

Partition of India: The Process of Othering and A Living Memory

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Abstract:

This paper examines the Partition of India in 1947 and its enduring and unresolved legacies, which continue to impact contemporary South Asian geopolitics. It examines how Hindus and Muslims were divided along communal lines as a result of the British Raj's "*divide and rule*" policy, which prepared the way for the Muslim League's demand for a separate homeland based on the Two Nation Theory. The Paper makes the case that although Partition brought about freedom, it also led to one of the biggest forced migrations in history and unexpectedly high levels of sectarian bloodshed. Roughly a million people lost their lives in riots and massacres, during which women were the targets of rape, kidnappings, and honour killings carried out as a kind of warfare. The paper contends that Partition created several geostrategic tensions that remain flashpoints. The Kashmir dispute represents the 'unfinished business' of Partition, while border demarcations defying river geography have led to enduring water disputes between India and Pakistan. Discrimination encountered by minorities left on the wrong side of the border highlights Partition's inability to ease tensions between communities. The nuclearisation of the India-Pakistan rivalry also demonstrates Partition's toxic legacy. Thus, the unhealed wounds and unresolved problems born out of Partition continue to impact regional identities, politics, conflicts, and peace-building. The paper analyses Partition as an ongoing process, not just a singular historic event, providing insight into its contentious legacy that still has the potential to ignite conflict in contemporary South Asia.

KEYWORDS

Partition, Two Nation Theory, South Asia, Divide and Rule, Legacies

INTRODUCTION

The creation of India and Pakistan as two sovereign dominions is referred to as partition. It established the framework for the nation-states of Pakistan and India. August 1947 saw the independence of India following more than three centuries of British rule (Svensson, 2013). However, the subcontinent became divided during the long struggle for independence. One of the largest migrations in human history started as soon as the partition was completed, with millions of Muslims migrating to West and East Pakistan (the latter of which is now Bangladesh) and millions of Hindus and Sikhs travelling in the opposite way. Hundreds of thousands of people failed to succeed (Zamindar, 2011). Famous historian E.H. Carr wrote in his book "*What is History*" that '*Suffering is indigenous in history. Every great period of history has its casualties as well as victories.*' (Carr 1980, p. 79). So was the case with the partition. When the partition occurred, Communities who had lived together for over a millennium clashed in a horrifying wave of sectarian violence across the Indian subcontinent, with Sikhs and Hindus on one side and Muslims on the other. It was a mutual genocide that was both unexpected and unheard of. Mass kidnappings, forced conversions, brutal sexual assault, and massacres were all commonplace in the provinces of Bengal and Punjab, which border West and East Pakistan, respectively. A large number of the approximately 75,000 women who were raped later suffered from disfigurement or amputation. (Khan, 2011).

Different narratives tell different stories about the partition. How did the discourse start, and who were the people who participated in the event? Who was responsible for the partition that divided the sub-continent? Whether the violence that followed the event could have been stopped. There are different stories from different sources. Decades have passed, but the horrors of the partition are still living with us. There are several legacies of partition. These legacies haunt the people of the sub-continent. There are unresolved issues, security concerns, water disputes, minority problems, refugee issues, etc.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Partition of the sub-continent was not an overnight event. It did not occur suddenly. It was a gradual process, many events became responsible for the division of the sub-continent. The main causes of the subcontinent's partition were the Indian Muslim's religious fervour and communal sentiments, the British government's divide-and-rule policy, the Congress leadership's stance toward the Muslim League, Hindu-Muslim riots in various regions of the country, and numerous other incidents. In 1940, the Muslim League passed the Lahore Resolution, which demanded that Britain divide and leave India, while the Indian National Congress advocated for Britain to leave the country. The British, the Congress, and the Muslim League were all involved in the creation of the distinct Muslim homeland in the subcontinent for several reasons (Ahmad, 2002).

