion that a beginning may be made by constituting Andhra, Sindh and Karnatak into separate provinces.”

The proceedings of the conference gave a hint of the difficulties that would be encountered in the future negotiations between Hindus and Muslims.

N.C. Kelkar, while presiding over the Annual Session of Hindu *Mahasabha* remarked:

¹¹⁸KHUHRO, Hamida, *Documents on Separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency*, Islamabad 1982, p.xxvii

¹¹⁹ *The Nehru Report*, 1975 edition, p.49

*"The majorities will hold the minorities as hostages and thus prevail tyranny of majority in any province."*¹²⁰

Kelker implanted the idea of holding the minority as hostages in the minds of the people, which later led to severe bitterness.

1928 to 1935 was a period of hectic constitution making in India. This period saw the arrival of Sir John Simon with his British Parliamentary Commission in 1928 to assess the constitutional needs of India. The Indian politicians responded with a variety of proposals including the Delhi Muslim Proposals, the All Parties Conference, the Nehru Report, M. A. Jinnah's Fourteen Points and the Allahabad Muslim League session of 1930.

The struggle for the separation of Sindh intensified, with outpouring of literature, convening of conferences and building public opinion. By the beginning of 1930, the game was back in the hands of the Sindh players. This period was undoubtedly one of the most crucial in the history of the sub-continent of India and shaped the subsequent course of history. A significant result was the achievement of provincial autonomy, the inauguration of fully elected legislatures and fully responsible ministries at the provincial level. The Act of 1935 constituted Sindh into a separate autonomous province. The struggle for autonomy lasted over twenty years and was a brilliant example of unity of purpose and devotion to a cause by the Muslims of Sindh.

Change of Masters

The demand for separation of Sindh was strongly advanced by the All India Muslim League in an attempt to increase Muslim provinces in India. The Sindh Muslims, who expected a larger share of political and economic benefits from a separate province, took up the issue. The scheme was strongly opposed by the Sindhi Hindus. The British government found it practical politics to separate Sindh from Bombay Presidency, mainly because Muslim cooperation was necessary to formulate a sound constitution of India and partly because it was thought the separation of Sindh would minimize further communal strife. Separation of Sindh left the Sindhi Hindus very bitter because their economic and political interests would be at stake in a government dominated by Muslims.

Partition of Sindh did not benefit the ordinary Sindhi, the status of *hari* never changed; there was a change of masters, from Hindu capitalists to Muslim *Waderas*.

Waderas lacked a sense of justice and equity and were mostly illiterate, although they were wealthy and well connected. They treated *haris* like domestic animals, with no privileges or rights as human beings. Such was the condition of the *haris* of Sindh, who formed the bulk of its population and tilled its land. Even to this day, the *haris* of Sindh are no better than serfs and they live in almost primitive conditions without any concept of social, political or economic rights. Their only one interest in life is food, which keeps body and soul

¹²⁰ PERVEZ, Ikram ul Haque, *The Contribution of Sindhi Muslims in Pakistan Movement*, University of Sindh, 1984, p.156

together.¹²¹ They lived in a scattered manner, far from one another, in small hamlets consisting of thatched mud houses. Even the wives and daughters of *baris* were not safe from the *zamindars*.

*“Fear reigned supreme in their lives – fear of imprisonment, fear of losing a child, wife or life. The zamindar could oust him at any time and could take over his crops, his cattle might also be snatched and he might be beaten out of the village, he might suddenly find himself in the shackles of police, under investigation for theft, robbery, murder or, more often, under Section 110 of the Criminal Procedure Code. He was frequently threatened with imprisonment by the zamindar, which he believes could be arranged through official friends. He remembered the fate of other baris who incurred the wrath of the zamindar and were wrongfully locked up in ill-ventilated, congested and suffocating sub-jails for very long periods where they suffered terms of imprisonment under-trial than what they suffered on actual conviction.”*¹²²

The *zamindar* sent for the *bari* for *baigar* (forced labor) for the construction of his house, digging of wells or other minor works. The *bari* would be called to plough and cultivate the private fields of the *zamindar* or to render some domestic service. He dare not refuse and annoy the *zamindar*.

The Masjid Manzilgah Issue, Sukkur

There was a total division of opinion between the Muslims and Hindus on the issue of Partition in Sindh’s administrative set-up and Indian political front, The Muslims were demanding Pakistan while the Hindus wanted a united India, thus supporting Muslim League and Congress respectively. The *Sindh Ittehad Party* (Sindh United Party) was the strongest in Sindh, with Muslims and Hindus membership and was the majority party in Sindh Assembly. Allah Bakhsh’s Premiership depended on its support.

The strategy of the Muslim League High Command was to disintegrate the unity of such provincial political parties, which were based on collaboration between Hindus and Muslims, especially in Muslim majority provinces. Thus, in the case of Sindh, Allah Bakhsh Soomro and his *Sindh Ittehad Party* became their main target. Muslim League needed an opportunity to challenge the Allah Bakhsh government. In 1939, during an agitation caused by the disputed status of a ruined building *Manzilgah* in Sukkur.¹²³ The local leaders of Muslim League G. M. Sayed and Khuhro were quite active against the Hindu community in this movement.

The Sukkur Muslims claimed the building was a mosque and should be restored and returned to the Muslim community. The dispute was essentially a matter between the government and the Muslim community but it assumed a communal aspect when the

¹²¹ Hyder Baksh Jatui, Statement of the Accused, Hyderabad, 1997, p.87

¹²² Minutes of Dissent by Mr. M. Masud Khadderposh

¹²³ Manzilgah building and its mosque and rest house built during Akbar’s reign, was in the government's hands. See for details, SOOMRO, Mohammad Qasim, *Muslim Politics in Sindh 1938-47*, Jamshoro, 1989

Hindus became concerned with its settlement.¹²⁴ The Muslim demand for the *Manzilgah* attracted Hindu interest because of the widely unequal socio-economic levels of the two communities in Sukkur.¹²⁵ The feelings of fear and insecurity aroused during the separation movement days had never entirely left Sindhi Hindus and they viewed the Muslim claim to the *Manzilgah* as a threat to their position of dominance and control. Thus, they opposed the claim and declared that the building should remain under government control.

Earlier deputations and appeals to the government had failed but the Sukkur Muslims' hope was renewed by the government's successful settlement of the *Om Mandli* and *Hanuman Mandir* affairs in May 1939.¹²⁶ Anticipating the determined opposition of the Sukkur Hindus, the Muslims in Sukkur approached the Sindh Muslim League. Finding a universal positive response from the town's various Muslim *anjumans*, Abdullah Haroon publicly declared League support at a meeting in Sukkur on 19 May 1939.¹²⁷

In 1938, the Sindh Provincial Muslim League passed a resolution demanding the government to handover the mosque to the Muslims; the dispute became political and religious. The government's failure to undertake immediate steps for the *Manzilgah's* restoration prompted the League to appoint a restoration committee to put greater pressure on the government. The first meeting of the committee was held on 22 and 23 July.¹²⁸ 18 August 1939 was declared as *Manzilgah Day*. It was also decided that if the Ministry did not accept the Muslim demand, All India Muslim League volunteers would be asked to start *satyagraha*¹²⁹ to have the *Manzilgah* on 1 October.

Abdullah Haroon stayed in Sukkur and led the agitation. When the agitation gained strength, the Sindh Premier ordered Abdullah Haroon to leave Sukkur, and M. A. Khuhro was placed under house arrest. G. M. Sayed arranged a hunger strike at the doorsteps of the Ministers and their supporters.

It was the concern of the provincial Muslim League to get the mosque back. A Restoration Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Abdullah Haroon. This made the Muslim League a mass Muslim movement in Sindh. The Hindu Association of Sukkur, Hindu *Mahasabha* and Hindu *Panchayat* opposed the restoration of *Manzilgah* to Muslims.

In subsequent weeks, the League leadership continued its efforts but the government failed to grant the Muslim demand; it adopted a policy of avoiding the issue and postponing its settlement. Allah Bakhsh felt unable to take a stand because his pre-eminent goal was to stay in office.¹³⁰ Therefore, he could not lose his Hindu supporters.

The inability of the moderates, Haroon and Khuhro, to persuade the government to grant the *Manzilgah* demand, gave ascendancy to the radical wing in the League. In order to retain

¹²⁴ *Causes of Sukkur Disturbances*, Appendix B, pp. 46 ff

¹²⁵ P & J 4889 'Note on the Honourable Home Minister's Tour' by R. M. Maxwell, I.C.S., n.p.

¹²⁶ SAYED, G. M., *Struggle for a new Sindh*, p. 31

¹²⁷ *Weston Report*, p.8

¹²⁸ *Weston Report*, pp. 27 ff

¹²⁹ SOOMRO, Op.cit., p.54

¹³⁰ CHEESMAN, Op.Cit., p.135

their leadership in the League, Haroon and Khuhro were compelled to support the radical method of *satyagraha*, though they hoped to obscure their action by maintaining a public front of issuing appeals and letter writing.¹³¹ The emergence of the radical wing as the dominant group in the party was clearly reflected in the resolution passed at the next meeting of the Restoration Committee on 29 September 1939. The resolution called for the commencement of *satyagraha* within three days unless a settlement was reached.¹³²

Haroon and Khuhro invited Allah Bakhsh to Sukkur in a final effort to persuade the government to concede the Muslims' demand. The chief minister arrived on 1 October, the day *satyagraha* was scheduled to begin and held talks with the League leaders but once again, no agreement was reached.

Satyagrahis and volunteers had streamed into Sukkur for several days at the urging of a local League leader, Wajid Ali and a barrister from nearby Shikarpur, known as 'Dictator'.¹³³ By the second day of *satyagraha*, two thousand people had gathered and on the morning of the third day, the large group pushed past the police and occupied *Manzilgah*. G. M. Sayed stated:

*"My days with the Congress had taught me that once agitation has started, it is extremely insulting and damaging to call it off halfway through. Therefore, I took over the leadership of the movement and had the Masjid Manzilgah taken over by force."*¹³⁴ Thus, for the time being, restoration of the *Manzilgah* was achieved."

The government reaction to the restoration of the *Manzilgah* was shock and embarrassment. Allah Bakhsh was undaunted and adopted an unusual scheme that he hoped would calm the situation; he ordered through the Sukkur District Magistrate that all Muslim *satyagrahis* would be released and police withdrawn.¹³⁵ He took this decision because the jails were full to capacity and there was no food for the prisoners, but in reality he hoped to defuse the situation, reasoning the *satyagrahis* would lose their enthusiasm and disperse if the government demonstrated leniency.¹³⁶ But subsequent events proved Allah Bakhsh had misjudged the situation. The *satyagrahis* did not leave. They were bitterness when they realized the government had no intention of giving up the mosque and became even more determined in their claim.

On the morning of 19 November, G. M. Sayed and the other leaders of the Restoration Committee were arrested in Sukkur. At noon, the police took possession of the *Manzilgah*, expelling the *satyagrahis* with tear gas. After forty-eight days of Muslim occupation, the *Manzilgah* was once again in government hands.

The expulsion of the Muslims from the *Manzilgah* and its reoccupation by the government was followed by a wave of communal disturbance and rioting that began in Sukkur and spread into the surrounding district.¹³⁷ Both communities suffered losses in the riots in terms

¹³¹ *Weston Report*, pp.2829

¹³² CHEESMAN, Op.cit., p.135

¹³³ *Weston Report*, p.28

¹³⁴ SAYED, G. M., *The Case of Sindh*, Karchi, 1995, p.27

¹³⁵ IOR, *Linlithgow Papers*, MSS Eur F 125/96, Graham to Linlithgow, no. 1, January 4, 1940, p.1

¹³⁶ SAYED, G. M., *Struggle for a new Sindh*, p.34

¹³⁷ IOR, *Linlithgow Papers*, MSS Eur F 125/95, Graham to Linlithgow, no. 124, December 22, 1939, p. 163

of property, injuries and loss of life in the town of Sukkur but the Hindus suffered most dramatically in Sukkur District. More Hindus were killed than Muslims.¹³⁸

The combined result of these events was the riots of 1939, which, eventually led to the fall of the Allah Bakhsh Ministry in Sindh. It also afforded an opportunity to the Muslim League to push through the resolution demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims, but at great cost to both the League's image and Sindh's communal peace; results that posed serious questions about the League's ability to govern, should they come to power.¹³⁹

Hindu Muslim Harmony (Aug-Dec. 1947)

Although communal rifts started once again in Sindh, now under the influence of the 1947 Partition, the communal harmony remained undamaged. The province inherited a tradition of religious tolerance from the *Mirs* (the Muslim rulers displaced by the British conquest). Thus, the separation from India engendered a sense of insecurity amongst the Hindus, but there was less general disposition to give way to panic or despair.

"The Sindh Hindu Mahasabha's membership consisted of Hindu zamindars who aligned with the Independent Muslim Party, which consisted of the Muslim landed gentry. Religion obviously played no divisive role here as they joined hands to protect their class interest. This was my first insight into upper class, Hindu-Muslim solidarity."

¹⁴⁰

The long-lasting inter-communal harmony and absence of large-scale violence made the Sindhi experience of Partition different from that of the Punjabis and Bengalis.

*"This lack of violence could be attributed to the overarching Sindhi identity, which transcended Hindu-Muslim differences, a shared language, script and literature, a deep rooted synergetic tradition with shared pirs and saints and even a similarity in food and dress. Added to this was the economic cement in a feudal society where Hindus were well off, owned land and controlled business."*¹⁴¹

In this scenario, the Hindu immigrants to India took Partition as a temporary inter-communal ill will with the apparent intention to return to old houses and old lives. They attributed warmth and co-operation to the Sindhi Muslim neighbours and friends, who escorted many of them to the railway station or the harbour. Almost unanimously the deteriorating situation was ascribed to the *"arrival of Muslims from outside, that is, from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar... Another reason for the relatively smooth transition was that the bulk of them came by the sea route. Of the ones who came by train, only one respondent reported ransacking of luggage by Muslims before they crossed the border. One or two suggested that if Sindhi women experienced sexual violence, it was in the refugee camps in cramped quarters."*¹⁴²

The media and Muslim leaders launched an organized propaganda to shatter the balance of inter-communal harmony. Gopal Das Khosla stated that the Muslim leaders carried a

¹³⁸ CHEESMAN, Op.Cit., p.139

¹³⁹ CHEESMAN, Op.cit., p.140

¹⁴⁰ SUCHITRA, *The Sindhi Experience of Partition*, CSDS Archives, Ahmadabad, p.5

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p.3

¹⁴² Ibid. p.3

ruthless anti-Hindu propaganda. Mr. Ayub Khuhro, during his election campaign for the Sindh Legislative Assembly in 1945-46, said:

*"I am looking forward to the day when the Hindus in Sindh will be so impoverished or economically weakened that their women, even like poor Muslim women today, will be constrained to carry on their heads the midday food to their husbands, brothers and sons toiling in the fields and market places."*¹⁴³

Later, as Minister for Public Works, he declared:

*"Let the Hindus of Sindh leave Sindh and go elsewhere. Let them go while the going is good and possible, else I warn that a time is fast coming when in their flight from Sindh, they may not be able to get a horse, or an ass, or a gari, or any other means of transport."*¹⁴⁴

Khosla adds that Agha Badaruddin Ahmad, M. L. A, Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Legislative Assembly, in a letter, addressed to the Sukkur District Muslim League Conference, said:

*"These Muslims are anxiously and restlessly awaiting to hear the sound of the galloping horses, the rattling of the swords and the sky-rending slogans of 'Allah-o-Akbar' of Muslim crusaders."*¹⁴⁵

According to Khosla, the Muslim Press in Sindh was equally violent. *Dawn* in its issue of 13 September 1947, called upon the Muslim League National Guards to help search the baggage and persons of Hindu passengers, both male and female, migrating to India. The *Hilal-e-Pakistan*, a Sindhi daily of Hyderabad, published a fanatical article on 6 October 1947, called upon the Muslim criminals and hooligans to devote their energies in victimizing Hindus.

"You should neither kill nor rob Muslims. On the contrary, your full strength, valor and weapons should be used to wreak vengeance on those people with whom even today thousands of Muslim women are prisoners. Every Muslim who casts his eye on this article and happens to know any dacoit, thief, and aggressor should carry our request to him and instruct him to convey the exact sense of our appeal to members of his Jamiat. Inform us about your Association or meet us, so that we may give you requisite instructions and directions."

This was published after the Partition and showed the extent of emotions of the Muslim masses. Religious preceptors quickly followed the lead given by the Muslim leaders and the local *zamindars* used this anti-Hindu propaganda as an opportunity for personal greed.¹⁴⁶

The Refugee Issue

The issue of assimilation of refugees presented a totally different situation in Sindh as compared to West Punjab. The refugee influx in West Punjab, except for a tiny minority, consisted of Punjabis. They took very little time to assimilate in their new surroundings as

¹⁴³ Quoted by Parsram V. Tahilramani in *Why the Exodus from Sind?*

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *Alwahid*, Karachi, April 9, 1947

¹⁴⁶ KHOSLA, G.D., *Stern Reckonings*, New Delhi: OUP, 1989, pp. 244-245

they shared the language, customs and culture with the people of West Punjab. *“Even the Urdu-speaking refugees, who chose to make Punjab their home, soon assimilated themselves in their new surroundings, and their next generation become Punjabis.”*¹⁴⁷

In Sindh, the refugees had distinctive characteristics, bringing with them non-Sindhi language, customs and culture. They promulgated Mohajir Nationalism, which soon established bureaucratic, educational and cultural dominance. Contrary to Punjab, the assimilation of refugees in Sindh seemed improbable because of a different language, culture, and system of land ownership.

The government took over administration of Karachi as the Federal capital on 22 May 1948.

*“Brought in a massive influx of Muslim government personnel, largely of aggressive Punjabis, and entailed extensive requisition of Hindu residential and business premises in the metropolis, which was the seat and centre of Hindu economic domination.”*¹⁴⁸

The educated and wealthy “Muslim refugees from all parts of India headed for the capital of Pakistan. Sindh’s commerce, industry, and administrative services was not handicapped by shortage of trained personnel.”¹⁴⁹

The Urdu-speaking refugees captured the most profitable means of production and became the owners of industries, trade and commerce and urban properties. The Punjabi refugees were given ownership on the basis of claims in East Punjab and several purchased land and the civil and military officers were rewarded with large tracts of irrigated agricultural land. The number of Muslims coming in West Punjab from East Punjab exceeded the numbers of non-Muslims who left for India. Eventually, about a million refugees were diverted to Sindh. Top government officials fabricated a sophisticated scheme to render the Sindhis without a homeland and establish a constituency of their own.

One month prior to the Constituent Assembly’s declaration of Karachi as ‘federal area’, the Ministry of Ayub Khuhro was dismissed. Official sources said that he was deeply involved in corruption and misadministration. However, varied accounts existed about these charges; it was said that just before the dismissal, serious differences arose between Khuhro and the Governor of Sindh, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, because the latter had reallocated the portfolios without consulting or informing the former and had presented different view to the highest authorities on the issue of Karachi’s separation from Sindh and was dismissed.

Karachi was separated from Sindh and handed over to the federal government was a great setback to the political and economic infrastructure of Sindh; the benefits of the establishment of new industries did not trickle down the Sindhi people. Even the smallest of policies were formulated by the federal government, which, by that time had begun forming *‘an invisible government.’*¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Extracts from *Proletari*

¹⁴⁸ *The Sindhi Exodus*, p. 355

¹⁴⁹ Salim, Ahmad, *Pakistan aur Aqliattain*, Karachi, 2000

¹⁵⁰ Salim, Ahmad, “The Separation of Karachi from Sindh,” *Pakistan of Jinnah, The Hidden Face*, Lahore: Brother Publishers, 1993, p. 85

G. M. Sayed fought against Karachi's separation from Sindh. Though, he supported the separation of Sindh from Bombay in his early political career in 1937. He joined the Muslim League and became so active that he had the Pakistan Resolution passed in the Sindh Assembly, an act that he repented throughout his life.

By the time Karachi was separated, 25,000 Muslim employees of the Central Government reached Karachi from Delhi and had no place to live. Moreover, 150,000 refugees from East Punjab arrived in different parts of the province and spread communal tension of the worst kind. These refugees had neither a place to live nor any means of employment. The Sindhis were apprehensive and anxious to stop the ever-increasing influx of refugees because it would create a majority of non-Sindhis in the province and the avenues for political, social and economic development of Sindhis would continue to remain closed.¹⁵¹

Immediately after independence, three ministers were toppled within two years. As discussed earlier, on 3 May 1948, Pir Ilahi Bakhsh replaced Ayub Khuhro as Minister. In February 1949, Yusuf Haroon formed a new ministry. The same year, a draft communication was forwarded to the Speaker Sindh Legislative Assembly by G. M. Sayed, leader of the Sindh People's Front Assembly to be submitted as communication from the Assembly under rule 115 to the Governor of Sindh.

G. M. Sayed concluded in his draft communication that the province of Sindh, because of its historical, geographical, economic, linguistic and cultural viewpoint constituted a distinct nationality.¹⁵²

Riot in Hyderabad and Karachi (January, 1948)

The inter-communal harmony in Sindh was contrary to the situation in Punjab because the Hindus had not evacuated. The influx of migrants increased pressure and protest rose from Upper Sindh as the refugee mass moved southward.¹⁵³ Hyderabad was engulfed by communal riots; thirty people were killed and many wounded in the attacks on Hindus and curfew was imposed. The violence was not just materialistic in nature but spontaneous and committed by refugees arriving from Ajmer, India in retaliation for the riots at Ajmer on 6-14 December (believed to be perpetrated by Sindhi Hindu refugees on the local Muslims).

The Chief Minister Khuhro announced during a press conference on 13 November:

"He would associate with Hindu representatives and the administration of Sindh and exchange views with the Congress members of the Provincial Assembly regarding the problems of the minorities." Addressing a dinner gathering in the Karachi Club on 17 November, he said, "I am sure that those who left us did so in a

¹⁵¹ Salim, Ahmad, op.cit., Pakistan aur Aqliattain, p. 136

¹⁵² Salim, Ahmad, "Sindh's Turmoil – A Document that was Ignored," Pakistan of Jinnah, The Hidden Face, Lahore: Brother Publishers, p. 89

¹⁵³ *The Sindhi Exodus*, p. 356

burry and must be feeling the pain of exile and regretting their decision. Therefore, we must do all that we can to get them to come back. If these sons of Sindh would come back, we shall celebrate the occasion."¹⁵⁴

Grandma Leelan and many other Hindu families refused to go to India, although their homes were attacked to force them to migrate. In the words of Dadi Leelan:

*"At that time I had just graduated and was a music teacher in a training college. We were quite happy when Pakistan was created; Muslims had become rulers again after the end of the Mughals. That era was very good for the non-Muslims, particularly for Hindus. Pakistan was our home; the new era would be good for us too. But soon our optimism ended. Every evening, the Muslim refugees stoned our houses and shouted why we had not left and vacated our house for them. We got frightened; my brothers left for India, but my father refused to leave and I decided to stay with him. The armed refugees remain outside our house; they knew I was alone in the house with my old father. I was determined I would not leave. I continued to teach in college and serve my country."*¹⁵⁵

The inter-communal disturbance, which started with the influx of refugees into Sindh, exploded in January 1948. The riots of 6 January were an organized massacre and looting post-Partition Sindh. Much has been said and written about it and the details vary in different accounts but two facts stand out. The attacks came from just one group: the refugees. There was no provocation from the Hindus and *Nanak-Panthis* (called Mona Sikhs, or beardless Sikhs). The second reason for the attacks on non-Muslims was to create panic among the minorities; forcing them to flee from Sindh.

There is some difference of opinion about how the riots started. For instance, Narayan Shahani states that the refugees among the government employees had resorted to a pen-down strike. Eyewitnesses spoke of assault on 6 January on Pakistan Chowk, Karachi. According to them the spirit of goodwill among Hindus and Muslims in Sindh was so strong that many Hindus had themselves circumcised. These attacks absolutely destroyed this atmosphere of amity and understanding and forced the Hindus to consider migration. Apart from the attacks in Hyderabad and Karachi, there were no other reports of communal riots or killings on a large scale elsewhere in Sindh but the violence in the two major cities was sufficient reason to force the Hindus to migrate.

Sobho Gianchandani, a member of the Communist Party of Pakistan was not only a witness to the events of 6 January in Karachi but also actively associated with efforts to restore peace and sanity. He narrated: *"The Mobajirs thought the Sindhi Muslims were not good, and that they (the refugees) would take matters in their own hands and force the Hindus run away."*¹⁵⁶ He stated that even during curfew, 300 people were killed according to government estimates but the community estimated figure stood at 1100. The intention was not just to inflict wounds but to kill.

Sobho Gianchandani added: "On the night of 5 January at 10 p.m. a tailor comrade told some of the trade union workers that in the Mauladino musafirkhana, a meeting was held by desperate mauvis; it was decided

¹⁵⁴ SALIM, Ahmad, op.cit., Pakistan aur Aqliattain, p. 136

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Dadi Leelan at Hyderabad

¹⁵⁶ Interview with, Mr. Sobho Gianchandani, Larkana

that an atmosphere of terror should be created to force the Hindus to leave and vacate their houses. They held the view that Sindhi Muslims were not self-respecting enough to force the Hindus to flee."¹⁵⁷

Narayan Shaham reported "Hindus left Karachi in ships of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company. Sadhu Vaswani arrived in Karachi from Hyderabad said that his father (K.D. Shahani) told him that his departure would prompt all other Hindus to leave as well, but Sadhu Vaswani was determined to leave and also brought along many likeminded Hindu families."¹⁵⁸

In the words of Mohan Kalpana, the eminent Sindhi writer:

*"The immigrants from Bihar looted and killed many people. Stray mobs headed towards Ratan Talao. These riots perpetuated by the non-Sindhis greatly alarm the Hindus. We loaded our belongings on a camel and headed towards the Karachi Port. I wished to turn into a draught of wind and blow over the land, the houses, and the people of Sindh, kissing them, I expected to return. I don't know when this hope died. Now my only wish is to see Sindh."*¹⁵⁹

*Mohan Kalpana wrote a letter to Jay Ram Das: "You ask me to forget Sindh. During your governorship of Bihar, your ancestral ring fell in the pond while boating. On official expense, you drained the pond to retrieve the ring!! What had you lost? Just a ring – we have lost our homeland!"*¹⁶⁰

Hindus were blamed for the turmoil. Maulvi Abdul Haque, known as Baba-e-Urdu (the father of Urdu) misrepresented what actually happened in favour of *Mohajirs*.¹⁶¹

On the evening of 6 January, Muslim mobs carried out an organized looting of Hindu property in Karachi. "Groups of thugs swooped simultaneously on Hindu neighbourhoods. The victims agreed that they were not physical maltreatment but the threatening attitude of the looters was enough to induce terror in the victims."¹⁶²

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was shocked at the turn of events. Addressing a gathering of Muslim refugees on 9 January he said, "I understand the sentiments of the Muslim refugees and all those who have suffered trials and tribulations and sympathise with them but they must control themselves and learn to acquire the ways of a responsible people. They should not take undue advantage of the hospitality extended to them, nor should they ignore the steps taken to improve their plight. Once again, I warn all Muslims against lawless elements and urge them to protect their Hindu neighbours from the *goondas* responsible for the riots. They must create a sense of trust and security among the minorities."¹⁶³

Literary Response

Hundreds of thousand of Sindhi residents were forced to leave their homes because of communal riots. In this political upheaval, Sindhi Hindus suffered because they did not get

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. also interview with Rauchi Ram, Mohammad Ibrahim Joyo

¹⁵⁸ Salim Ahmad, Op cit, p. 139

¹⁵⁹ Farooqi, Musharaf (tr.), Mohan Kalpana, *Excerpts from Ishq*, Bhukh ain Adab.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Haque, Maulvi Abdul, *Taqseem-e-Hind ke Fasadaat aur Anjuman ki Hijrat*, p. 187

¹⁶² *The Sindhi Exodus*, p. 356

¹⁶³ SALIM, op.cit., *Pakistan aur Aqliattain*, p. 139

land compensation when they arrived in India, contrary to Punjab policy. The dreams of Sindhi Muslims, who initiated and strongly pleaded for creation of Pakistan, were shattered immediately after independence. Compared to the incoming Muslim immigrants, the local Muslims lacked education and technology and did not gain in terms of political power and employments in the administrative fields of Pakistan.

Punjab and Bengal retained half of their states but the Sindhi community faced the permanent separation from their homeland; they were deprived of their cultural, historical, geographical and sociological identity and became the subject matter of Sindhi poetry.¹⁶⁴

The 1947 Partition issues remained favourite subject matter for Sindhi writers in India and Pakistan; revolved around the attainment of freedom and the communal holocaust, the migration of Hindus from Sindh, their plight in resettlement camps, and their socio-economic problems of rehabilitation.

Important aspects of fictional writings, pertaining to Partition are: (1) Fond childhood recollections of Sindh (2) Anguish caused by loss of native land (3) Feeling of alienation in the new environments in India (4) Love for Sindhi heritage, culture and way of living (5) Strong efforts for the preservation and development of Sindhi language, literature and culture in India (6) Sympathy for various movements of Sindhi Muslims and (7) Humanitarian outlook and considering Sindhis as a single community.

Remarkably, the Sindhi writers rarely portrayed grim pictures of communal riots and disturbances; instead they have tried to establish communal harmony by portraying inter-communal marriages and good relations among Sindhis residing in India and Pakistan.

In a story entitled *Claim* by Narayan Bharti: an old Sindhi man says, “*I am a Sindhi. The Sindh region belongs to me. I have every right to register a claim for getting it back.*” In another story ‘*Dastavez*’ (The property deed, 1952) he reinforced the issue of Hindu-Muslim harmony and love of the homeland.¹⁶⁵

The Partition proved painful on both sides, to those who left and to those who stayed but felt the pain of separation. Popati Hiranandani bitterly observed: “*While Punjabi Hindus and Bengali Hindus received half of their land, Sindhi Hindus were rendered homeless...*”

During the Indo-Pak war in 1965, the great Pakistani Sindhi poet Sheikh Ayaz faced a dilemma. He wrote about Sindhi poet Narayan Shyam in India:

Oh! This war...

In front of me I see Narayan Shyam!

We share the same hopes

And despairs,

The same speech and its lilt

How can I aim a gun at him?

How can I shoot him down?

That. I should do this

¹⁶⁴ MAKHIJA, Menka Shivdasani, Arjan Shad Mirchandani, (ed.), *Freedom and Fissures*, New Delhi

¹⁶⁵ JETLEY, M.K., *Partition of India as portrayed in Sindhi Literature*, p. 104

Is something not possible?¹⁶⁶

Impact

The absence of large-scale violence made the Sindhi experience of Partition different from that of the Punjabis and Bengalis. The Sindhi Hindus terrorized because of the measures adopted by the Sindhi Muslims wielding political power. This anti-Hindu discrimination was perceived as what the future held for them. Many Hindus sent their families away, at least till the situation was resolved.

With the influx of refugees in Sindh, *Mobajir* Nationalism was promulgated and Sindhi culture and its indigenous people became hostages in the hands of people from Punjab and India. *Mobajir* Nationalism was established as a symbol of bureaucratic, educational and cultural dominance. This initiated a cultural and political discrimination against Sindhis in Pakistan that exists even to this day. However, it would have been a different story, if the Sindhis were united like the people of East Pakistan. Bengalis of all classes and backgrounds were united in their cause. Had the Sindhis united like the Bengalis, the nature and degree of the discrimination and problems that they faced would have change dramatically.

Sindh received a huge a setback when Karachi was separated from Sindh and established as Federal capital on 22 May 1948. Sindh suffered again when Sindh University was shifted from Karachi to Hyderabad; it was moved from the booming industrial centre to the old *chakera* (bull cart) culture. The final nail in the coffin was elimination of Sindhi language from Karachi schools.

The plight of minorities is a chronic issue in Pakistan. Even today, Sindh has a significant Hindu population as compared to other provinces of the country. These people did not leave Sindh at the time of Partition due to economic compulsions; amongst them the urban business class is in a far more miserable condition than the *Bhils*, *Kolis*, etc. of the Thar area. Their misery could be justifiable in terms that Sindhis in general are treated as second-class citizens, and as Sindhi Hindus are treated as third-class citizens. The bitter feelings of Sindhi Muslims towards the pre-Partition *baniyas* add to the communal friction in the province.

In 1955, the One-Unit scheme ignited a wave of fury among the Sindhi population, particularly among the student, intellectual and peasant classes. They staged province-wide agitations and faced merciless resistance by the authorities. The abolition of the provinces under the garb of so-called parity was aimed at capturing the economic and political life of the smaller provinces. Sindh was the most prosperous with enormous promise for the future. During agitation against One-Unit, countless Sindhis were detained and many were prosecuted. Unmoved, the Khuhro leadership implemented the hated scheme on 14 October 1955.

¹⁶⁶ JOTWANI, Motilal, *Of Grass and Roots: An Indianist's Writings*, New Delhi: Sampark Prakashan, pp.204-205

However, One-Unit scheme could not last long. In the wake of the dissolution of One Unit, demands for rectifying the wrongs was intensely demanded by the smaller provinces. One of these demands was the restoration of Sindhi as the provincial language. Sindhi language had this status since 1851, but a series of government actions eroded it after the creation of Pakistan.

The newly elected provincial government of Mumtaz Ali Bhutto moved a bill in Sindh Assembly in July 1972 for the promotion of the Sindhi language, without prejudice to the status of the national language, Urdu. However, “*So much mistrust had already developed between the two communities in the previous two years over this question that leaders of the Urdu-speaking community were not willing to accept anything less than a ‘bi-lingual’ province.*”¹⁶⁷

Riots broke out in the province even before the bill had passed. President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto intervened and the passage of a supplement bill helped cool the passions temporarily, these riots caused irreparable damage to inter-community relations in Sindh and the basis of Pakistan’s unity. July 1972 was the re-enactment of the language controversy scenario of 1952 in East Bengal.

During the Bhutto regime, Sindhis received compensation but the Sindhi writers, intellectuals and political workers were harshly suppressed. Later, for securing political legitimacy, General Zia ul Haq added fuel to the fire in the ethnic violence in Sindh. To this day, Sindh suffers the aftermath of General Zia’s regime.

In the conflict between Sindhis and Urdu-speaking migrants, the latter must accept their new Sindhi identity in letter and in spirit. If the Sindhi middle class fails to recognize the dialectics of the productive forces in society and opposes the development of Urdu as a threat to purity of Sindh, it would essentially be working for feudal restoration in Sindh. The trend of Sindhi nationalism, like that of any other nationalism, is class collaborationist; it speaks against the injustices meted out to Sindhis as a whole and conveniently overlooks the injustices and humiliation meted out to Sindhi peasants.

As regards resolving the fate of *Mohajir* separatism, MQM (*Mohajir Qaumi Movement*) had its susceptibilities, which called for the ability of the state to manipulate the political process, the attitude of other ethnic groups towards *Mohajir* nationalism and, above all, the capacity of the *Mohajir* community to shun its sense of self-righteousness. However, the situation is improving. *Mohajir Qaumi Movement* changed its name to *Muthida Qaumi Movement*. It is too early to denounce it as ‘*just a change in name,*’ time will show if the organization demonstrates a shift from self-righteousness. *Muthida* has recognized the reality of Sindh and is facilitating integration and seriously views with respect and acknowledges the historical rights of the Sindhis.

Case Study 4

¹⁶⁷ AHMAD, Feroz, “The Language Question in Sindh,” *Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan*, Vanguard, 1992, p. 139

Partition, Migration in Balochistan

Historical Background

After conducting a detailed study of the situation emerged in the wake of Partition in Punjab, Sindh and North West Frontier province, this chapter deals with the state of affairs in Balochistan. Exploring the historical evidences based on the oral accounts and available facts, it is revealed that the situation in the Balochistan with reference to the violence and atrocities is quite different from the other provinces.

Except for a few incidents of violence in Quetta and Pishin, the overall situation in Balochistan area remained calm and peaceful. During Partition, there was complete communal harmony in tribal Balochistan. With the departure of British imperial power, status of the state faced challenges of forced accession with the state of Pakistan. Centuries old freedom and self-rule of the Baloch tribes encountered the challenge; the dignity and sovereignty of the Baloch tribe had gone astray. Baloch never warmed up to the ideals of Pakistan, pre and post Partition. The Baloch *Sardars* were more interested in their own tribal freedom rather than becoming a part of overall Pakistani structure¹⁶⁸.

Balochistan had Muslim majority, the number of non-Muslim community was low as compared to Sindh, Punjab and North West Frontier Province. Therefore, non-Muslim community of the area faced no real danger; they were part of the centuries old Baloch tribal system. The situation in the Pashtun settled areas of Balochistan, however, were different.

Balochistan had a strategic position for Britain; it secured the buffer status of Afghanistan and Iran vis-à-vis Russia and also secured communication links with Middle East and Europe. After the *Khanate of Kalat* declined involvement in foreign aggression against Afghanistan, occupation of Baloch State became necessary for Britain to safeguard the supply line for British invading army in Afghanistan. A British detachment attacked Kalat on 13 November 1839¹⁶⁹. The *Khan*, Mir Mehrab Khan was killed in the battle and a new Khan was appointed as nominal ruler of Baloch State with a British representative as the supreme authority.

From 1839 onward, the British gradually consolidated their power in Balochistan through a series of wars and treaties imposed on Kalat State. These treaties gave the British the rights of safe passage through Kalat (1839), the right to stationing of troops (1854), the right to extend Indo-European telegraph line through Baloch Coast (1863) and various other agreements giving Britain some major economic and territorial concessions. The northern area of Balochistan, including Bolan Pass was leased to Britain, which was later named as British Balochistan.

¹⁶⁸ Mir Gul Khan Naseer, *Balochistan – Qadeem Aur Jadeed Tareekh Ki Raushni Main*, Quetta, 1982, pp. 329-321

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*

An important and consequential treaty was signed in 1876 between the *Khan*, the tribal chiefs and British authorities in Delhi. Under the agreement, the *Khan's* authority was accepted over the region but the British, in accordance with local customs would administer it.

The British occupation of Kalat was perhaps the greatest event in Baloch history. It weakened the authority of the *Khan*, broke up the traditional system of governance, giving extraordinary clouts to tribal chiefs and nominated council, with vast jurisdictional power, which was unprecedented in Baloch annals. During the period of the British Raj, there were four Princely States in Balochistan: Makran, Kharan, Lasbela and Kalat, the largest and the most powerful. During the first few decades of the 20th century, it became clear that the British would eventually leave and that India would be partitioned.¹⁷⁰

Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, who wanted independence rather than possible Pakistani rule, ruled Kalat. The British had given many Princely States, the choice of India, Pakistan or independence during the immediate pre-Partition period. When India and the newly created Pakistan gained independence in August 1947, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan declared Kalat's independence.

In April 1948, the Pakistani army launched an operation and Mir Ahmed Yar Khan signed an accession agreement, ending Kalat's de facto independence but his brother, Prince Abdul Karim, decided to carry on the struggle. He based himself in Afghanistan he conducted a guerrilla war against the Pakistani army, which eventually failed. Parts of Balochistan were held by Oman as late as the 1950s, but were eventually turned over to Pakistan; including the coastal city of Gwadar. On 11 August 1947, the British protectorate of Balochistan declared its independence. Three days later, Pakistan also became an independent nation. The two states coexisted for less than a year.¹⁷¹

In August, less than ten days before the Partition, the Viceroy of India, Lord Louis Mountbatten, notified the *Khan of Kalat* that only two "princely states," out of the more than seven hundred in India at the time, would gain full independence following Britain's withdrawal, namely Nepal and Kalat. (Burma had already gained its independence in 1937.) On 11 August 1947, the *Khan of Kalat* declared independence. Shortly thereafter, the *Khan* formed a government in Kalat with two houses of parliament, one made up with elected representatives and the other with *Sardars*. Internal divisions continued to haunt Balochistan. By 1948, three chunks of territory, traditionally under the sway of the *Khan of Kalat*, including the Makran coastal region, acceded to Pakistan.¹⁷²

In March 1948, Pakistan invaded and seized Balochistan. Under threat of imprisonment, the traditional Baloch leader, the *Khan of Kalat*, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, was pressured to sign a treaty of integration. This treaty was, however, never agreed by the Balochistan parliament and never mandated by the Baloch people.

¹⁷⁰ *Shaheen Sardar Ali and Javaid Rehman, Indigenous people and Ethnic Minorities of Pakistan, Routledge, 2001pp, 58-63*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*

¹⁷² 'New Status for Kalat', New York Times, August 11, 1947,

The Hindu and Sikh Population of Balochistan

The Hindu community in Balochistan enjoyed a prosperous life in the province. The Hindus of Kalat, Mastung, Machh and Kolpur discovered that the Baloch and Brahui tribes provided them employment. Hindus were visible in Baloch areas but scarce in the Pashtun areas; in 1941, most of the 54,000 Hindus of Balochistan lived in the Pashtun areas. After 1947, the Hindus in the Pashtun areas declined by 93 percent but only by 11 percent in the Baloch areas. They faced serious problems in the Pashtun areas, while in the other parts their life, the Baloch Muslim tribes equally protected social structure¹⁷³.

Peace and harmony among the non-Muslims and Muslims was affected and they were forced to leave their homeland. Hundreds of Hindus were forced to flee their homes and cross over to Sindh and to the Indian side. Three Hindus were reported killed in the town of Chaman, after clashes between Hindus and Muslim mobs in October; Hindu temples, homes and shops were set ablaze and destroyed. Growing social intolerance assumed alarming new proportions in the Quetta and Peshin districts of Balochistan. In all cases, local extremist groups played a role in triggering the attacks.

The Attack on Baloch Identity

On 15 August 1947, twenty-four hours after Pakistan came into being, the *Khan of Kalat* issued a Royal Charter, declaring the independence of the State of Kalat. The exponents of the two-nation theory claim that constitutionally, the *Khan's* proclamation “had no legal authority and was treated as such by the Government of Pakistan.”

On the contrary, it is argued by Baloch nationalist forces that Kalat was not an Indian State. The legal status of Nepal and Kalat, as mentioned earlier was different from that of other princely states in the Indian sub-continent. While the other native states dealt with the British Indian Government in New Delhi, Nepal and Kalat maintained their treaty relations directly with London. Baloch nationalists argued that the 1876 Treaty, which permitted the British to occupy Balochistan, pledged that the British ‘would respect the sovereignty and independence of Kalat’¹⁷⁴. More interestingly, Quaid-I-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, as a legal advisor to the *Khan* during 1936-47, supported an independent Balochistan.

As mentioned earlier, the British first stormed Kalat in the 1830s; they needed to cross the Bolan Pass to invade Afghanistan. In 1855, Kalat signed its first twenty-year treaty with Britain; British political agents were assigned to the *Khan* and an annual rent was paid in exchange of loyalty.

In the 1930s, a conscious Baloch nationalist movement arose. The *Anjuman-i-Ittehad-i-Balochistan* and Kalat State National Party (KSNP) came into being¹⁷⁵. KSNP was dedicated to the goal of an independent, unified Balochistan following the departure of the British. Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, the

¹⁷³, *Shaheen Sardar Ali* Op,cit, pp. 5-59

¹⁷⁴ Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, *Tareekh-i- Kaum Baloch Wa Khawaneen-e-Baloch*, Quetta, n.d. pp. 225-226

¹⁷⁵ Mir Ghulam Naseer, *Balochistan – Qadeem Aur Jadeed Tareekh Ki Raushni Main*, Quetta, 1982, p. 321

new *Khan of Kalat* also expressed the same view. KSNP, however, was banned, as it indirectly threatened the autocratic powers of the *Khanate of Kanat*, and more directly, the powers of the *Sardars*.

In 1936, the *Khan* met Quaid-e-Azam, who agreed to become the legal advisor to the *Khanate of Kalat*. When the cabinet mission visited India, the *Khan* consulted the Quaid on the constitutional aspects of the future of Kalat. The Quaid set up a panel of eminent lawyers. Their memorandum was handed over to the Quaid, who forwarded it to the cabinet mission with his recommendations. According to the document, Kalat was an independent and sovereign state.

During the cabinet mission's visit to India, the KSNP's President Ghaus Bakhs Bizenjo and the Watan Party's President Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai went to Delhi and met the Congress President Maulana Abu-ul-Kalam Azad.

According to Inayatullah Baloch, Mr. Bizenjo explained to Maulana Azad that Kalat and Balochistan were never a part of India. It had its own independent status, governed by the Baloch-British Treaty of 1876. Maulana Azad responded: "Yes, I have gone through the British-Baloch Treaty. I know, Balochistan has never been part of India, but the Baloch people cannot survive as a sovereign, independent state; therefore, you will ask for British protection and if the British agree and remain in Balochistan, the sovereignty of the sub-continent would become meaningless. So, I hope that you (the Baloch People) will not insist on compromising the sovereignty of the 40 crore people of the Indian sub-continent."

Azad's point of view, however, was rejected by KSNP including the Hindu representatives, in accordance with Baloch national inspirations.

Regarding the future of Kalat, a Round Table Conference was held on 4 August 1947, attended by the *Khan of Kalat*, Lord Mountbatten, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, Sir Sultan Ahmad and the Chief Minister of Kalat. The Conference was concluded with the main point that "Kalat State will be independent on 5th August 1947 and enjoy the same status as originally held in 1838".

In the light of this decision, an agreement between Kalat and Pakistan was concluded on 11 August 1947.¹⁷⁶ Its very first clause declared: "The government of Pakistan agree that Kalat is an independent state."

This was the state of affairs when the *Khan* announced independence on 12 August 1947.¹⁷⁷ A written constitution was promulgated within a week. A council of ministers was composed and the constitution provided for a bicameral legislative body. Elections were held and the nationalist forces dominated, even though the KSNP was officially banned. It took 39 seats of the 50 seats in the House. It is noteworthy that the Hindu population of Balochistan also supported the Baloch rights of sovereignty.

Pakistan reacted severely to these actions. In September 1947, as Dr. Inayatullah Baloch noted that Pakistan changed its policy and demanded accession from the *Khan*. The changing policies of Jinnah and Pakistan were the results of the conflicts and interests of the two major political parties of India, the All India Congress Party and the All India Muslim League.

¹⁷⁶ Ghulam Naseer, Taareekh – e- Balochistan, 3rd Edition, Quetta, 1993, p. 487

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 488

Jinnah and the Muslim League favoured an independent Balochistan in order to get money from the *Khan* for the Pakistan movement. He also regarded Balochistan as his last resort, in case of the failure of the demand for Pakistan. The *Khan of Kalat* stated that a secret plan was arranged with the Quaid and Chudhary Khaliqzaman, that if the demand for the creation of Pakistan was refused, an independent sovereign Balochistan would help Indian Muslim in their armed struggle for Pakistan.

Suspicious arose over Pakistan's designs during the two sessions of the Kalat Assembly in September and December 1947. Attacking the Two-Nation Theory in the Lower House on 14 December, Bizenjo said: "*They say that we, the Baloch cannot defend ourselves. Well, are Afghanistan, Iran, and even Pakistan capable of defending themselves against super powers? They say we must join Pakistan for economic reasons. Yet, we have minerals, we have petroleum and we have ports. The question is what would Pakistan survive without us? If Pakistan forces us to accept this fate, every Baloch will fight for his freedom*"¹⁷⁸.

Kalat's Parliament's decision was sent to Pakistan. On 2 February 1948, Quaid-e-Azam wrote to the *Khan* and repeated his demand. The members of the two Houses once more assembled on 21 February and Bizenjo stated that they had all come to the categorical decision that they would not accept accession to Pakistan under any circumstances.

On 18 March, the Government of Pakistan announced the accession of Makran and Lasbela was accepted. With the accession of these areas, Kalat lost half of its territory and its connection with Iran and Afghanistan.¹⁷⁹

The situation worsened quickly. On 27 March, All Radio India announced that the *Khan* had approached the Government of India for accession but it was turned down. The *Khan* immediately denied the charge and protested to Mountbatten in a telegram on the same day.¹⁸⁰

Mountbatten called V. P. Menon to discuss the protest. He stated: "Regarding Kalat, Mr. Jinnah recognized the independence of the State. Later, it was realized that Kalat must accede to Pakistan. The State was not responsive to pressure, steps were taken to disrupt it by accepting the accession of its suzerains."¹⁸¹

The *Khan*, however, surrender when the Pakistan Army ordered General Akbar, Garrison Commander based in Quetta, to move into Kalat and arrest the *Khan* unless he signed an agreement to accession. Contrary to the great tradition of resistance of his ancestors, the *Khan* saw the "wisdom" of declaring 'accession' without the approval of the Parliament.¹⁸²

A political agent was appointed to control the administration of the *Khanate*. The *Khan* accepted the new development unwillingly and commented on Jinnah's decision:

*"Thus my legal authority as the Khan-e-Azam came to an end on 15 April 1948. My connection with the affairs of Kalat were cut off and within 20 hours of the orders issued to me, several minister of the Kalat Government were exiled or arrested"*¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 497-498

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 509

¹⁸⁰ Innayatullah Baloch, *The Problem of Greater Balochistan – A study of Baloch Nationalism*, Stuttgart, 1987, p. 188

¹⁸¹ Ibid

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 189

¹⁸³ Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 164

The *Khan* signed the death warrant of three hundred year-old Baloch Confederacy because he believed in two conflicting ideologies: Baloch Nationalism and the two-nation theory, simultaneously.

Sardar Khan Baloch's conclusion cannot be ignored, that Ahmad Yar, *the last Khan*, buried all the glory of his lineage. The military intervention of the Pakistan army in Balochistan inaugurated a process of forced integration.

Partition / Minorities in Balochistan

After the official declaration of the accession of Balochistan to Pakistan, there were assumptions that the situation of minorities might be cause for concern. Reports in newspapers suggested that the overall situation of Hindu and Sikh communities in the Quetta, Sibi and other districts was under control. However, in Quetta and other Pashtun areas, the riots erupted but were soon controlled.

Pakistan Times reported:

*“Riot broke out in Quetta on Wednesday night, following a quarrel between Pathans and other Muslims. The quarrel developed into riots, followed by widespread arson and loot. Litten Road, Rambarah and Babu Mohallah localities were the worst affected areas. Three cinema houses were set on fire and gutted. The total causality was estimated as 50 killed and several injured. Two aircraft are chartered to evacuate members of the minority community. Meanwhile, the District Magistrate, Sukkur told members of the Peace Board that steps were taken to meet any emergency and prevent any disorder in the Town.”*¹⁸⁴

With regard to the protection of the minorities and preventing any mishap in the Quetta and other districts of the Kalat State, cross border diplomatic efforts were made. During the month of August, the government and other bodies, such as Peace Boards and other government machinery was active and aware of the situational threat faced by the minorities. On 30th August, Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India attended a meeting of the Joint Defence Council at Lahore discussed the issue of refugees in Quetta with Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan. Pundit Nehru, in a telegram to Dr. Choithram Gidwani, President of the Sindh Provincial Congress Committee stated that all facilities should be granted to the refugees and to assist the evacuees.¹⁸⁵

L. R. Chawla was 25 years old Hindu and found himself living on the wrong side of the arbitrary line drawn by Sir Cyril Radcliffe to demarcate the new Muslim State of Pakistan. Born in Sibi to a family of civil servants, the city of Quetta was his home until the situation changed abruptly for millions of people in 1947 after Partition.

India's freedom celebrations from colonial rule were short-lived as communal tensions turned the new border region into a killing field. Mr Chawla's thoughts turned to his mother, three sisters and three brothers still in Quetta. At that time, he was Chairman of a construction firm in Bombay. He related, *“In Quetta, there were hardly any communal feelings and*

¹⁸⁴ Quetta Situation Under Control, *Pakistan Times*, 23 August, 1947

¹⁸⁵ The Pakistan Times, 31st August 1947

*there was good understanding between the communities. A Pashtun contractor called Jumma Khan took my mother to his village because the situation was getting disconcerting.*¹⁸⁶

Quetta Riots

With the creation of Pakistan and India, evacuation of the Hindus and Sikhs started. On the other side of the border, murder, arson, rape and looting of Muslims started. In Pakistan, the Muslims in Sindh, Balochistan and the State of Kalat, Mekran, Lasbela and Khairpur remained calm. Incidents of killing and looting were reported from Quetta and parts of the province. Maj. General Akbar Khan stated:

“Riots erupted across Quetta. To counter this turmoil, I was sent to Quetta, there were no regular Muslim troops except the recruits and the training staff of the Baloch Training Center. Indian Armored Division, comprising Hindus and Sikhs opposed us. I went to see the senior Indian Commissioned Officer and we chalked out a plan:

- 1. All ranks of the Indian Armored Division should be confined to the Barracks*
- 2. All commissioned officers should help the Baloch Center Troops and Zhob militia to put an end to rioting. The Indian troops would not carry any arms except sticks*
- 3. The Indian Armored Division would provide transport to evacuate all non-Muslims to the refugee camp at the Combined Military Hospital. Big tents were erected to provide extra accommodation.*
- 4. The care of non-Muslim refugees inside the camps would be the responsibility of the Indian Division. The protection of the entire camp perimeter would be the responsibility of the Muslim troops.*¹⁸⁷

With a complete plan of action, the evacuation of the non-Muslims started. The Government of Pakistan ordered several special trains to transport the non-Muslims successfully and peacefully crossed the border.

Major General Akbar Khan and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, the Minister of Communication visited Quetta during the riots, commented:

*“Quetta was peaceful and normal. Firearms were not used at all during the trouble and casualties were estimated at 100 killed and 50 to 60 wounded. No women or children were molested or killed and there was no dislocation of telegraphs or telephone wires. Fire broke out in Babu Mohallah and Gawal Mandi on 20 August, and shops were burnt. Troops were called and within three hours, the situation in Quetta was under control. Free milk and free rations was distributed in refugee camps and a majority returned to their homes by the morning.”*¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article2271179.ece>

¹⁸⁷ Reminiscences of a Soldier, Dawn, Sunday, August, 14, 1960

¹⁸⁸ Pakistan Times, August 26, 1947

Balochistan: The Oral Accounts of Partition

The socio-religious interplay of the minorities in Balochistan was totally different from the other provinces; there were some similarities between the minorities of the Balochistan and Sindh. The common sentiment was their unwillingness to leave the Pakistan and especially Balochistan during Partition riots.¹⁸⁹

The non-Muslims reluctantly accepted evacuating their homes where they lived for generations. The non-Muslim community of Balochistan never wanted to leave this country, but when the situation became unfavourable, they had no choice but to leave the country. Those who could not afford to move opted to stay.¹⁹⁰

“Balochistan cannot be considered as a unit for the study of migration. The nature of their relationship with the majority (Muslims) differed in many ways. For instance, Baloch of Balochistan had a secular mind-set. While the Pathans of Balochistan were different, their mindset tilted towards the religion. The two communities, Pathans and Hazaras had fanatical and extremist qualities. When the riots broke out in Pashtun dominated areas like, Pishin, Gulistan, Zhob, the Hindus were forced to run away. In Baloch dominated areas like Bolan, migration did not occur. The Baloch and Hindu community lived together in peace.”¹⁹¹

Hindus and Sikhs contributed in the social and economic sectors of Balochistan; majority of the non-Muslim community had deep roots in economic activity of the area. Before and after Partition, their significant role in different professions like, business, trade, labour and farming cannot be ignored. Majority of the Hindu community had acquired higher education and were in the medical and engineering professions. Their contribution in the field of art, literature and academia was significant.

The local non-Muslim community have revealed heart-rending tragedies of nationally contrived divisions and borders. Partition cast a dark shadow over many aspects of state and society. Yet, the literature on this major event is inadequate, impressionistic and lacking in scholarly rigour; the stories of the heroic efforts of the people who saved the lives of migrants are ignored to a large extent. During Partition, the non-Muslims migrating to India encountered many eye-opening incidents. Migrants journeyed through a valley of destruction, leaving behind their homes; they had never thought they would leave.

“Muslims and Hindus have lived this region for hundreds of years. They had friendly relations with each other and shared each other’s times of troubles and happiness. The riots started suddenly. Our elders told me that friendly neighbors became enemies overnight. When the riots started in Quetta, many Hindus had to flee. We did not leave because we belonged to Baloch families; our ancestors came from Sindh to this area. We live by the tribal system; tribal heads respected us, gave us land and helped us in many ways. Baloch Sardars were Muslims, but they never consider us as outsiders. Their support and friendly behavior made us a part of this land.”¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Seneator Sanaullah Baloch, Mazloom Balochistan, (*Innocent Balochistan*), Balochistan Institute for Future Development, January, 2002, pp. 39-41

¹⁹⁰ Dr. Shiyam Lal and Dr. Mohan Kumar, Quetta

¹⁹¹ Ibid

¹⁹² Chandar Calran, Quetta

It was a time of severe trouble and grief; the heads of the tribes helped the non-Muslims and ensured their security and safety. During Partition, non-Muslim population in Quetta and its adjacent area was over twenty-five thousands, which dropped considerably after the eruption of riots.¹⁹³

Along with the contribution of the Muslims, the role of Christian community in the area was also of very significant. The local Christian community protected and saved many Hindus and Sikhs.

Abdullah Jan Jamaldini narrated his memories of Partition and described the situation in Noshki. According to him, Muslim League members arrived from Punjab and instigated the riots against the Hindus. Many Hindu and Sikh families lived a happy life in Noshki and had a semi-nomad life before Partition. The local elders resolved to protect the lives of the non-Muslims of the area.¹⁹⁴

Abdullah Jan Jamaldini further stated:

“There were many Hindus in our village and shared with us moments of sorrow, grief and happiness. My mother had friendly relations with Hindu women; I had many Hindu friends, Ganga Ram, Narain Das and Nigbraj. We visited each other’s house. Very few Hindus migrated to India from Balochistan and those who left, still remember their motherland.”¹⁹⁵

Balochistan’s societal structure was secular even though language, culture and customs between the Hindus and Muslims were different.

The Baloch tribes saved the lives of many Hindus. Balochi poetry and literature include many such stories. The story of a soldier from the Baloch Regiment, who was appointed to provide security to the *caravan* (convoy), is very significant. Some miscreants near Khanewal, attacked the train carrying non-Muslims and two men died. The Captain of the Baloch Regiment opened fire on the miscreants; some were killed, and the rest ran away. The people asked him why he killed his own Muslim brothers. He replied, “We are given the responsibility to guard this Caravan. My Quran does not allow me to let people die who are under my protection. It is our duty to take them to their destination safely”¹⁹⁶.

Amid jubilation of Independence, the extent of the ensuing carnage and tragedy was not fully visualized; even those who feared Hindu, Muslim and Sikh reprisals for earlier violence were unprepared for the ferocity unleashed. Motives varied from region to region and within communities in the same region. Individuals in the other parts of Pakistan instigated violence due to fear, retaliation and financial opportunism, while the situation in Balochistan was totally different. Statistics show that the mass killings, which constituted ethnic cleansing, was comparatively very low in Balochistan.

¹⁹³ Ibid

¹⁹⁴ Abdullah Jan Jamaldini, Noushki

¹⁹⁵ Ibid

¹⁹⁶ Ajit Rai, Amritsar

“We heard about fighting in the various parts of the province and we couldn’t understand it; it was a shock, we had lived together so many years. We got along very well with all community members. We didn’t have any problems. We were one community.”¹⁹⁷.

