Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI) Volume 13, Issue 1, January 2022: 1783-1799

The Dilemma of the Partitioning of the Subcontinent 1947: A Tale of Sacrifices and Hardships of Immigrants

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Abstract

This research aimed to delve into the experiences of partitioning-era refugees during the partitioning of the sub-continent in 1947. Now, it is time to document as many tales as possible from the generation that saw the emergence of modern India and Pakistan. A vast and brutal upheaval characterized the partition of the subcontinent. Partition in Punjab was extremely brutal. Hindus who had lived in what would become Pakistan for centuries were forced to evacuate instantly. Meanwhile, millions more Muslims fled across the Pakistani-Afghan border to escape the violence in their own country. This study aimed to investigate the psychological trauma and stress that migrants endured during the partition of the sub-continent. These migrants' coping techniques (to deal with their experiences) were also examined in this study. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with participants in order to get an understanding of their narratives and tales about the India-Pakistan Partition. At the time of Pakistan's and India's 1947 Partition, ten people (five men and five women) were selected for the survey. Transcribing the extensive interview transcripts was the next step. The data was analyzed with interpretative phenomenological analysis.

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Keywords: Partition, immigrants, Sub-continent, India, Pakistan Sacrifices

Introduction

Personal recollections of life experiences provide a unique and in-depth perspective, mainly

when traumas are involved. Personal tales are valuable for communicating knowledge and

assisting people in dealing with psychological issues. Researchers can use these tales to

understand better the participants' experiences and cultures (Elliott, 2005).

These narratives have been utilized in therapeutic and trauma studies to assist affectees in

comprehending their anguish while also recording historical and personal events for posterity.

These accounts have been lacking from the affectees of the subcontinent's partition in 1947. Only

in the past several years (unfortunately, when the generation who lived through it) has it been

vital to chronicle traumas and families.

Using the difference between personal narratives of migration-related difficulties and post-

traumatic stress experienced by migrants during the 1947 Pak-India Partition, the current study

proposes to concentrate on narratives. This will give a vital in-depth insight into changes in

personal suffering and the mental and emotional health of people who saw the 1947 Partition and

subsequent migration. These will emerge as thematically coordinated life tales. Personal stories

of people's lives with multidimensional experiences are accessible to narrative analysis, and the

importance of such views is emphasized in providing access to the personal world of emotions

(Pietkiewicz& Smith 2012).

Literature Review

Davis (1949) states that the fundamental cause for the vast exodus was a "wave of religious

fanaticism and intolerance, combined with immense bloodthirsty violence," which made people

on both sides of the border fear for their lives. As a consequence of the subsequent migration of

people, educated Hindus with professional occupations departed for India, while Pakistan

acquired an infusion of Muslim peasants who proved to be troublesome for the newly constituted

state. The migration of Muslims and Hindus on both sides of the border influenced the religious

demography of both nations, as the proportion of Muslims in Pakistan climbed from 77 to 83

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(1941 to 1949), while the number of Muslims in India decreased to 40 million (only 11 percent of the total population of India).

Ansari (1994) demonstrated how the abrupt end of the subcontinent's decades-long British control opened the stage for a violent upheaval that murdered many individuals who found themselves on the wrong side of the border. Others died of tremendous weariness, famine, and natural illnesses, while other migrants were killed by violent mobs due to significant community unrest, undermining the British effort to construct an organized exchange of people.

Khalidi (1998) claims that around 7,200,000 Muslims and 5,500,000 Hindus fled from India and Pakistan in three stages. The first began in August 1947 and concluded in November of that year, with migration limited to Delhi, Punjab, Bharatpur, Alwar, and Uttar Pradesh. The researcher further states that the unprecedented number of individuals going back and forth between India and Pakistan was unanticipated, and hence no preventative steps were planned to address this large migration. When violence erupted, it was discovered that state authorities in states like Alwar, Baharatpur, and Kapurthalla were also complicit in the mass slaughter and deportation of Muslims, along with other violent mobs participating in "orgies of physical violence.

Butalia (2017) reveals disturbing stories such as a Sikh woman moving her braid so that her father could easily behead her, young children moving from house to house looting valuable possessions, and a woman who jumped into a well full of water but survived because it was already too full of bodies.

