




**Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema**  
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**Lecture - 18**  
**Womanhood and Motherhood - II**

Good morning and welcome back to my lecture for the course Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema. [This] is a continuation of the discussion on Womanhood and Motherhood. We would like to start today's lecture with a reference to Jawaharlal Nehru's quotation in *The Discovery of India*, his famous work, where he states: (Refer Slide Time: 00:56)

### Imagination of the Mother/Female Kin of the Martyr

- Jawaharlal Nehru's **The Discovery of India**, which is described in Bumiller's book, states:
- "Our ladies stepped up to the plate and took command of the battle. Of course, women had always existed, but suddenly there was an avalanche of them, which surprised not only the British authorities but also their own men. Here were these ladies, higher or middle-class women living in their own homes—peasant women, working-class women, wealthy women—pouring out in their tens of thousands in defiance of official order... It wasn't only their bravery and boldness; what was much more unexpected was the organisational power they demonstrated" (Bumiller 19).
- Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent civil disobedience campaign was known as the **Satyagraha movement**, in which women actively participated.

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"Our ladies stepped up to the plate and took command of the battle. Of course, women had always existed, but suddenly there was an avalanche of them, which surprised not only the British authorities but also their own men. Here were these ladies, higher or middle-class women living in their own homes—peasant women, working-class women, wealthy women—pouring out in their tens of thousands in defiance of official order... It wasn't only their bravery and boldness; what was much more unexpected was the organisational power they demonstrated" (Bumiller 19).

Here, we see a glorious picture, a celebratory picture of women, where Nehru is actually lionizing their struggle and their noteworthy contribution, to the anticolonial movements.

We have already referred to M K Gandhi's non-violence civil disobedience campaign, which was known as the Satyagraha movement, where women had actively participated. So, majority of the recorded history of India's Partition, however, does not account for the common men, women, and children suffering, and how these events left a long-lasting mark on those who survived different forms of loss.

Generally, as is typical of wars, Partition had a distinct impact on women more than on men, owing to the unique responsibilities associated with each gender. So, women were not in charge of their own fate, during the Partition riots and the aftermath. (Refer Slide Time: 03:16)

### Imagination of the Mother/Female Kin of the Martyr

- The majority of the recorded history of India's Partition does not include accounts of common men, women, and children suffering, as well as how the event impacted all those who lived through it.
- Like wars and other types of violence, Partition had a distinct impact on women than on men, owing to the unique duties and responsibilities associated with each gender.
- Women were not the ones who chose their fate, whether to suicide, survive, or migrate. They were subjected to violence at many levels, including community, familial, and macro levels.

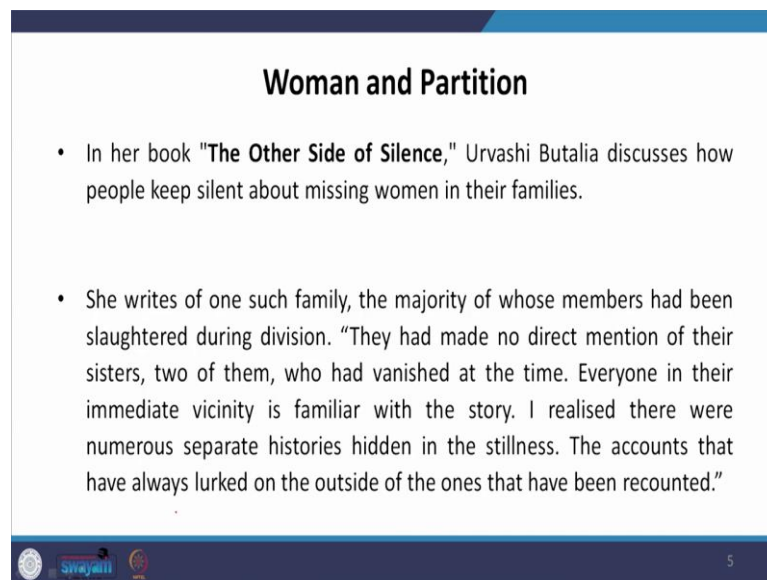
Whether they would suicide, survive, or migrate was something that their male kin had to decide for them. So, they were subjected to violence at the level of community, at the level of family, and at macro-social levels. (Refer Slide Time: 03:31)

### **Imagination of the Mother/Female Kin of the Martyr**

- Women were seen as emblems of honour on both sides, and their dishonour was seen as a betrayal of a community's faith, culture, and everything considered as sacrosanct by the people.
- A woman impregnated by a man from another race was considered as impure, and the child born into such circumstances tainted the race's sense of purity.
- Consequently, in the vast majority of situations, women did not make the decisions. They accepted the choices that their family or circumstances had made for them.

Women are seen as emblems of honor for each community, such that dishonor on the body of the woman is understood as betrayal of the community's faith, the community's culture, and everything that is considered as sacred by the people. During the partition and even in the riots that follow till the modern day, till the turn of the century, in each and every riot what is remarkable is that the patterns of violence are very similar.

We see that the violence is wrought/ inflicted on two places generally, two sites that are attacked - one is the religious shrine of the enemy community, and then the body of the enemy community's female kin (are violated). Once a woman is impregnated by a man from another community or race, she is considered as impure and the child born under such circumstances is tainted in terms of the community's sense of 'purity'. (Refer Slide Time: 04:59)



**Woman and Partition**

- In her book "**The Other Side of Silence**," Urvashi Butalia discusses how people keep silent about missing women in their families.
- She writes of one such family, the majority of whose members had been slaughtered during division. "They had made no direct mention of their sisters, two of them, who had vanished at the time. Everyone in their immediate vicinity is familiar with the story. I realised there were numerous separate histories hidden in the stillness. The accounts that have always lurked on the outside of the ones that have been recounted."

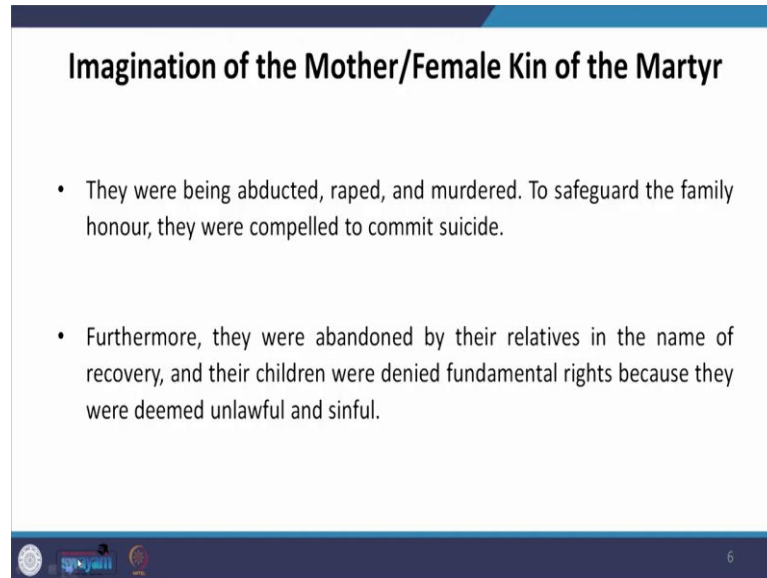
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Now, women were actually not decision-makers, like Urvashi Butalia in her book "The Other Side of Silence" discusses how people generally like to keep silent about the missing women in their families. She talks about one such family, where a majority of the members had been killed during the Partition and the riots that followed. She says, "They had made no direct mention of their sisters, two of them, who had vanished at the time. Everyone in their immediate vicinity is familiar with the story.

