2. Review of Literature:

Before the late 1980s early commentary on Partition Literature documented rather than represented the violence. The interpretive function of reading and writing about the Partition, the discursive construction of subjectivity, agency, nationalism and history that are involved in its narrativization was not considered. The representations of the everyday and local experiences had been pushed to the margin and literary criticism did not give a fuller, more rounded discussion of the event. Similarly, much historical scholarship deals with the high politics of India’s Partition and the causes of Partition. However, this historical scholarship does not deal with the personal and social histories of the people. In an attempt to rewrite this history from the margins revisionist historians like Gyanendra Pandey, Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have repeatedly emphasized the centrality of personal narratives, testimonies, eyewitness accounts, literary narratives and the role of memory.

With this shift in attention it becomes clear that history and literature are linked and any discussion or criticism without the two becomes meaningless. In order to get a clearer picture, it is necessary to review the revisionist historical sources, recent literary sources of criticism as well as journals which deal with the historical, literary and inter-disciplinary aspects of Partition.

1. Historical Sources:

   i. Gyanendra Pandey in Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India (2001), calls Partition a moment of rupture and points out to the singularly violent character of the event which was unprecedented in both scale and method. Conventional historical discourse and the official accounts either justify or elide the gruesome happenings as an illegitimate outbreak of violence. There is a wide chasm between the historian’s perception of 1947 and a more popular, survivor’s account of it. The historian’s history does not deal with the effect of Partition on the people.

   ii. Gyanendra Pandey in Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories (2006), maintains that the historian needs to struggle to recover marginal voices and memories for what the official sources give us is still but a fragment of history. He advocates another type of fragment – literary sources – for it is of central importance in challenging the states’ constructions of history, in thinking other histories and marking these contested spaces in which some unties are constructed and others destroyed.
iii. Urvashi Butalia in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (1998), finds that the oral narrative offers a different way of looking at history, a different perspective which enriches history. She focuses on the stories of the invisible, bit – players: women, children and scheduled castes. She details how abducted women were forcibly recovered and made into symbols of national honour, and the problems they faced after recovery. She also highlights violence within families for fear of dishonour to the community.

iv. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin in *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition* (1998), look at the violence that women were subjected to both, at the hands of men of the other community and within their own families. Women’s bodies were treated as territory to be conquered, claimed or marked by the assailant. They too consider the recovery of abducted women a deliberate violent action of the state. They show how Partition posed the question of *belonging* in a way that polarized choice and allegiance, aggravating old and new antagonisms which had far reaching implications for women.

2. Literary Sources:

i. Jill Didur in *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (2006), examines how the literariness of language mediates the readers’ perception of history, memory and fictional representation connected to Partition. She interprets the silences found in women’s accounts of sectarian violence that accompanied Partition: their sexual assault, abduction, and displacement from their families: not simply as an attempt to conceal a socially damaging experience but as a sign of their inability to find a language to articulate their experience without invoking metaphors of purity and pollution. Her book examines the role that narratives of women’s experience play in constructing the memory of India’s Partition.

ii. Seema Malik in *Partition and Indian English Women Novelists* (2007), gives a comprehensive and exclusive evaluation of women writers on Partition who present the whole process from a gendered perspective. Through her study she highlights the marginalized situation of women within the socio-political space of the Partition. She critically analyzes the *impact* of and *response* to the Partition as inscribed in the agential discourses of women writers. She treats Partition as trauma, sees how history is fictionally represented, talks about violence and its socio-cultural ramification and the narrative strategies they adopt in replotting the female destiny.

iii. Anup Beniwal through a range of novels in *Representing Partition: History, Violence and Narration* (2005), traces the nature of various levels of the creative responses and consciousness to Partition within the tradition of Indian Writing in English. His focus is on how
these novels approximate history, the understanding of their reaction to Partition violence and the structuring of the narratives around the theme of order – disorder – order. He also compares and contrasts the pre - and post - Rushdie writings on Partition.

