

## *CHAPTER VI*

### *Women in Partition literature, films and memoirs*

The partition of India is one of the most debatable questions in the South Asian history. This tumultuous event has shaped the lives of millions of people in many ways. Popular sentiment and perception regarding partition has been reflected in different arenas of literature, though some has registered the issue of partition with anguish or annoyance and profound unhappiness. There are few texts that have depicted the various psychological, political, economic and social effects of partition. Partition and its accompanying violence have inspired many creative minds to generate a literary depiction of such a tragic incident. The historic event of partition of India's subcontinent has enriched Bengali and other literatures to their highest peaks. It has dealt mainly with two factors: firstly, they have been based on the tales of tremendous grief and distress of the uprooted people and secondly they have been represented as the stories of determination and never ending fight of the refugees for their survival on the foreign land against all odds and riddles. A good number of rootless persons have also rendered valuable contributions for the enrichment of Bengali so far as other Indian literatures are concerned. Truly speaking, Partition of India has been such a revolutionary event that spontaneously produced numerous masterpieces. While some creations have depicted the massacre during the refugee migration, others have concentrated more on the aftermath of the partition in terms of the troubles faced by the refugees in both sides of the borders. Even now, more than seventy years after the partition, works on fiction as well as films are being made on that frenzied event of partition. The event of partition along with its prelude and legacy has been the subject of different scholars.

The word 'holocaust' which is a European term and had a direct relation with history and the agony of holocaust, was also intimately connected with the history of partition of India. The euphoria of emancipation buried under the debris of fear, torture, killing, insecurity and uncertainty. Very recently, a new trend of comparing the partition with the holocaust has commenced. Apart from it, with the growing importance of subaltern studies and marginalized languages in history writing, the experiences of individuals have come to the fore front. With the advancement of this trend, the

separate and sporadic experiences of riots, agony of displacement and the relentless struggle for survival have intermingled with other fragmented histories of the time. In reality this history cannot be termed as a totality; but a conglomeration of the pang-pathos and wound of individuals. All these sagas of sorrow, miserable plight of individuals give rise to a new definition of history and have brought about a radical change in the trend of historiography.<sup>1</sup> In this periphery of experience based history the stories related to partition stealthily entered. This paradigm of experience based history has given a permanent room to fiction. The characters of fictions may be fictitious, but their pain is not imaginary. It is history and nothing but a history. According to Anita Desai, "In India, the past never disappears. It does not even become transformed into a ghost. Concrete, physical, palpable-it is present everywhere. Ruins, monuments, litter the streets, hold up the traffic create strange islands in the modernity of the cities. No one fears or avoids them-goats and cows graze around them, the poor string up ropes and rags and turn them into dwellings, election campaigners and cinema distributors plaster them with pamphlets-and so they remain a part of the here and now, of today".

Partition of India was not merely the division of the countries like France and Germany; it was division of a subcontinent. So the division was among the provinces also, i.e. Bengal and Punjab. The Indian literature had no separate entity of its own; it was the accumulation of various literatures of various languages. That was termed as Indian literature. The Punjabi language and alphabets were to be treated as most affected one owing to partition. The language of Kashmir was the third victim after Punjab and Sindhi. It is really astonishing that due to partition Urdu and Bengali literature became enriched and occupied a healthy position in comparison to other languages of other states. Following partition another epoch making event took place and that was the movement for recognizing Bengali literature in East Pakistan. This movement subsequently led to the birth of Bangladesh<sup>3</sup>. If we penetrate deep into the partition literature it would be evident that being the doyens of the Bengali literary arena some writers exhibited their silence and apathy towards partition literature. The opinion of Satya Guha was very pertinent in this perspective. In his thought provoking composition '*Ekaler gadya podya andoloner dalil*' he once expressed that those litterateurs who claimed to be renowned writers or the main path finder for enrichment of Bengali literature were devoid of any human feeling and sentiment.<sup>4</sup> In

the Sealdah station along with other stations and also in the transit camps of India innumerable civilized people became uncivilized. But Tarashankar, Banaphul, Buddhadeb Basu or other writers of pre partition era did not pay heed to the matter. Of course some accounts were there that only expressed the torture on womenfolk, nothing else. Eminent poet Amitabha Dasgupta made a valuable comment that after the massive destruction over partition no adequate number of discussion and writings were available over chaotic issue of partition. Manik Bandopadhyay and Tarashankar Bandopadhyay were not as vocal in their writings over the partition as expected.<sup>5</sup>

The Womenfolk occupied a significant position in partition literature of India as well as East and West Bengal was concerned. The selfless sacrifice of womenfolk in diverse fields of society, their incessant struggle with new situation and also the violence they suffered were presented from different perspectives by different scholars. It was beyond question that this massive holocaust of partition brought about a radical change in the attitude and philosophy of life of the women. This change was really different in character. The litterateurs recorded and painted their women character from their own viewpoint. Not only the partition of 1947, again in 1971 when Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation, from that period onwards a new perspective of partition literature opened. The memory of bloodshed, violence, degradation of human sentiment became a scar that was oozing still. Those incurable wounds of humongous event were vividly represented in the compositions of different litterateurs of Punjab and both the Bengals. A historical portrayal of the human tragedy following partition of India through the exploration of short stories, memories and histories could creatively trespass across the border between fictional and historical narratives<sup>6</sup>.

The same spirit was also reflected in contemporary Bengali novels, poems, memoirs and films. As the effect of partition in Bengal was significantly different from the sudden cataclysmic division in Punjab due to a number of historical and socio-political reasons; so the Bengali literature based on partition experience was also different especially from the point of view of the responses to 1947. The issues relating the gender, livelihood and ways of struggle had different impetus on the Bengali novels and stories of partition.<sup>7</sup> The outstanding contributions of different eminent personalities, litterateurs, poet and short story writers of West Bengal,

Pakistan and specially Bangladesh had pioneering roles in depicting sad tales of displaced persons mainly hailing from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to West Bengal of India and from West Punjab to East Punjab of Indian Territory. Untold stories, untold agonies, pathos, mass abduction, genocide, unabated rapes, molestation, physical tortures, sexual abuses and the helpless conditions of displaced persons, specially the womenfolk, have been vividly described by those literary personalities which were distinctly and elaborately presented and revealed through their valuable creations. The main themes of their artistic explorations were to represent the fact that the Bengalis though became politically and geographically isolated but emotionally and culturally were united and indivisible. The realist discourses of art and literature could not reflect the historical reality of partition.

The voices from different angles viz. the marginalized landless peasants, land owing middle class Hindu refugee, abducted women etc. constructed a wide range narratives. Various narratives of Bengal from late 1940 to 1970s ventilated and depicted how refugees confronted and articulated the violation of social as well as personal space.<sup>8</sup> The then volatile political condition created such a situation for the writers of both West Bengal and East Bengal and later on Bangladesh to revisit the past. Most of the writers were politically conscious and had composed a number of short stories and novels about riot and partition, though their works were varied and eclectic in thematic and artistic content and their responses were elliptical.

Reputed historian Urvashi Butalia in her invaluable contribution in '*The Other side of Silence- Voices from the Partition of India*' has conducted some interviews with the victimized Punjabi women of Partitioned India and has observed minutely the wounds of women of Punjab in the event of Partition. The women endured the oppression silently. Butalia has tried to bring out those hidden wounds of the women in full public view through her observation and investigation. Many historians who dealt with and researched with the Partition history considered that the "Silence became their main psychological defense"<sup>9</sup>. Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin in their book *The Borders and boundaries- Women in India's Partition* analyze it from the dynamics of the morality and aesthetic attitude. The uprooted women of Punjab remained silent and tight lipped. Taking the advantage of Partition, some miscreants belonging to other communities, religions and states dared to outrage the modesty and dignity. The

troublesome question of women's sexuality i.e. impure, polluted etc. insisted on women's silence ' through the attachment of shame and stigma to this very profound violations of self'.<sup>10</sup> Refugees, the women in particular became the silent victims of oppression, suppression and molestation. During this period of partition the two nations viz. India and Pakistan experienced unprecedented brutality, bloodshed, slaughter and travesty of human values that remained in the collective memory as a 'vivid scar' still oozing the blood of millions'.<sup>11</sup>

#### i) NOVELS

The writers of Bengali literature remained silent and dormant when the Partition took place. However, in due course different novels, poems, films on partition ventilated the emotion, pang and pathos of rootless people. The hardship and trauma of refugees were the source of inspiration behind the outstanding creations of the period. Though history is always accompanied by the male aggression which is in fact overlooked in the patriarchal set up, still it cannot be denied that the women during partition were compelled to pay the cost crime as they were the worst victim.<sup>12</sup> Those trauma of women community and their relentless endeavour in coping with changing time were manifested in different fictions which detected various injustice at the heart of the vivisection.

A sizable number of Bengali novels were written on the back drop of the dreadful events of partition. In this regard reference could be made of the following novels viz. *Nilkantha Pakhir Khoje* of Atin Bandyopadhyaya; *Rani Palanka* of Bijan Bhattacharjee, *Jalpahiati* of Jibanananda Das; *Epar Ganga*, *Opar Ganga* of Jyotirmoyee Devi, *Lal mati* and *Bidisha* of Narayan Gangopadhyay, , *Banga Bhanga O Sampradayik Rajniti* of Badruddin Umar, *Arjun*, *Atma prakash* , *Purva Paschim*, *Jyotnakumari* of Sunil Gangapadhyay, *Jal pare pata nare*, *Protibeshi* ,*Prem nei* of Gourkishore Ghosh, *sarbajanin* Manik Bandapadhyay ; *Samudra Hriday* of Prativa Basu; *Khandita* of Samaresh Basu, *Lajuklata* of Devi Rajlakhmi; Elias Aktaruzzaman ; *Garh Shrikhanda*, *Nirbus* of Amiya Bhusan Majumder , *Titas ekti nadir naam* of Adwaita Mallabardhan, *Keya patar nouka*, *Nonajol Methemati*; Prafulla Roy, *Hasu Banu* of Probodh Kumar Sanyal, *Badwip* of Sabitri Roy, *Bangla desher Hriday hote* of Tarapoda Roy etc. Some novels were composed by the authors of East Pakistan and later on Bangladesh. Those were: Kayes, Ahmed's *Nirbasito*

*ekjan*; Abu Ishak's *Surjyo Dighal Bari* ; Taslima Nasreen's *Phera*, Selina, Hossain's *Katatara Prajapati*, *Japito Jivan* etc.

Following the shocking event of Partition of India in the year 1947, few academicians, scholars and writers contributed to the development of Bengali literature both of West and East Bengal. Refugee women and their stigma, their relentless endeavour to adjust with changing time had vividly been sketched by authors from different angles. The trials and tribulations of the refugee women had been differently articulated by innumerable novelists in their own fashion. Jyotirmoyee Devi's *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* was first published in 1967 under the title '*Itihasey Streeparva*' in a reputed Bengali periodical called *Prabasi*.<sup>13</sup> This novel was superb in its qualities, it threw light on the character of Sutara, the heroine of the novel. After being displaced, she is proposed by her intimate friend Sakina to be a member of Sakina's family through the bondage of marriage. Sutara summarily rejects the proposal with a plea that as Sakina's community is responsible for the deaths of her parents and abduction of her elder sister she is not mentally prepared to accept the unholy proposal. In the realm of partition literature Jyotirmoyee Devi had the courage to break the silence of women through the protest of Sutara. This fiction composed by Jyotirmoyee Devi on partition is nothing but a representative text of women's experience of social hostility and oppression after being rejected in their home as well as in their respective communities.<sup>14</sup>

However, in Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel *Purbo Paschim*, Pratap's sister Supriti is also characterized as a victim of refugee activities. Her husband was killed in the process of trying to free his land from the refugees who have forcibly occupied it. Supriti's in-laws, who are of West Bengal origin, held her East Bengal roots responsible for all the problems that fell on the family. She was now forced to lead a life of penury; restricted to just one single room in the house and denied any source of livelihood. Eventually, not able to bear this kind of treatment anymore, and specially to ensure a better future for her daughter, she moved out of the home into her brother's home. Keen to get her daughter educated, she used whatever little she had been able to bring from her in-laws' home and thus refusing to be a burden on her brother. Eventually, her daughter also started giving private tuitions to earn some extra money for her education. She grew up to become a successful doctor and settled

in London<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the similar motifs of primacy to education and to work for a living are visible in this case of the West Bengal women as well, dispossessed of their lands by the refugees. This displacement never the less widened their mental horizon and proceed towards a self- reliant identity.<sup>16</sup>

Amiya Bhushan Majumdar, an acclaimed novelist, composed *Garh Srikhanda* set in a time span of four years between the famine of 1942 and the partition of 1947. The novel presented 'the lives of the landless, land- hungry, land-greedy and land-occupants'. There are many human characters but the protagonist is none but the *Garh Srikhanda* (Srikhanda, the fort).<sup>17</sup>. Unprecedented outbreak of the famine, communal frenzy and vivisection of India's subcontinent were the main sources in depicting the pathetic conditions of the people of a particular area which was situated near the border of Bengal. The untold pathos, the suffering of the destitute have become the main features round which the novelist Amiya Bhusan has sketched neatly, distinctly and perfectly through the different characters of his masterpiece novel *Garh Shrikhanda* Majumdar drew the vivid pictures of the art of livelihood and the sufferings of the downtrodden humanity belonging to the lower strata of the society. Moreover, middle class people of the society also suffered a lot. The simultaneous and successive occurrence of famine, partition, communal disturbances brought about a dramatic change in the whole atmosphere of the country. The complexion of society, politics, country and its economy came to a total halt. Availing the advantages of disrupted condition of the country, a section of opportunists thought otherwise.