I realized there were numerous separate histories hidden in the stillness. The accounts that have always lurked on the outside of the ones that have been recounted." There are

histories within history, there are so many blind-spots that actually need to be bypassed for a formal history to be able to shape itself in a neat manner, in a polished fashion.

The Indias within India, the histories within history can be discovered through referring to these alternative voices, alternative memories. (Refer Slide Time: 06:33)



### Imagination of the Mother/Female Kin of the Martyr

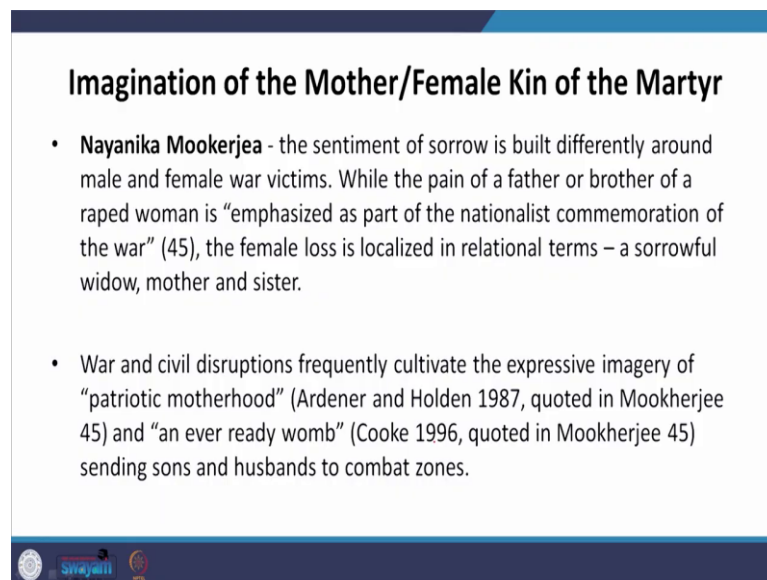
- They were being abducted, raped, and murdered. To safeguard the family honour, they were compelled to commit suicide.
- Furthermore, they were abandoned by their relatives in the name of recovery, and their children were denied fundamental rights because they were deemed unlawful and sinful.

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So, there were rampant abductions, murdering, and rapes, and the family patriarchs actually would safeguard the family honour, through compelling women to commit suicide. Women would be goaded to commit suicide through jumping off into wells, through touching the electric wire, or through consuming poison.


Once a woman was violated, she was molested, she would hardly be taken back by the family. And the children born of rape were denied any fundamental rights, because they were seen as unlawful and sinful. Nayanika Mookerjea studies the war and the sentiment of sorrow that is built differently around the male and the female who are victims.

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### Imagination of the Mother/Female Kin of the Martyr

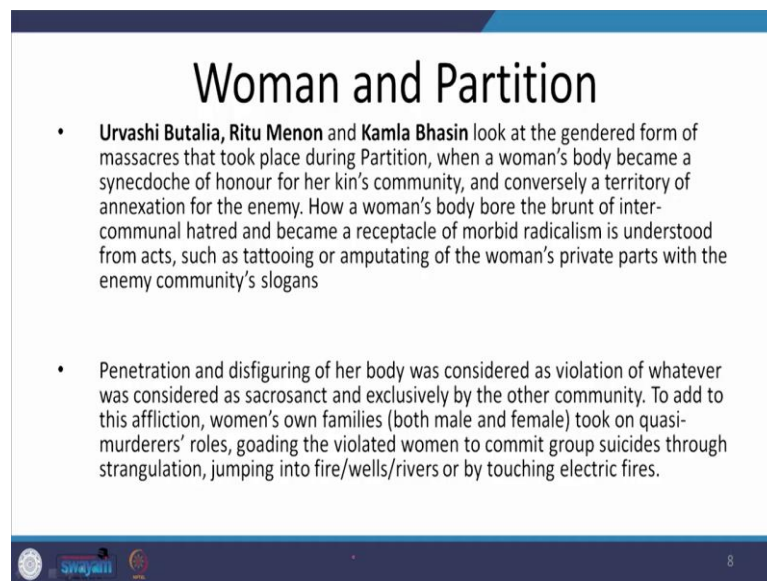
- **Nayanika Mookerjea** - the sentiment of sorrow is built differently around male and female war victims. While the pain of a father or brother of a raped woman is “emphasized as part of the nationalist commemoration of the war” (45), the female loss is localized in relational terms – a sorrowful widow, mother and sister.
- War and civil disruptions frequently cultivate the expressive imagery of “patriotic motherhood” (Ardener and Holden 1987, quoted in Mookherjee 45) and “an ever ready womb” (Cooke 1996, quoted in Mookherjee 45) sending sons and husbands to combat zones.



The pain of the father or the brother of a raped woman and the pain of a martyr are shaped very differently. They are understood very differently.

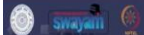
The former is, as she says, "emphasized as part of the nationalist commemoration of the war". The female loss is localized in relational terms on the other hand - the sorrowful widow, the sorrowful mother and the sorrowful sister. So, we understand that the losses for both genders are very different. War and civil disruptions cultivate the expressive imagery of "patriotic motherhood" and "an ever-ready womb" that is constantly giving birth to strong sons and supporting husbands, sending the sons and one's husband to combat zones.