Pandey (2001) describes the partition story, bringing it lucidly into the center of the discourse by addressing three important aspects: the nature of evidence in firsthand observations and official archives; the causal explanation of the partition; and the role of rumors in politicizing a community. First, he addresses the total number of refugees, which, in his opinion, has been claimed to be between 200,000 and two million.

Ahmed (2002) portrays the bloody events of partition as a breeding ground for pathological politics, with those of the same caste, creed, ethnicity, religion, and so on being given precedence over people of other castes and creeds as it promoted the idea of majoritarian nationalism. The researcher compares community riots that occurred before the notion of

partition to those that occurred subsequently. However, the previous events were on a smaller scale and tended to fade swiftly with the possibility of early reconciliation, the events after the partition were more brutal and long-lasting, with ramifications that may still be felt today. The author describes the immense cruelty after the partition as "the world's first successful post-war experiment in huge cleansing."

Kaur (2007) states that painful memories are the legacy of the 1947 India-Pakistan partition. She also highlighted a photograph published in numerous Delhi newspapers after India's nuclear tests in 1998, in which people were celebrating the achievement of being able to attack Lahore and Islamabad with nuclear missiles. People were dancing and singing as they celebrated. She emphasized the troubling fact that these folks were never a part of the partition but were the offspring of those Hindu and Sikh affectees who suffered difficulties during relocation. Partition has also resulted in such nationalist intoxication.

Khan (2008) argued that the slow retreat of British forces, the already split police force, the weak and understaffed Punjab Boundary Force, and an ethnically divided subcontinent with lethal weapons at their disposal to be deployed at whim are all part of the picture. In the face of such anarchy, hell broke free, and militias of various nationalities prowled the streets in search of weakly fortified villages so that they might be invaded, and their women and children were taken captive. Trains were purposely derailed or set ablaze with gasoline, and each passenger was mercilessly slaughtered, and children were orphaned directly in front of their eyes, while women were cruelly raped and their genitals disfigured.

According to Nair (2011), the carnage seen during the partition was caused more by the failure to discuss the power-sharing formula between different groups inside the subcontinent than by religious extremism. Building up to the violence that occurred when the Radcliff Award was implemented, Nair cites various incidents such as Hindu-Muslim clashes at Kartarpur, Calcutta, and Amritsar as a foreshadowing of what was to come.

According to Bhalla (2012), the refugees who managed to flee the carnage had to start again in the face of horrific memories and the desire to forget the past. Further, the researcher state that

even pacifists who were incredibly trustworthy and loyal in their daily lives took on a different character when the partition was proclaimed, transforming them into murderers. When the slaughter started, things like friendship, blood links, and religious views ceased to matter, and people jostled to make sense of the horror around them.

According to Zamindar (2013), the Partition process was riddled with catastrophic violence. The deadliest episodes took place in Punjab province as an unprecedented number of people were uprooted, and about 12 million people were expatriated in Punjab alone when it was split due to the kidnapping of 50,000 women.

Ghosal (2014) argued and compared the genocides in Europe to those in the subcontinent after the partition. The researcher states that, unlike the Jews of Europe, who had no opportunity to retaliate against their Nazi counterparts during the Holocaust, the Muslims of the subcontinent did so, as they were victims of large-scale violence at the hands of both the Sikhs and the Hindus in some places and victors in others.

Dalrymple (2015) discusses the unexpected eruption of sectarian violence and mutual extermination on the side of the peacefully coexisting Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh populations until the news of partition reached them. Forced conversions, arson, sexual assault, mass abductions, and terrible killings ensued, with infants taken from pregnant women's stomachs and youngsters roasted on spits. The researcher also states that prominent personalities, such as Bengal Chief Minister H. S. Suhrawardy, who incited violence against Hindus in Calcutta: "bloodshed and chaos are not necessarily wicked if resorted to for a worthy cause."