The unfortunate distressed men and women of both the communities brushing aside their religious bondage and caste system consolidated under the banner of humanity. They faced the impending troubles united and with firm determination. In season or out of season both the communities came forward with their helping hands. The tragic end of abortive amorous affairs between Suro and Madhai ended in frustration. Tepi was compelled to adopt the profession of flesh trade and Tepi's mother was forced to be the companion of a vagabond traveler or *Boiragi*. Amiya Bhusan's farsighted and penetrating insight towards human psychology had perfectly been depicted through the characters of the above mentioned personalities. Here lied the erudition of a great novelist like Amiya Bhusan Majumder.<sup>18</sup>

The name of the novel *Arjun* authored by Sunil Gangopadhyay is worth mentioning here in connection with the saga of partition. *Arjun* is dedicated to the freedom fighter of Bangladesh war.<sup>19</sup> The novel focuses on the life of the title character Arjun. Arjun, an educated fellow is compelled to take refuge in the refugee camp of Dumdum after partition. The agony and ecstasy of the uprooted persons, their incessant struggle for survival, their plight and pathos, even their frantic attitude puzzle Arjun to a great extent. Life is nothing but a conglomeration of truth and that truth is the main element of life. So our claim for true livelihood can at any case be unrealistic. The partition had snatched away the boyhood of Arjun. He has to undergo the relentless struggle for existence even in the post partition era. His struggle for livelihood is unending and continuous. His struggle takes a new shape in his newly settled colony. At that junction of life Arjun becomes suspicious over the existence of religion. The religion which is meant for protection of mankind and which escorts human being to the way of a new consciousness and realization, that very religion absorbs the complexities of new civilization and due to this complicated and complex evolution of time religion also fails to convey the message that the 'Road was not meant for any particular one'.<sup>20</sup>

Famous poet and novelist Jibanananda Das authored one of his best compositions i.e. *Jalpaihati* in the year 1948. The novel is based on the lives of the Hindus of the village named Jalpaihati. The writer highlights on the fact that previously the Muslim people dared not to enter the house of the Hindus but during the period of turmoil due to partition the Muslims who were so long considered as underlings do not hesitate to enter even in the bed rooms of Hindu houses. Even they do not vacillate to ask for *bidi* or to give marriage proposal to Hindu women. This novel exposes the socio religious in cultural practices that was prevalent in the then society which was attacked by the reversal of rituals. Jibanananda's struggle with this cultural problem is best seen in his inherent identification with the plight of the *bhadra mahila*.<sup>21</sup> Simultaneously, he attempts to resolve the issue through marriage of Wajed Ali to Hindu girl, Sulekha.

In some of the Bengali fictions of the post partition era marks of disgrace and disrespect towards womenfolk are aptly reflected. Prafulla Roy's *Keya Patar Nouka* is

a tale of an ill-fated sexually abused lady named Jhinuk, In Atin Bandopadhyay's *Nilkantha pakhir khoje* Malati attempts to commit suicide out of her utter frustration and despair.<sup>22</sup> However, Kumu, the heroine of *Bakultala P.L.Camp* writes a letter to her elder sister that she has summarily rejected the proposal of Abdul Gani to share his bed and being insulted, she sacrifices her life jumping on the river Dhaleswari.<sup>23</sup> Three female characters Anjana, Khanjana and Ranjana of *Neel Agun*, the victims of partition, come to Shealdah station as refugees. They belong to three different families. The novel *Neel Agun* by Saroj Kumar Roy Choudhury reveals how the struggle for existence and survival of the refugees that take place in years together. These above noted girls are ready to go to any extent for their survival. With the passage of time and due to the coercive milieu of adverse circumstances, for the maintenance of their livelihood they are unwillingly forced to involve themselves in the business of flesh trade and ultimately they have to accept the profession as their means of livelihood. Initially the sufferings of those three ladies are different in nature, but at the end of the story we see them to be united and surrendered themselves completely to the profession of prostitution for the means of their bread earning.<sup>24</sup>

Atin Bandopadhyay's celebrated novel *Nilkantha pakhir khoje* is a marvelous and splendid historical document in which pang and pathos, sorrows and sufferings, frustration and humiliation have perfectly and neatly been depicted by the author himself. The pathetic situation of the uprooted East Pakistan refugees has been manifested in a roundabout manner and through allegory. In this novel, the author Bandopadhyay tries his best not to prioritize the political complexities of the age but tries his utmost to highlight its appeal towards humanity, towards love and affection, towards universal brotherhood and sings the song of the triumph of human feelings and humanism. According to the *Puranas*, after the completion of Goddess Durga's emersion ceremony a bird known as *Nilkontha* was appointed to act as a harbinger to convey the message of arrival of Goddess Durga to the house of in laws at the *Koilash*. Following the absence of *Uma* the whole *Koilash* becomes pale and lifeless. Listening to the news of *Uma*'s arrival a joyous atmosphere prevailed over the *Koilash*. In a similar way the unfortunate destitute of partition victims even in the midst of profound melancholy still dreamt the sweet dream of reunion of two separate states into one. The displaced persons have had firm conviction that the fulfilment of

their sweet dreams was not at all far ahead.<sup>25</sup> The sad tale of shattered life of the uprooted persons through the allegorical fiction was presented by the author very proficiently. The myth of the Padma Puranas was also available in the aforesaid fiction. The old Mahendranath said to the wife of his insane son Manindranath “My life itself is the *Padma Puran*. I am Chand Sadagar and you are Behula”. Insane Manindranath is the main pivot of the novel. He is a true visionary. He moves frantically with a vision of to searching his beloved fiancé. He continues his quest for the dream girl among the flock of the *Nilkontha* birds, the symbolic representation of peace and union.<sup>26</sup>

In the novel *Nilkantha pakhir khoje* the main female characters Joton, Jalali and Malati are the symbols of two countries. Joton and Jalali are the symbols of Pakistan where as Malati and her elder daughter-in-law is characterized as symbols of India. Jalali’s life is full of struggle, ups and downs. But when after her demise she gets a piece of land, Jalali seems to become very happy. She has her rebirth through the *kash* flowers on the land of her graveyard.<sup>27</sup> On the contrary Malati, another tragic character of the story is abducted and raped by Muslims and then is thrown in jungles, Returning back to home she becomes so frustrated that she condemned her own body as her family members consider her dirty and impure. But the divine honour (Pir) is showered on her. In the Islam the honour of *Pir* is only rewarded and enjoyed by the male. But the author intentionally violates the traditional idea by offering the honour of *Pir* to Joton, which symbolize the birth of a new nation-Pakistan. Bandopadhyay has selected Malati and Joton as icons of two nations.<sup>28</sup>

A number of novelists, writers, poets and essayists have illustrated through their compositions the differences of the attitudes between the Hindu and Muslim communities. *Prem nei*, a remarkable novel authored by Gour Kishore Ghosh, points out the prolonged religious differences between the two communities. Bilkis and Togar are two intimate friends. But despite their intimacy Togar throws water from her pot and refills it if she is touched by Bilkis at the time of procuring water. Bilkis becomes perplexed and looks at Togar vacantly. Being puzzled, Bilkis has an innocent look on the water thrown by Togar. The very line of water thrown by Togar is considered by Bilkis as a line of division between the two communities.<sup>29</sup> In *Epar Ganga and Opar Ganga* it is found little girl used to play among themselves and

collecting mangoes together. However, with the onset of the social reality of partition, a sense of alienation develops in there and the idyllic childhood gets contaminated as alienation creeps in like a shadow. One Muslim girl warns another Muslim girl to be aware of behaving with the Hindu girl with the utterance '*Bhai Ora Hindu, amader etho disni. Oder Ma bokbe*' (Brother, they are Hindus, don't give them our tested food. Their mother will scold them). The social distance of real life revealed through various literary texts of the period. In *Nilkontha pakhir khoje*, Fatema offers a sweet to a little boy Manindranath with her hands. The very occurrence makes Isham, a Muslim by religion, totally perplexed. In the said novel it is witnessed that a Muslim woman Joton makes all arrangements for the preparation of food for Malati who is raped by Jabbar. But Joton does not touch the cooked food because Malati may lose her caste.<sup>30</sup> But in the novel *Pratibeshi* of Gour Kishore Ghosh a character of an old Hindu lady is sketched who is far from the ambit of caste system. She is liberal in outlook as she utters '*Rail-e jokhon uthis tokhan ke kon jat tor songe jachchhe, seta ki tora bhabis?*' (When you board at railway compartment then do you think what sorts of passengers accompanying you?). In the train compartment all the humane is the only identity that the passenger has and it is beyond the premises of caste and religion.<sup>31</sup>

In the novel *Bindu bindu jal* by Shekhar Das, a gloomy and dark picture of partition is presented. The novel centered round a mentally retarded lady named Basumoti. She is the burning example of pathetic saga of riot and partition. During the period of political turmoil and communal riot, she runs away from her house but instead of rescuing her son, she carries away the side pillow, mistaking it to be her son. When she returns back to rectify the mistake, she finds the house was set ablaze. This pathetic incident and sudden big shock make her totally insane. She searches her son frantically everywhere. She becomes the prey of some miscreants. She begins pelting stone out of anger. So everyone call her '*Dhilani*' (stone thrower). All of a sudden she meets an orphan boy and she feels the existence of her deceased child Ratul through the orphan child whom she comes across in her life. Basumoti regains her consciousness for the time being and encourages the boy '*Ratul jore chhot re baba*' (Ratul, run fast baba!). Basumoti becomes the brilliant symbol of oppressed and depressed womanhood. In the said novel there is no point of ending, it could not be and hence the ending is elliptical.<sup>32</sup>

It is observed that in all literary works the struggle of refugee women are represented in an artistic style. Acute pecuniary stringency and other prevailing circumstances prompt them to come out from the confinement braving hurdles and difficulties. They get themselves involved in different professions and their journey is not at all pleasant and covered with roses. Their intimate involvement with the outer world and their efforts for establishing social identity bring about a sacred message of women emancipation. Some authors, in their works, try to ventilate the self confidence of refugee women, who in the midst of profound sorrows and sufferings shoulder the responsibilities like the male members. A novel authored by Narayan Sanyal under the caption *Balmick* ventilates the relentless struggle of the refugee women in coping with the new environment. In the novel *Namita* is a teacher by profession. She is associated with many constructive activities of the colony. Her sudden demise brings about a magical change among the colony dwellers. They become united and determined to finish the unfinished task of their beloved Namita.<sup>33</sup>

In the novel *Bidisha* of Narayan Gangopadhyay a horrible picture of partition is sketched. The heroine of the novel, *Bidisha*, had two young sisters. Gangopadhyay composes the pathetic saga of their troublesome journey from Dhaka. Three sisters in their way toward India are accompanied by their guardian Suprakash. But suddenly Suprakash is attacked by a violent mob in the airport premises and is severely injured. But the three sisters are deprived of the opportunity to cast a last glance on Suprakash for a single moment.<sup>34</sup> Bhavani Mukhopadhyay's *Kannahasir dolay* remind us the days of turmoil of mid and late forties. The independence of India is a long cherished dream of Joyanta and Minati and they are the prime characters of the book. The riot, bloodshed and death of Joyanta in the riot perplex the author no doubt but at the same time he does not confine the plot within this disillusionment and depression. The novelist is always in favour of positivism and the novel concludes with optimism. In *Agunmukhar Meye* of Nurjahan Bose a vivid picture of post 1950 riot is available. She has also recollected her own experience where she herself was subjected to different types of subjugation.<sup>35</sup>

Satinath Bhaduri's story *Gana nayak* is based on the tension and uncertainty of both the communities of the border area in Tetulia of Jalpaiguri district. Bhaduri has based his story on the life of Rajbansi priest of Tetulia police station. The central figure of the story is Pora Gosai of Bajorgaon who becomes exceedingly glad hearing the news

of non transfer proposal of Bajorgaon to Pakistan. The priest ultimately decided not to go to Pakistan. It was unthinkable and beyond his dream to move towards Pakistan. This nostalgia was visible in *Gananayak*.<sup>36</sup> In Shankha Ghosh's superb novel *Supariboner sari*, Nilu's grandfather uttered with painful heart that the row of beetle nut trees behind the *Kacharibari* (outer house) trees were planted by him. Here lies the tomb of his father, mother and grandfather where evening lamps were kindled by the women inmates of the house. He laments that how the sweet memories of those golden days are to be left behind.<sup>37</sup> *Nirbas* by Amiya Bhusan Majumder depicts nostalgia in the characters for the river Padma and its nearby territories. The characters of *Nirbas* have firm conviction that the land where the river Padma flowed, beyond this, there are unexplored abysses of nothingness but not countries. Through these partition literatures, nostalgia towards motherland has distinctly been revealed.<sup>38</sup>

*Hasubanu* is a novel authored by Probodh Kumar Sanyal, is an important partition centric fiction. Samaresh Basu, a renowned Bengali writer who writes about partition in his book named *Suchader Swadesh Jatra*. Samaresh does not recognize and approve the partition of India. In the fiction of Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay's *Jaal*, the references of refugees are also available. The political and social activist Manikuntala Sen in her *Sediner Kotha* represents before the readers the untold miseries of the uprooted personnel.<sup>39</sup> Two novels of Sabitri Roy named *Badwip* and *Swaralipi* represented the relentless struggle of refugee women. *Swaralipi* was composed in 1952 and its purview of discussion was confined within the period of 1947-51. The fiction stressed on the changing scenario of socio economic and socio political institutions. It demonstrates the break of traditional ties of both the Bengals. *Swaralipi* brilliantly described the agony and anguish of uprooted people in India and the problems faced by the retainers of Hindu zamindars in Pakistan.<sup>40</sup> By the time when Emergency was proclaimed by Indira Gandhi in 1975, the Naxal movement was petered out. When the CPI(M) came back to power to form the Left Front and the euphoria was towering, the Marichjhapi massacre took place. The presence of Left Front Government could not prevent the tragedy. Shaktipada Rajguru's novel *Dandak theke Marichjhapi* was written at a time of assessment, after the violence was over. In the novel the efforts of the Namashudra refugees to change their status and livelihood is visible.

Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh occupies a unique position in the realm of Bengali literature so far as Bangladesh is concerned. She voices her demands against the oppression on the harmless and innocent female counterparts of the society by the male dominated members of the families. For her philanthropic outlook and humanitarian activities she had to face criticism and was even ostracized from her own country and community and she was also deprived of citizenship from her own motherland. Virtually she has been regarded as the citizen of the world. She is the true representative and mouthpiece of the oppressed and deprived women of the globe. In alliance with her lived realities she defined the word 'Refugee' from wider point of view. In almost all her novels she dwelt on this theme, sometimes with regard to communalism forcing a large number of populations to migrate to the alien lands where they were constrained to live the lives of refugees, unaccepted and unacceptable to the native people. Sometimes the women remain homeless in their homes. The women are not geographically isolated and refugees but from social and emotional view they remain as refugee.

