

THE PARTITION, WOMEN AND OPPRESSION: A STUDY OF *IN FREEDOM'S SHADE*

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Abstract

The Partition of 1947 led to the abolishment of the British Raj, which has been defined throughout the Indian Independence Act. Anis Kidwai examines the nature of trauma and its disastrous effects on the life of the inhabitants. Anis Kidwai, the survivor of the 1947 rallies, narrates the tale of how the riots caused the death of her husband. This research paper seeks to describe the sufferings of women in society. Through illuminating the persistent haunting of the past and continuing anxiety of the present, this memoir addresses the terrible history and existence that were disfigured during the Partition of British India in 1947. The objective of this research paper is to address the trauma endured by individuals during and after the 1947 genocide, as described in Anis Kidwai's *In Freedom's Shade*. The numerous incidents that documented that period's barbarism will be further examined using Trauma Theory, and the colonisation of the women will be highlighted through Gayatri Spivak's 'subaltern'. The research papers will explain how much this memoir is acclaimed to be depicted in Partition Literature.

Keywords- Partition, Feminism, Oppression, Resistance, Memoir

In Freedom's Shade is a memoir of Anis Kidwai, written in the form of a diary. It was first written as *Azadi Ki Chaon Mein* in the Urdu language between 1948-1949, over a period of six-month however, the memoir remained unpublished until 1974. *Azadi Ki Chaon Mein* (Kidwai,1974) was translated into English and titled *In Freedom's Shade* by Ayesha Kidwai, her granddaughter. The memoir chronicles her grandmother's tale of the initial two years of recently constituted India, the bloodshed, and the actions of reformation in Delhi that followed her husband's murder in October 1947. An account about her acquiring the 'identity' of her husband's position in society, a societal position as a leader that she had been forced to take after she lost her 'identity' as a wife. In order to analyse 'space' and 'gender' in the context of social, cultural, economic, and political developments following Partition, this memoir examines women's individual experiences.

Anis Kidwai was born in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, in the year 1906. Despite being subordinate to *purdah*, it has been the circumstance of most teenage girls of that era. Kidwai seemed to be ready to retrieve stringent schooling, acquiring knowledge while learning Arabic, Farsi, arithmetic as well as Urdu in the same

schoolroom as boys, which would have been a rare commodity during that time until she reached a grade where that was no longer permitted.

Anis Kidwai relocated to Masauli, her hometown, when her father died in the year 1920. Later, she married her cousin, Shafi Ahmad Kidwai, who was an active contributor throughout the "war of liberation" years preceding down to the Independence and Partition, having her home functioning as Congress headquarters. Her husband was the last Muslim alive in Mussoorie, later assassinated in 1947 in the name of communal bloodshed during Partition.

The incident, the assassination of her husband, which begins the memoir, prompted Kidwai to seek guidance as well as relief from Mahatma Gandhi; he advised her to serve in Muslim camps, which will be a tribute to her husband's martyrdom. (Kidwai,1974) This preaching settles the tone of Kidwai's social welfare account, which takes up a good portion of the memoir. Kidwai devoted her life to working as an activist for Muslim women residing in India as well as an advocate of secularism. She establishes herself first from the start as a person who does not only acknowledge the "trauma" of the people who were victims of Partition's bloodshed but rather as a neutral observer of something like the purportedly "secular" individual attempting to demand an end to religious bloodshed between Muslims and Hindus in 1948. The research paper will investigate how women inside the conservative city asserted their autonomy and demanded 'space' and 'identity' in their discussion of survival and approaches, ultimately earning a livelihood and investing in capitalism. It emphasises women's management of the nation, family, and the home in the post-Independence era, instead of considering women as passive recipients of the past. The research paper will investigate specific personal experiences hence a memoir.

