



E-ISSN: 2789-1615  
P-ISSN: 2789-1607  
Impact Factor: 5.69  
IJLE 2021; 1(2): 135-141  
[www.educationjournal.info](http://www.educationjournal.info)  
Received: 12-07-2021  
Accepted: 13-09-2021

**Sanjit Kumar Das**  
Assistant Professor (Ad-hoc),  
Department of Education,  
SPM College for Women  
University of Delhi, New  
Delhi, India

## Revisiting partition historiography: An overview

**Sanjit Kumar Das**

### Abstract

Partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947 is one of the most catastrophic and traumatic historical phenomena in the history of human's existence. It led to the emergence of large-scale violence, massacre, riots and migration. Various historians, researchers and academicians have tried to explore this in their studies. In this paper, the researcher has tried to explore the historical journey of writings on partitions and migration. After the analysis of the varied literature, it may be inferred that there are majorly three phases of writings on the issue of partition and migration. Firstly, the focus was on finding the national and international reasons for the occurrence of partition and migration, which is popularly termed as high politics. Later on, the focus shifts towards the inclusion of exploring the regional and local reasons behind the partition and migration. In both these phases, the migration has been explained as a generalized experiences resulting from partition. They do not give space to the actual experiences of people who migrated as a result of partition of the Indian subcontinent. This lacuna in the field of research was explored in the new history writings, which moves beyond the dominant representations of migrations and give voices to the marginal groups including women, lower castes and others. They also move beyond the popular time frame of 1947- 1950 and explains that the migration kept on happening even after years of partition and its memoires are still afresh in the minds of the subsequent generations of migrants.

**Keywords:** Partition, refugee, migration, high politics, regional politics, new histories

### 1. Introduction

The 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947 is an important landmark in the history of the Indian subcontinent. On this day, on the one hand, India got independence from two-century old British rule, and on the other hand, the subcontinent got divided into two dominion nation-states, namely- India and Pakistan. When the Britishers finally divided and quit the Indian subcontinent their departure was accompanied by large-scale disturbances, violence and displacement in two newly formed nation- states India and Pakistan, particularly in Punjab and Bengal regions. The detachment of territory in 1947 led to massive social disruptions. The unexpected consequences of mass migration sowed the seeds of gigantic problems for provincial authorities all over the north and east India. The partition effect resulted in the form of mass migration due to 'ethnic cleansing'. This 'bloody' split forced a large number of populations to leave their ancestral places and roots behind and move forward to a journey of uncertainty (Kidwai, 2005) <sup>[15]</sup>.

Partition was not only a territorial division of a geographical terrain, rather it was the division of minds which left the bitter hatred and anger among the people of both the states- India and Pakistan alike. It also left the feelings of alienation among the refugees who had to leave their ancestral roots.

To understand these severe social and mental disturbances, dislocations and trauma which arose due to partition, various scholarly works pertaining to different fields of studies including history, political science, sociology, geography, anthropology etc., has to be analyzed, to explore how these literatures see the history of partition per se. In this paper, the researcher tries to explore how the historiography of partition has developed over the years.

#### 1.1 The first phase of history writing of partition: The high politics

In the early phases of history writing of partition, the focus was on exploring the causes and consequences of partition. It also enquired about the people and organizations who were responsible for this catastrophic historical calamity. The national and international politics were identified as the main catalyst for the said event. Due to the focus of this genre on the international and national politics, it has been termed as 'High Politics'. The phrase 'high politics' of Partition has become shorthand for the constitutional negotiations between the

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Sanjit Kumar Das**  
Assistant Professor (Ad-hoc),  
Department of Education,  
SPM College for Women  
University of Delhi, New  
Delhi, India

British and Indian leaders during the 1940s. The high politics is generally contrasted with the term 'history from below'. The term history from below, coined by the French historian Georges Lefebvre in his book, *The Coming of French Revolution* in the year 1939. Scholars from high politics are especially distinguished by their efforts to 'blame' individuals, parties and states and they generally focused on national and international developments which concluded in Partition.