Hindus in Lasbela were forced to leave their homes. In almost all cases, the increased activism by militant religious groups imposed new strains on relations between the Muslim and the Hindu communities. The efforts to forcibly convert the Hindus, especially female school students, played a direct role in violence against Hindu settlements. During Partition, almost 95% Hindus were swept out from the Pashtun belt but they were given protection in the Baloch belt. Many Hindus in Pishkeen, Zhob converted to Islam.¹⁹⁸

There are seven Hindu temples in Kalat. From centuries, the lives and properties of the Hindus were safe and people had freedom to exercising their religions.¹⁹⁹

There were several Hindu doctors in various parts of Balochistan. Hindu merchants controlled the wholesale trade of the area. In 1992, after the Babri Mosque incident in India, the Pashtun community attacked the Hindus. The police in Balochistan do not keep a record of violence against the minorities and is barred from operating outside the province’s major cities.²⁰⁰

“At the time of Partition, when sectarian riots ravaged the subcontinent, the Hindu population of Balochistan remained unharmed, mainly due to two factors. First, in the native/princely Balochistan, majority of the Hindus lived under the protection of Khan of Kalat, the chief ruler of Kalat State, Yar Mohammad Khan, who respected the Hindu community. He assured them of economic and religious freedom. Second, there was reciprocity of mutual relationship between Muslims and Hindu. Prosperity in business encouraged them to abandon the idea of migrating to India. They lived in Quetta, Kalat, Sibi, Mastung, Dabdar, Dukki, Dalbandin, Chaman, and Gandawa.

Gandawa, a tiny town and headquarter of Jhall-Magsi district, has the fifth largest Hindu temple in the subcontinent. Hindus dwell in their own little colonies, usually not away from their temples. They belong to the business class, without major interest in education and government offices. Some of them are wealthy merchants, owners of large jewellery and general stores, but the majority are middle and lower middle class businessmen, with shops/stores in the bazaars of various towns.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ An interview with Chandar Calran, Quetta

¹⁹⁸ Basant Lal Gulshan- MPA, Quetta

¹⁹⁹ Babu Lal Mach

²⁰⁰ Ibid

²⁰¹ Basant Lal, Op.Cit, p.2

Religious minorities in Pakistan have always been positive in their approach towards serving the society even before Pakistan came into existence. Various accounts of minorities' generosity and support are available but have never been documented.²⁰²

*"The Hindu and Sikh families stayed in our village after 1947, they didn't have any connections in India. We all went to the same school and spoke the same language. We were not affected by the Partition because the bond of communal harmony among Muslims and non-Muslims was very strong."*²⁰³

The situation in the Baloch areas was normal. Incidents of violence occurred in the Pashtun areas. In August 1947, violence erupted in Quetta and lasted for a very short time. Hindus of Pishin and Noshki suffered the blow and bloodshed of migration; but their lives were protected and safeguarded by the adjacent districts. Balochi tribes provided shelter to the Hindus of Noshki and Pishin.

*"During Partition time, the Baloch community took the responsibility of protecting the Hindu community from attacks and hostility. In this regard, many Muslims from the various parts of Balochistan took the affected Hindus to their homes and provided them basic necessities. They were guarded by armed men and given shelter in the center of the village. People were appointed to protect them from any unforeseen attacks."*²⁰⁴

In this regard, Mr. Wahid stated:

*In Noshki, the Muslims escorted the Hindu businessmen to their shops, while the local Muslim community members protected their families in the towns and villages. It is a Baloch tradition that the poor and weakest should be protected without any discrimination of religious, political or social affiliations. Once the shelter is granted, they cannot be harmed or hurt."*²⁰⁵

Operation against Bugti and Plight of Hindu Community

A military operation was launched against civilians and progressive elements of Balochistan. On 18 December 2005, Pakistan Army started a full-fledged operation in Balochistan, particularly in districts Kohlu and Dera Bugti. Force was used against the villagers to compel them to vacate their homes. Pakistan Air Force fighter jets, Army gunship helicopters and heavy artillery were used against the unarmed innocents and nomads of these areas. More than one hundred deaths were reported, which include women and children.

On 17 March 2005, the Pakistani army launched a military operation against the Balochs of Dera Bugti. The residence of Nawab Akber Khan Bugti was targeted. More than 70 Hindu Baloch children and women were killed.

²⁰² An Interview with, Saifuddin Bohra Quetta, and Interview with Abdullah Jan Jamaldini, Noshki

²⁰³ An Interview with Dr. Aseer Abdul Qadir Shahwani, Mastung

²⁰⁴ Interview with Wahid Bandheek, Balochistan

²⁰⁵ Ibid

After the post-Partition anti-Hindu massacres, Balochistan and Sindh were the only provinces with Hindu population over a million. The Baloch nationalists looked upon them as their ethnic brothers and sisters and protected them.

In the early 1970s, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto looked upon these Hindus as security threats and started forcing them to leave Balochistan. Successive governments followed the same policy. President Musharraf started a champagne to force the remaining Hindus, whose numbers had considerably dwindled, to move to Sindh. The Baloch Sardars took these Hindus under their protection and resisted Musharraf's attempts to re-settle them outside Balochistan. Nearly 250 Hindu Balochs were under the protection of the Bugtis. Similarly, there were small clusters of Hindus under the protection of the Marris and the Mengals. All the Hindu Balochs were pressurized to leave Balochistan. Since Musharraf's military operation on 18 December 2005, the number of Hindu Balochs living in the Bugti area has fallen from 250 to two, according to the Balochistan Chapter of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan,²⁰⁶”

The Baloch culture, traditions and tribal system is unique and different from other systems. It is called the tribal system. There are some misperceptions about this system and many people regard it as *Sardari* system. This system is centuries old and safeguards not only the Baloch Muslim tribes but also guarantees peace and harmony for the non-Muslims. The Hindus in the community have historical link and association with the tribal system; they adopted it and moulded their lifestyle according to its principles.

“The system is based on purely human values, without any religious discrimination. Hindus are associated with our culture and tradition; they are respected on equal terms. Hindu families living in Shahwani, or Kharan tribe are considered as Shahwani, Makrani, or Kharani.”²⁰⁷

Minor incidents of violence against Hindus occur in urban areas but the Hindus in rural areas are protected, where they blend in the tribal system. They fought along side Muslims against the aggressors. Many Hindus sacrificed their lives for the cause during the attack against the Khan of Kalat. An attack on Baloch tribe is considered as attack on the Hindus. During the March 2005 attack on Bugti, many Hindus gave their lives for their fellow tribesmen.

This fact is elaborated by Dr. Syed Faiz Hashmi and endorsed by Wahid Bandheek:

“The hallmark of the communal harmony and unity of the Muslims and non-Muslims of Balochistan can be measured with tradition, a Hindu living in Marri is called a Marri and those settled in Bugti area consider themselves as Bugti's. This is evidence of the unique nature of communal harmony among the Hindus and Muslims of Balochistan. Balochistan is the only province that recognizes the Hindus as equals by the local tribes.”²⁰⁸

The situation in Mustang area is unique from the other parts of Balochistan because not a single causality was reported during the Partition. Another important factor in Balochistan is that Hindus had lived here for centuries but when the situation changed during Partition, the

²⁰⁶ Ahmed, Khaled, Plight of Hindus in Sindh and Balochistan, Friday Times, May 14-20, 2004

²⁰⁷ An interview with Dr. Aseer Abdul Qadir Shahwani, Mastung

²⁰⁸ Interview with Dr. Syed Faiz Hashmi, Mastung, and Wahid Bandheek

Hindu Baloch were not harmed or driven away. This is the hallmark of Baloch tradition, which emphasises humanism rather than ideological or religious principles.²⁰⁹

The continuum of governmental interference is escalating. Tension and hostility between the Baloch people and Pakistani government could lead to a bloody confrontation. Dera Bugti is a remote district with population of 84,000, 50,000 live in the town, which includes a small Hindu community. During the conflict, 19 Hindu children and 11 Hindu men died. Many people were injured but the law enforcement officials did not allow the patients to go to the hospitals.²¹⁰

In the same context, Friday Times reported in the issue of 23-29 March 2001:

‘Hundreds of Hindus were forced to flee their homes and crossed over to Sindh. Three Hindus were reported killed in the town of Chaman, after clashes between Hindus and Muslim mobs in October. Temples and homes were set ablaze and Hindu property was destroyed. Growing social intolerance assumed alarming new proportions in Balochistan. Local extremist groups prompted the attacks.

The precise number of families that fled was not known; reports suggested almost half the community of 10,000 Hindus in Lasbela was forced to leave their homes within the year. Increased activism by militant religious groups imposed new strains on relations between Muslim and the Hindu communities.²¹¹

The only Brahman in town was Maharaj Roshan Sharma, custodian of the Shiv Mandar. After the 1992 Babri Mosque incident in India, the Hindus were unsafe and unstable in the Pashtun areas.²¹² At least five Hindu temples were vandalised, causing structural damage and objects of worship were thrown on the ground and smashed.

“Khan of Kalat had proudly claimed that the life and assets of the Hindu and other religious minorities would be safeguarded in the Balochistan province. He declared to the other provincial leaders that non-Muslims in Kalat would be protected and none would leave their homeland. During his time, the Hindus were given lands and properties to build their homes and shops. They were not only a part of the Baloch culture but also played a vital role in the socio-political affairs. Their life style, traditions and social interaction were in tune with the Baloch society. The Baloch society accepted them and honoured them.”²¹³

This peaceful coexistence and communal harmony still prevails in Balochistan. The Hindu community enjoys freedom of speech and freedom to practice their religious activities. The Baloch Muslim *Sardars* donated land to the Hindu community to build their places of worship.

Chakar Khan related:

²⁰⁹ Ibid

²¹⁰ Taipei Times, Tuesday, Mar 22, 2005, Page 5

²¹¹ Friday Times, March 23-29, 2001

²¹² An interview with Chandar Calran, Quetta, and Interview with Mr. Wahid Bandheek

²¹³ An Interview with Chakar Khan, Balochistan

“This communal harmony between the Muslims of Balochistan and the non-Muslim community is exemplary; it has strong roots in history. The Hindu community has full freedom to practice their religion. Muslims respect and protect their homes, shops and places of worship; their disputes and problems are addressed. Recently, a dispute between the Hindu community and one of the family members of the Khan of Kalat over land for the Hindu temple was resolved. He gave his private land to the Hindu community not only to settle the dispute but also to ensure that the interests of the non-Muslims of the Balochistan are safeguarded.”²¹⁴”

At the time of Partition, when sectarian riots ravaged the subcontinent, the Hindu population of Balochistan remained unharmed. The ruler of Kalat State, Yar Mohammad Khan, respected Hindu values and mutual relationship of respect between Muslims and Hindus.²¹⁵

In the view of oral accounts, violence at the time of Partition was a short-lived phenomenon. Communal disharmony after Partition in Balochistan was a result of military rule and dictatorships. However, communal harmony in rural Balochistan continued because they remained a part of Balochistan’s traditional life-style and culture. On countless occasions, people have put aside religious, regional, cultural, and linguistic differences and manifested genuine human values and emotions.²¹⁶

During Partition, the services of non-Muslims nurses and their welfare work cannot be forgotten. There was equal participation in the festivals and special occasions. Those who migrated to India still remember their old friends and neighbours.

The oral accounts of the local people are filled with tales of communal harmony and peace between the non-Muslims and Muslims communities. An objective of this study is also to provide insight in the spirit of humanity, above the boundaries of religion, sect and language.

²¹⁴ Ibid

²¹⁵ Exclusive interviews with, Mr. Abdullah Jan Jamaldini, Chandar Calran, Saifuddin Bohra, Aseer Abdul Qadir Shahwani, and Wahid Bandheek

²¹⁶ Ibid

ONCE UPON A PARTITION: CULTURAL LEGACIES, FICTIONAL WORLDS OF THE PARTITION AND BEYOND

Asif Farrukhi

Once upon a time, and a very good time it was, there was a Partition. And a very important Partition it was too. All the scholars agree from Timbactou to Trincomalee. All the good children were born appropriately at the exact stroke of midnight. Tryst with destiny and all that razzmatazz. Many were born later, mostly *bad-tameez desis*. We must refuse to even acknowledge them, shall we? Some were born earlier. As if in anticipation. So that they were ripe for the Partition when it came. There was a lot of to-do and Pow-Wow and much Sob-sob. Everybody then lived unhappily after. Period. The credits roll and the story will continue in the next episode as we are promised more Partitions to come.

This is a story my father told me. He sowed the dragon's teeth and my generation reaps the harvest. We suffer the consequences. Partition is a story which makes Baby Tuckoo out of all of us. Brought up on such stories, I revisit all this frequently, much too often for comfort. It is only against such a background that I can read the Partition in Urdu literature, especially fiction, which narrates the Partition through and in multitudinous texts. All said and done about the Partition, it is those literary texts which continue to haunt me. There is no getting away from it. It turns up in unexpected places. It comes in all shapes and colors. After so many years, it still lurches in the shadows and looms around the corner, waiting to grab you unawares. I would rather confront it, face it rather than flee or beat a hasty retreat.

The Partition to begin with. It is History with a capital H. For my generation it is the Great Given. No need to hark back to the time before the lines were drawn and battle out the long-drawn arguments on its validity. Now that it's there, what next. How to read it in the books that it inspired and how to read the books which flowed out of and with the tumultuous events. More often than not, the Partition is seen as either a beginning or an end. The Beginners are the historians and scholars who signpost it as the emergence of the new nation-state, the dawn of a new day. The Enders deplore and lament it as the end of a secular South Asia, where different castes and creeds had lived harmoniously for thousands of years. It is the sheer dichotomy between the two positions, which I find unsettling. Clearly it's a beginning as well as an end. In my end is my beginning and in my beginning, my end. Like a serpent swallowing its tail. You don't know where to begin and can start from anywhere.

So where do you begin? From the Partition itself. I would like to start from the actual events, rather than any fixed or inviolable ideological position. The facts are well-known but let me recapitulate what for me are some of the defining features. The handing over of power to local representatives in India by British authorities was a hasty affair, for one reason or another, many of the long-term consequences not thought out by the perpetrators. Not only much unresolved business was left behind to create a long-standing feud, the shape of the newly created dominions, as they were called, ensured the uprooting of what is described as the largest exodus in modern human history. Sheer

numbers or Biblical references fail to do justice to the suffering in human terms, as the displacement was accompanied by mayhem on a scale unprecedented in a country much prone to violence. Who knows how many died, how many men subjected to brutalization and pillage, and how many women knew abduction and rape. But matters did not end there. A Diaspora had been triggered on and the generations after have continued to be the indirect affected ones. After Midnight's children, the Children of After the Midnight. The emotions unleashed in 1947, or the ones reaching their climax in those events, remained unabated on both sides and contributed to other partitions, most significantly to the events of 1971, a second Partition. And who knows what next? The name of Kamleshwar's Hindi novel haunts me as an un-requested but un-answered question: *Aur Kitnay Pakistan?* By all accounts, 1947 was the Mother of All Partitions.

Beyond itself, what *was* the Partition? Was it a cause or an effect? Was it the Mother or a child? It was an incision which dissected out the new inception, Pakistan, out of the parent-body of India. The analogy of a Cesarean section was used by Mumtaz Shirin in one of her short stories. This generally fine critic who studied the literature around the Partition described the large scale violence that ensued with the events as symbolizing the loss of blood which accompanies a surgical procedure. Such symbolism seems heavy, oversimplified. It is the accompanying violence, its scope and its scale, which puts to shame the ideologically-minded scholars who would like nothing better than to describe the emergence of Pakistan as an Immaculate Conception. Not by a far cry. Shouldn't a critic as perceptive as Shirin have shown greater sensitivity to the discernable difference between hemorrhage and blood-letting? Bifurcated and dissected out, the Partition itself has been Partitioned with different stake-holders laying claim to different parts. But who will gather the limbs of Osiris?

As we move from the topography of the events to the barest reference to a fictional artifact, we are crossing from one plane to another. The transition is swift if somewhat jerky and we do not immediately realize that we are crossing the date-line. The Partition is open to a multitude of possibilities, several readings. I would like to differentiate between two different discourses, on one hand socio-political analysis and on the other, the study of the Partition as a literary phenomenon. The two are obviously related and intertwined closely so that it is not possible to artificially dissect out the two, but having said that, I would also like to point out to the ensuing confusion when the terms of one are admixed with those of the other. Switching one for the other is the main reason why some analysts/ critics over-burden it with their pet peeves, ideological or otherwise. They read various trends and patterns in the literary texts about what they think happened or what should have/ have not taken place. Without denigrating other possibilities, I would like to focus on the The Life and Times of the Partition as a literary phenomenon, particularly in the context of Urdu.

It doesn't take a literary critic to recognize the immense outpouring of fiction and poetry in Urdu focusing on the events of 1947 and the related consequences. Readers not directly conversant with Urdu can have access to representative works through a number of anthologies, out of which I would like to specially refer to *An Unwritten Epic*, the Penguin selection by Professor M. U. Memon, and the large Urdu sampling available in Alok Bhalla's three volumes of *Stories About the Partition of India*. While these and others amply serve the non-Urdu reader at large, what about Urdu itself? There is no such collection available in the very language these works were originally written in. Here one should refer to the sadly instructive fate of *Zulmat-e-Neem Roz*, the anthology Mumtaz Shirin edited but failed to see printed in her lifetime, but let me return to it later.

The Partition rode on a high wave in the Urdu short story. The social realism accentuated by the Progressive writers had prepared the ground and the traumatic events opened up a new vein by the major short-story writers of the period: Saadat Hassan Manto, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishan Chander; Ismat Chughtai as well as scores of others. In stories such as *Thanda Gosht* and *Khol Do*, Manto perfected his art to create taut, compact narratives going beyond the search for the lost ideals of humanism to a quest for what constituted the human, while *Toba Tek Singh* goes beyond political questions to what is essentially the human condition. While these stories mark an ascending point in Manto's career, for

Krishan Chander, the once much admired stories *Hum Websi Hain* and *Peshawar Express* now seem artistically weak, the beginning of this writer's decline. He returned to the theme a few years later in his short novel *Ghaddar*, better crafted than his earlier works, but his vision remains essentially political. Bedi's powerful *Lajwanti* was written a little later, and remains one of the best stories from his early period. In her few stories around this theme, Ismat Chughtai did not achieve the distinction of her best work from the same period.

Following closely on their heels were other remarkable writers who have at least one remarkable short story around this theme: Aziz Ahmad (*Kaali Raat*); Hayat Ullah Ansari (*Shukr Guzār Ankeahin*), Ahmed Nadim Qasimi (*Parmesbar Singh*); Upendra Nath Ashk (*Tableland*); Jamila Hashmi (*Ban-bās*) and Ashfaq Ahmed who authored *Gadariya*, one of the best-known stories from the period. There are other lesser known but distinguished writers such as the enigmatic Jawaida Jafri, who authored the unusual story, *Jagay Paak Parwardigar*, but never repeated her success.

The majority of these stories focus on the riots, the brutality, the barbarism, the dehumanization and the heroics of some characters against a politically charged backdrop and the pain of being uprooted as a consequence of communal violence. No wonder that Urdu critics used the categorization as *Fisadat Kay Afsaney*, "Riot Literature". This is the term used by Muhammad Hassan Askari and Mumtaz Shirin. Askari took up the interesting position that *fisadat* as such could not be the subject of literature and then went on to develop a reading of Manto's short stories, especially the vignettes in *Siab Hashiyay*, which focus exclusively on these themes. In using the term *Fisadat Ka Adab*, the riots were highlighted as the main occurrence, rather than the Partition itself, which may have been seen as a cause rather than the effect, perhaps even a transient phase. History proved it to be the other way around.

While the short stories examined under each may remain the same, as a category Partition literature is broader than *Fisadat Ka Adab*. It is based on historicity and this makes it vulnerable to manipulation. In the introduction to his anthology, Bhalla makes a distinction between the histories written by the apologists of Pakistan and its bitter opponents:

"If the first set of histories read like incantations, the second work like old demonologies."

Consider the introduction to this with Memon's preface as a study in contrasting methods and the different purposes the Partition is put up to. Bhalla begins by regarding "The Partition of the Indian sub-continent (as) the single most traumatic experience in our recent history", and goes on to say that:

“The real sorrow of the Partition was that it brought to an abrupt end a long and communally shared history.”

Memon’s preface records his dissatisfaction with what he calls “ideological underpinnings” working as “as a sort of distorting filter”, without going into the details of which books he is referring to and what those pronouncements are. He complains of inadequate translations but then takes an even more tantalizing position when he terms two well-known short stories of Ahmed Nadim Qasimi and Bedi as “poorly written.” His vehement dismissal of narrow nationalistic aspirations is offered as a sharp contrast to the positions taken by other critics whom he does not name. The difference in their points of view is not so much a question of different temperaments but fundamentally in their ways of reading the Partition. Bhalla’s complaint against the two sets of histories holds true for the anthologies, or at least their introductions.

The manipulation of literature in favour of a particular point of view is also borne out by the problem Shirin faced with her selection. Mumtaz Shirin had edited a special issue of her journal *Naya Daur* devoted to the riots, and she spent much time and energy writing about these fictions, making it her special area of study. Based upon her critical analysis she did put together a collection of what she considered the representative and important works of fiction, but as her selection was never printed, there is only anecdotal evidence and speculation as to its fate. The story goes that the anthology was submitted for publication to a quasi-governmental body but one of the bureaucrats reigning over there objected to the inclusion of a story by Krishan Chander on the grounds that it went “against Pakistan” and the editor was asked to remove it. This was ironic as Shirin had singled out this particularly story as being weak in terms of its craftsmanship but as it was a representative story by one of the best-known writers of the day, she was not willing to delete it all together. The resulting stalemate led to the anthology being shelved and even the manuscript was lost so that years later, I had to dig out all the references from Shirin’s essays to assemble a loose collection the lines that she had worked on initially.

I have often thought about what befall Shirin’s selection, wondering if amounted to a sort of censorship, an attempt to rewrite the past. An imaginary past, ideologically correct, with its *qibla* in the right direction. Call it the riots, or the Partition, the literature around this set of events has been prone to manipulation for reasons which have less to do with literature and more with ideological positioning of the critics involved. However, this brings us to another twist in the tale. In the first instance the Partition had been written as a story, a tale which needed to be told, and then we see the Partition as the frame of stories as it provides the reference for an assessment of particular stories. This change marks a turn in the fortunes of the Partition.

So we have two Partitions then. The Partition as a story. The Partition as the frame of stories. I want to move on to another step and look at another stage in the literary career of the Partition. This is the stage of Beyond the Partition, reading through the Partition in order to take a broader view, and this is best seen in the works of two powerful fiction-writers who transcend the entire category of Partition literature. These two writers are Qurratulain Hyder and Intizar Husain. Both follow on the heels of the writers mentioned above in strictly chronological terms as the former established her reputation on the eve of the Partition and the later, just in the wake of the Partition. And the dividing

line is important to both. Qurratulain Hyder does not have any single short story which could be regarded as an example of Partition literature, while Intizar Husain's long story *Bin Likhi Rizmiya* (An Unwritten Epic) was much admired by Shirin. Qurratulain Hyder's best-known novel, and undoubtedly the most widely read novel in Urdu, *Aag Ka Dariya*

Can be regarded with Husain's works as the epitome of *Fisadat Kay Afsaney* or Partition literature, as they fulfill the demands of this category and transcend/ break open this category by taking it beyond the Partition to a broader view of history of which the Partition is one component. These two writers represent the pinnacle of achievement in Urdu fiction and we can even ask if Urdu fiction has really moved beyond these two?

Unlike the earlier *Fisadat* writers, a discernable political stance is not merely a balancing act in these two writers, but it develops as their narrative technique. The Partition is a part of the story, not the entire narrative in both writers. While I am taking their names together, I do not want to set them up as a contrasting pair. There is no need for another *Mawaḡna-e-Anis-o-Dabeer* between the two as the *Urdu-wallas* are prone to. While I consider both to be important in their individual capacity, I am also not suggesting that they are writers of equal stature.

The differences and similarities between the two pose interesting questions. *Aag Ka Dariya* also serves as a dividing line between Hyder's earlier and her more mature, later work. It consumes and transcends the early period mocked and savaged by Ismat Chughtai as Pom Pom Darling. The novel remains unmatched for the brightness and sparkle of its prose and the narrative technique based on her concept of time as a continuum. Qurratulain Hyder's fiction is derived from her reading of the history as a narrative, it takes a longer view of the Partition, while Intizar Husain focuses on the Partition in his novel *Basti* in a manner which goes beyond the eternal present of the *Fisadat* to situations which are derived from and based in history, so we have 1857 on one hand and 1971 on the other. Intizar Husain's major novel, *Basti* is a mid-career work, and bears an interesting relationship to the writer's work. It draws on a number of themes from the writer's earlier and successful short stories in a manner where the author can be seen to be cannibalizing the previous work to some extent. Although, in a number of instances, portions of the novel cover the same ground, but the different components connect together to form a unified whole. Breaking out of the conventional framework of time, *Basti* contemplates historical time giving way to miraculous time.

Another point of contact between the two is the richness and multiplicity of their past, or pasts as both seem to have access to more than one past. Their techniques show the influence of the traditions of the ancient East as well as the modern European novel. Neither of the wants to give up one for the sake of the other and the ease with which they freely move from one to the other, is specially difficult to grasp for Urdu critics who are inclined to be myopic and seem to resent the fact that these writers defy the straitjacketing of categories. Hence, some Urdu critics still discuss and debate whether *Aag Ka Dariya* is written in the stream of consciousness technique and whether *Basti* can actually be called a novel in the strict sense.

As fiction-writers bracketed together by the same time-period, I would like to suggest that the experience of reading one can illuminate and enrich the reading of the other and provide us with a richer and more complex perspective, and for this purpose, I would like to read together the opening scenes and the conclusions of the two novels.

Let us read the beginnings. But if we can only identify them as such. The novelist Amos Oz has pondered over this question and in his book *The Story Begins* he frames this question:

“But what ultimately is a beginning? Can there exist, in principle, a proper beginning to any story at all? Isn’t there always, without exception, a latent beginning-before-the-beginning? A forward to the introduction to the prologue? A pre-Genesis occurrence?”

This is how *Basti* establishes what Oz has called “the opening contract”:

“When the world was still new, when the sky was fresh and the earth not yet soiled, when trees breathed through the centuries and ages spoke in the voices of birds, how astonished he was, looking all around, that everything was so new, and yet looked so old. Bluejays, woodpeckers, peacocks, doves, squirrels, parakeets---it seemed that they were as young as he, yet they carried the secrets of the ages.”

The opening scene is rooted in the childhood of the protagonist, for whom this is a more real and intense period in his life than any other. But even before the story begins, a beginning has been made. A beginning with the world on the eve of creation.

The opening contract of *The River of Fire* is invested in an insect rich in allusions:

“It was the first beerbahuti of the season that Gautum had seen. The prettiest of rain-insects, clothed in god’s own red velvet, the beerbahuti was called the Bride of Indira, Lord of the Clouds.”

This insect is no stranger as we encounter it in a memorable location in *Basti*, this time more symbolic than mythological, signifying the ideal of beauty that Zakir, Afzal and their friends would like to have their country achieve:

“I’m about to have some acres allotted to me One acre will be given over to beds of roses One acre will be only for rain-bugs.”

“Rain-bugs?” Irfan looked at him sarcastically

“Fellow! Be quiet! You won’t be able to understand this In the rainy season I roam around very anxiously. There don’t seem to be any rain-bugs here. There ought to be rain-bugs. We have to make Pakistan beautiful” Then, changing his tone, he addressed them both: ‘Listen! You too will stay with me. This is my command. I, and you two”

“And the rain-bugs,” Irfan interrupted.

“Yes, and the rain-bugs. In beautiful Pakistan there will be only beautiful people.” (Chapter 9)

You don’t really have to step out of the novel to realize that the impossibility of the situation: in the less than beautiful Pakistan, there are not beautiful people only. There are no rain-bugs too. Gautum had put the beerbahuti on a leaf and sent it floating down the river. Did it get left behind at the time of the Partition? Its disappearance is again taken up in a later story, *Allah Mian Ki Shehzadi*, included in the collection *Scheherzade Kay Naam*. A young girl and boy, on the edge of puberty, trade beerbahutis for a pappaya, and the exchange turns daring as the boy touches the girl’s clean tongue

to see it devoid of any spittle—the closest that any characters of Intizar Husain come to each other in physical proximity—when suddenly the story is transported and the reader is jolted into the realization that this is the realm of memory which has just been splintered by the narrator/ author's wife watching a loud-playing television and commenting on the news. The news too is about strained relations between India and Pakistan, amounting to further difficulties for travelers across the border, which in the post-Partition world have solidified into the absolute, in spite of all the beerbahuatis. The shattered memory cannot be restored, except to recollect that the beerbahuatis have died, their death symbolizes the loss of the childhood innocence, replaced by the politically charged colorless present.

But the beerbahuati is a later interpolation. Or import. It is simply not there in the opening scene of *Aag Ka Dariya*, which establishes its contract through different terms. This is why I want to plead the case for considering *Aag Ka Dariya* and *River* as two separate books, parallel but distinct. The twain never did meet.

The beginning having been established, let us move towards the end. To come to the closure of *Basti*, which is intriguing in itself:

“Yar,” he said to Irfan, “I want to write her a letter.”

“Now?” Irfan stared into his face.

“Yes, now.”

“Now when—“ He paused in the midst of his sentence, then took a different tack. “Before—“ Confused, he fell silent.

Before—he tried to get it clear in his mind—before—before the parting of her hair fills with silver, and the birds fall silent, and the keys rust, and the doors of the streets are shut—and before the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is shattered, and before the pitchers broken at the well, and the sandalwood tree, and the snake in the ocean, and—

“Why are you silent?” Irfan was gazing steadily at him.

“Silence.” Afzal, placing a finger on his lips, signaled Irfan to be silent. “I think we will see a sign”

“A sign? What sign can there be now?” Irfan said with bitterness and despair.

“Fellow, signs always come at just these times, when all around—“ he paused in the middle of his speech. Then he said in a whisper, “This is the time for a sign—“

It reverts and connects back to the Biblical language of the opening. The weight of the scene hangs on the sign. Our expectations aroused, we are confronted by questions: What does it mean and why now? Will it really take place? Or perhaps the sign already occurred—when Zakir wants to write a letter. This is the first indication of a stirring within him, a deeper connection with relationships and feelings. Zakir who is accused by many critics as devoid of action-less is now guilty of having thought of an action. True to his character, he has not actually carried out the act—writing the letter—but he has spoken of it to his friends. It is also significant that he discusses this intimate or almost intimate gesture with a friend. He has this sense of urgency that he needs to this “before—But before what? This he does not articulate. As this is never specified, there is a sense of foreboding, which is reinforced by the Biblical language, going back full-circle to the opening contract. *Basti* is an open-ended novel. There is no final and firm closure of the narrative sequence, indicating multiple possibilities in the ending.

The word in the original is *basbarat*, with its strong religious and metaphysical reference and with it is posed the question of will there be or won't there be--- "*basbarat ho gi kay nahin?*" The question at the end of *Basti* is the unanswered question of Partition literature—did the miracle take place or not? By not answering the question, the novel says it all.

Now read it with the closure of *Aag Ka Dariya*. The mastery of the narrative form and control over technique is displayed best in the novel's conclusion as the writer brings together the various threads to weave together a final scene. It closes the long, historical narrative and its irrevocable finality contributes to the sense of tragedy it highlights. The Partition as tragedy.

As the action of the novel moves ahead, Kamal has traveled to India from Karachi after the Partition but avoids meeting his old friends who meet again in a grotto of the Shravasti forest, in a scene which parallels their meeting in the opening scene of the novel, and as they begin to talk they comment about Kamal and his visit:

"Kamal has deserted us. Betrayed his friends, gone away for good and let us down. Together, we could have challenged the galaxies."

"We have all betrayed one another," Gautum replied quietly. Can these Western visitors to Shravasti understand the pain in our souls? In India's, in Kamal's, in mine?

They watched the river ripple past. Words were temporary and transitory. Languages fade away or are forced into oblivion by new tongues. Men also come and go, even the river and the jungle are not eternal. After fifty years a jungle of concrete may spring up here. The river may dry up or shrink or change course, just as human beings disappear or change the direction of their journeys.

*Ghazalan, tum to waqif ho, kaho Majnoon ke murney ki,
Divana mar gaya, aakhir ko, veeranay pe keya guzri"*

With this famous couplet, the scene tends to become a patch of purple prose. The two characters imagine Kamal in Karachi, with more than a touch of cynicism and certainly with less than approval, "dancing with some lovely begum in the Karachi Gymkhana."

Kamal is awkwardly placed here, but this sense of awkwardness was far more memorable in the Urdu version, specially the two lines which are placed quietly in the middle of the scene and are low-key and thus achieve a powerful effect:

*Shaid who donon ikhattey soch rahay thay keh Abul Mansur Kamaluddin kis tarah Hindustan main dakhil hua tha
aur k's tarah Hindustan say nikal gaya.*

These lines present the central theme of the novel without much fanfare. These are placed in between descriptions of the scene— two men throwing pebbles in the river and watching their reflections broken into expanding circles. The Urdu version closes with:

Who mundair par say utra. Us nay aik lamba saans liya aur ahista ahista qadam rakhta basti ki taraf wapas chala gaya.

Basti ki taraf. The road does lead towards the Intizar Husain's *Basti* and perhaps it is what lies beyond, the next step, which was also the next step in history.

The end of Aag Ka Dariya too is an unanswered question: how or why did he leave? *woh kaisay chala gaya*— This is a great walk-over. Is he abdicating from his story/history?

Henceforth history will be his absence. And the River of Fire is still a sheet of scalding wet heat. We are still undecided. The Partition likes me. The Partition likes me not. The Partition has left me. The Partition has left me not. Will there be a sign?

Writing Unfinished Histories:

Collecting Narratives on People and Places

By HARRIS KHALIQUE*

Introduction

In 1998 I was in London for my postgraduate studies where I met Rohini Kohli, an Indian student who became a close friend and my co-author. We were both interested in South Asian history and politics, partition of British India, the issues of identity, markers of citizenship, linguistic and communal differences, and how they were translated into extremism and violence between communities and how did they impact the livelihoods of people. The mutual interest led us to collecting narratives, informally interviewing people of both younger and older generations who lived abroad espousing ideas made vintage with longing, while they remembered their origins in South Asia. The two partitions of the subcontinent in 1947 and 1971 served as the backdrop.

Any Diaspora is rich in the experience of migration but a sizeable part of South Asian Diaspora has an experience of multiple migrations. They conserve certain beliefs and practices, which have become either obsolete or enjoy little relevance in their ancestral lands. But in fact, the meta-messages that travel through centuries, from generation to generation, remain the same. In some sense, the discussions with South Asian Diaspora helped us understand the reasons for why some people today insist on the differences between communities and the others promote and propagate the many similarities among all South Asians. Our encounters with these people revealed the spaces between hate and love that divide us even now, spaces between fear and longing, between those who remember partition and those who have no recollection, and finally those who want to be together in some way and those who don't in any way. An outcome of the interviews is a small book called "Unfinished Histories" published by Alhamra Publishing Pakistan in 2002.

The submissions I make now trace the reasons that provided the impetus to write this book and the experience of a Pakistani and Indian working together on this small but interesting project while feeling healed in some sense. I am also going to quote from the book presenting stories of individuals shaped by larger events and upheavals. And, how those interviewees felt and responded while narrating their experiences. Besides, the response of people after knowing my interest in the subject would also be discussed where an opportunity to relate their own anguish and pain was found.

The Conversations Begin

It was 1998. Pakistan for the first time and India for the second had detonated nuclear devices after celebrating 50 years of independence just a year before. A group of some South Asian students who got together in our school were charged, politically aware and concerned. There was a small café, as it

were, called Wright's Bar near the main entrance of our school. The Bar became the rendezvous for meetings of the small group and accommodated the long winding conversations. The issues discussed varied from Nehru's tryst with destiny to the struggle of a hardworking Maharashtrian housemaid in Mumbai who was an ardent follower of Shiv Sena. The conversations were of personal nature and somewhat cathartic in a rigorous academic atmosphere, which at times leads to a thoroughly dispassionate view on issues of high emotional value. Our school was in the heart of London and we had access to many people who would come for lectures, to meet friends or just for the heck of it. We could sometimes cross over and meet South Asian friends at the BBC, who were working for different South Asian language radio services. We would hop over to India Club Restaurant on the other side of Strand. In all these places we came across people from the subcontinent either living in London or coming to meet family and friends. The partition of 1947, a related incident, feeling or idea, was an unavoidable topic whenever Indians and Pakistanis met. When a Bangladeshi was around, 1971 could not be avoided either. Rohini and I extended the Wright's Bar all over London and initiated similar conversations in different places, pubs, restaurants, homes and parks.

The Writing Up

We decided one day to write what we heard in all these places from different people of South Asian origin. We also formally interviewed some of them to fill the gaps we had in our text. Those who were close to us and not South Asians became a part of the narratives in their own unique ways. However, when we began to weave the stories, the Palestinian question or the mindscapes of a truly global citizen of Dutch origin, all had a South Asian link, by association or by comparison. It was our own humble way of bringing forward individual and community plight in the face of grand narratives and hence without denying the grand narratives, using the smaller narratives of pain to understand the grand theoretical ones.

The idea was to present simple stories of people, their recollections of suffering and intense feeling, evoked time and again by the memory of the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Rooted in 1947 or before but realised later, new questions of identity, language, citizenship, cultural divides and exclusion are also posed and discussed. For instance, Bengali-Punjabi in the context of East and West Pakistan, Karachi-Lahore in terms of culture and politics, Delhi-Mumbai in terms of power and prestige, Urdu-Punjabi in the context of linguistic rights, Sindhi-Mohajir by way of civil and economic rights, Indian-Pakistani in the UK characterised in the name of religion and South Asian history, all come into the fold.

We decided to fictionalise the stories by changing the names and places. But retained an inherent order and sensitivity to locale and time and kept them largely as conversations that hint at deeper feelings and emotions. The product is not a book of high literary value or historic significance nor was it really intended. It is an account of the conversations some friends and their acquaintances had on the issues mentioned above. As our publisher puts it, the collection falls in the twilight zone between fiction and non-fiction. Therefore, all that we say is true and has happened to someone somewhere. It is all real, very real. Those narrating and those collecting the memories felt so light at the end that we can easily claim to have helped each other heal the wounds we inherited from our

own past or were relayed to us through the previous generations.

Indian and Pakistani Working Together

Please recall that we are talking about the times when the Indo-Pak relations were unusually tense, the period between 1998 and 2002. India had a right-wing government and Pakistan had another martial law imposed. The Indian and Pakistani communities in the UK were sharply divided and the communal tension in India was embraced by NRIs with increased fervour, as characteristic of the Diaspora. Pakistanis as usual were confused about their national politics and marred by a lack of skill in dealing with people of other faiths and non-believers, whether fellow South Asians or Europeans.

When Rohini and I discussed our joint project with friends, they were all excited. But when we would tell the interviewees who were a little distant from us socially and intellectually, they were either sceptical or in case they were Indians, young or old, would take upon themselves to apprise Rohini of the ulterior motives every Pakistani male has towards an Indian girl. Many people stressed the impossibility of two individuals from Pakistan and India, both knowing each other's countries so little, working on a serious issue. They saw it as a non-serious undertaking.

But in a matter of few months, every one we spoke to or asked goading questions, became so involved that they talked their heart out. Rohini and I carry a lot of baggage from partition, which was voluntarily transferred to us by our families and working together on such a project helped us in an unexplainable way.

What I gathered from the experience was the importance of being 'politically correct', the need to reiterate values of participation, egalitarianism and mutual respect. And, that every issue cannot be resolved and after being recognised, could only be handled. The only possibility we have is to learn to live with our past in harmony and with valour, either what we now consider good deeds or wrongdoings in the hindsight. For narration of past suffering, per se, does not heal always. Sometimes it is used to reinforce hatred and whip up emotion. It is important to be partial, to take sides. And the side we took is what I quote from the 'Afterword' of the book.

“Anna Akhmatova writes in her poem, ‘Why is this age worse...?’

*Why is this age worse than earlier ages?
In a stupor of grief and dread
have we not fingered the foulest wounds
and left them unbealed by our hands?*

*In the West the falling light still glows,
and the clustered housetops glitter in the sun,
but here death is already chalking the doors with crosses,
and calling the ravens and the ravens are flying in.*

Our parents were born in pre-partition India. One of us was born in an undivided Pakistan. One of us was born much after the partition of India and soon after the division of Pakistan. The two countries have fought three full-fledged wars. The dividing lines are kept illuminated by shelling across the borders or electrified fencing. Millions have died and billions have suffered at the hands of nationalistic frenzy. We do not want any more doors chalked with crosses.”

Now I quote from a few stories in the collection.

From ‘Cobra Bites Mr. K.S. Aurora’

“...Mr. Kartar Singh Aurora emerges from the serviceable door of one of these hotels. His stockinged feet pad noiselessly on the faded maroon carpet to answer the bell. He is heavy set but moves surprisingly lithely for a man his size to answer the quiet bell... Mr. K.S. has a great deal of feeling for Punjab and Punjabis in his breast. Emotions run thick through the Jullundhri brogue of his English. ‘The partition of India has been the rape of Punjab. No wonder the cunning Madrasis are ruling us. South Indians are clever and quiet. We have beaten and ruled over them for centuries. Now it is our turn to be ruled. The time is ripe for some sensible politicians to emerge and correct the existing situation. Pakistan too is based on a false premise, the power struggles of Jinnah and Liaquat have caused real problems. It’s a lot of Gandhi’s meddling. The only solution is re-integration.

... Matters of faith indeed run very deep in his soul. He looks at the faded posters on his wall, pictures of two of the most important pilgrimages for Sikhs in Pakistan, Nanakana Sahib and Punja sahib.

These are the two most holy shrines of Sikhism. The old Muslim men who have long memories greet the visitors every year with folded hands and tearful eyes. Mr. Aurora waits for the day when the journey will not be as poignant. His voice thickens as he brusquely gets up to answer the ringing telephone.”

From ‘Roshanara Bagh, Nazimabad, Hounslow, Wembley’

“...Someone rang the doorbell. It was Narender Kumar Varma, Shaikh sahib’s neighbour for twenty five years. Varma ji was about the same age as Shaikh sahib and had a look of a retired schoolteacher on his face. He was born in Campbellpur in Pakistani Punjab and the family left for Delhi in 1947. He was ardent supporter of the BJP, a born again vegetarian, and secretly believed that every man in Pakistan had four wives. After they had all shook hands and Varma ji was about to be seated, his daughter came running after him. It was a call from Delhi. Varma ji’s younger brother was on the line. During his absence for a short while, Shaikh sahib told Wajahat and Hussain that Varma ji is as good a person as a Hindu could possibly be. ‘We never discuss Kashmir. It made my blood boil when Varma ji called the Indian soldiers killed in Kargil martyrs. They don’t even have a word for martyr in Sanskrit or Hindi and use the Arabic word.’ Contempt was radiating from his eyes. Then he suddenly looked amused and continued, ‘before he comes back, I should tell you about an

interesting incident in Delhi. I was very young then. My elder brothers and their friends once brought a cow from somewhere, sacrificed it, distributed its meat among them and threw its head into the porch of Rajiv Malhotra's house. He was our neighbour and a rabid Hindu. While we had a feast that evening, Rajiv Malhotra was cursing unknown malichch Muslims.' Shaikh Riazuddin started laughing. Amidst his laughter, Varma ji came again. He told Wajahat how much he misses the street vendors of Campbellpur and especially the one who sold dahi bhallay.

In the meantime, food was served and Wajahat's Khala Nafisa emerged from the kitchen and announced that the table has been laid out. Then she said, "Bhai Varma, for you there's okra and black lentils. I was particular not to mix the stirring spoons for meat with vegetables. This is what I learnt from my mother..."

From 'Is Laila's nationality uncertain?'

"...Where are you from?' Hussain asked her. Before she could answer, Nayantara and Saeda waved at them and rushed to take the adjoining seats in congested Wright's Bar on Houghton Street. Hussain repeated his question. 'Well I come from Jerusalem as you know. But I should tell you a funny story.' Then she laughed for a long time. 'It's really funny. I have a Jordanian passport, an ID issued by Israelis, and I am Palestinian. So when I went to the alien's registration office in London, the officer concerned wrote 'uncertain' in the nationality column. My nationality is uncertain.' She started laughing again at the top of her voice.

...Laila asked them if they know of any other people who have had the same experience. They knew of no one else. Sjon said something about Abdullah Ocalan. He lived in an area in north London where Kurds from Turkey were in large numbers. He liked their hummus, olives, pickled green peppers and, most of all, the young woman in her mid-twenties who offered good quality food in the tacky kebab shop around the corner. Everywhere there were posters of Ocalan. Most of them said something in Turkish or Kurdish languages. Sjon was genuinely worried about the woman and her whole nation. 'Maybe she has relatives in all the four countries Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria? Maybe they are all persecuted? Who can tell?' Sjon continued as Laila nodded. 'Hussain, your part of the world has all the problems one could imagine. There may have been ethnic rights movements but at least there are no such people whose nationality could be termed uncertain in this appalling way.' 'There are.' Hussain replied promptly. 'I think there are about two hundred thousand such people.' 'Oh yes. You mean in Bangladesh.' Laila remembered. 'But how come their nationality is uncertain? They are Pakistanis aren't?' Laila said further. Sjon pitched in at this point with renewed interest, 'Yeah but why do they live in Bangladesh then and what's the issue? Tell me.'

"...Imagine their predicament, they migrated for the idea of belonging to a nation which itself had to retreat...Their nationality is uncertain. Very much like yours Laila'..."

From "From East Pakistan to Aldgate East"

“Chittranjan Park, the ‘East Pakistan Displaced People’s Colony,’ is in the heart of south Delhi. Durga puja is celebrated for four days in a pomp and splendour second only to Calcutta. The people who arrived during the war have now become affluent and have started to sell their properties, fetching impressive amounts, making them rich the fast way. Yet the Mahila Samitis are still managed by women in kantha sarees and vermilion bindis. Faith in the mother goddess is accompanied by Hindu rituals and strident feminism. There are homoeopathic dispensaries, divorce counselling centres and astrological services but nothing to change the tones of West Bengali complacency. Issues repeat themselves, the stories of husband and wife, West Bengali-East Bengali squabbles, the height of the Calcutta pecking order and the bhadra lok.

In the lengthening shadows of summer evenings and under the trees, the sound of Rabindra Sangeet escapes to the road and traffic outside. The sounds of the harmonium and tabla can be heard occasionally as people hurry their way to the nearby bazaar. It lights up with a dozen fish sellers squatting under a threadbare awning with dangerously hanging large bulbs and piles of fish in front of them. The sound of banter and good-humoured bargaining is unmistakable and confusing...”

Meeting Nowsherwan Bangash

After my return from London and while working on the draft of ‘Unfinished Histories’, I travelled to northern Pakistan for a consultancy assignment. The driver who accompanied me was a thorough gentleman, decent and caring. He had been a soldier in Pakistan Army and was a part of some historic military engagements. In 1965, he was in his teens and as a fresh recruit walked into Khemkaran with the conquering troops from the Punjab-Rajasthan border. In 1971, he served in East Pakistan and became a prisoner of war. He tried to break the Agra jail before being released. Then he was a part of Balochistan military action under Bhutto in 1974. He told me many stories of the times of war and we shared a lot of varying views on history and politics while travelling together. He was a professional soldier and had no misgivings whatsoever in following the commands from his superiors in the line of duty. He had only one regret. Nowsherwan’s unit was deployed in a bordering village where incursions from India were regular. The villagers had to keep inside during curfew hours or after dark. Otherwise, they were shot to death. One night while sitting on a rooftop, Nowsherwan and his fellow soldiers saw a shadow slowly moving towards them. The first man who saw this, shouted to halt the person at once. But the person kept moving. The second man shouted and warned that whoever is out at this hour will be shot. There was no response. The soldiers had to follow orders. They aimed in the direction of the shadow and unlocked the loaded guns with a rattle. They shouted for the last time and then fired. There was a cry and someone fell. Nobody came out. In the morning, Nowsherwan and his fellow soldiers saw an old woman lying in a pool of blood. She was a mental patient and her sons used to tie her up with the bedposts in the night to prevent her from walking out in the streets. That night she untied herself and quietly slipped out of the door to meet her death. Nowsherwan’s eyes were blank and mine were wet. I would like to end this piece on a poem that I wrote a few years ago, which was first published from Delhi, in The Little Magazine.

“I shall not return the borrowed dust...”

(for Osip Mandestam and Agha Shahid Ali)

In Lahore,
after the monsoon evening
darkness began edging away light.
Tadpoles, chairs, pedestal fans
appeared in Nana Farooq's courtyard.

"Let's tune in Amritsar."

There were no cables, no dish antennae.
We would be glued to blurred India for hours.

"They made Pakistan on the train stations.
Separate water taps
for Hindus and Muslims
and they were labelled,
Hindu pani, Muslim pani.
My word."

Nana Farooq had said.

Usman stirred the soundscapes
of an Iranian café in Quetta.

"Come off it. You are obsessed with Karachi."
Oh yes.
We are.
Like our forebears were obsessed
with Avadh and Kashmir.

But they failed to choose a water tap.
And couldn't prefer the Indus over the Ganges,
the Ganges over the Euphrates.

Avadh lives in our lexicon, Kashmir in our taste buds,
we live in the valley of Sindh.
But we fail to choose a water tap.

With gunpowder
Srinagar and Karachi are cleansed.
We are not given time to bury the dead.
We carry them.
They are heavy.
We are always tired, always thirsty.
But we fail to choose a water tap

Historicizing 1971 Genocide

State versus Person

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Introduction

Ranajit Guha, almost at the end of his scholarly career and incidentally by invoking Rabindranath Tagore, has reopened an old debate on the issue of 'history' in organizing our lives, admittedly with lots of candour and freshness of thought.²¹⁷ For the better part of the twentieth century and even now 'history' has come to be understood in Hegelian terms, indeed, very much outlined by Hegel himself in the nineteenth century. Hegel (1770-1831) in the backdrop of colonialism and the Europeanization of the world candidly remarked: "Only in the state does man have a rational existence.... Man owes his entire existence to the state, and has his being within it alone. Whatever worth and spiritual reality he possesses are his solely by virtue of the state."²¹⁸ This practically meant that 'no state, no history.' And since the Orient or the non-West, including the Bengalis, could not boast of having the state it ceased to have a 'history' or at the best ended up having a life and living in, what Guha calls, 'Prehistory'!²¹⁹ All the past achievements of the Orient in the field of art and literature, including music and dance, pedagogy, mathematics, astronomical and medical sciences and even agriculture and cottage industry came to nothing. Hegel's corroborating contention was that since the Orient lacked the 'essential self-consciousness of the concept of freedom,' one that is willed and guarded by the state, the entire 'past' of the Orient falls outside the realm of World-history.²²⁰

The Hegelian contention however was already in the air for quite some time; at times even predating Hegel's works on the philosophy of history. Ramram Basu's penning down of Raja Pratapaditya's life and living at the insistence of William Carey of Fort William College in 1801 is a good case in this context. His work was certainly, as Guha reminds us, 'the first Western-style historical narrative in Bangla.' If Basu is to be credited for the novel use of the vernacular then there is all the more reason to credit him for the 'style' that he had chosen to render his understanding of Pratapaditya's living 'past' or what has come to be known as 'history'. Carey's sponsorship, material as well as intellectual, needs no exaggeration here. Two points are worth mentioning in this connection.

²¹⁷ Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World-History* (Oxford and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

²¹⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.94.

²¹⁹ Guha, *op.cit.*

²²⁰ Hegel, *op.cit.*, p.145.

Firstly, the word 'history' had an interesting transformation over the years. The word originally meant *inquiry*.²²¹ Later with history's frequent reference to the 'past' or rather since the object of inquiry is the 'past' it began to be understood as the 'past' itself. There is however a clear distinction between the two, as Keith Jenkins reminds us:

...history is one of a series of discourses about the world. These discourses do not create the world (that physical stuff on which we apparently live) but they do appropriate it and give it all the meanings it has. That bit of the world which is history's (ostensible) object of enquiry is the past. History as discourse is thus in a different category to that which it discourses about, that is, the past and history are different things. Additionally, the past and history are not stitched into each other such that only one historical reading of the past is absolutely necessary. The past and history float free of each other, they are ages and miles apart. For the same object of enquiry can be read differently by different discursive practices....²²²

But despite this distinction 'history' succeeded in appropriating the 'past,' with many indeed ending up believing the 'past' as history. This has not only transformed the bits and pieces of the past into what could be referred to as 'total history' but also allowed the past to be treated as a linear progression of things or a sequence of events, one following the other in a predictable if not predetermined manner. And this brings us to the second point.

James Stuart Mill (1773-1836), a contemporary of Hegel, began to chronologize the Indian history into 'ancient,' 'medieval' and 'modern' with the Hindus, Muslims and the British (or by implication, the Christians) corresponding to them respectively. Mill incidentally never visited India, but that did not stop him from generalizing and chronologizing the life and living of the Indians spread over some thousands of years. Thanks to Mill's hegemonic construction of Indian history, the 'past' of India could not help but become communalized. Hindus and Muslims attending the modern educational institutions and tutored in modernity felt humiliated and sought the replacement of it by an authentic version of Hinduism and Islam, ironically to situate them and by implication their respective followers at the top! The governmentalization of history education in post-colonial South Asia further contributed to the reproduction of this self-consciousness, which often slipped into being something of a self-righteousness of the South Asians. Post-colonial South Asia otherwise began reproducing the Hegelian contention, keeping delusive of the fact that it must constantly race to reproduce itself in the fashion of the modern West. This is as true for India and Pakistan since 1947 as it is true for Bangladesh since 1971.

But 'history' understood in Hegelian terms, although had attained the status of a hegemonic discourse with colonialism and the imperial dissemination of knowledge, was not free from criticism,

²²¹ Margaret Anne Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p.21

²²² Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.5

in fact, it had some notable dissenters. Tagore certainly was one of the earliest ones, as he came out clearly in an essay written in 1941:

I have heard it said again and again that we are guided altogether by history, and I have energetically nodded, so to say, in my mind whenever I heard it. I have settled this debate in my own heart where I am nothing but a poet. I am there in the role of a creator all alone and free. There's little to enmesh me there in the net of external events. I find it difficult to put up with the pedantic historian when he tries to force me out of the center of my creativity as a poet. Let us go back to the inaugural moment of my poetical career....

Once after school I saw a most amazing spectacle from our western verandah. A donkey – not one of those donkeys manufactured by British imperial policy but the animal that had always belonged to our own society and has not changed in its ways since the beginning of time – one such donkey had come up from the washermen's quarters and was grazing on the grass while a cow fondly licked its body. The attraction of one living being for another that then caught my eye has remained unforgettable for me until today. In the entire history of that day it was Rabindranath alone who witnessed the scene with enchanted eyes. This I know for certain. No one else was instructed by the history of that day in the profound significance of the sight as was Rabindranath. In his own field of creativity Rabindranath has been entirely alone and tied to no public by history. Where history was public, he was there merely as a British subject but not as Rabindranath himself....²²³

Modern historiography otherwise makes the 'person' insignificant if not invisible. In fact, when it comes to modern historiography the 'person' has to speak, act and even imagine in and through the state or community, which, if we are to follow Tagore, could only mean the loss of *antaratma* - the person's inner self. In fact, it is this construction of modern historiography devoid of the person's inner self that prompted Tagore to reprimand it in the strongest words possible, "*dur bok ge tomar itibas*" (Off with your history)!²²⁴

Tagore's position otherwise stands contrary to Hegelian contention and the very discourse of World-history as the 'history' of the state. But then, Tagore is not alone in displacing the public and the state and placing the 'person' at the centre. *Hamlet*, if we remember, in the midst of his personal crisis made a bold statement: "O God! I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space...." His intention, albeit theatrically construed, was to place the person at the centre. Ivan Illich had his faith placed on the recovering of the 'commons,' and went to the extent of championing the cause of silence: "Silence, according to western and eastern tradition alike, is

²²³ Guha, *op.cit.*, pp.96-97.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.90-91.

necessary for the emergence of persons.”²²⁵ Michel Foucault sought freedom from ‘all unitary and totalizing paranoia’ by transforming the individual: “The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to ‘de-individualize’ by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations. The group must not be the organic bond uniting hierarchized individuals, but a constant generator of deindividuation.”²²⁶ More recently Theodore Zeldin pleaded for the decentring of the human and the repositioning of the ‘person’: “humans need to be recognized as persons.”²²⁷ And now, Guha, what is surely an auto-critique and falling back on Tagore, wants to get rid of historiography’s “statist blinkers and emulate literature to look afresh at life in order to recuperate the historicity of what is humble and habitual.”²²⁸ Yet official historiography, rooted as it is in colonial modernity, keeps displacing and even at times annihilating the person for the sake of reproducing the power of the state. Only by ensuring the voice of the person or nurturing ‘personography,’ if we could refer to it as such, can we make a real sense of diversity and creatively transform the multiversed world.

1971 genocide, for that matter, is as much a tale of the state as it is of the person, and often the ‘histories’ of the two do not match. The paper intends to highlight this in the next two sections. The consequence of having parallel, almost incommensurable, histories on an issue such as genocide is immense; it not only ends up traumatizing the victims but also creates space for the perpetrators to live a life free from remorse, guilt or sanctions. And this is precisely the case with both victims and perpetrators of 1971 genocide and sadly it continues to be so even after a lapse of over thirty years. The last section will take up the issue of reproducing a counter-discourse, with the purpose of sensitizing the public, including the policymakers, jurists, scholars, journalists, and many more, of the region and beyond not only on the issue of 1971 genocide but also on the subject of reprimanding, if not punishing, the perpetrators. But aside from this, there is more pressing objective at hand, and this has been best summed by the Nobel Laureate Desmond Tutu: “The compelling reason why we should learn about the Holocaust, and the genocides committed against other peoples as well, is so that we might be filled with a revulsion at what took place and thus be inspired, indeed galvanized, to commit ourselves to ensure that such atrocities should never happen again.”²²⁹ The purpose of this paper remains no different.

II

The statist discourse

²²⁵ Ivan Illich, “Silence is a Commons,” *The CoEvolution Quarterly*, Winter 1983.

²²⁶ “Preface by Michel Foucault,” in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, [1972] 2004), pp.xv-xvi.

²²⁷ Theodore Zeldin, *An Intimate History of Humanity* (London: Vintage, 1998), p. 469.

²²⁸ Guha, *op.cit.*, p.94.

²²⁹ Desmond Tutu, “Foreword,” *Encyclopedia of Genocide* (New York: 1971).

When it comes to the 1971 genocide there is a precise date for the birth of the statist discourse. One could place it around the time of the ‘ultimatum call’ and the ‘surrender document’ of December 1971. In the ultimatum call, broadcasted in all the radio frequencies of India on 14 December 1971, following the arrival of the Indian Army at the outskirts of Dhaka and directed towards the Chief of the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh, General Sam Manekshaw, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Indian Armed Forces, announced:

I would guarantee safety of all your military and para-military forces who surrender to me in Bangladesh....

