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## From 'Fictional' Ink To 'Refugee's' Echo: Framing Perspectives Of The Partition

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**Abstract:** This research paper presents different perspectives on migrants' experiences of the Partition and its impact on those who migrated from Pakistan during the 1947 Partition. The study compares fictional representations of these experiences with the lived experiences of former migrants as recorded in their oral narratives. It provides an account of the challenges they faced and reflects on how these refugees created space for themselves in India, transforming it into a home and a place to earn their livelihood. A key feature of this research is the juxtaposition of the literary portrayal of Partition in Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* with the real-life experiences of refugees who migrated from Pakistan to India during Partition.

**Index Terms** - Partition of India, Migration, Displacement, Refugee, Politics and Religion, Communal violence, *Azadi*

### I. INTRODUCTION

15 August 1947 is celebrated by many as the day India gained independence, whereas for many former migrants, it remains a day of sorrow, as it reminds them of suffering, violence, killings and sacrifice. The word "Partition" evokes memories of trains filled with dead bodies and of people shouting, crying, and running in desperation to save themselves. These memories remain indelible in the minds of former migrants.

The Constitution of India may have granted them citizenship, but they continue to live with the identity of people whose roots lie in villages or cities that are now in Pakistan. Therefore, this research project is an attempt to present their experiences and feelings.

Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is a portrayal of Partition, instigated by political forces in the state of Punjab. The novel is divided into three parts: "Lull," "Storm" and "Aftermath." The novel presents the collective experiences of people who travelled from Pakistan to India as refugees. The first part "Lull" introduces the pre-Partition phase with communal faith and friendship among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The second part shows the migration of people to and from Pakistan and India. "Aftermath" introspects on the failure of the government to accommodate these refugee families, followed by the struggles faced by characters to create their own space in new India. The text explores the impact of Partition across several dimensions such as economic disruption, migration, and family disintegration, loss of shelter, survival as a basic function, religion, communal violence, identity crisis, trauma, suffering, psychological and emotional impact through different characters and by using sensory imagery.

The novel opens with a depiction of chaos and political instability. "If Pakistan is created, we'll have to leave. That is, if Muslims spare our lives! ...There has been much killing going on for the past few months. Imagine what will happen once they're in power" (Nahal 41). The text has Sialkot district, now in Pakistan, as its backdrop. As Sialkot was a district with Muslim majority, the text demonstrates

that the political decision of the creation of Pakistan resulted in the forced migration of Hindus from Sialkot to India. Lala Kanshi Ram argued that he will not leave, would become a Muslim to stay at his home, if need be. Therefore, it presents an aspect of forced migration where Lala Kanshi Ram and other tenants do not want to lose their home. But the Viceroy's announcement of Partition made them leave their Mohalla. The text opens with the Viceroy's announcement on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1947. Everyone was listening to the radio announcement where the final decision was about to be made. As the Viceroy's speech was in English language, only Arun was able to comprehend it, defining it with single word- 'Partition'. The act of everyone drawing their family members together hinted at a feeling of protectiveness against the upcoming danger from Muslim community. As they lived in Sialkot which may be included in the state of Pakistan, a new state with Muslim majority. Therefore, Partition created Hindus as minority and force them to leave their homes.

The text demarcates upcoming forms of violence with a procession being carried out as a marker of rule by Muslims. "There was huge cry of 'Allah-o-Akhbar'- a cry travelled the length of the procession, each group picking up the shout" (Nahal 74). The text demonstrates how the announcement of division paved way for celebration for one community and a threat to another community that was forced to install gates to protect their Mohallas. Muslims promised to carry out procession through Hindu streets without any damage or harm to them. But ended up breaking down the windows of houses in Fort Street Mohalla. The Partition meant celebration for the Muslims but threat to the Hindus in Sialkot. Hindu families refused to let them enter in Hindu Mohallas as they might set fire to their homes or loot their property. This moment displays emotional turmoil and the dangers faced by the minorities, who struggled and were worried about their future. The characters remember these images throughout their lives.