The English always used a divide-and-rule strategy when colonising the subcontinent. During the census, individuals were categorised based on their religion and perceived as distinct. Rather than researching how people of different religions coexisted, the British relied on their understanding of the Indian populace on religious scriptures and the inherent distinctions they observed in them (O'Leary, 2007). The Muslims, who had ruled India for more than 300 years under the Mughal Empire, were another group that they feared might pose a threat. To win them over, the British backed the All-India Muslim Conference and assisted in the founding of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, two establishments that produced the leaders of the Muslim League and the philosophy of Pakistan. Muslims were assigned to a different electorate after the league was established. As a result, the Indian electoral system was designed to take Muslim's uniqueness into account (Singh, 2016).

In 1920, when Savarkar gave a definition of Hindu and gave Muslims in India a second-class treatment, the Muslim leaders in the sub-continent also reacted. Sir Muhammad Iqbal questioned the Congress leadership as to what the position of Muslims in a Hindu-dominated country would be. Muslim leadership started demanding special rights for minorities in a Hindu-dominated state. They demanded a separate electorate for Muslims. The League got the message from the Congress's repeated policy errors that their interests would be wholly suppressed and that living in an undivided India would be impossible after colonial control ended. One such measure was the requirement that Muslim students sing the national song "*Bande Mataram*", which has historically been associated with anti-Muslim sentiment, in Indian schools (Copland, 1991).

The subcontinent was divided, and Pakistan was established based on Jinnah's two nation thesis. The theory states that Muslims and Hindus are two distinct nations. Because Muslims are distinct from Hindus in terms of social and moral standards, as well as having their customs, religion, and tradition, they ought to be allowed to live in a separate country where Islam is the predominant religion, and they should be kept apart from Hindus.

According to Jinnah, the primary identity of Muslims in the sub-continent is their religion. Jinnah stressed that in the East, religion matters a lot; religion is our primary identity; he further stressed that India was not a single nation; Indian Hindus and Muslims were each a nation. A Muslim living in one country has more sympathy for Muslims living in different countries instead of less sympathy with non-Muslim countrymen (Ray, 2015).

The Congress and the Muslim League also disagreed over the August 1928 Nehru report. The report briefly outlined the federal government structure and dominion status under the Indian constitution. It also advocated Joint Electorates with seats reserved for minorities in legislative bodies.

As per Jinnah, *'The Committee has adopted a narrow-minded policy to ruin the political future of the Muslims. I regret to declare that the report is extremely ambiguous and does not deserve to be implemented.'* Instead, the Muslim League rejected the report relying on Jinnah's 1929 'fourteen-point formula', which became the cornerstone demand made by the Muslim community in exchange for their right to be included in an independent, united India. The Congress leadership rejected the fourteen-point formula put out by Jinnah. The poet and politician Allama Iqbal demanded a separate country for Muslims in 1930 during the Muslim League session in Allahabad (Iqbal & Saleh, 2011). Between 1930 and 1932, round table conferences were held. Although the Muslim League attended the conferences, Congress abstained. Nehru declared that the attitude of Muslims was reactionary and criticised the Muslim League for attending the round table conferences.

The phrase "*Pakistan*", which refers to the region that includes the Punjab, Kashmir, Sindh, Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province (Afghanistan), and Kashmir, was first used in a pamphlet titled "*Now or Never*" by Choudhry Rahmat Ali in 1933. The Muslim League adopted the Lahore Resolution, sometimes referred to as the "*Pakistan Resolution*," during its three-day meeting in Lahore later in 1940, which demanded that "*the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in the majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign*". There had been some hope of an undivided India, but the Congress party's rejection of the interim-government established under the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1942 satisfied Muslim League leadership that compromise was unachievable and partition was the only option (Kamran, 2017).

In 1942-43, the Muslim League expanded its dominance, forming governments in Sindh, Bengal, and the North-West Frontier Province and increasing its influence in Punjab. In 1944, Gandhi was released from jail. The talks between Gandhi and Jinnah were unsuccessful. Muslims interpreted this as recognition that Jinnah represented all Indian Muslims. The Muslim League was now able to make a strong claim that it and Jinnah alone represented India's Muslims. The Muslim League's landmark victory in the predominantly Muslim areas during the 1946 elections validated Jinnah and the Muslim League's claims to a separate nation. The British valued the convenience of having a single voice to speak for the Muslims of India, even though they opposed the creation of a separate Muslim nation. Following the collapse of the Cabinet Mission, Jinnah declared August 16, 1946, to be Direct Action Day. Thousands of people were killed in country-wide riots. The British were convinced that the division was unavoidable by the Action Day (Talbot, 2010).