In *Phera*, Taslima Nasreen underlines the issues related to religious fundamentalism and ventilated the fact that how inter-personal relations become affected because of communalism. Kalyani, the central character of the fiction *Phera* was uprooted from her birth place and shifted to Kolkata. Her family shifted to Kolkata for safety from the threat to honour. In spite of living in Kolkata physically, Kalyani's heart and soul have always remained in her place of birth. Her bosom friend was Sharifa to whom Kalyani had once promised to return. After thirty years she got an opportunity to revisit her place where she passed the valuable childhood days. But ironically, when Kalyani returns to her lost homeland, Sharifa's family eyed her with suspicion. They actually failed to gauge the intensity of the passion of Kalyani for her place of birth, for her childhood friends and above all her memories of childhood. This fiction is a tale of one's yearning for roots. The writer deftly captures the trauma of a refugee who at her wit's end questions to herself that where her home was, whether in India or in Bangladesh<sup>41</sup>.

In his masterpiece *Agun pakhi*, Hassan Azizul Haq sketches the painful story of partition from a different angle. He was brought up in Burdwan and he spent his precious childhood there. Later, he went to East Pakistan. This story carried the eloquent testimony of Haq's own lived realities and reflected his suppressed

consciousness. It appears that he expresses his own view through the character of an uneducated old lady of a rural background, who is uneducated and have stayed for her whole life in West Bengal. In the midst of leading a family centric life she had to witness some contemporary incidents like riot, famine, Partition etc. From within the ambit of her small family life she remains mute spectator of the tragic events of the time. Though she knows it well that Partition of India is a settled fact but she is not in position to accept the fact from core of her heart. Her near and dears went to Pakistan but she does not. Every one of her family left for East Pakistan but she stays here in India alone. However she is not alone. Her son who died in a tender age was buried here in India. So she was determined to stay here.<sup>42</sup>

The old lady of the novel raises a question on the utility of the partition. The lady has had the courage to denounce the Two Nation Theory.’ She uttered in her mother tongue “*kyane aleda ekto dyash hoyache, ei dyashti kyane amar loi*” (Why a separate state has been created? Why the country is not mine?). She also lamented “*I dyash chhere kotha jabo ami kichhutei bhabte parlam na. Amar khali mone hote laglo, kyane jabo keo amake bujhiye dik. Bujhie delei ami jabo, jekhane jete bolbe sekhane jabo. Oto Mosolmaner dyash r eto Hiduder dyash bole ar keo amar kachhe par pabena. U ji michhe kotha, u ji shoytaner kaj ta ayakon mone mone sobai janchhe*”<sup>43</sup>(I can’t imagine where to go from this country. Let someone explain to me why I should go elsewhere. Then and then only I would quit this country, anywhere they would dictate. I won’t spare anybody who would advocate this country is for Hindus and that country is for Muslims. It is a dam lie, it is the plot of demons, it is known to all). A simple question of an innocent and uneducated woman opens before us a humanitarian appeal. The whole episode of partition appears to be a matter of bewilderment in the eyes of the woman. She could not take it for granted that the two countries having same soil, same language has been isolated from each other simply on religious issues. Despite vivisection of India the sky overhead remains unaffected and undisturbed. The author makes this saga of Partition more appealing by his outstanding and penetrating insight.

Salman Rushdie’s magnum opus ‘*Mid-night Children*’ occupies a permanent position in the world of partition literature. *Midnight’s Children* waves its narratives based on the children born with the ability full of magic on mid night. Another fiction, ‘*Freedom at Mid Night*’, a non-fiction in character worked by Larry Collins and

Dominique Lapierre that chronicles the events surrounding the first Independence Day celebration in 1947. The work is for being a noted surrealistic fiction, full of satirical references to the event of partition and Independence. The 'Mid-night' alluded to in the title is the moment at which partition and independence become a settled fact.<sup>44</sup>

Amitav Ghosh's celebrated novels *The Hungry Tide* and *The shadow lines* represent Partition of India as black history. Apart from the immeasurable loss of lives and properties, dislocations and conflicts were also noticed. Ghosh emphasizes on the plight of the displaced persons who were forced to migrate from known to unknown destination which were full of insecurity and uncertainty to the migrants. The historical reality of Partition becomes an integral part in Ghosh's creation. Amitav Ghosh presents partition from the eyes of ordinary characters like Thamma (*The shadow Lines*) and Kusum (*The Hungry Tide*). In *The Hungry Tide*, the author sketches the Partition and the subsequent migration of refugees from Bangladesh. The migrants who could not be accommodated in West Bengal were compelled to settle down in Dandakaranya of Madhya Pradesh. The West Bengal Government promised them to be accommodated in West Bengal afterwards. But they failed to keep their promise. As a result of which the irritated settlers of the region moved out of Dandakaranya and settled in Sundarbans.<sup>45</sup> Ghosh ventilates these unfair treatment of the Government through his penetrating insightful novel. The character of Thamma and her trajectory that moved from Dhaka to Calcutta and back to Dhaka again as Ghosh depicts is identical with the journey of large number women who experienced the pathetic saga of Partition. Thamma's ultimate bitter realization in her revisit to Dhaka, her birth place is evident from her own lamentation "Yes, I really am a foreigner here". This lamentation of Thamma is nothing but a symbol of frustration, disappointments and non-fulfillment of the long cherished sweet dream of all other uprooted persons about their mother land.

Literature describing the human cost of independence and partition comprises of Khuswant Singh's *A train to Pakistan* (1956), Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*, Balwant Singh Ananda's novel *Cruel Interlude*, G.D. Khosla's *Stern Reckoning*, *The price of partition* by Rafiq Zakaria, etc. Saadat Hassan Manto, is a talented writer of extraordinary brilliance. His fiction represents the tragedy of partition and the

sectarian violence that expressed the hollowness of the morality of the middle class. Some of his widely criticized touching stories are branded as obscene and he is accused for propagating pornography. His fictions bring into sharp focus the tragedy of Partition and the violence that followed. Manto has the courage to present with utmost authenticity the reality of his milieu.<sup>46</sup>

The women community also had memories of the events of partition and they were rather compelled to suppress the fact or to stifle but the literature can somehow liberate these stories from hiding. As the devastating stigma of 1947 still attached to some women who were perceived to have been sexually contaminated by men of 'other' community during the sectarian violence that accompanied the partition, it was unlikely that they would ever testify about their experience. In the face of this silence it may well be the task of literary historiography to unveil, uncover, liberate from silence and oblivion, these women's stories.<sup>47</sup> It is a matter of great pleasure that a trend was noticed among the budding writers to come out with their writings of memories and non-fictional contribution on partition. Anis Kidwar's *In the shadow of freedom* (1955), Urvashi Butalia's *The other side of silence* (1988), Kamala Bhasin and Ritu Menon's *Borders and Boundaries* (1998), Kamala Patel's *Torn from Roots: A partition Memoir* (2006), Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days* (1989) etc, are worth to be mentioned in this pretext.

Attia Hossain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) is one of the most remarkable contributions on partition. The plot is centered round a Muslim lady Laila, the protagonist of the novel, who lives at Ashiana (Lucknow), the family house, with aunt Abida, aunt Majida, a widow and her daughter Zahra. Babajan, the Grandfather, a rich land lord belonged to the influential and powerful class of the Muslim *talukdar*. From her very childhood Laila is restless and she resists the conventional system of livelihood. The personal, social and political divisions caused by partition are elaborately projected in the novel. She is intolerant of conventional standards. In the meantime Laila marries Amir, a youth of her choice. Subsequently due to Amir's death, the trauma of partition and division of the family a new Laila emerges. The personal distress, national disaster fails to damp her courage and energy.<sup>48</sup>

The narrative of partition in Khuswant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* was first published in 1956. Singh's version of the partition is a social one providing diverse and detailed human accounts through the persona of characters where each had unique points of view, indicating that everyone is equally at fault and the blame was irrelevant. Woman victimization is one of the evils confronting women all over the world and this evil is further compounded if they are placed in unstable political societies or events. Women being extremely vulnerable are easy targets of any form of oppression, humiliation, deprivation and discrimination. Partition literature explores the sexual trauma, sufferings and painful experiences of women during and after the Partition. This in many ways substantiates the fact that inequality of sexes is neither a biological fact nor a divine mandate but a cultural construct. The novel *Train to Pakistan* is certainly about the innocent victims of the Partition where the village of Mano Majra provides the base for the different social, economic, federal and political thread work required to illustrate the suffering. The social sufferings such as Partition from the beloved, the trauma of leaving the homeland have been dramatically presented. The suffering part of the victims in the train is provided as a cause for the initiation of the chaos in the village. Partition in entirety is presented to show the human dimension of the momentous event.<sup>49</sup>

A renowned novelist Aktarujaman Ilias, in his *Khowab nama* interrogates into the prime reasons on the part of the Hindus to quit their motherland and infer their identities as Zamindars (landlords) while the Muslims as their subjects, Muslims are the clients where as the Hindus are the advocates, the Hindus are the lender and the Muslims are the borrowers, Muslims are the students where as the Hindus are the teachers, Hindus are the doctors while the Muslims are the patients.<sup>50</sup> *Lajwanti* one of the earliest literary account by Rajinder Singh Bedi, focuses on social stigma while facing the abducted women after their returning back to home. Bedi's version is that for a long moment the abducted women and their relative looked at each other just like a stranger. 'Then heads bent low, they walked back together to tackle the task of bringing new life to ruined homes...' There were some abducted women whom their husbands, fathers, mothers, brothers and sister refused to recognize. They used to curse them! Why did they not die? Why did they not take poison to save their chastity...They were cowards who basely and desperately clung to life"<sup>51</sup>There is no

doubt that community responded well to other rehabilitation activities, but there was a problem to rehabilitate them in hearts<sup>52</sup>.

## ii) SHORT STORIES

The writers from West Bengal composed different short stories that vividly portrayed the trauma of partition and the after struggle in the new abode with their penetrating insight. Mention may be made of some short stories written by Manabendra Bandopadhyay *Bhed Bibhed*, Satinath Bhaduri's *Gananayak*, Alok Bhalla's *Stories about the Partition of India* ; Imdad-Ul-Haq Milan's *Desh bhager po*, Debesh Roy's *Raktamanir Hare*, *Udvastu*, Tarapada Roy's *Galpa samagra*, Prafulla Roy's, *Anuprabesh*, Kamalesh, Sen's *Danga Birodhi Golpo*, Ramesh Chandra Sen's *Panther Kanta* , Dibyendu Palit's *Alamer nijer bari* etc.

In the story *Morok* composed by Ritwik Ghatak , the central figure of the story Israel goes to East Pakistan. In this connection it may be mentioned of two Bengali short stories composed by Ramapada Chowdhury i.e. *Angapali* and *Karun Kanya*. The central characters of those two stories are two abducted women named Sabita and Arundhuti and both women are recovered along with their illegitimate babies. Both the women of those two different stories experience the tragedy of partition. Family members of those two women are not ready to accept the baby. In the story *Angapali*, Sabita was the mute spectator when she looks at her mother who is taking bath after touching the baby because the baby does not belong to their family. In the story *Karun kanya*, Arundhuti is advised by her mother to send her baby to the orphanage. Suddenly Arundhuti met Subimal, her former fiancé. But he is not mentally prepared to accept her. More so Subimol and his family even did not accept his abducted sister Madhuri. Finding no other alternative Arundhuti has to return back to her abductor husband who has no objection to accept Arundhuti. These two stories are nothing but the reflections of hard realities of that turbulent time. The recovery operations in post partition period are considered to be as second uprootment of eloped women. Many of those ill-fated women express their unwillingness to return back to their families apprehending to be ostracized. Sometimes they are compelled to abandon their illegitimate issue behind the screen. The universal question of motherhood became suppressed, concealed and unanswered by the male protagonists in the act of recovery operation. Ramapada Chowdhury portrays the misfortune of women who are being

caught in between the crossfire of communal violence.<sup>53</sup> The most vital point in this connection is that women have to face abduction not only from the people of the other communities but the people of their own communities are involved.

Manik Bandopadhyay in his writings elaborately depicts the picture of a Muslim family who is forced to live for East Pakistan in the event of riot. Manik Bandopadhyay in his story *Upaye* (Final Solution) has made a comment that the predicament of the exile in the hellhole of those transit rehabilitation camps echoes the appalling life in death situation of the concentration camp in Europe. According to the author, the Jews in concentration camps were better off than those who take shelter in the railway platform of West Bengal. Mallika, the protagonist of the story, her body becomes the only medium through which she can transcend the conditions of oppression. Her sexuality is no longer confined within the possibilities of governed transgression through which it can turn into her means of sustenance. Her body has become her final solution to the situation which partition has ushered her into. A good number of Bengali fictions, short stories and other accounts were composed on the basis of partition. The rivalry between the Hindus and Muslims are revealed through atrocious riots. The first story of Narendranath Mitra on the context of partition is *Pataka*<sup>54</sup> In another story titled *Jaibo* the writer sketches the character of a Hindu woman named Sudatta who was raped just before the partition and was not allowed for abortion because her scientist professor husband Mriganka Majumdar wants to make a guinea pig of the baby to watch the influence of environment during conception on the formation of the child's personality. The freedom after partition which the woman is supposed to enjoy in the newly created India appears to be a nightmare to her. The raped woman of the story considers herself to be an object of a scientific experiment.<sup>55</sup> Narendra Mitra's short story '*Payasangka*, projects the picture of division of Indian territory. The very dialogue is very touchy and emotive.

Narayan Gangopadhyay composed a considerable number of short stories and novels where the problems and crisis of uprooted individuals hailing from East Pakistan have an authentic reflection. The saga of partition refugees have been ventilated through his short story *Simanta*. The story narrates that the coming of people in flocks from both sides of the neighbouring borders. Fazle Rabbi, an important character of the story is in a fix over the grim irony of fate of Doyal Mondal who has sacrificed his

life for the sake of his country. The vital question comes over the mind of Rabbi that why in spite of Doyal's devotion towards his country he is rendered to become an outsider in his own county. Samarendra Ghosh's superb writing *Bhangchhe shudhu bhangchhe*, a story of destruction caused by the turbulent event of Partition. Surajit Basu's *Darabar jaiga* is another important creation on partition. The writers of both previous and present generations composed different stories on partition from their own perspectives. The never ending wounds created following partition still alive in modern era. Beside the stories mentioned above the stories like *Kath Golap* of Narendranath Mitra, *Batasi* of Atin Bandopadhyay, *Epar Opar* of Monoj Basu, *Achaya Kripalini Colony* of Bibhuti Bhusan Bandopadhyay etc. create a tremendous impact upon the minds of modern readers that cannot be lost sight of. Apart from these writers some modern and promising writers had made valuable contribution in the genre of partition literature. The story *Janma bhumi* of Asis Sanyal, *Bela Obela* of Samir Rakshit, *Bhager Ma* of Ahana Biswas, *Anya Ihudi* of Kapil Krishna Thakur and many others stories of modern writers highlight the event of partition.