Doshi and Mehdi (2017) depict the terrible stories of survivors of the India-Pakistan partition. The researchers shared the account of a woman "Kumari" who said that at that period, even the fruits of trees tasted like blood and that some people had briefly gone insane as a result of seeing all the slaughter around them. She describes the agony of being trapped in a cave for three days with no food or water and seeing the deaths of her loved ones. Finally, when the enraged rioters discovered her and the others, they were hauled to an open place and burnt alive. Kumari remembers her dread at seeing the charred remnants of previously burned victims and the knowledge that she was soon to be burned alive. However, she was rescued when a sudden truce

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was declared, and a prominent political leader implored the people not to spill any more blood; as a result, her life was spared.

Jogi (2017) explained that the plots of Partition novels describe the immutable logic of violence in 1947. Religious extremism and radicalism sprouted as a result of the partition. These works show how a mentally and socially disturbed person might become a victim of hate while coping with his or her existence. The author described how, throughout history, zealots and ideologists who have been driven to the emotional edge of risking their lives had taken the leap, triggering a chain reaction of rigid mental fixations and attitudes.

Significance of Study

The planned research is essential because it will help people remember the 1947 India-Pakistan split. Some of the people who were forced to move are now in their late 80s or early 90s, and there is a need to keep their first-hand accounts of what happened. These first-hand stories will come from people who took part in the study. They will help us understand how partition affects people's mental health after moving. This study will not only look at the partition event but will also look at the psychological traumas and post-partition stress that survivors felt at the time. It was how migrants dealt with the situation, adjusted to their new surroundings, and the problems they had to deal with as they went through this process.

Research Objectives

Following are the objectives of the study:

- 1. What type of psychological stress and traumas were faced by migrants after Partition?
- 2. What were coping strategies used by migrants to cope with the situation?
- 3. How are the experiences of female affectees different from male affectees?

Research Methodology

The primary goal of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to understand how participants perceive their personal and social worlds. It focuses on how individuals interpret

their own lives by delving into the minutiae of others around them. It is mostly focused on the author's firsthand recollections and impressions of certain life events. Researchers' perspective on the world is considered while reporting on the participant's experience in IPA (Smith et al., 1999). IPA needs for the researcher to clearly and freely express their viewpoints, thereby illuminating the analysis (Willig, 2008).

In this study, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with people whom the study's findings had impacted. A total of ten people (five men and five women) who had lived through the 1947 Partition and could recall the period of their migration and other significant events in their lives were included in the study. Most of the participants were illiterate; thus, they gave their verbal assent after being fully briefed. Participants were reassured that taking part in the research was entirely up to them and that they may opt out. Researchers interviewed participants in the comfort of their own homes, with strict adherence to the subjects' right to privacy. The transcriptions were translated into English (Punjabi).

Volunteers were selected from a pool of 10 people (females and males) who were 12-20 years old at the 1947 Pak-India Partition, who had lived through the Partition's events and could recollect the migration and other events in their lives after the 1947 Partition. Participant recruitment is done via convenience sampling, and the requirements follow those of the IPA, which calls for small, homogenous samples (Smith, 2004). It is common practice in IPA to examine psychological similarities and differences within a group that has been designated as comparable based on significant factors.

Table 1. Summary of the key participant characteristics

Participants	Age	Gender	Age during Partition	Background	Pre-Partition residence
Participant I	85	Male	13 years	Urban	Patiala
Participant II	88	Male	16 years	Rural	Madhepur- Jalandhar
Participant III	85	Male	13 years	Urban	Amritsar
Participant IV	86	Male	14 years	Urban	Ludhiana
Participant V	87	Female	15 years	Rural	Jalandhar

Participant VI	85	Female	13 years	Rural	Muktasir, Ferozpur
Participant VII	86	Male	14 years	Rural	Muktasir, Ferozpur
Participant VIII	89	Male	17 years	Rural	Muktasir, Ferozpur
Participant IX	90	Male	18 years	Rural	Muktasir, Ferozpur
Participant X	87	Female	15 years	Rural	Muktasir, Ferozpur

Interviews

This approach to interviewing is an attempt to implement IPA's inductive epistemology. The social constructionism stance explains that "truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world." Moreover, it describes how constructionists explained reality as Crotty stated, "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, was contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and their world, and transmitted with an essentially social context."