But, this genre of writing has been criticized by new group of history writers, who believed that it is not including the dynamics of regional politics, which was very significant aspect for the emergence of situations which resulted in partition.

### 1.2 Regional politics: The impact of local powers

In the last three decades, there has been a noticeable shift in academic writing from an all-India perspective to inclusion of regions and local perspective regarding. These writings are influenced by the Cambridge and Subaltern Studies School of writing. In general, there are two common features of regional and local approaches regarding partition. Firstly, their focus was also, like the all-India studies, limited to understand why partition occurred, rather than on exploring its consequences. Secondly, they shift their focus beyond the crucial date of August 1947, especially to identify the causes of partition. As far as the first characteristic of regional and local approaches are concerned, they largely intend to work as a corrective to the traditional emphasis on high politics, which neglects vital details on how precisely support was mobilized, for instance, in the Pakistan struggle. These approaches of partition stresses on how the provincial peculiarities such as history, economic development, culture, language, the level of political development etc., formed the fortunes of successor states (Talbot, 1988) <sup>[25]</sup>. But this genre of writing was also lacking on the part of exploring the 'human experiences' of everyday life of partition and subsequent migration. This led to the emergence of new perspectives of writing, popularly known as 'New History', which focuses on human dimensions of partition.

### 1.3 New history: The history of the human dimension of partition

For many years typical accounts of partition tended to stop in 1947. Most of the writing restricted themselves without seriously considering whether continuities could be seen beyond this date. Further, in the earlier writings, the focus was on quantitative studies which believed that all the migrants had similar issues and experiences. But now historians and scholars from other disciplines as well have begun to explore these less travelled and less explored avenues, which led to the emergence of New History. This perspective is led by feminist writers and activists who emerged from an intellectual milieu in the early 1980s, resulting from the development of Gender Studies influenced by New Sociology as well as with the association of Subaltern School of Studies. In this approach, the subjective experiences of the migrants and refugees has been explored which believed in the idea that all the migrants are unique and have their own distinct experiences. The main focus of the 'New History' is to restore the agency to non-elite groups which have been neglected since years in the academic discourse. The shades of de-constructivist

methodologies of postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism which sought to place the subject at the centre of their research can be seen in this approach. This new approach moves away from a preoccupation with the colonial and nationalist elites and tries to study the underprivileged communities, not only as victims of partition or as a passive witness in history, but as active agents with their very own consciousness. The new history basically looks at the partition and its subsequent consequences from the perspective of 'subaltern class', the term which was used for the very first time by famous sociologist and academician Antonio Gramsci (Guha, 1983) <sup>[4]</sup>.

This approach of writing is not only unique in terms of its subject, but in terms of its methodologies also. It gives space to subjectivity by moving beyond the main stream sources of history writings and give equal importance to the 'voices of common people', through different methods. For instance, the methods like Oral History, testimonial literatures, folklores, letters, fictions, diaries etc. are used as important source to recreate the history of partition. This new history believes that these types of sources are one of the best ways to provide the avenue and strength to the voices of marginal groups. This genre is grounded in the 'reality' of people, who try to break their silence and wish to be heard (Sternbach, 1991) <sup>[23]</sup>.

This new history demonstrated that all communities, whether from the side of India or from the side of Pakistan, had their own set of victims and aggressors. So, the proponent of this new perspective thereby demystifies the stereotype of the 'other' community as the aggressors and offender of violence. These testimonies have also discovered the differential experiences of fear, violence, uprootedness, migration and rehabilitation which were previously incorporated in uniform official writings (Kaur, 2007) <sup>[16]</sup>. Now, they are trying to look at the impact of partition on the life of refugees on the one hand and that of the local community on the other. It also focuses on the complex social formation resulting from the interaction of two diverse communities, refugees and the host. These studies do not see migration as a one-time process and a stagnate one, rather see it in motion and try to see the impact of the same on the present scenarios as well (Talbot & Tatla, 2005) <sup>[24]</sup>.

These new histories try to give voice to subaltern groups and some of these are share below.