This is one question that is studied by several feminist critics of Partition scholarship; they look at how women have an inspirational role. Women's loss is understood only in terms of the loss of the body. So, men can afford to lose property, men can afford to lose or win the nation. They can afford to win a power position, in terms of territorial domination/ establishing control over a territory, but women's territory is essentially their own body. (Refer Slide Time: 09:30)



## Woman and Partition

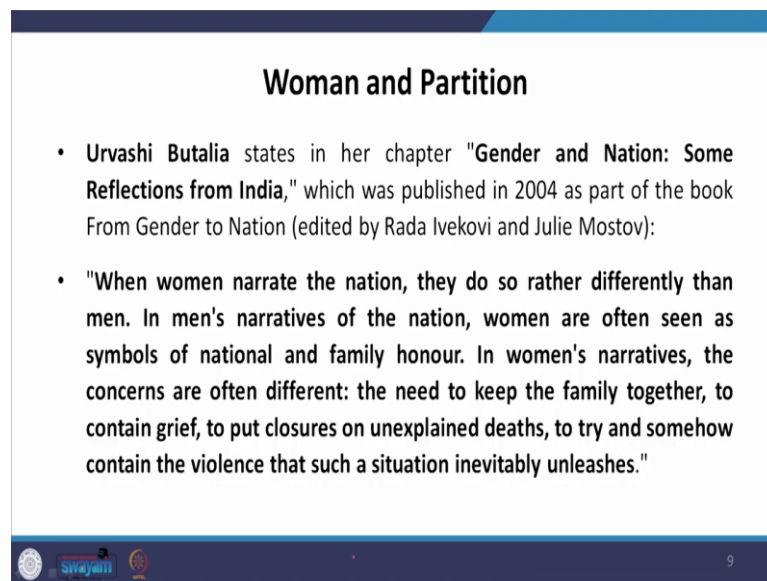
- **Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin** look at the gendered form of massacres that took place during Partition, when a woman's body became a synecdoche of honour for her kin's community, and conversely a territory of annexation for the enemy. How a woman's body bore the brunt of inter-communal hatred and became a receptacle of morbid radicalism is understood from acts, such as tattooing or amputating of the woman's private parts with the enemy community's slogans
- Penetration and disfiguring of her body was considered as violation of whatever was considered as sacrosanct and exclusively by the other community. To add to this affliction, women's own families (both male and female) took on quasi-murderers' roles, goading the violated women to commit group suicides through strangulation, jumping into fire/wells/rivers or by touching electric fires.

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Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin - all of these feminist critics of partition studies look at the gendered form of violence that took place during Partition, where women were the synecdoche of honour for their own community, and conversely a territory of annexation for their enemy.

They became receptacle of morbid radicalism, and this can be understood through the extremely heinous and base acts, such as tattooing or amputating of women's private parts. Sometimes they would be stripped and made to parade on public places, they would be unclothed and made to perform in in holy shrines.

(Humiliation such as) penetration and disfiguring of her body was understood as being transferred to the entire community. And to add to this affliction, (women's) own family members would play the quasi-murderer's role, goading them to kill themselves. (Refer Slide Time: 10:39)



### Woman and Partition

- **Urvashi Butalia** states in her chapter "**Gender and Nation: Some Reflections from India**," which was published in 2004 as part of the book *From Gender to Nation* (edited by Rada Ivekovi and Julie Mostov):
- "When women narrate the nation, they do so rather differently than men. In men's narratives of the nation, women are often seen as symbols of national and family honour. In women's narratives, the concerns are often different: the need to keep the family together, to contain grief, to put closures on unexplained deaths, to try and somehow contain the violence that such a situation inevitably unleashes."

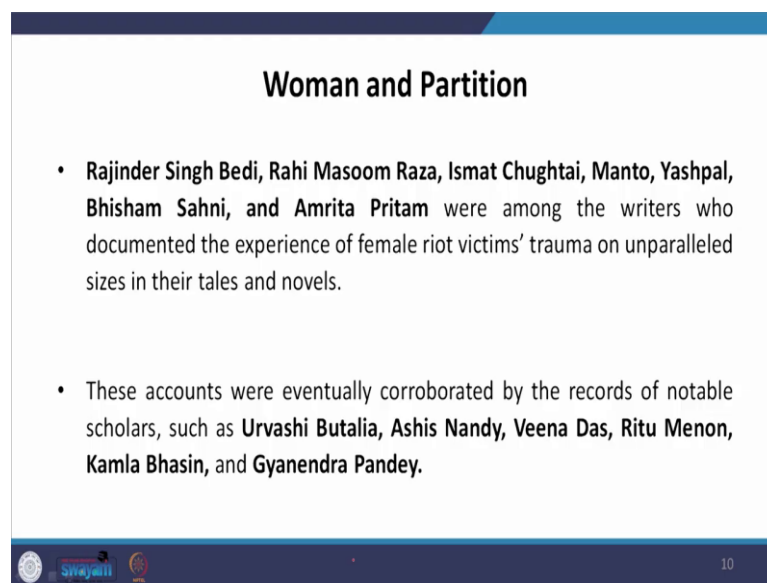
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In women's narratives, the concerns are often different: the need to keep the family together, to contain grief, to put closures on unexplained deaths, to try and somehow contain the violence that such a situation inevitably unleashes."

We have several authors that have produced momentous artworks on the woman and Partition (centering the woman in the context of Partition). (Refer Slide Time: 11:35)



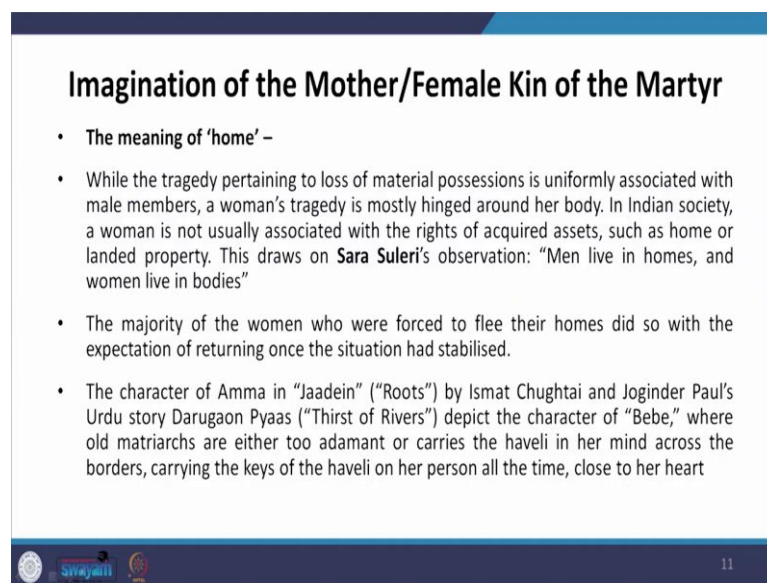
### Woman and Partition

- **Rajinder Singh Bedi, Rahi Masoom Raza, Ismat Chughtai, Manto, Yashpal, Bhisham Sahni, and Amrita Pritam** were among the writers who documented the experience of female riot victims' trauma on unparalleled sizes in their tales and novels.
- These accounts were eventually corroborated by the records of notable scholars, such as **Urvashi Butalia, Ashis Nandy, Veena Das, Ritu Menon, Kamla Bhasin, and Gyanendra Pandey.**

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Rajinder Singh Bedi, Rahi Masoom Raza, Ismat Chughtai, Sadat Hassan Manto, Yashpal, Bhisham Sahni, Amrita Pritam are some of these names that document the experience of female riot victims and their trauma. And then we have notable scholars, such as Urvashi Butalia, Ashis Nandy, Veena Das, Ritu Menon, Kamala Bhasin and Gyanendra Pandey.

