

Partition and Indian Literature*

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PARTITION of India in August 1947 was culmination of the politico-social process, which began in 1857 when first war of Independence broke out against British colonial rule. However, it was the rise of communal and sectional organisations like Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), Muslim League and Akali Dal, which changed the course of events to such an extent that rather than India achieving true freedom from British colonialism, it became the victim of machinations of colonial power, as well as that of the communal organisations, which divided Indian people on the sectarian and religious grounds. What was achieved by Indian people on 14th August midnight was the pathetic cries of people being massacred, women being subjected to all kinds of cruelties, property being looted, those who survived, were condemned to be refugees, running for their lives and finding ways to sustain themselves after being uprooted from their homes and lands. India and Pakistan celebrated its freedom, not by remembering its freedom fighters, but by unfurling national flags and removing union jack, under the shadow of those cries.

PARTITION of India in 1947 was a great historic event with world-wide repercussions. This was accompanied with transfer of power from British colonialists to national rulers and surely there was a great political design to reduce the strength of a United India by dividing it into two and which was further divided into three at a later date. The fruits of British polity in India are such that it is still in the danger of further disintegration, if the drift is not checked by corrective measures.

Colonialist power of Europe—Britain, France, Holland and Portugal etc. subjugated large parts of Asia and Africa during seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century's particularly after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 and the establishment of Soviet Union, the national liberation movement got momentum in most of these countries. Almost all countries had to fight bitterly to gain freedom from colonial masters, who had not only plundered their material wealth but had also affected their socio-cultured life by imposing colonial language and cultural values upon those societies. Many countries were embroiled into complex problems by colonial rule. Thus there were ethnic and tribal strife's in many African countries; worst kind of racialism was practised in many of these nations. The native inhabitants were made aliens in their own countries and societies by colonial masters as in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Indian society could also not escape the all pervasive effects of British colonial rule. It has been claimed that India was a culturally strong nation and British rule could not affect Indian culture, it has also been claimed that India won its freedom by peaceful and non-violent means. Mahatma Gandhi has been projected by even colonialists as 'an apostle of peaceful transition to political power.' But have

these claims got any substance or validity? Has Indian national movement struggling to achieve freedom from colonial rule got any perspective of nationality and national liberation? Indian National Congress was the most representative and strong political force to gain political power from British colonialists, but could it project itself as the true representative of all sections of Indian people?

How came that Indian National Congress, which claimed that it would oppose partition of India on religious grounds, compromised so easily as to agree to the division of the country on most illogical grounds? And if the partition was to come about, why the unitary cultural units of Punjab and Bengal were allowed to be divided on religious grounds, ignoring stronger basis of cultural unity of these people? And was it any wonder that superficial ground of partition led to another partition of Pakistan itself in 1971 into Pakistan and Bangladesh. Still would the present geographical and cultural units of these three countries namely India, Pakistan and Bangladesh sustain or in the course of time lead to more logical or illogical divisions or reunifying processes?

The Partition of India in August 1947, rather than solving the problems of newly free countries and satisfying their peoples' urges, has rather led to more complications and raised many more questions. Since this paper is concerned more with literary responses to the partition and not with partition's politico-historic analysis, we shall look into two representative novels of Punjabi, two novels from Hindi and one writer Manto from Urdu and see how these narrative texts have perceived the reality of these historic events and what kind of questions and issues had to be faced by their writers while constructing the social reality of those days into the form of creative texts.

Most devastating impact of partition of India had to be faced by Bengal and Punjab. In fact these were the two linguistic regions of the country, which were divided in the true sense of the term. Otherwise, Pakistan was carved out of India by taking out Baluchistan, Sindh and North Western Frontier Province in their entirety. It was only Bengal and Punjab, which were divided into Eastern and Western parts. And these were the two states, which went through horrifying sufferings because of their division.