#### 1.3.1 History from the perspective of women

In contrast to 'High Politics' and official histories, the actual sufferers of partition, and primarily the women, became the new focal point of research in the new history approach (Major, 1995) <sup>[18]</sup>. Roots of the development of new history reinforced by the contemporary revival of mass communal riots symbolized by the 1984 Delhi anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of the then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. This incident made a significant shift in the history writing on partition and moved the writings from its earlier style and began to focus more on exploring the personal experiences of the victims. Taking clues from the experience of victims' of 1984 riots and the complex collaboration of the state and political groupings in the Delhi violence, a number of scholars undertook a more rigorous and organized study of female victims of Partition violence.

In this genre, Butalia's (1998) <sup>[4]</sup> 'The Other Side of Silence' formed the seminal text that announced this new departure. Her approach was extended by Menon and Bhasin (1998) <sup>[19]</sup> in their equally path breaking work entitled 'Borders and Boundaries'. They deeply examine the issues of the women who have been abducted during the 1947 Partition violence and recovered later on. The human wretchedness and physical and psychological wounds arising from abduction are hidden in the bald statistics shared by the governments in their official records. The writing of these new historians tries to give voice to these 'bald statistics.' They state that, the women were doubly harassed firstly, by their abductors and secondly, by the recovery machinery, of the governments of both sides, which forced them to leave the families they had already established. They say that the government machinery forced them to return to 'uncertain futures' in their own homeland, which was abandoned somehow by them. This coerced nature of the governments further intensified the suffering of recovered women even when they had settled with new husbands and families on the other sides of borders.

Furthermore, Kaur (2007) <sup>[16]</sup> shares about the traditional gender stereotypical thinking in the recovery processes and rehabilitation of the refugees by the post-colonial states. For instance, taking initiative for early marriages of the female orphans to control their sexuality. A separate refugee colony for young widows was established in Delhi and the social behaviour of the female residents of these spaces was closely monitored and controlled. The stigma attached to widowhood was reflected in this type of settlement. This colony's inhabitants were not allowed to go outside its boundaries without the permission of the female social workers (Kaur, 2007) <sup>[16]</sup>.

These aforesaid works mainly focused on the experiences of female victims who were recovered from Pakistan and were settled in Indian states. These works prompt one to believe that this 'gendered approach' is also very India and Punjab centric. Although, before making a final decision, it is also essential to understand the reality of the socio-political scenario of the then-contemporary times. However, comparatively very few studies are there in the educational discourse which talks about the human dimension of the recovery process and rehabilitation from the other sides of the borders.

The main proponents of 'gendered approach' argue that it was challenging and difficult for a researcher to study the experiences of women residing on both sides of the borders due to socio-political disturbances and the sensitivity of the situations. For example, it was believed that the sufferers of the other side of the border may not be comfortable in sharing their experiences with the 'other' (Ghosh, 2007) <sup>[13]</sup>. But now the scholars are trying to execute the comparative studies of refugee settlement in both Pakistan and India, following the work of Talbot (2006) and Virdee (2005) <sup>[24, 27]</sup>.

### 1.3.2 Tilt towards marginal groups

Current historical works which deal with the human cost of partition largely concentrate on refugees who were driven across the border by the violence it unleashed and left a number of minorities on both sides of the border. Although, it was the minority communities who largely had to leave the country and most of them migrated due to their very own reasons, but mass killing was the most important

reason for their uprootedness. But among these minorities there were groups of people who did not leave their roots. These religious minorities who for a variety of reasons chose not to emigrate to the 'right' new nation did not get due focus in the educational discourse so far. This new history discourse moves beyond conventional history writings of dominant high castes' experiences. However, it tries to capture the multiple experiences of the marginal groups who did not have their own cultural capital to pen down their experiences.

