

Lajwanti
by Rajendra Singh Bedi
P.G. Semester IV
EC II
Unit III

Dr. Md. Shahnawaz Alam

Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty)

P.G. Department of English

Maharaja College, Arrah

"Lajwanti" is one of the most poignant and celebrated short stories in Urdu literature. Written by Rajendra Singh Bedi against the backdrop of the 1947 Partition of India, it explores the deep psychological scars of the era—specifically focusing on the rehabilitation of abducted women.

Bedi, known for his "down-to-earth" realism and sensitivity to the human psyche, transcends the political chaos to focus on the intimate, often tragic, dynamics of a single household.

Lajwanti
by Rajendra Singh Bedi

P.G. Semester IV

EC II

Unit III

Dr. Md. Shahnawaz Alam

Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty)

P.G. Department of English

Maharaja College, Arrah

The story follows Sunder Lal, a man who becomes an activist for the "Rehabilitation Committee," urging society to take back the women who were abducted during the riots. His own wife, Lajwanti (nicknamed Lajo), was one of those abducted.

When Lajo is eventually returned to him via a prisoner exchange program, the story shifts from a social crusade to a complex internal drama.

The Name "Lajwanti": The title refers to the Mimosa pudica (Touch-me-not) plant, which curls inward when touched. This serves as a metaphor for Lajo's delicate state and the fragile nature of her dignity.

Lajwanti
by Rajendra Singh Bedi

P.G. Semester IV

EC II

Unit III

Dr. Md. Shahnawaz Alam

Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty)

P.G. Department of English

Maharaja College, Arrah

The "Goddess" vs. The Wife: Upon her return, Sunder Lal treats Lajo with extreme kindness, but he stops treating her as his wife. Instead, he places her on a pedestal as a "Devi" (Goddess).

The Failure of Communication: Sunder Lal refuses to let Lajo speak about her trauma, fearing it will "sully" her or cause her pain. By silencing her story, he inadvertently denies her the chance to heal and reclaim her identity.

Psychological Realism - Bedi captures the irony that "rehabilitation" is not just physical return, but emotional acceptance.

Gender Dynamics - The story critiques a patriarchal society that views a woman's "purity" as more important than her personhood.

Lajwanti
by Rajendra Singh Bedi

P.G. Semester IV

EC II

Unit III

Dr. Md. Shahnawaz Alam

Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty)

P.G. Department of English

Maharaja College, Arrah

The Ending - The conclusion is bittersweet and haunting. While Lajo is physically home, she realizes she has lost her husband's intimacy; she is now a "sacred object" rather than a partner

"Lajwanti" is a masterclass in subtlety. While other Partition stories (like those by Manto) often focus on the visceral violence of the riots, Bedi focuses on the *quiet violence of the aftermath*. He suggests that while the men were "forgiving" the women, they were still judging them, and that "noble" treatment can sometimes be just as isolating as rejection.