Anis Kidwai was a social worker; she recounts her working experience in Partition refugee camps in her autobiographical work "*In Freedom's Shade*". It can be considered more than just a study of recollecting 'memory' and 'history'. Kidwai was a Muslim woman who worked for the rehabilitation of not just Muslim refugees but also Hindu inhabitants. She worked for the Hindu-dominated Indian government at the time; this did not bother her dedication to rehabilitating abducted women; it also involved the use of statistics that have been left out in other memoirs, individuals impacted by Partition and participated in the project, which led to nation-building. The official figure was 50,000 Muslim women abducted in India and 33,000 Indian women abducted in Pakistan, notwithstanding the fact that the exact percentage of women abducted varies. (Kidwai,1974)

The abduction of women illustrates that they had been viewed as unaddressed projections: Regardless of the fact that India's secular government theoretically guaranteed equal human rights to everyone, however, women remained prohibited from that authority to select their nationality and were therefore perpetually under the control of the Territorial jurisdiction, prohibited the sovereign rights implicit in nationality. Throughout the viewpoint of the authority, the women created unintended nature led to their depiction as a cultural symbol instead of subjects. Greater administrative histories of both governments emphasised mostly the concept of an incorporated "honour" of the estranged women mostly during the "history writing project started soon after

Independence," rendering its retrieval imperative. (Didur 9; Khan 365) Kidwai believes that because of their religious affiliations, gender, and identity, Muslim women were considered more marginalised throughout this memoir. (Kidwai,1974)

Kidwai's memoir is amongst the most graphic descriptions of both the male dominance during the abduction of the rehabilitation program as well as the government's cooperation during the assaults of Muslims. This also reveals the numerous instances of women's agency throughout their different cultural settings, even though it was forbidden to individuals. 'What heroes have these Hindus become after attacking women and children?' questioned one of the several camp detainees, Kajalshah Begum, who Kidwai portrays as sitting beneath a genuine stack of trunks and chests, walled off from a makeshift shelter of blankets and required to wear silken garments and magnificent jewellery.'" (Kidwai, 1974)

The trauma and the suffering of the women who were Hindu refugees as something of an exemplifier of refugees' own will and autonomy are central to the history of Partition on gender perspective. Regardless of the fact that historical researchers acknowledge the marginalisation of Muslim women in the post-independence era, there is little academic research about Muslim women who were traumatised during Partition. Another explanation for this, since this research seems to suggest, is indeed the relatively broader discourse—colonialist, socialist, and post-colonialist—concerning Muslim women as innocent victims of religious fundamentalism restricted to *Zenana* and *Purdah*, which had already pervaded historical narrative and yet refuses to acknowledge Muslim women commission as traditional actors. The other important element would be the unavailability of historical documents, governmental and organisational, in accordance with both the government's greater objective of marginalising Muslims as Indian citizens and national.

This memoir shows the link between Anis Kidwai as well as the abducted women jeopardise the state's conception of females as symbols of honour, but the writer shifts the attention to considering these women as historical subjects and not merely as objects. Kidwai laboured with both the Central Recovery Organization as a social worker and documented the challenges of operation of rehabilitation in their memoir. Kidwai believed she, as a woman, empathised with and comprehended the abducted women because "only a woman can understand what is in another woman's heart," Kidwai added (Kidwai,1974). Kidwai notes in the memoir, "In truth, I have no idea what has happened to the women we transported to Pakistan," she added I was always looking forward to hearing from them." (Kidwai,1974)

Kidwai's *In Freedom's Shade* serves as a valuable preliminary step for analysing the importance, treatment and role of 'subaltern' in the formation of the nation that we call 'India'. Nevertheless, due to the obvious quantity of details provided by Kidwai, current historical researchers have started to depend upon this memoir to support certain preconceived historiography. However, evidence-based memoir is frequently taken seriously without the need for a comprehensive understanding of how to approach memoirs and their language as historical documents.

The memoir by Anis Kidwai was originally intended to be a report for the youth of India, but intervention changed it to a memoir. Asserting that the communal conflict would only result in the common consciousness

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The author mentions several issues, such as unlawful collisions, displacements, cultural assimilations, and honour killings. Throughout this translation, our view of these feminine services unwittingly presents women as clandestine workers of an inadequately oppressive patriarchal agenda, compassionate or helpless, piqued the interest of readers.

The female plot is primarily a record of self-improvement and emancipation, and their relation to the events involving them is the one where the events relate to companions, communicating their empowerment.

Even though it tells everyone about the significance of Humayun Tomb¹ and Purana Qila² detention centre, their research reveals some other heritage of the locations in the memoir, which in our minds had sometimes stood for the Delhi sultanate times without reminding us of how tombs and even damage monuments protected existence when sidewalks were turned into cemeteries and nations and lives were ravaged.