The typical approach adopted by the IPA researcher is to collect data from semi-structured interviews where the interviewers have developed a few main themes for discussion with the participants and some prompters. A semi-structured interview schedule was designed, and questions were phrased in such a way as to move from general issues to more particular ones. The interview schedule questions and probes were drawn from relevant research literature and further elaborated with the help of two pilot interviews. Semi-structured interviews explored psychological traumas that migrants faced after Partition and coping strategies which migrants used to cope with the situation.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed by a cyclical process where the researcher proceeds through several iterative steps:

Step 1: Audiotapes were transcribed with wide margins on both sides of the paper. The audio recordings were listened to while first reading the transcript. Transcripts were read and re-read many times.

Step 2: Researchers started initial note-taking after getting an overall sense of data. Lines were

assigned numbers to make it easy to pinpoint examples of different themes. Anything of interest and any special issue within the transcript was given due attention.

- Step 3: Researchers looked for repeated words or phrases in the participant's responses; this helped them narrow down (condense) the words or sentences in a transcript. These three steps were repeated with each case.
- Step 4: Systematic examination of similarities between the participants' views was found to identify emergent themes.
- Step 5: Connections across cases and how a theme in one case helped highlight a different case were considered at this step. Themes were summarized, illustrated, and explained, and narratives were used to support the concepts.

Table 2.Table of themes

Super-ordinate themes	Themes	Subordinate themes	
		Loss of family & friends	
	Social and religious divides	Loss of identity	
		Killings of Muslims by Hindus and Sikhs	
Painful realities		Killings of Hindus and Sikhs by Muslims	
		Empty handed/penniless	
	Deprivation	Intense weather	
		Helplessness & Homeless	
	Destruction	Dead bodies were all around Dead bodies	
		were eaten by dogs	
		Babies were sucking milk from their dead	
		mothers' breasts	
Incomparablescaleof	Dreadful violence	Women's breasts were cut off Brutal and	
violence and massacre		massive killing Bellies of pregnant	
		women were cut and their unborn babies	
		were murdered	
	Honor killings	Men killed their wives, sisters and	
		daughters to save them from rape	

Geography of trauma	Geographical divide /Resettlement	Separation of geographical boundaries	
		Loss of property	
		Formation of new boundaries	
		Forced to leave homes	
	Forced migration	No means of transportation	
		Forced to change their religion	
Incredible	Painful memories	Pain of losing their homes Memories of	

overwhelming		old good days of pre-Partition era	
experience		Memories of childhood friends with	
		whom we used to play with dolls	
		"gudianpatole"	
		Could not have a peaceful sleep for year	
	Health issues	Suffering from contagious disease	
		Non-availability of medical	
	Self-distraction	Indulge in household chores	
		More involvement in farming	
	Sunnant goalring	Started making new friends to seek the	
	Support seeking	support	
Coping strategies	Religious coping	Started offering prayers	
		Started reading Holy Quran	
	Acceptance	Good to separate from other religions	
		Essence of pride that new country was	
		come into being for Muslims	

Results

According to Table II, the analysis resulted in five super-ordinate themes, 13 themes, and 28 subthemes.

Painful realities

Participants shared their Partition experiences, describing religious and societal differences from the past. There were several traumatic experiences presented verbatim. "At the time of the disaster, I was a young kid of 16 years," one person said. With the Partition, Hindus and Sikhs attacked Muslims, committing genocide that was both unexpected and unprecedented. Partition was a period of sorrow and suffering for many fleeing to Pakistan. Torture, sexual brutality, forced conversions, and mass abductions intensified the tragedy. Helpless persons who traveled to another country empty-handed, through the challenges of weather and hunger, encountered a slew of issues. Another participant said, "For some, 1947 represents freedom; for me, it represents independence but also the horrible murder of my parents and the whole family."

The subcontinent's partition in 1947 is regarded as the most significant mass exodus in history. Muslims who had lived for years in regions with a Hindu and Sikh majority had to relocate to Pakistan, while millions more Hindus and Sikhs who had lived in Muslim majority areas had to abandon their homes to cross the border. When residents abandoned their houses, a wave of

violence erupted, and neighbors turned on. "There was blood everywhere, and I began to believe that not a single Muslim remained after that carnage."

Incomparable scale of violence and massacre

The partition of the Indian subcontinent into separate states of Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan in 1947 was followed by one of the most extensive mass migrations in human history and unprecedented bloodshed. "On our trip to Pakistan, in "Sipari Wand," a Muslim majority area, we spotted corpses all around, and stray dogs were eating them," one participant said."

