

**A Study of the Representation of Child, Body and Nation in
Partition Literature**

by

Kamayani Kaushiva

Submitted

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A Study of the Representation of Child, Body and Nation in Partition Literature**” being submitted by **Kamayani Kaushiva** to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is a bonafide record of research work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance. The thesis work, in my opinion, has reached the requisite standard fulfilling the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

The results contain in this thesis have not been submitted in part or full, to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.



(Angelie Multani)

Assistant Professor

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

New Delhi - 110016

India.

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Abstract

The research focuses on the representation of children as victims of Partition violence in Partition Literature of the subcontinent. The study also represents how the partitioned-body of the nation found its resonance in the desecration of the bodies of men, women and children. Further, the study focuses on how the chosen texts use the notion of 'nation', 'home', 'space', 'freedom', borders, contestation between 'memory's truth' and 'historical truth', the 'gaps' and 'silences' that edit any discourse on Partition, the trauma of dislocation, to highlight the impact of partition and its contemporary influence upon the postcolonial nation.

The texts chosen for study are - *Cracking India*¹ (1991) by Bapsi Sidhwa (originally published as *Ice-Candy Man* in 1988), *Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie and *The Shadow Lines* (1988) by Amitav Ghosh. Each text explores the impact of Partition and its aftermath in the divided subcontinent through the perspective of a child protagonist. Drawing insights from a broad framework of existing historiographical, sociological and literary discourses on Partition the study is a close exegesis of the chosen texts for a hitherto unattended aspect of Partition – children as victims.

The thesis is divided into three chapters: the first chapter uses sociological theories of childhood to deliberate about the concept of 'child' and 'childhood' and also from psychoanalytic theories of trauma to explore the impact of partition on the generation that was in the stage of childhood when they experienced the intensive cultural trauma of

¹ The text that I refer to in this study is the US edition of Sidhwa's text *Ice Candy Man* that was republished as "*Cracking India*". This title very aptly connotes how Partition split the Indian subcontinent into two countries. The title powerfully evokes the image of how the very 'body' of the nation was 'cracked' into two, a crack which refuses to heal even decades later.

Partition. The second chapter enquires into how the cartography of division was traced not only on the territory of the subcontinent but on the bodies and beings of children, women and men by using theories of gender, violence and nationalism. The third chapter lends insights into the contemporary nature of Partition, exploring how the chosen texts reveal the ways in which Partition as an 'indigestible trauma' has affected the post-partition generation(s).

The methodology used for this study is a close reading of the texts against the theoretical background of theories of nationalism, childhood, psychoanalytic theories of trauma, memory, gender, and violence.

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