iv. Vinod K. Chopra in *Partition Stories: Mapping Community, Communalism and Gender* (2009), studies the nature and dynamics of the shifting paradigms of community, communalism and gender of Partition as reflected in the short stories which have a variety of themes. He conceptualises the terms community, communalism and gender. He also deals with inter – community and intra – community violence against women and how the writers show traces of human goodness and values surviving the communal divide.

v. Tarun K. Saint in *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* (2010), focuses on the literary representations of the Partition which offer crucial insights into the traumatic effects extreme violence has had on the collective psyche and imagination over time. The study maps shifts in the contours of literary remembrance and historical trauma in the domain of novelistic representation across three generations. He calls these novels *fictive testimony* and details what researchers have to say about testimonies related to the Holocaust. These instances of witnessing in the literary form enabled the restoration of affect consigned to the realm of the inarticulate. Moreover, critical witnessing includes a further element of self – reflexivity allowing for the possibility of self – critique.

vi. Kavita Daiya in *Violent Belongings: Partition Gender and National Culture in Postcolonial India* (2008), takes up cultural texts, like literature and film, and deals with the gendered violence and displacement in the postcolonial public sphere. She attempts to show how Indians and more recently, South Asians in the Diaspora, fashion belongings, perform citizenships, and survive nationalism. She tracks the formation of transnational South Asian public spheres by taking up the Partition as both historical event and discursive formation. She re – examines the discourse about Partition migrants in 1947, who were both refugees and citizens depending on ethnicity and gender. She also explores the postcolonial shape of the feminisation of the nation and links it to the representation of male and female experiences of violence and displacement. One of the claims of her book is that like the female body, male bodies also became symbols of decolonized and postcolonial nationality, albeit in different ways.

3. Journals:

answer how Jinnah rose to be the *sole spokesman* of the Muslim community and make narrative sense of 1947. Gilmartin sets out to link *high politics* with everyday life through an analysis of the relationship between the reality of pervasive political division among Indian Muslims in the decades leading to 1947 and the vision of symbolic unity embodied in the Pakistan concept. He offers useful insights into the Pakistan demand, linking the collapse of the moral community to a rise of communalism and demand for a separate territory.

ii. Rukmini Bhaya Nair in *Acts of Agency and Acts of God: Discourse of Disaster in a Post–Colonial Society* in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No: 11, March 15, 1997, pp. 535 – 541, examines three sorts of disaster narrative – the official, the popular and the academic – each of which interprets an under – lying nominal / natural kind divide differently. Her paper also partly addresses the subaltern historiographer’s problematic of how the moment of people’s suffering is to be captured in the writing of history through disasters like the Partition. She refers to Pandey’s *In Defence of the Fragment* where he advocates the literary fragment like poetry so that historians can achieve a more textured truth as it represents marginalised voices. But the problem of how the historian is to give due weight to affect in his work remains. Bhaya Nair refers to the philosopher Richard Rorty who states that concepts like freedom, solidarity and suffering are best understood not by philosophical works but by literary ones. By implication historians too should look in this direction.

iii. Mushirul Hasan in *Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India’s Partition* in *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, Vol.15, 2000, pp. 263 – 285, gives a balanced view of the Partition of India and its effect on the people. He makes an impassioned plea for understanding the basic oneness of Hindus and Muslims and the syncretic way of life they shared for centuries. Keeping this in mind he analyzes what led to the Partition from the Muslim perspective. He does so through the effective use of literary works which eloquently bolsters his point of view that not every Muslim was in favour of Partition. The creation of Pakistan and the Partition of the country had no significance or relevance to the millions living in India or Pakistan. They were caught in the cross fires of religious hatred. He too advocates studying this holocaust side by side with literary texts to develop an alternative discourse.