When we talk of women, we also talk about home. I would like to harken back what Sara Suleri observes - she says, "Men live in homes and women live in bodies." In an Indian society, a woman is not usually associated with rights to acquire assets and property such as home or a land. (Refer Slide Time: 12:31)



### Imagination of the Mother/Female Kin of the Martyr

- The meaning of 'home' –
- While the tragedy pertaining to loss of material possessions is uniformly associated with male members, a woman's tragedy is mostly hinged around her body. In Indian society, a woman is not usually associated with the rights of acquired assets, such as home or landed property. This draws on **Sara Suleri's** observation: "Men live in homes, and women live in bodies"
- The majority of the women who were forced to flee their homes did so with the expectation of returning once the situation had stabilised.
- The character of Amma in "Jaadein" ("Roots") by Ismat Chughtai and Joginder Paul's Urdu story Darugaon Pyaas ("Thirst of Rivers") depict the character of "Bebe," where old matriarchs are either too adamant or carries the haveli in her mind across the borders, carrying the keys of the haveli on her person all the time, close to her heart

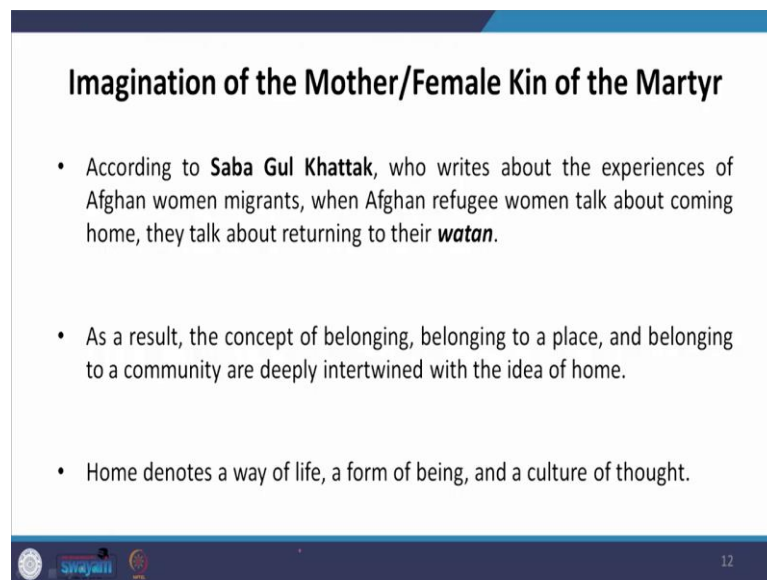
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A woman's tragedy is always hinged around her body. A man's tragedy or loss could be hinged around loss of land, loss of a homestead, (the woman) can only afford to lose her body and own it.

We see a majority of these women who were forced to flee their homes did so, with the expectation that once the riots had stopped, once the turmoils had calmed down, they would come back. I was talking about this character in "Jaadein" by Ismat Chughtai, and then Joginder Paul's Urdu story Darugaon Pyaas, where Paul depicts the character of "Bebe". These old matriarchs are adamant and they carry the keys of the haveli.

The key becomes synecdoche of the haveli that they are carrying in their mind, and they are carrying the key on their person all the time imagining that they would come back some day.

According to Saba Gul Khattak, who writes about the experiences of Afghan women, the Afghan female migrants, Khattak would say that the Afghan refugee women conflate, they merge the notion of home with the notion of watan. Coming back to home/ homecoming is like returning to one's watan. (Refer Slide Time: 14:08)

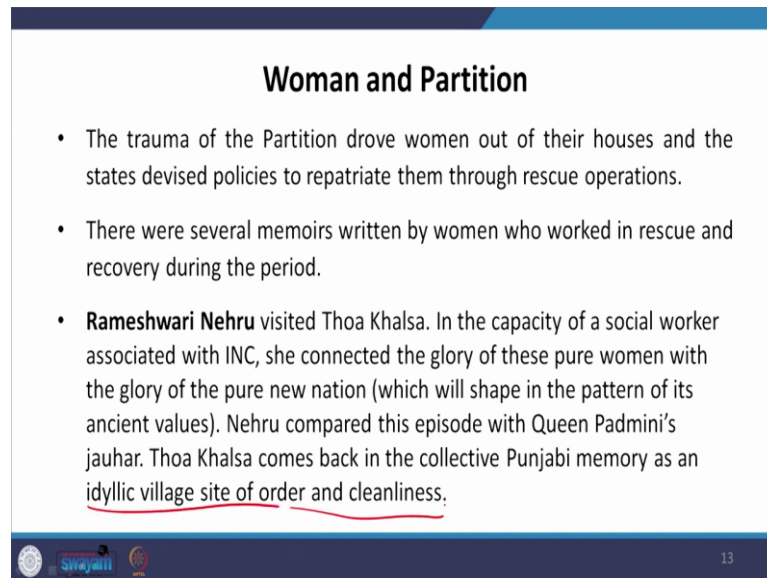


### Imagination of the Mother/Female Kin of the Martyr

- According to **Saba Gul Khattak**, who writes about the experiences of Afghan women migrants, when Afghan refugee women talk about coming home, they talk about returning to their *watan*.
- As a result, the concept of belonging, belonging to a place, and belonging to a community are deeply intertwined with the idea of home.
- Home denotes a way of life, a form of being, and a culture of thought.

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For a woman, there is no larger meaning of watan. Especially for a woman that has lived all her life in parda, watan and home are synonymous. Home, thus, denotes a concept of belonging to a place, to a community and so, it is a way of life and a form of existence as well as a culture of thought; so, having to lose one's home actually verges on the question of identity crisis. (Refer Slide Time: 14:47)



### Woman and Partition

- The trauma of the Partition drove women out of their houses and the states devised policies to repatriate them through rescue operations.
- There were several memoirs written by women who worked in rescue and recovery during the period.
- **Rameshwari Nehru** visited Thoa Khalsa. In the capacity of a social worker associated with INC, she connected the glory of these pure women with the glory of the pure new nation (which will shape in the pattern of its ancient values). Nehru compared this episode with Queen Padmini's jauhar. Thoa Khalsa comes back in the collective Punjabi memory as an idyllic village site of order and cleanliness.