"The two words 'refugee camp' were to become a household name all over India in the next few months. It means a camp for people seeking shelter" (Nahal 129). However, Lala Kanshi Ram's response to Arun's argument - "I was born around here, this is my home- how can I be a refugee in my own home?" (Nahal 130). Here begins a search for identity to these people. There was constant hope built by the author in his narrative for the refugees who expected to come back at their native places. He affirms, "Why go to the refugee camp, when in a few weeks' time they will have to return to their homes?" (Nahal 135) Lala Kanshi Ram left his mohalla with the expectation of coming back but his arrival at the camp site made him realise the real situation and proved his hope as a delusion.

The author describes the camp site where people are seeking refuge. Nahal describes the camp site with water flowing through muddy lanes. People sweeping water out of the tents, making small dams outside to prevent water from coming into the tents. "Air thick with the smell of sweat, urine, and excrement," and the ground "muddy and littered with garbage" (Nahal 166). There is a constant threat of violence, and people are often robbed, beaten, and even killed. Only four tents were given for accommodation to the families from Fort Street. Nahal presents sensory images to show the plight of people in refugee camps. They used to wake up at six in the morning in order to use community bathrooms and collect dry rations of wheat and rice from the store. They used to pass their time by visiting fellow refugees in other camps, this marks a sense of unity and harmony among these people who stayed resilient during this painful process and a number of children were born daily. "Death was considered as a blessing rather than tragedy" (Nahal 243). People living in the refugee camps believed that the land which gave them birth should receive them back as well. There was no news from and to the either side of the borders if their relatives have reached the other side safely or not. Wazirabad, Lahore, Amritsar had become sites of refugee camps, with a vast sea of humanity, a heaving mass of people, all trying to survive. This temporary shelter marks the beginning of loss, discomfort and mental suffering that awaited these people.

The text also presents how people were forced to transform their cultural identity in order to save themselves and cross the borders safely. Thus, religious identity becomes a source of violence, suffering and identity crisis. For Sikhs, it has been described as a period of intense suffering and persecution. Sikhs could escape from Pakistan only by shaving their hair, an act prohibited by their faith. The ordeal for Sikhs has been described in the text through Sardar Jodha Singh's family. Sardar Jodha Singh wanted his children to reach safely across border. He forced Niranjana Singh, his son to accept the idea to shave off their beard and convert to Islam, as survival was of utmost significance. When they were stationed at the refugee camp in Sialkot, Niranjana Singh was asked by everyone to

shave off his beard to avoid recognition in order to save trouble for his wife Isher Kaur, who was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. But to him, his hair and beard "was a kind of badge of courage" (Nahal 262). He couldn't bear to lose it. Niranjn argued that our "Dharma says: lose your head, if need be Don't lose your faith!" unable to deal with this problem, he set himself on fire and cried aloud that "I belong to Waheguru. lose my life, but I won't leave my Sikh Dharma"(Nahal 262). Thus, Niranjn Singh chooses the path of self-immolation rather than being called as infidel.<sup>1</sup> However, on the other hand, Nahal presents the character of Ghulam Muhammad, the husband of Amarvati, who had decided to stay back at Sialkot. He converted himself to Islam in order to take over his property. Therefore, Niranjn Singh's choice to prioritise his religious sentiments and Ghulam Muhammad's choice to uphold his economic interest over religion shows varied perspective. Some considered their religious identity to be their priority; whereas some felt that their economic identity was their foremost objective during Partition.

The text's narrative structure captures the grief, displacement, and sense of dislocation experienced by refugees through the characters of Arun, Chandani, Isher Kaur, Lala Kanshi Ram, and Niranjn Singh. From Isher Kaur's character, the author highlights a pragmatic view of familial loss. She lost her husband and was left with unborn child at the camp. Isher Kaur who gave birth to her child in the train demonstrates the real struggle for pregnant women who travelled during Partition. It shows how women's religious identity, combined with their gender, led to their double marginalization because women struggled much more physically, mentally and emotionally.