Colonialist and Imperialist powers world-over are aware of the fact that they cannot keep people and nations under their military boots, yet they wish and try in every possible manner to protect their economic, and political interests, based on exploitation of the people, even when they have to relinquish their military and political power. And the colonial masters in India and in other Third World countries chose to divide the people of the countries, they directly ruled in whatever manner, in the name of religion or caste or race. Even the modern means of education, parliamentary institutions, etc. were subverted to suit their colonial interests. And they succeeded in dividing Indian people in the name of religion and in so many other categories. One may argue that Indian society was already divided into obsolete caste system; it may be true but Britishers rather than destroying these divisions with the help of modern science and education, perpetuated them with the help of them. This resulted in a national movement internally weak, due to religion based ideologies dominating the movement.

While religion or religion-based ideologies are not necessarily related to communalism, in Indian context, during British rule and also after the Britishers left, it led to producing dangerous communal passions resulting sometimes in the holocaust of 1947 or in the massacres of 1984 in Delhi or in 2002 in Gujarat and in occasional smaller massacres of 1989 at Bhagalpurs or Meeruts, Bhiwandis, Muzaffarnagars etc. and while discussing the literary works related to partition, one needs to be keen

observer of two aspects depicted in these writings, one being the political aspect of the situation. How Indian national movement was led to the inevitability of the division of the country, that too, not on any cultural or political basis, but on religious basis. The second aspect is the depiction of the human tragedy resulting from the partition.

Generally, great tragedies or great historic events inspire the writers and artists to create great works of art in language and in other forms of art. Partition of India was a great historic event—as well as a tragedy of great magnitude. A large body of literature has been written in Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, English and Sindhi, relating to partition of the country. There has been some literary activity in Dogri, Gujarati and Marathi languages also.

Many novels, apart from other forms of literature, have been written on the partition in these Indian languages. Many of these have earned fame. Abdulla Hussain's 'Udas Naslein' (The Sad Generations) is perhaps most poignant of all such works, Qurratul Ain-Hyder's novels, particularly 'Aag ka Darya' (The River of Fire), Manto's short stories and many other writings in Urdu are very touching accounts of the tragic human aspect of the partition. In English, Chaman Nahl's 'Azadi' also gives an objective view of the situation, while Khushwant Singh's 'Train to Pakistan', though much talked about, is quite superficial. In Punjabi, Nanak Singh, Sohan Singh Sital, Kartar Singh Duggal, Amrita Pritam, Salim Khan Gimmi, etc. wrote some good but generally emotional novels on partition.

In Hindi, apart from Yashpal and Bhisham Sahani, whose works are discussed in this paper, Balwant Singh's 'Kale Kos', Shaani's 'Kala Jal', Rahi Masoom Raza's 'Adha Gaon', Kamleshwar's 'Laute Hue Musafir', Shamsheer Singh Narula's 'Ek Pankhuri Ki Tez Dhar', etc. are some of the novels, which deal with the theme of partition.

Partition and Punjabi Novel

In Punjabi language from 1947 onwards more than five hundred texts have been written on the theme of partition. More than one hundred writers have touched this theme in their writings. There have been more than two hundred poems, nearly two hundred short stories, about forty novels and some plays also. This theme still inspires writers to write upon. Thus Mohinder Singh Sarna, a celebrated short story writer and Sahitya Akademi award winner had numerous stories to write on the theme of partition.

About twenty novelists have dealt with partition, which include novelists from Pakistani part of Punjab as well. Nanak Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Surinder Singh Narula, Sohan Singh Sital, Amrita Pritam, Santokh Singh Dhir, Salim Khan Gimmi, Sukhbir, Devinder, Narinderpal Singh, Niranjana Tasneem, Mohan Kahlon are some of the novelists, who have touched upon various aspects of partition in their novels.

Out of these narrative texts, the focus in this chapter is on two novels. One is from Pakistani Punjabi writer Salim Khan Gimmi, who wrote a beautiful novel, 'Saanjh' (The Shared Bond), which was published in Gurmukhi script in Indian Punjab in 1976. The other novel is by Indian Punjabi novelist Sohan Singh Sital. 'Tutan Wala Khuh' (The Well Surrounded by Mulberry Trees) by Sital was published in early seventies. The study of these two novels from both sides of present Punjab would give us an opportunity to look at the partition from two different angles. Both novels have depicted the socio-cultural life of pre-partition Punjab and also the effects of partition on that fondly shared life, which had its intrinsic harmony of the different communities, particularly in rural Punjab. How this social fabric was torn apart against the wishes of those people by their self-styled leaders has also been reconstructed by these authors, observed from their own lived experiences. What are the commonalities of these authors in reconstructing the social reality of partition days and what is the contrast between the two can also be realised from these texts.