But, Chatterji (2019) <sup>[5]</sup> tries to examine this relatively less covered landscape in the context of Selimpur, West Bengal where the Muslims got affected largely by the decision of partition. She mentions that it was partition which suddenly reversed the political position of the Muslims of West Bengal especially in the city of Calcutta and reduced them to an exposed and vulnerable minority community in their own homeland which created a huge problem for them. The atmosphere of Calcutta for the Muslim became vulnerable soon after 1947 due to various riots and they realized that their lives and belongings were at high risk. But their prominent concern was how easily they could take their assets away with them and how efficiently they could deploy their skills to get a living on the other side of the border i.e., in East Bengal, which was largely dependent on what contacts they had there. But the problem was more acute if they wanted to remain stuck to West Bengal, which was not a simple step for them especially after the huge influx of refugees from the other side of the border. These disturbed and tense situations were further intensified with their location of living in West Bengal whether they lived in clusters or were scattered thinly in isolated compartments. It was also a matter of fact whether they were nearby the border or far from it.

Chatterji (2007) <sup>[6]</sup> states that partition generated migration not only changed the geographical belongingness but also changed the demography of the certain. She mentions that after the mass migration of Hindu refugees from East Bengal to southern municipal area of the Calcutta most of the Muslims had to leave that area, which was once dominated by them, and had to settle in borderland districts of Bengal. She says partition made the Muslims marginalized, dislocated and ghettoized. These people also faced atrocities in East Pakistan when they migrated to that country as people didn't accept them wholeheartedly. The people who did not go to East Pakistan and stayed back in Calcutta, were forcefully displaced by the Hindu migrants coming from the different parts of East Pakistan. These Muslims were forced to move to the rural areas from the urban areas of residence. She also shared that the Muslim dominated areas of Malda, West Dinajpur and 24 Parganas which were situated in south Calcutta were forcefully taken over by the Hindu Refugees who came from East Bengal. These communities, even lost their claim over their sacred spaces (Chatterji, 2007) <sup>[6]</sup>. She also tries to explore the differences in the situation of Uttar Pradesh's Muslims vis-à-vis Bengali Muslims after the partition. In Uttar Pradesh, Muslim still had space to live in urban spaces, but in Bengal they did not have space to reside in city areas and were forced to move beyond the boundaries of city.

In addition to this, Dasgupta (2010) <sup>[10]</sup> shares about the journey of migration of people of East Bengal to Assam. She asserts that people of East Bengal started migrating towards Assam during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their

major aim of doing so was to secure land and employment. Even after partition, the people kept on coming to the state. Interestingly, this movement of people increased manifold after the creation of boundaries between East Pakistan and India. According to the Census data of 1961 and 1981, it was observed that there was an increase of 2.7 million in the population of East Bengal's migrants in the state of Assam. Majority of these migrants were 'illegal'. According to the rules of Indian government, the people who came from Pakistan during the time of 1947 to 1952, were treated as refugees and given the citizenship of India automatically. But the migrants who came in the following years are still treated as illegal.

Furthermore, Scholars like Ghosh (1998) <sup>[12]</sup> tries to describe the atrocities of Bihari Muslims, who faced numerous displacements after the immediate result of October-November 1946's communal violence. Repercussion of this communal violence was very traumatic for Bihari Muslim who firstly migrated to West Bengal from Bihar, thereafter to East Bengal (East Pakistan) from West Bengal and then to Pakistan after the 1971's war of liberation. Till now a huge number of Bihari Muslims are still living in Bangladesh at Geneva camps, as 'stateless' people following the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation state in 1971. The Bihari Muslim who had migrated to East Bengal in the early years of partition, ironically, now are living there as stateless people because of refusal of Pakistan to accept them as Refugees. In this way, the followers of new history approach try to explore the untouched aspects and experiences of migrants. They shared subaltern perspectives related to partition and migration. They moved beyond the traditional (so called mainstream) migration writings. They explored the experiences of Bihari and Bengali Muslims migrated to East Pakistan and who did not leave the country (India) after partition. They also discussed about migration in Assam and provide a multifaceted reality of partition and subsequent partition.

