



The Power of Women: Healing from Trauma

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Abstract:

India features a rich tradition of ancient tales and stories. The stories not only amuse but also reflect on the culture that prevailed. Apart from anticipations, escapades, and sentiments, they also discourse ethical principles and philosophy, rich in connotation. From ancient days women are considered to be the weaker sex. However, they had a high status in the scriptures. They are preached as a goddess. They are considered as the perfect homemaker in the cosmos. They are capable to confront any sort of difficulties and easily cover the position. Most of the Indian women are committed to their families. Their condition remains unchanged even during the contemporary world with only minimal changes.

Amrita Pritam's first debut novel *Pinjar*, later it was translated into English titled *The Skeleton* by Kushwat Singh and it is filmed in the year 1970. The novel *Pinjar*, one of the best novels depicts the pathetic situation of women during the partition of India. The protagonist Pooro a young Hindu girl engaged to Ramchand. Later she is abducted by a Muslim man named Rashida. The story portrays the cruelty of India and Pakistan partition, as affected the lives of many people. The paper entitled "The Power of Women: Healing from Trauma" seeks to explore the story of Pooro, even though her life begins with suppression and depression, gradually gains courage and confidence through the other few female characters she encounters. She turned all her negatives into positives.

She became the inspiration for the whole villagers. As the men say, let the women be the weaker sex, but they have the power to overcome their traumas by self-healing.

Keywords: Partition, Trauma, Courage, Suffering, Weaker, self-estranged, Self-Healing.

India features a rich tradition of ancient tales and stories. The stories not only amuse but also reflect on the culture that prevailed. Apart from anticipations, escapades, and sentiments, they also discourse ethical principles and philosophy, rich in connotation. From ancient days women are considered to be the weaker sex. However, they had a high status in the scriptures. They are preached as a goddess. They are considered as the perfect homemaker in the cosmos. They are capable to confront any sort of difficulties and easily cover the position. Most of the Indian women are committed to their families. Their condition remains unchanged even during modern times with only minimal changes. They were under the impact of their parents before marriage and husband after marriage. When they give birth to girl babies it becomes even worse. Even in many places, they are not allowed to go outside their household but also refrained from being developed.

Amrita Pritam was the first prominent Panjabi woman novelist. Amrita Pritam was born in Pakistan based Gujranwala in 1919. She started her career as a romantic poet. She is well-known for her short stories, novels, poems, autobiographies and essays. She is famous for her splendid manipulate on Punjabi literature. Her autobiography later translated into several languages such as English, Urdu, Japanese, French, and Danish. She died in New Delhi in 2005. To her credentials, she is the first Indian woman who received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1956 for her work *Sunehray*. Her '*Kagaz te Canvas*' (Paper and Canvas) in 1981 received the Bhartiya Jnanapith Award in 1982. She received the Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushana in 1969 and Sahitya Academy comradeship in 2004. She got a D.Litt. honorary degree from numerous universities. She becomes a member of Rajya Sabha in 1986-92. Her novel *Pinjar* was translated into English titled *The Skeleton* by Kushwat Singh and it is filmed in the year 1970. It is an award-winning Hindi movie by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi.

The novel *Pinjar*, one of the best novels depicts the pathetic situation of women during the partition of India. The protagonist Pooro a young Hindu girl, engaged to Ramchand. Later she is abducted by a Muslim man named Rashida. He commits this action for his ancestral family dispute with Pooro's family. After so much of difficulty she escapes from Rashida to her parent's home. Unfortunately, her parents did not accept her because

they fear it would outbreak into a Hindu Muslim clash. Provoked Pooro loses hope and returns to Rashida. Meanwhile, Pooro's name has been changed into Hamida. Pooro managed herself to live a life with Rashida.

The novel is also a huge outcry of a set of female characters. Taro, a young sick girl who could speak her mind very boldly, lived next door of Hamida. Through Taro's life, the author portrays the importance given to the woman's health. The next female character is a madwoman Kammo, who wandered all over the village, after giving birth she dies. All the female protagonists come out as a brave individual directly or indirectly and challenge the rigid traditional social taboos and all those who hurdle her life and emotions.

Pooro being abducted by Rashida, kept locked in a room for three days. She bashes her forehead against the walls and hammered the door with her bare hands until she felt exhausted. Her only impetus was to seepage from Rashida and to rejoin with her family. When she reaches her family, her parents were not ready to accept her, because nobody will come forward to marry her when they come to know she has spent fifteen days in Rashida's place. "Who will marry you now? You have lost your religion and your birth right" (TS 18). The incident portrays how a female's chastity is checked by her parents. She is corned not only by society but also by her parents. "Material, symbolic and political significance of abduction of women was not lost... on the women themselves... their communion or on... governments. As a retaliatory measure, it was simultaneously as an assertion of identity and humiliation of the rival community through the apparition of its women" (Menon, 3).