I expect you to issue orders to the forces under your command in Bangladesh to cease fighting immediately and surrender to my advancing forces wherever they are located....²³⁰

It is not difficult to see that not only the Bangladesh forces were operating under the Indian military command but also, with the Indian control of the final phase of the liberation war, the nationalist struggle of Bangladesh was transformed into an exclusively Indo-Pakistan affair. The surrender document, signed on 16 December 1971, is a further proof of this:

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command agree to surrender all Pakistan Forces in BANGLADESH to Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA....

This surrender includes all PAKISTAN...armed forces. These forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the places where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA as soon as this instrument has been signed....

Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA gives a solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to...and guarantees the safety and well-being of all PAKISTAN military and para-military forces who surrender. Protection will be provided to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of WEST PAKISTAN origin by the forces under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.²³¹

Both the ultimatum call and the surrender document make no mention of genocide or mass killings committed by the Pakistan military and para-military forces. On the contrary, both the ultimatum call and the surrender document go on to guarantee the ‘safety and well-being’ of all Pakistan armed forces, including the para-military forces and ‘personnel of West Pakistan origin,’ that is, the members of the so-called ‘Bihari’ community in Bangladesh. It may be mentioned that apart from the Bengali collaborators the bulk of the Biharis sided with the Pakistan military, and as such some of its

²³⁰ Prabhat Srivastava, *The Discovery of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Sanjay Publications, 1972), p.160.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.160-161.

members were not free from the suspicion of having a hand in the mass killing of the Bengalis.²³² The statist discourse otherwise began by somewhat putting a lid on the issue of genocide, albeit on account of bringing a quick end to the war and the surrender of the Pakistan military. The fear was that any reference to genocide would have hardened the Pakistani resolve to continue the war and thereby increase the number of casualties of Indians, Pakistanis and Bengalis alike. This tendency of downplaying the issue of genocide for some strategic reasons continued even after the surrender of the Pakistan military.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, following his return from Pakistan on 10 January 1972 and taking the reins of governmental power, could not help but quickly slide into the task of locating the issue of genocide on similar statist considerations. As J.N. Dixit noted: “The substantive motivation for Mujib’s decision (not to hold war crime trials) might have been his long-term strategy of not doing anything which would prevent recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan and other Islamic countries.”²³³ But then, why would Mujib, almost contrary to the public opinion prevailing in the country and not to mention the immense suffering of the people, opt for a statist discourse? Two or three arguments could easily be made. Firstly, the nine-month incarceration of Sheikh Mujib and his absence from real-life killing fields. This is an issue that has not been raised with the seriousness it deserves. Unlike Nelson Mandela, who had some access to the media, both print and visual, particularly during the later years of his prolong incarceration, Sheikh Mujib remained totally in dark throughout the nine-month period as to what was happening in Bangladesh. His knowledge of post-genocide Bangladesh became virtually secondary, briefed predominantly by the members of his party, who often slipped into being ill-informed mediocre if not uncouth sycophants. And this brings us to the second contention.

The massacre of the intellectuals, particularly Dhaka University teachers, had a lasting impact on the direction of war crime trials, including the discourse on genocide. While those who had survived could not readily overcome the fear that had gripped their minds and bodies but then it is also true that there was a dire need of excellent scholars and researchers who would collect evidence, compile and analyse and make the genocide an international issue. In the midst of this vacuum the sycophants made a sorry state of things, often coming up with figures of atrocities and death without backing them up with evidence and if that did not prove enough then uncritically repeat and follow whatever Mujib had to say on the issue of genocide or the trial of the killers.

Thirdly, the return of the stranded Bengalis from Pakistan was obviously something that Mujib could not ignore and this is what got priority when it came to the decision of putting an end to war crime trials for good. But this priority was set in the backdrop of real issues, as Dixit points out: “Mujibur

²³² One witness narrated to the government fact-finding mission: “As the Punjabi soldiers sprayed bullets, the Biharis looted their homes.” See, *Bangladesher Swadhinata Juddher Dalilpatra*, Volume 8, Editor, Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Information Ministry of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka, June 1984, p.51. This however does not discount the killing of Biharis at the hands of the Bengalis in 1971.

²³³ J.N. Dixit, *Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relations* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1999), p.155.

Rahman on his own told Haksar that given the difficulties about collecting evidence he did not want to waste energy and time on holding war crime trials.²³⁴ But why would collection of evidence be so difficult immediately after the liberation of Bangladesh? Put differently, the people in charge, including members of civil society, failed to provide Mujib the materials that were required for a speedy trial of the war criminals and have the issue brought into international fora. Both the government and the public settled for a statist discourse, which gradually saw the issue of genocide being shifted towards 'half-hearted trials,' 'numbers' and 'collaborators.'

Mujib, it must be noted, enacted legal instruments for the trial of war criminals. The Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order 1972 and the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 were enacted with the purpose of putting into trial two categories of war criminals, that is, local collaborators and members of the Pakistan military respectively. On the basis of the former, some 37,000 collaborators were sent to jail, some even faced life imprisonment. Mujib, however, freed around 26,000 of them following the declaration of general amnesty. This resulted in the continuation of imprisonment of some 11,000 collaborators, who too were released, following an appeal, when the government of Justice Abu Sayeed Sayem and General Ziaur Rahman scrapped the Collaborators Act on 31 December 1975.²³⁵

The statist discourse, however, was more prominent when it came to the trial of the Pakistan military. Although the government, including Mujib himself, declared that some three million Bengalis were killed at the hands of the Pakistan military, but when it came to putting the Pakistan military officers to trial the number was reduced from 400 to 195 and then to 118. Apart from the fact that the death figure of three million in nine months became a statistical nightmare and the officers in charge had no foreknowledge or even the means to substantiate all the killings, the government also dilly-dallied in starting the trial of the 118 that it had actually identified. At the end Mujib settled for a pardon on the eve of the Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan in 1974, and in exchange of which the stranded Bengalis all returned home without harm or reprisals. Incidentally, there was no public protest in Bangladesh against Mujib's pardoning of the war criminals. The statist consideration allowed the issue of genocide to fizzle out, at least momentarily.

Towards the end of Ershad's military regime and more effectively following the return of democracy in 1991 the issue of genocide once again attained a centre place in public discourse. Two issues were particularly noticeable, one dealing with 'numbers' and the other calling for the annihilation of the collaborators. The discourse on the numbers was the most painful one; for it went on to quantify death with little or no attention to the person concerned. A moot question became: did three million die or was it less? At the end, statistical reason prevailed over human narratives and the likely figure of human casualty came down to something around 300,000 to 1.5 million! Not sure why this discourse came into being, it did have a flavour of trivializing the issue of genocide, which prompted many of the defenders to revitalize the issue, again more with passion than having a thoughtful mind

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Shariar Kabir, ed., *Tormenting Seventy One* (Dhaka: Nirmul Committee, 1999), p.18.

on the issue. It did not take long for the response to once again succumb into a statist discourse, which by now became more regime-centric in form and deliberation.

This is precisely what had happened to *Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee* (The Committee for the Annihilation of the Collaborators of 1971). Formed in January 1992 under the leadership of Jahanara Imam, the civil body could not resist the temptation of being partisan, indeed, to the point of inviting kudos from the main opposition party, the Awami League, while facing the wrath of the party in power, the BNP. But then somewhat unfortunately, with the Awami League entering into a tactical alliance with the Jamaat-e-Islami and the former winning the 1996 elections, the work of *Nirmul Committee* almost came to a close while the issue of genocide began to be used for partisan interest, this time to consolidate the power of the Awami League vis-à-vis a formidable alliance of BNP and the Jamaat-e-Islami. The statist discourse settled for a regime consideration, and nothing changed during the Awami League in power (1996-2001) and understandably not even with the BNP-Jamaat in power (2001-2006).

Things however began to change a little with the arrival of the second Caretaker Government in January 2007. Bereft of partisan politics, and possibly with some nodding from some members of the Caretaker Government, civic groups, including former military officials who fought during the liberation war, renewed their demand to try and punish the war criminals. There was also renewed call to enact the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 which remained valid and as Dr. Kamal Hossain pointed out, “In principle, this law is in force and can be invoked for all the cases that fall under its ambit.”²³⁶ That is, if found guilty of war crimes during 1971, members of the Pakistan military as well as Bangladeshi nationals could be brought to trial even today by enacting the 1973 Act. The public, feeling reenergized, launched a media campaign and pleaded with the state which came to be limited to two activities: one, setting up of war crime tribunals and two, internationalizing the issue and getting UN’s involvement in the process in the like of the Kampuchean or Rwandan genocides. Nothing concrete however materialized and this is mainly for the lack of state’s initiative to pursue and work on either of these pleas.

But then where does the person stand in all this? When the statist discourse resorts to politicking and settles for a silence of convenience what happens to the person who is a victim of genocide? What happens to the person who remains a witness to the mass murder? Who finds her love ones killed in one single night amidst agonising screams and a pool of blood? Whose life continues to be full of nightmares haunted no less by traumas, horrors and tortures? What do we make of such a person? How different is the person’s discourse from that of the state? Is statist narrative or ‘history’ different from ‘person-story’? How different is the cry of the person from the cry of the state? Indeed, in historicizing the 1971 genocide, can we salvage the person from the statist discourse and make a plea for punishing the perpetrators - the war criminals and their collaborators - more meaningful? Seeking answers to such queries is no meagre task.

III

²³⁶ Ashfaq Wares Khan, “Genocide Act enough to try war criminals, Act formulators say,” *The Daily Star*, 7 November 2007.

The discourse of the person

Genocide, as indicated earlier, is as much a theoretical issue (a tale of the state) as it is a practical one (a tale of the person). Understandably, the epistemological grounds of the latter would differ from that of the former. It is in this context that we find a civil entity - an academic institution in the name of Dhaka University - which incidentally was at the forefront in the campaign for freedom and independence of Bangladesh and suffered a mass killing of its students, teachers and employees at the hands of the Pakistan military, all the more relevant in understanding the discourse of the person. But then, why did the Pakistan military target Dhaka University or for that matter, why did it become a site of mass murder and genocide?

Few universities could take pride in what Dhaka University had achieved in its lifetime. It was established in 1921, but in less than hundred years of its establishment it made significant contributions to the history of Bangladesh, particularly in the making of the nation. Two events are noteworthy, although both related not so much to academic excellence as to the activism of the students. The first one relates to the historic language movement of 1952, when students of Dhaka University laid down their lives for making Bangla as one of the national languages of the state of Pakistan. The event is now nationally observed on 21st February and Dhaka University is the official host of the event. National leaders, foreign dignitaries and millions of people, all barefooted, congregate at the footsteps of Shaheed Minar (Martyrs Monument) located at Dhaka University on 21st February to pay homage to the 'brave sons of the soil.' It may be mentioned that UNESCO has declared the day as the International Mother Language Day. Dhaka University could only take pride in hosting the event and having the day internationally recognised.

Secondly, Dhaka University is the only university in the world where the students raised the flag of the country and handed it over to the national leaders. This took place on 3 March 1971, incidentally some three weeks *before* Pakistan military's recourse to genocide and the declaration of independence. This flag became the rallying call for independence and the symbol of the new nation during the nine-month liberation struggle. It may be mentioned that the flag symbolized the secular spirit of the movement, with the map of the country in the middle and the 'green representing the greenery of the country, its vitality and youthfulness, while the red disc symbolizing the rising sun of independence after the dark night of a blood-drenched struggle.'²³⁷ The map of the country in the middle of the flag however was dropped after independence following a governmental promulgation, albeit without the issue being discussed in the parliament. Neither did the change in the flag face any form of public criticism or protest.

But the question that merits attention, what made Dhaka University play such a part, which, if anything, was overwhelmingly *political* and thoroughly divorced from its civil task of reproducing consent and academic excellence? Part of the answer could be found in the remark by the Governor of Bengal and the Chancellor of Dhaka University, Lord Lytton, at the convocation speech on 22 February 1923:

²³⁷ Alfred Znamierowski, *The World Encyclopedia of Flags* (London: Hermes House, 2003), p.170.

It is no use recalling the days when Dacca had just ceased to be the capital of Eastern Bengal and when the late Sir Robert Nathan and his Committee were busy designing the University of Dacca as a splendid *Imperial compensation* (emphasis mine).²³⁸

Lord Lytton, in fact, was referring to the imperial compensation to the Muslims for the annulment of the partition of Bengal. Since then, the University could never rid itself of its political foundation. In fact, Dhaka University was at the forefront in the demand not only for a separate homeland for the Muslims during the colonial rule under the British but also, as indicated earlier, for the independence of Bangladesh during the semi-colonial rule under Pakistan. But that is only one part of it. The other part, and in many ways more significant, relates to the nature of the colonial and semi-colonial state. Let me explain.

Civil society in Europe is qualitatively different from what we refer to as civil society in South Asia, including Bangladesh. And this is mainly because of colonial experience, something that Europe never experienced at home in modern times and instead became the principal instrument and beneficiary of it. Having a colonized political society with no room for popular representation and platform for redressing social grievances made the colonized population rest on the relatively autonomous civil society to undertake the task of mobilizing and displacing the colonial power. For Bangladesh, such a role on the part of civil society continued during the semi-colonial rule under Pakistan. It was under these circumstances that a civil entity like Dhaka University could not help but be involved in the task of displacing the semi-colonial state. The traditional task of reproducing consent on the part of an academic institution gave way to getting itself involved in the business of politicking and engaging wholeheartedly with political and coercive forces. Progressive as it may have been at the time but the University came to be viewed as a place of anti-state dissent and violent agitation. On the night of 25 March 1971 Dhaka University became a predictable target of the Pakistan military. It is against this background that the discourse of the person would be pursued. But first let us see: who were the victims? This would certainly help us to understand as to why the wrath of the Pakistan military befell on them.

The state of subalternity

In a multi-class society subalternity can never be uni-dimensional or linear. Given the semi-colonial experience of the Bengalis the Awami League could easily muster support in favour of a 'nationalist' campaign against the state of Pakistan. The campaign was intuitively summed up in the Six-Point program, incidentally launched in 1966, which later became the agenda of the party in the general election of 1970. The cry of 'Joy Bangla,' in fact, symbolized the nationalist aspirations of the people, mainly to overcome the semi-coloniality of the nation. But the semi-colonial experience was only one aspect of subalternity of the Bengalis. The society had other subaltern layers, mainly the disempowered, marginalized population. But then, how obvious were these in times of genocide? Or, to put it slightly differently, is there a wilful blurring of subalternity on the part of the state and statist

²³⁸ Muhammad Abdur Rahim, *The History of the University of Dacca* (Dacca: University of Dacca, 1981), p. 1.

discourses? And if so, what does it signify? The mass murder at the hands of the Pakistan military in Dhaka University does shed some light on this.

M.A. Rahim, a professor of history, while reflecting on the 'last sixty years' (1921-1981) of Dhaka University and the role the latter played in the nationalist movement culminating in 1971, stated:

The Dacca University Campus was made one of the principal targets of attack by the army. The military leaders considered that the Dacca University was the centre of the Bangladesh movement, and hence intended to cleanse it once for all....It is estimated that about 200 students were killed in the Iqbal Hall (later Zahurul Haq Hall). Many of these dead bodies were removed by the soldiers. Two days after 30 bodies were found still lying there....It is estimated that about 300 persons, including 10 teachers and 26 other employees were killed in the University in the night of 25th and morning of 26th March.²³⁹

The commentary of US Consul General, Archer K. Blood, on the Pakistan military's attack on the University was more telling:

We saw traces of two mass graves in the campus, one near Iqbal Hall, the other near Rokeya Hall....The students at Iqbal Hall, some of who had weapons, were either shot in their rooms or mowed down when they came out of the building in groups. Rokeya Hall, a dormitory for girl students, was set ablaze and the girls were machine gunned as they fled the buildings. The attack seemed to be aimed at eliminating the female student leadership since many girl student leaders resided in that Hall.²⁴⁰

Both the accounts give an impression that the University was at the 'centre' of the movement and that the Pakistan military was targeting the 'armed students' or militant population residing there. There is an element of truth in so far as the first account goes, and this I have indicated earlier, but not so much the second account. A quick look at Appendix I would show that the victims, apart from faculty members and student, included caretakers, gardeners, security guard, sweeper, canteen owner and even a peon. A predictable question would be, why them? How threatening were they? Were they armed? Did they pose a bodily threat to the Pakistan military? Uma Rani, now a sweeper in the Arts Building, narrated how her father, Misri Rajvor, a gardener at the Vice Chancellor's office, was killed in the early hours of 26 March:

Rajvor and his family were a little relieved since they knew Urdu. They heard that the military did not kill sweepers, laundrymen and cobblers. When the military came, they pretended to be 'vangi' (sweepers). They were saved because of this lie. But after a while, when Rajvor was brushing his teeth with a neem-stick, a group of military came and asked them to follow their lead. Rajvor followed them and had to pull dead bodies.

²³⁹ M.A. Rahim, *The History of the University of Dacca* (Dacca: University of Dacca, 1981), pp.185-187.

²⁴⁰ Archer K. Blood, *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh* (Dhaka, University Press Limited, 2000), p.

The bodies of people killed at night were scattered all around. The army assured them that the people who would replace the bodies would be spared from death. They got some consolation and followed the orders. They carried the corpses on their shoulders and heaped them on the playground. All the workers became drenched in blood.

Uma witnessed everything from where she was standing under a big tree. She kept herself out of the soldiers' sight. There were some other people with her. When the dead bodies had been piled up the body pullers were ordered to stand near the dead bodies. Uma saw the military shoot with the machine-gun in every direction and then the men who had worked fell down on the ground. She saw that heartrending scene and became senseless.²⁴¹

Rajvor obviously was no militant and posed no threat to the Pakistan military, bodily or otherwise, yet he was gun-downed, tragically after helping the latter bury the dead, those that they had killed the night before. The fate of the other subalterns residing within the premise of Dhaka University and as cited in Appendix II was no different. In fact, none of them were armed. Moreover, none of the faculty members and not even the student whose accounts are provided in Appendix II were armed or posed a threat to the Pakistan military. The narratives even do not suggest them getting caught in the midst of cross firing. Rather, it gives a clear impression of a murder after being carefully hunted down. A pertinent question therefore would be, why were they all so brutally killed?

The matter, indeed, is not so much with the subaltern as it is with its dialectic, *the hegemon*. The state of subalternity, in fact, infuses in the minds of the hegemon the 'will to power,' which cannot help but reproduce a precise form of psychoneurosis. Brutality is part of this neurosis. Once the hegemon, faced with an imminent threat to its pre-eminent position, decides to 'teach a lesson' to the subalterns there is no end to brutality, blurring in the process the various subaltern layers found in the colonized or semi-colonized state. In fact, experience around the world tells us that the lower rungs of the subalterns get brutalized the most, mainly for reasons of residing in positions of easy target, while the hegemon or the perpetrator remaining less worried about the consequences of killing them. And this is what makes the killing a plain murder and, when a community is targeted, genocidal. I will have more to say about this issue shortly.

The state of innocence

Innocence further exposes the domain of criminality. Save the subalterns who were actively engaged in the campaign to dislodge the semi-colonial state and a few wilfully taking up arms, the state of innocence prevailed over a large portion of the population, including those who resided in the campus. If this is a death-trap for the innocent subalterns, it is a grand opportunity for the hegemon to lay bare its brutality. Genocide, in fact, takes place not so much in the midst of armed resistance as it takes place in the midst of unarmed population and victim's pristine innocence. Take the case of

²⁴¹ Interview 10, Appendix II.

Mohon Roy, currently a gardener in the Department of Botany, whose entire family was killed on 25 March:

Mohon Roy's father-in-law, Nomi Roy, was on duty at the outer gate of Rokeya Hall. From the hide out Mohon could hear the soldiers talking. According to him, the military threw a powerful bomb at Nomi Roy and this made his hands and legs scatter and fall far from his body. Then the Pakistan military started firing haphazardly and breaking every door of the staff quarter. At first, they broke the door of Mohon's house. They fired guns at random, and Mohon and his brother-in-law were wounded by bullets. In the mean time he saw his four year old son Shibu fall down on the floor. Mohon understood that Shanti (his wife) was dead, as she did not hold the child. He tried to bring Shibu towards him by reaching out his hand, but at that moment the soldiers came back. They shot mortar shells repeatedly, so Mohon could not drag his child closer to him. Fortunately Shibu was still alive; he did not get hurt. At that time Mohon lost his senses. After midnight, he was brought to his senses by the sound of his child crying. He crawled forward to bring Shibu but unluckily at that moment two soldiers entered the room again. Seeing them, Mohon lay down pretending to be dead. But he understood everything that was happening around him. An army tried to kick the child, but completely missed him. He kicked again, this time hitting the ear of the child. The child cried out once and then breathed his last. Mohon could not control himself and he came out of his hideout shouting. As soon as he came out the military shot him indiscriminately and left the room. Mohon's brother-in-law also came out with him and his one hand was left hanging by the skin due to the gun-shots. Mohon's legs were severely injured by bullets.²⁴²

It is not difficult to see that not only women and children but also unarmed and relatively marginalized people were brutally murdered. Two issues related to innocence can easily be raised. Firstly, the fact that Mohon's family members were relatively economically disempowered and moreover Hindus did not make them think for once that the Pakistan military would kill them in lot. This only suggests that a state of innocence amongst the Bengali population prevailed till the final days of the military crackdown. After all, if they were not politically engaged or armed, why would the military target them? Pakistan military however thought and acted differently. It saw the Bengalis, particularly those residing in the campus, in an identical manner and thought that a killing spree would cow them down for good. In fact, generalizing the population and killing them at random is what makes such killing genocidal. How threatening the four year old Shibu could have been, but then he was 'kicked to death' for the simple reason of being a member of the Bengali community. Can the killing of Shibu be justified even if the community that he belonged to (indeed, at this age for reasons of parentage) had openly questioned the very foundation of the state? This is a moot question, and it is here where acts of mass killing can be brought down to a matter of criminality and criminal offences, firstly, of the soldiers, and secondly, of the officer whose orders the soldiers were carrying out.

²⁴² Interview 7, Appendix II.

Secondly, what made the Hindu subalterns stay back in the campus and risk their lives? This certainly is puzzling, because it included not only the marginalized and less educated people like Misri Rajvor and Mohon Roy but also well-reputed educationists and faculty members like G.C. Dev and Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta. These were the people who stayed back in the eastern wing of erstwhile Pakistan after the communal partition of India in 1947. Did such Hindus then view the 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan' differently, thinking that with time the new state would overcome the bitter and violent communalization of 1947? Or, were they too convinced that they had made the right choice in opting for Pakistan and no harm would come to them so long they remain detached *personally* from the political agitation? That is the impression one gets when listening to the manner in which Professor Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta was killed:

On the night of 25th March, Mr. Jyotirmoy was checking examination papers while the rest of the Guhathakurta family went to bed. Suddenly they heard a loud sound of ammunition being fired. The gate of their house used to be locked with a chain. The Pakistani military troops opened it and rushed into the compound. The house was on the ground floor of a three-storied building. There were six flats in the building, and two of the flats were vacant. The Pakistani military knocked forcefully on every door of the flats. As the Guhathakurta family lived on the ground floor, they had a backdoor and a garden behind their house. Three people entered through that door; one of them was a military officer and the other two were soldiers. They grabbed the servant and hauled him away. They entered the house and asked, "Professor sahab kaha hain"? [Where is the Professor?]. Mrs. Guhathakurta came and asked them why they needed him. They replied, "Unko le jayenge" [We will take him with us]. Mrs. Guhathakurta went inside and told Mr. Jyotirmoy that the military had come to take him with them. She gave him a punjabi to wear. The Pakistani soldiers came up to him and said, "Apko le jayenge" [We will take you with us]. He then asked them in English "Why?" They did not answer. They dragged him out through the back door, and no one could really understand their intention at that point.

"As the non-cooperation movement was going on and the teachers were not taking classes, we feared that my father might be arrested and taken to the cantonment for questioning and investigation," said Meghna. They had been mentally prepared for this. Many people had already left their houses by then. However, since her father was the provost of the hall, he could not leave. Her father had said that even if only one student remained in the hall, it was his responsibility as the provost to stay. Thus he did not run away....

Three minutes passed and Mrs. Guhathakurta went inside to talk to Meghna while suddenly they heard the sound of heavy gunfire eight times. They rushed to the door and saw four male dead bodies. Mr. Muniruzzaman, his son and two nephews were lying dead. Shocked and horror stricken, Mrs. Muniruzzaman cried out to Mrs.

Guhathakurta, “Didi! You said they will not kill them! Look! They killed all of them!”²⁴³

Checking examination papers on the night of 25 March? Professor Jyotirmoy obviously was less keen on if not oblivious of whatever was happening in the country. In fact, rumours were already in the air from late afternoon that the Pakistan military would crackdown on the politicians and agitators that night. Some of them in fact took refuge in safe houses or simply fled the city. What did not get registered in the minds of the common people, the innocent lot, is the brutality with which the Pakistan military would attack them, and Professor Jyotirmoy, like the commoners, seems to have reassured himself of being in the innocent lot. To the Pakistan military, however, it mattered little whether the victim was Hindu or Muslim. Their state of insecurity resulted from the person being a Bengali, and on the night of 25 March, from someone who dared to stay back in the campus! Equally importantly, the cry of the soldier, “Professor sahab kaha hain”? [Where is the Professor?], only indicated that the killing was cold-blooded. Indeed, Professor Jyotirmoy was murdered not so much for the reason of being a ‘Guhathakurta’ (a Hindu, which the soldier probably came to know then and there) as for being a ‘Bengali Professor’ of Dhaka University. But then, cold-blooded murder had to be schemed and ordered, and there lies the charges of criminality on those who were responsible for the military operation.

The state of neighbourliness

Perpetrators of violence and genocide never take lessons from history. During World War II the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour or the German bombing of London or even the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki made one thing clear: the victims far from getting terrified and cowering down start helping each other and surprisingly end up more patient and resolute than ever. This precisely has been the case with those who had become victims of the atrocities unleashed by the Pakistan military in 1971. Bokul Rani, the wife of martyred Shunil Chandra Das of Jagannath Hall, despite her agony and loss of husband had all the support from the neighbours, even strangers:

People became panicked on hearing the sound of gunfire; they cried out. At around 2.30 or 3.00 a.m. somebody told Bokul to go to the gallery and take shelter there.... The next day the curfew was withdrawn and people were running towards the medical. Bokul kept looking frantically for her husband; and she joined the crowd going towards the medical. She kept asking people about her husband, but the information she got were misleading, as some people were telling her that he was alive and others said that he was dead.

Bokul’s children were crying for food but Bokul did not even have a single coin! She had 300 taka at home but she could not go back there. She was fortunate to find a tea-stall on her way. The owner was a young boy and he gave bread to her daughter and a cup of milk to her son for free. She accepted the food with gratitude and fed her kids.... It had been a tiresome evening. They reached the yard of a house but

²⁴³ Interview 2, Appendix II.

the owner of the house would not give shelter to Hindu people. But God's delays are not His denials. One of the villagers saw them and asked whether they had come from Dhaka. He asked them to sit down for a while and went to the 'Member' (a chief) of that village and urged for shelter for them. The Member was very willing and gave them room.²⁴⁴

In fact, subaltern villagers were often found standing on the roadside with glasses of water or milk to feed the women and children who were fleeing the cities and taking refuge in the village or hurrying to cross the border. I too had experienced something of the kind while journeying from Dhaka to Agartala (Tripura, India). Not only did I get a free ride on the 'launch' (boat) from Sadarghat to Badur via the dreaded Homna and special treatment from the boat-manager, and this was as late as July 1971, but also was housed and fed practically free by a not-so rich peasant who I met for the first time. Other members of the group also got the same treatment.

Neighbourliness is what made the genocidal killing futile or to put it inversely, genocide contributed to the neighbourliness of the victims and witnesses, indeed, to the point of uniting the people and concretizing the nation in the making. But why refer to it as 'the nation in the making'? Two instances found in *Muktir Gaan* (Song of Freedom), a film made by Tareque and Catherine Masud, shed light on the query. It may be mentioned that the film is based on footages originally shot and directed by Lear Levin in 1971. The first instance is somewhat symbolic. There is footage in the film in which one of the chosen participants tries to teach a caged-bird the nationalist slogan of the time. In fact, at several intervals the said participant tells the caged-parrot to repeat after him, "*Joy Bangla!*" (Hail Bangla!). I would not have given much attention to the footage if it were not authentic, that is, shot at the precise moment of the birth of the nation. Keeping aside the fact that a 'caged-bird' is repeatedly subjected to nationalist teaching (I am sure one is reminded here of Tagore's *Parrot's Training!*²⁴⁵), the footage does indicate that the 'birds' were still in the process of learning the nation to come!

The second instance, however, is more real. There is footage in the film which, almost like the first one, shows that some of the chosen participants (incidentally all urban dwellers) are teaching the rural folks, particularly the ill-fed, ill-clothed children, nationalist slogans and the need to join the *Mukti Bahini*. Although the state of being caged is less conspicuous here, but then living under the military is no less a cage! What is more important is that even midway through 1971 (when the first footages were shot) people, particularly rural folks and children, were required to be taught (admittedly somewhat unconsciously) what they were really fighting for! But then, why this would be the case? It is here that 1971 genocide becomes critical to the people of Bangladesh as it was instrumental in bringing the individuals - the rich and the vagabonds, the city-dwellers and the rural folks, the empowered and the disempowered, the Hindus and the Muslims - into a state of neighbourliness which became a key factor in uniting the people and defeating the Pakistan military.

²⁴⁴ Interview 9, Appendix II.

²⁴⁵ For the English version of the story, see, Sisir Kumar Das, ed., *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Volume Two: Plays, Stories, Essays (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996), pp.272-274.

The nation may have been ‘imagined,’ as scholarly argued by Benedict Anderson,²⁴⁶ but save the genocide it is doubtful whether the people of Bangladesh would have rallied for it with such unity, hurriedness and passion.

The state of collaboration

But there is a flipside to neighbourliness as well, one that goes in the name of ‘collaboration.’ Reasons for the latter could be diverse: political, social, ideological, financial, and even psychological. Such collaboration not only emboldens the perpetrators of genocide but also empowers the (local) collaborators to participate in genocide. Interestingly, Dhaka University, despite being a centre of nationalist campaign, was not immune from such acts of collaboration. Abdus Sobhan, an official of Zahurul Huq Hall, whose colleague was killed on 25 March, highlighted one such case:

The army was coming through the middle of the ground. Meanwhile I had reached the bottom of a tamarind tree, situated to the west of the hall. Karim lay by the tree. He was a Bihari boy and used to keep cows at the hall. I got alarmed seeing them coming towards me. I immediately rushed to a hut nearby.

I hid in the corner of a corridor. I helplessly saw the army coming straight to Karim, waking him up and talking to him for about 20 minutes. I did not understand their language. Suddenly I understood that the military had already cordoned the ground. As soon as those soldiers had moved to the pond along with Karim, I heard a distant sound of gunfire from building no.40. Immediately after that, the intensity of firing gradually increased. The army set fire here and there....

After independence, freedom fighters searched for Karim to punish him. I am sure that Karim was an agent of the Pakistani army. Otherwise, how could they have gone straight to Karim that night! A freedom fighter took him to the Indian border and shot him dead.²⁴⁷

This certainly gives an impression of the oft-spoken non-Bengali or ‘Bihari’²⁴⁸ collaboration, which, although has some merit, need not be generalized. In fact, there were several Bihari faculty members at Dhaka University who remained with the University till the final days of the surrender of the

²⁴⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

²⁴⁷ Interview 13, Appendix II.

²⁴⁸ The non-Bengali Muslim community referred to as the ‘Biharis’ in Bangladesh is a misnomer. It not only included a sizeable section of non-Biharis – people from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat and other parts of north-western India – but also members who spoke Urdu. It may be mentioned that the language of Bihar is Hindi whereas Urdu came to prominence as a language of the Delhi elite and later on of Pakistan.

Pakistan military and a handful even after Bangladesh's independence but none of them, so far I am aware, collaborated openly with the Pakistan military.²⁴⁹ In fact, the Biharis had a bad name for collaboration not so much for the seemingly petty ones of Dhaka University but for the bulk who had resided in Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas of Dhaka city. The relationship between the two, however, became more pronounced only towards the final days of the military occupation and there were specific, albeit painful, reasons for this.

In so far as Dhaka University is concerned some of the Bengalis themselves proved no less heinous when it came to collaboration, and this I claim with reference to the brutal murder of the faculty members of Dhaka University just a day or two before the surrender of the Pakistan military on 16 December 1971 and their burial in mass graves in Mohammadpur (more precisely Rayer Bazaar) and Mirpur areas. This certainly gives an impression of Bihari collaboration, but the matter is more complex. Rahela Banu, sister of martyred Professor Munir Chowdhury, narrated how she last saw his brother:

14th December, 1971. It was around 11.30 in the morning. Some young men, who looked like students, came to our house. They said, 'We are students of Munir Sir. We have come to take an interview of him.' (They were actually members of the Al Badar Bahini). Munir Bhai had taken a bath and was coming out of the bathroom. He was wearing a lungi and was putting on a punjabi. He said, 'Okay, let's go.' My mother was laying out the dishes for Munir Bhai's lunch. I told my mother that some students had come to take Munir Bhai for an interview and that he would be back very soon. My brother walked out with the young men. I stood behind a window and saw one of the young men sticking a gun against my brother's back and nudging him into a jeep. I was absolutely terrified and I started calling my mother.... They then took him away in the jeep and we never saw him again. Bangladesh was liberated two days later on the 16th. All the freedom fighters returned home to a new nation but my brother never came back. My brothers and others desperately looked for his body in Rayer Bazaar and Mirpur where the bodies of intellectuals were found but there were no traces of Munir Bhai or his clothes....²⁵⁰

There is no doubt that the 'students' who had come to pick Professor Munir for an interview were Bengalis as there was no sign of anxiety on the part of Professor Munir or the family when he agreed to go with them. Only when his sister, Rahela Banu, saw Professor Munir being hurled into a jeep with a gun at his back and that again by chance from a window did the family realize that something was terribly wrong. And what about the mode of transport? Banu tells us that it was a jeep. Does it then indicate a military connection in Professor Munir's abduction since jeeps were mostly used by

²⁴⁹ In fact, there are instances to the contrary. Mr. Jalal, a *Bihari* house tutor, for instance, gave money to collect material to bury a (Bengali) caretaker of his hall who was killed by the Pakistan military. See, Interview 13, Appendix II.

²⁵⁰ Interview 15, Appendix II.

the Pakistan military and its para-military forces? Save the perpetrators no one can say for sure since private use of jeeps were a rarity but not wholly uncommon.

In Professor Munir's case this part remains a mystery but then mass graves of intellectuals and scholars of Dhaka University were found in the Bihari populated areas of Mohammadpur and Mirpur. Could it be that the Bengali collaborators in order to hide their heinous act of killing Bengali intellectuals chose Bihari populated areas to mislead the nation? But this does not free the Biharis of the guilt of alleged collaboration because up until now they have not come up with any information regarding the victims: Were they brought to the killing fields alive or dead? Were they shot then and there? What kind of weapons was used? Who helped dig the graves? When and how were the bodies buried? After all, the Biharis living in the area must have witnessed what was going on. Isn't it a criminal offence for a witness and that again of murder to remain silent? Much of this could be resolved by putting the Bengali collaborators to trial. It would be otherwise in the interests of the Biharis themselves that the Bengali collaborators are brought to trial so that the community could single out the perpetrators (Bengali and Biharis alike) and rid itself of the blemish.

The state of the dead

If anything that had completely shattered the moral foundation of the perpetrators and consequently of the state of Pakistan in 1971 it would be with respect to the burial of the dead. The burial of Mohammad Sadeq is a case in point:

From behind the curtain Aminul watched his brother arguing with the soldiers. The soldiers were talking in Urdu and his brother was replying in English. All of a sudden, Mr.Sadeq started begging with his arms joined. To his utmost horror, Aminul saw his brother being pricked at his wrist with a bayonet, and then stabbed at his neck with it. Mr.Sadeq instantly fell down on the floor. Aminul ran to his brother after the soldiers had left. Mr.Sadeq was bleeding profusely and was doused in blood. Aminul placed his brother's head on his lap. Mr.Sadeq was trying to say something, but could not. Voice failed to come out because of the hole in his throat. For the next 8 to 10 minutes it was all silent, and Mr.Sadeq died on the lap of his younger brother.

Aminul realized that they should leave the house whenever they get the chance. He could guess that the military would come again. Aminul had to think quickly in order to save his 'bhabi' [sister-in-law], and his nephew and niece. He quickly thought of burying the dead body. He asked all the members of the family to stay quiet and dragged his brother's body to the backyard. Aminul single-handedly dug the stiff soil and buried his brother.²⁵¹

Equally heartbreaking is the case of Shahjahan's father, Ahmed Ali, an official of Rokeya hall, whose body could not be traced and hence no burial rites could be performed:

²⁵¹ Interview 1, Appendix II.

At first [Mr. Shahjahan] went to the gate of Rokeya hall and found the dead body of one of his father's acquaintances. "We were searching around for the corpse of my father and I was horrified to see dead bodies pressing down the soil," describes Mr. Shahjahan. They went on searching up to Jagannath hall. Dead bodies were scattered here and there; some were pressed down and hands and legs were getting out from there. It was very difficult to find out his father's dead body. Mr. Shahjahan says that he knew from his childhood that all Muslims need obsequies after death, and '*jana'za*' needs to be performed by other Muslim males for the peace of the departed soul. He got worried for his father, and began to frantically look for the body. After some time he became senseless. Shahjahan's uncle poured water on his head to bring him back to sense. He says, "I saw crows and vultures pecking dead bodies. The fear, anxiety and pain that I went through that day are still alive in my mind. I can feel the same pain even now after 36 years."

Mr. Shahjahan's father was never to be found. He was lost amidst the many other victims of 25th March. After independence, bones were dug up from the ground, and were heaped by the central mosque of Dhaka University.... [Every] Friday after saying his '*jumma namaj*,' [Mr. Shahjahan] prays for peace for his father's departed soul. He says, "I can't tolerate the pain of not being able to bury my father like other Muslims."²⁵²

No less morally reprehensible is the case of Shamsuddin, alias Shamsu, a caretaker of Zahurul Huq hall, who died possibly from military fire or torture. Abdus Sobhan, a colleague of Shamsu, narrated the painful incident:

The curfew was withdrawn on 27th March.... We...found Shamsu lying facedown in the corridor. His dead body was entangled with a telephone cable and a leg was twisted. As we tried to straighten the leg, we got a bad smell from his burnt body....

I could not manage white clothes for the funeral of my dear friend Shamsu. I informed this to Mr. Momin (an official of the hall) and he gave me the white curtain of his windows to cover Shamsu's dead body. After that, I hired two men with 10 taka. They carried him on a plank of wood and dug the soil to bury him. Jalil (a worker in the dining hall) took his last breathe just at the moment when Shamsu's grave was being dug. It was 9 o' clock in the morning of 27th March. We were in a hurry to finish the burial, so the men dug a bigger hole and buried both Shamsu and Jalil there. Shamsu's twisted leg had remained so. We pressed it down with bamboo and tried to bury it. But it kept coming out forcefully. Finding no alternative, we broke the leg (sobbing...) and finished the burial.²⁵³

²⁵² Interview 4, Appendix II.

²⁵³ Interview 13, Appendix II.

Several issues need some reiterating here. Firstly, the lack of respect showed to the dead by the Pakistan military, indeed, to the point of not performing *janaaza* even when becoming aware that the victims, aside from some Hindus, were predominantly Muslims, could only stir horrors in the minds of the people as to what and whom the state was trying to protect. In fact, this utter disregard for the dead (as one interviewee said, “I watched a few Pakistani soldiers throwing down dead bodies from the second floor and from the water tank at the roof of the dormitory...They sometimes hit the corpses with the tips of their boots and sometimes with the tip of their guns”)²⁵⁴ puts into question the religious or Islamic credential of the state.²⁵⁵ The military incursion against the unarmed Bengalis was evidently more a political expediency than anything remotely Islamic. Secondly, the state of fear even when burying the dead only goes on to confirm that the Pakistan military not only became an *alien force* in the hearts and minds of the kith and kin of the victims but also lost the trust it once had amongst the bulk of the Bengali population. Put differently, if anyone is to be blamed for the break up of Pakistan then it would be those who had unleashed the machinery of death and not those who had actively or passively supported a democratic transformation of the state. Finally, mass graves of bullet-ridden and heavily tortured people only go on to show that the brutality of the perpetrators was as much psycho-pathological as it was genocidal. If such perpetrators are let loose or go scot-free not only would murder become a ‘national treasure’ but would also set a trend of reproducing the same against its own people if and when required. And there lies the danger!

IV Epilogue

But are the two discourses – state and person – commensurable? A quick answer would certainly be in the negative but the response need not be so categorical. Let me highlight two issues to make my contention clear. Firstly, the discourse of the person as a methodological quest to understand social realities is a much older tradition compared to the statist discourse. The latter incidentally in its modernist form cannot be stretched beyond the Westphalian notions of 17th century. In fact, the discourse of the person has been pursued in almost all the classical texts of human civilizations, including religious texts, from time immemorial, although lately with the advent of modernity it has

²⁵⁴ Interview 3, Appendix II.

²⁵⁵ One is reminded here of the manner in which the Prophet had showed respect to the dead even when the deceased was not a Muslim. One gets the following narration in both *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*:

Jabir Ibnu Abdullah (r.a.) narrated: “There passed a bier (coffin) and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) stood up for it and we also stood up along with him. We said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, that was the bier of a Jewess.’ Upon this he remarked: ‘Verily, death is a matter of consternation, so whenever you come across a bier stand up.’”

Cited from Mokhtar Stork, *A-Z Guide to the Ahadith: a must-have reference to understanding the Traditions of the Noble Prophet Muhammad* (Singapore: Times Editions –Marshall Cavendish, 2004), p.117.

come under serious attack and is often ridiculed as subjective and devoid of ‘scientific reasoning.’²⁵⁶ Secondly, despite the hegemonic status of the statist discourse and here one must give credit to the Europeanization of the world, the legalistic tradition of apprehending and punishing criminality has remained for centuries quintessentially fixed to the *person*. Even when the state has been reprimanded for resorting to violence the incidents, save for one or two, have remained mostly flawed. But then interestingly statist rather than personal compulsions have had greater acceptance not only amongst the perpetrators but also amongst those who have sided with the victims while resorting to violence. Such is the power of the statist discourse! Yet, not everything is lost. There is still scope for both the discourses to remain simultaneously engaged, particularly on issues which remain central to both, while keeping their respective historiographies distinctive. Bringing the alleged perpetrators of genocide to trial and have them punished if found guilty in state-sponsored tribunals or judicial courts could be one such task.

Trials of mass murder and genocide could take place at four levels. Firstly, at the level of the person or individual. Since killing of unarmed citizen, even by a person in a military uniform in times of war, is a criminal offence, cases can certainly be brought before the court by a person if s/he is confident of having the required evidence. In cases like this it is expected that the nearest kith and kin of the victim or someone witnessing the killing would seek justice in the court. While fully proven evidence remains absolutely vital there is also the need for vigilance against any misuse of individual petition, lest the court come up with a verdict of dismissing such cases one after another for lack of evidence or want of technical/procedural merit.

Secondly, at the level of the group. Members collectively, again in possession of sufficient evidence of murder, loot and rape at the hands of the military and para-military forces, may approach the court for justice. There are certainly instances when villagers or townfolk in group have witnessed the horrors, including the places where mass graves have been dug, and this could easily be made available to the court during the judicial hearings. Again, there is always the possibility of this being misused by forces not wanting the trial and therefore special care has to be taken when framing the charges, particularly with reference to the evidence that is to be provided to the court.

Thirdly, at the level of the state. The latter could establish special tribunals and punish those found guilty of mass murder and genocide. This could be done by enacting the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 which, as indicated earlier, still remains valid. This certainly would produce the quickest results for rendering justice to the victims, mainly for the reason that such tribunals would not hesitate to accept circumstantial evidence, including photographs and public statements. This is otherwise vital from the standpoint of the victim because it is now already more than thirty years when the crime was actually committed and the evidence a normal court of law would seek may no longer be available.

Finally, placing the issue of genocide at the international level. This would be in line with the recent genocide trials in Kampuchea and Rwanda where the United Nations played an active role. In fact, when it comes to the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh this is one level that is absolutely vital because

²⁵⁶ See, Imtiaz Ahmed, “Introduction,” to Ashis Nandy’s *A Very Popular Exile* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press), p.4.

apart from putting into trial the local collaborators the task includes prosecuting and punishing members of an alien or foreign military force, namely the Pakistan military. Without pressures at home and abroad, including the United Nations, it is unlikely that Pakistan would agree to collaborate with Bangladesh on this matter. Put differently, to pursue the issue of genocide at the international level there is an urgent need to highlight the gravity of the case not only amongst the members of the United Nations but also, and more importantly, amongst the citizens of Pakistan. A campaign of this kind could be launched jointly by the citizens of both Pakistan and Bangladesh; indeed, with the objective of impressing upon the bulk of the population that the perpetrators of genocide are devoid of human quality or even nationality and as such if allowed to roam freely would not hesitate to replicate the horrifying deeds. An active participation on the part of the respective governments on this matter would certainly make the campaign easier and consequently create the much-required space for commencing the trials and punishing those responsible for committing crimes against humanity.

This is where incommensurability becomes meaningful from a Kuhnian standpoint. Even when there is a 'revolution in science' and a paradigm shift occurs it does not imply that the old paradigm has ceased to have all relevance and cannot be understood from the standpoint of the new.²⁵⁷ On the contrary, the new science, for reasons of greater acceptability and grand success in problem-solving, does not keep itself isolated and beyond the purview of being compared with the old sciences. Post-Einsteinian science of quantum mechanics, for instance, does not make Einstein's theory of relativity irrelevant or untranslatable from the standpoint of the former, although both remain incommensurable when placed against each other. Similarly, the four categories of genocidal trials, although may turn out to be incommensurable when placed against one another, ought not to be viewed as incommunicable or in dichotomous terms but rather efforts should be made to make best use of them, indisputably with the objective of rendering justice to the victims.

This brings us to the second issue, knowledge-creation and genocidal trials. Without evidence or proven knowledge of genocide there is no way one can seek justice for the victims. Put differently, if the perpetrators seek to erase the memories of genocide and there are ample instances of this at home and abroad it becomes imperative for those seeking justice to keep the memories of genocide alive. But saying this is one thing and having it practised is something different. There are several areas where one needs to work with extra vigour and dedication. Let me highlight three.

(a) Degovernmentalizing the issue of genocide. It is important to impress upon the nation, including political parties, policymakers and providers of public opinion that the issue of genocide cannot be politicized and made a partisan issue. This is mainly because Bangladesh genocide is the only genocide in history that was perpetrated against a population for demanding *democracy*! In fact, the genocide could not have been for 'religion' (as in the case of the Armenian genocide) because the people of both the wings of Pakistan were predominantly Muslims. Again, it could not have been for 'race' or 'ethnicity' (as in the case of the Jewish or Rwandan genocides) because inter-cultural

²⁵⁷ As Kuhn commented: "[Lack] of a common measure does not make comparison impossible. On the contrary, incommensurable magnitudes can be compared to any required degree of approximation." Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Road Since Structure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p.35. See also, Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

interactions, including inter-marriages, were common between East and West Pakistanis. It could not have been for 'language' as well (as in the case of the Aboriginal genocide in Australia or the Chinese genocide in Indonesia) because *Bangla* was already one of the national languages of the state of Pakistan. And certainly it could not have been for class or ideological reasons (as in the case of the Kampuchean genocide) because the perpetrators of Bangladesh genocide did not single out the economically rich or inversely the economically poor. Bengalis were murdered irrespective of their class affiliations.

Nor could Pakistan blame Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his historic 7 March speech where he declared that "The struggle this time is for emancipation! The struggle this time is for independence!" because Mujib also ended his speech with the words: "Joy Bangla! Joy Pakistan!"²⁵⁸ It may be mentioned that the Bangla word for independence is '*swadhinata*' and it has multiple meanings, including 'freedom.' And therefore any suggestion that the speech is a 'declaration of independence' and therefore a call for secession does not hold true. On this, the Mujibnagar Cabinet is absolutely right in declaring *26 March* and not 7 March as the country's Independence Day. In this context it is worth emphasizing here that without 25 March or genocide there could not have been a Bangladesh, at least not in 1971. It was the genocidal attack on the people of Bangladesh that ended all rationale of having two wings in the state of Pakistan. And this is why democracy and genocide are so important when it comes to the birth of Bangladesh and the *raison d'être* for having a separate state. Few countries, I believe, could be found to have shed so much blood in their struggle for democracy and this is one factor that would be difficult to erase even if some quarters are conspiring as it is often alleged to roll back the democratic aspirations of the people. It is otherwise in the interests of democracy and the rule of law that the issue of genocide be de-partisaned and given a 'national' prominence that it rightly deserves. Any attempt to downplay the horrifying experience would not only make the campaign for democracy irrelevant but also put into question the very birth of Bangladesh. A national effort would certainly help in the collection of evidence, including making use of them in war crime tribunals without worrying about political or partisan compulsions.

(b) Re-moralizing the issue of genocide, particularly by bringing into account the killing of the Biharis at the hands of the Bengalis. One report indicates that between the period of December 1970 and March 1971 some 15,000 to 50,000 Biharis were killed as a result of violence meted against them.²⁵⁹ If this is the case, and if there were serious human rights violation and unlawful killing, there is no

²⁵⁸ The author was present at the Race Course, now *Suhrwardy* Uddyan, on 7 March 1971 and therefore heard the entire speech in person. It may be mentioned that some, including those present at the Race Course, dispute Mujib ending the speech with the words 'Joy Pakistan!' This I believe could be for reasons of audibility. Those who were near the platform or bit far from the microphones probably missed the very last words as people in tens of thousands began clamouring noisily when they realized that Mujib was ending his speech, particularly when he uttered 'Joy Bangla!' Moreover, the Pakistan government, not even Zulfikar Bhutto, ever charged Mujib of secession after the speech. On the contrary, both Yahya Khan and Bhutto came to Dhaka to negotiate with Mujib but left just hours before the Pakistan military resorted to genocide, killing hundreds of unarmed people of Bangladesh in the late hours of 25 March 1971.

²⁵⁹ Sumit Sen, "Stateless Refugees and the Right to Return: the Bihari Refugees of South Asia, Part 1," *International Journal of Refugee Law*, Volume 11, Number 4, 1999, pp.625-645.

reason why this should not be investigated and the Bengali perpetrators brought to trial and punished for the offence. This would put to the rest the grievances of the Biharis and in the process bring them into confidence in the Bengali quest to put to trial the perpetrators and render justice to the victims of genocide. As I indicated earlier, there are Biharis who have had first hand knowledge of the atrocities of the Pakistan military and their collaborators and some of them may be willing to share the information provided space is created to handle their grievances as well.

(c) Disseminating knowledge of genocide at the global level. If there is a particular genocide which had the least coverage internationally, it would have to be the one committed by the Pakistan military against the Bengali population in 1971. While academic circles and international media are familiar with the Jewish, Armenian, Cambodian, Rwandan, even Bosnian genocide but the same cannot be said when it comes to Bangladesh genocide. The fault however rests not so much with the international world as it rests with the successive regimes in Bangladesh. There has been no concerted effort on the part of the state, even with regimes sensitive to the issue of genocide at home, to make this issue into a global subject of concern. There is no reason to believe that this would change overnight with future regimes. It is time therefore that the issue be taken up by the members of the post-1971 Bangladesh diaspora, as many amongst them have lost their dear ones or were witness to the killing, rape and destruction and have a stake in the post-1971 identity of the nation. Elsewhere I mooted the idea of the government launching *Bangladesh Parishod* or Council in different cities of the world, managed and run, however, by a pool of officially-sanctioned, well-qualified members of the Bangladesh diaspora.²⁶⁰ If this comes into being, it could certainly engage itself in disseminating knowledge of 1971 genocide to the local population and have the issue transformed into a global concern.

Finally, what role must Dhaka University play for being what can be regarded as an epicenter of genocide? It is an irony and somewhat sad that such a question is raised nearly four decades after the gruesome killing of its members, which included gardeners, peons, caretakers, security guards, canteen owner, students, teachers, officials, and many more. One thing is certain that Dhaka University as the epicenter of genocide and for sacrificing so much for the cause of democracy and emancipation has lot to offer not only to the nation and the world but to humanity as a whole. And it is precisely for this that the authorities of Dhaka University, indeed, with active support from faculty members, campus officials, family members, even students, old and new, and the society at large must embark upon the noble task of establishing a *Centre for Genocide Studies* (CGS) within the premise of its campus on a priority basis. To make its task unique in this part of the world, the CGS ought to have a declaratory mandate to perform four sets of activities.

First is research. Apart from having critical research on 1971 Bangladesh genocide and the ones that occurred elsewhere in the past or since then, there should be a concerted effort to collect the 'life stories' of each and every dead and living victim as well as of perpetrators of Bangladesh genocide. In fact, students each year of various faculties could be mobilized to work on this time consuming task.

²⁶⁰ Imtiaz Ahmed, "Future Directions of Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Dreams or Nightmares?" Keynote paper presented at The Daily Star & Centre for Foreign Affairs Studies (CFAS) Roundtable on 22 November 2008.

This would not only bring down the cost of the research but would also allow the students to be exposed to what is certainly a tragic episode in the country's history.

Second is teaching. Courses of all kinds, semester-wise or year-long, including those designed for the professionals, could be offered by the CGS. Such courses on genocide and mass violence need not be limited to social science students but could also be offered to the students of science and business faculties. It may be mentioned that given the task of unearthing mass graves and various killing fields specialized branches like forensic medicine, forensic science, forensic anthropology or forensic pathology could be developed at the CGS, which would certainly attract students from diverse faculties.

Third is having 'genocide tour' for the public. The birth of Bangladesh, as indicated earlier, cannot be contemplated without taking into consideration the glorious role and the painful sacrifice of Dhaka University. As a result the campus has become a destination for the tourists, both local and foreign. But such touristic exposure of Dhaka University needs to be made more informative, authentic and efficient, and the CGS with student-volunteers as tour guides can certainly play a role.

Last but not least is housing a genocide museum and archive. The CGS could attract a large number of people from within the country and beyond by collecting genocidal relics and printed and visual materials of all kinds, including posters, photos and pamphleteers, relating to genocide and mass violence. And this need not be of Bangladesh alone but could be of places and times wherever state machineries and humans have unleashed their darkest side of being and resorted to torture, rape, killing and other forms of mass violence. A cue could be taken from various genocidal museums around the world, including Tuol Sleng [Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh](#) (Kampuchea), Kigali Memorial Centre in Kigali City (Rwanda), Armenian Genocide Museum of America and Holocaust Museum both in Washington DC (USA). A critical awareness of genocide and mass violence is bound to embolden the person in the vital task of putting an end to all crimes against humanity. As the epicenter of genocide let Dhaka University and the CGS embark upon this noble task as well.

Appendix I

Interview No.	Name of Interviewee	Profession	Age (Year)	Relation with the Martyr	Martyr's Name	Martyr's Profession
1	Aminul Haq	Deputy Controller Examiner, DU	53	Brother	Mohammad Sadeq	Teacher, University Laboratory School
2	Meghna	Executive Director,	53	Father	Jyothirmoy Guhathakurta	Lecturer in English Dept &

	Guhathakurta	Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB)				Provost of Jagannath Hall, DU
3	Rajkumari Roy	House Wife	62	Husband	Monvoron Roy	Peon, Commerce Building, (Then NIPA Bhaban), DU
4	Md. Shahjahan	Work Assistant, Chief Engineer office, Electrical Dept. Register Building, DU	46	Father	Ahmed Ali	Caretaker, Rokeya Hall, DU
5	Odhir Chandra Dey	Upper Division Assistant, Provost Office Jagannath Hall, DU	44	Father	Modhusudon Dey	Founder Director of 'Modhur Canteen' at DU Campus
6	Hasina Hafiz	Chief Assistant, Rokeya Hall, DU	52	1. Father 2. Mother 3. Sister 4. Brother	- Neoj Ali	Caretaker, Rokeya Hall, DU
7	Mohon Roy	Gardener, Botany Dept, DU	70	1. Father in law 2. Mother in law 3. Wife 4. Children	- Nomi Roy - Shundori Roy - Shanti Roy - Maya Rani - Chaya Rani - Shibu Roy - Biru Roy	Caretaker, Rokeya Hall, DU
8	Gita Rani	House Wife	62	Husband's Nephew	Shunil Chandra Das	Student, Dept. of Soil Science, DU

9	Bokul Rani Das	House Wife	60	Husband	Shunil Chandra Das	Caretaker, Jagannath Hall
10	Uma Rani	Sweeper, Arts Building, DU	49	Father	Misri Rajvor	Gardener, V.C office, DU
11	Fulbanu	House Wife	57	Husband	Abdul Khaleq	Gardener, Rokeya Hall, DU
12	Md. Mohoshin	Messenger & Peon Rokeya Hall, DU	51	1. Father 2. Mother 3. Sister 4. Sister in law 5. Brother	Monir Uddin	Head Security Guard, Rokeya Hall, DU
13	Abdus Sobhan	Grade 3 Staff, Zahurul Haq Hall, DU	59	Colleague	Shamsuddin	Caretaker, Zahurul Haq Hall, DU
14	Roquaiya Hasina (Neely)	Electronic Media Artist	50	Father	S. M. A. Rashidul Hasan	Professor, English Department, DU
15	Rahela Banu	Professor of English IML, DU	58	Brother	Munir Chowdhury	Professor, Bangla Department, DU

Appendix II

[Interviews were collected by Romena Parvin²⁶¹ in Bangla under the supervision of the author while translation and editing of the interviews were done by Romena Parvin, Md. Nazmus Saqib,²⁶² Mritunjoy Kumar Banik²⁶³ and Anika Mariam Faruqui²⁶⁴].

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²⁶³ Lecturer, Central Women's College, Dhaka.

²⁶⁴ Student of Architecture, Brac University, Dhaka.

Interview 1

Aminul Haq
Deputy Controller of Examinations,
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Brother

Mohammad Sadeq
Senior Teacher,
Government Laboratory School,
University of Dhaka

Mr. Mohammad Sadeq was a teacher of IER. His brother, Mr. Aminul Haq, is now the Deputy Controller of Examination, DU. In the first week of March 1971 Mr. Aminul came to Dhaka to spend the holidays with his brother. It was during this time that he heard the passionate speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7th March and saw the non-violent 'non-cooperation movement' in effect.