Manikuntala Sen finds a sort of struggle for existence and new awakening among the refugee women. A huge number of women for the sake of themselves and the livelihood of their families crossed borders and migrated to India, more specifically to West Bengal. The lives of those women were confined within the four walls till then, now engage themselves in new assignment<sup>56</sup>. In the story *Mahanagar* written by Narendranath Mitra and directed by Satyajit Ray reveals the fact that the daughter in law of a refugee family is compelled to engage herself in a job. In the story *Pasharini* by Samaresh Basu, Puspa, the daughter a school master named Nirapada, has to sell self-made dolls in the railway compartments. She is called in an insulting address *Putuler Ma*. The episode of partition actually suppressed and shattered the dreams of thousands of vulnerable Bengali women who are rather forced to sacrifice their dream of a sweet nest. Their only identities are their profession like *Putuler Ma*.<sup>57</sup> In a short story of Dipankar Das titled *Rrin* Renuka fails to accommodate herself with a suitable job. Her father can't tolerate the pang of separation following the partition and he frantically moves towards his deserted place in East Pakistan in quest of his lost abode. Renuka has to shoulder the heavy responsibility of the whole depressed family with the act of preparing *thonga* (a paper made container for carrying things). She is bound to struggle relentlessly with the ups and downs of the situations and eventually

she is forced to commit suicide. Through the tragic suicidal act of Renuka, the author tries to represent the whole woman community who become the victims of such tragic deaths in millions leaving behind no reliable history and evidence.<sup>58</sup>

There are also a huge number of short stories from the writers of East Pakistan and afterwards from Bangladesh. Those stories not only exhibit their literary calibre, but their intense feelings and sentiment over the heart rendering event of 1947. Salam Azad's *Desh Bhager Galpo*, Akhtar Hasan Hussain's *Sampradayikatar Biridhi Galpo*, Azizul Haq's *Rarh Banger Golpo*, Syed Walliullah's *Ekti Tulsigachher kakini* etc. are worth noting in this context. The number of Muslim refugees who crossed border and migrated to East Pakistan from India was no doubt microscopic in comparison to the Hindu refugees migrated from East Pakistan to India. The violence of partition and the trauma is manifested in different wings of literature. The pang and pathos of partition are vividly portrayed in *Gayatri Sandha* of Selina Hossain. The heroine of the story is Pushpita, who flees with her husband to East Pakistan. She is willing to give birth to her baby in East Pakistan and consequently her son is born in Rajshahi. He is named Pratik (symbol) Ahmed. The birth of the baby indirectly indicates the birth of Pakistan. The name Pratik signifies the birth of a new nation (Pakistan).<sup>59</sup> This optimistic attitude is one of the salient features of the partition literature of East Pakistan.

*Ekti tulsi gachher kahini*, a short story composed by Sayed Walliullah throws light on the other aspect of partition. Right after the partition a sizable group of homeless Muslims from Calcutta occupies a deserted house in Dacca. But, their joy of finding the new asylum is short-lived. All of a sudden a *Tulsi gachh* (tulsi plant) is discovered in the courtyard. The very *tulsi* plant indicates clearly that a Hindu family had lived there previously. Surrounding round the *tulsi* plant a hesitation comes over the minds of migrated Muslim inmates. Modabber wants to uproot it. But Motin, another inmate of the house contemplate about the woman who used to light a lamp and prayed before the *tulsi* plant stained with blood-red *sindoor*. In spite of Modabber's order to uproot the plant no one come forward to pull the plant out.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately the holy plant remained untouched, unharmed and conspicuous; moreover someone is found taking care of the plant because the almost dried leaves began to flourish green. The very incident shows the religious tolerance and respect of some Muslims towards the rituals. This story rather questions the very basis of partition.<sup>61</sup>

Another story by Hasan Azizul Haq named *Atmaja O Ekti Korabi Gachh* is a repository of the ordeal of partition. A helpless penniless aged father has to depend on the income from flesh trade of his daughter for livelihood. The dependent old father always keeps the poisonous seeds of the *karabi* flower with him. He just thinks that when his pang and pain will cross the limit of tolerance then he will consume the poison leaving behind the false independence derived from the partition. The dream to live a trouble-free life in the new abode in East Pakistan from West Bengal has become a nightmare.<sup>62</sup> The bifurcation of India and the miseries followed by Partition is the central theme of the story *Ekti Nirjola Kotha* by Hassan Azizul Haq. The lady of the story bears the scar of partition. She is totally indifferent towards the cause and effects of partition. In this story the woman is rather forced to come over to a new territory called East Pakistan which is totally unknown to her. But the heroine of the novel *Agunpakhi* of Hassan Azizul Haq is obstinate in staying in West Bengal braving all sorts of eventualities.

According to some scholars, Bengali literature on Partition cannot be compared with the works of Saadat Hasan Manto. Without ignoring the sheer brilliance of the stories of Manto it can't be denied that Bengali writers have contributed lot on the traumatic event<sup>63</sup>. Copious short stories such as *Toba Tek Singh* by Saadat Hassan Manto, *Short Stories on Partition*, edited by Bhallar are the extra ordinary collections. The banned controversial stories are *Cold Meat*, *Black Salwar* and *Khol Do* (open it). Through the stories the readers can experience the reality that social transformation demanded, which include not only the emancipation of female subjects but also the radical reconstitution of masculinity is concerned<sup>64</sup>. *Kingdom's End and Other Stories* are a collection of stories composed by Saadat Hassan Manto. The majority of the stories by this Urdu writer from Punjab revolve round the end of the Raj, partition and communalism. 'Manto was not the only one to whom Independence came packaged in genocide, necrophilia, ethnic cleansing, massive uprooting and the collapse of a moral universe<sup>65</sup>. The stories *Thanda Gosht*, *Khol do*, *Toba Tek Singh*, *Iss Manjdhar Mein*, *Mozzalle*, *Babu Gopinath* etc have written by Manto . Some of the characters the author created- become legendary.

## iii) POEM

Poems written by the poets of West Bengal on partition and refugee crisis are as follows: Bishnu De's *Hasnabadei*, Jal Dao -Shankho Ghosh's *Gandharva Kabita Guccha* ; Sunil Gangopadhyay's *Keu Katha Rakheni*, Achinta Kumar Sengupta's *Pub Paschim* etc.. Some poems from East Pakistan and as well as from Bangladesh have composed poems on partition and refugee problem, viz. Ahsan Syed Ali's *Amar Purba Bangla*, Sikander Abu Zafar's *Bangla Chharo*, Shamsur Rahman's *He Amar Balyo Bandhugan*, Taslima Nareen's *Asvikar, Bhanga Banga Desh* etc,

Two distinct streams are found in the poems on the episode of partition i.e. "the conscience of the poet paralyzed by an unwarranted retributive justice called the 'riot' or euphoria out of an image of a braver, newer world"<sup>66</sup>. The writings of Subhas Mukherjee, especially his poems like *Agnikoner, Ekti kobitar jonya Tallat jure* celebrated the bowing and scraping, while Jibanananda, an outstanding poet and a man of manifold qualities presents through his classic poems, his ardent love for his mother land. Jibanananda came from East Bengal and procured varied experiences in consequence of Partition. His experiences and realization have been aptly reflected in his superb literary creation. He is rightly adjudged as the greatest Bengali poet after Rabindranath. The unique creation of Jibanananda is his *Rupasi Bangla*. During the war of liberation of Bangladesh the brave fighters of Bangladesh considered the poem *Rupasi Bangla* as their source of inspiration and encouragement. Another famous poem of the poet is *Banglar mukh ami dekhiyachhi* (I have seen Bengal's face). These two poems give clear indication regarding the beauty, harmony and peace of the undivided Bengal where the blessings of nature, the myths and legends have been intermingled.<sup>67</sup>

The superb and outstanding contributions of some noted poets of West Bengal and Bangladesh depicting the untold sufferings of East Pakistan Hindu exodus have been conically analyzed from different purview and from different angles. One of Subhas Mukhopadhyay's famous poems *Parapar* the picture of undivided Bengal has been represented. Mukhopadhyay contemplated that, were the two stars in the eyes of Bangladesh and on the midway there stands a hindrance of corridors and borders. The poet ventures to cross the borders despite hindrance through his dream and imagination. He tries to unlock the locked windows removing obstructions of the

clear views of both the countries of West Bengal and Bangladesh. The cherished sweet dream of unification between the two countries is represented through his verse *Parapar*. It also stresses an emotional attachment rather than physical detachment.

Sunil Gangapadhay, a creative writer and poet per excellence migrated from East Pakistan and his memory of partition is vibrant in his poems also. Sunil Gangapadhyay's poignant poem *Dhatri* (Nurse) is one of his saddest poems on partition. An old refugee woman burdened with overage was found sitting on the Sealdah railway station stretching her hands for alms. She was a woman of seventy two. She was seeking helps with her trembling hands from the pedestrians. At the very sight of the old woman the poet tried to recollect memories of his childhood days. Just after his birth the woman in question took charge and care of him when his mother was in a critical condition. The lady in order to quench the thirst of milk fed the poet with the milk of her own breast. For days together the poet extorted blood from her body. She used to rub the child with oil sitting upon the sunny morning under the open sky with care and affection. The poet himself heard the story from his mother and maternal aunt. During the period of poet's illness of profuse vomiting the woman at dead of night set out in procuring *gandhabadali* leaves and also promised to offer *amla* at *Dorga*. The tragedy of whole thing is that the poet is searching a ten paisa coin instead of four *anna* coin from his pocket. The poet questions himself why the old refugee woman poured drops of rose water in his eyes to open the eyes to enable the poet to see the vast and beautiful universe? The poet also laments and cries aloud why he is allowed to take birth in this world only to see the pathetic condition of his dear Dhai Ma. The poet accuses the lady for his survival in this world and also apprehends the impending danger and catastrophe that would come in the way of her future life.<sup>68</sup>

Poet Nirendranath Chakroborty has published his book of poems *Neel Nirjon* in 1954. In this book there is a poem known as *Taimur* which is composed in the background of riot and its impact. Another prolific writer of the period Tarapada Roy in his first book of poems *Tomar pratima* (1960) deals with partition. In the second edition of his book published in 1972, he has made the poems more relevant with reference to the Bangladesh war of liberation.<sup>69</sup> Poet Birendra Chattapadhyay's *Visa officerer samne* and *Mahadever Duar* also depicts the stories of sufferings. The Poems of Bishnu Dey, Shangkha Ghosh, Amitabha Dasgupta, Mongalacharan Chattapadhyay Arun Bagchi,

Biredra Chattapadhyay, Joy Goswami, Shakti Chatopadhyay, Arun Mitra, Mandakranta Sen, Niladri Sekhar Basu and others contributed deeply towards the enrichment of partition literature. Poems like *Subhas ja dekhechhen* by Birendra Chattapadhyay, *Jamunaboti*, *Swadesh swadesh koris kara*, *Purarbasan*, *Lamppost* by Shankha Ghosh, *Shakha bhanga hat* by Anitabha Dasgupta, *Satbhai Champa*, *Sandiper chor*, *Jal dao* etc. by Bishnu Dey, *Ese dekhe jao*, *Shukno much uskokhusko chul* by Mangalacharon Chattapadhyay, *Duswapna* by Joy Goswami etc were composed on partition, violence, riot, genocide and above all the trauma and triumph of partition.

A few poets of Bangladesh also composed a number of poems relating to the partition episode and Bangladesh War of liberation. The poets like Bande Ali Miah, Al Masud, Abdur Rasid Khan, Samsur Rahman, Taslima Nasrin, Rudra Mammad Shahidullah and others have expressed their grievances, agony, experiences, sentiments and attachment due to partition. But the numbers of poems exclusively on partition were not adequate. One of the popular poets of East Pakistan Bande Ali Miah composed a poem named *Bastu bhita*. The miserable tragedy of partition was the main theme of his poem. In the poems of Al Masud the incidents of partition and the war of Bangladesh liberation were sounded. In the poem *Ullapara station* poet Abdur Rashid Khan recollected the memories of lost love, partition, war and famine.<sup>70</sup> In the poems of Samsur Rahman the events of partition and independence frequently appeared. Rahman's poems *Tomake paoar jonya*, *hay swadhinata*, *Swadhinata tumi*, *Ekhane Dorja chhilo*, *Tumi bolechhile* carried the message of dignity of mother tongue, revolt against the autocracy of Pakistan and also independence. The other literary genius and personality who originally hailed from Bangladesh was Taslima Nasrin. Such undaunted lady of Bangladesh made a valuable contribution in the Bengali literature in the event of Partition through her poems, novels, short stories and through other significant works. The two masterpiece poems by Taslima Nasrin *Bhanga Banga Daesh* and 'Aswikar' depicted the cause of Partition and her nostalgic attitude had been clearly revealed and reflected through her poetic imagination.

It is worthwhile to mention that female writers through their literary contributions represented the partition from a gendered angle and stressed on the feminine view point. The prevalent idea was that the women were destined to be the victims of

sufferings and sexual contravention. This sexual transgression was the violation of their deepest feminine self. The female writers never characterized the women as the unassertive progeny of victimhood and instead characterized them as personages of flesh and blood having with the efficiency in resilience and agency. The veil of silence over the gendered violence was unveiled and unmasked by the female writers. Breaking the traditional patriarchal roots, they tried to divulge the hidden truth of real history of partition. In the male narratives however the male personages were characterized of pursuing action exhibiting an attractive attitude accompanied with valour and heroism. On the contrary, the views of female narrators and the women protagonists had the courage to reject the traditional image of 'self-sacrificing womanhood' and to live a life avoiding the benchmarks or parameters of 'honour and shame'. It was set up under the patriarchal frame. The female protagonists of the novels by female litterateurs questioned the unbiased and pretended impartiality of history. Jyotirmoyee Devi, Anita Desai, Baldwin and many others tried to deconstruct the patriarchal version of history through their powerful and penetrating insight of woman psychology and their treasured grievances.

#### PAINTINGS

Celebrated painters like Bikash Bhattacharjee portrayed a sketch named 'Freedom' and another outstanding artist of Bangladesh Bulban Osman in his sketch 'Divided Bengal' revealed the pathetic saga of displaced persons. Another internationally renowned artist Somnath Hore of Shantiniketan sketched the portrait under the caption 'Udvastu'. These artists through their emotion, imagination and artistic excellence painted on the theme of partition from different perspective.