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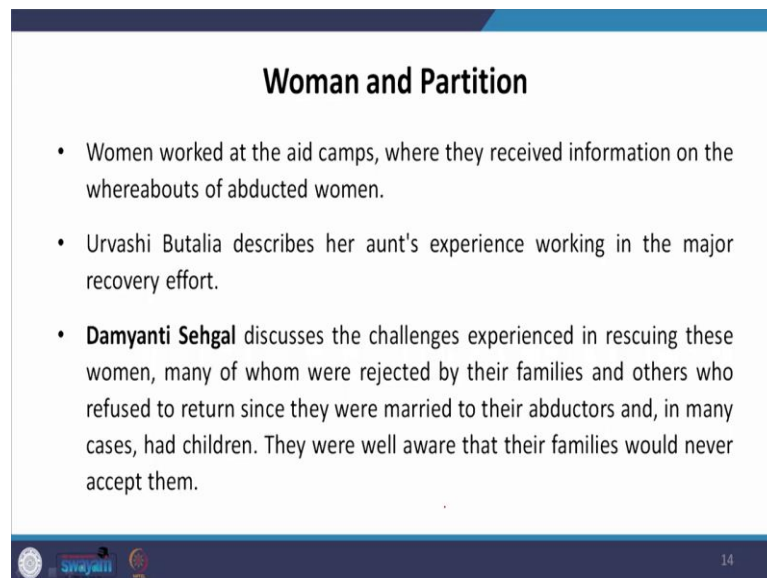
The trauma of the partition drove women out of their houses and there were these different state-devised policies to bring them back through rescue operations. The feminist critics actually question the nature of these policies; how far they were fair, how far were they doing any justice to the women concerned, the female victims. We see that Rameshwari Nehru had visited Thoa Khalsa. The mythological village and the genealogy of Thoa Khalsa that is actually mentioned in reference to the Sikh women's bravery and martyrdom.

A group of Sikh women (almost 80 or 90 women) had jumped off into a well [so that] the Muslims do not attack and convert them. They had read their holy book, and they were actually encouraged to perform this act; the suicide at that point in that circumstance was seen as a sacrosanct act. It is actually remembered as a kind of archetypal memory; these sorts of memories are valued for their archetypal qualities [and] celebrated as monuments and statues.

They are erected at the heart of nationalist sentiments. So, they are monumentalized basically. We see that Rameshwari Nehru in the capacity of a social worker that is



associated with Indian National Congress visits Thoa Khalsa, where the women had suicided [by] jumping into a well. And she glorifies these pure women and this is immediately connected with the historical performance of jauhar by Queen Padmini to escape Alauddin Khilji's attacks. Thoa Khalsa brings back the collective Punjabi memory, it becomes synonymous with the pride of a community and a race, and Thoa Khalsa becomes the idyllic village site reflecting order and cleanliness.

Damayanti Sehgal discusses the challenges that were experienced, that she experienced in rescuing women, many of whom had been rejected by their families, and some of whom had refused to go back because they were already married to the abductors at the time they were being recovered. (Refer Slide Time: 17:44)



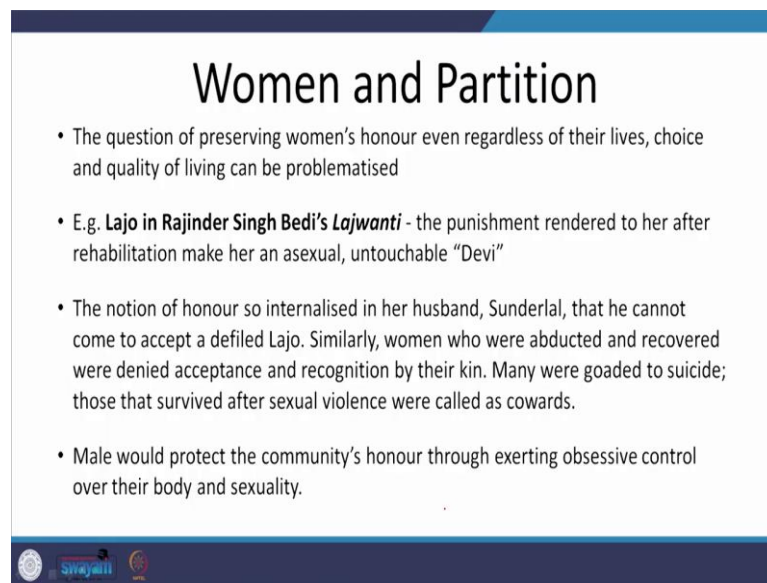
### Woman and Partition

- Women worked at the aid camps, where they received information on the whereabouts of abducted women.
- Urvashi Butalia describes her aunt's experience working in the major recovery effort.
- **Damyanti Sehgal** discusses the challenges experienced in rescuing these women, many of whom were rejected by their families and others who refused to return since they were married to their abductors and, in many cases, had children. They were well aware that their families would never accept them.

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Some of them had given birth to children. They were very well aware that the families would never take them back.

They were reluctant to, and for some it was a forced uprooting from one reality and grafting them back to their former state of existence where they would not be accepted. So, it was a kind of uprooting them from their current reality that they had come to accept and bringing them back to their former state of existence, where hardly they would be accepted. (Refer Slide Time: 18:33)



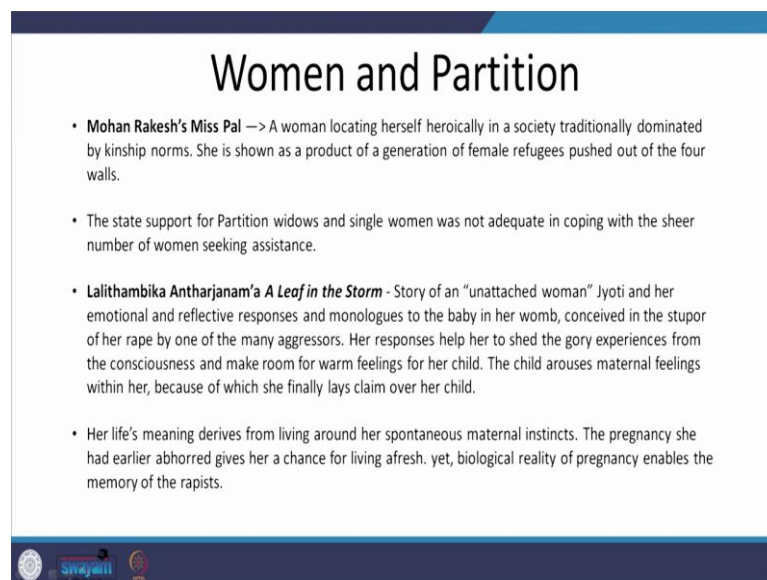
## Women and Partition

- The question of preserving women's honour even regardless of their lives, choice and quality of living can be problematised
- E.g. **Lajo** in **Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti*** - the punishment rendered to her after rehabilitation make her an asexual, untouchable "Devi"
- The notion of honour so internalised in her husband, Sunderlal, that he cannot come to accept a defiled Lajo. Similarly, women who were abducted and recovered were denied acceptance and recognition by their kin. Many were goaded to suicide; those that survived after sexual violence were called as cowards.
- Male would protect the community's honour through exerting obsessive control over their body and sexuality.