As we turn the pages, we come across various heartbreaking stories, such as that of a Qawwali³ artist who was passionate about singing and being heard but was unable to do so because the time he lived in witnessed the tearing of his heartstrings. 'How tough it was for performers of pleasant songs to existing in such times,' (Kidwai, 2011) says Anis Kidwai, who remembers the obscure musician. What was it like during the partition? Having lost both hands, a mother was hospitalised while her daughter lay beside her, covered in bandages and splints, wailing (Kidwai, 1974). This wretched mother could not caress her daughter's head, pat her back, wet her parched mouth, and comfort her anguish because she had no hands, says Anis Kidwai. The wounds everywhere were not easily healed, and there were no hands or hearts to help ease the suffering. The number of blankets available to victims of violence was insufficient. Complaints to Bapu and requests from him would not have ensured the blanket supply. At the camp, two bricks were used to meet body demands, and the same two bricks were also used to make a kitchen stove at other times. As the nation's health worsened, the health of the people in these camps deteriorated as well. 'Pneumonia' and 'influenza' ravaged the camps throughout the winter when medical services were scarce.

Anis Kidwai's narratives include females who have been abducted, assaulted, and slaughtered, as well as infants who have been abandoned and residences that have been burned down, plundered, or inhabited by immigrants. Mosques and markets were being vandalised and destroyed, erasing histories. The concept of the

¹ Humayun's mausoleum is a Mughal Dynasty Humayun's tomb in Delhi, India. The Construction started in 1565 and ended in 1572.

² Purana Qila, of the Mauryan period in 300 BC.

³ Qawwali is a Sufi Islamic devotional singing style that originated in the Indian subcontinent and is extremely popular in Punjab and Sindh areas, as well as in Hyderabad.

Veguetā, 22(8), 2022, eISSN: 2341-1112

'nation' in this memoir is transforming societies. We also read of humanising instances in which random people became a household or random people supported each other like relatives, connected like families, despite they were of opposing religions, to withstand troubled moments and serve as a role models for humankind to follow.

Although this plot chooses to leave everyone with so many questions of 'right' and 'wrong', particularly in the occurrences of reconciling ladies with their families, particularly in the complex situations where the female will indeed slip in love with a guy or to become a mother because of the man, episodes where the Indigenous female was required to carry the corpses when the 'others' continued to refuse, the author's strength comes in recounting the tales and photographing the infractions genuinely, which provides a great deal of information. The memoir primarily examines the complexity of the separation period throughout this manner.

Even though specific tragedies and occurrences require viewer criticism, the memoir primarily serves to compensate for the lack in Indian history and the history of partition by revealing the animalistic characteristics of humankind, the human instinct of males, the indifference of Congress⁴, the unsubstantiated claims of RSS⁵, as well as the conquest of civilisation placed above a white beastliness of men at various locations and the damages caused to humanity by the traumas of the time. The memoir is significant because it is a significant historical dot that must be interconnected with those other dots to form a full picture of events.

The research paper examines how women reclaimed rooms after partition by choosing particular choices in life and hence shaping their identities in the post-partition era. Muslim women weren't really eyewitnesses to Delhi's large demographic, socioeconomic, political, and significant innovation. Partition affected the lives of these Muslim women in a multitude of formats. It was a horrific time when Muslim inhabitants in Delhi were considered 'refugees at their home,' individuals began to congregate surrounding their group, resulting in a reduction of spaciousness. However, apprehension of 'others', as well as the advent of Hindu immigrants inside the metropolis, resulted in the reconstruction of gender and misogynistic conventions in the Muslim women's movement.

Notwithstanding their physical violence and migration, Delhi provided support and training to confident women who were Hindu but did not recognise Muslim women, particularly in most need of restoration. This research comments upon the restoration and marginalisation of women of space with respect to the presence of Hindu refugees in Delhi elsewhere, but the assumption that Muslims were passive victims is false. The research demonstrates that Muslim women reconciled their identities in post-Partitioned India and defied patriarchal and official expectations regarding their roles as nurturers, contributing to the state's socioeconomic well-being in capitalist society.

Mohammad Hossain, who was a government employee, was the one who "selected" India whenever questioned about the choice between India and Pakistan; after Partition, he was forbidden from employment

⁴ The Indian National Congress is a political party in India that was founded in the late 1800s.