#### iii) DRAMA

There were only a scanty number of dramas written and staged in Bengal on partition and refugee problems. In Digindra Chandra Bandopadhyay's drama *Bastu bhita* it was observed that middle class Hindu affluent people are forced to leave their villages out of frustration, depression and apprehension. The local Muslim leader Sona Molla vehemently protests against leaving of the Hindus to Indian Territory. On the other hand other communal Muslim leader Yasin conspires against the Hindus to leave the

country. These contrast pictures of two opponent groups are demonstrated through the drama.<sup>71</sup> Tulsi Lahiri, a dramatist, gained fame due to his celebrated play *Chhera Tar*, directed another drama *Banglar mati*. In that drama he dramatized the mass Hindu exodus from East Pakistan. Ritwick Ghatak, well known film director wrote, directed and performed in the play *Dalil* (deed)<sup>72</sup>. He did never tolerate the most unwise decision of the partition of India. The immeasurable sufferings of the uprooted and innocent individuals hailing from East Pakistan always made him perturbed and perplexed. Its manifestations were revealed through his films and plays. *Dalil* is not an exception. The police fired indiscriminately upon the silent female procession in Boubazar locality of Calcutta resulting in the deaths of three women- Lotika, Pratibha and Amiyaa. This horrible scene was recorded by the director himself as a theme of his drama.

*Nutan Yehudi* (The new Jews) is a remarkable drama which made significant contribution in presenting the immeasurable sufferings of East Bengal refugees. The play *Nutan Yehudi* was masterly composed by Salil Sen. The first performance of this act was staged in 1951 and it was published in 1957. It was one of the most and noted plays over the Partition of Bengal. Although it has been forgotten and plunged into profound darkness of oblivion, today the play still stands as unparalleled owing to its success and popularity in the fifties. The uprooted, displaced, shelter less, unwanted, innocent and helpless people of East Bengal has been referred by the author as Nutan Yehudi. Their relentless struggle for survival and existence, their abject poverty, apprehension of uncertainty and their agony has been dramatized in a true and realistic manner.<sup>73</sup>

#### ,iv) FILM

At the beginning of 1948, a group of talented directors ventilated the crisis, dilemma, saga and struggle of East Pakistan refugees through their superb creations. A number of films focused on detailed socio- political tension of the period. Nimai Ghosh's *Chhinnamul*; Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, *Komol Gandhar*, *Nagarik*, *Subarnerekha*, '*Jukti, Takko ar Goppo*', '*Titas Ekti Nadir Naam*'; Sukumar Dasgupta '*Ora thake odhare*'; Shantipriya Mukherjee's *Refugee* Agradut's *Bipasha*( Tarashankar Bandapadhyay); Bimal Basu's *Nabarag*. Srijit Mukherjee's *Rajkahini*, Masi Uddin Shaker and Sheikh Niamat Ali's *Surya Dighal Bari*, Tanvir Mokammel,

*Chitra Nadir Pare, Zahir Raihan Jibon theke neoya, Humayum Ahmed's -----  
-----.etc.*

Nimai Ghosh's *Chhinnamul*, the first film to have interrogated into the refugees quotient relating to the partition of India.(cm,73) Author cum director Nimai Ghosh has sketched a picture of the helpless and pathetic condition of an uprooted migrants in his film *Chhinnamul* (uprooted). Unfortunately, the said film remained unacknowledged to success. Despite the commercial failure of the film, the film itself is yet considered to be the path breaker, showing a new trend in social realism<sup>74</sup>. According to eminent director of international acclaim Mrinal Sen, 'Truly speaking *Chhinnamul* was a marvelous exception in the world of films'. The main theme dealt with how a single political decision brought about a shattered picture of Hindu migrants of East Bengal's. That very decision of partition not only created a scene of chaos and anarchism but also changed the subsequent trend of history. It is a proud privilege for the readers and the admirers of Ritwik Ghatak that the film maker himself acted in a vital role. Besides some thespian personalities like Bijon Bhattachaya, Shova Sen and Charuprokash Ghosh played important roles. Famous Soviet film director Pudo Vokin and the actor Chercashav observed that Nimai Ghosh performed a realistic picture in a masterly skill.<sup>75</sup>

Some creations of outstanding film directors basically based on the partition of India are very important in this regards. Ritwik Ghatak was an ardent observer of Bengali culture and it was evident in his films. His films express a unique viewpoint of post-independence Bengal. It is unique in the sense that he explored "the fall out of the 1947 Partition of India on Bengali society, and has been influential because he set a standard with his films for the newly emerging 'alternative' or 'parallel' cinema directors"<sup>76</sup> Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* can be chosen as a single film which depicts the trauma and tragedy of the Bengal partition with unparalleled power of sensitivity without asking any question. Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (The star veiled by cloud) is a masterpiece and classic creation of Ritwik based on a simple story. Here the sad tale of an uprooted, young refugee girl Nita has been neatly, perfectly, skillfully and masterly sketched by Ghatak in an artistic way. Nita becomes the victim of abject poverty, uncertainty and insecurity, struggling relentlessly for the survival of her displaced parents. The classical music lover and indifferent elder brother Shankar and the younger sister Gita are poles asunder in their nature and

outlook in comparison to Nita. Nita, the protagonist, sacrifices everything for her family. Braving all adverse circumstances she shoulders the heavy responsibility of the bread earner of the distressed family. Although partition is never explicitly mentioned in the film, the plot was set in a refugee camp in the outskirts of Calcutta and concerns an impoverished genteel Hindu *Bhadralok* family and the problems they face because of partition. Nita, the central character of the film, has been presented as a deathless symbol of Partition. She cares much for the survival of her family and cares less for herself. The ceaseless struggle of an undaunted lady, who has left behind everything and also become uprooted which has been skillfully screened by the director.<sup>77</sup> Her piercing cry and dying utterance “Dada Ami Bachte Chai” (I want to live Brother) still brings tears in the eyes of millions. When Ghatak starts this aforesaid film he never speaks of political unification. The cultural segregation has caused by politics and economics is not reconciled by him because he always thinks in terms of cultural integration.<sup>78</sup>

Another unique and superb creation is *Subarnarekha*. It is a realistic portrayal of development in the aftermath of Partition and refugee coping with it. The trauma of refugee life and its piercing political cry form the basis of the film *Subarnarekha*. The film stresses on a further understanding of the neo colonial Indian society after the transfer of power in 1947. The narrative revolves around Ishwar Chakraborty, a refugee, who stays in a colony with his sister Sita. Ishwar discovers an abducted boy Abhiram in the colony and give shelter to him. Ishwar, after getting a job settled in the bank of river *Subarnarekha*. Ishwar is conscious of Abhiram’s lower caste origin, so he opposes the marriage proposal of Sita with Abhiram. But Sita runs away with Abhiram. But it is a grim irony of fate that Abhiram gets himself involved in an accident and is killed by the mob. For the sake of her only son Binu, Sita sinks into harlotry and finds drunken Ishwar as her first customer. As a result Sita commits suicide. Frustrated Ishwar started his journey with Binu. The film ruthlessly exposes the ecological waste of post independent society.<sup>79</sup>

Apart from *Meghe Dhaka Tara* and *Subarnarekha* Ghatak has made tremendous contribution in the film industry through his creation like *Komol Gandhar*, *Jukti, takko ar Gappa* and *Titas Ekti Nadir Num* etc. The main theme of the film *Komolgandhar* is based on the internal tussle in a group theatre. But the drama specially revolved around the partition, its distress and agony of the uprooted persons

who have flocked to West Bengal from East Pakistan. The director of drama constantly and frantically thought over the partition. Although at present the true citizen of West Bengal, he, the director believes himself to be the true citizen of East Pakistan. This characterization of the drama director in the film *Komalgandhar* is to some extent identical with Ritwik Ghatak's personal life. It has been inferred often that *Komalgandhar* is the autobiographical accounts of Ritwik himself.<sup>80</sup>

*Bari theke paliye* is one of the renowned films of Ritwick Ghatak. The film is specially made for children. In this film Kanchan, the son of a village school teacher, flees away from his house and arrives at Calcutta with a long cherished dream of constructing a dwelling house. But his lofty ambition ultimately proves abortive due to his refugee status.<sup>81</sup> Ghatak focuses on detailed visual and aural commentaries of Bengal in politically as well as socially turbulent period from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Twice during his life time Bengal is physically set apart –first in 1947 by the event of partition and in 1971 by the war of Bangladesh liberation.<sup>82</sup> (Sumit.Sarkar, *Sadashi Movement in Bengal: 1903-8*, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1973). Ritwik Ghatak who is known to have 'gone mad over partition' is perhaps the only one who has attempted to grasp this phenomenon in his series of films and all of them are popular. A deep study will reveal Ghatak's partition trilogy as the psychological crisis of the uprooted persons residing in different colonies.

Another magnum opus of Ghatak is *Titas ekti nodir nam* though the film is not directly associated with the event of partition. The film deals with the diverse problems that accompanied the partition and displacement. The life of a fishing community and their panic due to change of river course is the main theme of the story. A civilization grows up surrounding the river Titas. As the river Titas starts shrinking the fishing community had to face with financial stringency. A section of landlords, being tempted tried to evict the fishing community but their attempts initially prove abortive following the unity of the fishing community. Afterwards, the traders hatch upon a plan by investing an enormous amount to enable the fishermen to make a voyage to the far rivers for catching fish. In this way they hurled a serious blow upon their unity and most of the fishermen quit their village.<sup>83</sup> The film ends with a big question mark whether the civilization is really declines? But the prompt answer is that civilization in no case can be destroyed and can only be transformed.

After a long period the Titas gets back her lost glory through the growth of green fields. At the fag end of the story the viewers witness the final tragedy and the grim irony of this change is witnessed by a dyeing women and a naked child running through the paddy field playing with a leaf whistle.

Apart from these films of Ghatak, Shantipriya Mukherjee's *Refugee* makes a valuable contribution in the realm of Bengali movies. Tarashankar Bandopadhyay's famous book on the Partition of Punjab *Bipasha* is directed by Agradut highly acclaimed. ,Bimal Basu's '*Nabarag*', Masiuddin Shaker and sheikh Niamat Ali's *Surja Dighal Bari* and Tanvir Mokammel's *Chitra Nadir Pare* are the leading novels on Partition have been adapted in the screen.. A popular Bengali film *Bipasha* was released in 1962. The heroine Bipasha is an orphan who lost her parents during the riot. Crossing the border she has migrated to Punjab and settled over here. Hero of the film Dibyendu knows that he is also an orphan. On the very day of their marriage Dibyendu comes to know a hard reality that he is the son of a whore. Being puzzled and upset he reaches Allahabad in search of his mother. Gradually he begins to consider himself as polluted one whose life is totally meaningless.

*Alo amar Alo* is a popular film directed by Pinaki Mukhopadhyay is based on the background of partition and refugee evacuation. This film was made during the period of Bangladesh war of liberation and was released after the war of liberation. The commoditization of womenfolk during that period of catastrophe is cinematized through *Alo amar alo*. *Nabarag* is another classic film directed by Bijoy Basu, deals with the frustration and mental anguish of Narayani who comes over to Calcutta from East Pakistan and gets married with an industrialist. Eventually, however, they get separated due to the immoral activities of her husband. Narayani hands over the charge of her son to a teacher who has migrated to Calcutta from East Pakistan. After a long interval she becomes united with her husband through her son. The most striking feature of this tale is the frustration of Narayani due to the experience and sweet memories of her abandoned motherland. 'Head Master', a film directed by Agragami, based on a short story of Narendranath Mitra, deals with post partition scenario of Bengal, was released in 1959.

Very recently veteran film director Goutam Ghosh has made one of his masterpieces *Shankhachil*. Though the film is not directly involved with Partition but 'border' has

become the central theme of this film. Goutam Ghosh is perhaps the sole director who contemplates and executes the theme upon border.<sup>84</sup> The film *Shankhachil* reflects the dream of free border and at the same time the tale of disillusionment. The teacher Muntasir Chowdhury Badal lives in the Bangladesh border happily with his wife Laila and the only daughter Rupsha. All of a sudden the heart disease of Rupsha is detected. The treatment of the disease is not available in the border area in Bangladesh. Finding no other alternative the teacher trespasses the border for the sake of treatment of his ailing daughter. With the assistance of the local relations they proceed to Calcutta for better treatment after having sold the ornaments of his wife. But their efforts are futile; his daughter breaths her last in Calcutta. The most tragic end of the story is that after the death of his only daughter his family members are accused for the violation of international law on the plea of infiltration and they are arrested by Border Security Force. Accompanying the dead body of their only daughter they sail towards Bangladesh border over the *Ichhamoti* River. The *Shankachil* is a symbolic representation freedom. It does not bother about the geographical boundaries which is totally man made. Ghosh used the allegory of *Shanachil* in the title remembering Jibanananda's depiction of *Shanachil* in his poetic acts. Goutam Ghosh does not directly engage with trauma of partition on screen but in his film border has served as source of disillusionment to the inhabitants of two adjoining countries.<sup>85</sup>

A very recent and popular movie *Raj Kahini* by Shrijit Mukhopadhyay has exhibited a marvelous performance on border due to partition. Begamjan, the central figure of the film is actually the owner of a brothel house. Eleven women are under her direct supervision. Begamjan is quite ignorant regarding country and politics. Her future revolves round circling the brothel house. In the meantime India attained freedom and following partition the areas of Debiganj and Haldibari which were identical in status got separate entity for the resettlements of borders. But due to the border demarcation of Radcliff the half portion of Begamjan's brothel was under India and other half was in Pakistan. Naturally when the boundary of two countries was being constructed the brothel became the barrier. Finding no others means the decision to demolish the brothel house was taken. Then Begamjan stages a massive resistance against the authority. She is the living embodiment of protest and a symbol of intrepidity<sup>86</sup>.

Within the ambit of fifteen years from 1947- 1962 at least two thousand films were made in Hindi and Urdu language. Among the above noted figures only fifteen films

are based on partition. The under noted films deal with the theme of partition- *Lahore* of M.S.Anand(1949),*Nastik* of I.S.Johar(1954), *Chholia* of Manmohan Desai (1960) or *Dharmaputra*(1961). There are other relevant films, viz. *Agg* of raj Kapur(1948), *Dhul ka phool* of Yosh Chopra(1959), *Owaqt* of Yosh Chopra(1965).*Tamas* is not only a film on partition and riot, it is a realistic form of document of the political situation of undivided Punjab. It can be termed as a political deed. Director Govind Nihalni tried his utmost to avoid the debatable question that who were actually responsible for the creation of new states and the subsequent miseries of the people.