'Saanjh' (The Shared Bond) by Salim Khan Gimmi is relatively a smaller novel of about 150 pages. It was written in Persian script in Punjabi language by the author, and had been transcribed into Gurmukhi script by Punjabi Poet, Jagtar. (In Pakistani Punjab, Punjabi language is written in Persian script and in Indian Punjab, it is written in its own script — Gurmukhi.)

The novel is divided into three chapters—'Mele Mushahde' (The Fairs and Festivities), 'Maut di Aawaz' (The Sound of Death) and 'Hanju Te Rakhi' (The Tears and the Protection).

The locale of the novel is Faridpur village of Gurdaspur district of pre-partition days. It is a small village, with just eighty houses. Out of which forty houses belong to Sikhs, thirty to Muslim Pathans, ten to various professional communities like Banias (The Traders), the weavers, the barber, etc. Nearby village Khanpur is dominated by Muslims. The elders and leaders of the village are Murad Khan and Harnam Singh, both own large land and are close friends. Even their daughters Suggi (Sugran Bibi) and Preeto (Pritam Kaur) are fast friends. Kadar (Kadu), Dad Khan, the hero of the novel is the son of Bute Khan, who was hanged on the charge of murdering a bad character Santokh Singh. Even he lost his property in fighting the case in courts. Kadu is working with Murad Khan, who has paternal attitude towards him. Harnam Singh's sister lives in nearby village Ogran and his sister's son Kirpa Singh is engaged to his daughter.

In the first part of the novel, there is a depiction of three fairs: first of Shah Sikander's fair, a Muslim fair in which Kadu rescues Bijlee, a dancer from the hands of Kirpa, who is trying to kidnap her. This he does at the bidding of Harnam Singh, father-in-law of Kirpa. In the process Kirpa Singh is hurt and he vows to take revenge at Chitti fair. At Chitti fair, Kirpa and his associate Heera Saansi are again wounded, when they attack Kadu. So in the third fair, the Baisakhi fair, Kirpa with the help of his brother-in-law Darshan Singh, nearly killed Kadu Dad Khan and ran away. He got enrolled in the army as it was Second World War time. Luckily Kadu was saved by Dr. Lehna Singh and Suggi nursed him for a month till he came out of hospital. Murad Khan gets Kadu also enrolled in the army as the village people were talking about the love tales of Suggi and Kadu. Kadu unwillingly gets into army and in the third chapter, he meets Kirpa Singh in the Jungle of Burma. Kirpa Singh had joined Azad Hind Fauj of Netaji Subhash Bose. Kirpa gets killed at the hands of Kadu. Had Kadu not killed him, he would have got killed at Kirpa's hands. But while dyeing Kirpa Singh is remorseful of attempting to murder him earlier and hands over the golden ring, to be given to Preeto, his fiancée, to whom he has promised to get one. Nobody in the village knows about the fate of Kirpa Singh, prior to the return of Kadu Dad

Khan, who gets discharged from army after the surrender of Japanese forces. He hands over the ring to Preeto, but escapes from the hands of Darshan Singh etc., who had planned to murder him.

The scene now is close to partition of the country. The religious fanatics from city are coming to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere of the village. Newspapers are also publishing provocative news. Hindu, Sikh and Muslim fanatics are arousing these communities to get ready and collect traditional arms for attacking each other. Murad Khan, Harnam Singh and Maulvi Akbar try their best to control the situation, but they fail. Hamme Khan of Khanpur village threatens that they could attack the Sikhs of Faridpur village. Murad Khan challenges him and vows to defend the lives of Sikhs of his village.

Faridpur is declared as part of newly created country Pakistan, demoralising the Sikh population of the village. Khanpur Muslim mob attack Faridpur. Murad Khan and Hamme Khan are killed in the process.