### 1.3.3 Caste and Class factors in the process of migration

Caste and Class were major areas which were not very much explored in the earlier historiography of partition because of its Punjab-centric nature. Due to the influence of new history, this lesser explored factor got its due recognition in the history writings. For instance, Kaur (2007) <sup>[16]</sup> asserts that the narratives of Partition and migration history deliberately make the position of Dalit banal and invisible. The historiography of partition and its related migration is themed around the process of development of modern postcolonial India, in which the narratives of 'Dalit' is still perceived as an 'outsider'. She further notes that government policies of rehabilitation are also silently and subtly biased towards the upper castes and classes, specifically in the time period of 1947 and 1965. In her words: "The narrative absence becomes a gauge of both the discursive and the physical exclusion of 'Untouchable' refugees from the legitimate community of Partition migrants" (Kaur, 2007, pg. 281) <sup>[16]</sup>.

For instance, Choudhury (2009), Talbot & Singh (2013), Choudhury (2017), Banerjee (2017) <sup>[8, 26, 7, 3]</sup> argues that migration among East Bengalis from East Pakistan to West Bengal was primarily shaped by three basic imperatives: *dhan* (wealth/property), *maan* (honour/prestige) and *praan* (life). Majority of those who migrated at that time belonged

to upper caste and class. They state that in the early years of partition, the upper-caste Hindus with their higher socio-cultural and financial capital managed to settle themselves in Bengal. Although, many refugees (of upper caste and upper class) who came during the early years of partition didn't register themselves as 'displaced persons' officially. They have the opinion that this 'tagging' would hamper their socio-cultural capital. They also didn't take help from the government as they used to see it against their pride (Roy, 1973) <sup>[21]</sup>.

Beside these, upper caste Hindu there were another section of refugee who belonged to the middle or lower-middle income group. They had lesser education and social networks in comparison to earlier migrants. Beside these two groups, there was another group mainly consisting of peasants, landless labourer, fisherman etc., They were mainly Dalit in origin. They were perceived as a 'heavy economic burden' and were settled down mostly in the regions outside of West Bengal (Talbot & Singh, 2013) <sup>[26]</sup>. They were not made part of literary writing for a long time, as the eminent works on Partition of Bengal have typically represented a categorically positive figure of *bhadralok* Hindu refugee. Such scholarly efforts do not incorporate or explain the cultural surprise and the loss of morality amongst the poorer lower-class immigrants in the money-oriented milieu of Calcutta.

As a result of this, the second-generation of Dalit evacuees tried to become literate and 'penned down' their experiences and memories of partition, distinct from the perspective of upper caste and class. Through their writings they attempted to break two of the most stereotypical images, which are '*Sonar Bangla*' and 'unified migrant'. Basically, they focused on the post-modern idea of 'multiple realities'. These Dalit writers try to question the naturalized value systems which try to delimit the ethical and aesthetic brackets of each class. They embrace the tag of being a refugee with great pride and see it as their reality and questions the 'utopian' idea of '*Sonar Bangla*' and explains that the situation in East Bengal was also not much different from West Bengal. There also the discriminations against the marginalized groups, specifically Dalits, was rampant. So, the economic situation and social position of the people had remained the same after the migration also. They were still considered as *Chhotolok* West Bengal and were forced to remain in the margins. The only thing which was added to their identity is that of a Refugee, in addition to their identity of being a member of a marginalized group.

Another perspective of the same is shared by Feldman (2004) <sup>[11]</sup>, who asserts that particularly middle-class Bengali immigrants of Hindu religion, have miserable sentiments related to Partition. The narratives shared by them are filled with virtual myth which celebrates the 'unadulterated' past of East Bengal and is coupled by their unsatisfactory experiences of West Bengal. The elitist representation of Partition in fictions as well as memoirs, which is usually developed by the *bhadralok* completely side-lines the experiences of other immigrants. These narratives also help them in accumulating immense power in the socio-political arenas of their areas of rehabilitation. While sharing their pre-partition experiences, they provide a utopian vision of their homes in East Bengal and usually refuse to share the hierarchical relationships of landlord and peasant, which are the root cause of sectarianism and hatred

in East Bengal. In their memories, they share their own stories of violence and decline in status, but they do not acknowledge the atrocities faced by the East Bengali Muslim or Dalit wage-workers. They do this consciously, as they do not want to jeopardize the positive impressions of East Bengal in front of others.