On the night of 25th March, the Pakistani Army first attacked the halls of Dhaka University. There was heavy gunfire and the halls went up in flames and fumes. Aminul and his brother were staying home when there was a knock at the door. Realizing that the military had come, Mr.Sadeq went to open the door. As soon as he opened the door, three soldiers rushed into the room. Aminul quickly hid himself behind the curtains. The soldiers looked around the house with curiosity. From behind the curtain Aminul watched his brother arguing with the soldiers. The soldiers were talking in Urdu and his brother was replying in English. All of a sudden, Mr.Sadeq started begging with his arms joined. To his utmost horror, Aminul saw his brother being pricked at his wrist with a bayonet, and then stabbed at his neck with it. Mr.Sadeq instantly fell down on the floor. Aminul ran to his brother after the soldiers had left. Mr.Sadeq was bleeding profusely and was doused in blood. Aminul placed his brother's head on his lap. Mr.Sadeq was trying to say something, but could not. Voice failed to come out because of the hole in his throat. For the next 8 to 10 minutes it was all silent, and Mr.Sadeq died on the lap of his younger brother.

Aminul realized that they should leave the house whenever they get the chance. He could guess that the military would come again. Aminul had to think quickly in order to save his 'bhabi' [sister-in-law], and his nephew and niece. He quickly thought of burying the dead body. He asked all the members of the family to stay quiet and dragged his brother's body to the backyard. Aminul single-handedly dug the stiff soil and buried his brother. Then they planned to hide under the bed, leaving the door wide open. After a few minutes soldiers entered the house. Unfortunately the horrified children started crying. The soldiers traced them and ordered them to come out from their hideout. Aminul could sense that there was no escape. As expected, the soldiers inquired about the dead body. Aminul wittily replied that some soldiers had taken the body away. But the soldiers did not believe him and were about to kill him. They made Aminul stand against the wall while auspiciously an officer came in at that time and told the soldiers to go with him at once. The night of 25th March could have marked the death of two brothers but fortune favoured the brave. Aminul got a second

life and was not willing to lose it. Soon after the soldiers went out he, along with his brother's family, left the house in search of a safe shelter. They took refuge at the house of an uncle of an acquaintance of Aminul at Nilkhet residential area.

The Pakistani military forces were seizing civilians from everywhere. Aminul saw many people being concealed in the corridors of the buildings. Probably the military did not understand that Fuller road was a residential area as students did not reside there. Curfew was withdrawn on 27th March. Aminul, along with his sister-in-law and her two children, set out for their village and survived the turmoil of the war. After the independence a few teachers raised an objection regarding the place of burial of Mr. Mohammad Sadeq. Intervention of the then Vice Chancellor saved the grave from being replaced.

Interview: 2

Meghna Guhathakurata
Executive Director
Research Institute of Bangladesh

Martyr: Father

Professor Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta
Department of English
University of Dhaka

Martyr Intellectual Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta was the father of Meghna Guhathakurta. He was a Reader in English at Dhaka University, and was the then Provost of Jagannath Hall. During the Liberation war they used to reside at the opposite side of the Shaheed Minar, east of the Jagannath Hall. In March 1971, the non-cooperation movement was going on. Meghna Guhathakurta, a teenager then, watched students breaking the curfew and bringing out processions along the road of the Shaheed Minar. The sound of gunfire was very common at that time.

On the night of 25th March, Mr. Jyotirmoy was checking examination papers while the rest of the Guhathakurta family went to bed. Suddenly they heard a loud sound of ammunition being fired. The gate of their house used to be locked with a chain. The Pakistani military troops opened it and rushed into the compound. The house was on the ground floor of a three-storied building. There were six flats in the building, and two of the flats were vacant. The Pakistani military knocked forcefully on every door of the flats. As the Guhathakurta family lived on the ground floor, they had a backdoor and a garden behind their house. Three people entered through that door; one of them was a military officer and the other two were soldiers. They grabbed the servant and hauled him away. They entered the house and asked, "Professor sahab kaha hain?" [Where is the Professor?]. Mrs. Guhathakurta came and asked them why they needed him. They replied, "Unko le jayenge" [We will take him with us]. Mrs. Guhathakurta went inside and told Mr. Jyotirmoy that the military had come to take him with them. She gave him a punjabi to wear. The Pakistani soldiers came up to him and said, "Apko le jayenge" [We will take you with us]. He then asked them in English "Why?" They did not answer.

They dragged him out through the back door, and no one could really understand their intention at that point.

“As the non-cooperation movement was going on and the teachers were not taking classes, we feared that my father might be arrested and taken to the cantonment for questioning and investigation,” said Meghna. They had been mentally prepared for this. Many people had already left their houses by then. However, since her father was the provost of the hall, he could not leave. Her father had said that even if only one student remained in the hall, it was his responsibility as the provost to stay. Thus he did not run away.

Meanwhile, the Guhathakurta family tried to inform their friends and relatives about what had happened. There were sounds of gunfire everywhere. They noticed that the phone line had been cut off. The soldiers came to search again. They searched the bedroom, the bathroom, etc. and asked, “Where is Mujibur Rahman?” The Guhathakurta family was surprised because they knew only Sheikh Mujib whereas the soldiers were asking for ‘Mujibur Rahman’. They replied that they did not know him. The military scolded them and said, “What are you saying! You don’t know him?” They asked whether there was any male in the house. Mrs. Guhathakurta informed them about her only daughter. The military asked her to stay inside the house and not to be afraid, because women were safe.

After some time there were sounds of knocking at the front door. As Meghna opened the door she saw Professor Muniruzzaman, the Head of the Statistics Department, being taken away. Mr. Muniruzzaman resided on the 4th floor. His family comprised of his son and two nephews. Pakistani soldiers pulled and hauled Mr. Muniruzzaman, his son and nephews and two other boys. Soldiers were holding their hands from behind. The terrified wife of Muniruzzaman came to Mrs. Guhathakurta and said, “Look didi (sister)! They are taking away my husband and sons!” Mrs. Guhathakurta replied, “Let them do so. Don’t resist otherwise they may kill us all. They took away my husband too.” At that time the families thought that the military would only imprison the men they had taken away. Three minutes passed and Mrs. Guhathakurta went inside to talk to Meghna while suddenly they heard the sound of heavy gunfire eight times. They rushed to the door and saw four male dead bodies. Mr. Muniruzzaman, his son and two nephews were lying dead. Shocked and horrorstricken, Mrs. Muniruzzaman cried out to Mrs. Guhathakurta, “Didi! You said they will not kill them! Look! They killed all of them!” In the mean time, Mrs. Muniruzzaman’s sister came running to Mrs. Guhathakurta and informed that Mr. Jyotirmoy had been shot too. Spellbound, Mrs. Guhathakurta could understand only one sentence, that he was still alive and looking for her. Immediately they ran to the spot with a bucket of water. Mr. Jyotirmoy still had sense. The military had asked him his name before he was shot twice, once in his neck and once in his waist. Just because he had bent his neck, the bullet touched the side of his neck only. A severe waist injury cost him a feeble lower portion. He was unable to pull up his body.

Professor Abdur Razzak (later to become National Professor) used to reside on the second floor of the same building with his family. They witnessed the whole deadly incident. The Professor, his brother, nephew and Mr. Jyotirmoy’s driver helped take him inside the house, passing the dead bodies lying down in front of the door as they did so. Mr. Jyotirmoy was undergoing heavy bleeding but still retained his sense. Due to the curfew it was impossible to take him to the hospital. Heavy

gunfire was going on everywhere and people outside in the streets were being shot. The Guhathakurta family could not take Mr. Jyotirmoy to the hospital amidst such turbulence, although the Dhaka medical hospital was just across the road. They had to pass the night in anxiety, stress and horror. Mr. Jyotirmoy was laid on the floor so that no one could see him from outside. After finishing their shootout mission the military came back again, this time to collect the dead bodies. They counted four bodies and took them. Mr. Muniruzzaman's family had taken his dead body to the 3rd floor which the military dragged away and later buried in the mass-burial. The Guhathakurta family hid Mr. Jyotirmoy and luckily the military had forgotten about him. The Guhathakurtas were afraid as he was still alive and feared that the military might take him away. They were also planning to distinguish themselves as Christians if asked about their religion. This is because the military would not believe them if they had said they were Muslims. Fortunately the military forgot about the Guhathakurta family and did not bother to check their house.

During the same night, 3/4th of the students from Jagannath Hall came to their house to take refuge. They were urging for shelter at least for that night. The students had fled from the hall as they had witnessed dreadful scenes of mass killing at the Jagannath hall premises by the military. They were hiding at the roof top of the hall and thus could escape from death. The students hastily left the Guhathakurta house at dawn.

Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta was wounded and alive without any treatment until 27th March, when the curfew was withdrawn. Some people took shelter in the nearest mosque (Hossani dalan). Few of them came to inquire about the condition of the Guhathakurta family. Helpless and unable to leave the house, they had to request those unknown people to help them take Mr. Guhathakurta to the hospital. Consequently Mr. Jyotirmoy was taken to the hospital, wrapped in a bed sheet. The family members joined him at the hospital later on. Initially he was kept on the floor as the beds were all filled up with people injured with bullets. Most of them were students and policemen from the Rajarbag police line. In such an upsetting situation the doctor examined Mr. Jyotirmoy and declared that it was not possible to save his life because of his critical injuries.

The morning of 30th March marked the death of a prominent intellectual, Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta. But even death was not the end to his sufferings; his dead body went missing from the hospital. The body had been kept at the hospital bed for a day. Many people went to see him but could not find his body. On being informed, Mrs. Guhathakurta looked for the body in the morgue and in the place where unclaimed bodies were kept. But the search went in vain. Some people said that an unidentified student had seen his body being kept with the unclaimed bodies. Some people said that he was buried by that student somewhere near the hospital. Thus there are two perceptions about Mr. Jyotirmoy's dead body's last stand, a mystery never to be revealed. The Guhathakurta family did not exhume the body, nor did they request anyone else to do it.

For the entire nine months of the Liberation war, the family of Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta had to run from one place to another and had to change their residence frequently. They could not even stay at a friend's house. Residing in other houses caused problems, as the neighboring people talked about them. They feared that the military might search the houses looking for the Guhathakurta family. If anyone informed military about them it could create problem for the family who gave them shelter.

Meghna Guhathakurta once stayed at a Christian orphanage, Botomuli Home Orphanage, situated at Tejgaon. She had to disguise herself as a Christian with a fake Christian name. The orphanage was just opposite to the Holy Cross School, where she used to study. The Sisters at Holy Cross knew about the Guhathakurta family, and they hid Meghna for many days. They even admitted Mrs. Guhathakurta to the Holy Family hospital for her safety. Later the nurses in the Hospital gave her a quarter in the hospital. Meghna stayed in the orphanage for one month, and later joined her mother at the hospital where she had to live secretly. A few days before 16th December, a family friend of the Guhathakurta's came from America and he looked for them on returning. Until 16th December the Guhathakurta's lived with him.

Interview 3

Rajkumari Roy
Housewife

Martyr: Husband

Monvoron Roy
Office Assistant,
University of Dhaka

It was 25th March, 1971. I went to bed at about half past eleven but still could not sleep. Suddenly, at about 12 p.m., I heard heavy gunfire outside. 'Can you hear the sound?' I asked my husband. He replied with a look of panic on his face. 'Yes! Pak Army, the butcher, has entered our hall! I guess they have besieged us!' he said. I was about to inquire further when a heavy blow of gunfire was heard again. With the sound of the gunfire the electricity went out, leaving the whole Jagannath Hall in darkness. The butchers started firing indiscriminately using rifles, machine guns, mortars and tanks. It was nothing but a rain of bullets. We could not figure out the source of the indiscriminate firing, so we lay down on the floor to save ourselves. After a while we crawled our way to an unfinished building near our house. The heavy sound of the firing outside made my child restless and she started sobbing. My husband whispered to me to clasp her carefully so that we do not lose her. He whispered again, 'They are approaching us. Can you hear the thudding sound?' Just after that we heard them kicking the door terribly and shouting at us to open it. They shouted, "Hey bastard! Where are you? Open the door or we'll ruin your lives." As soon as my 'Kaki' (aunt) opened the door, they stepped into the house and pointed their gun around. They yelled and shouted and asked for our whereabouts.

They further ordered to 'stand up in the corner and switch on the light.' We stammered and said, 'There has been no electricity after the firing.' The men groped at the switchboard and checked whether we were speaking the truth. Then they told us to bring matches and illuminate the room. They forced us to go to the playground at gunpoint where they had gathered a few other unfortunates earlier. My husband told me to hold on to our children tightly. When we reached the corridor an officer, probably a Major, stepped forward and asked the soldiers, 'Where are you taking them?' "To the playground," the soldiers replied. The officer ordered the soldiers to leave us. He said, "Come back here later. Let's go to the other side". He was probably referring to the dormitory.

As soon as they left the place, we decided to seek a safer refuge. I, with my three children, rushed to take shelter in our neighbouring building, the assembly hall. I got separated from my husband at that time. He was hiding inside a cupboard in our house and he forbade me to tell anyone about it. The house where we took refuge was gradually filled up with about 25 women. Few of them were wailing over the loss of family members. Some of us peeped through the window and tried to get a see the butchery going on outside. There were heavily armed Pakistani troops all over the playground. They started firing randomly once again and we narrowly missed getting shot. We lay down while the carnage went on the entire night. Just before dawn, soldiers broke into the house where we had taken refuge and shouted abusive words at us. They shouted, "Where are you bastards? Come, pull out the dead bodies and help us to identify the students." A man frowned and asked 'How can we identify the students? Why are you killing us?' He was replied with the merciless pierce of the bayonet. They dragged out almost all the males from each house. At dawn, I watched the armies making the males set fire around the territory. The canteen of Shudhir Babu was set afire. It was just beside the house where we stayed. We felt an intolerable heat and were about to be burnt. We saved ourselves from the heat by hiding in an open space in front of the nearby latrine. Kaki and I took shelter over there. I watched a few Pakistani soldiers throwing down dead bodies from the second floor and from the water tank at the roof of the dormitory. They compelled a few people who were still luckily alive, to carry the dead bodies and pile them up on the field. The soldiers did not even spare the corpses, which were falling down from the heap, from their brutal treatment. They sometimes hit the corpses with the tips of their boots and sometimes with the tip of their guns. After the heap was formed, I watched a few more males of different ages being dragged to the place in order to make them the unfortunate additions to the heap. Modhu-da was one of them. Although he was severely wounded he still had his sense. An army shot him several times. I saw a few other people dragging along the dead body of G.C. Dev. Two soldiers brought Mukindro Babu' of our temple, shot him and laid him down with the other dead bodies. It was already daylight then. With the sight of the sun we found a glimpse of hope among us. A sense of calm was present. A voice, 'water, water' was coming from the stack of corpses. A boy like Moti was moving slightly from the copses. The hyenas saw it and shot him many times. The troops stood there watching the bodies for sometime to see whether there was anybody still alive. When they confirmed that everybody was dead they left the place in their van. A few soldiers marched up to us and forbade us to move an inch from where we were. Although they had left the hall, we were still afraid to move from the place, afraid to meet the same fate as our families and acquaintances. We thought that there must be some soldiers on guard outside and that they would shoot us if we came out. Dead bodies were scattered everywhere. Hearing someone asking for water, aunt decided to come out. She went out to find out whether Bindu's father (my husband) was alive or not. I knew he was hiding inside the cupboard. I did not even dare to inform it to her. She heard someone addressing her as 'Kaki' She frantically began to trace the source of the sound. Running over three dead bodies she found my husband lying wounded. He groaned and said, 'Kaki, I can't pull up my body.' With a sigh he asked, 'What about my wife? Are my children ok? Can you provide me with a glass of water?' His consecutive queries made my aunt restless. She said, 'How can I feed you water here? Let's go home.' He moved forward and requested, 'Will you hold me? Can I have a glance of my children?' My aunt came back to where I was to look for a few men to drag him. I said, 'Where will we search for men? Mother-in-law, you and I together can drag him instead.' Then I saw my brother-in-law. However, he was not inclined to take the risk of going outside because he was scared of being captured by the army. I rebuked him for his cowardice and said, 'How will you live peacefully if you let your brother die?' That made him join us. We brought my

husband to our house and I sat beside him for twenty minutes. He wanted to drink water again and I gave him a glass of water. He requested me to pour the water on his head and I did so. He told me that when he was hiding inside the cupboard soldiers came back to search our house again. They found him, tortured him, and took him to the playground. My husband asked me to look at his back. I saw a big hole there. It was bleeding severely and things were coming out from his abdomen. I tried to fill up the hole by putting some cloths into it but it continued to bleed. As the floor of our house was made of soil, the blood flowing down from his abdomen remained there. The bleeding was so acute that the floor of the room became bloody. I tried to medicate the wound by pouring water, but in vain. Mohon's father, our neighbor, was also bullet-injured. He got shot three times. He was also in the room with a blood-soaked body. Somebody else was busy attending him. I told him to sleep. He assured me about his health and said, 'No, I am ok. Don't worry about me. You should medicate him with caution.' My husband was trying to draw my attention with gestures while I was talking to Mohon's father. He told me to ask Kaki about the gold jewels. When he was hiding in the room, he put all my gold ornaments into a tin-pot and threw it into a big drain. He told me that Kaki knew about it. He also told me to collect the ornaments from the drain later with the help of my brother-in-law. Though I had changed my bloody cloth once before, my clothes got soaked again. My husband told me to change it again. My daughter was wailing outside on the lap of my mother in law. People scolded me and told me to keep my child quiet and to take her into the house. They were afraid that the soldiers would come again hearing her wailing. My husband then requested me to console my child and to make her quiet. I spent an hour trying to make her calm down. Leaving the child with her grandmother, I rushed to my husband. I found him lying stiff on the bed. I thought he had fainted. I pushed him but he did not respond. Then Mohan's father informed me that he was dead. Although my husband was seriously injured, I never thought that he would die so soon. A person named Odud Miah who used to sell books and papers outside the hall gate, was observing the position of the military lying down. When he saw no military there, he thought of bringing out at least a few people from the hall. He came towards us with Shiva. Shiva resided in the hall with his family. That night he had been on duty at Mitford. In the morning he came lamenting over his family. However, God was very kind to him; there was no harm done to his family. He found his two brothers, father, wife and children. However, Shiva and Odud Miah came to us and told us to leave the place quickly before the army attacked the place. Some, however, were not willing to leave their paternal houses, but others were more concerned about saving their lives.

Few began evacuating and the rest followed. We rushed to the gate and I came back to see my husband for the last time. When we were fleeing through the gate we were horrified at the sight near the gate. There were another heap of dead bodies. We were afraid but we had to save ourselves. We tread over the dead bodies and left the place quickly. As soon as we reached the medical gate, we watched a car halt near the hall. We did not look behind but ran away. Two men approached us and told us to go to Hossani Dalan. They told us to go ahead without stopping anywhere. We reached Hossni Dalan. Some Muslims were coming out through the gate after performing their 'Namaj' (prayer). They were startled to see us and asked us, 'Where are you all from?' We told them about our sufferings. Then the caretaker of the building asked us to enter the building quickly. 'If the army gets information that we are providing you with shelter, they might blow up building,' said the caretaker. He requested us to go up the stairs, and to forget our religious identities. There was a corridor at the top of the stairs and we sat down there. They requested us to keep the babies quiet. After midnight I felt pain in my burnt body, which I did not notice earlier. During the morning prayer of the Muslims,

I came down the stairs, leaving my child with my brother-in-law. There was a pond near the burial place of Bibi Fatima. I requested the caretaker to let me bathe in that pond. I informed him about my burns. He said that if I had the wish and the courage to bathe there, he had no objection. I went ahead but was afraid to get down. The water of the pond was looking dark. I went back upstairs and fetched my aunt and brought her with me. I got down slowly and I bathed in the pond. My body gradually became cooler.

Later in the morning the curfew was withdrawn. We got out in search of a reliable shelter. Within the nine months of our independence, we changed our residence several times. After independence, I went to reside in my relative's house. I was very beautiful when I was young and my relatives tried to force me to marry again. I did not comb my hair nor dress up well so that I looked unattractive. For many years, I behaved abnormally whenever I heard about soldiers and blood.

Now I reside at Jagannath hall with my sons and their family. My son Bindu works in Dhaka University. A few officials are planning to take us away from our residence. Every day I pray to God so that I can take my last breath in this hall. Every morning I watch the mass burial in the hall. My husband is lying under the soil of this playground. I came here as a bride, and I wish to leave as a corpse.

“Ma, can you help me? Can you control these people, so that they allow me to reside here with my family until my death?” urged the old lady with a look of panic on her face.

Interview 4

Md. Shahjahan
Officer,
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Father

Ahmed Ali
Official,
Rokeya Hall (hostel for female students)
University of Dhaka

Md. Shahjahan is working in Dhaka University Registrar office. His father, Ahmed Ali, was an official of Rokeya Hall, Dhaka University, during the Liberation war. He lost his father during the Operation Searchlight conducted by the Pakistan Army on 25th March 1971.

In March 1971, Mr. Shahjahan came to Dhaka to stay with his father. He was only 9 years old then. As a loving father, Ahmed Ali used to take him wherever he went. One day however, he told Shahjahan to leave Dhaka as quickly as possible, and told him that tumult might occur any time. Curious Shahjahan asked his father, “What type of tumult?” his father scolded him and said, “You will not understand.” He was very hurt because his father had never rebuked him before. Immediately Shahjahan was sent to his village with his uncle, just 2 days prior to 25th March.

Their village was in Munshigonj, near Dhaka. "On the night of 25th March, we could guess the situation in Dhaka from our village home. We could apprehend that something was happening in Dhaka," says Mr. Shahjahan. Abdul Khaleq from the same village used to work with his father. He came to their house on 26th March and informed them that Shahjahan's father was no more. He described the mass-killing in Dhaka University campus. The Pakistani military had attacked the Rokeya Hall staff quarter along with other halls and buildings. Abdul Khaleq and Shahjahan's father had taken shelter in a room with a few other staffs. When the army attacked the building and was about to enter their room, Abdul Kahleq took shelter in the next room, and could save himself by coming out through window by breaking the rods. Mr. Shahajahan says, "I came to know from him (Abdul Khaleq) that all the staff who took shelter in that room was dead." Before running away from that place in the morning Abdul Khaleq went to Rokeya hall in search of Shahjahan's father. "He didn't find him, not even his dead body," he continues. Khaleq informed that there was no possibility of Ahmed Ali being alive, as the firing had been too massive.

Mr. Shahjahan heard from other staffs who had survived that night that the Pakistani military had entered Rokeya hall at about 12:30 am. Nomi Roy, a security guard at Rokeya hall, was asked his name by the military. He replied, "Hum Hindu hai" [I am a Hindu]. Nomi Roy was blown up with mortar shells at once. The troops then entered the Provost's room and shot 20/25 people in a row. All of them were officials and members of their family. Those who could escape the killing ran to the residence of Akhtar Imam (then Provost of Rokeya hall).

Shahjahan and his family were anxious to get any news of Ahmed Ali. As Abdul Kahleq had not seen Ahmed Ali's dead body in the morning, they had high hopes of him being still alive. Shahjahan's uncle set out for Dhaka on 27th March. Despite the restraint of his family, Shahjahan adamantly went with him. At first they went to the gate of Rokeya hall and found the dead body of one of his father's acquaintances. "We were searching around for the corpse of my father and I was horrified to see dead bodies pressing down the soil," describes Mr. Shanjahan. They went on searching up to Jagannath hall. Dead bodies were scattered here and there; some were pressed down and hands and legs were getting out from there. It was very difficult to find out his father's dead body. Mr. Shahjahan says that he knew from his childhood that all Muslims need obsequies after death, and 'Janaza' needs to be performed by other Muslim males for the peace of the departed soul. He got worried for his father, and began to frantically look for the body. After some time he became senseless. Shahjahan's uncle poured water on his head to bring him back to sense. He says, "I saw crows and vultures pecking dead bodies. The fear, anxiety and pain that I went through that day are still alive in my mind. I can feel the same pain even now after 36 years."

Mr. Shahjahan's father was never to be found. He was lost amidst the many other victims of 25th March. After independence, bones were dug up from the ground, and were heaped by the central mosque of Dhaka University. Abdul Khaleq continued working at Rokeya hall. As for Mr. Shahjahan, every Friday after saying his 'jumma namaj,' he prays for peace for his father's departed soul. He says, "I can't tolerate the pain of not being able to bury my father like other Muslims."

Interview 5

Odhir Chandra Dey
Upper Division Assistant,
Provost Office,
Jagannath Hall

Martyr: Father

Modhushudon Dey
Founder Director of 'Modhur Canteen',
University of Dhaka

'I was just a kid then, 7 years only, but the trauma of 25th March, 1971, still haunts me' sighs Odhir Chandra Dey, son of martyr Modhushudon Dey of Dhaka University's 'Modhur Canteen'. He stammers and continues his story with blurry eyes. I woke up from my slumber with a sudden shock at about 11.30 p.m. hearing heavy gunfire and ammunition. My parents, my brother and his wife, and my siblings all woke up. They moved the curtain a little and peeped out to see what was happening. I joined them and watched Jagannath Hall in high flames and saw that people were screaming for rescue, 'Help! Help!' We spent the ghastly night in great anxiety. By dawn the Pakistani Military had cordoned the whole area. G.C Dev, the then philosophy professor of Dhaka University and the provost of Jagannath Hall was probably their first target. We watched a few soldiers dragging his body out from his residence. He was soaked in blood and seemed to be dead. Even the abbot of the Shiva Bari temple was not spared. The soldiers looked for young men in every building and brought them out. They aligned them on an open space and whimsically let them go after a while. Our quarter was between Jagannath hall and 'Shiva Bari'. After the brutal devastation in both the places, I saw them marching towards our building.

It was about 7 O'clock in the morning. The barbarous attack around the area had scared the people in our building. Now it was our turn. My father, leaning on the chair in the corridor, was saying his usual prayer. He asked my mother for a cup of tea. She, out of fear, limped her way to the kitchen to prepare it. All of a sudden 'the Pak Hanadar' started kicking the door terribly and ordered us to open it with abusive words in Urdu. The heavy blows on the door interrupted my father's prayer and baffled him. He could not understand whether he should open the door or not. Mother rushed to my father and muttered something. My brothers and sisters and I all started trembling in fear. When the door was about to be broken, my father opened it. As soon as he opened it, they pointed their gun to my father. As per the international law, there is rule to not kill the person who surrenders. My father might have known it. So, with a twinkle in his eyes, he surrendered by raising his hands up. Even after surrendering two soldiers grasped his hands and snatched him with a sudden pull. My father was a very tall and healthy person. With the jerk he stumbled onto the corridor of our next house. The door of the house was wide open as the members of it had already been seized by the army. By that time, six to seven soldiers had gotten into our house and they started destroying all our belongings. We screamed and rushed back to hide ourselves. Some of us took shelter under a cot, some of us in the toilet, and some hid inside the almira. Ranjit dey, our eldest brother, fled to the 3rd floor. Our house was in the 2nd floor. Then the bloody brute saw my newly married 'boudi' (wife of Ranjit). She started running to and fro within the house. When they were about to catch her, my sister screamed and called my brother to rescue my boudi from the clutch of the brute. Ranjit da rushed to

the spot and said “Rina! Rina! Hold up your hands!” Boudi’s name was Rina. As soon as he said it, the soldiers turned back and shot him. My sister Ranu was very near to my brother. The bullet pierced my brother’s chest and came out through his back, and then it hit the cheek of Ranu didi. Dada (my brother) tumbled down the floor at once. The floor around him was soaked with blood. After that, the military shot my boudi. She was pregnant then. The bullet hit her chest. I saw the dead body leaning against the wall and it seemed to me that it was not bullet but panic that was responsible for her death. Then they snatched the earrings of my boudi from her ears. After that, they went back to kill my father in the next house of our flat. I and my younger brothers and sisters were all sobbing bitterly on seeing the merciless treatment by the Hanadar Bahini. My mother got horrified seeing the bloody dead bodies of Ranjit da and boudi. When the military aimed their gun to shoot my father, my mother ran to him and stood in front of him spreading her hands. She begged the military, ‘You have ruined me! You killed my son, my daughter-in-law. Don’t kill him, I beg his life!’ They did not pay any heed to her appeal, and instead ordered her to go away. They tried to drag her forcibly but failed. Lastly, out of rage they cut both of her hands with bayonet. Her hands got totally dispersed and were hanging on just the skin. Then they shot her. The bullet hit her throat, and her tongue got exposed. Even after she died they shot her body several times in front of my father. Father also got shot. Both the bodies were wet with blood. Even then we did not realize that my father was still alive. My parents had eleven children and seven of us were very young. All of us were crying over the dead bodies of my family. All of a sudden, we noticed that our father was still alive. He stood up and limped to us from our opposite house. He wailed for long on seeing the dead bodies of Ranjit da and boudi. Then hugging us, he went to my mother’s corpse. The people who were responsible for our ruin appeared in front of us again with two Bengalis; one worked as a gardener in G.C Dev’s house and the other was a student. As far as we know, a driver of Dhaka University named Tota mia who used to live at the fourth floor of our building informed the military that my father was still alive. They started dragging my father out of our house. We surrounded the military and requested them to spare our father. We kept asking, “Where are you taking my father? You killed all of us, if you take away our father also, how will we lead the rest of our lives?” They were least bothered and it was a fruitless effort. They replied, ‘We will give back your father after a proper medical treatment.’ By that time Ranu (our sister) had been shot on her chest. Father requested them, “My daughter is also injured, take her also.” They replied “Nehi! Larkiko hatao” (No! no! keep the girl away). A soldier kicked her. She fell down near the stairs. We kept waiting for the arrival of our father. Military used the two Bengalis to drag the dead bodies. Although both of them were also shot by the military they did not die. Both were Hindus. We came to know from them that the military had lied to us that day. They actually took my father to the Jagannath Hall premise and shot him with G.C. Dev sir, and Moniruzzaman sir. It was indeed a proper medical treatment to my father. They compelled the two Bengalis to make a big hole in the premise and bury the corpses piling them one after another. We still recall the memory of the mass burial at Jagannath Hall. Throughout the whole day there was heavy bleeding from the chest of Ranu didi. Dead bodies of my mother, dada and boudi remained at the same place where they died. We were all too young to remove the corpses. It was getting dark. So the very sight of the dead bodies was intensifying our fear. ‘Mashima’ (aunty), a woman from the third floor consoled us in that crucial situation and came forward to assist us. She told us to stay with them. By that time, the people of the house in front requested us to remove the dead body of my mother from that area so that their children do not get scared of the horrible sight. Then we, mainly with the assistance of our youngest sister Durga, positioned the dead body of my mother just beside the dead bodies of dada and boudi. Then we

locked our house and went to the house in the third floor. We got our food and shelter over there. They also tried to provide primary nursing to Ranu didi who was having difficulty to eat anything. Whatever she tried to eat was coming out through the hole made in her chest. There had been unbelievable bleeding for a few consecutive hours. She was trying to pull herself up to go to the toilet, but with every trial there was excessive bleeding. She struggled throughout whole night for survival. On 27th March at dawn, few young men came forward to help her. They placed her on a tin which was wrapped up with a mat and took her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital passing the big drain beside Shiva Bari, and admitted her. Later on they took us to the hospital. Hundreds of people took shelter in the medical thinking that at least they can escape the killing. On 27th March, the curfew was withdrawn and the army announced that the military would kill the wounded people in the hospital. People evacuated themselves from the hospital quickly. Our Balai mama (uncle) and Hiralal (my father's friend) took us to the house of Hiralal. Ranu was left in the hospital. When the doctors came to know that Ranu was a daughter of 'Modhu da', they provided us with all kinds of necessary medication for her. They gave her oxygen, blood and bandaged her wound. A boy named Bacchu, (now working in a D.U canteen at the fourth floor of the Arts building), who worked in our canteen, got the information that Ranu's condition has improved a little. He took Ranu to our village home at Srinagar.

We returned from Savar (from the house of Hiralal) to our village after 11 days. Ranu got her treatment in our village hospital. The bullet in her cheek was removed by a major operation. She survived. After a few days, famine broke out. There was no money, no food; we had to sell even the tins of our house. Even the villages were not spared from the brutality of the military. With the assistance of a few rajakars (traitors), they entered our village. We had to leave our house as well. We fled to India. We spent many days as refugee at the camp in India. After independence we came back to our country. We got our freedom 36 years back but the wound caused by the 'Pakistani Hanadar Bahini' is still acute in our body and soul.

Interview 6

Hasina Hafiz
Chief Assistant,
Rokeya Hall
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Father

Neoaz Ali,
Staff, Rokeya Hall
University of Dhaka

The clock ticked away restlessly and showed that it was midnight. Everyone was asleep in Neoaz Ali's residence at the Rokeya hall staff quarter. A sudden loud sound of gunfire awoke everyone. Unaware of the situation, Neoaz Ali stood up on a stool near the door to observe what was going on outside. He saw the Pakistani military butchers killing the students of Jagannath Hall mercilessly. To his utmost horror he saw that some Bengalis were piling up dead bodies in another place. Neoaz Ali

also witnessed Nomi Roy, the guard of Rokeya hall, being blown up with a machine gun. He saw the military attack the house of Ali Akkash in the staff quarter and saw through the keyhole of the front door that three soldiers were forcibly taking the wife of Ali Akkash who was naked. They took her with them as they left in a car.

Then it was Neoaz Ali's turn. The military knocked and kicked furiously at the door. Earlier he had advised his daughter Hasina to keep reciting the Holy Quran. When the military were at the door, Neoaz also started reciting the Quran. Then 5/6 soldiers broke the door and entered the house. The nemesis began when they saw pictures of Iqbal, poet Nazrul, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, Kaba Sharif and a photograph of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib hanging on the wall. The picture of Sheikh Mujib was printed on a calendar, and it was this that infuriated them the most. They queried as to why the particular picture was there. Neoaz's younger daughter Roushan Ara attempted to satisfy the query by saying that all of them were Muslims. In the blink of an eye Roushan Ara and Neoaz Ali were shot. Neoaz's wife came running to save her husband and daughter. She tried to resist them, which resulted in several gun shots to her body. Hell was raised in Neoaz's house in the matter of a few minutes. His elder son and daughter Hasina were shot consecutively. One bullet went through the right side of Hasina's abdomen and another hit her right hand. She fell down on the floor. The restless clock still ticked away. After about half an hour Hasina regained her senses. She was very thirsty. Suddenly she heard her father, brother and sister's voice. All of them were saying, 'Water, water'. Hasina went to her mother but found her dead. Her one and a half year old brother was leaning against her mother's body. Pakistani soldiers came back twice to be assured of their death. They kicked and gored the bodies with rifles. A soldier even pulled Hasina's hair to make sure that she was dead. She tolerated the pain quietly to save her life.

Humanity will be shaken and terrified at what they did next. Hasina's little brother was crying bitterly. A soldier pulled him by his legs with one hand and flung him to the wall violently. He died at once.

When the military left the room, shell-shocked Hasina went to her other brother. He was asking for water. But the next request was heartbreaking; he asked Hasina to cut off his bullet torn left leg. Hasina gave him water, but he died after a few minutes. Hasina's father was senseless and was bleeding heavily. Hasina picked cottons from a pillow and pressed them on the wounds. As he got back to his sense he wanted to drink water. Night passed and dawn arrived, and Neoaz told his daughter that they should leave the room. He asked her whether she could walk out, because she was bleeding from the abdomen. Hasina then tore a sari of her mother and tied her hand and abdomen up with it and a scarf of hers. Father and daughter reached the dining room and found that Roushan Ara was critically injured. She had been shot 12 times. They tried to take her along but she could not raise her body. Neoaz and Hasina tried to drag her, but they could not move her. Realizing that it was impossible to take her along, they left her with a glass of water and moved out. When they came out of the house they found a few officials alive at the Rokeya hall dining room. All of the officials had duty at night. The terrible night demarcated the death of almost all the people in the staff-quarter.

Curfew was withdrawn the next day. Some volunteer boys took Hasina to the hospital. While going up the stairs, she saw a big room filled with dead bodies. Bullet-injured people were in the same room as those dead bodies. Two days later, she saw someone close by wearing her mother's sari.

Although Hasina had injuries in the abdomen she was able to walk. She walked to the person and to her utter surprise found out that it was her sister. Later she found out that some unknown people had brought her sister to the hospital, carrying her on a tin sheet. Neoaz Ali was also brought to the hospital by some people. 4/5 days had gone by when some of their relatives came by to see them. Since the dark night, they all broke down in tears for the first time. It was the first time that Hasina cried after losing her mother and brothers.

They were being well-treated at the medical college hospital when one day somebody informed the sisters that their father had died while the doctor was getting the bullets out of his body. But just after 7 days from hearing that news, a doctor and some of the relatives found out that they were lucky to have their father alive, and out of danger. Later Neoaz went to Tegria Government Hospital for treatment. Hasina and Roushan remained in Dhaka medical college hospital. Hasina was cured in one month but had to look after her sister. Both stayed there together until Roushan Ara was fully cured, which about 6 months.

Roushan Ara is no more. She died a few years back. Neoaz Ali died some years after independence. Hasina Hafiz is the only person alive in their family. She can not bear the pain of losing all the people dear to her, her little innocent brother. But she has to live on as a witness to the brutality that the Pakistani military projected in the dark night of 25th March.

Interview 7

Mohon Roy
Gardener, Department of Botany
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Father-in-law/mother-in-law/wife/children

Rokeya Hall
University of Dhaka

It was 11:30 pm. of 25th March. Mohon Roy's wife Shanti Roy awoke him. She informed him that the military were at the door. He peeped outside and saw two soldiers standing there with rifles. Mohon could understand the seriousness of the situation. He tried to break the rods of window, but it was of no avail. His children were asleep. Shanti requested him and his brother in law, Shankar Roy, to hide under the bed. In the mean time she along with her children remained in bed. She was planning to save her husband by saying that he was on duty that night. A few minutes passed and then there was a luminous gun fire and the hall went into a black-out.

Mohon Roy's father-in-law, Nomi Roy, was on duty at the outer gate of Rokeya Hall. From the hide out Mohon could hear the soldiers talking. According to him, the military threw a powerful bomb at Nomi Roy and this made his hands and legs scatter and fall far from his body. Then the Pakistan military started firing haphazardly and breaking every door of the staff quarter. At first, they broke the door of Mohon's house. They fired guns at random, and Mohon and his brother-in-law were wounded by bullets. In the mean time he saw his four year old son Shibu fall down on the floor.

Mohon understood that Shanti was dead, as she did not hold the child. He tried to bring Shibu towards him by reaching out his hand, but at that moment the soldiers came back. They shot mortar shells repeatedly, so Mohon could not drag his child closer to him. Fortunately Shibu was still alive; he did not get hurt. At that time Mohon lost his senses. After midnight, he was brought to his senses by the sound of his child crying. He crawled forward to bring Shibu but unluckily at that moment two soldiers entered the room again. Seeing them, Mohon lay down pretending to be dead. But he understood everything that was happening around him. An army tried to kick the child, but completely missed him. He kicked again, this time hitting the ear of the child. The child cried out once and then breathed his last. Mohon could not control himself and he came out of his hideout shouting. As soon as he came out the military shot him indiscriminately and left the room. Mohon's brother-in-law also came out with him and his one hand was left hanging by the skin due to the gunshots. Mohon's legs were severely injured by bullets.

In the morning Shankar and Mohon came out of the room and saw two soldiers standing in the corridor. Both of them were bleeding from the injuries. With disgust he had to tolerate the sight of his 7 year old daughter, Maya Roy, being dragged out by the soldiers, up side down. Mohon and Shanker could not escape. They were captured and mocked by the soldiers. The soldiers asked them, "Tumhara Mujib kidhar hai?" [Where is your Mujib?] and said, "Jai Bangla bolo!" ['Say, Long live Bangla!']. Mohon wanted to die and he asked the soldiers to kill him with a bullet. Shanker and Mohon were prepared for death. They clamped their hands together and were waiting for the bullet to pierce their ribs. The moment the rifles were aimed at their chest, an officer came saying 'no fire'. Instead they were taken to the outer wall near the road.

Mohon identified 30/35 persons of the staff quarter lying dead covered by tarpaulin. Dead bodies of men, women and children were gathered together. On his left, he saw the dead body of Nomi Roy and his wife Shanti Roy. Mohon sat down motionless. The army officer told him to lie down with the corpses and said that he would come back later. Mohon became violent and asked the officer to shoot him. The officer pushed him forcefully and he fell down into the heap of corpses. The soldiers covered Mohon with tarpaulin and he lost his senses.

It was about half past eight in the morning. Mohon heard somebody shouting from Rokeya hall. The person was saying that if anybody was alive around there they should come to Rokeya hall. Hearing this Mohon got up casting away the tarpaulin. Lying with the dead bodies gave him a strong desire to live. He then pushed Shanker, and found him to be alive. They attempted to talk but sounds were not coming out. They saw no army around them because the military had gone towards the playground of Jagannath hall. Two men (staff) from Rokeya hall came to them, and asked whether anybody else was alive in the pile of dead bodies. Mohon could not speak; his lips were shivering but no sound came out. The two men came ahead and carried them on their shoulders. Shamshunnahar hall was then four storeys high. Mohon and Shankar were kept there. But Mohon could not stay there for long. Leaving Shankar there, he walked out to enter Rokeya hall, hiding behind the tin-hedge. The moment he was entering Rokeya hall he found two wounded people crying out 'water, water'. He went near them and could identify both; one was Mohon Rajvhor and the other was Budhi Ram. Both of them were residents of Jagannath hall. Budhi Ram reached the bathroom groaning; he drank water from the water tap with his hands. After a few moments he died. Mohan Rajvhor went towards the 'Teachers' colony' and Mohon Roy followed him. Mohon Roy went to the

residence of the provost of Rokeya hall, Aktar Imam madam. Seeing Mohan all soaked in blood, madam asked him whether Nomi was alive or not. He could not speak. He made her understand by shaking his head that Nomi was no more. At 3 p.m. he went towards Fuller road to seek refuge in the house of a teacher of an acquaintance. His leg was bleeding profusely as he made his way to the house. His trouser was soaked in blood and the blood in his shirt was dry and sticking to his body. His blood-stained hair was standing upright like pins. Sir got frightened seeing Mohan's condition. He asked whether anybody was alive in Mohan's family. He waved his hands, meaning nobody had survived. Sir tried to put off Mohan's shirt. Being unable to do so, he cut it out. Mohan requested for water or he would die of thirst. Sir did not give him water and said that if Mohan drank water, he might die. He added that as Mohan is now in his house both of them have to stay alive. He advised Mohan to sleep. Sir set a pillow below his head and put an earthen-ware under the wound in his leg, so that blood could be collected there. Mohan fell asleep quickly. The next morning (27th March), Sir gave Mohan 10 taka and asked him to get the bullets removed from his legs from Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital and then to come back. There was no rickshaw or van on the roads. But Mohan assured Sir that he would be able to reach the hospital walking slowly on foot. After he had walked for a while, two men riding on a cycle halted in front of him. On seeing his condition they escorted him to the medical on the cycle. The medical was full of patients and Mohan kept waiting for a doctor while lying down in a corner. At about 7:30 pm a doctor took him to the Operation Theater, and took out the bullets. The next morning he again went to the Sir's residence.

In one night Mohan lost his whole family - his wife, all his four children, his father-in-law and mother-in-law. A few days later, his brother-in-law Shankar also died.

Interview 8

Gita Rani
Housewife

Martyr: Nephew
Shushil Chandra Dey
Official, Curzon Hall
University of Dhaka

It was 9 o'clock in the evening of 25th March when G.C. Dev, the then Provost of Jagannath hall, came to Gita Rani's house. He was engaged in a conversation with Gita's husband Dhiren Chandra and was explaining the deteriorating condition of the country to him. In the midst of the discussion G.C. Dev sent Dhiren to see whether the Bangladeshi flag had been hoisted in the vice chancellor's quarter. Gita's husband did not find any flag there. At about 11 p.m. that night, G.C. Dev came again, and called Dhiren outside for a talk. Gita could not hear their conversation. When her husband came

back Gita tried to make him eat but he refused. Instead he asked her to make the children sleep. Gita's husband then went towards the pond when he suddenly saw students running around with sticks in their hands. He was curious and asked them what the matter was. The students informed him that there would be a strike from the next morning. It was a pity that no one could even then imagine the massacre that was to occur.

It was midnight and Gita's husband had not yet returned home. She asked her brother-in-law to fetch him and they returned home after some time. Her husband took his meal hastily and told her to finish her meal quickly as well. No sooner had she started to eat when they heard loud gunfire around where they lived. Gita put the lights out at once and her husband told her to shut all the doors and windows. The sound of the gunfire continued ceaselessly and nothing was visible in the darkness of the night. In such a terrifying situation someone knocked repeatedly at the door and urged them to open it. Gita was unsure of what to do and then she told them that she can not open the door. But two students were urging her to save them and it was an extremely emotional moment. They asked her, that were they her own brothers, would she be able to sit behind closed doors? She thought for a while, and then opened the door. The two students rushed into the room. Gita gave them to wear lungi and a place where they could stay comfortably. It was about 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. when a student injured by a bullet in his chest, came at their door. Gita allowed him to stay and made a bed for him to sleep in. The curfew had started by then. Military motorcades were crossing the road, completely armed and Gita watched three jeeps passing her house. The men in the jeeps ordered to curtain the doors and windows with black cloth. As their house was just beside the road, Dhiren told her to follow the orders. Gita curtained everything. The night passed without a clue of what was happening outside. The next day passed the same way. By then everyone in Gita's house had taken tea only. There was some boiled rice steeped in cold water, and she fed it to the children with curdled milk and molasses. That was all they ate on 26th March. At about 12 a.m., they came to know that the strike would be withdrawn from the next morning. The news on the radio confirmed the information. Dhiren asked her to cook and feed everybody and then went outdoors to see the situation for himself. Everything outside was burnt. He found a dead body torn into pieces by the dogs. Books, chairs, tables, all were in flames. He ran towards Shiv bari. He found all the doors and windows opened. Nobody was to be found there. Then he went to the residence of Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta and learnt that the military had shot Mr. Jyotirmoy, and that he had been taken to Dhaka Medical college hospital for treatment. Dhiren asked around people about his nephew Shushil Chandra who had been missing from the night of the mass-killing. Somebody told him that Shushil was dead, but another informed him that he was alive, but wounded by bullets. Dhiren looked for Shushil in the medical, but could not find him. He returned home at about 3:30 P.M, tired and shell-shocked for what he had witnessed. He asked Gita's opinion as to where they should go. They had no relatives in Dhaka at whose house they could seek refuge. He suggested going to Ramna kali bari but Gita did not agree. She felt that if they were to leave the house they should go somewhere far away. Gita asked an uncle of her acquaintance about what to do. She also requested him for shelter for her family or to drop them off at the Buddhist temple at Bashabo (in Dhaka) that night. Her uncle took them to his home at Vangura, 27 miles away from Dhaka. They took a few cloths, five kilo rice, mosquito-net, matches and a hand-fan with them. Gita also took a hurricane with full oil. Gita and her family left the hall in the afternoon of 27 March. They were probably the last people to leave the place.

Dhiren's nephew Shushil was shot in the night of 25th March. He had been an employee at Curzon hall and used to reside in Shahidullah hall. He would often come over to Gita's house to stay. That night he had stayed at Jagannath hall. From inside the house Gita and her husband had seen the military lining up 14 people and shooting them all down in the shadow of the night. Later the dead bodies were buried in a large hole behind the 'North House'. The hole was made by a crane which is now a mass grave. Gita later came to know that Shushil was among those 14 men.

That night the students of all the halls had been very scared. Some even hid in the water tank on the roof. At the dawn of 26th March, the military stopped in front of Gita's house. They reached the yard by breaking the windows of Uttar bari canteen. There was scaffold of gourd plants in the yard. A woman suffering from insanity used to live beside it. When the soldiers saw her they her in Urdu whether there were any men inside. She was a 'maroari', so she knew Hindi. She replied harshly and thrashed the soldiers with a broom. They shot the woman instantly.

On the night of 27th March, Gita and her family reached her uncle's house and consequently spent six months there. Within a few days from the 27th, a circular was published notifying the governmental and semi-governmental job holders to return to their offices. 17 people joined Gita when they had come out of the hall. All of them were given shelter at her uncle's house. Hearing the circular, all the men including her husband went to work in Dhaka and Gita stayed back with their children.

After the war, a mass grave was dug. The dead body of G.C. Dev was found. His white colored hair was as nice then as it had been when he was alive. He had returned from America just four days before his death. Gita's husband had received him at the airport. G.C. Dev used to love his students very much. He had been unmarried. There were 3/4 rooms in his house and some students used to live and study there. Two of them had gone abroad for higher education at his financial assistance, one to America and the other to London.

Interview 9

Bokul Rani
Housewife

Martyr: Husband

Shunil Chandra Das
Official, Jagannath Hall
University of Dhaka

Bokul Rani was very frightened after the nightmare she had seen the night before. It was the sunny morning of 25 March, and Bokul was trying to convince her husband to leave Dhaka and move to their village. She had a feeling that the scuffle and inhumane slaughtering that she had seen her dreams might come true. In the afternoon she again requested her husband to go to the house of her husband's uncle at Mitford. Bokul's husband would not listen to her, and tried to console her by saying that nothing bad would happen. After dinner he went out to work, locking the door from the

outside. At about 11 p.m. Bokul heard the sound of gunfire and that of the gates being closed. She curled up with her children (a daughter and a son) inside the house. She could not see what was happening outside and the danger outside alarmed her and she trembled and cried. At about 1 or 2 a.m. an old man from the neighborhood asked her what she was doing. Bokul told him that she was unable to leave the house as the main door was locked and asked him about the noise outside. The old man told her about the Pakistani army's ravage around the area. She learnt that the Pakistani army had cordoned the hall areas and was trying to demolish the gates. The man later sent someone for Bokul's husband and he unlocked the door for her.

Bokul, along with the children, went to the assembly room immediately after they had been freed from the house. The military were vigilant. They were throwing the dead bodies in the bathrooms and water-tanks after killing people. In the mean time, many people were gathering in the assembly room. After a while Bokul's husband also joined them. They tried to hide behind the statue of Swarashwati goddess when the army came. Suddenly a baby started to cry and the military saw the people hiding behind the statue. They took away Bokul Rani's daughter from her husband's lap. Bokul cried and requested them to leave her husband. A soldier kicked her down on the floor. Even then she went up to the gate holding her daughter's hand. The soldiers scolded her and ordered her to sit there. Bokul was stunned to see her husband being taken to a big plum tree. After that there was a sound of gunfire. She could not see anything in the dark and she did not see her husband ever again.

People became panicked on hearing the sound of gunfire; they cried out. At around 2.30 or 3.00 a.m. somebody told Bokul to go to the gallery and take shelter there. She found a young man of her acquaintance beside her and asked him about her husband. He informed her that her husband was still alive. He said that the Pakistani military had arrested many people but that they had been later released. He consoled her by saying that the military would spare her husband. The men held captives were forced by the army to drag the dead bodies and lay them down in the mass-burial. Soldiers forced them to utter 'Jai Bangla'. They could not say anything out of fear. Later the military took those men towards a broken wall and shot them.

The dark night crawled away slowly. Each minute seemed like hours. Somebody said it would not be wise to stay at the gallery, so Bokul returned to the assembly room with the others. She felt so helpless! For the entire day she had been crying with her children. The next day the curfew was withdrawn and people were running towards the medical. Bokul kept looking frantically for her husband; and she joined the crowd going towards the medical. She kept asking people about her husband, but the information she got were misleading, as some people were telling her that he was alive and others said that he was dead.

Bokul's children were crying for food but Bokul did not even have a single coin! She had 300 taka at home but she could not go back there. She was fortunate to find a tea-stall on her way. The owner was a young boy and he gave bread to her daughter and a cup of milk to her son for free. She accepted the food with gratitude and fed her kids. In the meantime, few people of her acquaintance told her to go to the medical college along with them. Bokul thought it would be better to stay back for the time being and to go to the medical at night. But they were very eager to take her with them and so she went along. The babies started to cry in the evening as they were terribly hungry. But

there was nothing to feed them .She passed that night in the medical without food and water. But some unknown people gave some food to her children. At about 1 p.m. the next day Bokul walked with her acquaintances to Shadhar Ghat. There was a bakery there and the salesman told her to stay at that place. But her companions said that the army might kill them at night if they stayed there. Thus she crossed the river with the rest. There was a Hindu woman there selling fried rice and she gave Bokul fried rice and molasses and took her to her house. Bokul had been trying to control herself since the deadly night, but she could not hold back any longer. She cried out for her husband and became senseless. She stayed there for 7 days and was well-treated and consoled at that house. The military came daily to that village. At dawn one day, people started running. They were running in fear, in confusion. They were running for their lives. Bokul also joined them. Her daughter was in the arms of the woman she had lived with for the last days. After some time she found out that she had lost both of them. But she could not stop to look for them as she had to save her life. Bokul crossed the river along with many others. Heartrending emotions of losing her family were making waves in her heart like the waves of the river. She was speechless at the loss of her dear husband and child. But life had not ended. Bokul, with the other villagers, reached a house. Her throat was dry and she was unable to walk. The people of that house gave her peas and water. She ate them and began to walk again and reached Rajanagar of Bikrompur.

It had been a tiresome evening. They reached the yard of a house but the owner of the house would not give shelter to Hindu people. But God's delays are not His denials. One of the villagers saw them and asked whether they had come from Dhaka. He asked them to sit down for a while and went to the 'Member' (a chief) of that village and urged for shelter for them. The Member was very willing and gave them room.

Bokul had been staying there for 2 months when one day a man was going to the woman's house where she had stayed for 7 days after fleeing from Dhaka. Bokul requested him to bring her daughter back. When he reached there he saw the woman was taking very good care of Bokul's daughter. When he said that he wished to take Bokul's daughter, the daughter cried out and wanted to meet her mother at once. She was taken back to her mother shortly.

Bokul had a sister in Dhaka. Some people went to Dhaka University from Rajanagar to collect their monthly salary. Her sister requested them to bring Bakul Rani to her. After 2 months, Bokul reached Dhaka to reside in her sister's house. As she did not know the directions, she took the help of a coworker of her husband to find the house. Bokul stayed at her sister's house for 3 months. She cried fervently and kept waiting for her husband. She believed that her husband was hiding and that he would come back. It seemed to her that he was calling her.

In the meantime, the elder brother of Bokul's husband had looked for them in every possible place but had been unable to find them. After 25th March, he came to the hall and became senseless on seeing the dead bodies and all the blood. When Bokul had left for another place from Rajanagar, he reached there after one hour of her departure. He could not get hold of them and returned home.

After 2 to 3 months, her brother-in-law came and took them to his house. But within six to seven days their house was burnt down by the military. They also captured her father-in-law and brother-in-law. Later her father came to take her. She stayed at her father's house for six months.

On a bright sunny day Bangladesh achieved its ultimate glory, its independence. Bokul returned to Dhaka. She lived with the employees of Jagannath hall, but she could not sleep because she was apprehensive. She was very young at that time. Her children slept but she passed sleepless nights sitting under the mosquito-net. In the morning when everyone went out for work, Bokul's tired eyes closed down. It was a rest for her eyes, but Bokul had no rest. She had to fight the battle of her life, even long after the battle for Bangladesh was over.

Interview 10

Uma Rani
Sweeper,
Arts Building
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Father

Misri Rajvor
Gardener,
Vice Chancellor's office
University of Dhaka

Misri Rajvor, father of Uma Rani, was a service holder in the Arts faculty. Like any other night, he was reading the Holy Gita together with his neighbors and friends. They were narrating the glories of God like they did every night. Budhiram, Uma's uncle, was employed at old Dhaka. It was about 10 p.m. when he came to her father and told them to stop the recitation. He informed everyone about the military break out and they all could hear the sounds of ammunition being fired. Uma's uncle left the place immediately. Misri Rajvor finished his dinner with his family but no one could sleep. It was maybe 11:30 p.m. Misri Rajvor was extremely depressed. His wife asked him to bring the latest news. In the interim, a contractor named Samsu, an employee of S.M Building, crawled to their door and knocked. He had not gone to work that night, and Mr. Rajvor asked him whether he knew who were shooting. He mumbled that Tikka Khan and Yahya Khan were killing people. They needed the land, not the people, he said. They were slaughtering Hindus and Muslims alike. The genocide lasted the whole night. The military caught many people and took them away.

Love for life is inevitable, and people are willing to do the most extreme things to save their precious ones. In the morning, Rajvor hid under the heap of cow dung, a mixture used instead of firewood. Uma was only 13 years old then. Behind their house there was a house of a Shikh. Uma's father heard that the military were trying to take away wives and girls. He was alarmed on hearing this and told Uma's mother to hide Uma. Their neighbour Chitbali had a daughter who was the same age as Uma. Rajvor took both the girls and hid them under the bed. In the morning he came out from the stack of cow dung. There was a man named Keshab Lal (who still works in the central library) who could not speak in Urdu. Rajvor hid him under that heap as well. Rajvor and his family were a little relieved since they knew Urdu. They heard that the military did not kill sweepers, laundrymen and cobblers. When the military came, they pretended to be 'vangi' (sweepers). They were saved because

of this lie. But after a while, when Rajvor was brushing his teeth with a neem-stick, a group of military came and asked them to follow their lead. Rajvor followed them and had to pull dead bodies.

The bodies of people killed at night were scattered all around. The army assured them that the people who would replace the bodies would be spared from death. They got some consolation and followed the orders. They carried the corpses on their shoulders and heaped them on the playground. All the workers became drenched in blood.

Uma witnessed everything from where she was standing under a big tree. She kept herself out of the soldiers' sight. There were some other people with her. When the dead bodies had been piled up the body pullers were ordered to stand near the dead bodies. Uma saw the military shoot with the machine-gun in every direction and then the men who had worked fell down on the ground. She saw that heartrending scene and became senseless.

The situation was horrific. Everybody cried bitterly. Rajvor's family gathered in a house belonging to an old woman whom Uma used to call Grandmom. They cried and shouted but could not decide where to go for safety. Uma had a sister and a brother aged two and a half years. Together with them, her mother's aunty and maternal grand father were also in the house. The military left the place after the shootout. Many people ran to the spot with water. Some wounded people could drink a few drops.

Uma saw one drop of blood in her father's ear, nothing else, not even a bullet. Probably a bullet had entered his ear and he had died instantly. Uma's mother tried to make him drink water, and he kept watching her face. He could drink a drop and before taking any more, he died.

Uma has seen her father's dead body. There was a man named Buddhu, and his son Shibu was on night duty at Mitford. He had tried to come to the hall in the morning. Near Bakhshibazar however, one of his friends forbade him to visit the hall area. He stayed with him in the book stall. At about 1:30 p.m. Shibu and his friend came to the hall and found Uma's family. They were all frightened and crying. Shibu suggested them to leave the place because he felt that if the military returned and found them, they would not spare anyone. Their neighbor Chandu was also wounded by bullets. And Bashu Deb, father of Choto Mohon was also wounded with 5 or 6 bullets. Everyone was thinking of taking them to the hospital but there was no vehicle because of the strike. They hid Chandu under their bed and Bashudeb was hidden in a small place in the wall of the toilet. Later they all left to reside in Hossaini Dalan. Uma stayed there that night. Bokul Rani, who had lost her husband, accompanied them as well. There was an under-construction four-storied building in front of Hossaini Dalan. Only the ground floor had been constructed then and it had no windows. The refugees stayed there for two days. The next day they left for another place. Uma went to her aunt's house at Purana Paltan. Her mother, uncle, aunty, grandmother and even her brother and sister, all went to a place called 'Pakistan math' (Pakistani field) and stayed there for eight months. Before independence, the military came and took away many people after covering their eyes with black clothes. They told Uma's mother that they have taken care of all of them but they are in problem at the moment. They asked everyone to think of themselves and warned them that if they stayed there for any more days something tragic would happen and that they would not be responsible for the consequences.