The Cabinet Mission Plan led to the establishment of an Interim Government in 1946, in which the Muslim League took part. The plan for India's partition was drafted between 1946 and 1947. As the last viceroy of British India, Lord Louis Mountbatten was appointed by British Prime Minister Clement Attlee. He was tasked with supervising the country's independence by June 1948 and instructed to prevent division and maintain a united India while maintaining flexible powers to enable a British withdrawal with the fewest possible setbacks. Mountbatten wanted to bring back the idea of a federal system for India through the Cabinet Mission. However, despite his initial desire to keep the center intact, the hostile social climate led him to believe that partition was now required to facilitate a more rapid transfer of power.

As a response to the growing Muslim separatist movement spearheaded by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Vallabhbhai Patel was among the first Congress leaders to accept the partition of India (Ankit, 2019). In sharp contrast to Gandhi's beliefs, the nationalist leaders of June 1947 agreed to a religiously-based partition of the country, with Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad representing the Congress, Jinnah representing the Muslim League, B. R. Ambedkar representing the Untouchable community, Master Tara Singh representing the Sikhs. The plan includes dividing the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal, assigning the mostly Hindu and Sikh territories to the new nation of India, and the predominantly Muslim areas to the new nation of Pakistan (Pandit, 2019). Even more horrifying was the communal violence that followed the declaration of the Radcliffe Line, a partition line.

Historians Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh describe the violence that accompanied India's division;

"There are numerous eyewitness accounts of the maiming and mutilation of victims. The catalogue of horrors includes the disembowelling of pregnant women, the slamming of babies' heads against brick walls, the cutting off of the victim's limbs and genitalia, and the displaying of heads and corpses. While previous communal riots had been deadly, the scale and level of brutality during the partition massacres were unprecedented. Although some scholars question the use of the term 'genocide' concerning the partition massacres, much of the violence was manifested with genocidal tendencies. It was designed to cleanse an existing generation and prevent its future reproduction" (Talbot, 2010. p. 27-40)

On August 14, 1947, the new Dominion of Pakistan was created, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah was sworn in as its first Governor-General. On August 15, 1947, India, a smaller Dominion of India, gained independence. Jawaharlal Nehru became the prime minister, while Viceroy Mountbatten continued as the nation's first Governor-General. The formal ceremonies took place in New Delhi. Gandhi stayed behind in Bengal to assist the recently arrived refugees from the divided subcontinent.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PARTITION

In "What is History", E.H. Carr remarked, *'Suffering is indigenous in history; every great period in history has its casualties as well as victories'* (Carr, 1980.p.79). The same happened in the case of India. After over 200 years of British domination, India's independence was undoubtedly celebrated at the time. However, this moment of victory has another side as well.

Along with its Celebration, there are many tragedies that are still there. It triggered a series of reverberations that started to manifest after the event happened. It was a means to some other things. The events that occurred after the partition were violent. If there is a discourse about partition, violence must be integral to that discourse. Riots, a huge number of casualties, and a massive migration wave were brought on by partition. Millions of people fled to what they believed to be safer regions; Muslims went to Pakistan, while Hindus and Sikhs headed towards India. Eventually, up to 14–16 million people may have been uprooted, migrating by train, bullock carts, and foot.¹

There are two perspectives on partition: the Joy of Independence and the Pain (Violence). Partition is not a symbol of independence for the Northern region of India, which has remained the epicentre of violence, but rather of memories of it. The subcontinent's citizens remain traumatised by the events of the partition decades later. It was G.D. Khosla who first documented the bloody incidents during the partition. He characterized the partition of India as an unprecedentedly horrific and massive occurrence. He claims that humankind has never seen human enmity on this scale. According to him, *'partition has, is and will remain a term for an event which always reminds violence, mass tragedy'* (Khosla, 1949). In