Chandani was Padmini's daughter who was a tenant of Bibi Amar Vati. She was kidnapped by Muslim men as their convoy proceeded from Narowal district towards Amritsar. It was reported that many people were killed, kidnapped, and dragged away by 'enemies.' The term enemies defined inter communal distrust. Hindus believed that Muslims are their enemy; similarly, Muslims believed Hindu to be their foes. Arun believed that these women couldn't be disowned, as they were not at fault. It is a reminder of how many women were disowned by their families who didn't make any effort to recover them. They were considered as impure, their sex made them prone to suspicion. In the same way, Padmini rejected her daughter by saying that she didn't have any daughter. As her daughter was kidnapped by some men, on their way to India. Thereby, denying relationship with her daughter, she wanted to reject and escape the harsh reality of her daughter being sexually harassed.

Arun describes how Partition frames relationships among adolescents through his relationship with Nur. Arun being a Hindu boy and Nur, a Muslim girl, find their relationship at risk due to different religions. However, the Partition traces their relationship as a dream in the past. It fades away with time. As soon as the news of Partition erupted, Nur encounters Arun and suggests that he should convert to Islam. He angrily suggests that she can also do the same. She rejects the idea and provides the defence that as a girl she cannot force her will on the family but as a man he can. However, Arun chooses to go with his family, leaving behind his relationship with Nur. Later, he gets infatuated with Chandani. Therefore, Arun's life is presented through his fractured relationships with Nur and Chandani. Chandani belongs to the same Punjabi community, but the Partition disrupted their relationship and snatches away his dreams of a future life married to Chandani.

Nahal has portrayed element of refugee migration in *Azadi* through the use of realism and emotional upheaval. The novel foregrounds forced migration as a central element through material losses, fragmentation of families, death, psychological and emotional turmoil uncovering the changed form of relationships.

The text describes how Partition became instrumental in changing relationships; how friends suddenly became foes and how acrimony between the Hindus and the Muslims gained ground.<sup>2</sup> Before the Partition, Sialkot was presented as a picture of peace, amity and co-operation among the Muslims,

<sup>1</sup> Kumar, Bimal. "The Pathological Problems of Communal Discord in Azadi." *Cross Currents: An International Peer-Reviewed Journal on Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol.1,2015.  
[https://saspublishers.com/media/articles/CCIJHSS\\_11\\_7-10.pdf](https://saspublishers.com/media/articles/CCIJHSS_11_7-10.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Sharma, Diksha. "The Partition and Chaman Nahal's Azadi." *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*. 8 October 2021. <https://www.the-criterion.com/the-Partition-and-chaman-nahals-azadi/>

Hindus and Sikhs. Nahal mentions that on Dussehra, a Hindu festival, effigies were made by Muslim workmen, the crackers and fireworks were also supplied by Muslims (93).<sup>3</sup>

Before the Partition, Lala Kanshi Ram and Abdul Ghani met each other "always with smiles, on both the sides." "They spoke a common tongue, wore identical clothes, and responded to the weather, to the heat and the first rains, in an identical manner. If they worshipped different gods, it was in the privacy of their homes, they were not Muslims or Hindus, they were Punjabis" (Nahal 54). However, the Viceroy's announcement declaring Sialkot as a part of Pakistan dismantled relationship. Abdul Ghani's Muslim identity took over his Punjabi identity. Slowly, he started following the Muslim League which transformed his friendship with Hindus from friends to a "threat in a free independent India" (Nahal 56). He perceived that his obligation towards communal identity; and functioning according to the decisions taken by his own community could aid his survival in Sialkot.