iv. Satish Saberwal’s article “Why Did We Have the Partition?” *The Making of a Research Interest* appears in the *Journal of Research Practice*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, Article M3, 2005, pp. 1 – 20. This study is a sociological exploration of the social origins of the Partition out of several decades of his personal experience. Saberwal had grown up taking a difference between Muslims and Hindus for granted. The Partition was a climax within a pattern of recurrent violence in the name of Hindus and Muslims for several generations. He tracks the origin of a sense of difference during the medieval period where there was no general social fusion though the Mughals integrated immigrants and people across religious differences to the
cement of power. The colonial period saw a major change with heightened insecurities amidst large changes in polity, economy and society and the rise of influential institutions for religious revival on both sides. As the sense of opposition between religious groups grew, so too did the frequency and intensity across the divide. The violence of 1947 was exceptionally brutal and large in scale; but the underlying attitudes had long been in the making. To understand this one needs to summon the resources of history as well as other social sciences.

v. Smita Narula’s article *Overlooked Danger: The Security and Rights Implications of Hindu Nationalism in India*, appears in the *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, Vol. 16, 2003, pp. 41 – 68. In it she talks of the rise of Hindu nationalism in India, more specifically, the rise of the RSS and its sister organisations. Their policies have resulted in considerable violence against India’s Muslim, Christian and Dalit minorities. She particularly mentions the destruction of the Babri Masjid which was destroyed due to their propaganda and the pogrom against the Muslims in Gujarat after the Sabarmati Express was set afire in Godhara. The communal carnage that followed both these incidents was chillingly reminiscent of the Partition violence. Through the dissemination and consumption of hate literature the idea that India is a country for Hindus is gaining ground. Muslims, Christians and others are tolerated minorities whose best interests lie in toeing the majority line. In addition to subverting the rule of law within the country, it helps fuel a cycle of retaliatory communal violence across borders besides threatening regional security. The secular fabric is beginning to tear. Implicit in Narula’s argument is that the lessons of Partition have not been learnt or understood, that historical wrongs are attempted to be set right through violence and intimidation and that violence against minorities is a justifiable act.

vi. Jason Francisco in a *Review Article* in *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, Vol. 10, 1995, pp. 208 – 217, has critically commented on Alok Bhalla’s three volume compilation of short stories in *Stories about the Partition of India* as well as his *Introduction*. In his view, Bhalla’s three – volume anthology stands out as the most far – sighted, comprehensive and accomplished effort to gather the short stories on Partition and through them, to consider their continuing impact. It offers insights of writers from every community (Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) affected by the holocaust. The stories encompass a range of emotions like anger, negation, confusion, betrayal, lament, consolation and determination. They also answer Bhalla’s question, “Why did we not as people resist?” Moreover, it is a testimony which is no less pertinent today as it was in 1947. However he finds Bhalla’s *Introduction* to the collection overtly political and, in places, polemical. He concentrates his polemic on Pakistani historians who seek to justify Partition as an historical destiny. Francisco also has issues with Bhalla’s silence about Hindu fundamentalism.
vii. Jason Francisco in *In the Heat of Fratricide: The Literature of India's Partition Burning Freshly* (A Review Article), in *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, Vol. 11, 1996, pp. 227 – 250, has critically reviewed three anthologies. They are two volumes of *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* edited by Mushirul Hasan; *Orphans of the Storm: Stories on the Partition of India* edited by Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal; and three volumes of *Stories about the Partition of India* edited by Alok Bhalla. These collections attest not only to the resurgence of literary interest in the Partition, and the emergence of Partition writings as a genre in modern South Asian literature in translation, but also of a different approach to the event itself: an unkindled reclamation, a direct gaze at ugliness. The anthologized material contains three central thematic concerns: rupture, protest and repair. Though none of the anthologies is thematically arranged, these three motifs taken as a progression form a natural response to the Partition, a continuum from pain to healing, thus attesting to the healing powers of literature.