¹ <https://theconversation.com/how-the-partition-of-indiahappened-and-why-its-effects-are-still-felt-today-81766>

'Midnight's Children,' Salman Rushdie described partition as '*something classily horrible proportions and one of the centuries greatest tragedies*' (Abdullah, 2014.p.341). Alok Bhalla, a literary critic in his book "*Glories about the Partition of India*", gives his description of the partition as '*The single most traumatic experience in our recent history. An experience which coerced our social sense, which made people rude, distorted our political judgment and deranged our understanding of moral rightness*' (Francisco, 1995). Partition, according to Ranabir Samaddar, is a concentrated metaphor for violence. '*Partition is synonymous with violence, fear, domination, and separation,*' he asserts. Partition is considered an epic tragedy in South Asia.

First of all, regardless of one's perspective, the Partition of India was an exceptionally sorrowful event. Think about the following information. Between two and thirty lakh persons are thought to have died in the bloodshed surrounding the partition. Neonal Mossly calculated six lakh fatalities. According to J.S. Grewal, approximately one million people died. Evan Stephen calculated that between 5 and 6 lakh people died. H.V. Hodson claims in his book "*The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan*" that the riots that followed the partition claimed the lives of about a million people. He goes on to say that 12 million Hindus and 6.5 million Muslims participated in the riots overall. According to Menon and Bhasin (Menon & Bhasin, 1998), between eight and ten million people have crossed international boundaries, with between 500,000 and one million people losing their lives. It is generally accepted that more than a million people died during the exodus, even though Butalia claims that around twelve million people relocated and that death counts varied between 200,000 and two million people (Butalia, 1998). General Moon stated, without providing exact numbers, that Muslims in India left behind 44 crores of property, whereas Hindus and Sikhs lost almost 4000 crores. We could assert that the bloodshed, not the victories of independence, is essentially the sad fact of partition.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Women have historically been the victims of conflict. Women are mostly used as military weapons. Every time there has been a conflict, history has shown that these women have suffered the most (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). Regarding India's partition, the situation about violence against women did not change. Between 75,000 and 100,000 women are thought to have been kidnapped, raped, or molested. In the aftermath of the partition, kidnapping a woman belonging to a different religion became the go-to tactic for exacting retribution on members of rival religious communities. Unfortunately, the least studied topic during the partition riots remained to be the violence against women (Khan, 2011).

According to Leonard Mossly, almost one lakh women—young girls—were abducted, raped, and sold. Women's kidnapping turned into a weapon used by men. Women's bodies were used as passive witnesses, and the community emblems of the holy figure were tattooed on their intimate areas. One group used the body of a woman as a platform to challenge the other's religious superiority. The acts of violence against women's bodies were not directed towards them. In actuality, the women's raped and disfigured bodies served as a threat to the men in the religious organisation to which they belonged (Ahmad & Pal, 2017).

Jisha Menon explains the relevance of the female body in communal conflict in her book "*The Performance of Nationalism: India, Pakistan, and the Memory of Partition*". As per Menon, '*The female body served as the terrain through which to exchange dramatic acts of violence. The gendered violence of the Partition thus positioned women between symbolic abstraction and embodiment*' (Menon, 2013). These behaviours "*desexualise a woman and negate her as wife and mother; no longer a nurturer,*" according to Menon and Bhasin. In their book "*Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition,*" Menon and Bhasin assert that 33,000 Hindu and Sikh women were abducted while attempting to migrate to India, while the official figure of abducted women stood at 50,000 for Muslim women abducted by Hindu and Sikh men en route to Pakistan (Menon & Bhasin, 1998) Similar figures are provided by Butalia in her book "*The Other Side of Silence*" where she asserts that 75,000 women were kidnapped from both sides of the border. Furthermore, there is a good chance that the real figures are far higher than the government estimate that may be found in records and books (Butalia, 1998).

There were two types of gender-based violence throughout this ethnic genocide. The violence against women occurred both in other communities and inside their own. Suicides and honour killings were examples of violence committed by members of their own family or community (Menon & Bhasin, 2011).