At last, Uma's family took shelter in Dhaka Hall, a half-damaged building beside the museum. They stayed there until independence.

Interview 11

Fulbanu
House wife

Martyr: Husband

Abdul Khaleq
Gardener,
Rokeya Hall,
University of Dhaka
(Fulbanu also lost her sister and brother-in-law in 1971)

In the evening of 25th March, my husband informed me that turbulence might take place in the city and that the situation might lead to a state of war. I anxiously asked him whether we were safe in our house. He told me not to worry and explained that we were safe as long as we were in the house. But I was not convinced. I compelled him to go to my parents' house at Matuail of Demrah. It was about 10 o' clock at night, and my husband asked me to pack up the necessary clothes to set out for Matuail. Then he discussed this with his maternal uncle. Uncle told us not to worry and added that there was no reason to be attacked while at home. My husband became confused about what to do. At about 11 pm, the news broadcasted over the radio informed that Yeahiya Khan had accepted the '11 points' [which was the demand of East Pakistan]. Every one started rejoicing. My husband was very happy; he raised flags on the roof with other people. I still cherish the joy of that moment. Some people were shouting, 'Now we are the free people of Bengal!

My husband used to take military training at the field of Jagannath Hall. He used to participate in meetings and processions. He had been very much inspired by Sheikh Mujib's speech of 7th March. Sheikh Mujib had urged the East Pakistani men and women to spontaneously participate in the raging war. My husband told me, 'If circumstance demands mass participation, don't think that because you are a woman, you can't do anything'. He gave me an iron rod to use if I had to attack the enemy. He said, 'Don't think that you will die. If you can kill at least one enemy, it will be a glorious deed for the nation.'

Age has taken its toll, my world is getting darker each day, but the trauma that I went through that night is still fresh in my memory. Members of Hanadar Bahini halted at our building. At first they dislodged the fences at the corridor by pulling at them. It was a few minutes past twelve. I got alarmed at the sound of raving boots near our house. It seemed that the sky was literally falling down on earth. My 10 year old sister and 11 year old brother-in-law held my husband tightly, trembling in

panic. I cuddled my one year old child, my little child, and lied on the ground facedown. Then I heard somebody pulling at the door forcefully. I anxiously asked my husband what was creating so much noise. He told me to not talk and presumed that students had come to take shelter as there was chaos all around. He moved ahead half heartedly to open the door. I pulled him back as there was no light in the room. I was lying on the floor; peeping under the door I could see boots in the dimly lit corridor. I worriedly told my husband that I thought the police had come at our door. My husband, spellbound in fear, confirmed me that the military had come. I was shivering in panic but I did not move from my position. My husband looked indecisive. He fiercely tried to break the window at the back, but failed. Thus he had no choice but to accept whatever was fated. He was ready to strike at least one enemy with the iron rod. The military broke into the room and fired several gun shots randomly. I do not know whether anyone was struck by the bullets as I was facedown on the floor with my eyes closed. I had become stiff with fear. I got shot in my left leg, just over the knee. Instantly my leg became heavy. My sister and brother-in-law were seriously wounded and were moaning on the floor. I sat in a corner of the bed hugging my little kid. My husband was lying straight on the floor. I could not figure out how profound his wound was. He told me to be calm and muttered 'ayats' of the Quran. My vision became fuzzy with pain and after sometime I became senseless.

I regained consciousness in the morning and found my husband dead along with my sister and brother-in-law. I was insanely thirsty. I was crying out loudly saying, 'Water! Water!' My voice drew the attention of a soldier. One part of the door had been broken. And two soldiers came in through the opening. I began reciting 'ayats' of the Quran and praying Allah to save me and my child. I could not move for the pain my leg. I asked for water from them. I was hopeful that if I uttered the name of Allah, they would give me some water. A soldier gave me a glass of water. I demanded more and then out of rage, he broke the pitcher of water striking it with the gun. I got alarmed thinking of what they could do. He was about to hit my head. I begged for mine and my child's life. He stopped and went near the corpse of my husband. My son had just learnt to walk. He walked towards his father's dead body calling 'Abbu! Abbu!' One of the soldiers brought my child to me and they went away after that. My vision got blurred, so I did not see what happened afterward.

I got my sense back in the afternoon. I was suffocating as my throat was dried up in thirst. My child was crying for food. Suddenly I caught sight of Razzak. He was the servant of the house next to ours. He had been shot in the stomach. I pleaded him to bring some water. He replied that the military might shoot him if he got out. I requested him to look after my child if I died. He told me that he would not survive long. As I saw him, he exhaled like the groaning of a slaughtered cow. The bullet had pierced his stomach from one side and had come out through the other side. His entrails had been exposed and were hanging out of his stomach. In such a condition he brought water for me from somewhere. I took it and fed a little to my child. Nobody could go out for the curfew. The on-duty night guards at the Hall could not come to find out whether anybody was alive.

In the morning of 27th March I was about to choke. I lay on the floor, motionless. There was no food to eat, no water to drink. I felt that the blood in my body had been exhausted due to the excessive bleeding from my injury. In such a condition, I could not look after my child. A pond of blood had been created in the room. My little child was floating on it. He crawled to his father, touched him with his tender hand and get on his lap. Getting no response he moved towards my sister's corpse. I can not express how wretched I was feeling at my child's misery! Regaining consciousness in the morning, I found the blood on the floor congealed and turned into pudding.

The whole body of my hapless child had been soaked with blood, his hair was coated in blood, and only his eyes were visible. My heart broke seeing my child suffer.

I was sure that I would die. I longed for somebody to come so that I could give my son for adoption. At 10 o'clock a few officials of Rokeya hall came to the staff quarter. They went from door to door to check whether anybody was alive. They found me lying half-dead. They were shocked to see my son Harun. I appealed to them to feed something to my child. He had been starving for two days. I saw hope of my survival, so I requested one of them to look after my child. I became senseless as soon as I finished my words. They carried me to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Some military stopped them on the way and ordered them to throw me into the mass-burial. They left me by the big hole made for the mass-burial. That day a few volunteer students were searching for wounded people to bring to the hospital for treatment. They found me crippled on the road and made a bamboo-frame to carry me to the hospital. My cloths had been worn out by the bullet. So I hesitated when they were placing me on the frame. They told me to relax adding that they were like my brothers. They assured me that they would take me to the hospital. They carried me on their shoulders in covers as the military were sending back vehicles carrying wounded people. I was admitted to the second floor of Dhaka Medical. I did not get proper treatment there. Doctors and nurses were in a fix with a large number of wounded patients at the hospital. There was a rumor that the hospital might be attacked by the military. I did not see any doctor for 15 days. Only a saline was pushed into me, and the bullet remained in my body.

By that time my father came to Dhaka (on 27th March noon) to inquire about us. At that time some people set out for our village to take my child there. I came to know from my father that he had been escaping the military everywhere in order to find out his daughters and son in law. He had found the dead bodies of my husband and sister. He along with my maternal cousin had managed a pushing cart. They were carrying the corpses, but had been stopped by the military. The military had ordered them to take the corpses to the mass burial at Shamsunnahar hall and to throw them into it. They had no option for argument, thus did accordingly. My father left the dead bodies of my husband and sister in the hole. After that, father started looking for me and my son. He did not know that his grandson had already reached our village. Not finding me anywhere he came to Dhaka Medical. He walked passed my bed several times, but failed to see me. I recognized him and waved my hands. Noticing my gesture, a person brought him to me. I burst into tears on getting my father near. He tried to console me by saying that my husband was alive. I told him that my husband had died in front of my eyes. He consoled me; he was trying to revive my spirit to fight for survival.

The nurse took an X-ray of my injury after 15 days of admission. She only gave me first aid. The nurses were unaware that a bullet was still inside the wound. A week later, my father got an unpleasant smell from me. I told him about the bullet which was still inside in my leg. My father went to consult the doctor. At that time some people saw that my bed was wet with blood and blood was flowing down the floor. They immediately called my father and he came back with a doctor. The doctor took me to the O.T that day and pulled out the bullet from my leg. The doctor assured me that my wound would be healed soon. But my suffering had not ended. I got septic on the wound. The treatment was very poor. I remained in the hospital till November, one month prior to independence. During this time, I fled to my parent's house twice to see my son. I had asked my father several times to bring my child to me, but he did not. I was about to go mad. My left leg shrunk in size. I came down the stairs of the hospital crawling on my knees and reached my village by

a rickshaw. Father made me understand that I should stay in the hospital for treatment as he could not bear the expenses of my treatment. He added that I should live for my child. Then he brought me back to the hospital.

On the day of independence every Bengali rejoiced. But I could not. My husband had dreamt of independence. He had trained to fight against the enemy. I was tormented to live the independence after losing him. I lamented and said, 'I don't want independence! I want pain! More pain!'

My son Harun is now 38 years old. Now I can walk on my foot. The people who had rescued us from the detained situation on 27th March said that my little child had seemed to swallow blood. I do not know whether Allah had actually let an innocuous child survive for two days taking the blood of his own parents!

Many years have passed and my eyesight has reduced, but the memory is still clear and the torment will continue for as long as I live.

Interview 12

Md. Mohoshin
Official,
Rokeya Hall,
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Father

Monir Uddin
Head Security Guard,
Rokeya Hall,
University of Dhaka

(Md. Mohoshin also lost his mother, elder sister, sister-in-law and younger brother during the night of 25th March 1971. He was only 14 years old then.)

'37 years have passed since that ultimate brutal attack, but the memory of that night is still vivid and the agony has not abated,' Mohoshin starts with a sigh. He and his family used to reside in the staff quarter of Rokeya Hall. That night Mohoshin lay on the floor of the house of his neighbor Giasuddin uncle along with him. The house was just beside Mohoshin's house. An official of the hall (Mohoshin can not recall his name) was sleeping in the room facing the front door. It was about 10 minutes past midnight. Mohoshin was suddenly woken up with the sound of the heavy blows at the door. Then the Pakistani military abruptly broke into the house. The man who was sleeping alone in the front room woke up and surrendered by raising his hands, baffled. But the soldiers shot him mercilessly, piercing his body with bullets. He instantly fell down on the floor. Mohoshin then felt lucky that the soldiers did not enter the inside room. Gaisuddin hid in a drum and Mohoshin took shelter under a cot. As the soldiers departed, the wounded man kept saying, 'Water! Water!'

Mohoshin came out, gave the man water and again went under the cot. The sound of heavy gunfire and the clamor of people outside frightened him a lot. The ghastly night passed in great anxiety. He

was very worried for his family next door. At dawn he rushed to their house and found the door wide open. He was met with a shocking, devastating sight. The dead body of his mother and elder sister, soaked in blood, were lying motionless on the floor. Beside them his younger brother, pierced with a bullet in his waist, was groaning, 'Water! Water!' Mohoshin looked around for his sister-in-law and found her covered in a blanket and lying motionless on the cot. It looked like she had been shot in her neck while she was sleeping. Mohoshin's wounded little brother was relentlessly asking for water. Mohoshin could not find any water so he ran out and brought a pitcher full of water. His brother calmed down after drinking water. His two other little brothers were in a state of shock. 9 year old Mohiuddin had been shot in his ankle. The other one was Shamim; he was 10 years of age. Mohoshin's elder sister had been only 40 years old and her little son was crying relentlessly beside her corpse. In the early morning of 26th March, Mohoshin, along with the three unfortunate children (his two brothers and his sisters' son) came to the house of Giashuddin uncle. He asked them to stay quietly in the house. They were almost detained in their house by the curfew that day. His little brothers were crying in hunger and asking for food. His little nephew, who was only allowed to breast feed, was crying constantly in hunger. He could only give them water by mixing some sugar in it.

It was about 10.30am when some soldiers came again. They all became frightened at the sound of marching boots in the building. The sound stopped at their door. The military broke the door and entered the room and aimed their gun at them. Mohoshin's brothers began to cry, especially the 9 year old wounded brother. But Mohoshin was so shocked that he could not even appeal for life; he rigidly sat where he was. At that moment, an officer stopped the soldiers and said something to them. Just after that the military left the place. Before leaving, a soldier told Mohoshin to shut the door by locking it. Mohoshin could not understand his language, so the soldier made him understand by gestures. Mohoshin promptly informed him by gestures that the lock had been broken. When the military went away shutting the door from outside, Mohoshin tied the handles of the door with a rope. Mohoshin still believes that they had been spared that day because of those three children. Although the military had killed people indiscriminately regardless of age, Mohoshin saw a trace of humanity in them.

The helpless children stayed near the dead bodies of their mother, sister and sister-in-law. They were starving and counting time to be rescued from such suffering. Throughout the night the wound in the waist of Mohoshin's brother bled heavily. He was very weak because of it. Mohoshin was in a daze with the mental agony and hunger. In the afternoon, during the period of 'Asar namaj', Mohoshin found his wounded brother crawling towards the dead bodies of his mother and sister. He lay between their dead bodies and a few minutes later he succumbed to his death. Mohoshin, with the two children, stayed near the dead bodies.

It was getting dark. They had spent the wearisome night doing nothing. On 27th March, the situation improved as the curfew was withdrawn. A security guard of Rokeya hall named Abul Miah was knocking at the door. Mohoshin opened the door after he confirmed his identity. He went to the hall with him to meet his father. His father had been on night duty on 25th March. His elder brother who had been also doing duty at Curzon hall joined them. Everybody who had survived was leaving the hall; Mohoshin's family also left for their maternal grandparents' house at Matuail.

They went on foot from the Dhaka University area to Bangabandhu Avenue, and then walked again from Jatrabari to Matuail. In that long walk, they came across dead bodies scattered all over the

roads. The slum by the Fulbaria bus-stand had been turned to ashes. The family reached Matuail and after an hour from then, the husband of Mohoshin's elder sister and the husband of his maternal aunt set out for Dhaka to bring the dead bodies that they had left in their house. But they could not bring them as the military stopped them. The military had made a big graveyard just east of the gate of Shamsunnahar hall and buried the corpses there. After independence, the mass-burial was excavated and the skeletons found were reburied beside the DU central mosque.

Mohoshin informed that 14 officials used to stay in the staff quarter at that time. Along with their family members, 45 people had died that night. Few of the wounded are still alive.

From the night of the mass killing of 25th March to the morning of 27th March, Mohoshin had to stay with the dead bodies of his dearest people with three little children. He could not express in words what he felt that night. He wonders how he could stay with the corpses for so long without fear or anxiety. Actually, he had lost the sense of fear and sadness for what had happened to his closest people.

Interview 13

Abdus Sobhan
Official,
Zahurul Huq Hall,
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Colleague

Shamsuddin
Caretaker
Zahurul Huq Hall,
University of Dhaka

On 7th March 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his speech urged all Bengalis to be prepared with everything that they had to defeat the enemy. The next day, a training centre was set up at the grounds of Iqbal Hall. As the non-cooperation movement was going on, activities in all educational institutions and administrative offices came to a halt. So the political leaders of other educational institutions used to gather at 'Chhatro Shongshod' (Students' Union) at Iqbal Hall. Every political statement made used to spread from there. On 24th March, Bangabandhu asked the leaders to leave the hall and spread out across East Pakistan. Following the order, leading politicians such as A.S.M Abdur Rob, Tofael Ahmed, Nur-e-Alam Siddiki, Shahjahan Shiraj and Abdul Kuddus Makhon, left the hall. In the morning of 25th March, we heard about a possible raid at the hall that day. This information reached Bangabandhu via a secret agent in the Pakistani army. However, only a few people remained at the hall when we got the information.

At 9 o' clock at night, news spread that armies were coming towards the hall. The 2/3 officials who had remained and a few students ran away on hearing the news. As I used to work in 'Chhatro Shongshod', I had to look after the materials there. I found that I was left to manage the Shongshod

office alone. I finished my work there and went to the 1st floor of the canteen of Chhatro Shongshod where I used to stay. Suddenly I heard a noise coming from near the pond where a barrack had been established for officials. I saw that a few people had gathered there. I asked them about the situation. Shamsu, a night guard of the hall, was present there. I scolded him for leaving his duty at the hall gate. I came down the stairs and went to the provost office along with Shamsu. Shamsu made a phone call to the provost. He informed the provost of the situation of the hall and expressed his inability to maintain the security of the hall alone. The provost asked him whether anybody else was still at the hall. Shamsu's son Sattar and I were there. Then the provost asked us to come to his residence. Meanwhile the 2/3 officials who had fled were coming back to the hall. We took them along with us to provost's house. As soon as we entered the house Abul Kalam Azad, the V.P. of the Hall, came in. Anticipating much time would be required there, I went to my residence to change. Suddenly I heard a commotion outside. From the corridor, I watched Sattar running indecisively. I came to know from him that the military was coming. I immediately ran out and reached the middle of the hall ground. I insisted the crowd saying, 'The military had besieged the halls many times but had never attacked the halls.' So I did not join them. I helped them pass over and moved towards the canteen. No sooner had I reached the playground when I saw the army coming. There was an open passage from the British Council to the back of the Muslim Hall. From there, shadows of some people were marching forward creating rhythmic sound. If I had not noticed them, I would not be alive. I went back at once. The army was coming through the middle of the ground. Meanwhile I had reached the bottom of a tamarind tree, situated to the west of the Hall. Karim lay by the tree. He was a Bihari boy and used to keep cows at the Hall. I got alarmed seeing them coming towards me. I immediately rushed to a hut nearby.

I hid in the corner of a corridor. I helplessly saw the army coming straight to Karim, waking him up and talking to him for about 20 minutes. I did not understand their language. Suddenly I understood that the military had already cordoned the ground. As soon as those soldiers had moved to the pond along with Karim, I heard a distant sound of gunfire from building no.40. Immediately after that, the intensity of firing gradually increased. The army set fire here and there. Firing, bombing and high flames at Palashi created a great anarchy. I lay with facedown in the corridor of the hut where women were crying from inside. I crawled to the door. I asked the women not to shout and advised them to come down from the bed. A woman among them used to work in the canteen; she opened the door for me. I thought it unsafe to remain in the room. A few days back, a big hole had been created beside the hut as soil had been taken from there to repair that woman's cot. I, along with her, her husband and their children rolled on the ground and reached the hole. We spent the whole night with our heads bent in that deep hole. I felt bullets passing just above my ears. Hours passed; I could see indistinctly in the minimum light of late night. I figured out blackish heaps scattered on the ground. I guessed that those were corpses. An hour passed; I discovered that the heaps were armies who had shot bullets the whole night lying on the ground. I observed that they were slowly making their way towards the hall. Thus we got the chance to escape from there. Passing over the barbwire of the hall boundary and crossing the nearby railway, we reached the boundary of the Home Economics College. A big hole had been made in the bottom of the wall; some people were already taking shelter there. They helped us climb over the wall. We sat quietly on the first floor of the college compound. I could see soldiers at the hall. They looked like shadows in the dark of the night. Then I saw a person being taken away by tying his hands from behind. I could not recognize him. I

also saw a corpse being dragged; later I came to know that it was Jafar, a student of the hall. Dead bodies were scattered all over the field.

At about 10 o'clock in the morning no soldiers were visible, so we came down and walked towards the hall. On the way, I came across Sattar. With a miserable face, he said that he suspected that his father Shamsu was no more. I winced, asking the reason for his thinking so. He said that he had locked his father in the office according to his fathers' wish. His father had thought that he would be safe that way. As soon as we crossed the canteen and reached the road, we saw the armies taking rest near the hall gate. We retreated instantly. The sight of the corpses being dragged had haunted me so much that I began to run aimlessly. I hit my head on an iron rod at the railing of the canteen. Two men saw blood flowing from my head. They came closer to hold me; they thought that I had been hit by a bullet. Those men took me to building no.40 which had been destroyed by bombing. I took shelter at the kitchen there. A few people had already taken refuge there; a woman among them gave me primary treatment and bound my head with clothes. She was a nurse who resided near the railway. The curfew on 26th March expedited our suffering. My shirt, soaked in blood, was totally damaged. I took it off and passed the night in discomfort.

The curfew was withdrawn on 27th March. I returned to the hall with Sattar. He requested me to look for his father in the hall office. We went there and found Shamsu lying facedown in the corridor. His dead body was entangled with a telephone cable and a leg was twisted. As we tried to straighten the leg, we got a bad smell from his burnt body. We went to the house tutor Mr.Jalal. He was a Bihari. Mr. Momin, an official of the hall, was also with him. They gave me 50 taka to collect material to bury Shamsu.

I watched two men being dragged out by the military while I was in the Home Economics college building. I came to know that one of them was Chisti Helal, a student, and another was Jalil, a worker in the dining hall. Both of them had been shot at the same time. Mr. Chisti had fallen down immediately and Jalil dared to run away from them and joined us at the college compound. Bullet had pierced his belly from one side and come out from other side. I pressed clothes to the wound to stop the bleeding. The curfew on 26th March raised his agony. There was no way to take him to the hospital for treatment. However, in the afternoon of 26th March, we watched as corpses were carried out by military jeeps. After coming back to the hall on 27th March, I found no dead body there except the corpses of two children and an old man on the roof of the hall mosque. I presume that those poor unfortunate fellows had been residents near the rail line. They had run up to the roof of the mosque to save their lives!

I could not manage white clothes for the funeral of my dear friend Shamsu. I informed this to Mr. Momin and he gave me the white curtain of his windows to cover Shamsu's dead body. After that, I hired two men with 10 taka. They carried him on a plank of wood and dug the soil to bury him. Jalil took his last breathe just at the moment when Shamsu's grave was being dug. It was 9 o' clock in the morning of 27th March. We were in a hurry to finish the burial, so the men dug a bigger hole and buried both Shamsu and Jalil there. Shamsu's twisted leg had remained so. We pressed it down with bamboo and tried to bury it. But it kept coming out forcefully. Finding no alternative, we broke the leg (sobbing...) and finished the burial.

I could not deny the boy who had just lost his father. As we reached Jinjira on foot, we came across Abul Kalam Azad, a student of the hall. He grieved for Sattar and gave us 100 taka. I had a total of 140 taka; I kept 30 taka and gave the remaining to Sattar. Sattar left for his village and I was in a fix about where to go. I decide to go to Munshigonj to seek refuge at Mr. Mohiuddin's house; he was a body guard of Bangbandhu. It was about to be dusk. In the meantime, I had high fever with head ache. For this, I took shelter in the house of Hindus. Many men, women and children were gathering near the school building of that house. I had a fever, and a person took me to the roof of the house and covered me with a sack. In the morning, I set out for the launch terminal.

I arrived at Chandpur via a launch. Then I went to the Awami League office. Workers there gave me bread to eat and hired a rickshaw to get me to Munshigonj. I reached my destination and from there I went to my village. After two months, announcement came via the radio for joining our duties. Then I came back to the hall and got my duty in the water tank. I am still continuing with that job.

During the war time, military came to the hall again. I had watched them beat our head security guard. They had made us stand in a line and had aimed gun at us. Once, a contingent of military had besieged Iqbal hall. Then, I suppose, the Indian army drew them back from the hall by bombing.

The day of independence came, and student leaders started coming back to the hall. After independence, freedom fighters searched for Karim to punish him. I am sure that Karim was an agent of the Pakistani army. Otherwise, how could they have gone straight to Karim that night! A freedom fighter took him to the Indian border and shot him dead. The Bihari house tutor Mr. Jalal was a very good person. But after independence he did not come back to the hall, probably fearing that people suspected him.

Interview 14

Roquaiya Hasina (Neely)
Electronic Media Artist.
Also dedicated to music, especially Tagore Songs

Martyr: Father

S.M.A Rashidul Hasan
Teacher
Department of English
University of Dhaka

S.M.A Rashidul Hasan was a teacher in the Department of English at Dhaka University. He was politically conscious; he always seemed discontented and disturbed with the discriminatory treatment of the Bengalis by the Pakistani rulers. His outspokenness and open support for the movement of students and political parties against the Pakistani rulers went against him. It made the pro-Pakistani teachers angry with him. So later when the liberation war started, they reported him to Al Badars and Rajakars and his name was included in the list of intellectuals that they had targeted for killing. On 14th December, just two days before independence, they took him away from his residence. After 22

days of his disappearance his decomposed body was found in Mirpur Baddhay Bhumi along with the dead bodies of the best sons of this soil.

Memories with her father

Among my siblings, I was the most stubborn. I had been the most pampered child of my father and was really loved. I always insisted on importunate demands, but my father never lost his temper and tried to give me what I wanted. My mother always used to tell my father not to listen to me and she did not forget to warn him that he was spoiling her daughter by fulfilling her crazy demands. My father chuckled and did not listen to her. He was my best friend and companion. His departure was the greatest loss to my life.

Although he was a teacher of English he greatly respected our mother tongue and our Bengali culture and tradition. So among his clothes we had always noticed more panjabis and payjamas than shirt-pants. He loved music. Tagore songs and poems were his favourites. It was for his wish that had I started learning songs from a very young age of six. Whenever I learned a new song he would sing along with me. Today I am a national TV artist. My 3rd album has just been released. How delighted he would have been if he were still here.

The Road to Freedom and His Departure

Through nine months of struggle and bloodshed, we emerged as an independent nation. The war had caused much pain and sorrow and grief to our people. I lost my father who had embraced martyrdom just two days before the liberation of our nation.

During the liberation war, we remained in our residence in the 'teacher's quarter'. Our ancestral home was in West Bengal, India. As my father was worried about the proper care of my 2 year old sister, we did not move there. My father had openly supported our liberation war. He had made students aware of their responsibility to the nation. An announcement had been given from the Pakistan government that said that anyone who could identify the people working for liberation would be awarded. At that time, on 20th September, a few men from the Pakistani army came and took my father away but with the help of a friend he returned unharmed 12 days later. But on the morning of 14th December, my father was taken away from Dhaka University quarter no.30/E by members of Al Badars. That was the last time we saw him.

It was in the house of Anwar Pasha, professor in Bangla, DU. He and my father were bosom friends. From the first week of December we went regularly to Anwar Pasha Uncle's house to spend the nights there. On 14th December at 9 o'clock my father was talking to Anwar uncle while taking breakfast. I was beside my father. Suddenly, a knock at the door stopped their discussion. The door was opened and a few men wearing khaki uniforms came in. One of them had a paper in hand. They asked whether it was the house of Sir Anwar Pasha. Anwar uncle came forward and gave his identity to them. My father asked them why they were looking for Anwar Pasha. They replied that their sir had sent for him. They added that they needed to interrogate him and would send him back after some time. My father looked agitated. A man at the back holding a paper in hand [I later understood that it was the list of teachers targeted for killing] asked my father his identify. My father answered him. He checked something on the paper and then told my father to come with them. Being alarmed, I ran to my mother. My mother and Mrs. Anwar Pasha were in the middle room. We came back to the drawing door and finding nobody there, we rushed to the corridor. We watched the men

dragging them forcefully towards a bus. Mather and Anwar Uncle were blindfolded. We cried out at the sight of it. They scolded us and asked us to stop crying. They started firing in the air, then got in the bus and disappeared. My eyes often get blurred when I recall that sight. After independence we searched for my father. Some students from D.U. found his dead body along with the dead bodies of other intellectuals martyred at Mirpur Boddhay Bhumi 22 days after his disappearance. The dead bodies of probably eight martyrs were found unblemished. Some had only the upper portion of their bodies. Later their bodies were buried by the mosque of D.U.

Expectation to the Nation

My father believed that we definitely would achieve our independence. My mother was often very nervous and scared about what was about to happen. And just two days after his disappearance we did achieve our independence. We emerged as an independent nation ready to take our place in the world. The creation of Bangladesh was a triumph of the democratic spirit and the resolve of the people who created a homeland in which they could speak their language, embrace their culture, and live in dignity, free from religious bigotry and alien exploitation. I appeal for the punishment of the war criminals for the peace of the souls of our martyrs. The people who opposed our war of liberation and painted their hands with the blood of our intellectuals were in power in post independence Bangladesh. They rode in government cars hoisting the flag of Bangladesh.

Al Badar and Rajakars took away my father for ever. I must mention here that the then professor Mostafijul Rahman of the Arabic and Persian department of D.U. was pro-Pakistani. His brother-in-law was involved with Al Badars and Rajakars. We got to know from the wife of martyr Dr. Mortuza that Professor Rahman's brother-in-law was in that bus which carried my father, uncle Anwar Pasha, Dr. Mortuza and other intellectual martyrs. He showed the military to the house of the intellectuals.

It is a matter of great regret that they have not faced punishment yet. Professor Mostafijur Rahman continued his job in D.U. smoothly after independence. My mother became a widow at the age of thirty. Later we got the allotment of the house from D.U. but I grew up with the pain that those who were responsible for my father's death are living peacefully in independent Bangladesh. These agents of Pakistani oppressors opposed the creation of Bangladesh. But they are hoisting the Bangladeshi flag in their cars! It is very painful for the family of martyrs. We have to unite on the issue of giving punishment to the war criminals so that the souls of our martyrs may rest in peace.

Interview 15

Rahela Banu
Professor of English,
Institute of Modern Languages,
University of Dhaka

Martyr: Brother
Munir Chowdhury
Professor of English

University of Dhaka

On 14th December 1971, Professor Munir Chowdhury was picked by members of the Al-Badr group from his home and he was never found again. His sister Rahela Banu was one of the last people to see him. In this excerpt, Professor Rahela Banu speaks about her brother, his last days in his paternal home, days of joy that they spent together and years of sorrow after his death. Professor Munir Chowdhury was only 47 years old when he was killed in 1971.

Munir Chowdhury was a Professor of Bengali at the University of Dhaka. In 1971, he was also the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He was at once an educationist, a playwright, a critic, a short story writer, an essayist, a linguist and a brilliant orator. Perhaps he was best known as a playwright. One of his most well-known plays, *Kabar (The Grave)*, was written in jail and first performed by convicts in prison. He received numerous awards for his literary achievements. He received the Bangla Academy Award in 1962 for *Raktakta Prantar*, the Daud Award for *Mir Manosh* in 1965, and the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz* in 1966. Munir Chowdhury began his career teaching English Literature in Dhaka University, but switched to Bangla after getting a First Class in Bangla Literature in the MA examination which he took while serving a jail sentence for his participation in the language movement of 1952.

Rahela Banu's reminiscences

In 1971 I was 21 years old, a final year student of the Department of English in Dhaka University. On the 25th of March 1971, I was living in our paternal house at 20 Central Road, Dhanmandi, Dhaka. I used to live with my mother, two married brothers and a sister-in-law. Munir Bhai used to live in his university flat in the campus. After the Pakistani army crackdown on 25th March, Munir Bhai left his university flat and started living with us with his wife and three sons, Bhashon, Mishuk and Tonmoy. I am not sure of the exact date; it was either the 26th or the 27th of March. Throughout the nine months from March to 14th December, 1971, Munir Bhai and his family lived with us in our Central Road house. His son Bhashon had joined the Mukti Bahini. Bhashon and many others had repeatedly advised my brother to leave the Central Road house, but Munir Bhai refused to go. He used to say: 'My whole family is here; besides if they really want to kill me, is there any place that is really safe?' That is what he thought and he paid for it with his life.

Munir Bhai always had a wonderful sense of humour; he was a great raconteur. We were fourteen brothers and sisters in all. He was the second child and I was the last of 14. If anybody asked him about the difference in age between the two of us, he would say, there are 11 other brothers and sisters between us; he would never tell anyone how much older he was. I remember that sometimes I would make parathas for him and others and he would compliment me on my culinary skills by referring to the hardness of the parathas: 'These are very strong parathas indeed,' he would say. Even after all these years we all remember him and miss him terribly. He had this great ability of giving joy to others, a great sense of the sheer joy of living. The Al Badars took away the best of my brothers, the most talented. Every time he wrote a new play, he had to read it aloud in our first-floor balcony to his first eager audience—Ferdousi, Banu and I.

Munir Bhai had this special ability of making everyone feel special. I was the youngest and I used to think that I was his favourite sister, that I was somehow special. But my eldest brother or my eldest

sister would think the same; for that matter, every single brother or sister thought he or she was special. He had this terrific capacity of loving others.

He was particularly close to his students for whom he had very special feelings. He not only encouraged his students in academic matters but was often closely involved in helping and advising them in personal matters as well. Even today, close to four decades after his disappearance, a now retired professor of Sanskrit, a student of Munir Chowdhury, remembers the day when she was pregnant and was having problems opening her office door because of all the papers and files she had in her hands. She remembers how suddenly Munir Bhai came, 'helped me carry the books and opened the door for me. I'll never forget that kindness.' Some students remember that he would sometimes invite them home and fry omelettes for them. In those days, in the 60s and 70s, not too many professors had cars. Munir Bhai had one and it was a pleasure for him to pick up people from the streets, colleagues, students, his son's friend, and drop them wherever they wanted to go. Every Friday he would pick up my father and drive him to the mosque, wait till the prayer was over and then drive him back home again. He did this for years. Ordinary people, mostly his subordinates, loved him. He was a favourite of office staff and peons, darwans and dhopas. He would help them with money, listen to their troubles and would always smile at them; they were all his friends.

He absolutely believed that Bangladesh would be liberated one day. He was not sure whether he would be alive or not, but he hoped that his children, his younger brothers and sisters would be around to enjoy it. 'You are young; you are just starting your lives now.'

Munir Bhai was an unstoppable prankster; he loved fooling around with me and my other sisters. One day I was standing in the ground floor verandah and he was up on the balcony above, pouring water on my head. 'Why are you pouring water on my head?' I asked him. 'Oh, it's not me. It's someone doing something from that MIG up above us,' he replied. In the last days of the war, MIG aircrafts were a common sight in the skies of Dhaka. Despite our big difference in age (he was 27 years older) we were like close friends. In fact all my brothers and sisters are very close to one another, but he stood apart in his special ability to love and be loved by all. The Al Badars killed the best of my brothers.

The day the Al-Badrs took him away

14th December, 1971. It was around 11.30 in the morning. Some young men, who looked like students, came to our house. They said, 'We are students of Munir Sir. We have come to take an interview of him.' (They were actually members of the Al Badar Bahini). Munir Bhai had taken a bath and was coming out of the bathroom. He was wearing a lungi and was putting on a punjabi. He said, 'Okay, let's go.' My mother was laying out the dishes for Munir Bhai's lunch. I told my mother that some students had come to take Munir Bhai for an interview and that he would be back very soon. My brother walked out with the young men. I stood behind a window and saw one of the young men sticking a gun against my brother's back and nudging him into a jeep. I was absolutely terrified and I started calling my mother. I remember Munir Bhai telling me as he was going out of our front door: 'Move away from the window. It's not a good idea for a young woman to be seen at the window.' I moved away from the window in fear. Now I regret having moved away; I could have seen him for two more minutes if I had stood there. They then took him away in the jeep and we never saw him

again. Bangladesh was liberated two days later on the 16th. All the freedom fighters returned home to a new nation but my brother never came back. My brothers and others desperately looked for his body in Rayer Bazaar and Mirpur where the bodies of intellectuals were found but there were no traces of Munir Bhai or his clothes. Torn pieces of lungi and a ring were shown to me because I was the last to see him but I could not identify those with any certainty. A brother of mine who had actually opened the door to the Al Badar people searched for Munir Bhai for days in all possible places but there was absolutely no trace of him.

Days of anxiety

During the nine months that Munir Bhai stayed with us in our Central Road house we would see cars parked in front of our house, sometimes patrolling military vehicles. We would be scared to look outside. My sister Ferdousi Majumdar and her husband Ramendu Majumdar lived with us in the same house for a few weeks after 25th March. We were scared about the presence of a Hindu son-in-law in our house. Eventually, sometime in May, they left Bangladesh, stayed a few weeks in Kolkata and eventually went to Delhi on a fellowship. They somehow survived on a meager stipend. They came back home soon after Bangladesh was liberated.

Family

Although my father was a very religious man, we grew with fairly liberal values: differences in race, colour, religion or language did not concern us much. Two of my brothers married Pakistani women, one from Punjab and another from Jodhpur but settled in Karachi. My Karachi sister-in-law lived with us during those nine months. I could sense the helplessness of my Pakistani bhabi and the agony she felt when her own brother-in-law (Munir Chowdhury) was picked up at the orders of the Pakistani army. Two brothers were in the Pakistani Army and one of them used to live in Pakistan at the time. Soon after the Army crackdown in March, one resigned from the army, studied Geopolitics, and took up a career in teaching. Another spent months in a military camp in Pakistan and was eventually repatriated to Bangladesh.

The agony of the mother

My mother died in 2000. She could not see her son Munir Chowdhury when the Al Badar took him away. She waited for him everyday, for many years, hoping against hope that suddenly her son would come home one day. He never did. My mother would say, 'Your father was lucky, he did not have to suffer the sorrow of losing a son.' My father had died just the year before in 1970. My mother was a very God-fearing woman; she was very pious. She had absolute faith in the will of God and that was how she consoled herself for almost three decades after Munir Bhai was killed. She would say, 'I have lost only one son. The lady in the house across the street lost three. How does she live?' This is how she bore her sorrow and gained strength to go on living. From time to time she would sigh deeply and say, 'Allah, this is all your will. I do not have the arrogance to question your wish. I only ask you to grant me the strength to bear my pain.' She would sigh and tears would roll down her cheeks. I never saw her crying aloud. Today I am the mother of two sons. When I think of my mother's sad face I find it difficult not to cry. Imagine the sorrow and the loss of his wife and three sons, deprived of the care, love and protection of an extraordinarily talented and affectionate man!

Did my mother ever really think that her son would come back one day? As long as I live I will treasure the thousand memories that I have of Munir Bhai, the thousand memories that all my brothers and sisters have of him. As I said before, the Al Badars took away the best of the lot; they knew that the future of the new nation Bangladesh depended on people like him. And perhaps that is why they roam around freely in public now, often occupying positions of power and authority.

Today, there is a lot of talk about trying the war-criminals of 1971, the Razakars and Al Badar people who were responsible for the rape, torture and murder of hundreds and thousands of Bengalis. This is a trial that should have taken place much earlier. The people responsible for the death of so many Bengalis simply should not be allowed to live unpunished. The offenders, whoever they may be, must be punished. Those who have been killed are dead; they will never come back again. But the perpetrators of the crimes of 1971 must receive punishment.

The Bangladesh
Liberation War: A
Summon to
Memory
Meghna
Guhathakurta

ONCE UPON A PARTITION: CULTURAL LEGACIES, FICTIONAL WORLDS OF THE PARTITION AND BEYOND

Asif Farrukhi

Once upon a time, and a very good time it was, there was a Partition. And a very important Partition it was too. All the scholars agree from Timbactou to Trincomalee. All the good children were born appropriately at the exact stroke of midnight. Tryst with destiny and all that razzmatazz. Many were born later, mostly *bad-tameez desis*. We must refuse to even acknowledge them, shall we? Some were born earlier. As if in anticipation. So that they were ripe for the Partition when it came. There was a lot of to-do and Pow-Wow and much Sob-sob. Everybody then lived unhappily after. Period. The credits roll and the story will continue in the next episode as we are promised more Partitions to come.

This is a story my father told me. He sowed the dragon's teeth and my generation reaps the harvest. We suffer the consequences. Partition is a story which makes Baby Tuckoo out of all of us. Brought up on such stories, I revisit all this frequently, much too often for comfort. It is only against such a background that I can read the Partition in Urdu literature, especially fiction, which narrates the Partition through and in multitudinous texts. All said and done about the Partition, it is those literary texts which continue to haunt me. There is no getting away from it. It turns up in unexpected places. It comes in all shapes and colors. After so many years, it still lurches in the shadows and looms around the corner, waiting to grab you unawares. I would rather confront it, face it rather than flee or beat a hasty retreat.

The Partition to begin with. It is History with a capital H. For my generation it is the Great Given. No need to hark back to the time before the lines were drawn and battle out the long-drawn arguments on its validity. Now that its there, what next. How to read it in the books that it inspired and how to read the books which flowed out of and with the tumultuous events. More often than not, the Partition is seen as either a beginning or an end. The Beginners are the historians and scholars who signpost it as the emergence of the new nation-state, the dawn of a new day. The Enders deplore and lament it as the end of a secular South Asia, where different castes and creeds had lived harmoniously for thousands of years. It is the sheer dichotomy between the two positions, which I find unsettling. Clearly it's a beginning as well as an end. In my end is my beginning and in my beginning, my end. Like a serpent swallowing it's tail. You don't know where to begin and can start from anywhere.

So where do you begin? From the Partition itself. I would like to start from the actual events, rather than any fixed or inviolable ideological position. The facts are well-known but let me recapitulate what for me are some of the defining features. The handing over of power to local representatives in India by British authorities was a hasty affair, for one reason or another, many of the long-term consequences not thought out by the perpetuators. Not only much unresolved business was left

behind to create a long-standing feud, the shape of the newly created dominions, as they were called, ensured the uprooting of what is described as the largest exodus in modern human history. Sheer numbers or Biblical references fail to do justice to the suffering in human terms, as the displacement was accompanied by mayhem on a scale unprecedented in a country much prone to violence. Who knows how many died, how many men subjected to brutalization and pillage, and how many women knew abduction and rape. But matters did not end there. A Diaspora had been triggered on and the generations after have continued to be the indirect affected ones. After Midnight's children, the Children of After the Midnight. The emotions unleashed in 1947, or the ones reaching their climax in those events, remained unabated on both sides and contributed to other partitions, most significantly to the events of 1971, a second Partition. And who knows what next? The name of Kamleshwar's Hindi novel haunts me as an un-requited but un-answered question: *Aur Kitnay Pakistan?* By all accounts, 1947 was the Mother of All Partitions.

Beyond itself, what *was* the Partition? Was it a cause or an effect? Was it the Mother or a child? It was an incision which dissected out the new inception, Pakistan, out of the parent-body of India. The analogy of a Cesarean section was used by Mumtaz Shirin in one of her short stories. This generally fine critic who studied the literature around the Partition described the large scale violence that ensued with the events as symbolizing the loss of blood which accompanies a surgical procedure. Such symbolism seems heavy, oversimplified. It is the accompanying violence, its scope and its scale, which puts to shame the ideologically-minded scholars who would like nothing better than to describe the emergence of Pakistan as an Immaculate Conception. Not by a far cry. Shouldn't a critic as perceptive as Shirin have shown greater sensitivity to the discernable difference between hemorrhage and blood-letting? Bifurcated and dissected out, the Partition itself has been Partitioned with different stake-holders laying claim to different parts. But who will gather the limbs of Osiris?

As we move from the topography of the events to the barest reference to a fictional artifact, we are crossing from one plane to another. The transition is swift if somewhat jerky and we do not immediately realize that we are crossing the date-line. The Partition is open to a multitude of possibilities, several readings. I would like to differentiate between two different discourses, on one hand socio-political analysis and on the other, the study of the Partition as a literary phenomenon. The two are obviously related and intertwined closely so that it is not possible to artificially dissect out the two, but having said that, I would also like to point out to the ensuing confusion when the terms of one are admixed with those of the other. Switching one for the other is the main reason why some analysts/ critics over-burden it with their pet peeves, ideological or otherwise. They read various trends and patterns in the literary texts about what they think happened or what should have/ have not taken place. Without denigrating other possibilities, I would like to focus on the The Life and Times of the Partition as a literary phenomenon, particularly in the context of Urdu.

It doesn't take a literary critic to recognize the immense outpouring of fiction and poetry in Urdu focusing on the events of 1947 and the related consequences. Readers not directly conversant with Urdu can have access to representative works through a number of anthologies, out of which I would like to specially refer to *An Unwritten Epic*, the Penguin selection by Professor M. U. Memon, and the large Urdu sampling available in Alok Bhalla's three volumes of *Stories About the Partition of India*. While these and others amply serve the non-Urdu reader at large, what about Urdu itself? There is no such collection available in the very language these works were originally written in. Here

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one should refer to the sadly instructive fate of *Zulmat-e-Neem Roz*, the anthology Mumtaz Shirin edited but failed to see printed in her lifetime, but let me return to it later.

The Partition rode on a high wave in the Urdu short story. The social realism accentuated by the Progressive writers had prepared the ground and the traumatic events opened up a new vein by the major short-story writers of the period: Saadat Hassan Manto, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishan Chander; Ismat Chughtai as well as scores of others. In stories such as *Thanda Gosht* and *Khol Do*, Manto perfected his art to create taut, compact narratives going beyond the search for the lost ideals of humanism to a quest for what constituted the human, while *Toba Tek Singh* goes beyond political questions to what is essentially the human condition. While these stories mark an ascending point in Manto's career, for

Krishan Chander, the once much admired stories *Hum Wehsbi Hain* and *Peshawar Express* now seem artistically weak, the beginning of this writer's decline. He returned to the theme a few years later in his short novel *Ghaddar*, better crafted than his earlier works, but his vision remains essentially political. Bedi's powerful *Lajwanti* was written a little later, and remains one of the best stories from his early period. In her few stories around this theme, Ismat Chughtai did not achieve the distinction of her best work from the same period.

Following closely on their heels were other remarkable writers who have at least one remarkable short story around this theme: Aziz Ahmad (*Kaali Raat*); Hayat Ullah Ansari (*Shukr Guzār Ankaabīn*), Ahmed Nadim Qasimi (*Parmeshar Singh*); Upendra Nath Ashk (*Tableland*); Jamila Hashmi (*Ban-bās*) and Ashfaq Ahmed who authored *Gadariya*, one of the best-known stories from the period. There are other lesser known but distinguished writers such as the enigmatic Jawaida Jafri, who authored the unusual story, *Jagay Paak Parwardigar*, but never repeated her success.

The majority of these stories focus on the riots, the brutality, the barbarism, the dehumanization and the heroics of some characters against a politically charged backdrop and the pain of being uprooted as a consequence of communal violence. No wonder that Urdu critics used the categorization as *Fisadat Kay Afsaney*, "Riot Literature". This is the term used by Muhammad Hassan Askari and Mumtaz Shirin. Askari took up the interesting position that *fisadat* as such could not be the subject of literature and then went on to develop a reading of Manto's short stories, especially the vignettes in *Siab Hashiyay*, which focus exclusively on these themes. In using the term *Fisadat Ka Adab*, the riots were highlighted as the main occurrence, rather than the Partition itself, which may have been seen as a cause rather than the effect, perhaps even a transient phase. History proved it to be the other way around.

While the short stories examined under each may remain the same, as a category Partition literature is broader than *Fisadat Ka Adab*. It is based on historicity and this makes it vulnerable to manipulation. In the introduction to his anthology, Bhalla makes a distinction between the histories written by the apologists of Pakistan and its bitter opponents:

"If the first set of histories read like incantations, the second work like old demonologies."

Consider the introduction to this with Memon's preface as a study in contrasting methods and the different purposes the Partition is put up to. Bhalla begins by regarding "The Partition of the Indian

sub-continent (as) the single most traumatic experience in our recent history”, and goes on to say that:

“The real sorrow of the Partition was that it brought to an abrupt end a long and communally shared history.”

Memon’s preface records his dissatisfaction with what he calls “ideological underpinnings” working as “as a sort of distorting filter”, without going into the details of which books he is referring to and what those pronouncements are. He complains of inadequate translations but then takes an even more tantalizing position when he terms two well-known short stories of Ahmed Nadim Qasimi and Bedi as “poorly written.” His vehement dismissal of narrow nationalistic aspirations is offered as a sharp contrast to the positions taken by other critics whom he does not name. The difference in their points of view is not so much a question of different temperaments but fundamentally in their ways of reading the Partition. Bhalla’s complaint against the two sets of histories holds true for the anthologies, or at least their introductions.

The manipulation of literature in favour of a particular point of view is also borne out by the problem Shirin faced with her selection. Mumtaz Shirin had edited a special issue of her journal *Naya Daur* devoted to the riots, and she spent much time and energy writing about these fictions, making it her special area of study. Based upon her critical analysis she did put together a collection of what she considered the representative and important works of fiction, but as her selection was never printed, there is only anecdotal evidence and speculation as to its fate. The story goes that the anthology was submitted for publication to a quasi-governmental body but one of the bureaucrats reigning over there objected to the inclusion of a story by Krishan Chander on the grounds that it went “against Pakistan” and the editor was asked to remove it. This was ironic as Shirin had singled out this particularly story as being weak in terms of its craftsmanship but as it was a representative story by one of the best-known writers of the day, she was not willing to delete it all together. The resulting stalemate led to the anthology being shelved and even the manuscript was lost so that years later, I had to dig out all the references from Shirin’s essays to assemble a loose collection the lines that she had worked on initially.

I have often thought about what befell Shirin’s selection, wondering if amounted to a sort of censorship, an attempt to rewrite the past. An imaginary past, ideologically correct, with its *qibla* in the right direction. Call it the riots, or the Partition, the literature around this set of events has been prone to manipulation for reasons which have less to do with literature and more with ideological positioning of the critics involved. However, this brings us to another twist in the tale. In the first instance the Partition had been written as a story, a tale which needed to be told, and then we see the Partition as the frame of stories as it provides the reference for an assessment of particular stories. This change marks a turn in the fortunes of the Partition.

So we have two Partitions then. The Partition as a story. The Partition as the frame of stories. I want to move on to another step and look at another stage in the literary career of the Partition. This is the stage of Beyond the Partition, reading through the Partition in order to take a broader view, and this is best seen in the works of two powerful fiction-writers who transcend the entire category of Partition literature. These two writers are Qurratulain Hyder and Intizar Husain. Both follow on the

heels of the writers mentioned above in strictly chronological terms as the former established her reputation on the eve of the Partition and the later, just in the wake of the Partition. And the dividing line is important to both. Qurratulain Hyder does not have any single short story which could be regarded as an example of Partition literature, while Intizar Husain's long story *Bin Likhi Rizmiya* (An Unwritten Epic) was much admired by Shirin. Qurratulain Hyder's best-known novel, and undoubtedly the most widely read novel in Urdu, *Aag Ka Dariya*

Can be regarded with Husain's works as the epitome of *Fisadat Kay Afsaney* or Partition literature, as they fulfill the demands of this category and transcend/ break open this category by taking it beyond the Partition to a broader view of history of which the Partition is one component. These two writers represent the pinnacle of achievement in Urdu fiction and we can even ask if Urdu fiction has really moved beyond these two?

Unlike the earlier *Fisadat* writers, a discernable political stance is not merely a balancing act in these two writers, but it develops as their narrative technique. The Partition is a part of the story, not the entire narrative in both writers. While I am taking their names together, I do not want to set them up as a contrasting pair. There is no need for another *Mamaqna-e-Anis-o-Dabeer* between the two as the *Urdu-wallas* are prone to. While I consider both to be important in their individual capacity, I am also not suggesting that they are writers of equal stature.

The differences and similarities between the two pose interesting questions. *Aag Ka Dariya* also serves as a dividing line between Hyder's earlier and her more mature, later work. It consumes and transcends the early period mocked and savaged by Ismat Chughtai as Pom Pom Darling. The novel remains unmatched for the brightness and sparkle of its prose and the narrative technique based on her concept of time as a continuum. Qurratulain Hyder's fiction is derived from her reading of the history as a narrative, it takes a longer view of the Partition, while Intizar Husain focuses on the Partition in his novel *Basti* in a manner which goes beyond the eternal present of the *Fisadat* to situations which are derived from and based in history, so we have 1857 on one hand and 1971 on the other. Intizar Husain's major novel, *Basti* is a mid-career work, and bears an interesting relationship to the writer's work. It draws on a number of themes from the writer's earlier and successful short stories in a manner where the author can be seen to be cannibalizing the previous work to some extent. Although, in a number of instances, portions of the novel cover the same ground, but the different components connect together to form a unified whole. Breaking out of the conventional framework of time, *Basti* contemplates historical time giving way to miraculous time.

Another point of contact between the two is the richness and multiplicity of their past, or pasts as both seem to have access to more than one past. Their techniques show the influence of the traditions of the ancient East as well as the modern European novel. Neither of the wants to give up one for the sake of the other and the ease with which they freely move from one to the other, is specially difficult to grasp for Urdu critics who are inclined to be myopic and seem to resent the fact that these writers defy the straitjacketing of categories. Hence, some Urdu critics still discuss and debate whether *Aag Ka Dariya* is written in the stream of consciousness technique and whether *Basti* can actually be called a novel in the strict sense.

As fiction-writers bracketed together by the same time-period, I would like to suggest that the experience of reading one can illuminate and enrich the reading of the other and provide us with a

richer and more complex perspective, and for this purpose, I would like to read together the opening scenes and the conclusions of the two novels.

Let us read the beginnings. But if we can only identify them as such. The novelist Amos Oz has pondered over this question and in his book *The Story Begins* he frames this question:

“But what ultimately is a beginning? Can there exist, in principle, a proper beginning to any story at all? Isn’t there always, without exception, a latent beginning-before-the-beginning? A forward to the introduction to the prologue? A pre-Genesis occurrence?”

This is how *Basti* establishes what Oz has called “the opening contract”:

“When the world was still new, when the sky was fresh and the earth not yet soiled, when trees breathed through the centuries and ages spoke in the voices of birds, how astonished he was, looking all around, that everything was so new, and yet looked so old. Bluejays, woodpeckers, peacocks, doves, squirrels, parakeets---it seemed that they were as young as he, yet they carried the secrets of the ages.”

The opening scene is rooted in the childhood of the protagonist, for whom this is a more real and intense period in his life than any other. But even before the story begins, a beginning has been made. A beginning with the world on the eve of creation.

The opening contract of *The River of Fire* is invested in an insect rich in allusions:

“It was the first beerbahuti of the season that Gautum had seen. The prettiest of rain-insects, clothed in god’s own red velvet, the beerbahuti was called the Bride of Indira, Lord of the Clouds.”

This insect is no stranger as we encounter it in a memorable location in *Basti*, this time more symbolic than mythological, signifying the ideal of beauty that Zakir, Afzal and their friends would like to have their country achieve:

“I’m about to have some acres allotted to me One acre will be given over to beds of roses One acre will be only for rain-bugs.”

“Rain-bugs?” Irfan looked at him sarcastically

“Fellow! Be quiet! You won’t be able to understand this In the rainy season I roam around very anxiously. There don’t seem to be any rain-bugs here. There ought to be rain-bugs. We have to make Pakistan beautiful” Then, changing his tone, he addressed them both: ‘Listen! You too will stay with me. This is my command. I, and you two”

“And the rain-bugs,” Irfan interrupted.

“Yes, and the rain-bugs. In beautiful Pakistan there will be only beautiful people.” (Chapter 9)

You don’t really have to step out of the novel to realize that the impossibility of the situation: in the less than beautiful Pakistan, there are not beautiful people only. There are no rain-bugs too. Gautum had put the beerbahuti on a leaf and sent it floating down the river. Did it get left behind at the time of the Partition? Its disappearance is again taken up in a later story, *Allah Mian Ki Shehzadi*, included

in the collection *Scheherzade Kay Naam*. A young girl and boy, on the edge of puberty, trade beerbahautis for a pappaya, and the exchange turns daring as the boy touches the girl's clean tongue to see it devoid of any spittle—the closest that any characters of Intizar Husain come to each other in physical proximity—when suddenly the story is transported and the reader is jolted into the realization that this is the realm of memory which has just been splintered by the narrator/ author's wife watching a loud-playing television and commenting on the news. The news too is about strained relations between India and Pakistan, amounting to further difficulties for travelers across the border, which in the post-Partition world have solidified into the absolute, in spite of all the beerbahautis. The shattered memory cannot be restored, except to recollect that the beerbauatis have died, their death symbolizes the loss of the childhood innocence, replaced by the politically charged colorless present.

But the beerbahuati is a later interpolation. Or import. It is simply not there in the opening scene of *Aag Ka Dariya*, which establishes its contract through different terms. This is why I want to plead the case for considering *Aag Ka Dariya* and *River* as two separate books, parallel but distinct. The twain never did meet.

The beginning having been established, let us move towards the end. To come to the closure of *Basti*, which is intriguing in itself:

“Yar,” he said to Irfan, “I want to write her a letter.”

“Now?” Irfan stared into his face.

“Yes, now.”

“Now when—“ He paused in the midst of his sentence, then took a different tack. “Before—“ Confused, he fell silent.

Before—he tried to get it clear in his mind—before—before the parting of her hair fills with silver, and the birds fall silent, and the keys rust, and the doors of the streets are shut—and before the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is shattered, and before the pitchers broken at the well, and the sandalwood tree, and the snake in the ocean, and—

“Why are you silent?” Irfan was gazing steadily at him.

“Silence.” Afzal, placing a finger on his lips, signaled Irfan to be silent. “I think we will see a sign”

“A sign? What sign can there be now?” Irfan said with bitterness and despair.

“Fellow, signs always come at just these times, when all around—“ he paused in the middle of his speech. Then he said in a whisper, “This is the time for a sign—“

It reverts and connects back to the Biblical language of the opening. The weight of the scene hangs on the sign. Our expectations aroused, we are confronted by questions: What does it mean and why now? Will it really take place? Or perhaps the sign already occurred—when Zakir wants to write a letter. This is the first indication of a stirring within him, a deeper connection with relationships and feelings. Zakir who is accused by many critics as devoid of action-less is now guilty of having thought of an action. True to his character, he has not actually carried out the act—writing the letter—but he has spoken of it to his friends. It is also significant that he discusses this intimate or almost intimate gesture with a friend. He has this sense of urgency that he needs to this “before—But before what? This he does not articulate. As this is never specified, there is a sense of foreboding, which is reinforced by the Biblical language, going back full-circle to the opening contract. Basti is an open-

ended novel. There is no final and firm closure of the narrative sequence, indicating multiple possibilities in the ending.

The word in the original is *basharat*, with its strong religious and metaphysical reference and with it is posed the question of will there be or won't there be--- "*basharat ho gi kay nahin?*" The question at the end of *Basti* is the unanswered question of Partition literature—did the miracle take place or not? By not answering the question, the novel says it all.

Now read it with the closure of *Aag Ka Dariya*. The mastery of the narrative form and control over technique is displayed best in the novel's conclusion as the writer brings together the various threads to weave together a final scene. It closes the long, historical narrative and its irrevocable finality contributes to the sense of tragedy it highlights. The Partition as tragedy.

As the action of the novel moves ahead, Kamal has traveled to India from Karachi after the Partition but avoids meeting his old friends who meet again in a grotto of the Shravasti forest, in a scene which parallels their meeting in the opening scene of the novel, and as they begin to talk they comment about Kamal and his visit:

"Kamal has deserted us. Betrayed his friends, gone away for good and let us down. Together, we could have challenged the galaxies."

"We have all betrayed one another," Gautum replied quietly. Can these Western visitors to Shravasti understand the pain in our souls? In India's, in Kamal's, in mine?

They watched the river ripple past. Words were temporary and transitory. Languages fade away or are forced into oblivion by new tongues. Men also come and go, even the river and the jungle are not eternal. After fifty years a jungle of concrete may spring up here. The river may dry up or shrink or change course, just as human beings disappear or change the direction of their journeys.