Nahal presents two sides of the coin. Therefore, he has presented Chaudhary Barkat Ali as Ghani's counter personality, who, unlike Ghani helped Lala Kanshi Ram to leave his home safely for the refugee camp, while Ghani mentioned that he wants them to leave because they're Hindus and they don't believe in Allah; the communal venom is evident through Ghani's hatred towards his Hindu neighbour's dead daughter Madhu, who has been killed in a train massacre: "I put her and her husband into the fire with my own hands, and they are on their way to dozakh, to hell -where I hope they rot for ever" (Nahal 177). Whereas Chaudhary Barkat Ali's act of informing Lala Kanshi Ram "Tonight is the turn of your street - I have it from the most reliable source. You better pack up and leave" (Nahal 138). It shows that he functions on the principle of humanity. Barkat Ali's constant efforts to find Madhu, Kanshi Ram's daughter and sending Arun safely back to the camp, asserts his friendship and humanity.

"Begin from scratch? Wasn't that asking a little too much from a middle-aged man? Where precisely would we begin? In what city?" (Nahal 132). Lala Kanshi Ram and other refugees had left their property. Abdul Ghani offered Lala Kanshi Ram to give his shop on rent to him. This act suggested how refugee properties were taken over by other natives or refugees who travelled to that part. He was only left with two hundred rupees in his pocket. Moreover, it was the middle of November when they came to Delhi. Till that time, the refugee properties had already been allotted. However, he managed to arrange a small shop and quarters to live in but had to pay a high rent. Nahal attempts to criticise the corrupt authorities who worked on bribes, as they "demanded paghri- black money" (Nahal 351). However, Lala Kanshi Ram expected that authorities might make some adjustments as he had left property in Pakistan. Therefore, along with migration here comes a question over material wealth and questions of basic shelter and food for survival as well. Here, lack of money defines poverty and economic crisis faced by refugees. He says that his only craving is for identity, as he "wanted a name for himself - not fame, just name" (Nahal 350). When Lala Kanshi Ram and his family entered the Rehabilitation process, he was asked by Rehabilitation officer- "Why have you come to Delhi? Why not East Punjab?" (Nahal 341). It marks out how his identity as a Pakistani refugee is seen as a burden by government authorities. Thus, despite being in a co-religious space he feels alienated. He is no longer seen as a Hindu; his identity is that of a refugee- a migrant from Pakistan as decided by bureaucrats. It also shows his position as 'an unwanted refugee,' feeling isolated and humiliated in a place which he once considered his motherland. Kanshi Ram stopped wearing his turban which he considered as a marker of his status, prestige and honour. He felt that his identity as a merchant of Sialkot has been reduced to "an alien identity" of a refugee. Therefore, Lala Kanshi Ram's character symbolises the fractured identity which is carried by refugees from the Partition of 1947.

After settling at Delhi's Kingsway Camp, "Lying on his bed late in the night, he thought of it. What of the loss of personality he had suffered? What of the material losses? What of Madhu?" (Nahal 369). This internal monologue marks out a sense of being lost in a crowded world. He mourned for his lost daughter. Lala Kanshi Ram could only remember petitions which he needed to file. He could only think of the long queues, where he had to stand for long hours. Thus, this forced migration not only created property or material loss but also an 'alien identity' for the refugees. Hence, the tenants from Sialkot successfully established their identity of Hindu but failed to overcome the 'identity of refugees from Pakistan' that was forced upon him by Delhi government authorities. Therefore, it can be said that Nahal's narrative style portrayed Partition as a means of redefining communal and personal

<sup>3</sup> Kumar, Bimal. "The Pathological Problems of Communal Discord in Azadi." *Cross Currents: An International Peer-Reviewed Journal on Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol.1, 2015.

[https://saspublishers.com/media/articles/CCIJHSS\\_11\\_7-10.pdf](https://saspublishers.com/media/articles/CCIJHSS_11_7-10.pdf)

identity. It also marks out how refugees like Kanshi Ram carry the weight of sadness in their heart. They want to get rid of all the sights which they saw during their journey. However, the more they try to get rid of them, the more deeply it gets engraved in their mind.