Documentaries and movies have done a good job of addressing the stories of such brutality and trauma. It is noteworthy to highlight "*Khamosh Pani*" and "*Pinjar*". Examples of kidnapped women who marry their abductors are "*Veero*" in Khamosh Pani and "*Puro*" in Pinjar. The best illustration of abuse against women in their community is found in Khamosh Pani with Veero. Her father encouraged Veero to leap into a well in order to end her life. Therefore, Khamosh Pani represents the silence of women who, to live in the new nation-state, have to deny who they are (Sharma, 1993).

Sadaat Hussain Manto, in his story "*Khol do*", talks about the violence the brutality that women faced during the events that occurred after partition. This story is significant because it emphasises that women faced danger from all sides. Sakina trusts the men from her community and goes with them willingly—she does not expect them to violate her because of their shared community. However, they leave her in a condition worse than they found her, close to dead. It is symbolic of the ways that communal identity put women in harm's way during Partition: if she had not identified with the same community as the perpetrators of violence, she might have been safer. "*Khol Do*" is important because it shows how

women in that era were compelled to accept their lot in life; the meek way she takes off her pants is a physical representation of this. These women also had very little agency or security because even those who were supposed to be protecting them could use violence against them. Manto also wrote tales like “*Khuda ki kasam*” and “*Thanda Gosht*” (Manto, 1990) about the psychological horror of the trauma women endured during the partition riots.

In addition to these two forms of gender-based violence, State violations against women also caused psychological distress for the women. Women who had been kidnapped had no voice and were eventually returned to their own country. Authorities from Pakistan and India both referred to their efforts as “*Recovery Operations*,” demonstrating how much they were objectified. Consequently, women had a far more severe and lasting effect from the cataclysmic event known as the division than did men.

PARTITION AS A LIVING PROCESS

*“The 1947 Partition is undoubtedly one of the most momentous events in history, not only in terms of administrative dismantling, but it also resulted in large-scale displacements and the mass killings of people. It was a holocaust and one of the largest forced movements of people. We cannot minimise Partition’s legacy. Wars were fought because of this decision. One land was split into two nations and then three in 1971. Many of today’s problems in the South Asian subcontinent are rooted in Partition”.*² (Ayesha Jalal)

Undoubtedly, more than 70 years have passed since India was divided into two nations, yet the memories of that occasion endure. The people of the subcontinent are still plagued by various challenges that the partition failed to resolve. Below is a discussion of a few of them: -

Kashmir problem

One of the most significant effects of division is the dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan. The problem has affected relations between India and Pakistan in addition to affecting various other regions in South Asia. The problem persists despite several rounds of discussions, accords, and agreements. The issue of Kashmir persisted throughout the three wars between India and Pakistan, as well as the Indo-China War of 1962. India and Pakistan are still experiencing severe tension (Ali & Majid, 2019). Kashmir came to be recognised as a nuclear flashpoint between India and Pakistan with danger to South Asia after the two countries conducted nuclear tests in May 1998. This conflict has affected both India and Pakistan badly. Thousands lost lives; the economy was hugely affected. Both countries have played blame games against each other. India has always blamed Pakistan, and Pakistan did the same.³ The conflict in Kashmir has exacerbated all of the challenges and traumas that the partition was supposed to resolve. Kashmir is taken as a central point in the national ideologies of both states. Pakistan believes that the alphabet ‘K’ in ‘Pakistan’ is for Kashmir and Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir. The refusal of either country to concede has created a virtual deadlock that belies hopes for a peaceful solution, at least in the foreseeable future. Kashmir remains a stark and poignant reminder that after about 73 years, the ‘*unfinished business of partition*’ continues to exact a heavy toll on peace and stability in the region.