Commenting on the editorial viewpoints Francisco finds Cowasjee and Duggal’s the least editorially weighted of the three. Bhalla intends his collection to stand as a categorical indictment of communal hatred, as well as a vindication of his own Gandhian views and of Gandhi himself. On the other hand, Mushirul Hasan is a sober critic who clearly understands the gravity of the ethical failure the Partition played out and peers critically into the political scenario from the Muslim perspective.

viii. Debali Mookerjea – Leonard’s article *Disenfranchised Bodies: Jyotirmoyee Devi’s Writings on the Partition* appears in the *Genders Journal*, Issue 38, 2003. In it she contextualizes the desertions of abducted and raped women within the social production of a discourse of honour and women’s sexual purity and examines the rejections through a reading of the Bengali feminist author Jyotirmoyee Devi’s short story *Shei Chheleta (That Little Boy)* and novel *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga (The River Churning)*. This article provides a historical background as to how women were made repositories of the national honour which adds to the reader’s understanding of the gendered violence that occurred during Partition. This is something that Butalia, Das, Menon and Bhasin have not done. These insights are crucial for any meaningful discussion on the gendered violence of 1947.

ix. Kavita Daiya in *Postcolonial Masculinity: 1947, Partition Violence and Nationalism in the Indian Public Sphere*, in *Genders Online Journal*, Issue 43, 2006, gives a different view of gender through her analysis of two novels: Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*. So far feminist cultural criticism and the postcolonial critique of nationalist discourses, has shown how women are constructed as signs and symbols of the nation. In the process of examining the gendering of nationalism, these critiques translate the relation between gender and nation, as one between woman and nation. However, in this article Daiya sets out to answer how male bodies are represented, deployed and refashioned in the creation and contestation of nationalism. She focuses on the
cultural representation of violence suffered by male bodies in the public sphere. In short, she gives novel insights into how violence was inscribed on male bodies.

x. Basudeb Chakraborti in *The Essentials of Indianness: Tolerance and Sacrifice in Indian Partition Fiction in English and in English Translation*, in the *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, Vol.1, No.1, 2009, pp. 3 – 32, explores tolerance and sacrifice in Indian Partition fiction in Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi*, Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man*, Bhisham Sahni’s *Tamas*, Saadat Hasan Manto’s short stories, and two Indian films, *Mr. And Mrs. Iyer*, directed by Aparna Sen and *Meghe Dhaka Tara (The Cloud Shrouded Star)*, by Ritwik Ghatak. Chakraborti maintains that tolerance and sacrifice have been the essential foundations of Indian culture since the ancient Vedic times which is visible even in Indian Partition fiction. Despite these narratives recording man’s bestiality and savagery the writers attest to the fact that man is essentially sincere and committed to upholding humanity to survive and sustain itself.

In conclusion, it can be said that in conjunction with the fresh insights subaltern historians, in particular Gyanendra Pandey, have to give in challenging conventional historiography and in advocating that literature be included in its ambit that literary critics started reinterpreting these texts. They started focusing on the silence of the subaltern and realized that literature offered an alternative record of the period, excavated forgotten histories and recovered marginal voices. This is exactly what David Gilmartin, Rukmini Bhaya Nair and Mushirul Hasan advocate. Critics like Anup Beniwal, Jason Francisco and Vinod K. Chopra have based their commentaries on these texts taking the political, the aesthetic and the social situations into consideration, simultaneously keeping in mind the new frame-work. Tarun K. Saint has added an interesting dimension to literary criticism by treating these works as fictive testimony.

The silence of the gendered subaltern has found resonance in the works of revisionist, feminist historians like Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin. Taking their cue from such feminist research Jill Didur, Seema Malik, Debali Mookerjea – Leonard and Kavita Daiya have given interesting and novel insights about the plight of women during Partition. They have shown how Partition was also a gendered narrative of displacement which led to the realignment of family, community and national identities. In addition, Daiya focuses on how violence was perpetrated on men.

Through a study of these critics it becomes clear that literary criticism has expanded in scope to focus on the everyday experiences of the marginalized and shows how these literary archives bring out the differences between the official record and the people’s experiences. In order to do this literary criticism has become inter-disciplinary in nature. This is something Satish Saberwal strongly recommends. Moreover articles like Smita Narula’s bring into
sharp focus the ever lurking danger of the rise of fundamentalism that every literary critic has pointed out to. However, this calls for a more vigilant, ethical and critical reading of *Partition Literature* if it is to enhance our understanding of the times and if we are to learn the lessons of Partition.