“We were strangers in a strange land. I felt lost and alone. I didn’t know anyone, and I didn’t know where I belonged” (Nahal 60). This internal monologue presents an insight into isolated and alienated state of human lives during the Partition. Even blood relations on the either side of the borders were happy to see them safe but refused to help them. People were not "welcomed" by their own relations as those were 'distant relations' nor 'blood relations'. Lala Kanshi Ram talked about his relations. Some who treated them as guests having a cup of tea. While some who already had guests in their houses, had no space available. The only help they received was from charitable trusts and organisations. Therefore, the refugee migration uncovers elements of social and cultural isolation, as well as psychological turmoil. It also presents a critique of government authorities who failed to manage the chaos, leading to inhuman conditions where people were suffering without basic means of survival. Chaman Nahal criticises them, but on other hand, he praises the army and Indian soldiers who safely led the convoys to India.

Along with the question of identity, there comes family disintegration. Madhu was dead, Suraj Prakash was killed, Chandani was kidnapped, Sunanda was raped. The violence tore them apart. As the convoy stopped near Narowal district, Arun's encounter with procession of Hindu women has been described by Nahal. He has presented the impact of Partition in the form of communal hatred and in the form of women as victims of violence. The portrayal of women as sexual objects, criticises what the Partition did to humanity. As the convoy proceeds, many scenes of women being kidnapped, houses being burnt, people running here and there to save their lives were seen.

The text ends with the recreation of identity of each and every character. Sunanda started sewing and earning a living by tailoring children's cloth. Similarly, Arun has enrolled into higher education. Lala Kanshi Ram started a small ration shop to earn a living. It must be noted how the Partition changed the inter-communal feelings among the characters. Lala Kanshi Ram did not hate Muslims. But Prabha Rani, his wife hated them as she remembered how her daughter and son-in-law were killed. Lala Kanshi Ram disconnected himself from political and social spaces. His monologue portrayed him as man who stand out as a protector and healer for his family but shattered internally. His thoughts stayed within his mind. He didn't share or give information to Prabha Rani from newspapers as he used to give before. His identity from a grain merchant was reduced to a refugee. Therefore, the text presents Partition as a singular subject with 'brutal effects' and 'horrors'. Thus, the text describes economic instability, mental, emotional turmoil, killings, death, kidnapping, violence, burning down of trains, incredible bitterness, agony, uprootedness and religious disharmony.

*Azadi* as the text provides singular perspective of Partition. However, there exists various other dimensions, where unlike Lala Kanshi Ram former migrants view Partition as the opportunity to grow. Prof. (Dr.) S.K. Chugh, is a physician; educator and public health advocate. She lives in Patel Nagar, Delhi, a former migrant from Peshawar. She shared how she rebuilt her life from a displaced young girl to a doctor in medicine. She said that her dream to become a doctor in medicine and pursuing Cardiology and Gastroenterology would not have been possible in Peshawar. Therefore, she perceives this event of Partition as an opportunity to rebuild her life and career prospects. She has shared her journey in her book, *The Flame that Rose from Ashes*. She called her memoir “a flame that does not burn in anger, but lights the way in hope.” Therefore, she views the event of Partition as a positive input in her life.

Like Dr. S.K. Chugh, there are other people who view the division as an opportunity to achieve success in different areas. MDH spices *Mahashian Di Hatti*, a highly successful business started by one such migrant, introduced the concept of ready to use spices<sup>4</sup>. Mahashay Dharampal Gulati was the owner of this giant who passed away in December 2020. He travelled from Sialkot, Pakistan during the Partition. This business was originally set up by his father which he continued after travelling as a

<sup>4</sup>Official website of MDH <https://www.mdhspice.org/>

migrant to India<sup>5</sup>. Another business trader is Giani Gurcharan Singh, from Lyallpur, Pakistan. Just like MDH spices, he carried the authentic taste of spices from his homage to Delhi in the form of the famous chain of *Gianis*.