From late 1990 onwards more films on the theme were produced including several main stream films viz. *Earth* (1998), *Train to Pakistan* (1998), *Hey Ram* (2000),*Gadar: Ek prem kotha*(2001), *Pinjar*(2003), *partition* (2007) and *Madrasapattinam*(2010). Concerning a fact of a partitioned Muslim family the film *Garam Hawa* of M.S. Sathyu was really remarkable. The outstanding cinema personality Satyajit Ray expressed his remarks over the film as an honest, strong and having multifaceted qualities. The film was quiet incomparable. The main theme of the story dealt with the problems of both the Hindu and Muslim refugees who became victim of circumstances. Not only the Hindus but also the minority Muslims of India has to confront such problems of the period.

#### v) MEMOIRS

Memoirs are an important source for reconstructing the partition history. After coming over here in India from East Pakistan, a process of construction and destruction acted silently in the minds of the uprooted persons. If it was observed with open eyes it would be evident that immense agony, anguish and frustration were preserved in the hearts of the uprooted persons. A sizable number of migrated persons being displaced from their ancestral homes stored their experiences and memories which were vividly manifested in their compositions. A good number of partition victims, both from West and East Bengal made valuable contribution to the partition literature by their memoirs. Through those memoirs of partition victims some undiscovered and unknown facts which remained dormant came into full public view. *Shatabarshe Ashalata* by Josodhara Bagchi and Abhijit Sen, *Ja dekhechhi and Udvastu* by Hiranmoy, Bandapadhyay, *Deshbhager Dinguli'* by Atin Bandapadhyay, *Chhere Asa Gram* edited by Dakshina Ranjan Basu, *Jibaner jalchhabi* Prativa Basu,

*Bhite chhada*, *Nirbindu* by Nirenbdranath Charaborty, *Aji hote shatabarsha age*, *Amar debottar Sampatti* by Nirad Chandra Chaudhry *Srinkhal Jhankar* by Bina Das, *Smritimoy Dinguli* by Hena Das, *Noakhali Durjoger Smriti* by Ashoka Gupta, *Leaves From A Diary* by Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, *Tin kuri dash* by Ashok Mitra (part II& III), *Ramanthan Athaba Bhimroti Praptir Paracharitcharcha* and *Banganama* by Tapan Roy chowdhury etc. are works by the writers of West Bengal. There are some memoirs from the writers of East Pakistan and Bangladesh. In this connection mention may be made of Ahmed, *Amar Dekha Rajnitir Panchas Bachhar* by Abu Mansur, *Ethnic Cleansing* by Salam Azad, *Kakhono Champa Kakhono Atasi* by Ranesh Dasgupta, *Jeevan Maran* by Rashid Karim, Kiranshankar.Sengupta, *Challiser Dekha Dhaka*, *Jeevan Sangram* by Mani Singha; *Etodiner Smriti* Abul Kalam Shamsuddin.

An important compilation of essays: *Chhere Asa Gram* by Dakshina Ranjan Basu comprised some memories of different villages. The essay illustrated the sense of tragedy followed by the bifurcation of India. The essays are a nostalgic remonstrations of the childhood days.<sup>87</sup> The Hindu Bengali refugees were rather forced to start a new journey for survival in their new abode. The way of their journey in West Bengal, more specifically in Calcutta was riddled with hurdles. The nostalgia for the villages they left were sketched in an artistic manner. In the very beginning of the book he wrote “I have brought back from our country something of great value, could you possibly guess what it is? The friend placed a tiny box of earth in my hands....Deeply ingrained in this earth are the memories of all my ancestors of yore ... cried out my helpless heart.<sup>88</sup> Basu remembered nostalgically the Hindu Muslim unity, the joy of Muslims in Durga puja, the songs of boatmen of his childhood days. According to Dipesh Chakraborty ‘the nostalgic folksy image of the village never died’.<sup>89</sup> *Chhere Asa Gram*, composed shortly after partition, is a testimony of the struggle of uprooted refugees surprisingly free of animosity. The recollection is fixed on the calm and peaceful past of the undivided Bengal leaving apart the nightmare. This remembrance presented with lamentation the termination of the communal harmony that persisted in prior to the Partition.<sup>90</sup> An opinion of Dipesh Chakraborty is relevant in this regards “The native village is pictured as both sacred and beautiful, and it is this that makes communal violence an act of both violation and defilement, an act of sacrilege against

everything that stood for sanctity and beauty in the Hindu Bengali understanding of what home was”<sup>91</sup>

A memoir on partition of India *Dayamayeer kotha*, has written by Sunanda Sikdar. The author recollects her childhood days in her ancestral house in Dighapait, a village of Mymensingh in East Pakistan. She elaborately presents her pleasant experiences among the Muslim friends and well wishers. It was beyond the purview of her speculation that she would have to move towards India forever leaving behind her intimate friends, countrymen and well wishers with whom she enjoyed her childhood days happily and merrily. Due to political unrest and communal disturbances she clearly visualized a gradual change come over the locality. She observed minutely the people in queue proceeding towards India in processions shouting in lamentation ‘*O go, Choli , jammer moto jai, R kono din dyakha hoibo na go. Koto oporadh korchhi map koira dio*’ (We are going, going forever. We shall not meet again. Please forgive us for our misconduct’. On the contrary she also witnessed the people of Hindustan moved towards Eastern Pakistan especially from Cooch Behar and Malda. Doya, the central figure of these autobiographical accounts of Sunanda Sikdar asks a touching question to her mother that why she will have to leave the country. She preferred to stay here instead of going there. But she had to leave forever and hence surrender herself to her own destiny.<sup>92</sup>

Partition is nothing but an offshoot of religious fanaticism which is penned in the novel *Bishad Brikkha* of Mihir Sengupta. This religious fanaticism was due to the diplomacy of political leaders to establish their political supremacy. This resulted in severe riot. This riot was accompanied by the exploitation on the women by men folk. The character of Masi in this novel is an abducted by Muslim dacoits and her husband was burnt alive. Masi then was compelled to take shelter to a Muslim family. The character of Kuttidi sketched by the author is also the symbol of helpless womanhood of Bengal who has become the object of male voracity. As a matter of fact, materiality and the feminine become synonymous and the woman has become an object that can be portended\_and\_exploited\_from that point of view there is no difference between Malati and Kuttidi.<sup>93</sup>

In a similar way two noted memory-centric novels of Shanta Sen are *Pitamohi* and *Jonmer mati* composed in 1934 and 2007 respectively. The grandmother (Pitamohi)

was fondly called *Mago*(Oh! Mother). After partition she came from the village of Moukathi of Barishal in her tender age and died after coming to India. Author Shanta Sen based the book on the lived reality of her grandmother depicting the mass exodus during the period of partition. The writer during the period of her maturity again went to revisit the deserted country to renovate the sweet memory of the bygone days.<sup>94</sup> In her memoir *Ujan srote*, Nilima Datta heaved the sigh of relief after setting foot on Indian soil from Burma during pre partition era. But again she became compelled to quit the country during the partition of 1947. The narrator Nilima Datta cited a story in this regard. She experienced a terrible experience when a loyal Muslim subject appeared before them and informed them to quit the house immediately because a conspiracy had been hatched to torch their house. So the prevailing circumstances compelled them to come forward leaving behind their valuables and sweet relations.<sup>95</sup> Nilima Dutta also narrates the continuous efforts of her family members to arrange an abode of their own. She describes the memories of her by gone days and also the untiring struggle for existence in alien land.<sup>96</sup>

*Nilkontha pakhir khoje* is a reflection and reminiscences of Atin Bandopadhyay's own memory. Another memory based novel is *Manusher ghar bari* which emphasizes on the inexorable struggle of refugees for their resettlement in different parts of West Bengal. The central character of the novel is Bilu, the author himself. He along with his co-warriors is trying to construct their dwelling houses near Bahrapur through reclamation of jungle areas. The accounts of the struggles of the *bangal* families are the main focus of the novel. Hardships of the family members of the novelist along with his personal depression, disillusionment, identity crisis are represented in a unique fashion.

Indubaran Ganguli in his book *Colony Smriti* expresses his reminiscences on the days of his colony life. Noted artist Prakash Karmakar in his memoirs *Ami* divulged the fact that a model of his artist father was *Moulavi* so he was brutally assassinated in a gruesome manner before the very eyes of young Prakash. This merciless attitude of the Hindus left a deep imprint upon the immature mind of Prakash Karmakar.<sup>97</sup>

Madhumoy Pal in his reputed collection memoirs named *Deshbhag- Binash O Binirman* has represented before us the glaring memories of different narrators in post partition era. In each and every memoirs the pang of separation, memories of

childhood days and relentless struggle for existence and survival was most effective and remarkable. The living memories of twenty one writers had been presented. Some of the narrators moved towards East Pakistan and West Bengal. Renowned poet Naresh Guha, was a poet of nostalgic outlook and in his works he expresses his doubt that how few lines in the atlas had transformed his motherland to an alien land. The poet's view was that the importance and the valuation of his sweet home was far more superior in comparison to the Taj Mahal. After having lost the home and hearth the writer still could visualize the deserted house, his kith and kin, near and dear relations, hearing the sweet melody of the bird *bou kotha kao* and could hear the distinct call of Dukhiram *Babu Jage!*<sup>98</sup> (Babu, please get up)

Bishnu Bose left Dacca during the period of independence. He happened to come to Mouri gram, a remote village in Howrah. The sweet memory of the golden days glittered brightly in his mind's eye. But the memories of Dacca remained deep into his mind as before. He had unveiled this truth through his memoirs *Smriti diye dhaka*. Another reminiscence of partition was *Surjyer muhurta kono din* by Nagendra Dash was not merely an individual statement but it reflected the political turmoil, the tussle between the Hindus and Muslims and thus the riot of Noakhali were projected in his recollection. He was the inhabitant of both Barishal and Noakhali. Thousands of people who migrated from Barishal were not humiliated in all cases, but minority Hindus being apprehended to be the object of oppression decided to leave for India. He came over to India in the year 1964, and hence he was an eloquent witness of many ups and downs of East Pakistan and so far as West Bengal was concerned.<sup>99</sup>

A book on memories of partition compiled by Rahul Roy presented the personal memories of the refugees who were compelled to move towards East Bengal leaving behind their sweet home, childhood friends and memories in West Bengal. A line sketched by Radcliff made a huge number of Muslims of West Bengal uprooted. Suddenly everything changed within a short period of time. The book consisted of thirteen articles of noted personalities who were born and brought up in India, more specifically in West Bengal. Their nostalgia and emotions for place of birth have been expressed through their memoirs. The articles of Hasan Azizul Haq, Bulbul Osman, Hussain Mohammad Ershad, Badruddin Umar, Mubarak Hussain, Sharmili Ahmed etc. highlighted their nostalgia for India, their native country. After so many years of partition all the memories of their childhood days were vivid in their minds.<sup>100</sup>

## NORTH BENGAL: PARTITION LITERATURE

The influence of the partition on literary sphere of North Bengal is scanty. There is a vital reason behind it; the refugees who settled over here in North Bengal did not suffer as much as of those refugees who marched towards Kolkata and were rehabilitated there and other adjoining areas. The refugees settled in the districts of North Bengal did not confront any massive problem except monetary stringency. The more or less peaceful atmosphere of North Bengal immediately after partition might fail to flourish the affinity towards literary activities. Following which the writers did not feel any spontaneous urge to write on this unprecedented catastrophe. Among the scanty few writers and novelists, some established themselves in the arena of partition literature of North Bengal.

Amiya Bhusan Majumdar is a dazzling star among the star studded arena of Bengali literature, so far as the domain of North Bengal is concerned. In his copious outstanding compositions the partition and refugee problem occupy a unique position. His fictions like *Nirbas*, *Garh Shrikhanda* are worth mentioning in this regard. Discussions regarding his above mentioned fictions have already been mentioned. His mastery over short stories is really superb in the truest sense of the term. In some of his short stories the miseries and struggle of the refugees are revealed. In this context his short story *Sanyalder Kahini* commands great appeal. Through his other short story *Sada Makarsha* he pens down the relentless struggle of the refugees and their dream to return to their ancestral fatherland to quench the thirst for peace and tranquility.<sup>101</sup> The psychological problem of Badan master, a refugee has skillfully been portrayed in his fiction *Dukhiar Kuthi*. In this fiction Badan becomes a stoic philosopher, mute and disinterested about his very existence. This pessimistic outlook of Badan is also vibrant among the other victimized uprooted persons.<sup>102</sup>

Narayan Gangapadhyay is an outstanding literary personality and a giant educationist in the realm of Amiya Bhusan Majumder. Gangapadhyay's contribution towards partition literature of North Bengal cannot be ignored or overlooked. In this context a question may arise why and how Gangapadhyay has been intimately involved in the literary domain of North Bengal specially in partition literature. The answer is quiet simple and authentic. Though the writer hailed from Barishal but he was brought up in the lap of undivided Dinajpur town. He commenced his professional career as a

professor of Bengali language and literature at Ananda Chandra College of Jalpaiguri. The major portion of his literary creation was basically based on the history of *Barendra bhumi* () The rivers, the scenic beauty, the population of different tribal areas did not lose sight of the author. The writer in the truest sense of the term was a bonafied refugee following his matrimonial relation with Asha Debi, the daughter of Jalpaiguri. The renowned novelist presents the atrocious murder of Suprakash when the three sisters under the guidance of Suprakash started towards Tejgaon airport with a view to going India. Suddenly a gang of hooligans armed with deadly weapons attacked the innocent air traveler Suprakash and subsequently he succumbed to the injuries. The terrified sisters could not have the scope to see the dead body of Suprakash.<sup>103</sup> The background of the story is based on Malda.