The Problem of Minorities

So horrible partition and its events were as horrible as the movement of refugees. Partition, in its essence, was believed to solve the problem of communalism, but it did not solve the issue. Rather, the issue of minorities became more complex. Minorities became second-class citizens (Chatterji, 2009). Menon and Bhasin claim that approximately eight to ten million had crossed borders, with a death toll of 500,000 to 1,000,000 lives (Menon & Bhasin, 2011). At the same time, Butalia writes in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* that twelve million people migrated and that death counts varied between 200,000 to two million people. The official history of partition abounds with similar figures and statistics, but after nearly seventy years of independence, there undoubtedly remain certain aspects that are usually left out of the grand narrative and which can only be found in memoirs and partition fiction. One of them is the aspect of nostalgia, the loss of homeland for millions who were violently uprooted and made to migrate to an unknown land that claimed to be their new country. Since the two countries divided citizens based on who was a Hindu/Sikh and who was a Muslim, all other aspects of one’s identity, such as culture, language, local customs, etc., were shrouded by religious megalomania. The homeless refugees lost not only their motherland but friendships were broken, bonds were severed, and the idea of home itself was altered (Bhalla, 2007). The trauma caused by partition is described beautifully by author Ismat Chughtai in the following words:

‘Those whose bodies were whole had hearts that were splintered. Families were torn apart..... The bonds of human relationships were in tatters, and in the end, many souls remained behind in Hindustan while their bodies started off for Pakistan’ (1998, 9)

²<https://www.dawn.com/in-depth/partition/comment/thelegacy-of-partition-ayesha-jalal/>

³<https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2017/8/15/kashmir-and-the-festering-legacy-of-partition>

Chughtai's statement views partition beyond facts, dates, and numbers, and political events. It reflects the damaging effects of partition on the masses. Butalia states that the refugees' *'experience of dislocation and trauma [that] shaped their lives . . . finds little reflection in written history'* (1998, 9). Those who migrated from India to Pakistan looked at it as the new *Madina*; refugees held offices in Pakistan, and now, after 70 years, the refugees are still treated as refugees. About 18 million refugees, even after more than 70 years of independence, continue to struggle for their identity. For those *Biharis* who remained in East Pakistan, a frightful fate awaited them. When Bangladesh gained independence in December 1971, an era of extraordinary animosity toward Biharis began. The Bihari minority's future in Bangladesh remains depressing. As *'pariahs'* or *'stranded Pakistanis,'* they continue to face hostility from the local populace. Many Bangladeshis believe that the Biharis deserve their plight because of their acts of collaboration with West Pakistani authorities (Zakaria, 1971). However, this resentment is also generated by self-interest, as many jobs and homes that belonged to the Bihari have been forcibly occupied. Unwanted by India and Pakistan, the Biharis seem condemned to live as a stateless and forgotten minority.

Security concerns of South Asia

South Asia could never become a peaceful region. The conflict in Kashmir is the main obstacle to the establishment of peace in the region. Both the parties to the conflict, India and Pakistan, have officially declared each other as the number one threat and enemy. The dispute in Kashmir, the principal source of ongoing enmity between India and Pakistan, has resulted in the institutionalisation of all historical irritants between the two countries. It has also led to the perception that India-Pakistan relations are congenitally flawed (Bose, 2009). The circumstances of partition, the hostile environment which Pakistan faced as a new nation, and the debilitating conflict over Kashmir have coalesced to create an atmosphere which has *'made normal relations between India and Pakistan well-nigh impossible'*. As Gowher Rizvi (Bangladeshi Historian) explains:

'Rivalry between India and Pakistan is built into the political structure of the two countries. The existence of one threatens the other...the dispute of Kashmir, a legacy of partition, reactivated all the issues and the traumas which partition was intended to stop...the establishment of Pakistan merely transformed the communal fight into an international rivalry'.

The Continuous low-intensity war over Kashmir is threatening the whole South Asian region. The problem of Kashmir has reactivated the question of partition. Both India and Pakistan are spending most of their budget on defence. In India, 3-4% of GDP is spent on defence. In the 2017-18 budget, there was a 10% increase in the defence budget from 860 billion in 2016-17 to 920 billion in 2017-18. Both India and Pakistan are trying to maintain conventional edges. Both states have been on top in arms procurement. The army is now increasingly becoming powerful and politicised. In May 1998, India and Pakistan both conducted nuclear tests. At present, both countries have huge amounts of nuclear warheads. India has about 100-110 nuclear warheads, while Pakistan has 110- 130 nuclear warheads. This has resulted in increasing tensions in the South Asian region. If the situation remains the same, South Asia could never become a peaceful region(Bose, 2019).