Harminder Kaur, another former migrant, was four years old when she came to India. She was born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Kawaljeet Kaur, her daughter, shared some second-hand experiences which were told by her father and uncle. She shared an incident about her uncle, how he was separated from his entire family while boarding a train to Amritsar. She mentioned that he waited for two days at Attari border and wished that a train came with people who were alive. Before the Partition happened, her uncle was engaged. He was stripped of hope, so he took off the engagement ring and threw it away. He thought that his people were killed and cut into pieces, when he saw bodies in the train, there were not living souls. However, her uncle met the entire family after four days at the camp. Everyone was safe. Her father and uncle met each other; both were in tears. However, later they joked about the incident of throwing the engagement ring. She said that they joked and wished that it was an opportunity to marry someone else. Therefore, this incident directs how some people shared their memories to second generation as a part of laughter. Whereas in *Azadi*, Sunanda has been seen as a mother who was never able to meet her daughter Chandani.

However, trauma; suffering; killings; family disintegration are some aspects which are dictated in common terms by refugees. Just like Lala Kanshi Ram and other characters in the text become spectators of violent imagery, S.K. Chugh shared her experience as well. She said that it was a random day. Her father was teaching mathematics to Pushpa, her sister. There was a knock on the door. When they opened it, they were told "Leave your house, it's not safe." An army truck was waiting for them. They were taken to Sanatan Dharma School, a refugee shelter. There were no food and water in the shelter. Her mother carried a glass of water and her father took a blanket with him while leaving the house. They were frightened, tired, scared, clinging to each other. She said that she could never forget that journey. She mentioned that the sight of a burning train and people burnt alive was something she could never forget. She saw this sight from the window of the train. Therefore, just like Arun dictated the sight of violence in the town, same had been dictated through oral narratives. Sudarshan Kumari, born on 20 August 1940, native from Jhang-Maghiana talked about the incident when she boarded the train to India along with her neighbours. She called it as the sight of shock that she couldn't forget. She was calling Chankanda Ram, her father who was sitting on the roof train to come and sit with her. Meanwhile, she heard a gunshot. Next, she saw her neighbour's son, whom she regarded as brother being killed. She also shared how her friend's family members were killed during displacement. Prof. Kamal Midha, retired government official, born at Ahmedpur. He shared that he was only thirteen years old when he travelled to India with his sister. He had just passed sixth standard. He shared some of his memories from school. He remembered the way he managed to escape with her sister from Pakistan. He was shot in his leg. He still remembers how he took his younger sister and brother on his back and ran. After the announcement of the Partition, he hid with his family in their godown. Kamal Midha also shared his bonds with other people back in the town. He said that the place where they used to live with brothers and sisters, within the five days of Partition it became a camp for refugees. "Hum ghar ko tala laga kar aa gae." He mentioned that the Partition took away not only those friendships but also their wealth. He called them "barbarious", those who killed their people and looted their homes. "Sialkot jal raha tha, Karanchi jal raha tha, Lahore jal raha tha." He said, "trains were burnt, train kat ke jaani, train kat ke aani." Like the text dictates that some Sikh people cut off their beard, converted themselves into Islam to save themselves. Kamal Midha mentioned the same. He said that not only Sikh community but other Hindus were also forced to convert to Islam in order to survive. Thus, people like S.K. Chugh and Kamal Midha still remembers these incidents like an unforgettable scar of their childhood.