Bimal Ghosh popularly known as Chomang Lama, in his article *Ei Alo Ei Andhar* vividly describes the untold sufferings of refugees. During that period of turmoil following partition countless refugees rushed towards India. The flow became an unending event. Initially two places were earmarked to rehabilitate the refugees in West Bengal. They were also provided in Siliguri town also.<sup>104</sup> The accomplished writer Dinesh Chandra Roy, the elder brother of Debesh Roy, in his story *Kulapati* narrates the struggle of a refugee family to adjust himself with other families. The pathetic tale of adjustment has skillfully and artistically being reflected in the said story. His most remarkable novel concerning the refugees is *Sona Padma*. It is undoubtedly one of his best creations.<sup>105</sup>

After Amiya Bhusan Majumder, perhaps the true representative of partition literature of North Bengal is Benu Dutta Roy, a poet per excellence. His original name is Dr. Suranjan Dutta Roy. In the course of his discussions and in his memoirs, in his verses, in interviews and above all in his writings the untold sufferings of refugees have been sketched. Benu Dutta Roy in his personal expressions through compositions and regarding the homeless occupy a major part of his creation. In his reminiscences, the fond faces of his kin, the blue water of the river Dhaleswari and Meghna, the whistle of the streamer of the Goalnanda ghat are still alive in his mind. Benu Dutta Roy of Netrokona subdivision of the then Mymensingh district is the true mouthpiece of the refugees.<sup>106</sup> Dutta Roy in his memoir *Jala Kallorer Din* discloses that how the torture of Muslim League compelled the Hindu inhabitants to flee from East Pakistan. The writer also came to Jalpaiguri as a refugee.<sup>107</sup>

Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay is one of the brightest stars among the star sprangled galaxy of Bengal's literary horizon. He hailed from the district of Mymensingh and procured varied experiences during the course of his travel in different parts of Bengal following the transferable job of his father who was a railway service holder. He started his academic career at Missionary school of Cooch Behar town. From there he got himself admitted in the Victoria college of Cooch Behar town. Though he is a refugee still tied the nuptial ties in Cooch Behar. His celebrated novel *Phera*, through this novel the pathetic condition of a refugee girl Bithi has masterly been sketched. India had just become independent; the author himself was not matured enough. He happened to come in contact with a raped refugee girl in a dilapidated house of a cottage. The simple and innocent raped girl Bithi frankly discloses to the author that as she is a raped girl she has no moral right to dwell with other inmates. She wants to know from the author the proper place of such a rotten girl. But the author remains mute and fails to answer the query of the raped girl. The sagas of such helpless girls like Bithi remain buried under the debris of oblivion. The celebrated novelist Shirshendu has have the efficiency and proficiency to unveil and unearth the treasured sorrows and sufferings of hundred of girls like Bithi.<sup>108</sup> Shirshendu's another book *Madhab O tar Pariparshik* deals with partition and its impact on common mass.

Dinesh Chandra Dakua of Mathabhanga subdivision of Cooch Behar district is a veteran political personality and ex Minister of Left front Government of West Bengal, his composition *Uttarer Golpo* gives a clear picture of the pathetic condition of East Bengal refugees in the soil of Cooch Behar. According to his authentic statement in his writings it is clearly stated that the Rajbansis of Cooch Behar looks down upon the refugees of the adjoining districts of East Pakistan like Rangpur and Dinajpur. The pity of whole thing is that the Hindu Rajbansis of Rangpur and Dinajpur according to the sentiments of the Cooch Behar Rajbansis were not to be treated as refugees because they were the feathers of the same bird. More so, the refugee Rajbansis were considered to be their relatives, their brothers and sisters and their kith and kin; whereas, the refugees from other districts were treated to be the refugees, to be the foreigners and also as *Bhatiya*<sup>109</sup>.

Professor Ananda Gopal Ghosh, a reputed writer in his book *Swadhinatar sat: Prasanga chhere Asa Mati* makes an elaborate discussion about the pre and post events of partition. Initially he started with the sixty years of completion of

independence and also about the Radcliff line and its impact on North Bengal. He also made discussion about refugees, their rehabilitation and resettlement in different corners of West Bengal. He also illustrated and pointed out the gradual development of North Bengal in all spheres of life. The impact of Partition on the North Eastern states did not lose sight of his discussion. In another chapter of his book he dealt with the manifold aspects of partition literature of India. He specially stressed on the Bengali literature that presented the partition related refugee crisis and the trauma and turmoil of the period. The author also ventilated the sincere efforts of different people who in order to satisfy their nostalgic feeling named various places after the names of their deserted ancestral abodes in East Pakistan.<sup>110</sup>

Dr. Jyotnendu Chakraborty of Jalpaiguri town is one of the most gifted literary personalities. Most of his stories and writings are based on Mymensingh, his motherland. In his widely read short story *Bagh O Harini Sambad* (Tale of a tiger and deer) he depicts the miserable condition of a Hindu family. The author in his said story expresses his agony and anxiety about his teen-aged daughter. He thinks less for his property but more for his daughter. Taking the advantage of the helplessness of the minority Hindus the Muslim hooligans targets the house of a Hindu middle class family Nitai Sarkar. Nitai being worried regarding the fate of his dear daughter comes at his wit's end. In the meantime the Muslim miscreants intimidate the family of Gour Master. The hooligans demand Rs. Five lacks to the said family to be paid within a week. At the said moment the daughter-in-law of Gour is just returning from the bathing *ghat*. Eying her, the notorious persons change their decision and indirectly hints Gour that they are ready to forgo their demands in lieu of his daughter-in law Chapala This remark of 'Hat kata' Munna gives sufficient indication of the future of Gour. On the other hand Nitai Sarkar with his wife and daughter escapes from motherland at mid night with the help of agent.<sup>111</sup>

*Barama Brityanta of Jeevan Sarkar* is an eloquent testimony of the story regarding the life and livelihood of refugee individuals. The father of the author still bears the sweet memory of bygone days of his motherland. Every food item he consumes reminds him the superb and heavenly taste of different food items of ancestral land. The author laments that the indigenous people always blame the *Bangal* for their misery and inconveniences but they never praise their excellence. The *Bangal* can produce

consecutive harvest at least three times in the same land instead of one. The book gives clear account regarding the pain of separation from the ancestral house. To them this separation is nothing but the synonymous to death. This book is the lamentation of the displaced evacuees who move from one corner to other like shuttle cock. They are leading rootless and aimless life for a long uncertain period.<sup>112</sup>

Jeevan Sarkar's noted poem *Dhaleswari* is a glaring example of nostalgia and urge for eternal heavenly peace. It also emphasizes his affinity and urge to return back on the bank of Dhaleswari which is still flowing. He portrays-*Swapna Dekhi / Kala Gachhe Ghera Dhaleswari parer/ Sei Bagan Barite Achhi/ Ilishier Jal Nie/ Dhaleswarite Bhasie Dei Nao/...Kotakal Shunina/ Jhup Jhap Par bhangar Shobdo/ Biswas Hoina Na/ Mone hoi / Ajo Dhaleswarir Parei/ Rayechhe Amar Ghar*<sup>113</sup> (I dream/The Dhaleswari is surrounded by banana trees/ I assume that I am there/ carrying a net for catching Hilsa fish/ I float a boat on the river Dhaleswari/...I don't hear for a long the shattering sound of river banks/ I still believe, my nest is on the bank of the river Dhaleswari). The writer Sarkar is not a popular face in the literary arena of North Bengal. Yet, his desire to return to the *bhita* of East Bengal though impossible, still it survives in his mind's eye, which has intermingled with the longing of thousands of refugees.

Subhas Choudhury, a retired teacher of Jalpaiguri, composes a book *Jalpaiguri Shaharer Itibritya* where he highlights the problem of the refugees hailing from East Pakistan and their struggle to cope with the alien land, more so their relentless endeavours to resettle in a foreign land and they decide hastily to reside in the area of Maskolaibari under Jalpaiguri district. Each refugee family was allotted ten *kathas* of land and sometimes 7.5 *kathas* of land along with Rs, 12,500 only with a view to constructing dwelling houses.<sup>114</sup> The author is also the writer of another book *Purba Banger Korcha*. The central character of the book is Vikramjit, a refugee. The writer narrates the nostalgia of the refugee people through the characterization of Vikramjit. Despite lapse of several years his dreamy memories childhood days of Pabna is still vivid in his mind.<sup>115</sup> Debashis Chakraborty, a bank officer, is a well known story writer. He composes a book named *Abhijatya*. The family members of the composer migrated from Dinajpur of East Pakistan to the other side of the border. According to his statement the displaced individuals by the pressure of adverse circumstances were

compelled to sell their belongings in a cheap price.<sup>116</sup> Biren Saha, the former director of Akashbani Kolkata, a poet of repute, settled in Mathabhanga of Cooch Behar districts. Two of his poems 'Dhaleswari' and 'Satghoria' memorize the reminiscences of his motherland. Dhaleswari, a river of East Bengal occupies an important place in many of his compositions.<sup>117</sup>

Besides poems he authors an outstanding novel known as *Shutungar Dotara* which brilliantly narrates the tussle between the local inhabitants and the migrated evacuees. He reaffirms the fact that how *Bhatiya Khyadao* movement takes a violent shape. Through the conversations of the characters of the novel the author depicts his longing for ancestral place. He is optimistic enough that everything will be as before, the dark cloud of catastrophe will soon be subsided.<sup>118</sup> From the writings of Biren Saha a clear picture of society, social relations as well as picture of social crisis become evident. The writer also throws light on pre and post partition period in one of his famous novels *Bas Parabas*. He sketches the picture of the family members who are the worst sufferer of devastating riot. The theme of the novel gives a clear indication that how the ill fated members of a refugee family becomes the victims of grim irony of fate.<sup>119</sup>

Kamal Acharya in his story *Iswar Nirakhekho* presents a remarkable story on uprooted individuals migrate after partition. Govinda Ghosh, a protagonist of the story, flees to India for safety and security. At the middle age he is compelled to quit accompanying Madhab and Shefali. In his tender age Madhab realizes the heinous attitude of his miscreant Muslim neighbours of East Bengal. To humiliate the Hindu women in different ways becomes the order of the period.<sup>120</sup> An eminent essayist and poet of Balurghat is Amal Basu, authored a book of poems named *Udvastubasi*. A talented poet from Kaliaganj in North Dinajpur in one of his poems *udvastu* he represents the sufferings, agony and distress of the displaced persons. He writes-  
*Amra Udvastu/ Vastu Achhe Tabu Vastuhin/Kul Achhe Tabu Okul/Mul Achhe Tabu Chhinnamul/Ma Achhe Tabu Matrihin/Amader Nei Kono Sikriti/Amra Prithibib Jaroj Santan.*<sup>121</sup> (We are refugee/ we possess home, still homeless/We have rim, still rimless/We have root, still rootless/We have mother, still motherless/We have no recognition/We are the illegitimate children of the Earth.

The prominent leftist writer and editor of Siliguri Pallab Kirtonia, has composed a poem *Khulnar Madhumoti Nadi* where he depicts the character of a refugee who hails from Chor Shivpur village. The poet synthesizes the remembrance and reality through this thought provoking creation.<sup>122</sup> The experience of forceful occupation of the properties of Hindus, rape, elopement, convulsion and also the painful experience of displacement have artistically been portrayed by Pushpajit Karmakar in his book *Naya Basat*. He has migrated from Rangpur to a village named Sihal in South Dinajpur district. At the beginning of the book the author writes ‘Kichhu Kotha’ where he narrates different aspects of Hindu exodus, the intimidation which the Hindus suffer, rape and molestation on the women along with inhuman torture on general people in 1965 during India Pakistan war. The author narrates that Mita is running, she is running undressed, wild wolf like men were following him. It was not a scene of a film, it is a grim reality.<sup>123</sup>

A renowned poet and story writer of Malda district, Partha Sarathi Jha, composes a story *Bhitemati* where he presents the deplorable condition of the refugees. The lady character of the story narrates how they flee, how their religious sentiment found outlet and how they save their chastity. In spite of all these shortcomings the pang of separation from motherland has not disappeared.<sup>124</sup> Another veteran poet of Chopra, at the vicinity of Islampur town of North Dinajpur, Narayan Chandra Mandal writes a book of poems under the title *Mongal Shankha*. In one of the poems from this collection titled *Chokher Jol* he poeticizes the story of a teenage girl who becomes the victim of severe injustice of fate. The poet highlights the fact that how the new foreign country creates a despair in her immature mind.<sup>125</sup> Other poem of the poet is worth to be mentioned in this connection is *Banga Bibhajan* that represents communal frenzy, genocide, bloodshed experienced by the Hindu community in East Bengal. The poet throws the question that why such a catastrophe takes place, why these ordinary people are compelled to traverse a long way riddled with hurdles of insecurity, uncertainty and disillusionment? Nayayan Chandra Mondal laments with his deep insight about the barbaric attitude of violent Muslim mob through every line of his poems.<sup>126</sup>

The nostalgia for motherland has been expressed in the poem *Setu* of Arabinda Kumar Maji. He writes *Radcliff chhuri diye kete phelte parbe /Amader eki rokter*

*prasaban?/Anarir chhuri diye korechho angachhed,/Satchallishe Padma, Ganga, Meghna Rupnarayane/Bhasiyechho bhatrityer raktakta lash.*<sup>127</sup>(Radcliff, can you vivisect the blood circulates within us?You have immersed the dead bodies of blood wet brotherhood in the rivers of Ganges, Padma, Meghna and Rupnarayan) A note worthy writer Dr. Brindaban Bagchi, migrated from Pabna to Royganj as a refugee. His momentous work *Char dashaker Ganit* portrays a vivid picture of atrocities during the period of turmoil. His emotional representation is really heart rendering. When the bulk of Hindu population is moving towards India- all of a sudden some Muslims armed with deadly weapons forcibly come into the train and let the Muslim passengers to get down. But the Hindus are not allowed to vacate the train. The terrorists shout *Tum log kapher hain* (you are the enemy of religion), a fierce tussle takes a violent shape. The whole train is flooded with blood.<sup>128</sup>

A noted writer of rhymes and also a well known actor of *Yatra* (a type of theatre)Ajit Roy settled at Jalpaiguri district as a refugee. Through his unparalleled numerous rhymes he memorizes sweet memories of motherland. In one of his rhymes *Bastuhara* the poet makes a rhythmic presentation of the refugee exodus and their subsequent struggle for survival.<sup>129</sup>In another poem under the caption *Bastu Bhite* poet describes his urge and passion for the lost homeland. The poet writes- *Sahar theke anek dure/Chhotto ekti gram/Shanta shital sabuj prantar/ Moyna tar num/Sat purusher vastu vita/Chhilo sei grame/Swarane tahar dunoyane/Asru dhara name*<sup>130</sup>.( Far away from the town there was a small village named Moyna with full of cool peaceful green meadows –there was the ancestral house of seven generations. The reminiscences of that olden days cause tearing. *Atit Kotha Bole*, in that rhyme writer Ajit Roy artistically mentions different food and fruits of East Bengal with which the poet has an emotional attachment, as he mentions in the lines –*Jawar bela hoye elo/ghaniye ase sanjh/Atit diner koto kichhui/Porchhe mone aj/Pangsha gramer nokshi kodma/Kumar khalir khaja/Phatullapurur chirar sathe/Lagto khete moja...*<sup>131</sup>(The time of farewell is fast approaching. The sweet stories of bygone days flash in memory. *Naksi Kadma* i.e. one kind of sugar made product of Pangsha village, *Khaja* i.e. one kind of sweet made of wheat of Komarkhali was delicious and palatable with *chira* i.e. one kind of pressed rice of Phatullapur).