So, it may be inferred from the writings of new history that it would be abstruse to generalize the experiences of migrants without acknowledging their caste, class and linguistic identity. The upper caste and class had a different experience of the migration which are shared by majority of researcher and academicians, but there are other groups of people also, including Dalits and people belonging to lower strata of the society, who had their own unique struggles and the new history tries to provide platform to raise their voices.

### 1.3.4 Exploration of late migration

Majority of the literature which focuses on the partition of Indian subcontinent, limits their explorations and explanations of migration to only the early years of partition but there were many communities who did not migrated immediately after the partition but later on. For instance, Sindhi community of Karachi. The followers of New History approach try to unravel the reasons behind their late migration. For example, Ansari (2005) <sup>[1]</sup> states in her 'Life After Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh: 1947-1962' that after the riots in different areas of India, more than 2,00,000 Muslims left for Karachi. But, when Karachi's premier, Mr. Ayub Khan, didn't follow the Pakistan's government decision of rehabilitation of those migrants, then a deadly riot broke upon. Subsequently 60% of them were rehabilitated in different parts of Karachi. As a result of this, a tussle arose between the migrants and the local Sindhi community and they started moving to the Indian side of the border due to the fear of religious persecution and economic downfall.

Furthermore, another important aspect of new history, i.e., Reverse Migration, has been discussed by Zamindar (2007) <sup>[28]</sup>. She shares that when some members of the Muslim community returned back to Delhi in 1948 from Karachi due to absence of proper housing and food facility in newly formed state of Pakistan, the government of India introduced a permit system to limit the influx not only in Delhi, but across the western frontiers also from 14 July 1948. This shows that the people who migrated to other part of the border were usually looked down upon and were forced to live a life of misery by their destiny after returning back to their homeland.

Further, Singh (2010) <sup>[22]</sup> shared about the migration of the people of 'Chakma community', which is an indigenous tribal community based in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Their population is approximately 3,50,000 and is the largest of the thirteen hill tribe present in the area. They are settled in the southern part of Chittagong District situated in the India-Bangladesh border. Tripura and Mizoram states of India are near to the residence of this community. These tribal groups are different from the Bengali people in multiple ways. For instance, they have Sino-Tibetan descent whereas Bengali people have northern Aryan descent. Moreover, the language of the Chakma community is more similar to the languages of North-eastern states of India and that of Barma, whereas the language of Bengali is historically

traced from the Sanskrit and Hindi Language. As far as the religious belief is concerned, the people of Chakma community predominantly follow Buddhist religion, whereas the people of Bengal either follow Hinduism or Islam predominantly.

During colonial times, Chittagong Hill Tracts were treated as an 'excluded area' and the entry of non-tribal people was not allowed. Although these groups had partial rights of limited self-government during those times. But in 1964, the Pakistan's government terminated the special status provided to the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the areas were opened for the settlement of non-tribal people also. During the war of liberation, 1971, Pakistan's government recruited the members of the Chakma community in their army, whereas the Bangladesh government allocated funds to Bengali families to get settled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, by stating the fact that the area was less crowded as compared to other regions of the country. As a result of this, the population of Bengali people increased in the area and by the year 1981, they constituted one third of the population of the area.

In order to counter this influx of 'outsider' in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the people of Chakma community formed the People's Solidarity Association (PSA), which demanded regional autonomy of the Chakma tribal community. They also tried to pressurize the government to resettle the lands taken over by Bengali immigrants since the year 1970 and to ban the immigration of people of any other community in future. They feared that this large-scale influx may make them a minority in their very own area. But the Bangladesh government rejected the demand of the group for regional autonomy. As a result of this, the Chakma community initiated an armed insurgency to restore their autonomy. But the Bangladesh government alleged that these people are given arms and training by the Indian military to create disturbance in the internal matters of the country. Consequently, Bangladesh's government started attacking the unarmed Chakma villagers. In order to save their lives, many people of the community crossed the border and got settled in the Indian states of Tripura and Mizoram. Gradually, their population increased manifold in the states of Tripura and Mizoram as a form of refugee influx (Singh, 2010) <sup>[22]</sup>.