*Ghazalan, tum to waqif ho, kaho Majnoon ke murney ki,
Divana mar gaya, aakhir ko, veeranay pe kya guzri"*

With this famous couplet, the scene tends to become a patch of purple prose. The two characters imagine Kamal in Karachi, with more than a touch of cynicism and certainly with less than approval, "dancing with some lovely begum in the Karachi Gymkhana."

Kamal is awkwardly placed here, but this sense of awkwardness was far more memorable in the Urdu version, specially the two lines which are placed quietly in the middle of the scene and are low-key and thus achieve a powerful effect:

*Shaid wo donon ikhattey soch rahay thay keh Abul Mansur Kamaluddin kis tarah Hindustan main dakhil hua tha
aur ks tarah Hindustan say nikal gaya.*

These lines present the central theme of the novel without much fanfare. These are placed in between descriptions of the scene— two men throwing pebbles in the river and watching their reflections broken into expanding circles. The Urdu version closes with:

Who mundair par say utra. Us nay aik lamba saans liya aur ahista ahista qadam rakhta basti ki taraf wapas chala gaya.

Basti ki taraf. The road does lead towards the Intizar Husain's *Basti* and perhaps it is what lies beyond, the next step, which was also the next step in history.

The end of Aag Ka Dariya too is an unanswered question: how or why did he leave? *wob kaisay chala gaya*— This is a great walk-over. Is he abdicating from his story/history?

Henceforth history will be his absence. And the River of Fire is still a sheet of scalding wet heat. We are still undecided. The Partition likes me. The Partition likes me not. The Partition has left me. The Partition has left me not. Will there be a sign?

Bangladesh: Literary Responses to the Tragedy of 1971

Ahmad Salim

Introduction

To suppress East Pakistan's demand for political autonomy, Yahya Khan government launched a planned genocide on the 26 March 1971. In the following nine months, three million people were massacred; the largest number of people killed in the shortest span of time in human history. People from all walks of life were; students, teachers, professors, doctors, nurses, scientists, politicians, poets, artists, writers, government workers, military and paramilitary personnel, industrialists, shopkeepers, rickshaw pullers were executed. Innocent and unarmed villagers; men, women and children were rounded up, raped, mutilated and massacred by the West Pakistani troops. The outcome of this genocide was the Liberation War of 1971.

On 16 December 1971, the Pakistani army occupation ended and they surrendered before the joint command of the Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters) and Indian Army. An independent and sovereign Bangladesh was born.

Literature is often written in response to a specific occurrence and occasion. Writers and poets are called the "conscience of the people." We find mixed literary responses in Pakistan during the Tragedy of 1971 in East Pakistan.

Renowned names such as Ahmad Nadim Qasmi, Mumtaz Mufti and Safdar Mir favoured the government's atrocities and brutality against the innocent Bengali people. Writers and poets sympathizing with the Bengalis and against the government's drastic action lacked courage to write their opposing views and remained silent. The truly exceptional thinkers like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Habib Jalib, Ata Shad, Gul Khan Naseer, Ajmal Khattak, Ghani Khan, Sheikh Ayaz and Anwar Pirzado did not remain silent. They had the courage to speak their mind.

Army Crackdown

The Bangladesh War, incorporating the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, was an armed conflict between Pakistan Army and the people of East Pakistan that lasted for nine months, from 26 March to 16 December 1971. It resulted in independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan.

Since Independence in 1947, East Pakistan accounted for a majority of the country's population but political power remained firmly in the hands of West Pakistanis, specifically the Punjabis. A system of representation based on population would have empowered East Pakistan; the establishment in West Pakistan devised 'One Unit' scheme, in which West Pakistan was considered one province. The sole reason was to counterbalance the East wing's votes. Apart from economic and political exploitation, Bengalis were grossly underrepresented in the Pakistan military. Bengalis were only 5% of combined Army, Air Force and Navy forces in 1965; only a few were in command positions, the majority were in technical or administrative posts.¹

Despite a huge defence budget, East Pakistan received none of the benefits such as contracts or military support jobs.

The Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 over Kashmir highlighted the military insecurity among Bengalis. An under-strength infantry division and 15 combat aircraft were positioned in East Pakistan to thwart Indian retaliations during the conflict.²

In 1948, Mohammad Ali Jinnah declared in Dhaka that 'Urdu, and only Urdu' would be the official language for all of Pakistan.³ This proved highly controversial because Bangla was spoken by the majority of East Pakistanis. The language controversy resulted in a revolt from East Pakistan; students and civilians lost their lives in a police crackdown on 21 February 1952. The day is revered in Bangladesh and in West Bengal as the Language Martyrs' Day. Later, in memory of the 1952 killings, UNESCO declared 21 February as the International Mother Language Day. The conflict left the East Pakistanis feeling alienated and hostile.

The situation climaxed in 1970 when Awami League, the largest political party of Pakistan, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won a landslide victory in the national elections. They were denied the right to form the government, which led to a nation-wide strike.

All foreign journalists were systematically deported from Bangladesh. Bengali members of military services were disarmed. On the night of 25 March, the Pakistani Army began a violent effort to suppress the Bengali opposition.. The operation was called Operation Searchlight by the Pakistani Army. It was carefully devised by several top army generals to crush Bengalis.

The capital city of Dhaka became the focus of violence and the process of ethnic elimination was initiated all over Bangladesh. Residential halls of University of Dhaka were particularly targeted. Pakistani armed forces destroyed The Jagannath Hall and an estimated 600 to 700 residents were murdered. The Pakistani army denied charges of cold blooded murders at the university in the Hamood-ur-Rehman Commission in Pakistan. The massacre at Jagannath Hall and nearby student dormitories of Dhaka University is corroborated by a videotape filmed by Prof. Nur Ullah of the East Pakistan Engineering University, whose lived directly opposite the student dormitories.⁴

All over Bangladesh, Hindu areas suffered severe brutalities. By midnight, Dhaka was ablaze. Time magazine reported, "The Hindus, who account for three-fourths of the refugees and a majority of the dead, have borne the brunt of the Muslim military hatred."⁵

On the night of 25 March 1971, the systematic and planned murder of the people of East Pakistan began. In March, Yahya Khan brutally reversed the overwhelming mandate of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. Yahya Khan came to power on 25 March 1969. Ironically, on the same day two years later, he instigated ruthless massacre of the Bengalis.

Simon Dring of The Daily Telegraph wrote about 25 March, 'How Dhaka paid for a United Pakistan?' In his report, he provided the first eyewitness account of the terror campaign, designed by the Pakistani generals to 'save' the 'integrity' of the nation.

He recorded that 200 students were killed in Iqbal Hall, the headquarters of the anti-government students' union. Two days later, bodies of students were still smouldering in burnt-out rooms, scattered outside the Hall, many floated in a nearby lake and an art student lay sprawled across his easel.⁶

The corridors of the Iqbal Hall were covered in blood. The military removed many of the bodies but 30 bodies were unaccounted for.

Soldiers buried the dead in mass graves, which were bulldozed over by tanks. Shanty houses running alongside a railway line near the university were destroyed. Professor Jotirmoy Guha Thakurta and his wife Pashanti's house had a pool of blood on the stairs, five days after the massacre

There was a fierce battle between the Bengali policemen and the troops at the Rajarbagh Police Headquarters. The late Jahanara Imam wrote in her book, *Blood and Tears*, that most of the policemen were killed and rest were forced to retreat. Many university professors including Prof. Modayniruzamman, Dr. G. C. Dev, Dr. F. R. Khan and Dr. A. Maqtadir were killed. The offices of 'The People' and 'The Ittefaq' were burnt. Most of the market places and slums area was burnt to ashes including Rayer Bazaar, Thathari Bazaar, Naya Bazaar, and Shakaripotti. The night of the 25th till the morning of 30th March, the army killed people in the Dhaka Club and dead bodies were left on the ground.

Response in West Pakistan

27 March 1971 was a lovely day in Lahore. The city was full of flowers, colours, and fragrance. The writers, poets and intellectuals gathered at Shah Hussain College, to proceed to the Shalimar Gardens in Bagwanpura to attend the annual *Urs* of sixteenth century Punjabi saint-poet, Madhu Lal Hussain. People danced the traditional *bhangra* of Punjab. The devotees preferred *dhamaal* to the beat of the *dhhol* and exhaust themselves dancing ecstatically. Lal Hussain and Dulla Bhatti rebelled against the Mughal authority during the reign of Akbar the Great. *Dhamaal* at the shrine during *Urs* is usually held in the last week of March and is not an expression of merriment but an expression for freedom and justice.

On 26 March 1971, Reports of genocide in East Bengal reached people in West Pakistan. Led by Professor Manzoor Ahmad, the Principal of Shah Hussain College and Shafqat Tanveer Mirza of Majlis-i-Shah Hussain, a procession started from the college to the shrine. Inside and around the saint's tomb, the devotees sang louder than ever before and people danced in a state of frenzy. On my lips were the verses of my poem:

*Lal Hussain! O Lalon's kin,
Rise up! In Bengal your Madhus are being massacred
They shot at the songs of Lalon time and again
In '48 in '52 and later on too....
And today they are ablaze with the songs of Tagore and Nazrul
Rise up Lal Hussain, Madhu is lonely, embrace him.
Combat with your songs the bullet whistling towards him
Get up Lal Hussain,*

*Dulla Bhattis of Bengal are filing-up
Get up poet, where have you left your gun?
My poet, the night grows long without Madhu*

One of my poems about the plight of our fellow countrymen in East Pakistan was translated in Urdu and sent for publication in *Awami Awaz*, published by M. R. Hassan. There was harsh reaction from the military-bureaucracy of West Pakistan. I was arrested in Lahore and M. R. Hassan in Karachi.

A few days later, it was learnt that on the night of 25 March, tanks rolled into Dhaka and targeted the students. The university canteen, usually the center of students' politics was burnt and the owner, Madhu was shot dead along with other three members of his family. Bashirul Haque wrote in his book, "Twenty years after the Genocide in Bangladesh".

Madhu lived in Dhaka University Shib Bari quarters in flat number 3/D. One night, the soldiers attacked his apartment and in 90 minutes, killed four members of his family. Madhu Da had large family, five sons and six daughters and daughter-in-law. Ranjit was the oldest and worked for an insurance company. Madhu Da, Ranjit, Bina Rani Dey were killed at the same time. Mother, Jugamaya Dey, met the same fate along with her husband, son and son's wife the same night.⁷

Pakistani Writers and Poets in support of Army Crackdown

On 7 April 1971 the writers and poets from Lahore condemned the armed intervention by India in East Pakistan. In a resolution adopted at the Writers Guild House, the writers demanded that the Government should mobilize all means of information at its disposal "for the propagation of Pakistani nationalism for reflecting and widespread public communication of the ideals of Pakistani nationhood". They expressed gratitude to "our great neighbour and friend, the People's Republic of China who had, in the note of protest to India, condemned the Indian interference in Pakistan's internal affairs."⁸ They supported the stand taken by the President of Pakistan in his reply to the letter from the President of USSR.

The meeting was presided by Abul Asr Hafeez Jullundhari, the author of our national anthem, and attended by Lahore's leading poets and writers: Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi, Prof. Hamid Ahmad Khan, Muhammad Safdar, Mir, Jamiluddin Aali, Meerza Adeeb. Maulana Hamid Ali Khan, Qateel Shifai, Dr. Enwar Sajjad, Ishrat Rahmani and Syed Qasim Mahmood.

Indian action in East Pakistan was strongly condemned. Government of India was warned to desist interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan. Ignoring the crimes committed by the government in East Pakistan, the writers welcomed the assurance of the President of Pakistan that political power would be transferred to the representatives of the people as soon as conditions returned to normal. The resolution said that the most important concern was the preservation and protection of the integrity of Pakistan.⁹

The writers noted with 'surprise and Indignation' that some Indian writers had given utterances through AIR to their support for 'the totally unfounded and mischievous propaganda of India against Pakistan'. They advised that they should recognize the importance for writers to uphold "the

standard of truth and honesty in all situations and should have the courage to criticizing the injustices of their own country. They should specially remind their Government of the untold cruelties that it had unleashed on the Muslims of occupied Kashmir and of India throughout these 23 years.”¹⁰

Before the meeting adopted the resolution, it was addressed by Abul Asr Hafeez Jullundhari, Ahmed Nadim Qasimi, Prof. Hamid Ahmad Khan, Ishrat Rahmani, Prof. Muhammad Usman and Prof. Anjum Roomani.

The resolution was a carbon copy of *Jamaat-i-Islami's* statements. Zeno (Muhammad Safdar Mir) wrote in his cultural notes, ‘The Writers’ Responsibility’, ‘well attended meeting of writers and poets of Lahore passed a strong resolution against Indian intervention in Pakistan's present crises.’ Zeno noted that it was not the first time Pakistan faced Indian aggression. Pakistan was an unacceptable entity to the Indian ruling classes. He further added that Indian aggression on West Pakistan in 1965 and on East Pakistan in 1971 was a part of a historical process. Zeno concludes in the following words:

“As writers, it is our duty not merely to sing in abstract terms the songs of our people's heroism; this is important. Also necessary for our successful struggle is to prepare our people for this long struggle by clarifying the nature and context of this struggle. It is when we forget the overall perspective and keep our eyes concentrated on the immediate fight, that we get confused about the political nature of the incidents in East Pakistan, about the distinction between our friends and our enemies. The enemy is likely to take advantage of our confusion. The only way we, as writers, can help in the struggle of our people against the challenges to our very existence is to understand what the conflict means in its totality and what forces are engaged in this conflict on both sides. If we are clear about this, it would not be difficult for us to help clarify it for others; both within Pakistan and abroad. And that is the best way in which the writers can be of service in our present struggle.”¹¹

During the war, the writers from Rawalpindi appealed to the writers worldwide that they should support Pakistan. Sayyed Zamir Jaffri wrote in his book, *Judai ka Mosam*, that these writers appealed on 10 December 1971 and included Mumtaz Mufti, Shorish Malik, Majid Amjad, Fateh Mohammad Malik, Afzal Pervaiz, Manzur Arif, Colonel Mohammad Khan, Ada Jaffri, Qamar-al-Hussaini, Sultan Rashk, Jamil Malik, Akhtar Hoshiarpuri, Sadiq Nasim, Aziz Malik, Insar Nasri, Karam Haidri, Ayub Mohsin, Ahsen Ali Khan, Rabia Fakhri, Jamil Yousaf, Perveen Fana Sayyed.¹²

Uxi Mufti, Deputy Director of Pakistan Council, Ministry of Information, took out a procession of writers and poets on a decorated truck through the bazaars of the city on 14 December 1971.¹³

Writers like Masood Mufti, who served as bureaucrats during the 1971 war in East Pakistan, forgot the basis on which Bengali Muslims broke the strong bonds of Bengali nationalism, accepted Partition of their land, culture and history and joined hands with West Pakistanis 1,000 miles away from them, according to the outstanding Punjabi writer Shafqat Tanveer Mirza. Masood Mufti views in his diary *Lambey*, were partial and one-sided. As a civil bureaucrat and representative of the Government of Pakistan, he projected views of the government. He does not recognize the economic complaints of the Bengalis against the West Pakistanis. The Biharis and other refugees

from India never fused culturally with the locals. It was a fight for quotas. The Bengalis made many political sacrifices for West Pakistanis. Masood Mufti also wrote *Chehre* and *Rezezy*. He wrote in *Lambe*:

“The scale of violence in 1971 was far greater than that of 1947. This time not only Muslims killed other Muslims, but in the name of Bengali nationhood, Muslims, along with Hindus, killed other Muslims.”¹⁴

Ironically, the writer in denial about the killing of hundreds of thousands of East Pakistani Muslims at the hands of Muslims of Pakistan Army. Overlooking the atrocities in East Pakistani, Mufti writes:

“On seeing Chittagong my eyes were filled with tears. In the beginning of March, women and children were killed in Isfahani Jute Mill Club. I saw splashes of blood. On one of the walls, I saw the marks where a child’s head was smashed and the brain was sticking on the wall. I saw *burqas* of women in shreds. I saw a new unused *paranda* (head band) of a small girl. And finally I saw a book of a small child with a picture of a deer. It was the same book my child reads in his school in Lahore. I picked up the book. The marks of blood were visible on it. I thought that was my own child’s blood and tears started falling from my eyes abruptly.”¹⁵

Quite interestingly, our poets and writers either remained silent or favoured the Yahya Khan government during the genocide of the people of East Pakistan. They justified the massacre of innocent people by the Pakistan army on grounds that the killed people were traitors and Indian agents.

Josh Malih Abadi in his poem, *Jangi Qaidiyon ke Khandan*, wrote:

Kaun hain yeh bewian jin ke jigar hain chak chak
Jin ke chebron per hai zardi, jinki mangon main hai kbak

(Who are these wives with broken hearts?
They have pale faces, and there is dust on their foreheads)

Ahmad Faraz wrote a poem in favour of 1965 war, writes on POWs in his poem, *Meri Ankhain mera Chehra Lao*:

Main abhi zinda hoon
Maujood hoon
Yeh meri ana man sake
Aj ke din
Hi gae the mere sathi
Meri shaula bhari ankhain
Mera angar sa chehra le ker
In andheron ki taraf
Jin me mertii hui

Shamyon ke zia chikhti thi

(Yet I am alive
I exist
This very day
My friends had gone
Taking my burning eyes
And my face like coal
Towards that darkness
Which resounds
With cries of burning candles)

Jamil ud Din Aali in his poem, *Aey Dais ke Hawao*, wrote about POWs

*Aey Dais ke hawao sarhad ke par jao
Aur unko chu ker ao*

O' winds of my country, cross the borders
And go touch them and return

In another poem also titled, *Aey Dais ke Hawao*, Jamil ud Din Aali wrote:

*Aey Dais ke hawao
Khusbu main bas ke jao
Aur unko le ke ao*

(O' winds of my country
Take the fragrance along
And bring them back with you)

On return of POWs, Qateel Shifai, wrote:¹⁶

*Chun ke her zakhm se teer akhbir
Purfishan ho gae hain aseer akhbir
Sari duniya ne sadaqat ke himayat kerdi
Jag utha he sare zamane ka zameer akhbir*

After picking the arrows from each wound
Finally the prisoners have got freedom
The entire world has sided with the truthfulness
Finally the conscience of the world has been pricked

The Conspiracy of Silence

With the exception of Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Habib Jalib, most of the Urdu writers remained silent and did not challenge the government. There were, however, many Sindhi, Balochi, Pashto and even Punjabi poets and writers in West Pakistan who refused to believe in the theories circulated by the PPP, the Muslim League factions, the *Jama'at-i-islami* The *Jama'at*, actively collaborated with the killers in East Pakistan.

Andrew McCord wrote whether Faiz remained silent during the crisis in 1971 in East Pakistan.¹⁷ In fact, even raising this question was unjustified. Faiz was tremendously disturbed by the crisis that led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Soon after the fall of Dhaka, Ayub Mirza reports that Faiz was found under the blankets in a darkened room at Flashman's Hotel in Rawalpindi refused to get out of bed or turn on the lights. According to McCord, his most remembered public statement was a repudiation of the Soviet Union for its alliance with India. Some accounts say that Faiz offered to return his Lenin Prize, as Tagore had renounced his British knighthood after the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh.¹⁸ However, this is not true. According to renowned Urdu poet, Sahar Ansari, Faiz refused to return the Lenin Peace Prize saying that it was not a prize by some government but it bore the name of great Lenin. In a ceremony in Khaliq Dina Hall, Karachi, many speakers said that Faiz should return the Lenin Peace Prize. Faiz was present on this occasion. He courageously said in the public meeting that he would not return it. The people who came to visit me in the jail also confirmed this. They told me that there was immense government pressure on Faiz to condemn the Soviet Union and and return the Peace Prize.

Writers and Poets against Genocide

In spite of restrictions and the hardships of jails and confinements Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Habib Jalib, Sahar Ansari, Anwar Ahsan Siddiqi, M. R. Hassan, Fehmida Riaz, Ata Shad, Ghani Khan, Sheikh Ayaz (Sindhi), Gul Khan Naseer (Balochi), Ajmal Khattak (Pashto), Asif Shahkar (Punjabi) and myself, a Punjabi poet, stood against the force used to crush the political, economic and cultural rights of the people of East Pakistan and denounced West Pakistan government's inhumane and brutal treatment of the Bengali people.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz wrote a poem titled, *Stay Away from Me*:¹⁹

How can I embellish this carnival of slaughter?
How decorate the massacre?
Whose attention could my lamenting blood attract?
There's almost no blood in my rawboned body and what's left
Isn't enough to burn as oil in the lamp?
Not enough to fill a wineglass.
It can feed no fire,
Extinguish no thirst.
There's a poverty of blood in my ravaged body—
A terrible poison now runs in it.

If you pierce my veins, each drop will foam
As venomous as the cobra's fangs.
Each drop is the anguished longing of ages,
The burning seal of a rage hushed up for years.
Beware of me. My body is a river of poison.
Stay away from me. My body is a parched log in the desert.
If you burn it, you won't see the cypress or the jasmine,
But my bones blossoming like thorns on the cactus.
If you see through it in the forests,
Instead of morning perfumes, you'll scatter
The dust of my seared soul,
So stay away from me. Because I'm thirsting for blood.

On April 8, 1971, Faiz wrote another poem²⁰:

This is how my sorrow became visible
Its dust, piling up for years in my heart
Finally reached my eyes.

The bitterness now so clear that
I had to listen when my friends
Told me to wash my eyes with blood.

Everything at once was tangled in blood-
Each face, each idol, red everywhere
Blood swept over the sun, washing away its gold.

The moon erupted with blood, its silver extinguished
The sky promised a morning of blood
And the night wept only blood
The trees hardened into crimson pillars
All flowers filled their eyes with blood
And every glance was an arrow

Each pierced image blood. The blood
– a river crying out for martyrs –
Flows on in longing. And in sorrow, in rage, in love

Let it flow. Should it be dammed up
There will only be hatred cloaked in colours of death.
Don't let this happen, my friends,

Bring all my tears back instead,
A flood to purify my dust-filled eyes,

To wash this blood forever from my eyes

I also wrote some poems; the innocuous prerogative of a poet in hard times and was promptly tried by a military court. The judge in *kbaki* passed a sentence of rigorous imprisonment and six lashes. I sincerely realized that it was too trivial when compared to colossal sacrifices made by the Bengali poets, writers and intellectuals. Army Generals and the *Razakars* and *Al-Badr* murdered dozens of intellectuals on the eve of surrender.

Two nights have befallen us
Poor old forgetful mother!
One night we saw the moon blossoming in the plait
The next, we witnessed the sun burning your forehead.
From the land of the five-eyed blonde
Hailed hounds in dirty uniforms
On the first sight,
Your bosom quivered
Under heavy jackboots;
On the other, the shower of bullets
Pierced through your breast
And our song soared higher
And higher

M. R. Hassan published a bimonthly, '*Awami Awaz*'. My Punjabi poem was published in *Awami Awaz*, with Urdu translation. When I was arrested he went to the military courts and told them that the responsibility of publishing that poem lay on him and not on me, therefore, he should be arrested. He was arrested for publishing my poem against the military operation in East Pakistan and forced to stop the publication of *Awami Awaz*.

In 1972, M. R. Hassan was arrested again for distributing pamphlets against the operation in East Pakistan and jailed for four months. He was arrested once again for involvement in anti-government political activities. The case was launched in Lahore and he was fined.²¹

In 1967, Hassan, along with Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Mir Gul Khan Naseer, Ajmal Khattak, Sheikh Ayaz, Mohammad Ibrahim Joyo and Hassan Hamidi founded '*Awami Adbi Anjuman (Pakistan)*'. He became the first Secretary General of this literary organization. He kept the organization alive from 1967 to 1985; he gave a new life to progressive literature in Pakistan.²²

As mentioned earlier, I was granted 6 months' imprisonment and six lashes and a fine of rupees 2000, on non-payment my jail term was to be extended. Faiz arranged to pay the fine and sent it to the authorities. This was against my plans because I wanted to extend my jail term by non-payment and avoid the punishment of six lashes. However, Faiz was unaware of my plans and acted in good faith, although it proved detrimental for me.

Dr. Azizul Haque and his 'Young Peoples Front' was a pro-China group of leftist severely criticized the genocide in East Pakistan by the Pakistan army. He wrote articles against the military action and also took out processions. He continued the activities favouring East Pakistan through the platform of *Halqa Arbab-e-Zauq*. During my jail term, Dr. Azizul Haque looked after my family although I belonged to the pro-Moscow National Awami Party (NAP)

Many decades have passed since the fall of Dhaka 1971, but the verses of Habib Jalib are still engraved in public memory. He who wrote the historic verses during Fatima Jinnah's campaign:

*Aisey dastoor ko,
subah-i-benoor ko,
main nabin manta,
main nabin manta...'*

(‘Such a constitution (reference being to the Ayub regime) —
Such a morning without light,
I do not accept,
I do not accept.’)

The arrival of each military government gave Jalib a fresh lease of life. His heart bled with the separation of East Pakistan in 1971. The 1970 elections caused a storm that blew across Pakistan. Habib Jalib wept for the massacre of common people from East Bengal:

*Mohabat golion se bo rabe ho
Watan ka chebra khood se dho rabe ho
Guman tumko keh rasta kat raba be
Yaqaen mujko keh manzil kbo rabe ho*

(You are trying to sow love with bullets,
You are smearing the face of our country with blood,
You think you are nearing the destiny,
But I am sure you are losing the way.)

Sahar Ansari wrote in ‘*Nasal-e-Ziyan Guzeeda*’

*Hamare mehbub jism ber su sisak rabe hain
Wo beyaqini ki wadiyon mein bhatak rabe hain
Kisi ke kapre phate hue hain
Kisi ke pistan kate hue hain
Yeh aag or khun ke samundar
Ubher rabe hain ataab dar ber*

(Our beloved ones are anguishing in pain

And are lost in uncertainty
Some of them have their clothes torn off
And some have their breasts cut off
These oceans of fire and blood
Are appearing yet everywhere.)

The popular Balochi literature by Gul Khan Naseer urged Balochis to revolt against the Pakistani state²³ and severely criticized the horrific action of West Pakistan army against East Pakistan in 1971.

One of the popular Baluchi writers Zahoor Shah (1926-1977) wrote about East Pakistan in 1971:

My heart bleeds
To wet the barren land for my miserable people in the hope
That one-day these lands will turn green
And there will grow red flowers. Gather the seeds of those flowers
Because these are from my blood.²⁴

Sheikh Ayaz, great Sindhi poet and a West Pakistan leader of the Awami League was arrested and kept in Sukkar Jail. He composed several poems in support of Bengali people. Another Sindhi poet, Anwar Pirzado, an officer in the Pakistan Air Force, suffered because he supported the people of East Pakistan. In his poem, 'March 26, 1971', he wrote:²⁵

A Bengali mother today
Wails over the body of her infant,
Its chest riddled with bullets.
The blood-drenched child
Wants to call out to its mother
With its tongue wrenched out
But cannot utter even a word.
A flicker of breath moves in and out.
The mother finally accepts death,
The blood congealed and blackened.

More children are hacked away.
A father sees his daughter
Unclothed, a plaything in the hands of strangers.
Darkened corpses, clotted blood.
But Islam was saved.
The Ghazis celebrated victory over Bengali chests,
Earned blood-stained medals
Which are against mankind.

The red page of history unfolds
A spark turns into fire.
The dark drops of blood will raise their head.

Your bullets will come to an end.
Bamboo sticks
And shining axes
And homemade guns will burst forth,
The spade will be ready.
Red flags will unfurl
The blood of martyrs will live for centuries
This living blood,
The game of blood will lead us to our destination—
The red revolution.

Literary responses to the incident of 1971 emerged sporadically from various regions of West Pakistan. However, no novel was written about it. It may be termed a failure of the historical imagination, collective literary responses from Pakistan about the great tragedy of East Pakistan was sparse and casual. It is surprising when compared to the writings that emerged after the Partition of British India in 1947, the well-known short stories of Manto and the poems of Faiz as well as Qurratulain Hyder's '*Aag Ka Dariya*' (trans-created by the author in English as '*River of Fire*').²⁶ It is surprising that West Pakistani men of letters, otherwise known for their loud support of social and political issues at home and abroad, were not forthcoming on the issue of the disintegration of the country and atrocious massacre of their own people. The incident appeared to have touched only a few and even fewer who felt any deeper significance of national morality. The country just wrote off the whole incident.²⁷

Notable short stories of Intizar Hussain and Masood Ashar '*Band Aankhon Par Donon Haath*.' Sarwat Hussain's poems '*Aik Insaan Ki Maut*' (The Death of a Man) strike a collective note but personal conviction is missing. A noteworthy example is Sorayya Khan's debut English novel '*Noor*,' Another remarkable novel is '*Breaking Links*' by Razia Fasih Ahmad. '*Breaking Link*' is one of the few novels from Pakistan to reach out across to address this overwhelming void.

Recent Publications

Intezar Husain and Faiz Ahmad Faiz referred to the bloodstained legacy.

Pakistani author, Sorayya Khan wrote a novel about 1971 titled *Noor* published by Penguin. *Noor* breaks the long silence among Pakistanis writers about East Pakistan. The story is about Ali, a young Pakistani soldier, brings home Sajida, who lost her family in a cyclone and is found wandering in the streets of Dhaka. Ali raises her as his own daughter. Sajida marries and has children and is Noor is one of them, a child so special and gifted that she has access to secrets yet to be revealed and memories her mother and Ali have buried. Born with Down's syndrome, Noor begins to paint the most astonishing pictures from her first birthday. The blue of her infant drawings is the blue of the Bay of Bengal, that relentless body of water that rose up in an angry tidal wave and swept away her mother's childhood. Noor's unerring drawings bring the past back for Sajida: the cyclone, the sea full of fish, the fishing boats on the shores of what was once East Pakistan and has since become Bangladesh.

Wrapped like a snake in a tree high above the swirling waters, young Sajida survived besides rotting fish in torn nets when the rest of her family perished. In a series of chilling portraits, Noor brings the

past back with an exactitude that is both fearful and astonishing. She draws uprooted trees, shattered boats and the unrelenting monsoon rains. She details the unimaginable atrocities committed in the name of nationalism: the senseless killings of millions, the rivers water red with blood, the bloated corpses with tied hands floating like paper boats down the river and the graffiti in a now-forgotten script written on a wall: *Joi Bangla*. Noor draws what Sajida has forgotten and what Ali has barred from his memory. Her drawings reveal a 'connection'; not severed, merely buried, with Sajida's past, with Ali's compliance in those acts of unmitigated barbarism. The novel moves inexorably towards its final cathartic question: "*What was it like? There?*" and in the answer lances a long festering wound.²⁸

Razia Fasih Ahmad's most ambitious work is the novel entitled '*Sadiyon Ki Zanjeer*', translated recently by the author titled 'Breaking Links.' The novel is a conscious decision to write about the historical reality of the major crisis in 1971. She researched the historical details and eyewitness's accounts in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The novel presents external realities through strong internal emotions. Just as the two World Wars left legacies of their own in the world literature, this novel creates a legacy based on the human tragedy of the political clash of East and West Pakistan, which resulted in the break-up of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. This tragedy has heart-felt emotion and great empathy, the writer tried to create a wider canvas by looking at the big picture. She describes a full spectrum of people, of the social injustice and lack of vision in one group of people and hypocrisy of other, who blame everybody but themselves.

Razia Fasih Ahmad presented individual actions that affect peoples' lives and group actions that result in death, devastation and grief. The novel presents a human story artistically woven into the emerging mosaic of the East Pakistan tragedy. The most remarkable aspect of the novel, '*Sadiyon ki Zanjeer*' is its readability. It is a gripping narrative, a rare thing in our so-called 'modernistic' times. The description of scenic geography is so beautiful that they look more like some rare paintings of master painters.²⁹

Razia Fasih Ahmad wrote:

Sheikh Mujib realized that he was surrounded on both sides. Awami League wanted him to declare independence immediately and President Yahya was totally against it. He read the draft of his proposed speech one more time and thought of a new strategy: He would not announce the creation of Bangladesh but would keep the tone of his speech firm and threatening. He added to his speech:

The door is open for negotiations with the West Pakistanis and the path of resistance is open for our people. If there is no agreement, we cannot do anything but there is still time. If one shot is fired during this period or our people are subjected to oppression, then we will turn every house into a fort. We will be ready to face the enemy with whatever weapons we have. And, to the government, I shall say, "No more spraying of bullets. You cannot suppress seventy million people. We have shed our blood once. We are prepared to shed it again.

He would play another trump card to enliven the masses and give them something to chant: *Remember, the present struggle is for liberation. The present struggle is for independence. Joi Bangla.*

He felt better. These last sentences could easily be interpreted as the Declaration of Independence.”³⁰

Conclusion

Pakistan Army with the support of political and religious militias during the war of 1971 carried out widespread violations of human rights, killings and displacement of civilians in East Pakistan. Three million people were killed and ten million fled to India. At the onset of the Bengali nationalist uprising led by the Awami League, Pakistani forces targeted Bengali intellectuals, students, political activists and masses, especially at college campuses in the capital Dhaka and other cities.³¹

Al-Shams and *Al-Badr* forces, at the instruction of the Pakistan army, murdered a large section of the intellectual community of Bangladesh.³² On one hand, the writers and poets of West Pakistan brought out various works in favour of the government; they wrote in great lengths for the POWs. Sadly, nothing was written or expressed about the killing of their countrymen. There are many mass graves in Bangladesh and even today new graves are discovered, such as in an old well near a mosque in Dhaka located in the non-Bengali section of the city, discovered in August 1999.³³ Few West Pakistani writers and poets decided not to remain silent. Others sympathized with the Government of Pakistan and endorsed the brutal actions of Pakistan army against the innocent people of East Pakistan.

Another group of writers and poets remained silent about the horrors of 1971. They justified their actions by claiming no knowledge of the actual events but as creative writers, they were duty-bound to seek information and respond accordingly. The poets and writers who supported the Government of Pakistan claim that they did not realize the extent of what was happening in East Pakistan. This is baseless reasoning because everyone knew the 25 years history of East Pakistan’s economic, political and ethnic exploitation at the hands of West Pakistan. West Pakistan dominated the Bengalis and divided the country politically. East Pakistan accounted for a majority of the country's population, political power remained firmly in the hands of West Pakistanis, specifically the Punjabis. Apart from economic and political exploitation, Bengalis were gross underrepresented in the Pakistan military. In 1970, Awami League won a landslide victory in the national elections but was denied to form the government and told to give up their constitutional right.

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Who could my wailing blood arouse or attract?/The blood in my emaciated body is hardly/Enough to fill up a lamp or a glass./What fire could it fuel, whose thirst could it quench?
Blood is hardly left in my afflicted body/Yet poison wells in its every vein./Prick me and see: Each drop is snake venom/Of pain and grief distilled for ages./ Encapsulating heat of all rages.
Stay away from this wide river of poison./This kindling-dry body, stay away./Light it, and the campus of the garden will burn/Not with cedar and jasmine, but a thorn tree, my bones./Scatter it and over field and forest scatter not/Sweet dawn but ashes of my afflicted soul./Stay away. My heart thirsts for blood.)
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**Part Three: Religious Minorities:
The Issues of Identify and ‘Others’**

Identity Politics and Minorities in Pakistan

Rasul Bakhsh Rais

In the past, as well as in our times, religion in multi-religious and ethnic societies has polarized more than unified societies. Even within a single religious denomination one may find numerous strands that never tie up. Doctrinal differences, political contestation for power, material gains and territorial space can make the religion itself—and the question of authenticity—quite explosive. The political question of majority versus minority becomes salient and troublesome even in a society with one dominant religion. This question is a greater divisive force in states where religion is the source of political legitimacy or the basis of a state's identity. Religion turns out to be a dangerous political weapon when the majority religious communities attempt to shape culture, social institutions and the state itself according to a specific belief system. It was not without some learning from history of bitter religious feuds that the neutrality of the state became the central element of theorizing about the modern nation-state. The Western community of nations has accepted secular liberalism as the defining ideology of state, and this concept has found a considerable following even in the post-colonial states. But in some states, such as Pakistan, the role of religion is not a settled issue, which greatly impacts the statecraft, the status and rights of minorities, and the larger question of internal peace and security. In recent years, some of the Pakistani religious groups have become greatly involved in transnational terror networks, causing sectarian and communal violence within the country.

Complex historical and social factors have shaped the interaction between religion and politics in Pakistan. Islam was at the heart of the political struggle for the creation of Pakistan and has remained at the center of post-Independence political discourse. Controversy about the role of Islam in politics continues to trouble the political landscape of the country. Even after half a century, the relationship between religion and state is still as unclear as the nature and direction of the democratic enterprise. The question of what type of polity Pakistan should be—liberal democratic or Islamic—evokes different responses from different social sectors and political interests. Military leaders, mainstream political parties, and Islamists have all attempted to define this relationship according to their vision of democratic development and the role of religion in society and state affairs.¹

Among the three main forces in the country, the quest for shaping the Pakistani state has added yet another dimension to religious and political polarization in Pakistan. As a consequence of this unending conflict of interests and expedient coalitions, the autonomy of the civil political sphere and the general question of civil liberties and minority rights have suffered a severe setback. The central argument of this paper is that the common political

strands of identity politics, state formation processes, and Islamic radicalism have caused marginalization of religious minorities, sectarian tendencies among Muslims sects and contributed to a wider problem of structured intolerance at social level.

True representative democracy and constitutional politics are the best institutional tools to protect and advance the interests of religious minorities in any set of social conditions. For various reasons, Pakistan has never applied any of these tools during most of its history. The problem lies in the state formation process, in which the balance of power shifted toward the statist elites, the army and the civil bureaucracy.² Historical and geopolitical factors have determined this shift. At the moment, the army is once again restructuring the political system; the indications are that this will further institutionalize the army's power. The disjointed nature of democratic practice and its structural problems, which is a result of the army-dominated state formation process, has not produced a social change capable of empowering minorities and other disadvantaged groups in society. Their marginalization is as much a result of the failure of democracy as it is due to deep-seated social and religious attitudes against them. Another important aspect of the state formation process in Pakistan is the contested issue of its identity—whether the state would be neutral among different religious communities or be Islamic.³ Answers to this fundamental question continue to generate religious conflict and political confrontations in Pakistan. To explain this dilemma, it is necessary to touch upon the Pakistani theory of the state. The movement for the creation of Pakistan, among other things, was aided by the acceptance of the demand of the Muslims as a religious minority. Since Muslims were a substantial minority—about 25 percent of the population in undivided India—the objective was to have proportionate representation in the elected assemblies under the British rule. For this, they demanded and achieved a system of separate electorates under which Muslims electorates voted only for the Muslim candidates. Among other social and economic forces that influenced the growth of Muslim nationalism in British India, the separate electorates further distanced Muslims from integration with the majority community on the basis of secular Indian nationalism. While separate electorates worked to the advantage of Muslims in undivided India—at least in getting larger numbers of their representatives in the elected assemblies—it was politically divisive and created a bigger wedge between Congress and the Muslim League. After the creation of Pakistan, the issue of separate electorates became enshrined in the character of the Pakistani state. Even though Muslims became a majority, the state had a formidable task of reassuring religious minorities and integrating them into mainstream national politics.

In the 1956 Constitution, and later in the amended 1973 Constitution under the Zia ul-Haq regime, Pakistan practiced separate electorates against the will of minorities. The following sections explore minority discrimination and marginalization by examining the legal regimes that sustain discrimination, as well as informal social structures, values, and culture. The rise of Islamic radicalism during the past two decades has equally put religious minorities under

tremendous social and political stress, in some cases provoking violence and terrorist attacks against their members and places of worship.

Identity Politics and Marginalization of Minorities

Until the recent changes in elections laws, Pakistan had a system of separate electorates that was introduced by the military government of Zia ul-Haq in 1979. But the political roots of separate electorates go back to the pre-Partition Muslim politics in the subcontinent and also to the early debates after the creation of the country about how to best protect minority rights. One of the most important planks of Muslim politics under British rule was to ensure that Muslims scattered around the length and width of India have representation in the elected councils proportionate to their numbers. For this, Muslims demanded separate electorates, meaning they would be allocated seats in the local, provincial, and central legislative bodies according to their percentage in the population, and that only Muslims would vote for Muslim candidates. The British in the Minto- Marley Reforms of 1909 for India, though vehemently opposed by the Indian National Congress, finally accepted this demand.⁴ Muslims were in fact accorded dual voting rights: to elect their own representatives and to cast their votes in the general constituencies. All elections after the introduction of these reforms were held according to this system. Some historians have rightly argued that the establishment of separate electorates further strengthened the Muslim separatism that led to the creation of Pakistan.⁵

After Independence, some leaders of the Pakistan movement continued to press for continuation of separate electorates; others pushed for ideological consistency, while still others aimed to ensure adequate representation of minorities in the elected bodies of the country. The question of separate electorates was one of the focal points of debate and controversy in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan when the first post-Independence constitution was under discussion. On the issue of separate electorates, the views of leaders of East Pakistan, where there was a sizeable Hindu minority, were different from those of the leaders of West Pakistan. While the West Pakistanis stressed the need for separate electorates, the East Pakistanis insisted on joint electorates. Members of the minority communities were also of the view that separate electorates would cast them off the mainstream national politics. They demanded equal political, civic and legal rights that could be guaranteed only under the joint electorate system.

It is important to probe the reasons for support of the separate electorates. Why did post-Independence Muslim leaders support separate electorates for minorities? Was the move to protect their democratic interests? A scant look at the arguments presented reveals that most Muslim leaders thought separate electorates would be consistent with the two-nation ideology of Pakistan.⁶ This theory was at the heart of political struggle that resulted in the creation of Pakistan.

Conservative religious leaders—and even some members of the Muslim League (the dominant political party at that time)—did not favor the idea of granting equal rights and status to non-Muslims in the Islamic polity they wished to establish.⁷ Some of these leaders even questioned the loyalty of the Hindu minority to Pakistan and expressed their distrust of them openly. The religious parties and their supporters in the assembly refused to accept minorities as equal citizens with equal constitutional rights.

One wonders how separate electorates would have strengthened the foundation of Pakistan ideology, promoted national integration and made Pakistan a progressive, moderate and liberal Islamic nation that its founder, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammed Ali Jinnah wanted to make it. It is pertinent to mention here the famous and oft-quoted statement of the founder of Pakistan before the Constituent Assembly: “You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state. You will find that in the course of time, Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state.”⁸ There cannot be a more lucid and forceful expression of the founder’s political ideology than this address to the Constituent Assembly. The occasion of entrusting the assembly with framing a constitution—and the forum itself—makes Jinnah’s intent very clear about the direction and nature of Pakistan’s polity. The liberals and minorities in Pakistan have taken this statement as the fundamental principle of the country’s political structure. Those who believe in liberal, secular and democratic values cite this historic address to support their vision of Pakistan.

Others have taken a long u-turn in reading the history of the Pakistan movement and have reached opposite conclusions about the political character of the post-Independence Pakistani nation and state. In the formative phase of the country, some members of Jinnah’s own party began to present a distorted, illiberal and retrogressive political map for the country. The argument that minorities could not be treated as equal citizens in the Islamic republic found a lot of support among the lawmakers from West Pakistan, many of whom hid their ideological bias in pleading that in a system of joint electorates minorities might not get representation in the national parliament and provincial assemblies. The members of the Constituent Assembly from East Pakistan vociferously contested this view.⁹ They were right in arguing that separate electorates would leave minorities in both wings of the country disenfranchised, and that the system would work against national integration.

The Constituent Assembly, in the very contentious atmosphere of framing the 1956 Constitution, failed to reach any agreement on whether to have separate or joint electorates. After ascertaining views of the provincial assemblies, the assembly left the matter for the future parliament to settle. The issue kicked up lot of public debate and controversy, and

lines were drawn between liberal politicians and regional parties on one side and religious parties on the other. The Jamaat-i-Islami (Islamic party) and its founder and prominent leader, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi, were at the forefront of opposition to the joint electorates.

Other religious political parties and, as mentioned above, some sections of the Muslim League, also supported separate electorates. Their reasons were as diverse as the leaders and groups themselves. They argued that some pro-India parties and groups would capture power with the support of the Hindu minority in a system of single member electoral constituencies, mainly in East Pakistan. In their judgment, more Hindus would get elected to the provincial assembly in East Pakistan and to the national assembly than would be justified under joint electorates. They also argued that with the influence of Hindu lawmakers and their prominence in the political arena, Bengali nationalism would gain strength, undermine Pakistan's position on Kashmir and gradually erode the country's ideological foundations.¹⁰ These arguments were flimsy, unconvincing and evasive of the real issues. The central principle of democracy is equality among all citizens with equal rights and duties. But a true democracy based on such principles was the last thing on the minds of many of these politicians, who were more interested in how to prevent religious minorities from becoming equal citizens and how to exclude them from electoral politics.

Why the religious and political parties wanted to build a political system in Pakistan where minorities would be marginalized and alienated is a question that has bothered true democrats from the beginning of the controversy to its end in 2002. All the major political parties in then East Pakistan supported joint electorates, except for the Muslim League, which had lost its influence there since the 1954 provincial election. After the adoption of the 1956 Constitution, when the issue was referred to the two provincial assemblies (East and West), a different resolution was passed: East Pakistan for joint electorates and West Pakistan for separate electorates. The national assembly, feeling the political pulse and opposition from East Pakistani parties, decided to approve two different methods: joint electorates for East Pakistan and separate electorates for West Pakistan.

When elections were about to be held under the 1956 Constitution, the military imposed martial law for the first time in the country, abrogated the constitution and set out to make a new one that would be "appropriate to the genius" of the people of Pakistan. The issue of separate or joint electorates lingered on in political debates. The commission that was set up to frame the 1962 Constitution recommended separate electorates for minorities. General Muhammed Ayub Khan, the military ruler, did not accept the recommendation and decided for joint electorates. Pakistan held all subsequent elections under joint electorates, and formal marginalization of minorities in elections ended.

After the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, Parliament framed a new constitution more or less along the same lines as the 1956 Constitution, putting an end to the presidential system that Ayub Khan had earlier introduced. Pakistan was back to the parliamentary system but this time around, even in the face of opposition from the religious parties, procedures for joint electorates were adopted. After the separation of East Pakistan, the population of religious minorities shrank to nearly 5 percent of the Muslim population. The new government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto introduced additional safeguards into the 1973 Constitution for representation of minorities in national and provincial assemblies. Six seats were reserved for minorities in the national assembly. For provincial assemblies, five seats were reserved in Punjab, two in Sindh, two in Baluchistan, and one in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). However, minority legislators were not elected directly, but by the electoral college of their provincial assemblies. To further prove to the world that minorities were well represented in the power structure of Pakistan, the Bhutto administration—and almost all subsequent governments—recruited from the minority community for at least one federal minister of some unimportant ministry. With this system, minorities had a better sense of participation but were far from being treated with equality as discrimination continued in many other forms.

A New Religious Minority

Ahmadis who claim to be Muslims are a relatively new religious minority. Mainstream Muslims—both Shia and Sunni—do not accept Ahmadis within the fold of Islam. The controversy over the Ahmadi sect is about one hundred years old. At the turn of the twentieth century, Muslim cleric Mirza Ghulam Ahmad from Qadian in Punjab declared himself a new prophet of Islam. He made many other controversial assertions, such as the claim that he was Jesus Christ resent to reform the world. People generally regarded Ahmad as an insane person and ignored him. When the ranks of his followers began to swell in numbers, mainly after his death, the leaders of Jamiat-i- Ulema-i-Hind (Association of the Islamic Religious Scholars of India) took serious notice of the new prophet from Punjab. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, a noted religious scholar, wrote one of the first comprehensive theses against the Ahmadi sect in 1935. He declared Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a false prophet and an apostate and said any person who accepted him as a prophet, or even a religious a heretic, was liable to be stoned to death. After his decree a number of Ahmadis were stoned to death in the NWFP. The Deobandi ulema (religious forefathers of the Taliban) launched a nationwide movement against the Ahmadis by declaring them as non-Muslims and barring them from using Islamic symbols.

After the creation of Pakistan, the efforts of the Deobandi ulema gained considerable steam, particularly in Punjab, which had begun to emerge as the center of Ahmadi preaching. The Majlis-i-Ahrar (council for liberation) and the Majlis e Khatme Nabuwat (council for the finality of prophethood) were at the forefront of this movement.

They put forward three demands to the government in 1951 when the constitution of the country was being debated: (1) that Ahmadis be declared as non-Muslims in Pakistan's constitution; (2) that Sir Zafarullah Khan, the first foreign minister of Pakistan, be removed from his position because he was an Ahmadi; and (3) that no Ahmadi be allowed to retain any key position in the country because Pakistan is an Islamic state. So strong was this movement that Mr. Daultana, a Muslim League leader and chief minister of Punjab, endorsed these demands. As the central government was unwilling to accede to these demands, the anti-Ahmadi groups began to agitate in the streets of Lahore. The state of lawlessness and violence in 1953 provoked the city's first occurrence of martial law. Although the movement was suppressed, it continued to propagate against the Ahmadi sect in the following decades. A more violent form of the controversy revisited the country in the early 1970s. Among the many controversies created by the Bhutto government, one of the most crippling was the move to declare the Ahmadi sect as non-Muslims via constitutional amendment. The events during the debate in the national assembly and later in the cities, towns, and remote villages would not make any Pakistani proud. While the national parliament was determining the religiosity of a community whose following was gaining in strength, the religious parties and groups pounced on the known Ahmadi families and prominent figures, burning down their houses and businesses. With the state taking the lead in branding a section of the population as non-Muslims, the religious groups became emboldened to the point of physically attacking, harassing and persecuting the suspected Ahmadis. Thousands lost their lives, and Pakistan created yet another marginalized community despite that community's following of millions and well-funded, well-organized religious and social networks. The Ahmadis' mosques were closed down and they were debarred from congregational prayers or showing any sign of being a Muslim in their places of worship. Ahmadis were added to the list of minorities— along with Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs—and were required by law to declare their status as Ahmadis in all official documentation. Although the anti-Ahmadi movement is a perennial problem that has occasionally led to civil disturbances, the real persecution of this community started with the declaration that Ahmadis were non- Muslims. Since then, Ahmadis have been barred from naming their places of worship as mosques or even making them look like mosques.

They are not allowed to make prayer calls or to display Islamic symbols or Islamic religious inscriptions in places of worship. These measures marked the beginning of official religious intolerance. Persecution of religious minorities—particularly against Ahmadis— increased with late general Zia ul-Haq's Islamization project. A pervading sense of Islamic revival in the country fueled another anti- Ahmadi wave around 1984. To placate the religious right of the country and keep them on his side of the country's political divide, Zia further amended the Pakistan Penal Code by adding sections 298-B and 298-C. These provisions made it a criminal offence for Ahmadis to pose as Muslims, to preach or propagate by words (either spoken or written) and to use Islamic terminology or Muslim practices of worship. Once again, the state took the lead in implementing the political agenda of the religious political

parties. In doing so, Pakistan has ignored its commitments to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and violated its social contact with the minorities that supported the Pakistan movement.¹¹

The wave of religious bigotry and extremism began with Zia courting the religious constituency for political support and legitimacy.¹² The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and the Mujahideen resistance based in Pakistan were also factors that influenced the growth of religious militancy. The flow of arms and money from the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries to the Islamic madrasa (religious school) network further contributed to the power and influence of religious organizations.

Table 1. Population and minorities in Pakistan

Minorities	Number	Percent
Muslims	127,433,409	96.28
Christians	2,002,902	1.58
Hindus	2,111,271	1.60
Ahmadis	289,212	0.22
Scheduled castes	332,343	0.25
Others	96,142	0.07
Total population	132,352,279	100

Source: Government of Pakistan, Statistics Division, No. SD. PER.E (53)/99-449, Islamabad, 16 July 2001.

Separate Electorates

After hanging an elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Zia appeared desperate to cultivate a support base among the religious groups to end his political isolation. He took two drastic measures at that time to bring himself closer to the religious groups: separate electorates and blasphemy laws, two demands voiced by the religious groups for some time. Zia's actions are partly explained by his political need to have religious allies with street power on his side. Equally important is the fact that his vision of Pakistan was not much different from that of most religious political parties. Zia had plans to remain in power; his only bit besides the military was the religious establishment of the country. Zia gave the personal image of a pious, God-fearing, patriotic Pakistani. His Islamization agenda of the Pakistani state would have little credibility without acceding to the long-standing demands of the religious right for making provision for a separate system of elections for minorities. As an unchallenged military ruler, Zia began to give an altogether different orientation to Pakistan's political system, which was Islamic in the most conservative tradition. His

ordinances, laws, actions, and acts of omission and commission were passed through the Eighth Amendment into the Constitution when the national assembly convened after the 1985 non-party elections. This way the separate electorates became part of the 1973 Constitution.

The Zia regime increased the number of seats for minorities in the national assembly from five to ten, but maintained the same numbers in the provincial assemblies. There was also a change in how seats in the legislatures would be filled. The entire country was divided into ten constituencies for minorities, which made it utterly impossible for them to effectively contest or cast their votes. Since religious minorities are dispersed throughout the length of the country, drawing long territorial constituencies reduced the exercise of separate electorates to a mockery. A few influential, wealthy and well-connected minority figures could win in such a rough and unlevelled electoral field. After the restoration of democracy in the country with the death of General Zia ul-Haq and fresh elections in 1988, leaders from the mainstream political parties did not bother to address the issue of marginalization of minorities in electoral politics. Even with the unanimous removal of some parts of the Eighth Amendment through the Thirteenth Amendment in 1997, the issue of joint electorates was not touched. Most politicians have not been keyed in to the issue or have never felt the need to understand the plight of religious minorities. Another reason could be the hesitation to offend the clamorous religious groups or to kick up a fresh controversy over an issue that to them seemed politically insignificant.

Blasphemy Laws

No other law has had as grave of social and psychological implications for religious minorities as have the blasphemy laws. These laws have wide-blanket coverage of acts that may fall within the offences of blasphemy, the violation of which carries long prison sentences and death by hanging. Offences include injuring or defiling places of worship with the intent to insult the religion of any class; deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs; defiling a copy of the Holy Quran; use of derogatory remarks with respect to the Holy Prophet of Islam; uttering words with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings; use of derogatory remarks with respect to holy personages; misuse of epithets, description and titles reserved for certain holy personages and places; a person of the Qadiani group or Ahmadi calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith. In almost all cases, the law does not require any solid written proof, just the offensive remarks and few witnesses to get a conviction. More draconian is the procedure to file a complaint against an accused person. In addition to the state functionaries, any private person can file a case in the police station against any person under these laws. For this reason, blasphemy laws have been repeatedly misused against religious minorities and Muslims. In almost all cases the complainants have been private individuals with a personal grudge or religious zeal.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) monitored the blasphemy cases registered from January to October 2000. The commission's newsletter listed fifteen cases against the Ahmadis, five against Christians and eighteen against Muslims.¹³ Common accusations against Ahmadis included posing as Muslims, preaching, possessing Ahmadi literature, and building minaret in the place of worship. Christians and Muslims were booked for making derogatory remarks about the Prophet of Islam, writing provocative slogans on the walls, desecrating Holy Quran or claiming to be prophets. The case of M. Yusuf Ali from Lahore is worth mentioning. Ali was sentenced to death in March 1997 for claiming to be a prophet. While his appeal to higher courts was still pending, a man convicted of sectarian terrorism and on death row himself shot Yusuf Ali dead in May 2002. This is not the first time a person accused of blasphemy has been murdered. The blasphemy laws have not only increased religious intolerance but have failed to provide any legal or institutional safety net for religious minorities.¹⁴

Religious Intolerance and Terrorism

The rise of Islamic radicalism in Pakistan has greatly contributed to the growth of religious terrorism even among various sects of the Islamic faith, and more so against non-Muslims, particularly Ahmadis and Christians. In recent years, religious extremists based in the country and outside Pakistan have also questioned the Islamic religious identity of the Ismailis or Agha Khanis. These extremists send out derogatory material insulting the community and its leader, Karim Agha Khan. It is interesting to note that only the Deobandi faction of the Sunni Islam in Pakistan has raised militant outfits such as Lashkari- Jhangvi, and Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). The Shia sect responded to the sectarian challenge of the SSP by organizing Sipah-i- Muhammed (SP). Both have been brutally murdering religious scholars, political activists and young professionals of the rival sect. Thousands of Pakistanis have perished in the sectarian violence. Both the SSP and SP have exclusivist religious imagination and conflicting interpretations of the history of Islam and its doctrines.¹⁵ Both question the religious authenticity of the other, each proclaiming the other is out of the pale of Islam. The majority of the members of the Shia and Sunni communities have watched the sectarian killings with awe and disgust. But the frequency and persistence of sectarian violence during the last fifteen years cannot be explained without sympathy and support of some influential members from each community. Sectarian violence that includes murdering fellow Muslims worshipping in the mosques or in religious congregations speaks volumes about religious hatred and intolerance. In a comparative sense, more Muslims have fallen victim to religious intolerance of the rival sects than have members of religious minorities; however, this comparison may not be fair due to the smaller numbers of minorities in the population.

More than numbers, the rise in Islamic radicalism confronts the religious community with a sense of exclusion, inferiority, discrimination and above all, insecurity and fear, as they face violent attacks by Islamic militants. Ahmadis, because of their breaking away from the

mainstream Islam and their resourcefulness and organizational strength, have been the major target of intimidation and violence. Although Ahmadis have faced hatred and exclusion for a long time, never were they subjected to mass killings until their declaration as non-Muslims in the early seventies. Even after that brief but troublesome period, Ahmadis lived in harmony with their neighbors in villages and towns. It is only in recent years that the incidences of murders, mostly in places of worship, have increased against the Ahmadis.¹⁶

No other non-Muslim religious community has contributed more to the social sector development of Pakistan than the Christians have. Both missionaries and local members of the Christian community have built splendid educational institutions, hospitals and health facilities throughout the country. They have been peaceful even in the face of the worst provocation. Poor Christians have faced social exclusion and discrimination in both the urban and rural areas of the country. They have endured social inferiority and humiliation with grace and patience, hoping things would change with modernization and development. While Christians have yet to achieve social and economic mobility, they have increasingly become the victim of religious intolerance and terrorism; something this community had previously been spared. Christians are the new target of terrorism in Pakistan. Lashkar-i-Jhangvi terrorists attacked Sunday Mass in the Dominican Church on 28 October 2001 in Bahawalpur and massacred twenty-nine worshipers, representing the worst case of terrorism against the Christians to date. In February 2002, terrorists attacked a church service mostly attended by foreigners in the diplomatic enclave in Islamabad. On 5 August 2002 terrorists attacked a Christian school in the Murree hills, killing six persons. How can one explain the rise of violence against the minority Shia sect of Islam, the Ahmadis and the Christians? Is it due to declining capacity of the state?