It is difficult to fathom the devastation that the Partition of India had on the lives of its citizens. Humans will never be able to comprehend the scope of the carnage that occurred when people were being slaughtered all over the place. According to a response, babies were attempting to suck breast milk from deceased moms. In patriarchal societies like those found in India and Pakistan, women are revered as a source of pride for the household and the community as a whole. The plight of women was exacerbated during and after the partition. Women were more vulnerable, but they were also considered as protecting the honor of the community, which made them a prime target. As one person put it: "We discovered corpses everywhere, in the lake and on the ground; these were not regular dead bodies of ladies, but their breasts were hacked off. Pregnant ladies had their tummies sliced open by the assassins, who then executed the unborn children. Even if the violence did not personally touch them, the social framework in which they lived was shattered for others. To stop their loved ones from being raped, some men have killed their wives, daughters, and mothers. "My uncle shot his daughter for his honor," said another.

Geography of trauma

Participants noted that, before partition, a wide range of religiously diverse countries coexisted peacefully and lovingly for long periods. "Before Partition, we did not classify each other according to faith." "The Sikhs were simple and good-hearted," one responder reminisced about the pre-Partition period. When we lived in the village, a Sardar Ji lived there. Multiple fruit plantations were owned and operated by him. They all worked for a Muslim company. Muslim laborers were very important to Sardar Ji. Every day, he provided them with tea and Lassi

(Buttermilk). Hostility rapidly replaced amicable relations three to four months before the partition."

This independence marked the beginning of the geography of traumas, including separating geographical borders and creating states in the sub-continent. Partition was a catastrophic and terrible event. Hindu and Sikh aggressiveness towards Muslim victims has been portrayed as the cause of the violence in 1947. On the other hand, that violence had no territorial bounds, no religious boundaries, and no limitations. "We were slain by Sikhs, and we killed them. Our town had a gorgeous Sikh girl who was quite attractive (Madhepur). Her relatives abandoned her. When she went to a well where she planned to take her own life, the Muslim men of our community snatched her and killed her."

Incredible overwhelming experiences

Forced migration was a reality for many individuals. They were persuaded to believe that their houses, where they had lived for generations and were born, were theirs forever. The loss of their house was harrowing for them. It brought back memories of their youth, which had been ruined and forgotten." Forced migration was the reason behind it. Muslims were urged to move to Pakistan at mosques. It was almost a matter of duty for my family to go to Pakistan. People walked in enormous caravans all the way home, with no access to transportation.

For several years, I experienced a great deal of suffering. "A wounded Sikh widow came in our hamlet," one responder said. In the aftermath of the murders of her family, she was left to fend for herself. Rescued by one Muslim household, she married one of their children. A son was born to the couple. When her father and brothers returned after a few years, she was taken in by them. Their actions resulted in the death of her son."

Coping strategies

Adaptive and maladaptive themes of coping, such as practical coping, self-distraction, supportseeking, religious coping, and acceptance, were expressed throughout the study. All individuals showed a distinct, hierarchical, and overlapping system of coping behaviors that developed through time.

Self-distraction

Different activities were employed as ways for participants to distract themselves from their past traumas.

"Doing housework used to keep me occupied."

Support seeking

Migrants' stories of the 1947 Partition reveal a similar theme: the need for social assistance. "I had memories of this horrible episode after the Partition." When I thought back to the days before migration, I would frequently cry. I was able to get through this predicament because to the friendships I formed in my neighborhood and the sharing of my sorrows with them.

Religious coping

People who participated in this research commonly employed religious practices, such as reading the Holy Quran, giving prayers, and praying to God to address their problems. Participants said, "We used to pray to Allah that we could reach Pakistan safely." Another said, "We could not do anything except pray to Allah for those who were slain and those who were misplaced."

Acceptance

Participants in the research tended to adopt acceptance as a technique. In the absence of migration, "we would have been forced to change our faith."