We see so many of these stories, such as the case of the character Lajo in Rajinder Singh Bedi's short story Lajwanti - where she is not publicly punished, she is taken back by her husband Sunderlal. However, Sunderlal cannot come to accept the defiled wife that Lajo has become now.

So, he treats her with a lot of honour and thereby as the untouchable "Devi." He puts her in the pedestal of the goddess. The relation has become fake and hypocritical; it is not glorifying the woman, but actually punishing her through pushing her away from a normal and spontaneous existence. So, denying her a normal and spontaneous existence. We see this notion of honor, chastity, purity deeply internalized at the heart of the masculine society. (Refer Slide Time: 19:42)



## Women and Partition

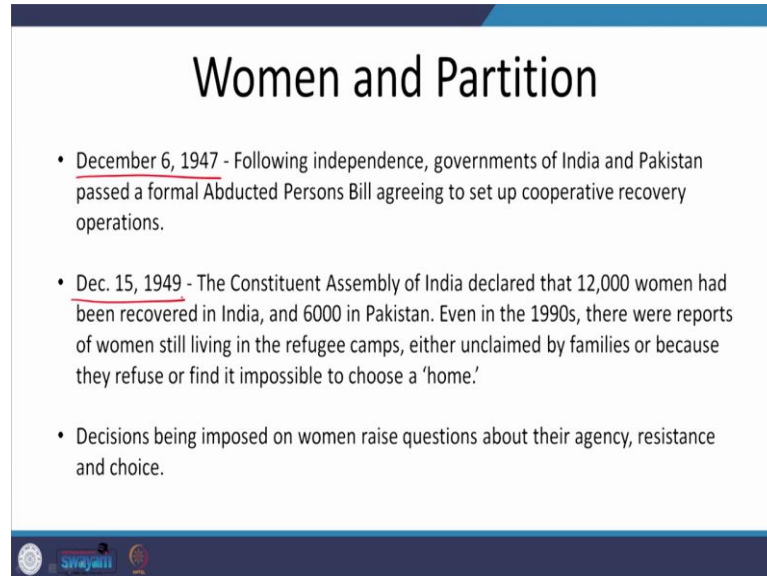
- **Mohan Rakesh's Miss Pal** → A woman locating herself heroically in a society traditionally dominated by kinship norms. She is shown as a product of a generation of female refugees pushed out of the four walls.
- The state support for Partition widows and single women was not adequate in coping with the sheer number of women seeking assistance.
- **Lalithambika Antharjanam's A Leaf in the Storm** - Story of an "unattached woman" Jyoti and her emotional and reflective responses and monologues to the baby in her womb, conceived in the stupor of her rape by one of the many aggressors. Her responses help her to shed the gory experiences from the consciousness and make room for warm feelings for her child. The child arouses maternal feelings within her, because of which she finally lays claim over her child.
- Her life's meaning derives from living around her spontaneous maternal instincts. The pregnancy she had earlier abhorred gives her a chance for living afresh. yet, biological reality of pregnancy enables the memory of the rapists.

Similarly, women that join the workforce - we have a short story by Mohan Rakesh, it is called Miss Pal. Miss Pal is locating herself heroically in a society that is dominated by the males. She is a product of a generation of female refugees that had moved out of the precincts of home. We have another story by Lalithambika Antharjanam, it is called ah a Leaf in the Storm. It is a story of a woman that has been violated multiply and she has given birth. The entire story of Jyoti is about her emotional and reflective responses and monologues to the baby, the unborn child in her womb that she has conceived as a result of gang rape.

She has both these feelings - on the one hand, the child arouses maternal feelings within her, and she wants to lay claim on the child; the child gives her a chance to live afresh


and yet, the biological reality of this pregnancy reminds her of/ enables the memory of the rapists.

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## Women and Partition

- December 6, 1947 - Following independence, governments of India and Pakistan passed a formal Abducted Persons Bill agreeing to set up cooperative recovery operations.
- Dec. 15, 1949 - The Constituent Assembly of India declared that 12,000 women had been recovered in India, and 6000 in Pakistan. Even in the 1990s, there were reports of women still living in the refugee camps, either unclaimed by families or because they refuse or find it impossible to choose a 'home.'
- Decisions being imposed on women raise questions about their agency, resistance and choice.

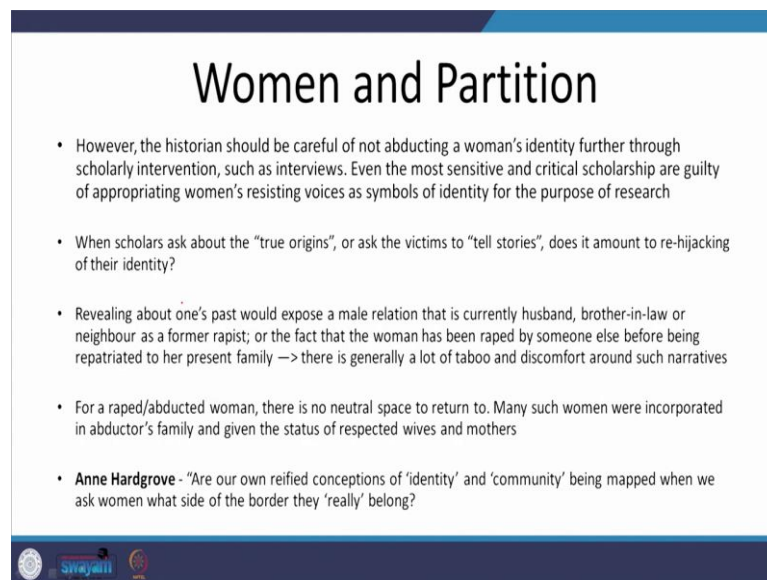




If we look at some of the important dates - December 6, 1947 - after independence, the governments of India and Pakistan passed a formal Abducted Persons Bill and agreed to set up cooperative recovery operations.


December 15, 1949 - The Constituent Assembly of India declared that 12,000 women had been recovered in India and 6000 in Pakistan.

Even in the 1990s, there were reports of women still living in the refugee camps, who were either unclaimed by their families or in some cases they refused to or found it impossible to go back to their 'home.' So, decisions that were imposed by the state policies on the women, raised questions about their agency and choice. (Refer Slide Time: 22:14)



## Women and Partition

- However, the historian should be careful of not abducting a woman's identity further through scholarly intervention, such as interviews. Even the most sensitive and critical scholarship are guilty of appropriating women's resisting voices as symbols of identity for the purpose of research
- When scholars ask about the "true origins", or ask the victims to "tell stories", does it amount to re-hijacking of their identity?
- Revealing about one's past would expose a male relation that is currently husband, brother-in-law or neighbour as a former rapist; or the fact that the woman has been raped by someone else before being repatriated to her present family → there is generally a lot of taboo and discomfort around such narratives
- For a raped/abducted woman, there is no neutral space to return to. Many such women were incorporated in abductor's family and given the status of respected wives and mothers
- **Anne Hardgrove** - "Are our own reified conceptions of 'identity' and 'community' being mapped when we ask women what side of the border they 'really' belong?"

