

## SUPPRESSED VOICE OF POORO IN AMRITA PRITAM'S PINJAR

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**Dr. Yogesh Chimanlal Parmar\***

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*Department of English, HNGU, Patan\**

### **Abstract:**

Amrita Pritam authored Pinjar in 1950. It was first written in Punjabi and afterward translated into English and French by renowned Indian-English novelist Khushwant Singh. This is a true account of the division between India and Pakistan, not merely a story. The narrative is so heartbreaking that one can practically feel the partition's blood dripping down the pieces of paper. It still illustrates how recently the bloody occurrence of division altered the course of two countries and their separate populations' lives. Millions of individuals lost loved ones and ended up homeless. Millions of people died as helpless slaves while living as strangers in their own homes.

**Key-Words:** Pinjar, Partition, Country, Bloody, Life

### **Introduction**

Partition has been India's most tragic and deadly tragedy to date. Seldom would any nation have experienced such a thing, especially in the name of religion. Few people would have ever witnessed politics having an impact on the lives of millions of innocent men, women, and children. The barrier was created by the inability of one man and the obstinate desire of the other. No matter how brutally they were killed in the name of religion, some individuals desired their own property at any cost. The memory of such an exodus-

led killing on both sides still lingers in the minds of those who saw it, and they continue to experience hallucinations. The mere thought of one's own woman being kidnapped and forced into servitude by an outsider gives one goosebumps.

### **Suppressed Voice of Pooro in Amrita Pritam's Pinjar:**

Amrita Pritam, who was born in 1919, independently endured similar traumatic partition events and captured them on paper in Pinjar. The 18th-

century Punjabi poet Waris Shah's elegy, *Ajj Aakhaan Waris Shah nu*, beautifully captures her pain at the split (Today I invoke Waris Shah). Many of Pritam's works, including Pritam herself, discuss the silenced voices of women who were the targets of such animosity. In the novel by Pritam, the same degree of agony, pain, division, homelessness, and elimination have been skillfully written. According to the following description from one of the web sources:

“The writer in this novel has used her versatility to depict the sorrow and sympathy for the characters in the novel. She has written with courage, passion and full devotion. She was herself one of the eye-witness of the partition of India in August 1947 and its consequences. She portrays the pathetic and falling standard of our human spirit in her novel.”<sup>i</sup>

The majority of Amrita Pritam's writings are focused on feminism and human values, particularly those of women. Punjabi folk poetry has had a significant influence on her writing, and her ten years of experience in the broadcasting sector have given her a solid command of the language of the typical man. In all of her work, she aimed to create socioeconomic reality. She was frank and transparent in her self-promotion. As M.H. Jogi has so

eloquently put it...

“Work of Amrita Pritam included poetic quality. Like for instance there are moments of ecstasy, great joy fraught with great sadness; there are moments of lonely soliloquies and almost spiritual despair and despondency in her works. Amrita Pritam had a flourishing career for more than six decades. In her career, she penned down 28 novels, five short stories, 18 compilations of prose and 16 prose volumes. As a novelist, her most noted work was *Pinjar (The Skeleton)* (1950), in which she created her memorable character, *Pooro*, an epitome of violence against women, loss of humanity and ultimate surrender to existential fate.”<sup>ii</sup>

The fiction of Amrita Pritam examines her need for closeness as an artist. She is a writer who has the ability to ignite the passion of traditionalists and staunch detractors. She manages the various aspects of life. Her tales demonstrate a keen psychoanalytical understanding of people's hidden histories. Contrary to common opinion, the narrative explores issues related to sociocultural, racial, familial, and religious issues. The novel portrays social, cultural, racial, familial, and religious issues in contrast to what she is aware of. The characters she portrayed are

identical whether they are flat or round, traditional or contemporary. These are individuals who are honest about their own situations. Amrita Pritam serves as an example of the general demeanor and temperament of women. According to Pooja Priyamvada...

