

Trauma of Partition Epitomized in Khushwant Singh's *Train To Pakistan* and Bapsi Sidwa's *Ice Candy Man*

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Literature, in its wide range of sense, it is a written work of any single body. Literature is a writing that is considered to be an art. It is used to refer to all written accounts, though living at or belonging to the same time definitions extend the term to include text that are sung or spoken. It is a beautiful product of language which tells more imagination rather than truth, by Julian Barnes.

The partition of the Indian sub-continent is remembered for the massacre and the problems aroused during migration of masses of people for their living. The partition has left a scar that cannot be erased from the pages of history. Urvashi Butalia describes partition as follows:

The political partition of India caused one of the great human convulsions of history... twelve million people moved between the new, truncated India and the two wings, East and West, of the newly created Pakistan.... Estimates of the dead vary from 200,000 to two million but that somewhere around a million people died is now widely accepted...75,000 women are thought to have been abducted and raped by men of religious different from their own (and indeed sometimes by men of their own religion). (3)

The Partition gave a crucial experience to women and children. The writers focus especially on sexual distress and excruciating days of women during partition. These incidents were exceptionally handled in the novels of Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, Shuana Singh's *What the Body Remembers*, Bapsi Sidwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* tells us how to lead a better and harmonious life. He presents a portrait of Indian society through his characters and condition. He begins his novels with a reference to the Hindu – Muslim riots.

The novels *Train to Pakistan* and *Ice-Candy-Man* together present the blood shedding days of the sub-continent in 1947. Both the writers present the peaceful circumstances as well as violence in rural and urban areas to show how the situation was worsened by the sudden and emotional decision of many from India and Pakistan. The sudden emotional outbreak led to many devastating results, which cannot be erased in the history of India and Pakistan. Many innocents without knowing the real reason for the revolts either lost their life or virginity.

The partition left a scar in the minds of multitudes, which are well expressed in *Train to Pakistan* and *Ice-Candy-Man* written by Kushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidwa. Train is used as a powerful medium to report the violence due to partition in the India-Pakistan border. Though violence is represented mainly, there is also some act of humanism among the people. Both Kushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidwa present the better side to indicate that man becomes violent when he is struck by some harsh reality and he has the helping tendency. These novels include politics, romance, love, violence murder and religion too. The religious groups include Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

The characters involved in the partition express their grief throughout the novels. Especially they deal with the events before and after partition in 1947. Both the writers express the peaceful existence of people before the violence and at the same time blame, all the religious communities for the problems. The people are canvassed or provoked to plunge into violence which effect the future of many innocent victims. The people once lived as brothers and fought for freedom with one voice and one mind by sharing the joy during festive occasion like Deepavali and Ramzan fought with each other and disturbed not only their equilibrium but the equilibrium of India and Pakistan too.

Train to Pakistan is the most significant novel because it is the first English novel written on the theme of partition in English. Later many writers began to write on the same theme in English. Here violence means sexual harassment, murders of men belonging to particular community. Brilliantly Khushwant Singh represents the brutality of partition with exact history. As youth, the partition of India affected him very much when India is divided into two nations.

Before the partition, there was co-existence and nonviolence among the people though they followed diverse religions in rural areas. Partition and violence arise in cities and progressively reach small villages. The novel, *Train to Pakistan*, begins with the information to the readers through the conversation among the characters in the novel about the communal riots in the country.

The riots had become a rout. By the summer of 1947, when the creation of the new state of Pakistan was formally announced, ten million people- Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs-were in flight. By the time the monsoon broke, almost a million

of them were dead, and all of northern India was in arms, in terror, or in hiding. The only remaining oases of peace were a scatter of little villages lost in the remote reaches of the frontier. One of these villages was Mano Majra. (2)

Bapsi Sidhwa was eight years old and was very young at the time of partition. As a child, she becomes a powerful and notable witness of everything around her. Therefore, the novelist Bapsi Sidhwa describes the story of partition based from the point view of the child narrator Lenny. It is easy for her to narrate what was felt by her at the age of eight and it is easy for the readers to understand the anxiety of people and youngsters. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Lenny is a polio stricken Parsi community child who lives in Lahore, narrates the conflict of partition and the impact of partition on the people. Before breathing the free air after Independence, they witness bloodshed and fear.

In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Bapsi Sidhwa presents the theme of interfaith marriage through the relationship of love between the Muslim Ice-Candy-Man and the Hindu Ayah. While seeing his fellow Muslims massacred, the Ice-Candy man goes mad of taking revenge and keeps his beloved Ayah in the prostitution area of Hira Mandi in Lahore forgetting his love for his wife and her community. Later he realizes his mistake and marries the Hindu Ayah after converting her as a Muslim woman but now love has become powerless. Then the Ayah is rescued and is taken to a Recovered Women's Camp in Amritsar.

Like *Train to Pakistan's* Mano Majra, the village Pir Pindo also fears and worries about partition. The village mullah starts talking about communal trouble infusing in cities and the British government's inability to do anything about it. Fact is that the government is capable to control the situation but the government becomes incapable to do anything. Imam Din warns them that the riots is not only among Hindu – Muslim but also among Sikh – Muslim. The Sikh priest opines that

The villagers, Sikhs and Muslim, erupt in protest.
'Brothers,' the Sikhs *granthi* says when the tumult subsides, 'our villages come from the same racial stock. Muslim or Sikhs, we are basically Jats. We are brothers. How can we fight each other?'. (56)

The partition on the basis of community and religion created violence and its wrath affected innocents. The subalterns such as old men, women, children and minority people have to suffer. Mano Majrans reflect the better part of Indian culture of India.

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