

Discovering The Recovered Women

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Due to extreme political views and short-sighted governmental actions, there was a terrible amount of violence during the India-Pakistan partition turmoil. The women from both of the divided territories were subjected to abhorrently cruel torture. After the blood had stopped flowing, both sides made an excessive effort to bring the motherland's daughters back. The first action in this direction was done at the Congress Session in Meerut from November 23–26, 1946. Under the direction of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, a resolution was adopted stating that people must be given every opportunity to return to the life of their choice and that women who have been kidnapped and forcibly married must be returned to their homes. On 3 September 1947, deputed representatives from both nations decided to work out a joint coordinated exercise from both sides. On 17 November 1947, a resolution in this regard was passed. Mridula Sarabhai was appointed the Chief All India Organizer at a conference at Lahore on 6 December 1947. As the Recovery Operations were launched thereafter, six months later there was significant reduction in the number of women recovered. There was a unanimous need for stronger agreement to bring better results. Both nations passed some ordinances.

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A creative idea indicates that the distinct roles that men and women initially assumed must have been based on their physical attributes and capacities. As a general evolutionary principle, interaction with the outside environment and oneself becomes more sophisticated over time. This improved perception of reality in general and of oneself in particular may have planted the seeds for future advances in human existence. The emergence of civilizations was facilitated by the evolving settlement pattern and new discoveries that resulted from constant interaction with the matter. They would have become political beings in the sense of Aristotle as a result of this. The politically powerful man created the world from his point of view. The basic instinct of will to power as Nietzsche coined, got so ingrained in the very existential way of being that it lies silently, in a deceitful manner though, underneath the speech and acts of human experience.

In the patriarchal set up women are regarded as the biological and cultural reproducers of the nation. Women are taken as subject of purity and modesty whereas men are given the responsibility of defending the national image and protect the territory i.e women's purity and modesty, and the moral code. As a result, the nation is always depicted as an effeminate entity that needs constant protection. So, women are portrayed as the social and biological womb of the country, and men are portrayed as its guardians.

In their compelling argument, Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias show how important it is for national and ethnic processes to govern women and their sexuality. In addition to reproducing the borders between national groupings, transmitting culture, and serving as the favoured signifiers of national difference, women face the responsibility of being the mothers of the nation (a role that is ideologically defined to suit official priorities). Thus, the nation's demands may seem just as oppressive as the tyranny of more primal attachments to lineage, tribe, or kin, with the difference being that the State and its legal administrative apparatus enforces such demands rather than specific patriarchs.

Nationalism's basic vocabulary singles out women as the symbol of collective identity. In order to refer to something to which one is inherently connected, Anderson notes that nationalism describes its target using either the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, patria) or home (heimat). Thus, nationalism is associated with gender, parentage, skin color, and other unchosen characteristics that, due to their inevitability, inspire unselfish attachment

and sacrifice. The nation/community is further united with the selfless mother/devout wife as a result of the association of women with the private sphere; hence, the obvious response of defending her and even giving one's life for her is naturally triggered. Women may be regulated in a variety of ways for the purpose of defining and upholding the identities of national/ethnic collectivities. Regulations governing who a woman can marry and the legal standing of her children attempt to reproduce the bounds of the symbolic identity of their group, as Anthias and Yuval-Davis point out. White women in South Africa were prohibited from having sex with males from other groups until recently, just as higher caste women in India were prohibited. Similar restrictions do not apply to men because Islam is passed down through the male line, but Muslim countries typically do not allow its women to marry outside the faith. In the majority of post-colonial states, the inclusion of women in nationalist movements has been fraught with contradictions and ambiguities. As Rowbotham points out, nationalist and anti-colonialist movements opened an important theoretical space for questioning women's position and the prevailing religious doctrines which legitimize their subordination.

The male collective consciousness is also an indication of the historical configuration of women as property. During the Partition violence it comes to the fore that women were captured and grabbed as properties to stamp a male conquest over another male. It can be seen in the folk idioms as well, for instance the much popular –aapsi fasaad ke kaaran teen - zarr, joru aur zameen‘ (There are three causes behind the disputes-money, woman and land). It is a blatant display of women being seen as embodied property juxtaposed with other material valuables like that of land and wealth. And curiously so, even the land and wealth are coined in feminine gender of almost all cultural languages! Almost everything that has feminine connotations/ semantic value is ought to be conquered, tamed, possessed, penetrated etc. In the same vein, the notions like that of motherland were constructed where one's own motherland is to be protected as duty and others' motherland need to be conquered or looted as duty again of a patriotic nationalist.

The women from both the divided countries were kidnapped, raped, and subjected to the most terrible forms of torture during the turmoil of the horrifying bloodshed that occurred during the partition of India and Pakistan, which was brought on by narrow-minded political decisions and politicized stances. After the blood had stopped flowing, both sides

made an excessive effort to bring the motherland's daughters back. The first action in this direction was taken during the Congress Session in Merrut from November 23–26, 1946. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad stated that women who have been kidnapped and forcibly married must be returned to their homes; mass conversions have no significance or validity, and people must be given every opportunity to return to the life of their choice.

Delegated representatives from both countries resolved to plan a joint coordinated exercise on September 3, 1947. A resolution in this regard was passed on November 17, 1947. On December 6, 1947, Mridula Sarabhai was chosen to serve as the Chief All India Organizer at a convention in Lahore. Six months after the Recovery Operations were started, there was a noticeable decrease in the number of women who had been retrieved. Stronger agreement was universally agreed upon as being necessary for improved outcomes. Several laws were passed by both countries.