Meenakshi Majumdar, a teacher by profession resides at Alipurduar town, has writes a poem named *Desh*, which is based on the memory of motherland. Sitting on the verandah of a flat Sarama the protagonist of the poem finds herself within a cage. There was no pomp and gaiety in her ancestral home but still the memoirs of those golden days are vivid in her mind. Though the houses were ordinary and not well built and not luxurious but happiness persisted. The very question of Khoka -*Desh ki Ma?*(Mother, what is country?) shakes the very existence of Sarama.<sup>132</sup> *Lal Pagri* of Asit Ranjan Dutta is a different type of composition. The author after completion of his job as a police officer in East Pakistan joined in University of North Bengal as a security officer. He represents his experiences as a police officer in this aforesaid book. What he writes is derived from his own practical experience, nothing fictitious has been written. He elaborately discusses the ruthless assassination of the Hindus in East Pakistan and the Hindus were forcefully driven out at the point of guns in 1950. In this way the Hindus were ousted from Dacca and other parts of the country.<sup>133</sup>

Khitish Mukherjee, an octogenarian resident of Sivmandir, in the vicinity of Siliguri town, expresses his reminiscences in his memoir *Kanna Hasi*. He articulates the pathetic helplessness condition of the refugees who left their *bhita* in Pabna and Tangail which were enriched with many charming memories.<sup>134</sup> Poet Bipul Saha in his illustrious poem *Jeevan Jua* symbolizes the emotional attachment towards the lost territory of deserted Bengal.<sup>135</sup> Prolific writer and poet Rana Chattapadhyay spent his childhood days at Cooch Behar. In his memoirs *Bangla Amar Bangla* he frankly confesses that he does not find any communal attitude among the local residents and migrated individuals of Cooch Behar during the period 1952-53, which is unthinkable in Calcutta and its surrounding districts. This universal brotherhood is really praise worthy.<sup>136</sup> Ratan Das settled in Balughat from Barishal. In his memoirs *Album* a clear picture is available of his journey towards uncertainty and struggle for survival leaving behind all the lost memories of golden days. He is leading a life of a displaced and merged with the main stream of refugee exodus.<sup>137</sup>

Mani Bhusan Roy, a resident of pre partition Jalpaiguri divulged many unknown incidents of the time in his reminiscences *Ei janame ghatale mor jonmo jontantor*'. He used to live at Debiganj of Jalpaiguri before partition. By one stroke of pen of Radcliff five police stations of the district fell in the territory of East Pakistan. But the

grim injustice of fate was that the house of the writer was no longer within the Indian Territory. Then the author started his struggle to cope with the environment of new country and he began to consider himself as the citizen of that country. In his memoirs he uttered that once he was sentenced capital punishment on the plea of advocating anti Islamic view in school. The allegation levelled against him was that he taught a story from *Sita Ram* written by Bankim Chandra. This incident along with others prompted him to leave his motherland. This memorization was nothing but becoming foreigner in his own land.<sup>138</sup>

*Mukta simanter sesh rat*, a memoir of Satyendra Prasad Biswas of Alipurduar was a unique composition. The author stated in his article with a confession which he made in The Anandabazar Patrika on 14 August, 2005 that he was repentant of leaving wounded Nami in Darshana station, and then the writer moved towards Barnpur by Dhaka mail. Namita or Nami was a co passenger of the author. She requested the author to guide her towards Ranaghat camp. When the writer was in a deep slumber the train had already reached to Dashana, the last station of Pakistan border. After awaking he found that Nami was not there. When he enquired about Nami to another co passenger the reply was *Ansar ra niye gechhe* (Ansars had taken her away). The train left but Nami did not come. But what was a matter of great astonishment that after fifty years Nami being alive came across the confession note of Satyen Biswas and wrote a letter to him at the address of the Ananda Bazar Patrika that she was alive because that day by mistake she was thrown to the mail train loaded with dead bodies. After many ups and downs of life she was in an old age home. This memory of Satyendra Prasad Biswas bore a living example of the tremendous crisis of the period.<sup>139</sup>

Hemanta kumar Roy Barma, a local resident and a high official under Royal administration has penned his memories of 1947, is a valuable document for the construction of the history of refugee exodus in Cooch Behar and adjoining regions. *Amar Jeevan O Amar Rajnity*, a memoir by the leftist politician of Dinhat subdivision of Cooch Behar Kamal Guha, is intimately related to the life of the refugees. He was not a refugee but his book is an important document of refugee resettlement.<sup>140</sup> An auto-biographical work named *Jeevan Nadir Bake Bake* of Amar Roy Pradhan, a renowned politician, has discussed the communal fury in different

parts of East Bengal that resulted mass exodus of uprooted persons.<sup>141</sup> Manarnjan Das of Alipurduar made an autobiographical work *Swadeshe Porobasi* highlights on the ill-fated refugees from East Pakistan and also expresses his personal feelings for their own motherland.<sup>142</sup>

Shubhasish Das of Dinhata subdivision of Cooch Behar composed a poem *Udvastu* where the poet laments how the displaced persons following partition compelled to change their names, address and also their very existence. The independence has gifted them with the title *udvastu*.<sup>143</sup> A veteran poet of Royganj Kallol Bandapadhyay's rhyme *Ek Brinte Duti Kusum* is an imperative composition. He writes-*Epar Bangla Opar Bangla/ Modhyikhane Kantatar/ Phele Asa Chhinnamuler/Swapne Ghera Smritibhar*.<sup>144</sup> (A fencing in between Bengal of this part and Bengal on the other side of fencing. All these are wrapped with the dream of memories of uprooted persons) This nostalgia towards motherland also available in a book of poems named *Nirab Prithibi* by a poet Niranjan Dey Sarkar, a resident of Dhupguri of Jalpaiguri district. In one of his poems *Udvastu Jantrana* he utters -*He Kolam Itihaser Smritite phire Jao-/Dekhini Deshbhag, Dekhini Udvastuder Jantrana./Parechhi Itihas, Shunechhi janma theke Gurujonder jantranar Smriticharan/...Ajo lahkha lahkhaa pran nribhite kande atmadogdhotay*.<sup>145</sup> (Dear Pen please go back to the memory of history. I've never seen partition, never witnessed the agony of uprooted. I've read history, heard the memorization of pain from elderly persons...Till today lakhs of uprooted soul weeping silently in self affliction.)

Biswanath Roy in his story *Bahe Chole Madhumati* presents the oppression of the Muslims upon the Hindu minorities through the utterance of the character of 'Kakima'.<sup>146</sup> Professor Dr. Prakash Adhikari is the author of many verses on the partition of India and refugee life. In this respect his *Swadhinatay Harano Gram* is worth to be noted. An accomplished educationist of Alipurduar Dr. Shipra Sen Dhar composed a poem named *Desher Barir Lok*.<sup>147</sup> The other writer of Alipurduar, Arati Kahali Goswami writes a story in the name *Basati* where she deals with the struggle for existence of a namashudra uprooted family of Netrokona in their alien land.<sup>148</sup> Ranajit Kumar Sarkar hailing from Rajshahi settled at South Dinajpur. He writes two poems titled *Janmasthan* and *Swad*.<sup>149</sup> Santosh Basu of Cooch Behar writes

an essay ‘Sharanartha Shibire Tindin’ in his book *Phire Dyakha*. He portrays a picture of incessant refugee inflow towards India and the subsequent harassment and sufferings of the uprooted people.<sup>150</sup>

Parul Mandal of Dinhatra subdivision of Cooch Behar in her novel *Sonar Bangla* deals with the displaced persons following the India-Pakistan War of 1965. Professor Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay in his essay ‘Desh Bibhag, Swadhinata: Phire Dyakha’ also represents the inhuman torture on the minority Hindus on their way to India.<sup>151</sup> Debashish Chakraborty, a writer and essayist of Siliguri, has composed innumerable stories and essays on partition of India. Among those mention may be made one of his stories *Mati Daser Shunani*.<sup>152</sup> Chakraborty in his story *Saral Satya* presents a reverse picture of Muslim refugee exodus from India to East Pakistan. The writer tries to describe that the disillusionment of Indian Muslims are identical in comparison to their Hindu refugees.<sup>153</sup> Mandira Bhattacharya, retired professor of the University of North Bengal in *Oi Dyakha Jaye Bari Amar* ushers light on her childhood days in East Pakistan, on the sweet bonding of Hindu-Muslim neighbours, about partition and also on the memories of deserted ancestral abode.<sup>154</sup>

The Rajbansi community of North Bengal does not lag behind in composing the chronic problem of refugees of East Pakistan in their own Kamtapuri language. The name of Mani Bhusan Roy, an educationist of Rajbansi community is worthwhile to be mentioned. Much information is available from his various writings. Param Lal Singh, composes the biography of Kalindra Nath Barman where copious valuable and authentic information are available relating to partition and refugee resettlement.<sup>155</sup> Harimohan Barman in his article ‘Rajbanshi Samajer Sei Kal Ar Ei Kal’ highlights the fact that the Rajbansi community comes forward with their limited resources to help the destitute refugees of East Pakistan who came over to North Bengal for safety and security and to have a peaceful abode.<sup>156</sup> The above noted writers, poets, essayists, novelists with some special exceptions are not familiar in the wider Bengali literary world. Still their authentic, realistic and practical experiences help us to a great extent in accumulating the valuable information of the uprooted individuals of East Pakistan.

The partition of India had created a massive impetus upon Bengali literature and Bengal literary personalities from the very dawn of separation. On the contrary, the

Bengali literature and its literary personalities had no remarkable contribution in narrating and analyzing the pang and pathos, sufferings and humiliation of the displaced individuals hailing from West Bengal to East Bengal which subsequently converted into Bangladesh in 1971. According to an eminent research scholar and critic Rafikul Islam the huge number of Bengali Hindu minorities who was compelled to abandon the country was much more less in number in comparison to Muslims who left West Bengal and moved to Eastern Pakistan, instead of, a large number of non-Bengali Muslims entered into the territory of West Bengal. As a result the problems of humanity remained suppressed and lost its gravity and utility.<sup>157</sup> The academicians and the elite community of Bangladesh did not deem it fit to ventilate the grievances of the displaced persons of eastern Pakistan. Truly speaking, the refugees of East Pakistan were virtually free from all sorts of hurdles relating to the partition and rehabilitation. They had not to face any problem as the evacuees of East Pakistan confronted in India and so far as West Bengal was concerned. So, the men of letters of East Pakistan as well as Bangladesh did not have the opportunity to think seriously about the lives and livelihood and other activities of the displaced. Majority of the evacuees of East Bengal were financially sound and well to do in status. They had enormous valuable assets which they left behind before leaving the country forever. As a result the Muslim refugees of East Bengal were greeted with ready accommodation providing all sorts of facilities. In a sentence it may be asserted that the problem of migrants of both the countries were poles asunder.<sup>158</sup>

Sixty years ago the women migrants of East Bengal moved towards Calcutta and other districts of West Bengal as evacuees after being thrown out by the Muslims of East Bengal. The lives of the unfortunate women were plunged into profound darkness of uncertainty and insecurity. The writers and academicians of both the Bengals considered it to be their sacred responsibility in writing about the displaced women. They tried their level best to manifest their grievances, pang and agony. The bifurcation of country was a blunder in the truest sense of the term, which had a tremendous effect upon the lives of the East Bengal migrants, particularly the women were concerned. The women who remained ignored and neglected in the realm of novels and fictions became the central figures of discussion by the authors of both the Bengals. In the event of the partition, the women, especially the uprooted women of East Bengal had to confront irreplaceable loss in their own social arena. The partition

literature brought about a magical and radical change in the lives and activities of the depressed women. Partition literature concerning women paved a new trend of representing women in order to cope with the new changed circumstances.

Partition was a significant event and had a significant role in the lives of the uprooted women. It was not only a historical event, nor a social event, but was a challenge of the woman community to adjust themselves with the prevailing circumstances occurred by the aftermath of partition. Women of all walks of life were more or less affected by the partition. After the total destruction of the peaceful nests of East Bengal they were striving hard to reconstruct their disturbed nests and to revive the lost glory and dignity of their previous lives. Following partition women had to face several hurdles, physical and mental hardship, carnage, rape, molestation, humiliation and outrage of modest had become a regular event by the neighbouring inmates of our country. Successive oppression, consecutive depression and brutal assassination transformed the woman community to be vocal and vibrant. Fight, fight and fight was the true idealism which inspired the women to a great extent. Those activities, determination, conviction, self reliance and intrepidity of womenfolk had been skillfully depicted by the authors of both the Bengals. It was undoubtedly a wealthy treasure and asset of Bengali literature.

It may be ascertained with certitude that none of the partition litterateurs of Bengal could have had the ability like Sadat Hossain Manto to portray the lively documents of the pathos, tragedies and the untold sufferings of millions uprooted individuals from both sides of the borders. It was a matter of great misfortune on the part of Bengali literature that it was deprived of availing the magical touch of any writer like Manto. In actuality, the Bengali literature and film on partition brought about a continuing human consciousness. So the event of the partition cannot be historicized as an event of past. There is no denying the fact that 'past' is eternally digging into present. The characters of different wings of literature are also history. The characters in fictions so far as partition literature is concerned give a clear picture on intricate relationship between individual and history. Within this relationship the individual is nothing but an ethical subject of a history that cannot be comprehended nor denied.

**Notes:**

1. Ghatak Suchandra, "Sahitye dhora pore Itihaser Satya' *Bitarkika*, Kolkata: Setu, October, 2013, pp.110-111.
2. Anita Desai, Attia Hossain, *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Penguin India, 2009, (in introduction)
3. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, "Bharat Bibhajan O Bharatiya Sahitya, *Uttarer Hawa*, Sharadiya, 1406(BS), p.28.
4. Satya Guha, 'Ekaler Godya Podya Andaloner Dalil' cited in Ananda Gopal Ghosh, "Bharat Bibhajan O Bharatiya Sahitya, and p.28.
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