Pooro self- estranged herself from everyone and strays around as a skeleton without a soul. She was devastated and then returns to Rashida as she has no shelter to go. Her parent's rejection was more painful than Rashida besmirched. Afterwards, Pooro was forcefully married to Rashida. He bought a stranger to home and asked to tattoo the new name Hamida on Pooro's hand. From that day Pooro was called as Hamida by everyone. She felt very powerless as her own life was not under her control. "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 shape or a name" (TS 20). She felt the loss of identity; she was no more herself, underneath with pressure, grief, and her incarcerated life.

After a few days, Hamida felt something stabbing inside her, she was pregnant. When the midwife handed the baby to Hamida, she felt "if a slimy slug was clambering over her. She clenched her teeth; she wanted to shake the slug off her arm, flick it away from her arm" (TS 25). Even after giving birth to her son. She was not able to take him in her hands and kiss him. When the new born baby tugged at Hamida's breast she felt like, "the boy was drawing the milk from her veins and was sucking it out with force" (TS 26). She managed to take care of her son but she felt meaningless as he was planted inside her force and nourished inside her womb against her will and

now, she feels that he is sucking the milk from her breast, whether she liked it or not. The novel is a pointer to how a mother's influence could be unsettling to her son under different circumstances. How family love and fondness could be substituted by abhorrence and resentment, how a mother, conventionally and epitome of sacrifice and virtuous, could become a sign of self-centeredness and acrimony for her children.

Hamida encounters a young married girl named Taro who was her neighbour. She was very weak and found ill. When Hamida asked Taro whether she has informed her illness to her parents she replied that "when parents give away a daughter in marriage, they put a noose around her neck and hand the other end of the rope to the man of their choice" (TS 32). Even Taro's mother was aware of the health condition of her daughter, but could not help her. Whenever Taro informs her mother about her illness, she tells that, "Once we give away a daughter our lips are sealed. It's up to her husband to treat her as he likes. It's a man's privilege" (TS 33). Taro was a brilliant woman but because of her married life, she has become like dumb driven cattle. She was mentally high spirited but physically apathetic. This is the status of most of the women; they do not have the rights to take care of themselves.

Hamida witnesses a madwoman named Kammo, ran all around the streets of the village. She wore only a salwar, which covered her waist to ankles and belly and breasts were bare. When some women gave her dress to cover her up, she tore them within minutes. She did not even have the conscience that she was naked. She was mentally affected. "She was more like a skeleton than a living person" (TS 35). The villagers were shaken when they come to know Kammo was pregnant. They were least bothered about the human monster who abused her but the villager's botheration was how to send her to the next village.

The only person worried about Kammo was Hamida. When Hamida was wandering on the fields, she saw the madwoman lying dead and her umbilical cord still attached to her womb. Hamida took the baby boy and covered with her saree. The people praised Hamida and Rashida for supporting madwoman Kammo, but they did not allow their wives to visit the new born baby. Hamida took the baby to her home and fed him. She started taking care of the boy as if "God had himself sent her another son" (TS 39). She did not see partiality between Javed and the boy, as he was a Hindu child. But the villagers were not ready to allow the Hindu child to grow by a Muslim family. This portrays the darker side of human beings.

The story portrays the cruelty of India and Pakistan partition, as affected the lives of many people. Hamida's ears burned with rage when she heard of the abduction of Hindu girls by Muslims and Muslim girls by Hindu. All the Hindu women were forced into marriage to Muslim men, some murdered, some stripped and

paraded naked in the streets. Hamida hearing all these things, she was shattered and she felt, “It was a sin to be alive in a world so full of evil, thought Hamida. It was a crime to be born as a girl” (TS 57).

Hamida after encountering the Taro and Kammo’s life, she felt her problems are comparatively small. Her husband Rashida became a caring person. She made up her mind that this was the place where she is going to live all her life. She started convincing that her life is way smooth comparing other women. Hamida thinks that “I didn’t come here of my own will, nor I will leave off my will” (TS 34). She makes up her mind and starts taking good care of her son Javed and her husband Rashida. She makes up her mind and moves forward with her life and she is very grateful that she got Rashida as her husband. She even sometimes thinks that it was all fate and each of them all is players in the hands of God.

The novel portrays about Pooro, at her very young age she faced lots of trauma throughout her life. But she was able to transfer her worries, sorrows, pain into a happy, content and comfortable life. In the beginning, she tried hard to re-join with her family but when her family rejected her, she makes up her mind and continues her life with Rashida. Even though the story of Pooro starts with suppression and depression, progressively gains courage and confidence through the other few female characters that she encounters. She turned all her negatives into positives. She became the inspiration for the whole villagers. As the men say, let the women be the weaker sex, but they have the power to overcome their traumas by self-healing.

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