⁵ Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

as he was not allowed to continue his job for India, according to Anis Kidwai. "Will you kindly interfere," Hossain pleaded with Kidwai. I am absolutely stranded in this place. Hossain questioned that really should not 'we' be summoned back into the workforce if, even though you claim, there is no government mandate prohibiting Muslims from working. "Why should I have to travel to Pakistan?" says Mohammad. Despite Kidwai's efforts, she was unfortunately incapable of getting him to work, she added Mohammad "would have to embrace Pakistan" (117). Kidwai's reluctance to effect real change among forcibly displaced Muslims as either a result of their position as just an intermediate between both the administration and the general public undercuts significant political narratives of overwhelming Muslim "desire" towards Pakistan, putting the government of India in a precarious situation.

Anis Kidwai viewed the 1947 Partition bloodshed as nothing more than the humiliation of 'others' who must have worked relentlessly for the Independence of India. Kidwai's account, however, expanded further reporting brutality, the bloodshed that included standardised measures more about gendered current realities within these refugee camps, as well as reflections into what migration signified to those who had been forced to flee from their home.

Throughout his prominent work on the historiography of Partition, Gyanendra Pandey claims that every history seems intertwined with a political objective, either wittingly or unwittingly (168). This strong governmental history-writing operation which commenced after Partition attempted on trying to justify, had been recognised inside the mainstream as just an unauthorised escalation of violence, rendering. Partitions conflict with somebody else's narrative (82). Individuals involved in the massacre reappear as chronological participants while examining resources not shown in the traditional political historiography. Memoir, throughout this reconstruction of something new, an alternative timeline wherein the unresolved themes can acquire the centre stage, will become an undoubtedly important source. Throughout this work, the researcher attempted to demonstrate that when they are interpreted from the perspective of their specific viewpoints. These memoirs cannot be consigned into humankind's "psychological-emotional undertone" or merely reduced into "micro-histories" but should be regarded as experienced in the same way as geographical histories. Whereas Kidwai's tried to pertain to specific themes *In Freedom's Shade*, a hugely strong illustration, the above configuration of having read these memoirs as undercover agents of numerous positionalities throughout a historical movement instead of as arbitrator of "validity" or "reality of the situation," provides a more comprehensive, very little authoritarian heritage which is both fictionalised entire.

Anis Kidwai concludes her memoir, which records not just times and locations but the "inner mindsets and feelings of the inhabitants" (Kidwai, 2011) by stating that the book should reach the young generation before several those who 'lower their crafts into the river,' so even though interpretation allows them to 'divine the direction of the wind and understand where the rocks and whirlpools lie' (Kidwai, 2011).

The person who had already surrendered all of it and then had to start over to assume the mantle of the house's concealment, the father who may have never smiled or grieved and was always serious. That transpired not only to the writer's father but also happened to his uncle. Undoubtedly, there seems to be a neighbourhood

which has never spoken about whatever happened that horrible summer or the amount of money they had lost. The family's the only chance of survival and going forward in a nation that was never truly theirs would have been to suppress these similar memories. This seclusion by the predecessor was kept not only because of the younger generation of the said family but to protect the successors from the atrocities witnessed by the previous generation in order to protect the forthcoming generation from experiencing similar atrocities. The uncle of Rashid, affectionately known as Chan, usually spoke about the previous era after his aunt, Zubeda, had been slaughtered by her servant. "We lost two sisters in Jalandhar during the partition riots, and she who made it virtually from under the swords of rioters got to Pakistan only to be murdered in her own home by her servant," he stated " (45). Whenever the family initially relocated to Pakistan and afterwards returned, they abandoned the assurance of their life, their identities highlighting selves. These selves, as shattered pieces of a mirror, merely revealed bits as to what was. That confidence that because the property and residence individuals possess determine individuals and this certainty would continue to provide significance to their life has been forcibly snatched away either by 'Other or ' the government officials, that had little meaning and purpose in lives prior to Pre Partition era. The ones who have been left behind will be brought support again by eternity, thinking circumstances might get brighter, and their existence can continue on, just after the expenditure of their dear ones' lifeblood, their personal flesh and plasma. Unfortunately, much like the previous time, Chan's expectations were destroyed, leading him to speak out about the catastrophe. That process of attempting to locate an object to anchor itself continues over again. Rashid strives to put his grandfather's home to exist throughout his voyage, which had previously simply remained in the form of a monochrome picture. As even the move forward in life, this united 'self' with which he has constantly been identified as his grandfather begins to collapse. Rashid learns how his grandfather, who has always been known as any kind of man, was influenced by a climate of animosity or intolerance.

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