The state's declining capacity is part of the problem; while religious bigots have been preaching hatred and violence against minorities, the state has remained silent. Participatory politics and civic culture with a focus on citizenship rights have suffered gravely due to the repeated failure of the democratic process in Pakistan. In this democratic vacuum, religious extremism—riding on the wave of jihad in Afghanistan and with transnational connections with similar groups—has taken strong roots in society. The war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda, along with President Pervez Musharraf's policies to root out religious extremism, has produced a new wave of anti-Western feelings. This sentiment, however, is not new. Muslims thinkers such as Maulana Maaddudi and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, the two powerful ideologues, shrouded Islamic revival in historical grievances of Muslims and Western barbarism.¹⁷ This ugly sentiment, cultivated among the Muslim youth, was manifested in the killings of thousands of innocent people in New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001. In Pakistan, anti-Westernism has been turned against foreigners and local Christians. Christians in Muslim societies are generally affiliated with foreigners and are regarded by many as an extension of Western religious influence.

Conclusion

Pakistan needs to create conditions for true democratic polity and society to defeat terrorism internally and be able to help Afghanistan and other states to stabilize. As we know from the experience of other countries, democratic governance helps form social capital, build networks of trust and generate a sense of community that would transcend sectarian, religious and ethnic differences. Nation and state building in any country, including Pakistan, is not about establishing a majority rule or simply holding elections (which in Pakistan have been few and mostly controversial), but laying a solid foundation of representative legitimacy. For any student of democratic thought, nation and state building includes fundamental principles such as institutions and systems, citizenship, equality, inalienable fundamental rights, and empowerment of all individuals without any discrimination. In most post-colonial states, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities have found themselves at the receiving end of political distribution. Some saw their decline as a privileged group, while others found themselves reduced in number or branded as a new minority in the redrawing of boundaries. The example of Muslims in India and Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan fits this description.

In Pakistan, the voice of minorities has never touched the heart or mind of politicians. The tormenting experience of communal violence, transmigration of religious populations and the young and strident Muslim nationalism further muted the voice of minorities. In the bouts of political struggle for power, even liberal politicians remained silent on the issue of separate electorates. What could be more discriminatory than the classification of the citizen along religious lines? Most of the political parties decided to push the issue, while the religious groups feared a reversal of separate electorates would create a backlash. But the vision of democracy for such politicians was confined to getting to the assemblies, obtaining ministerial positions and making fortunes, not strengthening civic culture and participatory democracy.

Formal and informal discrimination against minorities has gone hand in hand; one has encouraged and deepened the other. Separate electorates have been more than separate electoral constituencies for religious minorities; they have amounted to the disenfranchisement, further marginalization and deepening sense among minorities of being second-class Pakistanis. Mainstream political parties showed no interest in courting minorities and embracing prominent members and leaders of these groups because they could not vote for them.

Minorities were left to form their own parties, if they so wished. Only the Christians set up some loosely organized parties. Other minorities have notable figures but no political organizations. Reversal of the separate electorates is very recent that came with the political reforms introduced by the military regime. But decades of political alienation of the minorities has already done a great social and political harm to them.

In a traditional Islamic society such as Pakistan, non-Muslims hardly enjoy equality of social or religious status. Officially, placing non-Muslims in another category in the electoral politics further deepened their alienation. Minority groups never supported separate electorates and have, for decades, struggled with whatever meager political capital they had to restore the joint electorates. In a large number of urban constituencies where mainstream political parties have traditionally close contests, the balance held by minorities would make a major difference in joint electorates.

Minorities kept the issue alive via the press, seminars and publications. The explosion of civil society organizations in Pakistan and the presence of the foreign press and human rights organizations have maintained a gentle pressure by questioning the authenticity of Pakistan's electoral democracy. In the past few years, two issues in Pakistan have received a lot of foreign attention: the status of women and the plight of minorities. In examining both these issues, one cannot escape the conclusion that both of these groups have been widely discriminated against, have hardly any representation in the power structure of Pakistan, and that there is official as well as society-based discrimination against both groups. Self-image has become a big problem in the globalized world media, and Pakistan has found its image badly battered on many counts. Each terrorist attack provides a fresh reminder about the trouble nature of Pakistani society.

The contention of this paper is that the practice of separate electorates was the worst case of disenfranchising religious minorities in the name of having representation in the Parliament and in the provincial assemblies. The present government has reversed the practice of separate electorates.¹⁸ accordingly, national elections in October 2002 were held on the basis of joint electorates. The constitutional amendments inserted by the chief executive have also provided for reserved seats for the religious minorities in the Parliament, as well as in the provincial assemblies. This is the first and most important step toward empowering minorities and bringing them back into mainstream national politics.

Another aspect of discrimination against minorities is informal, or social, which is subtler than the legal, formal process of barring minorities from the political arena. Pakistan has a long way to go toward integrating minorities into electoral politics. The next general elections scheduled for October 2002 will be the first in a quarter of a century where Muslims and non-Muslims will vote together for the same candidates. It is a sad commentary on Pakistan's democracy that in the 1970 and 1977 elections, which were held on the basis of joint electorates, not a single member from the minority communities won any seat. Given the social climate of the country, no political party in Pakistan in the October 2002 elections offered any ticket to any member of the minority community to contest elections on general seat. Social prejudice is so strong that no party would like to appear to be supporting a non-Muslim candidate against a Muslim candidate of a rival party.

The remedy lies in affirmative action and in maintaining reserved seats for minorities in the provincial and national assemblies. In addition to this formal political process, much more needs to be done at the social level. Pakistan has to stem the tide of Islamic extremism and terrorism through reforming the madrassa network, cultivating civic culture, promoting democracy, and reorienting the political discourse on Islam, state, and national identity. This is a tall order, but these issues must be faced if Pakistan is to protect its society against indiscriminate violence, instability and chaos.

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Managing Christian-Muslim Relations In Pakistan

Mehboob Sada

Christian-Muslim Relations: An Overview

Christian-Muslim relations in the Indian-subcontinent, after and before Partition, are marked by diverse ups and downs, even though the Christian community played an important role in the freedom movement against British colonial rule.

The contact of Christian community, through churches and other Christian organizations, in modern day Pakistan can be traced back to early 20th century.

“The Pakistan Christian Council was formed in the 1920s and links about half a million Protestants in common concerns. Its largest constituent member is the Church of Pakistan, which was formed in 1970 through the union of Anglicans, United Methodists, Presbyterians of the Sialkot Church Council and Lutherans. It has seven bishops, which preside over seven dioceses covering the whole of Pakistan. These dioceses are: Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Peshawar and Multan. Certain church groups including the United Presbyterians, Presbyterians of the Lahore Church Council and the Associate Reformed Presbyterians did not wish to be included in the Pakistan Christian Council. Denominations and church groups which are currently in Pakistan are (in descending order of membership size): Roman Catholics, the Church of Pakistan, the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, the Associated Reformed Church of Pakistan, Salvation Army, United Church in Pakistan, National Methodist Church, Christian Brethren, Full Gospel Assembly, Indus Christian Fellowship, Pakistan Christian Fellowship and Evangelical Alliance Churches. In Pakistan, church and mission bodies have been working together with a renewed emphasis on laying firm foundations through emphasizing personal Christian commitment.”¹

The Christians in the Indian sub-continent had a common political objective with the Indian National Congress in not supporting the division of the sub-continent, while the Christians of Punjab openly supported the Muslims for the creation of Pakistan.

Master Tara Singh stood on the steps of Punjab Assembly, brandished his sword and shouted, “*Those who want Pakistan will only get the graveyard.*”

At that time, Christian leader, S.P. Singha, supported the creation of Pakistan. Bhim Sen Sachar and Gulzari Lal Nanda of the Congress tried to pressurize Christians, offered them important ministerial portfolios in India, when soliciting their votes on whether Lahore should go to India or Pakistan².

¹ “A short History of Church in Pakistan”, I.I.S.I.C *Bulletin*, International Institute for the Study of Islam and the Christianity, London, August / September 1995, p. 3

² Joseph Parshad, “Pak-o-Hind Ki Tehreek-e-Azadi: Masihion aur Deegar Aqliaton Ka Kirdar,” *daily Pakistan*, 21 September 1997

On 25 July 1947, Singha stated on behalf of the Christians that they should be counted along with the Muslims³. There was an understanding between the Muslim League and the Indian Christian Association, the Muslim League offered greater concessions to the minorities, particularly the Christians. It was on the basis of this agreement that the leaders of Indian Christians took a leading part in the Pakistan movement and showed their preference for Muslim League against the Congress.⁴

A vast number of minorities lived in pre-Partition Indian-subcontinent, mostly Sikhs and Christians. The situation with the Sikhs was more complicated because they also wanted a separate homeland, centering in the Punjab area. The Hindus, Sikhs, Parsees, and other minorities of Sindh, the NWFP and Balochistan had already thrown their lot and future with Pakistan.⁵

The role of Christian community in the political struggle, socio-economic efforts for nation building, and their relations with Muslim community is significant. The political struggle for the attainment of a separate homeland for Muslims was not just confined to the Muslims but was supported, directly or indirectly, by Christian Community.

For centuries, Christians and Muslims shared this land, living in peace and harmony. Certain laws and events have severely affected this relations, such as separate electorate system, blasphemy laws, and the extra-judicial and discriminatory policies, based on socio-political biases, hatred, maltreatment of poor working classes, targeting and destruction of sacred and holy Christian places.

Current Changes in Christian-Muslim Relations

Since 11 September 2001, Christian-Muslim relations in Pakistan have gone through fundamental transformations. The measures taken by Musharraf's government to curb Islamic militancy in the country brought relief from the majority of the people including Christians. From Zia government to Musharraf's regime, moderate Muslims and religious minorities in the country, who support inter-faith dialogue, felt threatened by the growing power of Muslim extremism and ensuing intolerance.

Positive development has taken place, which is a step in the right direction, for example, abolition of a sixteen-year old separate electorate system for Pakistan's religious minorities.

Religious minorities have long claimed that the separate electorate, introduced by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1985, marginalized them from mainstream politics. This system allowed religious minorities to

³ K.R. Zia, "*Tehreek-e-Pakistan men Masihion ka Kirdar*", monthly Caritas, August 1997, p. 36

⁴ Father Francis Nadeem, *Yeh Des Hamara Hai*, p. 60

⁵ Ahmad Salim, "*Violence, Memories and Peace-Building: A Citizen Report on Minorities in India and Pakistan*", South Asian Research & Resource Centre (SARRC), Islamabad, 2006. p. 90

vote for candidates of their own community for a few reserved seats in the Provincial and National Assemblies. They were not allowed to vote for Muslim candidates in the general elections. This system was based on Islamic concept of 'Zimmis', (second class citizens) segregated and discriminated against religious minorities, by disconnecting them from the mainstream national politics. The Church, Christians and progressive Muslim organizations, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, waged a long struggle against this system of 'electoral apartheid'.

The Christian community and all religious minorities welcomed the decision to restore joint elections and the decision of the Sindh High Court, reiterating that constitution does not bar a non-Muslim from serving in the high court, denying a petition to remove Justice Rana Bhagwandas from the bench.

These positive steps encouraged and built the confidence of minority communities that were alarmed by the trend towards fundamentalism in Pakistan. Such actions, though few and far in-between, paved the way for negotiation.

Another significant development is the expectation to hold inter-religious dialogues and joint events to promote peace and harmony. Christian-Muslim seminars and inter-religious prayer services are being organized in all major cities to promote peace in the region.

Christian Contributions to Pakistan

Christian communities have always played a vital role in all aspects of nation building, especially, in the areas of education, health and social welfare. Unfortunately, this commendable role of Christian communities has gone unappreciated and unmentioned in the historical accounts in Pakistan.

“Our recorded history is not the history of the collective flow of life. Instead it records the exploits of rulers, political intellectuals and minions of governments and despotic overlords. Quite naturally, this pattern of Pakistan’s history ignores the significant role played by ethnic or religious minorities. In fact, during the freedom movement of the subcontinent, had the political leader not proved to the colonial power that the masses including minorities were with them, Pakistan could have not been achieved.”⁶

Historical evidence undoubtedly proves the role of Christian community was noteworthy. Their exceptional contributions in the fields of education, health, politics, trade, and industry are second to none; despite these efforts, Christian-Muslims relations are still marred in Pakistan.

⁶ Ibid. p. 20

A short review is given below to prove that these contributions are by no means inferior to that of the majority communities in Pakistan.⁷ Christian missionaries have, no doubt, helped in setting a high standard of education in the country and have played an equally commendable role in the health care sector. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah assured equal rights and opportunities to the minority communities of Pakistan.

“Many educationists from the Christian community contributed tremendously in the development of the motherland. Michael M. R Chohan, Principle St. Patrick College Karachi is one of them.”
(Hameed Henry, interview with the author)

Christian missionary educational institutions impart quality education. It must be noted that the present top leadership of the country was educated at missionary institutions.⁸

Christians have made immense contributions to other areas of Pakistani national life. Pakistan's first non-Muslim and the most respected Chief Justice of Supreme Court was Justice A. R. Cornelius.

Distinguished fighter pilots like Cecil Chaudhry, Peter O'Reilly and Mervyn L Middlecoat in Pakistan Air Force, many notable educationists; doctors, lawyers and businessmen have contributed in their respective fields. In Pakistan cricket, Yousuf Youhana was a Christian but converted to Islam and changed his name to Mohammad Yousuf.

Lawmakers, judges and lawyers from minority communities maintained the prestige and honor of the judicial system.

The history-making decisions of Justice A. R. Cornelius and Justice Dorab Patel, two judges of the highest integrity, have added brilliance to the reputation of the judiciary in Pakistan, and have enabled it to hold itself in well-deserved self-esteem.⁹

In addition to the struggle for upholding the law, Christian lawyers played a prominent role at the social and political levels. At present, there are hundreds of Christians in the Police Department in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. After independence, many Christians joined Pakistan Railways and did well in that department.

During the 1971 war in East Pakistan, Christian soldiers such as, Colonel Javed Jalal, Major Justin Sharf, Lieutenant General Julian Peter, Major Richard, and Second Lieutenant David Atarad courageously faced the Indian army. The first four were prisoners-of-war and remained in Indian

⁷ Ahmad Salim, “Role of Minorities in Nation Building with focus on Karachi”, Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan, 2006, p. 185

⁸ Ishtiaq Rao, “Religious harmony essential for prosperity”, *The Pakistan Observer* Saturday, April 15, 2006

⁹ Interview with Rana Qaiser Iqbal, Advocate, President, Amnesty International Pakistan

captivity for two and a half years. Lieutenant David Atarad lost his life. Colonel Parveen of nursing service and Colonel Catherine Mark tended the sick and the wounded in extremely trying circumstances. The former received the *Sitara-e-Imtiaz* for her services.¹⁰

In the health sector, Christians in Pakistan provide facilities of treatment and medical care to all people without religious affiliation. Their effort to provide health-care and medical aid in rural areas and remote regions, in pre and post-Partition times has been outstanding. Christian missions and organizations of the Church played a key leadership role in this sphere. Hospitals and health centers established by Christian community still serve the people of Pakistan in all four provinces. Even today, the hospitals managed by the minorities have the distinction of being the best served and best equipped in the country. Many received national awards for their exceptional services.

Ironically, a sizeable portion of minorities in Pakistan do not benefit from the education system that their communities have created to participate in government services. Lack of educational opportunities, poverty, discrimination and the prevailing prejudices, the minority citizens remain in the menial ranks of peons and sanitary workers. Despite this constricting environment, many individuals, through hard work and determination, reached top positions, rendering distinguished service to their country.

During the past three decades, movements were initiated to raise awareness in minority communities, to generate self-confidence and encouragement, and now more minorities are visible in government departments. There is, therefore, a distinct improvement in minority representation in various services but as stated above, during the last sixty years, their role in the services was confined to the lowly posts of peons, sanitary workers, ward boys in hospitals, and paramedical staff or at best, subordinate clerks.¹¹

The Christian Community of Pakistan provided invaluable services in the cultural sphere, like literature, print/electronic media, audio-visual arts, show business and sports. Numerous Christians, Parsis, Hindus, Sikhs, Bahais and Buddhists are professional journalist, writers and poets. In the world of film, television, radio and theatre, numerous non-Muslims have made a name for themselves. The sportsmen from the minorities have marched shoulder to shoulder with their majority compatriots in making Pakistan known internationally for its proficiency in some of the world games¹².

“The Christians have continued their interest and involvement in literature, and numerous Christian writers have featured in the forefront in this regard, though because of the typical social,

¹⁰ Ahmad Salim, “Role of Minorities in Nation Building with focus on Karachi”, (Part Two-Socio Economic and Cultural Contributions) Church World Service- Pakistan/Afghanistan, 2006, p. 362

¹¹ Interview with Rana Qaiser Iqbal, Advocate, President, Amnesty International Pakistan

¹² Ahmad Salim, “Minorities of Pakistan: Struggle and Contribution... p. 27

political, economic conditions of Pakistan and the influence of extremist religious elements, they did not receive the acknowledgement they deserved. Take Nasreen Anjum Bhatti and Nazir Qaiser, for example. All well-known poets and writers of today have praised them for their sensitivity and realism in Urdu and Punjabi languages. Similarly Gulzar Wafa Chaudhry has made a name for himself in Urdu literature, and his sketches of personalities have received exceptional praise. Afzaal Firdaus is counted among the country's first rank poets for his ghazals and nazms.”¹³

Struggles of Christians in Pakistan

The Christian community struggles for their basic human rights under severe Islamic religious domination. Their plight is visible at every level of the society.

The story of the Christian community in Pakistan starts with the creation of Pakistan. Even though, on 11 August 1947, Quaid-e-Azam stated, *religion has nothing to do with State Affairs*, we see that Islam has a dominating status in political, judicial, social, cultural and governmental systems. Islam is the official state religion; *Shariah* is enforced as the supreme law of the land and judiciary, legislature and executive departments also work under this law. Laws are modified and reframed according to the injunctions of the *Quran*.

The myth of first class citizen

The political systems and governments do not have a democratic approach because theocracy prevails in different garbs, capitalizing on the foundations of the concept of ‘one nation’. In this system, the Christians and other minorities have neither achieved equal politico-socio-economic status nor do they enjoy equal access to available opportunities.

Christian community considers themselves as equal citizens of Pakistan, even though the present political system and its unjustified policies never endorsed their rights. Unfortunately, the Christian communities that played a significant role in the creation of Pakistan and made admirable contributions have been reduced to second-class citizens. If we look at the history of the subcontinent, the overlooked reality is that Christianity has been in existence since the first century, while Islam appeared much later. This fact establishes Christian communities as pioneers in this part of the world.

Illegal occupation and forced evictions

¹³ Ibid, p. 28

Christians and Muslims have lived in Pakistan peacefully for many decades, but there are instances that have flamed a sense of hatred, creating disparities in Muslim-Christian relations. Foremost among them are the cases of illegal occupations and forced evictions. For example:

Sajid Butt, a Naib Nazim, a Muslim, demolished a two Marlas godown owned by Karamat Masih, a Christian, on February 9, 2005, at Narand Mandi District Sheikupura. On Karamat's refusal, Sajid Butt threatened him with dire consequences, but Karamat got a stay order from the court. However, the accused bulldozed the godown. No redress was provided to the affectee by the concerned authorities till this report. (NCJP Report)

Blasphemy and other discriminatory legislation

Brutal killings of innocent people and targeting and demolishing their places of worship are not a new phenomenon for the minorities in Pakistan. Religious leaders of Christian churches condemned the massive attacks and demanded a high-level judicial inquiry and exemplary punishment to all the culprits, yet very little has been done in this regard.

Adopted in 1986, Pakistan's Blasphemy law imposes life imprisonment on anyone insulting the *Quran*, and death penalty for defiling the name of Prophet Mohammed. Minority and human rights activists have repeatedly tried to repeal this law. It is often abused to settle private disputes. It is used against the Christians and hundreds of them have died because of it. Since 1986, more than 4,000 people have been accused of blasphemy; 560 have been charged and 30 are still awaiting a court decision. The accused, when acquitted had to relocate to save their lives and to protect their families¹⁴.

Bonded labor and illegal detention

It is appalling that the existing regulations lack the safeguards provisioned by law, and there are serious faults in the implementation of these policies.

A petition filed by Iqbal Masih against Mehar Muhammad Ashfaq, the kiln owner, who detained thirty-four workers for six months, and forced them to work. Later, the detainees, including three elderly persons, ten women and fourteen kids were recovered through a *Habeas Corpus* writ.¹⁵ Beside forced labour, they faced sexual harassment. International Labor Organization (ILO) report on human rights condition in Pakistan stated that women suffered sexual abuse as bonded labour.

¹⁴ Blasphemy Law under Fire amid Religious Violence in Pakistan, *the Christian Today*, Friday, May 4, 2007

¹⁵ Daily The News, October 12, 2005
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Biases and hate elements of the majority group

Thousands of cases are registered against minority groups including Christians, based on biased approach and hateful attitude of the majority communities. Low waged Christian sanitation workers, plumbers, sweepers and un-skilled laborer suffer the most. Such biases and resulting inhumanities are common among Muslim masses in Pakistan.

Biases against under-privileged Christians are rampant at the governmental level as well. Research reveals that Christian workers in all departments of federal and provincial governments face a number of injustices. Two are cited here: (a) Employees are not regularized but forced to work as temporary labour for years, and (b) pay books and pension books were not handed over to them. In addition, Health, Municipality, and Cantonment Board administration infringe upon worker rights and violate labor laws, when the laborers have to bribe the clerks to make their service records.¹⁶

Low-wage employees and workers face violence in their work place, especially in domestic situations and with private companies.

Among Christians living in villages, few are farmers or owners of land, most are poor and forced to migrate to the cities, where they are usually hired as sweepers, considered as one of the most degrading professions. This job further humiliates them; the Muslims treat them as untouchables. They are deprived of education.

This sorry state of affairs was observed among Christians and lower caste Hindus, because of their social and economic conditions, deficient education and persistent poverty. It makes them easy targets for discrimination.¹⁷ Those who achieve a higher status or 'respectable' jobs enjoy a better life but such individuals are only a handful.

Though Christian missionaries and churches run ninety percent of the educational institutions, they were disenfranchised when the Government of Pakistan nationalized their institutions. Now, the Christian community cannot benefit from these education institutions because of the admission policies and high tuition fees. Currently, only 01% Christian students receive education from missionary and Church-based schools. The only way to build a better future for this community is educational accessibility to high school level.

It has not been possible to build a civil society commensurate with its ideals. Lack of national priorities, under-privilege, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, social injustices, and anti-people policies of successive regimes have brought the country to this sorry stage. Political leaders, bolstered by the civil and military bureaucracy and motivated by greed and power, have shamelessly exploited the name of Islam and Islamic justice to allow the society to drift into an undemocratic and corrupt environment.

¹⁶ A Report on the Religious Minorities in Pakistan, Human Rights Monitor 2002-2003, NCJP, Lahore, 2003, p. 107

¹⁷ Interview with Razia Joseph, Director Women Shelter, Faisalabad

Dialogue: Road to Harmony between Muslims and Christians

Christians and Muslims must expand communication with each other for better understanding in order to seek healthy solutions. Even after living together for many years, true knowledge and appreciation has often been insignificant. An effort must be made to maintain strong and lasting trust between Muslims and Christians. A harmonious environment can only be achieved through concrete confidence building measures.

The leadership of Christians and Muslims has witnessed bitter conflicts provoked in places, where in the past; the two communities have coexistence in peace and mutual trust. Now, inter-religious harmony has become an illusion. External influences have further aggravated growing tensions since the existing bonds are not strong to sustain additional pressures.

Christianity and Islam teach equality, justice, peace, harmony and peaceful coexistence. It is not difficult for religious leaders to take peace-building responsibility by enhancing efforts to harmonize differences and to strengthen commonalities by rejecting policies of prejudice.

Following are some key areas where effort needs to be made to pave the way for dialogue:

- Muslim and Christian communities in Pakistan must promote common themes in inter/intra-faith activities
- Peace and developmental efforts carried out by Muslim and Christian peace builders in Pakistan and other parts of the world, must be studied for guidance and experiential learning
- Constructive methods of conflict resolution between Muslims and Christians must be based on the integration of universal and local perspectives

These efforts can only bear fruit, if the clergy on both sides agrees to this agenda, and meet regularly for discussions. Problems such as drought, disease, poverty, and the displacement of persons do not acknowledge religious divide. People of all religions including Christians and Muslims are equally affected by such calamities and their cooperation in this struggle for mutual betterment can yield heartening results. Joint action is important as it proves that Muslims and Christians are not yearning for self-aggrandizement or not profiting by capitalizing on people's weaknesses, instead they are truly serving their fellow humans.

The Muslims of the majority communities must be mindful when scrutinizing their positions. They must recognize their role in inter-faith relations, debates and discussions. Needs must be identified regarding acceptance, tolerance and positive leadership. Identifying the leaders and learning from their discourses is important. A dialogue is not only formal discussion between experts, it is a discussion about life and deeds to clarify ideas and dissipate prejudices.

Problems and Prospects of Interfaith Dialogue and Harmony

It may be noted that much of the formal dialogue concentrates on social issues. It may be useful to examine different religious perspectives as well, in order to build mutual confidence. It is understandable that it will be difficult to find agreement in theological matters but inter-religious dialogue may differ from the ecumenical dialogue among Christians that aims at bringing about a unity of faith. It is obvious that Christians and Muslims will continue to differ on essential matters of faith. For this reason, the purpose of theological dialogue is not to prove that one side is right or wrong but to explore respective positions for better understanding, resulting in many prejudices, built upon half-truths, to fall by the wayside.

The threat of retaliation from the existing political culture is immense; people can be jailed or silenced by other means. The dialogue for harmony must be free from any political pressure and must guarantee freedom of expression to participants.

There is an urgent need to develop manuals and materials for dissemination to raise awareness about minority communities and their beliefs. These can be translated to practical life. The only threat to these endeavors may come from a lack of leadership. The Muslim community is large and diverse; and leadership is exercised at all levels. It is frightening to give complete authority to the *imams* and “preachers” in leading inter-faith dialogue.

Since sensitive issues are involved, it is imperative to have knowledgeable individual and groups, with specialized knowledge and peace-building arguments to allow a sense of trust and authenticity. Special attention must be paid to the spiritual message of the Bible and the *Quran*, and also to the writings of spiritual writers, Sufis and mystics. Such exchanges, especially in an atmosphere of faith in the humanity, can be of immense help in generating mutual respect.

There are times when Muslims and Christians may want to offer joint supplication to God. During the Gulf War, Christians, Muslims and Jews came together to pray for peace.

There is no doubt that the road to dialogue and harmony in Pakistan is difficult, but this journey must be undertaken with trust and confidence that equality and peace can be achieved. Dialogue can contribute to peace by providing an understanding between individuals and communities to make them strong to resist external influences. Similarly, a dialogue with a common response to the effects of war will reinforce the determination to ban armed conflict as a way of resolving disputes. It will help to clarify issues, and also to plan strategies. The dialogue of religious experience will be motivational and a source of strength to persevere.

All this may seem idealistic; nevertheless, we have to nurture the dream of attaining peace and harmony among the people in Pakistan.

Dialogue as conversation between different religions or civilizations are a need of the time. Dialogue between civilizations, often refer to the dialogue between religions, is aimed at removing barriers and encourage free exchange of ideas. Exclusivist, parallelism and pluralism are referred as dialogical attitudes but only pluralism is found appropriate for successful dialogue.

Islam, as a pluralistic religion, considers dialogue legitimate but both Muslims and Christians have not effectively participated in addressing different problems like extremism, mistrust, misconceptions, weaknesses, lack of proper representation, and unjust authority. These problems can be addressed within a framework that comprises tolerance, respect, sincere preparedness and loyalty to humanity as the success of interfaith dialogue depends much on its agenda.

An agreement must be reached among participants on common points of agenda such as universal truth, trans-cultural values and spiritual satisfaction to achieve its goals.

On the surface, the initiatives and developments of inter-religious cooperation seem encouraging. These initiatives therefore, are an attempt to show to the world that Pakistan is an open society that accepts diversity and believes in pluralism. Most Church leaders have welcomed this new opportunity and are joining hands with the majority community in order to build a healthy relationship in peace and inter-faith harmony.

Minorities of Pakistan: Struggle and Contributions

Ahmad Salim

Freedom Movement, 1935-47

The minorities of Pakistan played an important role in the freedom movement against the British. Our recorded history details the accomplishment of rulers, political intellectuals, and despotic feudal overlords. This pattern of history overlooks the significant role played by ethnic or religious minorities during the freedom movement of the subcontinent. Political leaders needed to prove to the colonial power that the masses, including minorities, supported them. Without this collective support, Pakistan could not have come into existence.

The minorities made huge contribution to the freedom struggle against British Raj. At the turn of the 20th century, they remonstrated in Britain, France, Germany and the USA against Colonial rule in India. Radical political *Parsi* leader, Madam Bhikajee Rustam Kama was very prominent. During the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, she stated that the continuing control of Britain over India was not only disastrous, but also a threat to freedom supporters globally. Bhikajee Rustam Kama put forward a proposal, along with Guideman, in 1906, appealing for worldwide cooperation in securing independence for India.

Dramatic developments in the Struggle of Independence of India took place during the Partition of Bengal in 1905 and the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms in 1919. Extremist political movements also started during that time led by mostly Hindus and Sikhs. The most significant was *Pagree Sambhaal Jatta*, or "Mind your turban, O Jat!" This movement was the result of agrarian disturbances in the Punjab. Huge peasant rallies were held in protest, led by Sufi Amba Parshad, Lala Lajpat Rai, Ziaul Haq, Banke Dyal, Ajeet Singh and Syed Haider Raza. Rage against the British became so intense that the government was forced to retrieve the disputed amendments.

The formation of Ghadar Party in Punjab was another significant event, initiated by Sikh peasants in India; Canadian Sikhs also took an active part. The government took extreme measures against Ghadar activists. In the first Lahore Conspiracy Case before the special tribunal, most of the revolutionaries were sentenced to death by hanging.¹⁸ Some workers of the Ghadar Party were also arrested in the NWFP.

Bhagat Singh was politically very active in the 1930s. The impact of his revolutionary movement, which included Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, seemed to overshadow the entire political scene. It was the decade of the Sikhs' quest for an identity. Sikhs began to clamor for their religious rights and the *Akali* and *Babbar-Akali* Movements were established.

¹⁸ Ahmed Salim, *Azadi aur Awam*, p. 60

In the same decade, Sindhi Muslims, Hindus and Parsis began a vociferous demand for separation from Bombay and recognition of its national identity as a province. Hindu and Sikh communities of Balochistan also began to think in terms of their national identity.

In 1940, the Muslim League put forward its demand for Pakistan in Lahore. Unlike the Christians in Bombay, Goa and Madras, the Christian minority in the Punjab supported the Muslim League. Among the Christian leaders supporting Pakistan were S.P. Singha, C. E. Gibbon, R.A. Gomes, S.S. Albert, Fazal Ilahi, Alfred Prashad, F. E. Chaudhry and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.¹⁹

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah gave special attention to effective representation of the minorities in his 14 Points and accepted their demands for complete religious freedom.

Prior to Partition 1947, the Christians in Punjab supported the Muslims and made no demands. The Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, and other minorities of Sindh, the Frontier and Balochistan also supported Pakistan and did not emigrate during the Partition.

Role in Punjab Assembly

July 1947

When Master Tara Singh, standing on the steps of the Punjab Assembly, brandished his sword and shouted, "Those who want Pakistan will only get the graveyard!" Christian leader S. P. Singha declared his support for Pakistan.

Bhim Sen Sachar and Gulzari Lal Nanda of the Congress pressurized the Christians and offered them important ministerial portfolios in India and solicited their vote on the question whether Lahore should go to India or Pakistan. On 25 July 1947, Singha stated authoritatively on behalf of the Christians that they should be counted along with the Muslims²⁰.

An understanding had been reached between the Muslim League and the Indian Christian Association during the Pakistan Movement. Muslim League offered greater concessions to the minorities, particularly the Christians in Pakistan.

It was on the basis of this agreement that the leaders of the Indian Christians took a leading part in the Pakistan Movement, stood resolutely with the Muslim League and preferred it to any understanding with the Congress.²¹

The decision of the minorities to join Pakistan was the result of historical circumstances. They were loyal to Pakistan and imbued with the highest feelings of patriotism towards it. The Christians and

¹⁹ Father Francis Nadeem, *Yeh Des Hamara Hai*, Lahore 1997, p. 60

²⁰ K.R. Zia, "Tehreek-e-Pakistan men Masihion ka Kirdar", monthly Caritas, August 1997, p. 36

²¹ Father Francis Nadeem, *Yeh Des Hamara Hai*, p. 60

Parsis not only accepted the new state as their homeland but also in the early days of Partition helped in refugee settlement, and worked hard to relieve the pain and distress of the new migrants.

In the spheres of rehabilitation, health, education and employment, they opened the doors of their homes, schools, colleges and hospitals to assist and welcome the new citizens of Pakistan.

Constituent Assembly

1947-48

The proceedings of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly began with electing a minority member, Jogendra Nath Mandal, as its acting president. This first step indicates that the Quaid had the same respect for the minorities and their representatives as he did for the Muslim majority. This is also noteworthy that when Quaid-e-Azam formed his first cabinet after the establishment of Pakistan, Jogendra Nath Mandal was appointed Minister of Law.

In East Pakistan, most of the members of the Pakistan National Congress in the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan were Hindus. It was the same case in Sindh. In Punjab, all four-minority members: S. P. Singha, C. E. Gibbon, Fazal Ilahi and B. L. Rallia Ram were Christians. They made considerable contribution to the Radcliffe Award for the inclusion of certain areas of Punjab in Pakistan. Mr. Gibbon was elected as the first Speaker in the Punjab Provincial Assembly's first session.

The minority members began to assert their identity from the first session of the Constituent Assembly. On the third day of the session, on 12 August 1947, at the instance of Liaquat Ali Khan, a resolution on constituting a Committee on Civic Rights and the fundamental rights of the minorities was passed.

Liaquat Ali Khan moved a resolution that the appellation "Quaid-e-Azam" be officially used with the name of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The minority members took an active part in the discussion. Opposing the resolution, Bhupendra Kumar Datta hoped that the President of the Assembly, i.e. Mr. Jinnah, would request the Prime Minister to withdraw the resolution.²² Sris Chandra Chattopadhyaya opposed the resolution also. All the minority members who spoke on the resolution did so in a logical and democratic manner.²³ Jogendra Nath Mandal's speech was in its favour, as were the arguments of all the Muslim members.²⁴

The second session of the Assembly convened in February 1948, presided over by the Quaid-e-Azam. Dharendra Nath Datta moved an amending resolution that members should have the option to addressing the House in Bengali, along with English. Another member, Prem Hari Barua,

²² Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Debates, Vol. 1, No.3, 12 August 1947, p.35

²³ Ibid pp.37-39

²⁴ Ibid p.39

endorsed his views.²⁵ However, it was rejected by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, who asserted that Pakistan had been achieved on the demand of ten *crore* Muslims of the subcontinent and the language of these ten *crore* Muslims was Urdu, and as such the language of the Muslims should be the language of communication.²⁶

Similarly, in the session of 2 March 1948, a resolution was moved to extend term of the Governor General by one year under the India Independence Act, 1947, the small opposition in the House put up a strong resistance. On 18 May, Minister Pirzada Abdus Sattar presented a bill to amend the provisions for electoral disqualification, the minority members put up a tough fight against it and the House was divided. There were also occasions when an atmosphere of unanimity prevailed in the House.

Quaid-e-Azam died on 11 September 1948. On 14 December 1948, Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan's name was suggested as the new President. Six-minority member proposed his name, Rajkumar Chakravarty was one of them and six seconded it;²⁷ those who seconded the proposal included Bhupendra Kumar Datta.

Similarly, when Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan moved the condolence resolution about the demise of the Quaid-e-Azam, Leader of the Opposition S. C. Chattopadhyaya made a moving speech following those of the Muslim leaders.²⁸

The Christian members of the Punjab Assembly accorded fundamental importance to the rights of the minorities. S. P. Singha's speech in the House on 20 January 1948 has acquired a historical point of reference. With regard to the fate of the Christians in Punjab, he deplored the Sikh policy of forsaking the country after living here for centuries and leaving a legacy of misery and suffering for the Christians.

Shortly after the Partition of 1947, there was a continuous influx of refugees in Karachi and other areas of Sindh. The Sindhis were apprehensive if the arrival of new refugees could not be curtailed, it would contribute to create a majority of non-Sindhis in the province and the avenues for the political, social and economic development of Sindhis would continue to remain closed.²⁹ In December Hyderabad was engulfed by communal riots.³⁰ This happened when refugees from Ajmer reached that city. Many Hindus did not want to leave their homeland. Dadi Leelan and many other Hindu families refused to go to India even though their homes were attacked.

In Punjab, the communities on both sides of the border suffered because of religious enmity but it was due to personal greed in Sindh, especially for property and lands. It was a great tragedy for

²⁵ Ibid Vol. ii, No.2, 25 February 1948, pp.15-16

²⁶ Ibid p. 17

²⁷ Ibid Vol iv, 14 December 1948 p.1

²⁸ Ibid p.4

²⁹ Ibid p.209

³⁰ Dadi Leelan Wati, M.Prakash, Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo, and Wali Ram Vallabh, interviews with author

Quaid-e-Azam to realize that the perpetrators of loot and murder were not ruffians but a large section of the middle class, including government officials in Hyderabad and Karachi. There were no reports of Hindu-Muslim riots or killing on a large scale elsewhere in Sindh but the violence in the two cities was reason enough for the Hindus to migrate.

Quaid-e-Azam died on 11 November 1947, the minorities were well aware of the tremendous efforts made by the Quaid in his last days for the protection of their life and property. For them, his death was the departure of a great leader who had fought for them. All minority communities: the Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Sikhs and the Untouchables felt lost without his support.

Constitutional progress and the minorities 1948-52

The first assault on the minorities and the beliefs of the Quaid-e-Azam was in 1949 on the instance of Chaudhry Mohammad Ali; Liaquat Ali Khan got the Objectives Resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly.³¹ On 7 March, the Prime Minister introduced the Bill; it was strongly opposed by all Hindu minority members. They were of the view that designating Pakistan as an Islamic state would permanently convert the minorities into second-class citizens.³²

In this regard B. K. Datta said “if religion is brought in, criticism can become the cause of distress and give rise to authoritarianism. Today we should be careful not to take any action that may possibly lead our future generations into a blinding tempest. God forbid, it can happen that some day a Bacha Saqqa, or some such blood- thirsty political adventurer may thrust his will and authority on this country and quote the preamble to this Resolution in support of his tyranny.”

Mr. Datta was quite right because we witnessed it especially in Ziaul Haq’s regime. Prof. Chakravarty tabled an amendment whereby; in the second paragraph of the Resolution the words "free and independent state" be replaced by "free and independent democratic state." However, the appeal of Prof. Chakravarty proved futile and his amendments were rejected.³³ The speeches of the minority representatives proved futile.

Quite interestingly, the Secretary Defense, Major General Iskander Mirza, later Pakistan's first President was reported to have said that the Objective Resolution was a gift from the government for the mullahs.

The Objectives Resolution was passed on 12 March and the same day the formation of a 25-member Basic Principles Committee (BPC) was announced. A seven-member “Procedures Committee” was established, with three persons from the minorities, Jogendra Nath Mandal, S. C. Chattopadhyaya and B. C. Mandal. The Committee first met under the chairmanship of Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan, and the first formal session was held on 14-15 April. The BSP approved creation an Islamic

³¹ Aftab Alexander Mughal, *Aqliyaten, Insaaf aur Pakistan*, Fortnightly *Catholic Naqeeb*, p.14

³² Father Francis Nadeem, *Yeh Des Hamara hai*, Lahore, p.63

³³ *Ibid* pp.266-267

Education Board, headed by famous Islamic scholar, Syed Suleman Nadvi was invited from India on a salary of Rs. 1,500 per month. The functions of the board were purely consultative.

BPC was able to present its first report in 1950. According to this report, the Central Assembly should consist of two Houses. Admittedly, this proposal was in conformity with the federal system of government, but by giving them similar authority, the spirit of the federation would be adversely affected.³⁴

There was a violent protest against this report from East Bengal and it was termed as anti-Bengal. The Prime Minister announced postponement of the debate on the report. In October Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated and Khwaja Nazimuddin became Prime Minister. He directed the BPC to expedite the work of drafting the constitution. Fifteen months, the PM placed the report of the BPC before the House, i.e. on 22 December 1952.

The first recommendation was that only a Muslim could become head of state. The minority representatives took serious objection to this because it immediately placed them in the category of second-class citizens.

Another important recommendation of the BPC was to set up special boards comprising of *ulema* well versed in Islamic law, to be formed by the Governor General and the provincial governors. Laws of the country were presented before these boards in order to ascertain if they were in conflict with the *Quran* and the *Sunnab*. This gave veto power to the *ulema* boards over the legislative assemblies. The fundamental drawback was that the Board with limited powers and monopolized the interpretation of the principles of the *Quran* and the *Sunnab* on behalf of the whole nation. The minority members of the Constituent Assembly pointed the dangers in the recommendation and the potential disastrous consequences. Meantime, the forcible eviction of the Hindus from East Bengal continued and the two minorities on both sides of the border confronted loss of life and property.

During 21-24 January 1953, there was a meeting of the *ulemas* in Karachi under the chairmanship of Maulana Syed Suleman Nadvi. *Ulemas* from Pakistan, including East Bengal jointly framed 22 points for the enforcement of the tenets of the *Quran* and the *Sunnab* in Pakistan. Some of the points deprived the minorities of their rights and freedoms within the confines of the laws of the country. These laws were to be based on the *Quran* and the *Sunnab*.

On 27 February 1953, anti Ahmeddiya riots started in Lahore, fully supported by Maulana Maudoodi and Jamaat-i-Islami. Public demands were made to declare the Ahmedis as non-Muslims and immediate removal of Zaffarullah Khan from the post of Foreign Minister and dismissal of all high-ranking Ahmadis in civil and military departments.

³⁴ Dr Safdar Mahmood, op cit, pp.291-292

Debates on Joint and Separate Electorates 1952-58

To protect their self-interests in the early 20th century, The Indian Muslims raised the question of joint or separate electorates. In the constitutional reforms of 1909, the right to separate electorates for the Muslims was accepted. Even after the Partition of India, the problem of communal representation could not be resolved. It proved to be particularly complex in Pakistan because nationalism equated with Islamic ideology. The Jamaat-e-Islami, the Muslim League and the Nizam-e-Islam subscribed to the view that separate or communal electorates were the foundation of the Islamic state in Pakistan. The Awami League, the Krishak Sramik Party, the National Awami Party and the Ganatantri Dal strongly felt that separate electorate was an obstacle for a democratic and secular state. It was further complicated by the entire corpus of the Hindu population in the Eastern Wing. Separate electorates became a matter of political contention between the various parties and provinces.

It attracted public attention for the first time when the Government of India Act 1935 was amended to provide for separate electorates for Caste Hindus and Scheduled Castes within the Hindu community of East Bengal. This was done to meet the political needs of the rulers during the provincial elections. Opposing the amendment, S.C. Chattopadhyaya said, "Do not divide us. It will not end the problems of the Untouchables or the caste system." The Hindu members were of the opinion that even with joint electorates the representation of the depressed classes could be ensured.

During the debates, D.N. Datta raised a point: "Separate electorates were introduced in India on the demand of the Muslims who were a minority. Here we are in a minority and yet we are asking for joint electorates". The government in the Assembly had no answer. When voting on the amendment took place, all the minority members except the Parsi member P.B. Bhandara and Seth Sukhdev of Sindh cast their votes against its adoption. The Hindu members supported joint electorates for all religious minorities, though they were in favour of reserved seats for the Untouchables, Christians and Buddhists.

In March 1952, a conference of the minorities was held in Comilla, East Bengal. Three hundred of the 500 delegates were from the depressed classes. They openly and unreservedly criticized separate electorates. This showed that the Hindu community was against this system.

A Committee on Fundamental Rights and Rights of the Minorities was constituted by the Constituent Assembly in August 1947. In October 1953, the draft constitution was debated in the Constituent Assembly; the system of electorates also came under discussion. The report of the committee on the Fundamental Rights also came up before the Assembly in 1953.

One point of differences within the committee on which some non-Muslim members showed dissent was the issue of separate electorates, whose adoption was recommended by the committee. B. C. Mandal, P. H. Burman and R. K. Chakravarty, in their joint dissenting note stated that separate

electorates were neither in the interest of the minorities nor would they be conducive to promoting the interests of the state.³⁵

Provincial elections were held in East Bengal in 1954. The Muslim League faced a direct confrontation with a formidable combination of various parties including The Jucto (United) Front, a political alliance of the Awami League, the Krishak Sramik Party, the Nizam-e-Islam, and the Ganatantri Dal, an alliance led by personalities like A. K. Fazlul Haq, Husseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani.

The Front won 223 seats out of a House of 310. The Muslim League got only ten seats and all its stalwarts including the Chief Minister failed badly at the hustling, some even losing their deposits.

Within three months the Center dismissed the Jucto Front government. In 1954, Governor General Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the Constituent Assembly and the second Constituent Assembly came into being in 1955. Simultaneously the provinces of West Pakistan were amalgamated into One Unit in October 1955.

Iskander Mirza replaced Ghulam Muhammad as Governor General. Bengali Prime Minister, Muhammad Ali Bogra was supplanted by the Punjabi Chaudhry Muhammad Ali. At this time the constitution was in the last stages of being adopted, piloted by Bogra. Jucto Front government was restored in East Pakistan because joined the Muslim League.

Despite these fast-moving developments, the issue of electorates remained active in the country. The rightist parties openly attacked the concept of joint electorates; the old adherents of joint electorates became stronger by virtue of being political partners with the Jucto Front. The Hindu members were quite powerful on the electoral issue. The Awami League and the Ganatantri Dal openly campaigned for joint electorates.

During these discussions and debates, the ruling coalition refrained from taking up contentious issues like the electorates problem and left it for the future elected national assembly. It was written in Article 145 of the constitution that the coming provincial assemblies would best decide the matter.

When voting began on the government resolution to decide the system of electorates, all the Hindu members except three cast their votes against it. They were East Pakistan's K. K. Datta and A. K. Das, both central ministers, and Seeromal Kirpaldas of West Pakistan. A provincial minister from East Pakistan also voted against the resolution.³⁶

In East Pakistan, no party could form the government without assistance from the minority members. The Muslim League had practically ceased to exist in the East Pakistan Assembly. The Awami League and the Ganatantri Dal were in favour of joint electorates. The Hindu members

³⁵ Report of the Committee on Fundamental Rights of Citizens of Pakistan and on Matters Relating to Minorities, Karachi, 1953, p. 6

³⁶ CAP Debates, Vol. I, 21 February 1956, p. 3468

exploited this position to their advantage and within a year, the assembly gave its verdict in favour of joint electorates.³⁷

In West Pakistan, during the tug of war between the Muslim League and the Republican Party and the consequent upper hand gained by the Republicans, the electorates' issue resurfaced. The Muslim League fell back on its old expedience of loyalty to the ideology of Pakistan and joined in the struggle for power. The Republican Party had no electoral policy of its own. The former Congress leader Dr Khan Sahib headed it. On this issue his views, as expressed in press statements, were never constant and changed its preference a number of times but finally settled for separate electorates.³⁸

In the beginning of 1956, the parties of the United Front started to leave the alliance. In January 1956, the Ganatantri Dal withdrew its support to the coalition, followed by the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Pakistan National Congress. The Nizam-e-Islam Party directed its nominees on the cabinet to resign. That put an end to the ministry of the United Front, to be replaced on 9 September 1956 by a ministry of the Awami league. Along with this the League also succeeded in forming a coalition at the Center in conjunction with the Republican Party.

Fazlul Qadir Chaudhry (Muslim League) said in a statement, "Joint electorates are sure to bring about the end of East Pakistan, that is East Pakistan and West Bengal will become one."³⁹

When the voting took place in the Assembly on this issue, 159 votes were cast in favour of joint electorates and just one against it. Out of the 159 votes 59 came from Hindu members and 100 from the Muslims. This gave adherents of separate electorates the point that only 100 Muslim members had supported joint electorates out of a House of 237. Members of the depressed classes always favoured joint electorates and the concession of reserved seats but at this stage the Speaker refused to allow any change in the resolution. In protest, members of the Scheduled Castes Federation walked out of the House.

When the Electoral (Amendment) Bill advocating joint electorates for the whole country, was moved in the National Assembly for discussion, two Christian members from West Pakistan, C.E. Gibbon and Joshua Fazluddin opposed it; Gibbon insisted that the Christians should be represented in the assemblies by members of the community.

After a prolonged debate that began in 1952, finally ended with victory of the joint electorates system in 1957.

After Chundrigar's resignation as Prime Minister, another coalition government was formed on 16 December. The Republicans had an active role in it as well. The new Prime Minister, Malik Feroz Khan Noon was leader of the Republican Party. In July 1958, Noon announced that the general

³⁷ Ibid, p. 115

³⁸ Daily Dawn, 2 August 1956

³⁹ East Pakistan Assembly, Proceedings, Vol. XV, 1 October 1956, p. 200

elections would be held in February 1959, instead of November 1958. Martial law was imposed on 7 October 1958 and ended all possibility of an election on the basis of joint electorates.

1956 Constitution and the Minorities

The final draft of the 1956 Constitution was presented before the Assembly on 9 January. At that time, the Awami League was in the opposition and members of the Pakistan National Congress were with the government.

Suhrawardy was not in favour of using the appellation "Islamic Republic" for Pakistan. On the issue that only a Muslim can be the head of state, the contention of the Awami League and the non-Muslim members was that it was an unnecessary condition. K.K. Datta of the ruling coalition objected to the two Islamic clauses, which created a distinction between a Muslim citizen and a non-Muslim citizen and were thus in conflict with the spirit of the constitution.

The 1956 Constitution granted the minorities the same political, social, economic and religious rights as the Muslims. They were not subjected to any other constitutional discrimination, except that the head of state must be a Muslim.

However, apart from observing the letter of the law, the constitution did not do justice to the minorities. The constitution made promises to the minorities, it highlighted their problems and gave an indication that it intended to solve these problems but by declaring Pakistan as an Islamic state and by prescribing the pre-requisite of being a Muslim for appointment to key posts, they created a gulf between the Muslims and non-Muslims which could not be bridged by the Principles of Policy.

Military Bureaucracy and minorities, 1958-71

Pakistan's first military dictatorship did not have religion inclination. The first step that Major General Iskander Mirza, the country's first President took after imposition of martial law, was to delete "Islamic Republic" from the official name of the country. Within twenty days, Ayub Khan dislodged Iskandar Mirza from power and assumed the rank of Chief Martial Law Administrator and President. He continued with the political legacy of Mirza, especially its non-religious character.

Ayub Khan made it clear that the Pakistan needed a modern, enlightened society and not a system described as Islamic and based on the *ulema's* version of the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*. Ayub Khan vision of the country focused on economic and social changes and this could never be achieved by setting up religious institutions. He was conscious that he had disrupted democracy and would have to find a replacement for political system and political institutions. On 27 October 1959, he initiated "controlled democracy" which was not only necessary for the masses but also in harmony with their needs and aspirations. The system of basic democracies or BD started at the lowest level of public representation and escalating to the level of election of the President of Pakistan but the people rejected it.

Only a few members of the minority communities succeeded in getting elected under BD system and no one reached the assemblies. It was impossible for any minority candidate to be elected to the National Assembly or a Provincial Assembly.

Ayub Khan also cancelled the five percent quota of the minorities (mainly Christians) in government service and in technical and educational institutions and the land grant to Christian peasants of two acres per family, made at the time of the establishment of Pakistan. The prospects of progress for Christians began to recede and the condition of the Hindus was even worse.

In December, the 80,000 members of the Basic Democracies were elected. On 14 February, a referendum was held to elect Ayub Khan as President. Ninety-five percent of the 80,000 BD members voted in favour of Ayub Khan. After the election, President Ayub Khan announced the formation of an eleven-member Constitution Commission, headed by Justice Shahabuddin, to "analyze the causes of the failure of the parliamentary form of government in Pakistan." Unfortunately, the attitude of Commission towards the minorities was based on prejudices and suspicion.

It is interesting to note the change in the stance of the Muslim League during this period. For example, Nurul Amin, former Chief Minister of East Pakistan and an old Muslim Leaguer, deposed before the Constitution Commission that with a suitable amendment in the Citizenship Act, his party would be ready to support joint electorates. At the same time he advocated reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and women for the next ten years.⁴⁰ 19 *ulema*, including Maulana Maudoodi, opposed joint electorates. They recommended that all future elections should be held on the basis of separate electorates.⁴¹

The Commission presented its report on 6 May 1961. Ayub Khan accepted its recommendations but rejected adopting separate electorates for the country. The 1962 elections were conducted on the basis of joint electorates. The results showed that very few minorities' candidates won from their constituencies. Not a single non-Muslim was elected for the 156 National Assembly seats; in the pervious assembly they had occupied 11 seats in the House of 80. In East Pakistan Assembly, four non-Muslims were elected in the House of 155.

With the 1962 constitution started the era of the presidential system of government in Pakistan. It conferred almost dictatorial powers on the head of state and made him supreme authority in all matters. Pakistan was called a republic but it became a subject of violent criticism and Ayub Khan was forced to revert to the old appellation, Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Following in the footsteps of the 1956 constitution, the new dispensation also opened with the Objectives Resolution and claimed full protection to the legitimate interests (including religious and cultural aspects) of the minorities.⁴²

⁴⁰ *The Pakistan Observer*, 28 June, 1960

⁴¹ Ghulam Azam(Ed),Answers to Questionnaires issued by Constitution Commission, Rangpur,1960,p. 21

⁴² *Jamhooriya-e-Pakistan ka Aaeen*, Lahore 1862, p. 15

In the 1965 war, Christians were second to none in courage and patriotism. Baseless and irresponsible charges made against the Christians as spies and many were arrested and imprisoned. This created uncertainty and dissatisfaction among the community.

During the period of 1967-68, nationwide protest started against Ayub Khan. Hindus and Christians took a prominent part in the movement. The movement in West Pakistan, led by Z.A. Bhutto, inspired the masses in 1968. Advocate Emanuel Zafar, under the banner of a new party called the *Masibi Majlis-e-Amal*, led the Christians. Its Action Committee included Gulzar Chauhan, Dr Stephen Malik, Isaac Sushil, Umar Hayat Umar and other leading Christians.

In 1969, Gen. Yahya Khan seized power. The Yahya regime appointed retired Chief Justice of Pakistan, A. R. Cornelius as Minister of Law & Parliamentary Affairs. He was required to frame the new constitution to replace the 1962 constitution.

The new draft of the constitution was ready for promulgation and 17/18 December was fixed as tentative dates, when military action started in East Pakistan 1971. The surrender in Dhaka on 16 December turned the tables. Promulgation of the constitution was suspended.

Islam and minorities 1972-77

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took the oath of office as President of Pakistan and Chief Martial Law Administrator. East Pakistan achieved liberation and became a sovereign state of Bangladesh. Bhutto formed his first cabinet without delay. A new Ministry of Minorities' Affairs was created. Raja Tridev Roy, chief of the Chakma Tribe of former East Pakistan, became its first minister. It had offshoots at lower levels and additional deputy commissioner in every district was designated as Minorities Officer to rectify all legitimate complaints of the minorities.

The constitution of 1973 granted constitutional protections to the minorities. However, a cursory examination of these guarantees and protective measures makes it clear that most of them were never implemented.

During the period 1973-77, every citizen of Pakistan did not have the right to follow his religion and propagate its tenets. If this 'right' were seen in practical light, the name of Ahmadis (Qadianis) would not have been added to the list of minorities; efforts continued to designate Shias, Ismailis, Zikris, etc. as non-Muslims.

Religious minorities were not allowed to establish educational, social and cultural institutions related to their faiths; existing institutions were taken away forcibly. Representation of minorities in the federal and provincial services remained a constitutional right but in reality, it never materialized. In the Bhutto era, the minority seats were protected but the minority representatives were given neither the financial resources nor the authority for progressive work of their communities.

The issue of *Khatm-e-Nabuwat* surfaced in 1953 but was suppressed. It resurfaced in June 1974 when there was a clash on Rabwah Railway Station. The Muslims demanded that the Ahmadis be declared as non-Muslims.

On 7 September 1974, the National Assembly unanimously declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims. Bhutto's religious issue became a political problem and human rights. Like the other minorities of Pakistan, the Ahmadis were not fated to get constitutional protection or social security or political consolidation. The coming days would show the tribulations in store for them.

Overly confident on his policies and performance of his government, Bhutto announced general elections one year ahead of schedule. The opposition refused to accept the results of the April 1977 polls and protest movement started against him, consisting mainly of religious extremists with the slogan of an Islamic system for Pakistan, putting a false democratic face to religious fascism; which the United States decided to exploit for pursuing its own ends.

The progressive political groups of the country and the representatives of the minorities joined hands and vowed to oust Bhutto. The minorities did not give full support to the Pakistan National Alliance but a major portion of their leadership joined the mobs in the streets against him. The leadership of the minorities did not demonstrate political wisdom and unable to comprehend that despite his mistakes, Bhutto was their ally and that the leaders of the PNA, under the garb of an Islamic system, convert them into second class citizens.

Political Islam and minorities' sufferings, 1977-88

The protest movement launched against Bhutto by the Pakistan National Alliance against rigging in the general elections was actually a cover for imposition of the Islamic system of *Nizam-e-Mustafa* in the country.

Nationalist elements and representatives of the minorities also joined the movement. Forces within and outside the country were involuntarily propelling General Zia-ul-Haq to the forefront of the national stage. Zia took full advantage of this state of affairs and seized power.

Zia put off the promised elections on the pretext of accountability, followed by introduction of an Islamic system and guiding the national state of affairs towards the political murder of Bhutto. Finally, he postponed the elections indefinitely.

Imprisonment, whipping and hanging became the order of the day. The minorities could not escape Zia's atrocities. Christian youths wrote history with their blood by self-immolation to protest Bhutto's death by hanging.

Towards the end of 1970s, laws framed to bring about an Islamic legal system with its attendant penalties. The Council of Islamic Ideology was reconstituted and given more power to be effective. On its recommendation, a set of four laws, known as the *Hudood Laws* were placed on the statute book. These related to prohibition of alcohol and other intoxicating drugs, theft and its

punishments, rape and unlawful sex and to *qazaf*, i.e. giving false evidence about sexual relationships.⁴³

Following the promulgation of the *Hudood Laws*, a special *Shariat* bench was constituted in every high court and an appellate bench in the Supreme Court. They were empowered to listen to appeals against convictions under *Hudood* by sessions' judges. They were also authorized to hear cases and appeals challenging a law under which a conviction was made, as being in conflict with the *Shariat*, and to decide the matter, with the proviso that, if the conviction was struck down, the government could file an appeal with the Supreme Court. It was made compulsory for the government to respect and honour the decisions of these *Shariat* courts.⁴⁴

Along with bringing in such penal legislation, Ziaul Haq promised that general elections would be held. After Bhutto's hanging, elections were announced for October 1979. Zia knew that election meant returning the power to the People's Party and other civilian forces, he decided to indefinitely postpone the polls, on the plea that the country's laws needed to be *Islamised*. Instead local body elections were staged. The constitution of 1973 had prescribed the system of joint electorates but Zia decided to cause division between the religious majority and the minorities by resorting to separate electorates for these elections.