There exist some perspectives which are not heard. It includes the concept of language, dialect and tone of Punjabi. Kamal Midha shared that they came to Amritsar first, he said it didn't suit them well. They travelled further and received their first accommodation near G.T. Karnal area. The main problem he encountered was language. It was a local area where girls and boys were referred to as

<sup>5</sup> Salokhe, Shubhangi. "MDH Controversy: The King of Masala is Under the Scanner in International Markets." *Journal of the International Academy for the Case Studies*. Vol.30, Issue3, pp. 1-11. <https://www.aacademias.org> (last sourced 4 January 2026)

“Chhori” and “Chhora” respectively. Some people got into fights as they felt it to be an abusive term used for their children. Kawaljeet Kaur also mentioned that the dialect and the tone of Punjabi differ from place to place. The tone used by Punjabis from Pakistan differs from that of Punjabi’s in India. She said that this tone was only recognisable among their own community. It sometimes leads to change in behaviour of Indian Punjabis’ as soon as they hear them. Therefore, language on major part has been perceived as the barrier for former migrants.

It must be noted that these oral narratives are dictated from children’s perspective. However, texts like Azadi presented Partition as the event only from adult perspective, as presented by Lala Kanshi Ram and other tenants from Sialkot. It included Arun’s perspective as the college learner but it was restricted to his relationship with Nur and Chandani. It functioned within the family structure. However, the oral narratives defined their life after Partition as struggle, dealing with the real-life problems of survival and home.

Sunanda Kumari shared an incident which reflects on the economic aspect of the people who moved from Pakistan to Punjab. She said that her family had built a house just three months before the Partition happened. They were forced to leave it and run away. All the money was invested in building that house. So, they were not left with any cash in hand. They only had land, two shops with regular earning. They didn’t carry anything with them. She recalled that her father used to fill small pots with gold, each engraved with the name of his daughters. He hid all those pots in the ground, built a stair case on it. He wanted to keep that treasure safe as they hoped to come back after some days. She asked his father, “Sona reh gaya hamara, khajana reh gaya.” Her father asked not to speak so loud as anyone got it out. As Sunanda Kumari was separated from her family for a month. She hid in goods train for three days along with her neighbours. She told how women took all their earrings, chains, rings made of gold, and hide it in their garments. As she saw others, she did same and hid her earring in her under garments. She wore those clothes for a month. Therefore, when her mother asked to wash the clothes. She found gold earrings in her clothes. She described it as a changing moment in their life. She said that her father sold those earrings and received seventy rupees by which he opened a small shop on charpai. Later, it became a means of their survival and basic food. Therefore, this perspective marks out not only economic downfall of these former refugees but also continuous struggle and relentless nature against such harsh conditions.

It must be noted that Lala Kanshi Ram settled in Delhi as he got a small apartment to live in. However, these oral narratives dictate continuous displacement. They argued that it was hard to find a place which they could call their home. Sunanda Kumari told that she lived with her family in the camps for initial days. For some time, they lived in Jagadari, Karnal then moved to Rohtak. Similarly, Kamal Midha mentioned that first he settled near G.T. Karnal, then again moved to Rohini.

S.K. Chugh called her resettlement as “slow building of a life.” She explained that they were just refugees, nameless to the world. She said that in the initial years there was scarcity of food and instability. However, today she feels blessed and praises her family’s decision to leave Pakistan. These former migrants were asked if they would like to go back to their native space, or make a visit to their homes. All of them denied. S.K. Chugh said that she might but would like to visit under security. Kamal Midha said, “Apne ghar se kon pyaar nahi karta, bilkul jaenge, Karo Bharat Pakistan ko ek, pehle jaisa.” Harminder Kaur said, “Ab kya hai waha, kya karenge ja kar. Jo hai yahi theek hai.” Sudarshan Kumari said, “Ab jaha hai wahi sahi hai, waha jakr kya karenge.” Therefore, it must be noted that the text works within literary structure. It has beginning, complexity, ending. Whereas these oral narratives discard this structural form of presentation. Former migrants shared their sufferings, experiences in the form of episodic memory. Kamal Midha recollected the event of Partition as the process of survival, running with the convoy, while carrying his sister on back and brother on shoulder. Sudarshan Kumari shared glimpse of her memory through her neighbour’s son being shot, newly built house being burnt down and her reunion with the family after a month. Through their voices, it can be noted that these sufferings do not have any end or structure. In the text, the protagonist might have lost desire to grow and build himself. However, in the real life all these people have grown and tried to build themselves without any ancestral property. Kamal Midha started working as the member of Sangh. Sudarshan Kumari joined school in Adarsh Nagar as a primary teacher. In 2001, She retired as head mistress from the same school. S.K. Chugh also created her identity as a doctor in medicine who successfully completed her studies in Gastrology and Cardiology.