Up till the end of 1949, India and Pakistan each rescued about 12550 and 6200 women respectively over a two-year period. But the members of the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Session in December 1949 showed a significant displeasure after hearing that thousands of women were still stranded in Pakistan. Some members even cried out for an open conflict with Pakistan to free the nation's captured daughters. Gopalswamy Ayyangar introduced The Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Bill in the Parliament on December 15, 1949, just before Indian ordinances passed that year came to an end. On some legislative points, there were vocal opposition. The Bill was opposed because it would have given the police utterly unrestricted authority. In cases involving Recovery Operations, the police were allowed complete discretion and immunity from any investigation or legal action. The ladies who were saved during procedures were likewise denied any rights or legal recourse by the Bill. The Bill was also deemed insufficient, discriminatory, and incorrect in regards to the status of the children of recovered women, the surroundings of the camp, unfair agreement terms, etc. The Bill was enacted and announced on December 28, 1949, despite the passionate appeals of the members; none of the ideas were included and all objections were disregarded.

Ritu Menon quotes from Kamlaben Patel's account of Recovery Operations in her book

Borders & Boundaries. Kamlaben Patel was a social worker who assisted in the recovery and rehabilitation of kidnapped women for five years, from 1947 to 1952. Her record has a few heartbreaking incidents. Her account of 600 women who were given back by the Pakistani military a few months after the Inter-Dominion pact in November 1947 is noteworthy. They were reduced to skeletal remains, and the children were famished when Kamlaben discovered them. The Pakistani military personnel assaulted, used, and drained them sexually.

The twenty-one Muslim women who were forcibly recovered posed a challenge to the social workers which, as Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin say was a challenge posed at the State itself. The social workers that Menon and Bhasin spoke with, including Gulab Pandit and others, revealed that they harbored a great deal of mistrust and hatred for us. They would argue that you don't have the right to force us now if you couldn't save us back then. They reacted angrily, "Is this the freedom that Jawaharlal gained," when they were informed that they were India's daughters and Gandhiji and Nehru's daughters. It would have been better if he had passed away at birth. Our homes have been demolished, our guys have been slaughtered.

Ritu Menon quotes from Kamlaben Patel's account of Recovery Operations in her book *Borders & Boundaries*. Kamlaben Patel was a social worker who assisted in the recovery and rehabilitation of kidnapped women for five years, from 1947 to 1952. Her record has a few heartbreaking incidents. Her account of 600 women who were given back by the Pakistani military a few months after the Inter-Dominion pact in November 1947 is noteworthy. They were reduced to skeletal remains, and the children were famished when Kamlaben discovered them. The Pakistani military personnel assaulted, used, and drained them sexually. She then conducts interviews with those who had experienced or witnessed the horrible crimes against humanity, and specifically against women, that had occurred in the wake of violence.

One learns the tragic facts embedded in the fictional storylines of Partition-based violence are factual thanks to her extraordinarily comprehensive work and well-documented real stories. She examined the woman's perspective on the suffering, forbearance, silence, and patriarchal ruling notions and values that were preserved in ignorance due to a lack of critical evaluation or self-interest through her analysis of the real incidents as they were

reenacted in the interviews and the real stories that were transmitted to the communities' common sites.

Both India and Pakistan engaged in a disputed process of defining, redefining, and imposing a national character in the law and execution of Recovery Operations. It's interesting to note that India saw itself as secular, more democratic, and upright, maybe relishing in the glory of being deeply anchored in history. Pakistan was created under a rigid framework of religious and racial homogeneity. Nation creates its nature and identity by configuring an oppositional Other nation, just as the Self defines itself in opposition to the Other.

After the horrifying wave of insane violence that destroyed everything, there was an urgent need for atonement and order. The topic of women became more prominent after the restoration of the order. It highlighted the exchange value of women in the socio-political-libidinal economy of nation, nationhood, and nationalistic discourses in a hitherto unthinkable way. The hideous political unconscious of a country fed on Hindu mythological archetypes of chivalry, dharma, and male heroism that gained currency from the middle of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century with the consolidation of organizations like RSS, Hindu Mahasabha, and the growing influence of Arya Samaj in northern India, especially Punjab, lay beneath the pious-looking rhetoric of "let us bring our daughters back".

Conclusion

Otto Bauer may have been ahead of his time when he said that the concept of the nation is linked with ego when we consider the intersections between nation, gender, and sexuality. Bauer did not even mention gender in his reference to the nation's ego. The country is made up of sexed individuals whose performative actions shape not just their own gender identities but also the identities of the entire country. Members of the privileged nation help to build it by repetition of approved norms and behaviors, such as control over reproduction, militarism and heroism, and heterosexuality. At the same time, performing these acts repeatedly in the name of the nation also serves to build gender and sexuality.

Nation, gender, and sexuality are all components of culturally produced hierarchies

and are all linked to power since they are all constructed in opposition to, or at the very least in connection to, a (O)ther. Each attempts to gain hegemony by vying for the most favored position in the hierarchy (of nation, gender, and sexuality), and in the process each turns into a contested region, even the scene of conflict between nations, genders, and sexualities. The social, political, and cultural structures that it helps to create and from which it profits always favor one nation, one gender, and one specific sexuality.

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