In pursuance of the process of *Islamisation*, a whole network of *Shariah* courts was created. The judicial powers exercised previously by the *Shariat* benches of the high courts were now vested in the Federal Shariat Court. All the fourteen cases pending with these benches were transferred to this court, which managed to dispose of them before the end of 1981.⁴⁵

The process of *Islamisation* also extended in the field of the economy. Ziaul Haq laid the foundations of an official system for compulsory collection of *zakaat* and *ushr*. The aim of distributing *zakaat* was to improve the economic condition of the poor but, in actual fact, it did not bring about any change in their lives. All that it did was to promote religious extremism.

The ultra religious atmosphere led to a tremendous increase in the number of *deeni madressahs*. It not only widened the gulf between Muslims and non- Muslims but also helped to encourage sectarianism within the Muslim community. Mutual hatred and division within Muslims surfaced, followed by sectarian murder and destruction that continues to blight the society of Pakistan and shatter it into pieces.

Through hoaxes and baseless claims, Zia continued his mission of dividing the masses along religious and linguistic lines. He set up organizations like the Zafar Ansari Commission and re-shaped Islamic Ideology Council, whose sole purpose was to keep the people divided. The Council was particularly asked to submit recommendations on the various administrative, constitutional and judicial organs of an Islamic state.

⁴³ G.W. Chaudhry, *Pakistan, Martial Law se Civil Hukumat Tak – Intiqal-e-Iqtidar ki Kahani*, pp. 95-155

⁴⁴ Ibid p. 91

⁴⁵ Ibid p. 137

The report made observations about the responsibilities of the government in respect of the minorities but nothing was implemented.

Along with refurbishing the Islamic Ideology Council and forming new commissions and committees to meet General Zia's political needs, the penal code of Pakistan was also subjected to some fundamental changes, through which he victimized people in general and non-Muslims in particular.

Through an ordinance in early 1982, General Zia made an addition to Section 295-B, which stated that anyone, with intent forethought, desecrates a volume of the *Quran* or any part of it, damages it or detracts from its sacredness, or uses it in a derogatory or insulting manner or employs it for an unlawful purpose, will be liable to life imprisonment.

General Zia also issued an order (Presidential Order No.4 of 1982) whereby any act contravening the provisions of Section 295-B could only be tried by a military court. Act III of 1986 made an addition to Section 295-C whereby objectionable remarks about the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would earn the culprit the sentence of death or life imprisonment and a fine as well.

A lawyer in the Federal Shariat Court challenged the amended Section 295-C, that an insult to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would be awarded the death sentence only. In October 1990, the court accepted the plea and held that anyone found guilty would suffer the death penalty.⁴⁶

These changes were made in the presence of non-Muslim members in the *Majlis-e-Shoora*. The *Majlis* also passed the Islamic Law of Evidence in 1984, legislating that the evidence of two female witnesses would be counted as one witness and the evidence of four non-Muslims would be equal to the evidence of one Muslim.

The debate on separate and joint electorates went on for two decades. During the Local Government elections of 1979, under General Ziaul Haq's martial law, separate electorate was introduced for the first time. It was the same in 1983 Local Government elections. In pursuance of his political program, Zia moved towards elections in 1985, and the system of separate electorates was again foisted on the nation.

In this context it is significant to relate that for the referendum of 1984 (which will receive due mention later) Zia relied on the joint electorates system, probably because he would not have received many votes through separate electorates.

On becoming President for the second time, 12 August 1983, Zia announced a program, in which setting up a political government was outlined and it should be taken as the manifesto of his government till the next elections. Party-less election program based on separate electorates was announced and the number of seats reserved for the minorities was enhanced.

The general view among the people was against non-party elections and a decision to boycott the polls was seriously mooted. The minority circles in the country looked with displeasure at the

⁴⁶ Pakistan Commission for Human Rights, *Pakistan men Insaani Huqooq ki Soorat-e-Haal*, 1991, pp. 4-5

separate electoral rolls that General Zia had introduced in 1985. In Presidential Order No.16 of 1985, Zia allocated ten seats for the minorities in the National Assembly: Four Christians seats, four Hindus seats, one jointly for the Parsis and Sikhs and one for the Ahmadis.

There were nine seats in Sindh Assembly: five Hindus seats, two Christian seats and one each for the Ahmadis and combined Sikhs-Parsis. In Balochistan: two seats for the minorities, one for the Christians and the other jointly to the Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis.⁴⁷

The following were declared successful:

Christians: N. M. Khokhar, Emanuel Zafar, Colonel W. Herbert and Captain Sanaullah.
Hindus/Scheduled Castes: Seth Chamandas, Gulji, Bhagwan Das and Paroomal.

Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi, Others: M.P. Bhandara.

Nobody filed the nomination papers for the sole Ahmadi seat and it was allocated it to a non-Muslim woman, Mrs. Leela Vanti became member of the National Assembly.⁴⁸

Before transferring power to the "elected" representatives, Ziaul Haq decided to restore the 1973 constitution after effecting amendments in it to suit his politics, chief among them, the Eighth Amendment, which is a collection of amendments that completely disfigured the constitution, the infamous Article 58 (2) b, allowing successive heads of state to dismiss elected governments and assemblies.

The Junejo government was apparently an elected civil dispensation but in reality it was an extension of Zia's martial law. It was set up to counter increasing dissatisfaction in the country and the vociferous demand for restoration of democracy. Junejo made an effort to bring about a change but his regime fell victim to the Eighth Amendment. In other words, by attacking his own creation, Zia proved to the world ineffectiveness of the so-called government.

The Junejo government's hands were tied and it could not do much good for the majority in the country nor could it benefit the non-Muslim minorities. The process of *Islamisation* proceeded unhindered. The constitution continued to be amended and penal laws continued to be legislated. There was no appreciable reduction in the problems of the minorities.

After dismissal of Junejo government, Ziaul Haq promulgated the *Shariat* Bill in June 1988 as an ordinance. The *Shariat* Bill and the Ninth Amendment had the same objectives; the latter involved amendment in the constitution the former could become law through an act of parliament. The Ninth Amendment kept the constitution out of the purview of the *Shariat* Court, whereas there was no such provision, for or against, in the private bill.

The purpose of the Bill was imposition of the *Shariat*, which was specified as "Islamic directions according to the *Quran* and the *Sunnah*." According to the bill "the *Shariat* will be the highest law in

⁴⁷ Father Francis Nadeem, op. Cit. p. 77

⁴⁸ Aqeel Abbas Jafri, *Pakistan ki Intikhabi Siyasat*, Islamabad 1996, p. 149

Pakistan... and notwithstanding anything in any other law, custom, tradition or practice, will be deemed to have been promulgated.”

The courts were authorized to implement the *Shariat*. No functionary of the government, neither the head of state or the Prime Minister nor the provincial chief minister had the authority to pass an order without prior approval with the Shariat. Any such order could be challenged in a high court. Provisions were made to appoint *ulema* as judges and *muftis* of courts. Economic and educational systems should maintain the requirements of *Shariat*. An exception clause stated that all previous agreements and pacts made with foreign organizations would be considered sacrosanct.

General Zia faced the big dilemma of how to postpone elections. The constitution was emphatic that the President was bound to hold the elections within ninety days of the dismissal of the National Assembly. However, the only announcement made was that the forthcoming elections would be on non-party basis. Amid protests from various political leaders, General Zia announced that he intended to hold five such elections in the future because party-based elections were not in conformity with the spirit of Islam; the Islamic nature of the decision was not clarified or explained.

General election was scheduled for 16 November 1988. Zia was killed in the air crash and the acting President Ghulam Ishaq reiterated the date for the elections.

Post Zia Era: Struggle Continues 1988-99

Due to the sudden death of General Ziaul Haq, political changes were set in motion, though the change of faces in the Establishment was hardly indicative of any fundamental alteration in the system. The same can be said of the electoral process.

On the direction of the Supreme Court, the non-party general elections was converted into party-based polls but the longstanding demand of the minorities to put an end to separate electorates could not find favour with the new powers.

Thus, all the four elections from 1988 to 1997 were held on the basis of separate electorates. This was continuation of the mood set by General Zia.

Benazir Bhutto tried a different note in her second term by trying to win over the minorities through the ruse of a double voting right but could not succeed. Apart from this single attempt, the multiple regimes of the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League took no steps to do away with this injustice.

Unfortunately, the minority representatives elected during the long period from 1988 to 1997 failed to live up to the expectations of their people. Muted voices and half-hearted attempts did not make an impact. On an application by Naim Shakir, a minority candidate, the Supreme Court held that "the Christians and other minorities can vote for the Muslims and Muslims can vote for the Christian and

other minority candidates,⁴⁹ but this direction was applicable only to Naim Shakir's constituency PP 126, and not to the whole country.

Although the court ruling pertained to just one constituency, the good news about a joint electorate for that constituency proved to be a passing phenomenon and on 4 October, the Supreme Court amended its ruling to hold that Naim Shakir could not stand for election from a Muslim seat,⁵⁰ though it ordered that the hearing on the petition would continue.⁵¹

On 6 February 1994, the Supreme Court postponed the constitutional petition of Naim Shakir and directed its office to fix the next hearing for an early date. The Chief Justice observed that it was a lengthy and complicated constitutional issue and to resolve it required necessary understanding the spirit and content of the constitution, which required time and attention and postponed the case indefinitely. This full bench of the Supreme Court comprised Chief Justice Nasim Hasan Shah and Justices Shafiur Rahman, Saad Saud Jan, Abdul Qadeer Chaudhry, Sajjad Ali Shah, Muhammad Rafiq Tarar and Wali Muhammad.⁵² It was not just the case that was indefinitely postponed but the issue of electorates was shelved as well.

Benazir Bhutto proposed a double vote for the minorities during her second term but it would have necessitated amendment in the constitution and she did not command a two-third majority in the National Assembly.

Nawaz Sharif adopted an attitude of complete indifference from 1997 to 1999. The political leaders of the minorities failed to realize its gravity and were content with their perks and privileges.

In 1988, Peter John Sohotra, George Clement, Father Rufin Julius and Captain Sanaullah were elected for the Provincial and the National Assemblies. Sohotra was re-elected in 1990 and 1997. Clement was re-elected in 1993. Rufin Julius, who was a Bishop in 1997, was successful in all the four elections. Tariq C. Qaiser won in 1990, 1993 and 1997. Similarly J. Salik was a member in 1990 and 1993. The only two representatives elected once were Captain Sanaullah (1988) and Simon Jacob (1997).

Kishan Chand Parwani and Rana Chander Singh from the Hindu-Scheduled Castes were elected four times to the National Assembly, Dr Khatau Mal was elected three times and Bhagwandas was elected twice.

For the sole Buddhist-Sikh-Parsi seat in the National Assembly, a Parsi was elected the four times. Behram D. Avari was elected twice (1988 and 1990) and Yazdyar Kaikobad was also elected two times (1993 and 1997).

⁴⁹ *Daily Jang*, Lahore, 5 October 1993

⁵⁰ *Daily The News*, Lahore, 5 October 1993

⁵¹ *Daily Jang*, 9 February 1994

⁵² Pakistan Human Rights Commission. *Pakistan men Insani Huqooq ki Soorat-e-Haal* Lahore, 1991, p. 17

Most of the minority members in the National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies supported separate electorates. They also maintained the silence of acquiescence when laws were passed that were derogatory to the minorities and never struggled to become part of the national mainstream.

A Shameful Record (1991-2004)⁵³

The entire history of Pakistan is full of inexcusable treatment of the minorities. During the year 1991, various minorities groups confronted attacks involving discrimination, harassment and injustice.

The Gulf War against Iraq was characterized by reactionary elements as a conflict between Islam and Christianity. Christians of Pakistan were bracketed with the anti-Islam forces and were frequently threatened. The center of the Bible Society in Karachi and a church in Peshawar were attacked. There were instances of distribution of bigoted literature and the Christians were criticized in Friday sermons.

During the same year, the Federal Government turned down a proposal to fix special quotas for the minorities in public services.

1992 was year of fear and suspense for the minorities because of reactionary elements and government policies. There was an official proposal that religion should be listed on all national identity cards. The President and the Prime Minister publicly endorsed this proposal and the federal cabinet approved it. The minorities waged a vigorous protest against the proposal.

Javed Gul Masih of Sargodha was given the first death sentence under Blasphemy Act. He was accused of insulting the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The judge relied on the statement of the accuser. The testimonies of two witnesses in favour of the accused were ignored.

A wave of reaction swept across the country in the wake of demolition of Babri Masjid in India. Provoked by reactionary elements, angry crowds damaged and destroyed places of worship of Hindus, Sikhs and Christians. From 6 to 8 December, 120 Hindu temples, seven churches and two gurdawara were razed to the ground and hundreds of shops and houses belonging to the minorities were ransacked. Five hundred non-Muslim families were subjected to violence and a family of six was burnt alive in Loralai.

The government did nothing in pursuance of its promise to repair the temples and compensate the non-Muslims for their losses.

⁵³ All events and incidents mentioned under the heading-"Shameful Record," from 1991 to 2004 have been taken from the reports and documents of the following organisations, the responsibility for whose correctness or otherwise does not rest with the author:

- i. Annual reports of the Pakistan Human Rights Commission from 1991 to 2004, Urdu Edition
- ii. Various issues of the Urdu newsletter "Jadd-o-Jahd," of the Pakistan Human Rights Commission (1991 to 2004)
- iii. Various issues of the journal of the Organisation for Peace & Justice (1990 to 1999)

In April 1994, Lahore high Court disposed of a private petition and said that Section 295-C does not violate the constitution. Earlier in February, the Pakistan Law Commission meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Nasim Hasan Shah opined that the police had misused this law and expressed the fear that it was likely to be used as a weapon in the hands of sectarian groups and political parties. The Commission had also recommended that it should be referred to the Islamic Ideology Council.

In the middle of the year, the government decided to amend the procedure for the application of Section 295-C. There was uproar against this decision among the orthodox circles and a minister's views on amendment in July, resulted in protest demonstrations all over the country and no step was taken during the rest of the year.

The trend of forcible possession of church land, conversion of minorities to Islam, abduction of non-Muslim men and women, subjecting non-Muslims to violence and the minorities governed by discriminatory laws continued unabated during the year 1995.

In the Punjab Assembly, a resolution from a Christian member that the minorities be granted the right of double vote was strongly opposed and the demand excluded from the resolution on the ground that the proposal was impracticable, although the Election Commission supported the idea.

In February 1997, angry religious mobs attacked the churches in Khanewal and raided the village Shantinagar and its adjoining locality, the Tibba Colony. They suspected a local from these localities desecrated the *Quran* in a mosque.

In Pakistan, most Hindus and Scheduled Castes are concentrated in Sindh. They are the poorest and the most helpless among the minorities. Krishan Bheel, minority MNA from Sanghar, revealed a new kind of harassment in the National Assembly. He said two Hindu girls; 13 and 15 years old were abducted from Sanghar and kept in strict confinement for five days. Later, they were forced to accept Islam and marry Muslim boys. This incident took place on 14 August 1997; when the nation was celebrating its golden jubilee.

National Commission for Minorities Affairs and an advisory council replaced the Minorities Division in the federal Ministry of Religious Affairs to protect the religious, social and cultural rights of the minorities.

The year 1998 was unusually difficult, in terms of violation of the rights of the minorities. The single most alarming event was passage of the 15th Amendment to the constitution under the sponsorship of the Nawaz Sharif government.

On 6 May 1998, the Right Reverend Bishop John Joseph of Faisalabad put an end to his life to protest against the death sentence handed down by a court to Ayub Masih on a charge of blasphemy and to register his disapproval of the blasphemy laws.

During the year 1999, except for the Ahmedis, against whom a specific law exists, there was no legal restraint on freedom of worship. There were informal and social constraints that made non-Muslims less than equal citizens with Muslims.

Instances of discrimination, harassment and use of violence occurred frequently during 1999 without any effective legal or administrative action to discourage them. Several were prosecuted under blasphemy laws and their holy places encroached or confiscated. They remained targets of denunciation by fanatical groups. The concerned persons seeking respite or opportunity prompted conversion to Islam during the year.

Cases were filed against Ahmedis under Section 295 C. On 13 January, Dr. Nazir Ahmed of district Kasur was arrested for allegedly using derogatory language against the Holy Prophet. He is in jail to this day. On 1 June, Ijaz Ahmed, Nasir, Qamar Din and Abdul Hamid of district Sheikhpura were arrested for engraving *Quranic* verses and the *Kalima* on the gates of their residences. Ijaz and Nasir were released on bail but Qamar Din and Abdul Hamid are still in jail.

Instances of intolerance against Christians included their implication in blasphemy cases, violence against church and private lands, harassment and discrimination by the police, municipal officials and members of the majority community.

Ayub Masih remained in Multan jail throughout the year, awaiting confirmation of his death sentence and his appeal. He was detained on a charge of blasphemy in October 1996 and convicted by a Session Court in April 1998.

A case of hurting religious feeling (295A) was filed against church leader Elder Anayat Masih and other Christians in an anti-terrorist court (ATC) in Gujranwala and a prize of Rs. 800,000 was announced on the head of Anayat Masih.

In June, the Pastor House in Narowal was doused with petrol and burnt down along with its records, furniture and fixtures. The culprits remained un-apprehended.

The Hindus received double the maltreatment, as member of the minority and also for sharing the religion with the Indians. During times of tensions with India, they become even more vulnerable, as over Kargil during 1999.

On July 17, dacoits hijacked a bus with 56 passengers in the Guddu police stations jurisdiction. Eight Hindu passengers of the same family had to pay a ransom of one million rupees for their release.

On July 27, Nikal Chand age 18 years, worked as an assistant at a medical store in Umerkot was kidnapped and killed.

Two days later in Khaan city in Mirpurkhas, a boy called Gagan Minghwar was raped by factory owner Latif Ramgar and then killed.

Ranjhan Oad was held in Khaanji of NihJail, a private jail of Haveli Arisar near Chhor in Umerkot. The SDM raided the place on 28 July and he was released.

On 26 August, Pushpa, age 45 years and a widow, was robbed and murdered in her house in Naudero.

Conversions of non-Muslims to Islam were reported continually. They came from all faiths: Christianity, Hinduism and Ahmaddiyat.

Among them were: 15 Hindus (eight women, five men and two minors) of Zafarwal; a Christian couple Ashraf and Saima Masih of Lahore; a Christian family of Mandi Dhaban Singh; an Ahmadi solar scientist, Munawar Ahmad Malik of Gujar Khan with 13 family members and relatives; Christian man and wife of Bannu with seven children; Abid Masih of Samundri; Iqbal Masih of Lahore, Javed Masih of Sadiqabad and Shehbaz Masih and Nargis of Sialkot; two Christian brothers Shahbaz and Sarfaraz, of Chiniot; Kumar and wife Sharmeela of Sialkot; and Shahzad Masih and Samina Akhtar Patras of Lahore.

The 20th century came to an end but the minorities continued to be victims of deprivation and discrimination in the social, cultural and economic fields. They remained cut off from the national mainstream politics because of separate electorates. The many Articles of the constitution that guaranteed protection of their rights turned out to be just on paper.

The political parties promised assurance that if and when they came into power; they would ensure equal rights for the minorities. PPP and the PML had two opportunities each to fulfill their promises but they did not deliver. The problem with the parties remained that because of separate electorates, the votes of the minorities do not count as a deciding factor in bringing them to power. The minorities in Balochistan and the Frontier employed their strength with some success in favour of the Jamhoori Watan Party and the Awami National Party.

During 2001, the violence directed against specific communities continued, especially the Christians and Ahmadis. Their places of worship came under repeated attacks and the threat to individual Ahmedis was on the rise.

Orthodox clerics, particularly, *Tebrik-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwat* instigated violence against them. In August in Syedwala district Sheikhpura; an Ahmedi place of worship was attacked and severely damaged.

In the gravest incident during the year, 18 Christians were gunned down when 6 assailants opened fire inside the St. Dominic Church in Ballalwalpur on 28 October. 12 other worshippers were seriously injured. The dead included women and small children.

Pressure on members of all minority communities to convert to Islam continues. Members of minority communities complain of discrimination in jobs and other aspects of life.

2003 witnessed growth of intolerance and Talibanisation. The continued expansion of intolerance in society was evidenced not only by violence against non-Muslims but also members of Muslim minority sects. At least one hundred *Shias* were killed during the year in a series of attacks in mosques and on individual members of the community.

On 23 May, during an 'anti-obscenity' drive, hundreds of the MMA activists destroyed or defaced billboards depicting women or Western products in Peshawar. In June, the NWFP Provincial Assembly passed a *Shariat* Bill, and establishment of *Sharia* as the Supreme law of the province and for the setting up of three commissions to examine the economy, judiciary and the system of education, to recommend ways to "*Islamise*" them and wipe out "obscenity and vagrancy". Attacks were also conducted on cable TV operators and NGOs. However, no action was taken against the activists of religious groups.

Ahmadis continued to face violence, including beatings, verbal assault and even murder. In July, Brigadier Iftikhar Ahmad aged 65, was shot dead by three assailants at his home in Rawalpindi.

The Christians were spared the kind of militant violence inflicted on them in 2002. Isolated incidents of violence continued. In an incidence of violence in July, a Roman Catholic priest Father George Ibrahim, age 39, was shot dead at his home in Renala Khurd.

The year 2004 witnessed various incidents of violence against minorities. In August, 40 unidentified men, armed with axes and rifles attacked Hindu village, Manormal Kohli in Badin District. The assailants attacked women and children, destroyed the school, along with all that stationary and furniture. The locals reported that the motive of the attack was to seize the land and property by evacuating Hindu community, and influential locals were behind this attack.

In another incident on 19 August 2004, a Christian youth, Nasir, aged 21, died while in police custody in Shekhupura. On 16 August 2004, Nasir, a sanitary worker was handed over by complainant Abdul Majeed to police on theft charges.

Struggle against electorate issues 1999-2004

The minorities' struggle for the restoration of joint electorate since 1979 paid off during 2000-2001, and organizations accelerated their advocacy campaigns, writing appeals and mobilizing public opinion for joint electorate system. Boycotting the local bodies system finally convinced the government to abolish separate electorates on 16 January 2002.

The elected non-Muslim representatives in the local government are ignored and denied access to development funds as compared to funds available to the Muslim representatives. In Gujranwala, all the minority councilors boycotted a district council session to protest against their non-involvement in the formation of sub-committees and lack of facilities as compared to Muslim councilors in the council.⁵⁴

On 16 January 2002, the Federal Government declared that the elections would be held on joint electorate basis. The existing seats of the National Assembly were increased from 237 to 350, including 60 seats for women. Twenty-five new seats were created for the technocrats whereas ten

⁵⁴ Daily Dawn, November 29, 2001

reserved seats for the minorities were abolished. They were now eligible to contest against any general seats and cast their votes in their respective constituencies.

After Restoration of Joint Electorates, on 28 January 2002, two armed assailants gunned down Mr. Sudham Chand Chawala, President of Hindu General Panchayat and Convener of Movement for the Restoration of Joint Electorate in Jacobabad, Upper Sindh. Sudham Chand was going home from his Rice Mill office.

On 1 August 2002, the government restored reserved seats for the religious minorities both in the National and Provincial Assemblies. In National Assembly: four seats for Christians, four for Hindus, one for Sikh, Parsi and Buddhist communities and one for Ahmadis.

The persons contesting on reserved seats for religious minorities were elected through proportional representation of political parties' list of candidates, on the basis of total number of general seats won by each political party. However, the political party securing less than five percent of the total number of the general seats in the National Assembly was not to be entitled to the seat reserved for non-Muslims.

Contributions

Relief work and other services for Muslim refugees 1947-48

The minorities in Pakistan have always been proactive in their approach towards serving the society; the roots can be traced back to pre-Partition times. In that period of bloodshed and massacre, Christian priests walked shoulder to shoulder with the Muslim and Hindu in order to save their lives. The services of Christian doctors, nurses and welfare workers in the refugee camps cannot be forgotten. On Quaid-e-Azam's request, Parsis opened their educational institutions for their Muslim brothers. The Christians and Parsis helped the Muslim refugees and played a prominent role in their rehabilitation and providing medical and educational facilities

After the creation of Pakistan, the United Christian Hospital of Lahore tended the wounded coming from across the border. According to Professor Salamat Akhtar, hundreds of thousands refugees poured into Pakistan and the services rendered by Christian doctors, nurses, paramedical staff and social workers were immeasurable. Mr. S. P. Singha, Mr. C. E. Gibbon, Mr. B. L. Ralliarum and other Christian leaders made necessary arrangements in the refugee camps, Mrs. Singha, Mrs. Najmuddin and Miss Sube Khan, assisted by YWCA workers, provided aid to the inmates of the camps. Fathers of the church saved the lives of numerous Muslim refugees when they crossed over to Pakistan at the Narowal border.

In fact, in a demonstration of Christian love, members of the community rendered such indescribable humanitarian services to Muslim refugees that, for the latter, they became a reminder of the historic treatment of refugees from Makkah by the *Ansar* of Madina.

The 17 August 1947 was the first Sunday after the independence of Pakistan. The Archdeacon of the Anglican Church arranged a thanksgiving service in Karachi Cathedral. The Archdeacon wrote a special prayer for this occasion and Mr Jinnah was mentioned by name. When it came to Mr. Jinnah's attention, he requested permission to attend the service. Writing about this event, Wilfield Russel says, "Jinnah well knew that among his followers were many passionate and hard-line Muslims who would not be pleased at this attempt to placate the Christians but he purposely took this political risk." Unfortunately, the prevailing conditions were not conducive to the Quaid-e-Azam's tolerant and liberal thinking.

On 30 October 1947, a Peace Board was formed with five members, representing both the Muslims and non-Muslims and entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining peace among the various communities and also to prevail upon the Hindus not to leave the country. The members were

Professor Jethmal Parasram, Professor N. R. Malkani, Sheikh Abdul Majeed, Mukhi Govind Ram and Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan.⁵⁵

Peace Council was set up in Punjab, comprising of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians. Mr. S.P. Singha and Mr. E. Gibbon represented the Christians on the council.

Social Organizations & Political Parties 1947-2004

A number of political parties, reformist bodies, social and cultural organizations of the various minorities were set up after the establishment of Pakistan, including All Pakistan Christian League. S. P. Singha, C. E. Gibbon, and Master Fazl Ilahi were the Christian members of the Assembly from 1947 to 1951. Rallia Ram, Chaudhry Chandu Lal and Mrs S.P. Singha effectively called for the protection of political and social rights of the minorities. It was at this time; S. P. Singha founded the All Pakistan Christian League, which remained active in securing the democratic and social rights of minority communities till President Ayub's martial law.

The *Idara*, an ecumenical body sponsored by the Church of Pakistan and the Catholic Church, Diocese of Karachi was legally constituted in March 1977.

In the beginning, *Idara* was mainly concerned about the situation of Christians in the field of labour and to assist and guide them. Gradually, Christian participants brought fellow workers to the labour educational programs. They provided legal aid to victimized workers and assistance to other workers. It became the first non-conventional service of the church. For some years, many Muslims found it difficult to understand the Church for speaking up for exploited workers and marginalized people.

An important offshoot of *Idara* was the founding of the Justice & Peace Commission by the Conference of Religious Superiors. Its first chairman was a Dominican friar, Father Chris Mackway. In 1992, it was decided to set up the headquarters of the Commission in Multan. The Commission initiated numerous training programs and rendered memorable help to the sufferers of Shantinagar, apart from building public opinion about blasphemy laws' and related victimizations.

National Commission for Justice & Peace, Lahore sponsored by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Pakistan was founded in 1984. Going beyond the call of generating awareness among the socially depressed, it boldly faced the challenges confronted by the minorities at the national level. It got involved in court cases pertaining to inclusion of religion in the national identity card, sacrilege of the Christian marriage and the legal protection of persons accused of blasphemy.

Christian Study Center was established in March 1968. The center not only works towards the development of local theology but also reaches out to the broader society.

⁵⁵ Bolitho, Hector, *Founder of Pakistan*, p.292

The two main political parties in old India were the All India Muslim League, which represented the Indian Muslims, and the Indian National Congress. When India was Partitioned, the Indian National Congress bifurcated and just as the Pakistan Muslim League was the successor body to the old All India Muslim League, the Pakistan National Congress came to succeed the Indian National Congress in Pakistan. Its headquarters were in East Pakistan. It was the official opposition in the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

In Sindh, the Hindu *Panchayat* in every district maintained the momentum for securing the community's rights. During its earlier days, notable leaders of Hindu *Panchayat* included P. K. Shahani, Sobho Gianchandani, Ruchi Ram, M. Prakash, Wali Ram Vallabh, Dadi Leelan, Dr. Sono and Dr. Khatau Mal. In its limited capacity, the Bahai minority worked for the uplift of society.

The basic tenet of the Bahai faith is to find common factors in the various religions of the world in order to attain universal peace and material prosperity for everyone. The Bahai Jamia, as they call themselves, is striving all over the world for social equality and progress. The Bahai Jamia of Pakistan follows the principles of the faith to unite society for prosperity. Most of its activities pertain to social welfare work.

The Pastoral Institute of Multan provides instruction in many crafts and holds seminars on important subjects. It was started in 1971 to look after the needs and a responsibility of the Multan Diocese but extended to many other services, and has helped the diocese to bolster its missionary activities.

The Church of Pakistan was established as a result of major reorganization of different churches in the country. In November 1970, the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church and the Church of Scotland were united and became part of the World Council of Churches and the Church of Pakistan came into existence.

Cultural contributions: Literature print/electronic media, audio-visual arts, show business and sports

The non-Muslims of Pakistan have rendered invaluable services in the spheres of literature print/electronic media, audio-visual arts, show business and sports.

Before the inception of Pakistan, Christians, Parsis, Hindus, Sikhs, Bahais and Buddhists were engaged in the profession of journalism. Hindus and Parsis were active in the Punjab, Sindh and East Bengal.

The minorities made great contributions for the promotion of literature in numerous languages. Notable writers and poets emerged from the minority community in Pakistan. In the world of film, television, radio and theatre, numerous non-Muslims have made a name for themselves. The sportsmen from the minorities march shoulder to shoulder with their Muslim compatriots.

In East Pakistan in August 1947, many Hindu newspapers and journals continued to be published from Dhaka and other cities. After 1971, Pakistan was deprived of these publications and the only Hindu magazine *Prem Sagar* is published in Urdu and Sindhi from Sindh.⁵⁶

In the 1950s, an English monthly was published from Karachi called Goodwill, edited by Sarat C. V. Nariman. It was started in 1954 and devoted to politics and literature. Karachi was the venue of two popular Parsi papers, *Parsi Sansar* and *Lok Sevak*, founded by Barjarji Padshah, began publication in 1911. They are now managed by his son Mehrji and still in circulation. There are numerous newspapers, journals and magazines in Pakistan, edited and published by Christians.

The most outstanding Christian journalist, Pothan Joseph was editor of Dawn in Delhi, and at the Quaid-e-Azam's request shifted to Karachi in August 1947 and continued to work for Dawn. In the field of photojournalism, F. E. Chaudhry of The Pakistan Times is well remembered.

A Christian, Joshua Fazluddin, a MPA and Deputy Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs started the first Punjabi literary journal in the 1950s and 1960s; *Punjabi Darbar* served for many years and became very popular in the province.

Many Bahai journalists and writers are associated with national newspapers and journals. Among them were *The Bahai* of Preetam Singh, *Al-Basharat* of Mirza Mahmud Azqaani, *Bahai Magazine* of Syed Mahfuzul Haq, *Nawa-e-Aama* of Sheikh Munawaruddin, *Do Mel* of Dr Sabir Afaqi, *Bang-e-Sarosh* of Kamran Karimian, *Bahai Magazine* of Israr Husain Siddiqui, *Masaid* of Shamsheer Ali, *Masaid* of Pehlaj Kumar, *Atfal-e-Malkoot* of Fuad Akhtari, and *Naghmaat* of Riaz Shahid.

The Christians continued their interest and involvement in literature and numerous Christian writers are featured in the forefront, but due to social, political and economic conditions of Pakistan and the influence of extremist religious elements, they did not receive the acknowledgement they deserved.

Nasreen Anjum Bhatti and Nazir Qaiser are praised by all well-known poets and writers of today for their sensitivity and realism in Urdu and Punjabi languages.

Gulzar Wafa Chaudhry has made a name for himself in Urdu literature and his of personalities have received exceptional praise.

Afzaal Firdaus is counted among the finest for his *ghazals* and *nazms*. A modern approach and sensitivity of the soul are the hallmark of his poetry.

Many others have attained national recognition as poets, Victoria Patrick Amrit, Saltanat Qaiser, Aziz Jibrail, Parvez Amar, Shiraz Raj, Asghar Yaqub, Ashraf Daskavi, Yusuf Qamar, Parvez Bazmi, B.M.Hasrat, Parvez Akhtar Shad, Joseph Javed, Yunus Sabir Sarhadi, Father Siddiq Mark Sunder, Father Saleem Anjum, Father Khalid Rashid Aasi, Francis Sahar, Parvez Nadeem Ghauri, Gareth Raja Paul, Mushtaq Inaami, Mahmud Shams, David Irfan, Majid Patras Matlashi, Father Nadeem Jan Shakir, and Razia Joseph.

⁵⁶ Interview with Mr Tharwani

Noteworthy spiritual and religious poets, Dost Jullundhri, Firdaus Sialkoti, Mahbub Sialkoti, Jalaluddin Betaab, Sarf Clarkabadi and Victor Nisar.⁵⁷

The Bahai community takes deep interest in literature and demonstrates talent in Urdu, Persian and the regional languages. Worth mentioning poets are Mirza Mahmud Zarkani, Asfandyar Bakhtiar, Syed Mahfuzul Haq Ilmi, Syed Muhammad Ziai, Shuaib Salik, Hakim Taib Rizvi, Sabir Afaqi and Abdul Aziz Chisht.

The Hindus of Pakistan were active in the sphere of literature but after the Partition, only a few remain in Pakistan. Noteworthy are Korumal Chanan, Mall Kirinani, Partanan Devram, Kishan Chand Bevas, Pushpa Vallabh, Gori Vallabh. Chander Kesvani, Ram Chand Gad, Sindhu Mirani, Vadi Ramvalabh and Keshav Mohan.⁵⁸ Worth mentioning is Sobho Gianchandani. Vali Ram Vallabh made a name in translating foreign literature in Sindhi.

Parsi poets, Dr. Pashtaan, S.G. Dubash and Mrs. Mehr Pathiwala are widely read in the community, the work of Ardeshir F. Khabardar can be compared to any other famous Gujerati poet. Others recognized poets of Gujerati are Behram G. M. Malabari, Feroz R. Mehta, R. P. Mahni, K. N. Kabraji and P. J. Marzban.⁵⁹

Bapsy Sidhwa acquired an international distinction for her English novels and teaches literature in an American university.

Writers from the minorities in Pakistan are well known in poetry. Some prose writers are worth mentioning. Joshua Fazluddin was a giant among Punjabi fiction writers. Popular prose writers, Umar Hayat, Hamid Henry, Harish Massey, Asif Imran, Mahbub Sada, Gulzar Chauhan, Manzoor Rahi, Rev. Mehr Din, Philip D.Khanna, Jacob Paul, Father Aftab James Paul, Emanuel Nino, Hamid Henry, Father Salim Anjum, Father Rehmat Raja, Father Rashid Peter Francis, Charles Gill Musafir, Rita Farah Deeba, Father Everest Pinto and Father Samson Dilawar, should be noted.

Christians are featured as newspaper columnists, writing for the national dailies on various political and social topics include Emanuel Zafar, Ain Meem Badar Sarhadi, Ejaz Farhat, M. Gulzar Gul Maryakheli, Rufus Imran, Peter Jacob Dildar, Inayat Arshad, Asghar Yaqub, Albert U.Mall, Yunus Aashar, Irshad Shahid and Victor Daniel.

The Bahai community has some good prose writers. Those who have attained recognition in the community and in the literary world are Prof. Pritam Singh, Syed Mahfuzul Haq Ilmi, Dr. Sabir Afaqi, Syed Waris Hamdani, Shamsher Ali, Riaz Shirazi, Allama Abu Abbas Rizvi, Syed Irtiza Husain Abidi, Ch. Abdur Rahman, Mukhlis Vajdani, Tahira Afaqi, and Asrar Husain Siddiqi.

The literary efforts of Hindu writers of Pakistan in the field of prose are limited to a few names, though before the secession of East Pakistan, there were many well-known Bengali writers. The

⁵⁷ Father Francis Nadeem, *Yeh Des Hamara Hai*, Lahore, 1997

⁵⁸ Interview with Vali Ram Vallabh, Sindh

⁵⁹ F.K.Dadachanji, *Parsis, Ancient & Modern*, Karachi, 1997

Hindus of Sindh who attained distinction in this domain are Vali Ram Vallabh, Rai Chand Rathor, Raja Mohan, Munshi Chander Ram, Parvanand and Korumal Gherani, Sadhu Hiranand, Paromal Vasvani, Jagat Advani, Bihari Lal, Jai Raasi, Daulat Ram, Prof Ghanshyam Das and Narayan Das.⁶⁰

The contributions of the Sikhs and Buddhists have been insignificant. The Parsi writers excel in prose writings. Worth mentioning are Dasturji Mehrji Rana, Shamsul Ulema Dastur Peshton E.Sanjaan, Dr. Jamsetji, Shamsul Ulema Dastur Peshton Subhan, Khurshedji Rustamji Kama, Jiwanji Jamshedji Mody, Dr. Manekji Nusserwanji, Dhalla Edward Godreji, Dada F. K. Chanji, H. B. M. Homji, Bapsy Sidhwa, Khojasti Mistry, Dasturji F.M.Katwal, A. D. Gorwala, Nargis Dalai, Feroz Dastur and B. K. Karanjia.

The minorities of Pakistan have done outstanding work in the domain of painting and sculpture. One of the pioneers of commercial art in Pakistan was J. Michael of Lahore. The late Anna Molka Ahmed, a European married to a Pakistani artist, was a fine artist and taught painting in the Punjab University, where she set up the Fine Arts Department. Joseph Scott received advanced training in fine arts in Malaysia. Shazia Ishaq and Irfan Sadiq are budding painters. Beryl Beatsman was honoured with a national award for painting.

In the world of show business, numerous non-Muslims have made a name for themselves. While they encountered no communal prejudice in the pursuit of their artistic professions, they did not get as many opportunities as they perhaps deserved. Their contributions have been remarkable.

In the early decades of Pakistan, Saleem Raza was one of the famous names in music. S.B. John won millions of hearts with just one song for the film *Savera*. Irene Parveen was a famous playback singer for Pakistani movies. Arthur Nayyar is still counted amongst the most popular singers of light music, both in films and on radio and television. Nowadays, Yunus Khayyam, George Khayyam, Jackson Gill, Kashif Jackson, Manzoor Benjamin Gill and Babra Massey are the leading singers among the Christians.

In the world of Pakistani cinema, Neelo and Shabnam reached the heights unmatched by any other actress. Shabnam, who became known as the Silver Jubilee Heroine, ruled the cinema industry as the most sought after leading lady for nearly 25 years.

Among music-makers the name of Robin Ghosh will never be forgotten. George DeSouza, Moti Silvera, Mama Meneil, Nazir Martin and Peter Meneil whose public recitals were looked forward to by the citizens of Karachi. Amy Minwala, Ghanshyam, Nilima and Tara made their mark in the field of classical dance.

Christian artists have participated in television dramas on PTV. Notable among them are Anita Camphor, Nosheen Zahoor, Meena Daud, Poonam, Farzana Gul, Nasreen Augustin, Anthony Barkat, Alexander, Winston Das, Joseph David, Ambrose Gul and Dr Sunny.

⁶⁰ Interviews with Vali Ram Vallabh & Khalau Jani of Tharparkar

Hindus of Sindh complained that PTV broadcasts no special programs on their religious festivals nor have they been given an opportunity to work in television.

Sportsmen from the minorities have marched shoulder to shoulder with their Muslim compatriots. In fact in some fields, players from the minorities take the lead. Unfortunately, their services were not accorded due recognition because of prejudice and communal considerations. In the 1992 Olympic Games A. R. Gardiner was the goalkeeper in the national hockey team and gave a great performance in the final match with India.

Cricket has attained unprecedented popularity in Pakistan. In the history of national cricket team of Pakistan, Wallis Mathias, Duncan Sharp, Antao DeSouza and Sohail Fazal made remarkable contribution. The most brilliant Christian cricketer in Pakistan is Yusuf Youhanna, he is featured in all international matches and tournaments and has proved to be one of the mainstays of the national team.

Civil and defense services

In the early years of Pakistan, the minorities contributed notably to strengthen the defense of the country. The minorities, particularly the Christians, rose to the occasion,⁶¹ and when Pakistan was faced with war in 1965 and 1971, they excelled themselves in service to the homeland received many military awards for courage and bravery.⁶²

The Quaid-e-Azam appointed General Sir Frank Messervy, a British officer as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army. General Sir Douglas Gracey followed him during 1948-50. It is significant that many British officers in the Indian army preferred to opt for service in Pakistan at the time of the Partition as well as twelve British officers of the Air Force. The first Commander-in-Chief of the air force in Pakistan was also a British, Air Vice Marshal Perry Keane. He held that post till February 1949.

Later in the 1965 war, Christian Air Force officers made history by their achievements. Wing Commander Nazir flew many sorties and caused great damage to Indian installations. Twice he was nearly blown out of the skies but managed to bring back his aircraft and men safely home. He was decorated with the *Sitara-e-Juraat* for his performance.

On 6 September, Flight Lieutenant Cecil Chaudhry was a member of the formation of three F-86 fighters, led by Squadron Leader Sarfraz Rafiqi targeted the air base at Halwara. Cecil performed brilliantly on 6 and 15 September. He was awarded the *Sitara-e-Juraat* and the *Sitara-e-Basalat*.

Pakistan lost the 1971 war in East Pakistan but the Christian officers and men gave a good fight to the Indians. Major Shams Gordon, Wing Commander Anthony Chaudhry, Squadron Leader Akmal C. Khan Wing Commnader Mervyn Middlecote, Squadron Leader Peter Christie, Air Vice Marshal M. J. O'Brien, Group Captain Eric Hall and Group Captain James Loque were outstanding.

⁶¹ Interview with Johnson Michael, MPA, Punjab

⁶² Interview with Rana Qaiser Iqbal, Advocate, President, Amnesty International Pakistan

The minorities were not afforded the opportunity that they deserved for participation in the civil services because of poverty and lacking educational qualifications. Prevailing prejudices did not allow them to go beyond menial ranks of peons and sanitary workers. Despite this constricting handicap, many individuals, through sheer hard work and determination managed to reach high positions and rendered notable service to the country. The movement in the communities during the past three decades for asserting their identity has boosted self-confidence and encouragement and with the passage of time, more and more persons from the minorities are visible in government departments in respectable positions.⁶³

Non-Muslims attained high positions. In Lahore, H. L. Phailbus was Additional District Magistrate. Equally prominent magistrates were A. P. Gill and Julian Fazal Ilahi. Additional Deputy Commissioner Akhtar Joseph and Revenue Officer and Registrar C.J. Parvez.

In Pakistan Foreign Service, Samuel Burke and Samuel Joshua were ambassadors in important Western countries and Colonel Sushil Tressler was Chief of Protocol in the Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto regimes.⁶⁴

Among the Parsis, S.R. Poonigar of Quetta was in the CSP and retired as federal secretary. Jamshed Marker, also from Quetta, earned great respect as an international diplomat in the United Nations and served as Pakistan's ambassador in France and the USA.⁶⁵

The Hindus have an insignificant representation in the civil services. There are many Hindus in various departments of the Sindh Government, but only Ramesh Udesi reached the high position of secretary to government.

Social contributions: health, education, judiciary and labour

The manner, in which the minorities provided facilities of treatment and medical care to the people of Pakistan, without religious affiliation, has been most commendable. Their role providing health and medical facilities in the rural areas and remote regions, pre and post Partition has been particularly outstanding. Christian missions and Church organizations played a key role.

Parsis, Bahais and Hindus contributions have been no less remarkable. Even today, the hospitals managed by the minorities are best equipped in the country. Many of them have received national awards.

United Christian Hospital introduced heart surgery in Pakistan. In 1965, Dr. Bomes performed the first open heart operation and the first successful heart valves replacement surgery took place in 1969 in UCH.

⁶³ Interview with Rana Qaiser Iqbal, Advocate, President, Amnesty International Pakistan

⁶⁴ Father Francis Nadeem, *Yeh Des Hamara Hai*, Lahore, 1997

⁶⁵ Dadachanji, F .K., *Parsis --Ancient & Modern and their Religion*, Karachi, 1997

The Memorial Christian Hospital in Sialkot is 115 years old. It serves the general public within the city. Its Community Health Program reaches out to the surrounding villages, giving the rural population much needed medical relief.

The Holy Family Hospital in Rawalpindi was founded in 1900. A hospital in the Frontier has acquired legendary reputation over the years is in Bannu. Dr Pennel, whose medical knowledge, spirit of service and bravery were famous all over the province, set it up. Dr. Atliff was awarded the Sitara-e-Pakistan by the government, carried on the tradition.

When Pakistan was established, patients of leprosy in Karachi were confined to a particular locality because leprosy was considered a deadly infectious disease. Sisters from the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, on the inspired direction of the Bishop of Karachi started looking after them. A dispensary was set in the area. In 1960, Dr. Ruth Pfau of Germany and Dr I. K. Gill took up the difficult and sensitive work of caring for the lepers and treating them with modern medicines. For their valuable and unmatched services, Pakistan and Germany have presented state awards to Dr. Pfau and Dr. Gill. Pakistan government made Dr. Pfau an honorary citizen of this country.

The Parsis contributed in the medical and health care facilities. The Anklesaria Hospital in Karachi is an outstanding example of their great contribution. Dr. Rustam Jal Valak was a specialist in heart diseases. He was the first person to introduce the plant Rolfia to medical science and encourage its use controlling of blood pressure. Also famous in the field of cardiology is Dr R. B. Khambatta of Karachi, who was medical adviser to many high profile personalities of Pakistan. Dr. Noshehr H. Anita has acquired fame in the comparatively new and sensitive discipline of plastic surgery.

Hindu community of Pakistan is active in medical and health care services. Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and Gulab Devi Hospital continue as standing monuments to their generosity, philanthropy and keenness to help suffering humanity. These hospitals were taken over by the Health Department. There are small institutions in Sindh, including the Balram Charity Hospital in Kotri, which provide valuable service to all and sundry without distinction of faith. A. M. Tharvani is chairman of its board of management. In addition, there are numerous dispensaries run by the Hindu community in various parts of the province.⁶⁶

The Bahais population in Pakistan is not significant, though they are economically strong. Prominent among the Bahai medical experts are Colonel Mazhar Ali Shah, Colonel Jamshed Ali Shah, Dr. Khwaja Muhammad Yusuf and Dr. M. A. Latif. Practicing doctors are Tariq Sharif, Javed Yusuf, Fareedon Nirvanparast, Feroz Nirvanparast, Farzad Nek Akhtar and Seema Akhtar. Social Welfare Organizations of the Bahais arrange free medical camps. The prosperous in the community are known for their donations to hospitals and social welfare organizations.⁶⁷

Through out the Subcontinent, the Church, Christian missionaries and social service organizations of the Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis did tremendous work in the education department and their

⁶⁶ Interview with Mr Tharvani, Karachi

⁶⁷ Sabir Maqi, *Najum-e-Hidayat*, Bahai Publishing Trust, Karachi, 1987, and interview with Dr. Seema Akhtar

contribution are unforgettable. In Bengal in particular, Hindu intellectuals and social and religious reformers opened schools and colleges, and it was because of their influence that the people of the province became more educated and enlightened than those of other areas of India.

Most of the leaders of the Pakistan movement were educated in Christian schools and colleges. The Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal were both products of such institutions. Christian teachers helped to mould their personalities. Among the later leadership of the country, Z.A.Bhutto, Ziaul Haq, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif and General Pervez Musharraf were all educated in missionary institutions. Even today, the civil and military bureaucracy and the privileged classes prefer to send their children to Christian schools.

The Christian educational institutions in Pakistan are flourishing. The Church was very active and sponsored numerous schools and colleges, which are all doing extremely well. For instance, under the Karachi Diocese of the Catholic Church, popular institutions like Jesus & Mary Convent High School, Fatima High School, St. Francis Xavier High School, St. Joseph Convent High School, St. Lawrence High School for Boys, St. Lawrence High School for Girls, St. Mary High School, St. Michael Convent High School, St. Patrick Boys' High School, St. Patrick Girls' High School, St. Paul Boys' High School, St. Paul Urdu High School, St. Thomas Girls' High School are not only popular among all communities but are providing quality education.

Parsi community has devoted time and energies to quality education in Pakistan. The Bahais are numerically the smallest community among the minorities of Pakistan but they have done much for education. Prof. Abdul Aziz Farooqi and Prof. Pritam Singh are two famous educationists and served with distinction in many colleges and universities.

Lawmakers, judges and lawyers from the minority communities worked hard for the prestige and honour of the judicial system. The history-making decisions of Justice A. R. Cornelius and Justice Dorab Patel, two judges of the highest integrity, have added brilliance to the reputation of the judiciary in Pakistan.

After 1950, a new generation of Christian lawyers came forward. Among those who led in advocacy and practice were M. M. Shams, A. A. Joseph, J. V. Gardner, Emanuel Zafar, Naeem Shakir, Angela Mark, Agnes Tabassum, Ch. Veeruddin, Rana Ayub Masih, Rana Lateef Anwar, Ilyas Munim and Qayyum Bhatti. The last-mentioned is also well known as the author of *Colony Manual*, a book on status of Colonization in the Punjab.

Here are some other names of professional lawyers from Lahore, Karachi, Gujranwala, Sheikhpura, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Sahiwal, Sialkot and Vehari: Ejaz Emanuel, Jamshed Rehmatullah, T. S. Gill, Barkat Ali, Qamar Shams, Azra Shujaat, Nathaniel Gill, Akbar Durrani, Sadiq Masih Sohotra, Tariq Javed Tariq, Jacob Daniel, Ejaz Farhat, Karen Khan, Sheeza Zafar, Sikandar Hayat, Mrs Randhawa, Edwin Dean, Indrias Barkat, Clement John, M. L. Shahani, Asif Hayat, Ishaq Masih, J. C. John Malik, Isaac Jacob, Malik Mushtaq Hayat, S. Joseph, Irfan Bhatti, Chaudhry Chandu Lal, I. Qaiser, Haroon Fateh Jang, Ishaq Masih, Ch. Saleem Akhtar, Peter John Sohotra, Chaudhry Joseph, Ilyas Javed, Eric Sindhu, E. Thakurdas, R. M. Andrews, Saleem Nelson, Philip William, Colonel J.

Abel, Gabriel I. Khan, Abdul Qayyum Bhatti, P. R. Nasir, Samuel Azim, Suleman Akhtar Khokhar, Yunus Lal Din, Mr. Sohotra of Narowal and Albert U. Mall.

In contemporary times, Emanuel Zafar is perhaps the most popular and effective Christian lawyer and community leader. He aroused Christian public opinion about matters of national significance and founded a progressive and forward-looking Christian organization.

The Bahai community has worked in the field of law and justice. Maulvi Abdullah, Asanand Joshi, Iqbal Hashmi, Syed Waris Hamdani, Abdur Rashid Arain and Khurshid Roohani are well known as lawyers in Karachi. Roohullah Chagla is a magistrate.

Numerous Hindus of Pakistan worked in the law and justice department and rendered useful service in the domain of social justice. After Partition and the resultant mass migration, Hindus in sizable number settled in Sindh. Dewan Chand, Advocate, is a well-known legal personality of Mirpur Khas. P.K. Shahani and Narayan Shahani are prominent citizens and have made their mark in politics and law. A Communist leader from Hindu community, Sobho Gian Chandani is a prominent leader of Larkana. It may be mentioned that before the creation of Bangladesh, a large numbers of Hindus of East Pakistan were judges, magistrates and lawyers.

The Parsis were in the front line in the fields of law and justice before the Partition and though the community is not large, it is still active. Justice Dorab Patel was Founder-Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, which is sufficient to give him a place of honour in the history of Pakistan.

In agriculture, Hindus have made notable contribution. Many well-to-do Caste Hindus in the rural Sindh, decided to stay in Pakistan after the Partition, and are still involved in agriculture. These include Sodhas, Rana Chander Singh, Shahanis, Dewan Chand, and Lal Menghrio. In the localities of Amarkot, Larkana, Mirpur Khas, Nawabshah, Khairpur, Sukkur, Thar, Naukot, Hyderabad and Sanghar, several Hindu *zamindars* are owners of huge *jagirs*. In Punjab, Sahni family is active in agriculture in Sargodha.

Only a few Sikhs families chose to remain in Pakistan. Parsis and Bahais are almost entirely engaged in commerce, while in the Sindh villages, except for some Bheels, Menghwars and Kolis who cultivate small holdings of their own, all other members of these communities work as agricultural labour.⁶⁸

It is significant that many Christian organizations are subsisting on donor funding, work towards improving agriculture and working conditions. For the last ten years, the Human Development Center, under the leadership of Fr. Bonnie Mendes, procured land for landless peasants in the outlying areas of Toba Tek Singh, Jhang and Pirmahal and provided technical advice and monetary

⁶⁸ Interview with local Hindu leader Khatau Jani

aid. Thus, numerous Christian bodies supplemented the development efforts of the government in the domain of agriculture.⁶⁹

Civil society: Struggle for good governance and human rights

The largest minority in India claimed its rights aggressively in the united subcontinent, forgot its slogans for minority rights when it became the majority in Pakistan. From 1947 to present times, each new day in the history of Pakistan dawned with trials and tribulations for the minorities. Their lives marked by prejudices, religious hatred, instances of rape, police brutality and false accusations of blasphemy. The constitution, Parliament, the administration, feudalism and extremist attitude of religious elements joined in an unholy alliance to transform members of the minorities into second class citizens.

The Christian and Hindu minorities have always been victims of human rights violations in Pakistan. In 1952, Christians were burnt alive in village Matta. In 1962, the Bible Society premises in Lahore's Anarkali were set on fire and the secretary, Hector Gauhar Masih, shot. During the 1965 war, members of the minority communities engaged in the defense of the country were accused of spying and treason. After the war, employment in the military services was denied. The achievements of Christian military officers in the war were played down.

When the Arab-Israel war broke out in 1967, frenzied extremists in Pakistan vented their anger by attacking Christian religious institutions, ignorant of the fact that Israel is not a Christian country.

In 1972, the state nationalized hundreds of Christian schools and colleges that served the Muslim population for five to eight decades. When the Christians launched a movement against taking over their educational institutions, it was put down with undue force. Police opened fire on Christian women's protest demonstration in Rawalpindi, two persons were killed and scores wounded.

In 1979, miscreants set fire to two churches in Multan.

In 1981, Christians were forcibly evicted from the North Hall hostel Forman Christian College, Lahore.

In 1982, Christian village, Isa Nagri was attacked.

In 1986, churches in Rahimyarkhan, Islamabad and Lahore were vandalized. The vicious attack on the prosperous Christian village Shantinagar in Khanewal district has been described in detail in the previous pages.

The new laws based on the majority's faith and promulgated in the nineties, proved to be a constant threat to the lives, honour and property of the minorities.

Hindus in Sindh were subjected to similar maltreatment. The worst atrocities came from local landlords and *waderas*, exploiting the very poor among them, carrying away their women and forcibly converting and marrying their young girls. A few months after August 1947, many Hindus and Sikhs were killed by communal mobs of extremists in Karachi and other cities of the province. They were also attacked in 1965, 1971 and 1988 and their places of worship destroyed.

⁶⁹ Interview with Parveen Inayat, Christian social worker, Toba Tek Singh

During Ziaul Haq government, fundamental human rights and religious tolerance was hijacked by religious chauvinism and the situation continued to become worse. In reaction, the Christian Church and Christian social bodies became active. Prominent among these were the Justice & Peace Commission of the Catholic Church, the *Maktaba-e-Anaveem* of Father Emanuel Aasi and the *Idara-e-Amm-o-Insaaf* Karachi, co-founded by Robert Mendonca, Clement John, Samuel Xavier, Father Arnold Heredia and Hamid Henry. Clement John later became Secretary International Affairs, Secretary Christian Conference of Asia and Executive Secretary International Affairs, World Council of Churches, Geneva.

The small Hindu community of Pakistan worked against religious discrimination and atrocities. The name of Ruchi Ram of Mirpur Khas heads the list of dedicated workers. Others who have devoted time and attention to the problem are Sobho Gianchandani, P. K. Shahani, Dadi Leelan Vani, Ram Singh Sodha, Od Kathaujani, Seth Kewal Ram, Od Neel Kanth, Dr. Gulab Rai Oad Hukmun Mall Bheel, Sajan Das Chandani, Krishan Sharma, Madan Sahafi, Shram Mashhood, Sudham Ahuja, Advocate Suresh Rajani, Jagan Das Sharma, Dharam Das, Advocate Dewan Chand, Mazoop Okho, Thanvar Das, Bhagwan Das, K. M. Rano Bheel, D. M. Parmar and Mangal Preetam.

The Parsis and Bahais of Pakistan are fortunate not to have to face the fate of the Christians and Hindus. MNAs, Behram Avari and Minoo Bhandara boldly expanded human rights in the country, same as the prominent ship-owner, Ardeshir Cowasjee, through his probing column in the English daily Dawn.

Pakistan has entered 21st century but unfortunately it has not a build a civil society to commensurate with its ideals. Lack of national priorities, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, social injustices and anti-people policies of regimes, which are subservient to feudalism, capitalism and religious chauvinism, has brought the country to this sorry pass.

Political leaders, bolstered by the civil and military bureaucracy and motivated by greed of pelf and power, have shamelessly exploited Islam and Islamic justice to allow the society to become an undemocratic and corrupt entity.

Twenty big families benefited from policies initiated by Ayub. In the Bhutto era, culture, traditions, tolerance and secular identity was crushed in the name of Islamic constitution. Chauvinistic power of various groups was acknowledged and helped to create an atmosphere conducive to growth of sectarianism and minority elimination. The political culture that developed was based purely on self-interest and resulted in dictatorship. The *Islamisation* initiated in the Bhutto era reached its peak in Ziaul Haq's martial law. The people were deprived of their rights and civil liberties. Two thousand families instead of twenty in the time of Ayub now shared the wealth generated by development. The society was rendered apolitical, selfish and corrupt.

The generation that grew up in the years of martial law was devoid of the feeling for its rights; it never knew them. Life, both within the government and outside, became infested with criminal irregularities, extreme self-interest ruled, and people with clout did what they liked.

In the current regime, continued expansion of intolerance in society has been evidenced not only by violence against non-Muslims but also Muslim minority sects.

US war against Iraq and Afghanistan and ongoing operation of Pakistan Army in the tribal belt has infuriated religious clerics.

At the same time, a number of pointers suggest that the overall status of minorities is changing for better. The initiative of government to abolish separate electorates on 16 January 2002 is a step in positive direction. This was appropriately demonstrated when a minority member contested against the future Prime Minister. The government is also undergoing a process to reform blasphemy and other discriminatory laws.