
**PANORAMA OF
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Re-Visiting History : Unearthing the Gendered Violence of Partition

Kauser Tasneem*

Twentieth century witnessed unimaginable bloodshed and violence. The legacy of the two great partition still now haunts people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The partition of the Indian sub-continent resulted in the death of a million people and migration of around ten million people. Millions of people were affected by the displacement but it was women who suffered the most. The trauma of displacement was compounded by the extreme forms of violence against women. Riots and bloodshed was seen on both sides of the border but gender was a crucial element of the violence and women were recipients of this savagery. National history cannot be an artificial construct given to people as a directive from above. It has to become local and local history must be made national. (Bhagavan, 38) The Ghosts of Partition have not been laid to rest. They raise their heads and come to haunt us again and again. The anti-Sikh riots of 1984 which resulted in the death of 3000 Sikhs witnessed the same kind of savagery. Hundreds of Muslims were killed in Bhagalpur riots of 1989 and the Gujrat riots echoed the same. Gujrat riots raised a series of pressing questions : Was the ethnic cleansing we witnessed a product of extremist agenda, or was there a more natural, a more fundamental connection between nationalism and violence? (Bhagavan, 2)

All conflicts are gendered. And they affect men and women differently. Women become the worst victims of communal violence, inter-state wars, civil wars or sectarian violence. In the Indian Partition which is considered as the largest human migration till date, women suffered both as victims and survivors. Pandey argues that for survivors 'Partition is the violence' (Pandey, 189).