Water disputes and Environmental concerns

Beyond the India-Pakistan water dispute, there is also a dispute between India and Bangladesh, the roots of which also lie in the partition of 1947. The boundary line demarcated in 1947 defied all logic of geography and introduced a new dimension in the South Asian region, *'hydro-politics'* or conflict over water. While this conflict was resolved in the case of the Indus Rivers after protracted negotiations and costly solutions, the discord over the management of water resources in the Eastern region has not only continued but has become aggravated. It has created differences and antagonism between the two states over issues such as equitable sharing of water, shifting courses of rivers, flood control, harnessing of hydroelectric power, and related ecological and developmental issues. While water resources are important to both countries for irrigation, drinking water, fisheries, forestry, and navigational purposes, India's neighbour in the East is far more dependent upon them, given the natural landscape of the region (Rajan, 2016)

In 1971, East Pakistan gained independence after a bitter civil war and emerged as an independent Bangladesh. As is well-known, India played an important role in expelling Pakistani troops at the climax of the liberation struggle. Given India's role in the events and the gratitude that the new nation felt towards it, India was able to persuade Bangladesh to agree to the Farakka barrage proposal (Bass, 2014). By 1975, construction work over the barrage had been completed. The construction of the barrage has adversely affected Bangladesh. Its reported consequences include a drastic reduction in the flow of Ganges water into the country, downstream morphological changes in the river, intrusion of seawater into surface water, serious damage to crops that require intensive irrigation due to 'green revolution' technologies, and related environmental changes (Kawser & Samad, 2016). India is on the upper side, and Bangladesh is on the lower side. India can flood Bangladesh at any time in rainy seasons. Over the years, Bangladesh has raised these problems in regional and international bodies, but both countries have failed to find a mutually acceptable solution despite rounds of protracted negotiations. However, owing to political problems, the prospect of achieving a 'cooperative, multinational development' of the Ganges remains elusive. The failure to arrive at an agreement over the equitable sharing and management of water resources is exacting a heavy environmental cost on the region (Kawser & Samad, 2016).

However, the roots of this conflict go back to partition and the controversial boundary award, which imposed artificial trans-national borders over a unified natural landscape formed by one of the largest deltas in the world. In a sense, these boundaries continue to exact a heavy toll in terms of environmental and social costs, which have imposed extraordinary hardships on the people of the region, especially in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

The partition of India was the process of separating the country along sectarian lines, which occurred in 1947. The division had a very painful effect and completely ravaged both India and Pakistan. Violence followed partition immediately. All around the nation, there were communal riots that claimed lives, destroyed property, and left a terrible legacy that was difficult to overcome. Individuals were affected differently by the partition according to their class, religion, and urban/rural divide. Widespread murders targeted women as their primary victims. One of the greatest disasters of the modern era—possibly the largest human migration outside of war and starvation—was brought on by partition.

Communalism is still deeply ingrained in South Asian culture, and the effects of violence are still being felt there. Hindu nationalist groups like the BJP, which are gaining power in India, have been working to eradicate all traces of Muslim influence from history. Maharashtra has been at the forefront of these controversial attempts, with policies like the state's 2015 ban on cow slaughter directly attacking Muslim livelihoods and customs. Similarly, the Hindutva party MNS threatened to blow up movie theaters until well-known Bollywood directors agreed not to work with Pakistani actors. Indian movie screenings have also been banned in Pakistani theaters.

The relationship between the two nations is far from ideal right now. 73 years after the partition, Pakistan and India continued to define one another against the other, always bringing up 1947 in political discourse to further dehumanize the "other" on the other side of the border and foster a sense of Otherization. Thus, we can conclude that partition is a dynamic phenomenon that occurred in 1947 and cannot simply be forgotten. Partition will always be a major topic of discussion in both our historical and contemporary discourses. It will still influence our nationalism, politics, media discussions, foreign policy, and above all the way we build our identities.

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