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Partition: The Histories of Borders and Violence in Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

The Partition of august 1947 in South Asian history has become a matter of great significance. Almost two million people have been killed and fifteen million forcefully displaced across the newly drawn border. It redraws the map of subcontinent; relocate/displaced the millions of inhabitants across borders. Researchers begun to dig out that how far it spread and how everlasting were the echoes of partition. Partition presents history that cannot only be narrativized within the structure of the territorial nation-state's history. In fact it produces more than most happenings the tension between the ideas of the history centered on the state and the manifold identities. The Partition of the British India in 1947 was a defining moment in British-Imperial as well as South Asian history. From the imperial perspective, the British rule lost plentiful of its shine after the loss of its jewel in the crown. From the perspectives of the people of the Indian subcontinent, millions died in the ensuing Partition violence and the forced mass migrations following the division of British Indian Empire into two new independent nation states i.e. India and Pakistan.

The 'truth' of the partition of 1947, lay at least for its sufferers, in all forms ruthless violence done to them. Million faced the brutality of mass killings accompanied by dozens of other problems, which were started in other parts across subcontinent, and reached to them unnoticeably. The gravity as well as the uncertainty of violence that partition had, received the attention from number of scholars and became matter of debate and great significance, in terms of territorial/geographical and demographical settings. The unparalleled ethnic violence seen in the aftermath of the Partition of India has made it identical with violence. Oral accounts of the violence faced by victims, witnesses and, in some situations, perpetrators of the ferocity have carried to light the terrifying nature of the violence intimidated or put under expurgation for almost half a century. This marks an important advance in revisiting the histories of Partition. The connections between partition and other contemporary developments, which are now seen as discrete, instantly call for analysis. Much remains to be prepared before it can positively be held that partitions place in South Asia's history has been completely understood. We have yet to understand fully the echoes of partition on gender relations, caste praxis, religious behavior etc. and the demanding work requires to be completed before we can be assured how partition impacted the economy, geography, demography, and developments of urbanization throughout South Asian history. On the eve of partition and post-partition period Jammu and Kashmir presented a very muddled and mystifying picture. Both countries sought to regulate the affairs of Kashmir because of its strategic position and geo-political importance. The pervasiveness of Partitions afterlife and unending signs of historical trauma in contemporary times further demand the critical engagement on the subject. This paper will focus on the process of conceptualizing and drawing of multiple borders across Kashmir in the post partition period. It

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revisits the partition literature, histories, borders and its politics, which played pivotal role in defining the ongoing crisis in Kashmir.

Key words: Kashmir, Violence, Partition, migration, history.

Introduction

The greater body of Partition writings has been generally concerned with personal, discernible, physical violence or some somatic damage, as well as death, defacement and rape, "which reduces somatic capability (below what is potentially possible)".³

Partition scholarships have developed by leaps and bounds and continuously draw the interest of body of researchers. The historiography of India's partition has moved from an investigation of high politics at the center to a study of the regions, margins as well as people's experiences,⁴ and more in recent times, trying to illuminate the interconnections amongst elite politics and people's involvement in this historic event.⁵ However, Jammu and Kashmir (henceforth J&K) has hardly reckoned in these analyses, as scholarships of politics, violence as the violence; migrations in Punjab and Bengal continue to remain at central focus in this historiography. The Partition of India, a territorial division, was limited to Punjab and Bengal, but the repercussions were far-reaching. In addition to this, Kashmir has found little reference in the emergent studies on the borderlands of South Asia; nonetheless one of the world's most perilous borders runs through this region, well separating the India and Pakistan.

The origins of the India-Pakistan territorial claims have been map out to many sources; as the failure of the British to bring about a nonviolent and politically acceptable Partition. It further escalated by the deep-rooted political rivalries among the Subcontinent's major religious groups, Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. Kashmir's significance added to the national identities of both countries, and the greed or individual shortsightedness of leaders on both sides of the border. Stalwart leaders of the time, like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his romance and Brahminical arrogance with Kashmir (the Pakistani interpretation), or Mohammed Ali Jinnah's vanity, shortsightedness, and religious zeal (the Indian interpretation.)⁶ The territorial contests and border disputes between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir remain to be the main subject in the Partition history.⁷ The violence which engulfed Jammu region has largely been unnoticed in the Indian nationalist writings on 1947, which feature mostly as 'histories of the states' than as 'histories of people' of J&K who were at the receiving end. All of these and other aspects played a key role, but the conflict is larger than the sum of its parts.⁸

The J&K state was the second largest of the princely states at the time of India's partition. For administrative causes, the state was divided into three provinces, Jammu province (consists the districts of Mirpur, Reasi, Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua and Poonch, a jagir of the maharaja) the Frontier province

³Galtung1969: 169)

⁴ Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p, 11.

⁵Talbot, Ian, and Gurharpal Singh, eds. 2009. *The Partition of India*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p, 31.

⁶Cohen Stephen Philip. '*India, Pakistan and Kashmir*' Presented at the University of Texas, December 2001 Revised version forthcoming in the Journal of Strategic Studies, 2003, p. 2.

⁷ Prem Shankar Jha, *Kashmir 1947: The Origins of a Dispute* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).
⁸ Jha, *Kashmir* 1947.

(constitutes the districts of Ladakh and Gilgit), and Kashmir province (the districts of Anantnag, Baramulla and Muzaffarabad). Broadly speaking all of the three did not have many things in common, but they had been merged into a one political entity ever since the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846¹⁰.

Far from being an established historical fact that ensued in the past and is complete now, moreover, partition continue to appraise the politics as well as the lives of the people who inhabit the region. This is because the former princely states of J&K has been divided number of times between different entities and along diverse lines; For instance the drawing of the Ceasefire Line(Line of Control or L.O.C) in 1949 between the two nations i.e. India and Pakistan. Other partitions are those inside Pakistan between Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, as well as between the provinces of Pakistan and these two entities. In India, there are partitions among the constituent parts of the state; Jammu, the Kashmir valley and Ladakh, as well as between the entire state and the rest of India.

The main thrust of this commentary is to begin the course of conceptualizing and contextualizing the drawing of multiple borders through Kashmir in the postcolonial era from the standpoint of partition. Through an analysis of the writings on the subject, it demonstrates that this is an imperative exercise for the reason that the idea of vivisection, which operates at both the literal as well as conceptual levels in this area, has assisted considerably to the nature of the enduring predicament in Kashmir.

Partition Re-examined (1947)

Partition comes up with its own set complexities and histories. This is true in the case of Kashmir, which, in part since partition that is not acknowledged by either India or Pakistan. Its standing as a disputed territory parted by a legally unrecognized border, has haul out it into a luminal cosmos an 'alienated borderland' and designate, its elision in the historiography of partition. Partition scholarships has made great developments in terms of talking about the issue of people's experiences through the moment and beyond, and in connecting the gap amid the elite politics at the middle and migration, violence that infested particular regions of the Subcontinent in 1947. The scholarship stressed the idea that partition cannot be studied as an incident that took place at a definite historical moment but comparatively as a course that surpassed the moment of independence and the formation of Pakistan. According to these researchers, partition needs to be positioned in the wider framework of state creation and the contention between India and Pakistan in the postcolonial times.¹³

⁹Administration Report of the Jammu and Kashmir State from 16th October 1941 to 12th April 1943 (Jammu: The Ranbir Government Press, 1944), Jammu and Kashmir State Archives, Jammu.

¹⁰Treaty of Amritsar concluded between the British and Gulab Singh on 16 March 1846, after the British defeated the Sikhs in which Gulab Singh had played a crucial role. The British Government transfers and makes over forever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh, all the hilly or mountainous region eastward of the River Indus and westward of the River Ravi being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State, according to the provisions of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March, 1846.

¹¹ Zutshi, Chitralekha. 'An ongoing partition: histories, borders, and the politics of vivisection in Jammu and Kashmir', (Contemporary South Asia, 2015), p, 263.

¹² Martinez, Oscar. 2002. "The Dynamics of Border Interaction: New Approaches to Border Analysis." (In Global Boundaries: World Boundaries, Vol. I, edited by Clive H. Schofield, 1–15. London: Rutledge, 2002), p, 2.

¹³Khan, Yasmin. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p, 22.

No other regions of South Asia except in Kashmir, where the questions of relationship between India and Pakistan, and more so the center and states within each of these entities; violence, displaced peoples and national identities; all of which are result of direct consequence of partition. ¹⁴ The intermittent wars between two nations since then shape politics and the survival of its populations in palpable ways. It is true that the people of this region daily experience the consequences of partitions even as the course of drawing new dividing lines unfolds incessantly round them.

And yet, there is little written regarding the literal and metaphorical fatalities of partition as for as J&K is concerned. Even though the fact is that the people of J&K suffered violence and dislocation not just in 1947, but through the course of initial two years as both the countries tussled their first conflict over the region from 1947 to 1949. In his book *A Mission in Kashmir*¹⁵ for example, Whitehead extracts the untold story of the people of the Baramullatown who have witnessed the heat of partition after summer 1947.

In Kashmir Valley people witnessed the tribal incursion in October 1947, tribal army from the North West Frontier Province in Pakistan entered into Kashmir. The book retells us that whereas the violence was dying down in place like Bengal and Punjab, it was only just beginning in places such as Baramulla in Kashmir. Whitehead precisely summarizes the causes and workings of the tribal raid which finally spread-out into the full-scale war between the two nations that led to the partition of Jammu and Kashmir.

The significance of the book lies in recollecting this story through the memories of an variety of participants in the events in October 1947, such as Sister Emilia, on Christian mission at Baramulla who was a survivor of the attack; and Father Shanks, who left a detailed diary of the events and the mission initiated; Leela, a Punjabi Hindu woman whose family members had taken refuge in mission hospital at the time of raid; Randhir Singh Baliand Sheikh Ghulam Mohammad, both young boys at the time of raid; and Inayatullah, a local businessman who witnessed the raid. ¹⁶One of the most important contributions of this research is a comprehensive study of the events of violence that happened throughout the invasion, as Hindus and Sikhs in particular, who were seen as prosperous members of the town by the tribesmen were the primarily targeted. Since the tribesmen raided and attacked the houses of the well-to-do families, though, many Muslims too became the victims of looting and murder; with the tribesmen refuse the fact that that a wealthy house could belong to a Muslim. ¹⁷

The violence suffered by people in Baramulla in 1947 cut across religious lines and while this kind of violence and sufferings has dwindled in other areas that were troubled by partition violence, it continues unabated in Baramulla. While drawing too direct consequence from the happenings of 1947 and the contemporary crisis and issues in valley of Kashmir, Whitehead aptly points out that Baramulla remains at one of the center of separatist politics in the Kashmir. Certainly, as he states: "The town has suffered heavier casualties, and endured much more prolonged trauma, than anything encountered during the brief but brutal visitation of the tribal *lashkar* (Army). The nature of the conflict has changed. But at its root is the same fault line that first opened up as the tribesmen from the Frontier scaled the walls of the

¹⁴Zutshi, p, 267.

¹⁵ Whitehead, Andrew. A Mission in Kashmir. (New Delhi: Viking, 2007).

¹⁶Whitehead, pp., 122, 124.

¹⁷Whitehead, 124, 125.

mission back in October 1947". ¹⁸ As a genre of evidence this narrative continue to provide stimulus for those reckoning with the impact of extreme form of violence on the minds of individuals as well as society, weather activists, social scientist or the fiction writers.

Jammu didn't remain unaffected and changed geographically as well as demographically. The demographic changes can be understood through the census reports of 1941 and 1961. It shows the great demographic shift among the Muslims who once constitutes the majority community before partition. The un-mixing of different religious groups across border, because of forced displacement, migration resulted these massive change in the landscape of Jammu region. According to census report 1941¹⁹ Muslims comprises 61.19 percent of the total population of the region. And the 1961²⁰ census accounts 38 per cent Muslims of the total population in Jammu region. As Alexander Evans points out "earlier migrations lie forgotten. In 1947 large number of Muslims left Jammu and moved to Pakistan, significantly altering the demographics of the state as whole".²¹

The psychosomatic distress of partition, now somewhat healed in Punjab and Bengal, is persistently recreated in different areas within Kashmir, like Baramulla, as the contemporary crisis is troupe along familiar lines. The unending nature of the violence that originated in 1947 and remains in Kashmir is also palpable in the some works in the historiography on the partition of India that have taken Jammu and Kashmir into account. Violence and forced displacement and migration have thus categorized the lives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947.

Nonetheless, in her research article, 'Too Much Nationality'²², Robinson pays attention to the uniqueness of the long-term course of the making of the Kashmiri emigrant in the period between 1947 and 1974. She claims that not only did the partition refugees in general fall out in the time of the postwar international refugee regime, but when the Indian and Pakistani came into being, they made their peculiar refugee regime to tackle the partition time refugees. People forcefully migrated and displaced from Jammu and Kashmir through the spell of partition fell out to the purview of these rules.²³The ongoing nature of violence and creation of refugees began in 1947, continued during wars fought in subsequent period. Both India and Pakistan have fought al least four wars till date, 1947, 1949, 1965 and 1999. The problem of displacements and migrations continues as after insurgency broke out in Valley near about 160,000 Kashmiri Pandits left Kashmir.²⁴Robinson held that Kashmiri refugees were temporarily relocated and their rights were subjected to on their safeguarding of privileges over the land that they had left behind, which in turn was connected to their position as state subjects and to which they were likely

¹⁸Whitehead, p, 11.

¹⁹Census of India 1941, volume XXII, Jammu and Kashmir Part I and II, Essay and Tables, by Capt. R.G. Wreford, Census commissioner of Jammu and Kashmir State (Jammu: Ranbir Government Press Jammu, 1942).

²⁰Census of India 1961, volume VI, Part I, by M.H.Kamili, Superintendent of Census operations Jammu and Kashmir, (Jammu: Ranbir Government Press, 1962).

²¹ Evans Alexander. "A departure from history: Kashmiri Pandits 1990-2001". (Contemporary South Asia, 11, 1, 2002), p, 33.

²² Robinson, Cabeiri D. "Too Much Nationality: Kashmiri Refugees, the South Asian RefugeeRegime, and a Refugee State, 1947–1974." (Journal of Refugee Studies 25 (3): 344–365, 2012).

²³Robinson, pp., 346-47.

²⁴Alexander, p, 33.

to coming back once the plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir decided the problem in favor of any India or Pakistan.²⁵

Moreover, it became visible in early 1950s to national and international establishments that Kashmiri refugees could not return to their homeland, they were assigned temporary possessions for relocation centered on their position and identity as hereditary citizens of Jammu and Kashmir.²⁶ This has had deep effects on the countenance of individual as well as collective identities and activities of political belonging in this area, many of which remain to use the state as a frame of reference.

Lines of control and demarcation of borders since 1949

Most of the researches and writings on the Kashmir issue ever since 1949 has concentrated on territory of state rather than borders or the effect of border on the lives of people. This has had the result of reifying the boundaries that formed at the time of partition and aggravating the partitions along those lines since. Notions of territoriality, carried to illuminate the Kashmir dispute or offer resolutions to it, even so, do not capture the means in which the people of this region recognize belonging, which is still knotted to a swifter concept of place rather than a well-defined territory or how they interpret that into a politics.

Borders must be treated as self-regulating political constructs since they create particular kinds of political arrangements and make their 'own history'. Making this idea in the framework of the Line of Control that divides the Indian and Pakistani portions of Kashmir, Banerjee argues that even though legally unrecognized, this border has nonetheless grow 'ideologically sacrosanct', resulting to political uncertainty and conflict in the region. Monitoring this border through forcefulness and violence has become an end in itself, with the border itself provide justification for its continuous existence. Banerjee further held that the presence of aggressive militarization by both the nations round the border areas has alienated the people of this region. At the start of the insurgency in 1989, not only did the Pakistan directly question the acceptability of the Line of Control as international border, but more importantly, the Line of Control was constantly breached as Kashmiri youth from the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir cross over to the Pakistani region for weapons and military exercise. Banerjee

Aggarwal, in her book, *Beyond Lines of Control*³⁰ tries to travel beyond national security issues in her scholarship of the border village of Ladakh, Achinathang, which is situated on the Line of Control. She contends that it is the region's marginality as border area that placed it central to Indian nationalist histories and projects, though at the same time providing the impeccable space to repel these narratives. However placing Ladakhi cultural enactments and practices at the core of her history, Aggarwal recenters Ladakh itself in the discourse on the Kashmir issue. Not only is Ladakh negligible within India, it is also relegated within the state of Jammu and Kashmir. However these areas are drawn into and deeply

²⁵Robinson, pp., 354-55.

²⁶Robinson, pp.,357-58.

²⁷ Banerjee, Paula. Borders, Histories, Existences: Gender and Beyond. (New Delhi: Sage, 2010), p, 62.

²⁸ Banerjee, pp., 62-63.

²⁹ Banerjee, pp., 76-78.

³⁰ Aggarwal, Ravina. Beyond Lines of Control: Performance and Politics on the Disputed Borders of Ladakh, India. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

influenced by the conflict issues because of their position, the Valley is taken as center of both scholarly and popular writings and understandings of the Kashmir issue.

Aggarwal highlighted the presentations symbolize multiple connotations of belonging on the borderlands of Kashmir. Whereas Ladakhi men involve with notions of homeland at the level of residency and national belonging, Ladakhi women expresses a very different idea of home. For them, home is not a territorial object that they can regulate or control, but an emotive space or place of birth to which they do not want to break ties, even after marriage or dislocation as a result of conflict.³¹

Robinson's book, *Body of Victim, Body of Warrior*³²is important work to this subject. Author also rectifies the Valley-centric understanding to the Kashmir problem by concentrating on the interconnections among the two sides of the Line of Control over the movement of individuals across the border. At the same time, by arguing the connotations of belonging to land and community expressed by these individuals, the book go beyond the territory centered approach of the Kashmir conflict.

Robinson not only highlighted the creation of the Kashmiri refugee throughout the moment of partition, but also examines the changing meanings of refugee identity in the post-partition times as diverse sets of individuals crossed the Line of Control from the Indian to the Pakistani portion of Jammu and Kashmir. Robinson spent long time in the townships and villages of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (Azad Kashmir) and among the Kashmiri diaspora in Pakistan, the book explains the complex relations between political and religious ideas in expressing the changing meaning of refugee in these perspectives. Those who forced to migrate from the parts of Jammu and Kashmir (India) to Azad Kashmir (Pakistan) till 1990 had a very different understanding of their movement than those who migrated after the beginning of the insurgency to counter the Indian state in 1990. The key difference between both groups of people who migrated at different times is the former chose to live as refugees in the anticipation of coming back in to their homes and lands once Kashmir was bring together, the latter chose to pick up the mantle of fight and take up arms to counter the Indian state. As we have understood, borders and their course dominate the lives of the people in Jammu and Kashmir. This is particularly the case since the main border that governs their survivals is mired in a inconsistency the inevitability of the Line of Control is recognized by both nations (India and Pakistan) on the other hand both disagree its conversion into a stable or permanent border.

In an effort to offer non-territorial resolution to this paradox that would also help in resolving rigidities among India and Pakistan, a joint Indo-Pak study financed by the United States Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, hand out a report based on observation of the fieldwork conducted in regions on both sides of this border. Titled *Making Borders Irrelevant*³³(Chari et al. 2009). The author put forth an important observation regarding the borders in South Asia in general and Line of Control in particular. First and most important is that most of the borders are in constant remaking process as the states involved did not agree. Second these borders are objectionable to those who live around them since they have made partitions between families and groups of individuals who lived

³¹ Aggarwal, pp., 142-144.

³²Robinson, Cabeiri D. Body of Victim, Body of Warrior: Refugee Families and the Making of Kashmiri Jihadists. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

³³Chari, P. R., Hasan Askari Rizvi, Rashid Ahmed Khan, and D. Suba Chandran. *The Kashmir Dispute: Making Borders Irrelevant*. (New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2009).

together previous to their formation. Third, states remain unsuccessful to deliver good governance in these parts, overlooking the genuine demands and issues of the people. Last but not the least; this has led to the advent of non-state actors who have taken successful control of the borderlands, resulting to protracted armed struggle.³⁴

Given these aspects, which are in play at the Line of Control, the authors maintain that creation of the border which is not formally accepted by any state that involved have made the Kashmir issue so adamant.

Conclusion

In summer 1947, south Asia witnessed one of the greatest displacements of people in 20th century. The legacies of Partition have caste long shadow on lives of people of Jammu and Kashmir. At this point of time refugee movement initiated in the state as shadow of Partition. Kashmir dispute is considered by the researchers as "unfinished business" of Partition, needs to be understood in broader context of nation building process. No doubt both partition and borders play a key role in the lives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Partition resulted communal violence which in turn led the production of refugee population. Spreads through two states and separated amid various regional entities, these people have never been completely immersed in the citizen-making procedures of both India and Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir is together a cause and the consequence of the India-Pakistan conundrum. It is principally a dispute about justice and people, though its strategic and territorial extents are complicated enough. There are two Kashmirs; in addition the physical territory, other is established in the thoughts of politicians, policymakers, militaries and ideologues. This is a place where national and sub-national identities are stretched against each other.

Although, not present on the official map of India, or being signified as a dotted line on Pakistani and international maps, the Line of Control however exists as a dominant ideological and material concept that expresses the continuous rehearsal of violent state and non-state constraints in the area since its appearance in 1949. Since that instant, places and inhabitants have been vivisected in what can only be defined as continuing partition, rendering particular places, such as Kargil, and specific groups in these places, like women, liminal and marginal to conventional histories and courses of national and political edifice. The fictional story by Mirza Waheed, *The Collaborator*³⁵ situated at the Line of Control, captures emotionally the ruthless violence of this apparition border for those who live around it and those who dare to cross it.

An emphasis on partitions and borders in the case of Jammu and Kashmir can deepen the historiography on partition and the learning on borderlands. More importantly still, it retells us that the Kashmir issue, much like the formation of Pakistan in 1947, is about more than the issue of a territory. As a consequence, it cannot be resolute just through talks between the three, India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir. It comprises a range of other areas, and several groups of people, whose lives have been likewise surrounded and whose expressions therefore need to be involved in our academic writings understanding of the region, as well as to everlasting resolution of the issue. This special problem takes a minor but important step in that course.

³⁴ Chari et al, pp., XI-XIV.

³⁵Waheed, Mirza. *The Collaborator*, (London: Penguin Viking, 2011).

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