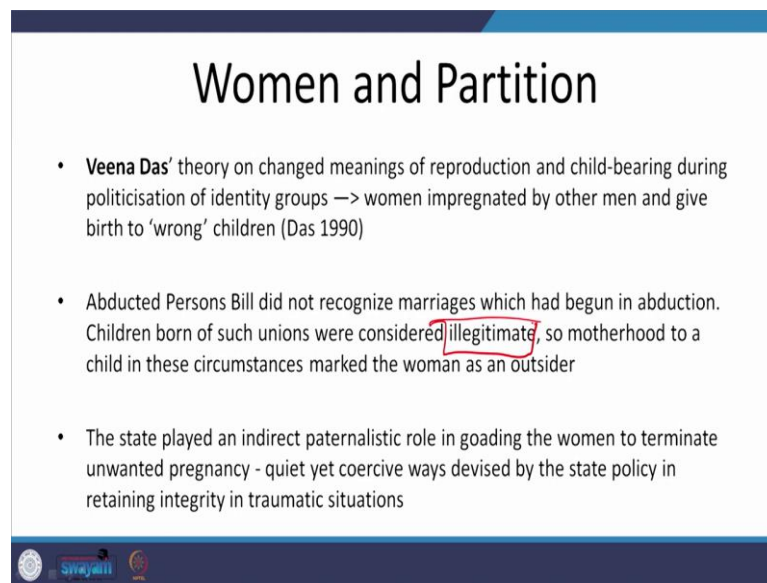


When we talk about recovering women's versions, women's own stories; we should also be careful, like Anne Hardgrove says, of not crossing a threshold that actually violates the woman's sense of privacy for the sake of scholarship.

Even the most critical and sensitive scholarship are guilty of appropriating the woman's resisting voice and using it as a symbol of identity for the purpose of research. There is no question of neutral space for a rape survivor to return to. For many such women, the abductor's family had become their home; they had to accept, they were incorporated in the abductor's family and given the status of respected wives and mothers.

So, it is very difficult for the survivors to speak, and like Anne Hardgrove asks, how far can we push them to tell about their accounts? In many cases, telling about one's past experience would reveal a male relation. It could be one's husband, one's brother-in-law or the neighbor as a former rapist; or maybe the woman has been raped by someone else and then repatriated to her present family. So, all these topics generally have a lot of taboo and discomfort around them.

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## Women and Partition

- **Veena Das'** theory on changed meanings of reproduction and child-bearing during politicisation of identity groups → women impregnated by other men and give birth to 'wrong' children (Das 1990)
- Abducted Persons Bill did not recognize marriages which had begun in abduction. Children born of such unions were considered illegitimate, so motherhood to a child in these circumstances marked the woman as an outsider
- The state played an indirect paternalistic role in goading the women to terminate unwanted pregnancy - quiet yet coercive ways devised by the state policy in retaining integrity in traumatic situations

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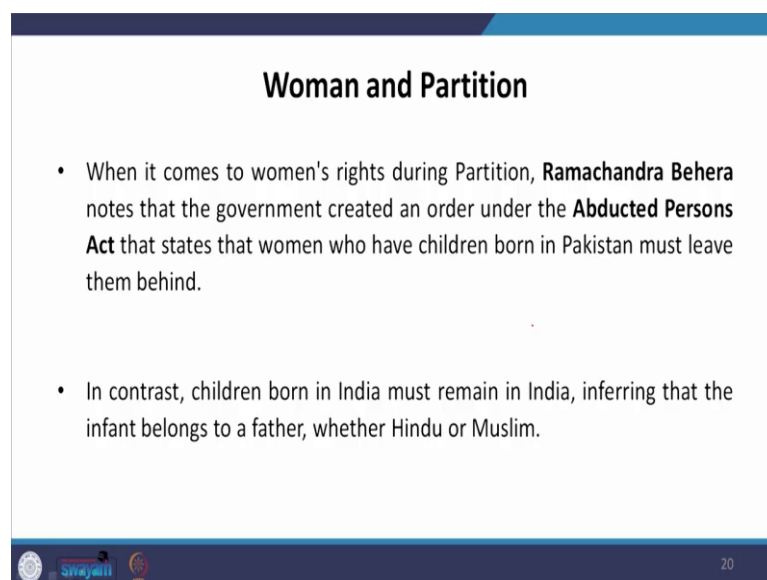
Veena Das' theory on changed meanings of reproduction and child-bearing during the politicization of identity groups discusses how women were impregnated by the other men, the men outside of the community and [they are considered 'impure'] after giving birth to the 'wrong' child. Abducted Persons Bill did not recognize marriages that had happened as a result of abduction. Children that were born of such coercive unions/ forceful unions were considered as illegitimate.

So, what happens to a child born of rape? Motherhood to such a child would mark the woman herself as an outsider.

She actually occupied a liminal position, where she was neither here nor there. She was not a part of any community; like the critics say, she had no neutral place to go back to. And the state was indirectly playing a paternalistic role in forcing the woman to terminate such pregnancies. One of the feminist studies points how women would be brought to Jalandhar and they would be 'cleansed.'

So, in the name of cleansing, basically they were being forced to abort the unwanted pregnancy. And we see the quiet yet forceful/ coercive ways devised by the state policy in retaining integrity during the traumatic situations.

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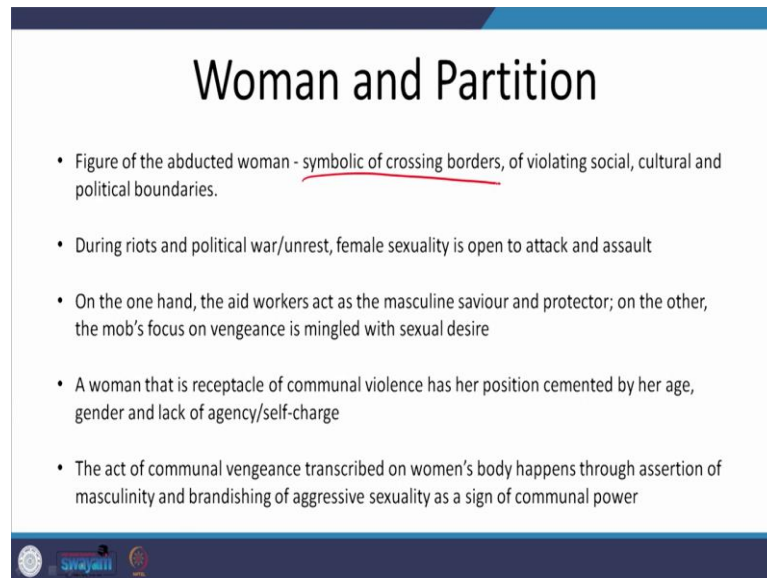
**Woman and Partition**

- When it comes to women's rights during Partition, **Ramachandra Behera** notes that the government created an order under the **Abducted Persons Act** that states that women who have children born in Pakistan must leave them behind.
- In contrast, children born in India must remain in India, inferring that the infant belongs to a father, whether Hindu or Muslim.