“Amrita became the first Punjabi woman writer to move out of the shadows of the contemporary male writers and create her own niche in Punjabi literature. Not just a poet, she was indeed revolution personified”<sup>iii</sup>

The tale is also set against the backdrop of the fate of the women who had been reduced to nothing more than skeletons as a result of their kidnapping by the male folk, as the title of the book suggests. Through the eyes of a Hindu girl named Pooro, it provides a colorful account of the depressing situation that developed as a result of the disdainful attitude of the two major religious groups—Hindus and Muslims—against one another during the partition of India. In essence, Pinjar is the tale of Pooro, who is abducted by a Muslim boy named Rashida in an effort to get revenge for a comparable tragedy. When Pooro's father refuses to adopt her because he worries that doing so would trigger a serious genocide, the painful kidnapping procedure is made even more difficult. Rashida, despite the fact that he was forced to marry her, is incredibly in love with her and

vows to make her happy for the rest of his life. Even though Rashida is now her husband and guardian, the reality that "he had robbed of her future" still exists. Pooro, now known as Hamida, comes to terms with her new name and thrives in a temporary, post-traumatic fashion. This transition from Pooro to Hamida is profoundly psychologically felt. The author writes with poignancy:

“It was a double life. Hamida by day, Pooro by night. In reality, she was neither one nor the other; she was just a skeleton without a shape or a name.”<sup>iv</sup>

It almost has a happy ending when she acts as an advocate for other threatened women. It makes a potent foundation for a story. The suppressed woman's inner psychology is evidently reflective as the story progresses:

“The sky was a colorless grey. Pooro sat on her haunches with a sack spread beneath her feet. She was shelling peas. She pressed open a pod a pushed out the row of peas with her finger. A slimmy little slug stuck to her thumb. She felt as if she had stepped into a cesspool; she ground her teeth, flicked of the slug and rubbed her hand between her knees, Pooro stared at the three heaps in front of her: the empty husks, the pods, and the peas she had shelled. She

put her hand on her heart and stared of into space. She felt as if her body was pea-pod inside which she carried a slimy white caterpillar.”<sup>v</sup>

Through a pea and a caterpillar, The scenario of a lady who is thirsting for her own identity is depicted by Amrita Pritam. Pooro encounters a crazy woman and a young girl who has been sexually harassed, and despite the challenging conditions, she makes the best decisions for the scenario. Out of her love for parenthood, she even adopts the insane woman's son.

She calls them Pinjars (skeletons) and promises to aid and safeguard them from the earliest catastrophes that would befall them. "This is a matter of religion, and one should not stand in its way," the village elders caution Hamida. This is seen in the way that she successfully saves her own sister-in-law from the clutches of harassment and predicament thanks to her cunning and bravery as well as Rashida's assistance and support. Pooro encounters a crazy woman and a young girl who has been sexually harassed, and despite the challenging conditions, she makes the best decisions for the scenario. Out of her love for parenthood, she even adopts the insane woman's son.

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In the story, Pooro is used as a pawn in a family feud as a result of the wrongdoings of her ancestors. She asks him, "If my uncle kidnapped your aunt, what fault was that of mine?" as she sobs alongside Rashida. Pooro is not a helpless, cowardly character. She has a strong will, is tenacious, and brave. Through Pooro, Amrita hopes to share the idea that if a girl, whether Hindu or Muslim, returns home after suffering and is warmly welcomed, it should be assumed that her spirit has arrived at its goal. According to Urvashi Butalia, "Women have frequently laid out several overlapping identities. When considering agency, it is important to consider how women's actions are intended to uphold morality.

Pinjar considers the distressing treatment of Muslim and Hindu women during the 1947 division of India and Pakistan. Pritam did a great job of explaining how human follies influence and interfere with man's destiny. The only real record of how many women committed suicide and were made homeless for no fault of their own is

found in history. If a girl is violated by a guy from a different caste, she may be excommunicated. She continued to be a nobody in her home. Even her parents and brother were powerless to save her honor. The poor girl had no choice except to accept her fate as it had been dealt to her or to stop trying to live. As Rabindra Das correctly notes...

“Pinjar is the story of Pooro, who is abducted and transformed into a Muslim woman, Hamida. She is a young girl abducted by Rashid. She is engaged to Ramchand. But destiny turns her to another man, Rashid. The old revenge of Rashid’s ancestors made Pooro to sacrifice herself.”vi

### **Conclusion:**

This short book, which has only approximately 80 pages, reveals a lot about many of these impoverished girls. It tells the story of male-dominated Indian societies where women were denied the freedom to live as they pleased. Furthermore, if a girl was assaulted by mistake, she had little possibility of rejoining her original family. The fictitious account of Pooro and the other ladies reveals a great deal about historical events as well as what actually happened to women in India at that time.

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