These former migrants were asked if they had or felt any enmity against any community. They agreed and accepted that the violence and killings done by Muslims to their people were unforgettable part of their lives. Kamal Midha mentioned that it's within him, sometimes it gets hard to tolerate them. He said that we might talk to them, help them, share common things. But the scar of bloodshed is indelible. He said, "for that part, I hate them." However, Sunanda Kumari said, "khoon toh kholta hai, par kar bhi kya sakte hai." She said that Partition forced her father to accept any task which could fetch him money for living. Therefore, he accepted the job of distributing post cards and letters in Muslim area. Initially, he carried forward that job but deep inside they feared from them. She shared that they still live in area which is surrounded by Muslims. She said that sometimes she is unable to sleep as she thinks about same. Some days doubt arises what if something like that same happens, history is repeated, where will they go? Therefore, oral narratives provided inner conflict and their perspective over inter communal relationships. However, *Azadi* as a text restricts itself with the idea of identity crisis.

Pushpa Behal, daughter of Somnath Katyal and Chandra Katyal whose parents moved from Pakistan to India during partition. She shared a different perspective, her grand-father who was khajanchi, a treasurer under British government, had received the information of partition earlier through administrative sources. Therefore, he decided to send his elder son to Delhi with some finances in order to settle down and help the family in future. Pushpa Behal told that he got into bad company. Thus, ruined all the finances, which made the process of migration more difficult for them just like other refugees. Therefore, this information discards the idea of 'preparedness' as the ones who were prepared, suffered in similar ways.

In between, these narratives reflect upon humanitarian relationship among some people. Kamal Midha mentioned about langars, food being distributed in front of every Gurudwara. Sudarshan Kumari told that when she was away from her parents for a month, her neighbours used to feed her. She said that even elders might not get food to eat or water to drink but they made sure that children are well fed. They didn't discriminate or labelled as other's children or children by blood but called them as their children. However, *Azadi* presented humanity on Lala Kanshi Ram's part who regarded all the tenants of his apartment as his family. He was allocated a small apartment, in which Sunanda and Bibi Amarvati live along with his family. However, it also presented a stark contrast when he was unwelcomed by his relatives, as he moved to India and needed help.

The text presents authorities as corrupt who asked Lala Kanshi Ram for "paghri-black money" for immediate allocation of shop or house. However, Sudarshan Kumari said that they were allocated a house which earlier belonged to a Muslim household. S.K. Chugh and others mentioned same about allocation. Kamal Midha unlike Chaman Nahal's protagonist favoured political authorities who helped them to settle in new space. However, Kawaljeet Kaur criticised political authorities for this decision of Partition. In common with text, Kamal Midha praised Indian Army and soldiers who came to their rescue during the state of chaos and vulnerability.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that *Azadi* as the literary text provides singular perspective on Partition where characters like Lala Kanshi Ram, Arun remain dissatisfied due to forced displacement. However, this perspective can't be ignored where former migrants still love their homeland. There exist other views as well where these refugees feel blessed, expressing themselves to attain the opportunities of growth and survival that India has provided them. This research traces similarity between the text and oral narratives in presenting the impact of Partition in terms of suffering; killings; trauma; economic and familial loss as well.

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