In this way, the 'new history' has not only included a human aspect to bald statistics of deaths, abduction and refugee migrants from the both sides of the borders, but it has also provided scope for the victims to share their voice in academic discourse. They also moved beyond the popular timeframe of 1947-1950 and presented that the migration of people kept of happening even after years of partition.

### 1.3.5 Gaps in new history

Despite giving new perspectives to see the history of partition, there are some shortcomings in the new history approach. For instance, the assortment of ever-increasing numbers of individuals' personal testimonies has added immensely to the empirical depth of knowledge and understanding related to Partition, migration and refugee hood, but it missed the conceptual framework and comparative understanding. Usually, the points shared by the researchers are fragmentary and lead to incommensurate points of view. Even though they include the subjective experience of suffering, the process of rehabilitation whether their settlement was smooth or tough, got

neglected. These all makes it difficult endeavor for the scholars of various disciplines including that of history, political science and anthropology etc., to generate new meaningful narratives which are not existent in the field of study. Usually, these narratives shared in the studies following the new history approach reproduces the same incomprehensive experiences of uprootedness and violence through first-hand account.

Further, there are also many other methodological apprehensions surrounding the use of sources like oral testimonies which are usually based upon recall and retrospective creation of memory, sometimes, which may be faulty. Personal accounts can- and do- act as a useful source for amalgamating official history with that of community histories, however, they can be subjective and incomplete in its nature. For instance, in one of the famous novels by Baldwin (2001) <sup>[2]</sup>, 'What the Body Remembers', one of the protagonists Sardar Kushal Singh, recollects the wordings of one commentator, "forgets many things now. Only the terrible things the Muslims did to us." He remembers only that.... "He weeds memories like a mali (gardener), ripping out the ones that mark the colors and textures of those he wishes to grow." (Baldwin, 2001, p. 527) <sup>[2]</sup>. Usually, these oral testimonies do not register silences with regard to the memories of abduction, rape and humiliation. So, in these cases the truth may not be disclosed completely as most of the participants do not want to relive those days of horror. It may be possible that the partition sufferers may also not be willing to share their experiences of tussle with the governments in everyday life. Alongside, the participants may also exaggerate their rootedness to their *desh* and the amount of immovable property including land and property, which they abandoned when they migrated to their new home land.

These writings are usually based on the narratives of people who believe their memories to be 'complete' and 'unbiased'. These partial, exaggerated and fractured memories may develop certain historical discourses which may need strong mediation between community's consciousness and national consciousness (Pandey, 2001) <sup>[20]</sup>. So, as a researcher one needs to be conscious of the fact that, people usually forget minute details of the event over a course of time and people also construct their memories on the basis of their perceptions and stereotypes. So, the scholars of new history paradigm must triangulate the data to verify the authenticity of the facts shared by the respondents to bring objectivity in their study and to reduce the possibility of biased and stereotyped representations of the pasts.

#### 1.4 Conclusion

From the analysis of varied literature, it may be inferred that, there is a seismic shift in the researches and narrative writings pertaining to Partition. Firstly, the ideas of High politics emphasize the reasons of the division, whereas the regional politics focuses on the issues which germinated at the local levels and led to the partition of the subcontinent. Furthermore, the new history tries to give spaces to human experiences and consequences of the partition and migration in their writings and maintain subjectivity in their representation. This new approach is very crucial as it helps in countering the historiographical 'appropriation' of the past by the dominant groups. Moreover, it also questions the unproblematic nature of weaker sex and subalterns.

As a result of new history writings, some 'missing voices' are coming in the partition historiography which comprises the experiences of migration and violence among the marginalized groups. These 'missing' and 'marginalized' voices in the literature help to explore how experiences of migration, refugee hood, resettlement and violence were interceded by gender, prevalent power structures and dominant norms and convention pertaining to caste, class and community.