There is a fear of attack of next day as well. But Harnam Singh refuses to leave the village. He takes part in the burial of his close friend Murad Khan and also solemnises the marriage of Kadu Dad Khan and Suggi as per the wishes of his friend. After completing his task, the Sikhs are being rescued by Kadu and other Muslims of the village. Everyone has been ferried safely to Indian territory, when Bairam Khan of Khanpur kidnaps Preeto. Kadu challenges him, he kills Bairam Khan and rescues Preeto, but himself is wounded by Bairam Khan. In a dramatic climax, he hands over Preeto to Harnam Singh's family and dies. The novel ends there.

Thus it is a simple narrative, but the author has imbibed his vision in the novel. He has dedicated his novel to two very popular folk singers of Punjab—Aalam Luhar of Pakistani Punjab and Yamla Jatt (now dead) of Indian Punjab. He seems to be extremely enamoured by the shared life of communities in rural pre-partition Punjab and its cultural patterns. His depiction of fairs of Punjab is full of romanticism, even his depiction of quarrels and fights of young people at fairs are romantic, yet he views Hindu community in total as clever and cunning, whereas he views Muslims and Sikhs as broad-minded people holding great character. He treats both Sikhs and Muslims at almost equal level, yet his preference for Muslim community as superior of all is not missed. Even the concept of nationality as emerges out of his novel is based on religion. He perceives the freedom in terms of Hindustan, Pakistan and Khalistan. His vision seems to be narrowed to Punjab only, where these three communities lived and he imagines three countries out of this zone, based on religion.

Sohan Singh Sital's 'Tutan Wala Khuh' (The Well Surrounded by the Mulberry Trees) is relatively a longer novel of about three hundred pages. The locale of this novel is Piruwala village close to Kasur town of undivided Punjab. In contrast to 'Saanjh', 'Tutan Wala Khuh' has much wider dimension; it has definite sociological and historical perspective. There is a well in the outskirts of village, surrounded by mulberry trees. Sixteen Bigha land at that place is equally divided between S. Chanda Singh and Chaudhary Charagdin. Both have common ownership over the well, so the well is named as well with mulberry trees around. In summer days, this place is used by village people to sit around, chat and play cards.

The author has given the genealogy of the village itself. The village was set up six or seven generations ago by one Yaatri, who died at the age of one hundred and thirty years. He has two sons Sudhu and Budhu. The older Sudhu's family tree has been kept alive by the family of Sajjan Singh and younger

son Budhu's family tree has been kept alive by Ilamdin. Their ancestors were same, that is why all the Sikh and Muslim families of the village worship the samadhi of Yaatri as their common ancestor.

The novel begins around the time of Second World War and concludes with the partition of the country and communal riots and migration of people. The story line, though simple, has many layers. Ilamdin and Sajjan Singh are fast friends. Dhanne Shah of Kasur town is a moneylender and wishes to acquire the mulberry tree lands of Piruwala village. So first of all, he entraps Sajjan Singh and Ilamdin into debt and then sows the seeds of discord between them by using communal card, actively involving communal leaders of both Muslims and Sikhs and divides the people of Piruwala on communal grounds.

Karam Singh, popularly known as Baba Akali is a militant nationalist, who has undergone many sufferings for taking part in country's freedom struggle. He was close to Kartar Singh Sarabha of Ghadar Party, and then he was associated with Bhagat Singh's movement. He was also associated with Gandhian nationalist movement and underwent imprisonment many times. He had observed hunger-strikes in jails for more than hundred days, and suffered personal tragedies in life. As his wife, whom he loved so much, was remarried by her parents, thinking him to be a permanent jail-bird, but his wife also loved him so much that she committed suicide. He is never able to forget her, yet he is always engrossed in the country's freedom struggle. He is a respected figure in the village.

The writer has used Baba Akali's character to narrate the story of freedom struggle in the novel. He begins with a saga of bravery at each occasion. Thus he narrates the story of Kartar Singh Sarabha and Ghadar Party, the story of Bhagat Singh, the Babbar Akalis, the Jalianwala Bagh massacres and later revenge of this massacre by Udham Singh of Sunam, who killed Michael O'Dwyer in England in 1940. The story of Sikh Morchas, of 'Quit India Movement', of Netaji Subhash Bose's Azad Hind Fauj etc. Baba Akali has the clear vision of nationhood. He is against dividing the country on religious basis. He considers Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims as inseparable part of the country. In fact, he has a class vision. He is against exploitation of peasants and workers. He is more close to the concept of free India of Bhagat Singh—a classless and exploitation-free society. When Dhanne Shah succeeds in his machinations to divide the people of Piruwala and the village is at the verge of communal clash, with both sides armed with weapons ready to attack each other, the colonial police watched the drama with amusement, with least effort to stop the clash, it is Baba Akali, who, risking his own life steps into stop the two communities from killing each other. Baba Akali, to some extent, succeeds in removing communal feelings from both the communities, but then partition is announced. Piruwala comes in Pakistan, Ilamdin and Sajjan Singh, who, fought bitterly, after falling in the trap of Dhanne Shah, cry in each other's arms and it is Ilamdin with his family, escorts all the Sikh population of the village to the Indo-Pak border.

The novel concludes with the stirring call of Baba Akali— The Britisher while leaving the country, has divided us, but these divisions will not sustain for ever. You are one blood, one nationality. You will see, you will meet again, yes you will meet again/ Baba said emphasizing his words, Then no one will be able to separate you . . . /

There are many more events in the novel but the focus of the novel is on freedom struggle and in preserving the unity of people, irrespective of religious identity.

Both the novels conclude on the depiction of the same event. In both the novels, Muslims had rescued their Sikh brethren to the border and did not allow the surrounding village marauders to attack their village people and if they have attacked, they repulsed the attack. But apart from this conclusion, the depiction of events in both the novels is differently constructed. While 'Saanjh' has focused on the fairs and festivities, quarrels and fights and the personal kinds of revenge and sacrifices in intimate relationships. In this sense, 'Saanjh' is a one-dimensional text, though it could be more engrossing occasionally.

Tutan Wala Khuh' on the other hand, is multidimensional novel. It is not only the personal life story of one or two characters as is presented in 'Saanjh'. The writer's concerns are much deeper here. He delves deep into the national movement and brings out a comprehensive picture of Indian nation as a whole. While Salim Khan Gimmi defends partition and is in favour of it on religious grounds, Sohan Singh Sital looks at partition as tragic and unnatural. He believes in the secular and non-religious concept of nationality. Moreover for Sital, freedom struggle against the British colonialists was not just driving Britishers away, but to achieve true socio-politico-economic- cultural freedom for the working people of India.

In short, we can see the following commonalities and contrasts in these two Punjabi novels dealing with partition:

- (i) Both novels focus on almost the same period that is from Second World War to the partition of India.
- (ii) Both the novelists have constructed their tale focusing on small villages which became border villages later.

In both the villages Sikhs and Muslims have strong presence with Sikhs being slightly more in number and also being a little better off. Both villages share the same Punjabi ethos.

Both the novels have depicted the same event in their respective texts, that is both are border villages and both are declared to be part of the newly created state—Pakistan. In both the novels the whole Sikh community is rescued by the Muslim community of the same village to the safety of Indian Territory.

Both the novels eulogise intrinsic harmony of rural Punjabi people. It is the leaders of communal organisation from cities, who come and destroy the social fabric by invoking the religious sentiments and exaggerating events, sometimes making even false statements.

Apart from these similarities, there are certain differences in the perception of both the authors in the construction of their texts:

- (i) While Salim Khan Gimmi believes in the concept of nationhood based on religion as propounded by Mohammed Ali Jinnah and projects division of the country as freedom for Muslim community in the form of Pakistan, Sohan Singh Sital rejects the concept of nationhood based on religious identity. Sital believes that Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims are equal partners of Indian nation and he trusts in the essential cultural unity of Indian people, irrespective of their religious identities, that is why he views partition as a tragedy and as a conspiracy of British colonialism to destroy the unity of Indian people.

(ii) