

RITA KOTHARI'S *THE BURDEN OF REFUGE*: A CRITIQUE**Dr. Alpesh Upadhyay**

Associate Professor Saraspur Arts and Commerce college, Ahmedabad.

ABSTRACT

Indians, particularly those who reside near India's northern, eastern, and western borders, have a long history of movement and exile. This extends to the whole population of India. There are a great number of tales that can be told about the partition of a county that was divided during the process of independence and is well-known for the migration that was politically compelled. Following the attainment of freedom, India did not develop in a peaceful manner. This is because the most significant events in Indian history took place after the country gained its independence. A brand-new nation, Pakistan, emerged from the ashes of a country that had been divided. A significant number of Muslims and Hindus are escaping to other nations. There was a perceived religious separation, which led to the outbreak of violence and murder that was beyond comprehension. The border that was drawn in the newspaper caused a great deal of disruption and destruction in the lives of a great number of individuals. The majority of people who have fled from one nation to another are Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. These groups have been the most significant victims. This research endeavours to investigate the ways in which neo-oppression, multiple identities, and purposeful forgetfulness are manifestations of division in the lives of modern society. The non-fictional narratives of Rita Kothari are utilised in order to accomplish this evaluation.

KEY WORDS: Partition, Refuge, Freedom, Memory, Riots.**INTRODUCTION**

Considering that Rita Kothari's books are exceptional investigations into the undiscovered paths of partition and how they have materialised in contemporary society, it is possible to draw the conclusion that Indian historiography has a tendency to falsify the history of the event. This is because the books are outstanding explorations into the pathways of partition. In their study, Kothari proposes a way of partitioning that is based on memory as its foundation. Memory studies have arisen throughout the course of the past twenty years, which marked the

beginning of the search for individual, societal, and collected memories of the split. "Memories, whether personal or communal, are never an exact replica of the past; rather, they are a creative expression of the wants and needs of the rememberer(s) at any given moment". (Erll, 8) Due to the fact that they are the topic of Rita Kothari's inquiry, the Sindhis, who are a social group that makes an attempt to disguise their real identity, are the primary focus of her investigation. A frequent term states that "Social groups derive their collective identity from the Cultural Memory that they construct," and this is a statement that is widely held. (Erll 29) Within the context of the modern world, it is not feasible for Sindhis to establish a consistent identity. One community that exhibits symptoms of collective amnesia is the Sindhis, who are an excellent example of such a population. Two of her most significant works, "The Burden of Refuge" and "Unbordered Memories," both shed light on the hidden history of the Hindu exodus from Pakistan to India as well as the partition of India. Both of these works are considered to be among her most important works.

INTENTIONAL IGNORANCE, NEO-OPPRESSION & VARIOUS PERSONAS

Compared to the Hindu majority that is present in India, the Sindhi Diaspora brought with them a huge array of religious and cultural practises. This is in contrast to the majority of the population in India who are Hindu. There were a broad variety of cultural, political, and social elements that had an impact on the Sindhi migrants, and the stories that are recounted here are examples of the effects that those variables had on them. Not only do the conditions of our social environment and the structures that make up that environment have a substantial impact on our identities, but they also have an impact on the way that we think. When it comes to those who have Sindhi ancestry, this remark could be considered to be accurate. Although it is a large movement, the migration of the Hindu Sindhi people from Sindh has not been fully recorded. This migration has occurred despite the fact that it is considerable. This is because, in contrast to prior migrations, it was depicted as a peaceful departure of people. This is the reason why this occurred. However, the psychological impacts of the Sindhis who relocated are the subject of other tales, and they are the primary focus of attention. These narratives are the subject of the majority of the attention. Those who live in border regions, such as the Banni, would be subject to limitations on their movement as a result of the partition, which would result in migration being an inescapable consequence. This would be a further effect of the division. Also, in the

same way that all other migrants in partitioned India were thought to be different from the main population, Sindhis who came to India after the nation got its independence were also handled in the same manner. This was the case because Sindhis were believed to be a distinct people.

On the basis of their actions, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the migrants are being subjected to tyranny. Within the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan, there were observable examples of neo-oppression that were taking place. The locations of these states may be found inside the nation of India. An investigation that Kothari carried out in 2011 revealed the following findings: "I went to Ajmer with my wife with the intention of observing a tea shop exclusively." Suddenly, as I was setting the cup of tea that the chaiwallah had delivered to me on a surface, he yelled at me, accusing me of 'contaminating' the other cups. I was in the process of placing the cup there. During that moment, I was in the process of positioning the cup in its spot. It was only as I was finishing the process of placing the cup on the surface that I saw it. Protected against the potential of being brought to harm? (Kothari, 2188)

As a consequence of this, the Jains and Oswals have formed an adverse picture of us, despite the fact that we have no intention of causing harm to anybody in Sindh by our actions. When migrants communicate with the people of divided India, the language that they use is reminiscent of the manner that colonial subjects addressed their colonial rulers. This is because migrants speak the same language. "I, the undersigned, humbly implore you from the bottom of my heart to pray". (Kothari, 2188) Disparities that were on the basis of social standing were brought to light as a result of the process of resettling the refugees. While the procedure was being carried out, several imbalances were introduced. People who were linked to places of power, money, and expertise were able to migrate to a new location with a decent level of ease. This means that they were able to move to a new area. A good illustration of the interaction between power dynamics and social class structures is provided by the process of resettling refugees in India, which was partitioned. This interaction is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the procedure was divided into many parts. Many individuals who had been historically marginalised were able to restore their capacity to take action in the years that followed as a result of the educational opportunities that were made available to them. This was a direct result of providing them with access to educational opportunities. In contrast to the circumstances in

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which they had been marginalised in the past, this was a somewhat positive development. In a statement that was made by Michael Foucault, he is quoted as saying, "Knowledge is equivalent to power." After India gained its freedom, education became a mechanism for boosting empowerment in the country over the course of several decades. This occurred after India had already achieved independence. Women were subjected to two distinct types of oppression in both the country from which they moved and the refugee camps, which resulted in their condition being far more precarious than it would have been in any other circumstance or circumstance. An individual may be able to get a more profound knowledge of the broad application of gender norms by conducting research on the lives of women who are moving. (Ahluwalia, 290)

When Singh's grandma made a need for assistance, those who lived in close proximity to her reacted to her request. My grandma was able to find safety in the company of a Muslim family who lived in the neighbourhood while she was going through a difficult time. Immediately after that, my uncle from Chakwal travelled to Gah with the assistance of a police escort on the day that followed. He managed to get there without any problems. All of the women that he gathered from the neighbourhood that was around the camp were going to be sent to a Chakwal refugee camp as their final destination. There is no possibility that all of the women who were being held as hostages within the house could have fled their kidnappers in a secure manner due to the circumstances. She took sanctuary in paraffin, which she used to wrap both herself and her mother, in an effort to disguise herself and her mother from the persons who were holding them as hostages. However, she was unsuccessful in her efforts. The use of life stories is a cognitive-linguistic technique that assists in the building of our identities as well as the memory of crucial experiences. The process of selecting and selecting from our extensive collection of autobiographical recollections is what allows us to achieve this goal. This is accomplished by drawing on the large collection of memories that we have accumulated throughout the course of our lives. It is said by Rubin and Berntsen (38), that migrants purposefully abandon their previous identities and accept new identities that they have voluntarily formed in order to assure their own survival. It is done in this manner in order to guarantee that they will be able to live. An individual can work towards becoming a more ideal version of themselves by comparing and contrasting their actual self with the image of themselves that is idealised by culture. This can help the individual become a more ideal version

of themselves. One of the ways in which a person might strive towards being a more authentic version of themselves is by using this strategy. (Higgins, 1991)

Due to the fact that they went on the trip, Hindu Sindhis were able to reconstruct their own narratives and identities. Furthermore, they frequently displayed features that are associated with the culture that they accepted after the split. In India, when people talk about Sindhi Hindus, they are often referring to the Hindus who live in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan rather than Sindhi Hindus. This is because Gujarat and Rajasthan are located in Central India. During the time that the former group was engaging in the process of fully adopting the culture and way of life of the latter, they concurrently succeeded in entirely eradicating any and all remains of their Sindhi heritage. While we are concurrently in the process of constructing and recalling our history, we are also in the process of forming and reconstructing our identities. This is happening simultaneously. Every single person have the ability to write their own life narrative, which is something that they have the power to do. The narratives that we tell ourselves about ourselves have a significant impact on how we perceive ourselves in relation to the world and how we identify ourselves by and with ourselves. (Rubin & Berntsen, 149) The animosity that migrants feel towards the new culture is the primary factor that contributes to the erosion and dispersion of their identities. This is the key factor that acts as the primary motivator. It is especially true in certain cultures, such as the Sindhis, where antagonism is highly pervasive. This is especially true in certain cultures. Many Sindhis have a strong desire to disguise their identity since they have a number of characteristics that are highly unique. This is because Sindhis possess a number of very distinguishing attributes. The physiological and safety needs of an individual are the basic demands that are responsible for maintaining all other elements of human development. The fulfilment of these prerequisites is the cornerstone of human growth. According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these requirements are located at the bottom of the hierarchy, which is the level that is considered to be the most essential. On the basis of the cultural norms that were prevalent at the time, women were portrayed in an unflattering light, with the implication that they were submissive and prone to being influenced by others by the actions that they took. As a result, women were prepared to give up their own interests if they departed from the norms of purity that were established by the society. This was because they had internalised these notions to such a degree that they were prepared to embrace them. This was the reason why anything like this occurred. It is unavoidable that each and every immigrant in India will, at some

point in time, come to the conclusion that the concept of "identity" may be interpreted in a number of various ways.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of distinct methods in which individuals from different socioeconomic strata might communicate their sense of self-identity to one another. These approaches can vary greatly from one person to the next. During the process of going on a path of self-exploration, it is of the highest necessity to take into consideration two major things: the socioeconomic class of an individual and the present status of circumstances. Both of these aspects are quite important. Because of the continuing fight for life that migrants in India experience, they are obliged to distort and degrade the identity that they share with one another. This is because of the fact that they are struggling to survive. This problem is one that occurs on a regular basis in each and every region of the American nation. An individual's recollections of personal life events that begin to form from the early to middle childhood years of a person are referred to as "autobiographical memory," and the word "autobiographical memory" is used to characterise these memories after they have begun to develop. Autobiographical memory is a concept that was used by psychologists in the twentieth century. The period of time that occurs before this point of commencement is believed to be the beginning of forgetfulness in childhood when viewed from the perspective of an adult. This is because childhood amnesia is characterised by a loss of memory. This definition takes into account the perspective of an adult in order to provide an accurate summary. (Fivush, Hayden, 8)

Although the separation itself was significant, the lives of the first group of Sindhis who were separated from him have been overshadowed by the debris of separation. This is despite the fact that the separation itself was significant. Geertz's definition of the term is that a migrant in partitioned India is a person whose identity is created by the complex interaction of biological, political, psychological, social, religious, and cultural components associated to the split. In other words, a migrant is someone who is trying to find a place to call home. To put it another way, a migrant is a person who was residing in India during the time of the partition. People who are Sindhi Hindus and who are preparing to travel to India feel forced to rid themselves of their Sindhi lineage and to enthusiastically embrace their new identity in India. When it comes to the works that are located within this particular site, memory is the medium that is employed. In

these books and other resources, the narrative of the notion of division serves as the primary emphasis. The tales of Partition are a portrayal of both the shifting identities of migrants and the neo-oppression that was based on religion, caste, and class in India throughout the process of partitioning the country. Both of these aspects are shown in the tales. Furthermore, these narratives provide light on the purposeful erasing of historical memory of the past, which is another problem that has been brought to light. In the years that followed the partition, there was an increase in the prevalence of new types of colonialism, persecution that was driven by religious convictions, and the emergence of caste politics. All of these things occurred simultaneously. It was at the same time that all of these events took place. It is vital to highlight and evaluate the acts of bothering while simultaneously conducting an interpretation of these actions within the framework of culture in order to get a thorough knowledge of partition narratives that is relevant to modern society. This may be accomplished by focusing on and evaluating the acts of bothering. In addition to that, this understanding needs to be suitable for the culture that is now in existence.

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