But the new history may be prone to fractured biased and stereotypical construction of experiences of partition as they are dependent on the memoirs and personal testimonials of the people. Further, the researches which are based on this paradigm also have methodological concerns, as the findings of these studies can't be generalized to develop a comprehensive understanding of experiences of partition.

#### 2. References

1. Ansari S. Life after partition: Migration, community and strife in Sindh, 1947-1962. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005.
2. Baldwin SS. What the body remembers. London: Black Swan, 2001.
3. Banerjee S. Different identity Formations in Bengal: Partition Narratives by Dalit Refugees in Interventions. 2017;19(4):550-565. Retrieved from: DOI: 10.1080/1369801X.2016.1277154
4. Butalia U. The Other side of silence: Voices from the partition of India. New Delhi: Penguin, 1998.
5. Chatterji J. Partition's legacies. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2019.
6. Chatterji J. The spoils of partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
7. Chaudhury ABR. Narrated Time, Constructed Identities: Displaced Hindus after Partition in West Bengal in South Asia Chronicle, 2017, 7. Retrieved from- <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/19504/06%20-%20Focus%20-%20Basu%20Ray%20Chaudhury%20-%20Narrated%20Time,%20Constructed%20Identities.%20Displaced%20Hindus%20after%20Partition%20in%20West%20Bengal.pdf?sequence=4>
8. Choudhury ABG. Engendered Freedom: Partition and East Bengali Migrant Women, in Economic and Political Weekly, 2009, 44(49). Retrieved from- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25663863>.
9. Chaudhury ABR. Narrated Time, Constructed Identities: Displaced Hindus after Partition in West Bengal in South Asia Chronicle, 2017, 7. Retrieved from- <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/19504/06%20-%20Focus%20-%20Basu%20Ray%20Chaudhury%20-%20Narrated%20Time,%20Constructed%20Identities.%20Displaced%20Hindus%20after%20Partition%20in%20West%20Bengal.pdf?sequence=4>
10. Das gupta A. Denial and Resistance: Sylheti Partition 'Refugees' in Assam in Contemporary South Asia. 2010;10(3):343-360.
11. Feldman S. Bengali State and Nation Making: Partition and Displacement Revisited in International Social Science Journal. 2004;55(175):111-121.
12. Ghosh P. Papiya Ghosh, 'Partition's Biharis', in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), Islam, Communities and the

- Nation: Muslim Identities in South Asia and Beyond, New Delhi: Manohar, 1998, 229-64pp.
13. Ghosh P. Partition and the South Asian diaspora: Extending the subcontinent. London: Routledge. 2007.
  14. Guha R. Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.
  15. Kidwai BA. Aazadi Ki Chhavi Mein. New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2005.
  16. Kaur R. Since 1947: Partition narratives among Punjabi migrants of Delhi. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.
  17. Lefebvre G. The coming of French revolution (Edition referred 2015): France: Princeton Classics, 1939.
  18. Major A. The Chief Sufferers: Abduction of Women during the Partition of India in South Asia. 1995;18:57-72.
  19. Menon R, Bhasin K. Borders and boundaries: Women in India's partition. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.
  20. Pandey G. Remembering partition: Violence, nationalism and history in India. London: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
  21. Roy R. The agony of West Bengal: A study in union state relation. Calcutta, New Delhi: New Age Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1973.
  22. Singh DK. Stateless in South Asia: The Chakmas between Bangladesh and India (Sage studies on India's north east.). New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2010.
  23. Sternbach NS. Remembering the Dead: Latin American Women's "Testimonial" Discourse in Latin American Perspectives. 1991;18(3):91-102.
  24. Talbot I. Divided cities: Partition and its aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar 1947-1957. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006.
  25. Talbot I. Punjab and the raj, 1849 - 1947. New Delhi: Manohar, 1988.
  26. Talbot I, Singh G. The partition of India. India: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
  27. Virdee P. 'Partition and locality: Case Studies of the impact of partition and aftermath in the Punjab region 1947-61', unpublished PhD thesis, Coventry University, 2005.
  28. Zamindar VFY. The long partition and the making of modern South Asia: Refugees, boundaries, histories. Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2007.