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According to Ramachandra Behera's study, the Abducted Persons Act states that the women who have children born in Pakistan must leave them behind. Similarly, children

born in India must remain in India. So, the child's identity is being formed in continuation [with that of the father], or the child's identity is connected to the father, whether Hindu or Muslim. The woman has to cross the border and come back to her natal home, leaving the child behind. So, that was another bill that is imbued with patriarchal values. (Refer Slide Time: 26:50)



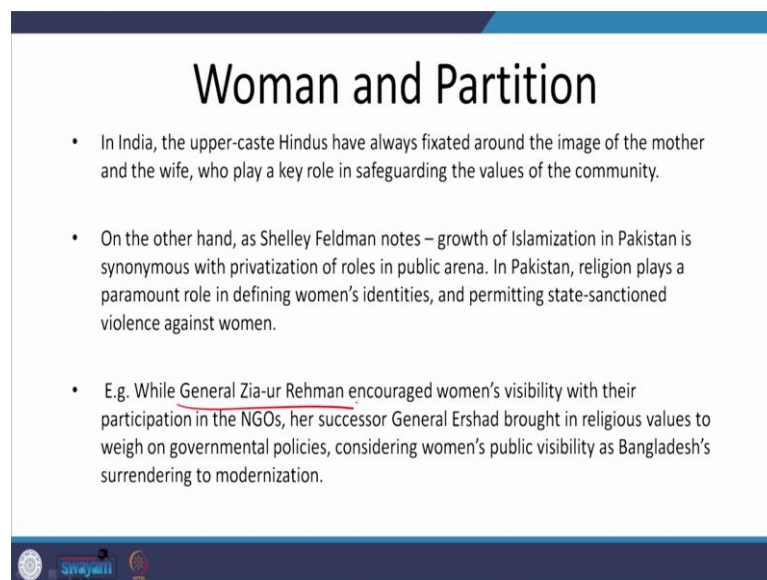
## Woman and Partition

- Figure of the abducted woman - symbolic of crossing borders, of violating social, cultural and political boundaries.
- During riots and political war/unrest, female sexuality is open to attack and assault
- On the one hand, the aid workers act as the masculine saviour and protector; on the other, the mob's focus on vengeance is mingled with sexual desire
- A woman that is receptacle of communal violence has her position cemented by her age, gender and lack of agency/self-charge
- The act of communal vengeance transcribed on women's body happens through assertion of masculinity and brandishing of aggressive sexuality as a sign of communal power

The figure of the abducted woman is necessarily a symbol of crossing borders, violating or transgressing the socio-political cultural boundaries. We also see that the meaning of communal violence for a woman changes depending on her age, gender and lack of self-agency or self-charge.


At the border women would be exchanged like cattles, and they would be simply numbers. The values of women would be less, if they were older. A young woman that is capable of giving birth would be considered as more valuable as a repatriated object or commodity.

Women were essentially being commoditized at that time, in the decades that followed Partition. Their values were being considered in terms of their capacity of giving birth and contributing to the nation. (Refer Slide Time: 28:11)



## Woman and Partition

- In India, the upper-caste Hindus have always fixated around the image of the mother and the wife, who play a key role in safeguarding the values of the community.
- On the other hand, as Shelley Feldman notes – growth of Islamization in Pakistan is synonymous with privatization of roles in public arena. In Pakistan, religion plays a paramount role in defining women's identities, and permitting state-sanctioned violence against women.
- E.g. While General Zia-ur Rehman encouraged women's visibility with their participation in the NGOs, her successor General Ershad brought in religious values to weigh on governmental policies, considering women's public visibility as Bangladesh's surrendering to modernization.



In India, we have already talked about how the upper-caste Hindus have always fixated around the image of the mother and the wife, and they are seen as playing a key role in safeguarding the values of the community.

In the same way, Shelley Feldman would study that the growth of Islamization in Pakistan would lead to privatization of roles in public arena, meaning (what we are trying to understand here is that) the state policies or the decisions, the policies made by a particular government, a particular regime, have a lot to do with the government's perception or take on women; how they look at women's emancipation, the question of women's identities.

If a government is orthodox, it would formulate its policies in terms of curbing the freedom of the women.

In Pakistan, we would see that religion plays a paramount role in defining women's identities. So, a government shapes its image as modern ah [through] policies [that are based on] gender terms. A government's, a nation's self-imaging as a modern state is also incumbent on the identity of the woman. For example, General Zia-ur Rehman's government would encourage women's visibility and their participation in the NGOs.

However, General Ershad actually brought in religious values to weigh on governmental policy, such that women's public visibility was considered in Bangladesh as immodest, and something that leads to surrendering to modernization.

So, in immediate post-partition decades, we see that women exercised usual freedom in determining their marital partners when the national boundaries were in flux. However, with the hardening of the borders and formation of India and Pakistan, the state takes on the role of the protector; the benevolent protector and provider, where the state gets to decide and determine where the woman and the child belong. (Refer Slide Time: 31:18)

## Woman and Partition

- Immediate Post-Partition- in many cases, women exercised usual freedom in determining their partners when the national boundaries were in flux
- However, with the hardening of the borders and formation of India and Pakistan, the states took on the role of protector and provider, insisting on determining where a woman and her child belonged
- Pakistan's creation was a loss of India's territory, so with a great urgency, claims were laid on recovering at least the "moveable property" – the women, and this greatly influenced the policies and the process of rehabilitation
- In South Asian context, the nation is the mother, but the state (governmental system) is the father. It can be either benevolent or authoritarian. The government offers protection to women and children, assuming they cannot do it on their own in exchange of controlling women's sexuality.

Formation of Pakistan was seen as loss of India's territory. And so, with great urgency what needed to be recovered was India's movable property - the women. The recovery operations actually informed the subsequent shaping of policies and the process of rehabilitation. It would serve to remember that while the nation in the South Asian context is worshipped as the mother, the state or the governmental system is the father. It can be either benevolent or authoritarian, depending on the position it wants to assume.

The government offers protection to women and children, [whereas] the symbol of nation takes after the image of the woman. However, the nation is run through patriarchal logic and values that are deeply rooted in patriarchy. So, the government which is generally a masculine concept offers protection to women and to children, [with an] inbuilt assumption that women and children cannot protect themselves. They are vulnerable, and in exchange for this protection the government sought to control women's sexuality. With this I would like to conclude today's lecture.

Thank you.