Discussion

Living through collective trauma may affect cultural narratives about identity and nationality, perhaps contributing to antipathy towards the group recognized as offenders and a feeling that future violence may be seen as 'deserved.' The violence in 1947 was so tremendous that it swallowed the Sikh-Muslim brotherhood and caused so many emotional scars that have stayed unhealed for generations. Partition's traumatic memories were a nightmare for a generation of parents and children in India and Pakistan. However, the slaughter occurred on both sides of the border, making it impossible for historians to draw a line between the victims and the predator.

According to survivors' traumatic recollections, the 1947 Partition had far worse implications than the Holocaust since it split families and communities. Another part of Partition memories that may be referred to as "transnational" is Partition violence as genocide (Naire, 2011). Survivors' recollections reveal that many details were purposefully overlooked or overlooked

when documenting and preserving history. This might be due to the specific conditions that resulted in violence. Whereas one of the victims complained about the police and military's chilly attitude to defending them, others complimented them, even if they were of opposing religions (Bates, 2001). However, the study demonstrates that not all murders and killings can be classified as "genocide." In truth, the 1947 Partition violence was not a one-time emotional response but rather permeated sub-continental politics throughout the years.

Following Partition, Muslims may have felt compelled to relocate to Pakistan, particularly from locations where Muslims were in the minority. The same was true for Hindus and Sikhs. The arrangement for individuals to migrate to "mutually agreed locations" has historical importance. It suggests that individuals were compelled to relocate to certain places because of their religious beliefs. It has nothing to do with permission or choice. They missed out on the chance to return to their ancestral homes and lands. This forced migration was caused by a hostile climate that arose quickly amongst people of a region who practiced different faiths (Rahman & Van Schendel, 2003). Both the governments of India and Pakistan were clearly taken aback and unprepared for the influx of people; many of the people themselves had no preparations to relocate. As refugees, some were accepted by locals, while others had to roam about until they found a place to live, and the remaining unfortunate found the Promised Land to be unwelcoming (Pippa, 2018).

The attitudes expressed by interviewees represented how Muslims from Hindu majority regions regarded migration and departed their homes, farms, and relatives' graves. One of the respondents said that when the riots erupted, he had no idea his family would be forced to flee their house. Most of them assumed it was a transitory situation and that they would be allowed to return once the difficulties between the two new nations were resolved. They struggled to embrace the concept of new boundaries and political configurations. They still retain harsh memories but are thrown in a dash of sweetness. One respondent said that when his family arrived at a Haveli deserted by Hindus, he discovered one transmitter (radio) identical to his own, which had been lost throughout the long and arduous voyage. It was a joyful time for him, and he believed that this was the beginning of the recovery of all they had lost; money, property, and maybe honor and respect. The anguish in his voice and tears in his eyes, on the other hand,

will not be forgotten. He cried as he said they were thrilled when they arrived in Pakistan, the new nation formed for Muslims. They were liberated from British colonialism and Hindu dominance (Nair, 2011).

The survivors of the 1947 exodus went through two levels of guilt. The first one lasted for a shorter amount of time. The moment of arrival is when the refugee has been numbed by the experience and is often overcome with sadness. Survivor's guilt was the second stage. The survivors who had been separated from their families felt guilty since their loved ones had been abandoned while surviving. They felt worried, tense, and unable to relax due to their guilt (Pippa, 2018).

Since the year 2000, several scholars have concentrated on investigating psychological trauma and traumatic memories related to the 1947 partition. Most studies, however, were focused on relief and rescue activities. Because the migrants are progressively disappearing by completing their life cycle, the saved recollections in the form of interviews provide a glimpse into the calm that had been swallowing terrible memories of the 1947 Partition.

Conclusion

The survivors of the 1947 Partition suffered trauma and hardship and the long-term implications of forced or intentional relocation. Physical and social aggression left terrible memories. Every person fought his or her war of recovery, coping, and mental fortitude. Even after seventy-two years of Partition, the effects of the 1947 bloodshed have progressively permeated the whole societal fabric. These unpleasant memories have been passed down to future generations, raised with hate for the people on the other side of the border. Individuals and collective existence continue to be impacted by waves of violence, which may be mild or intense. Until now, violence in 1947 migration has not been studied from a social and psychological standpoint, emphasizing political, economic, and demographic dimensions. This study is essential for understanding human emotions about violence during the 1947 migration.

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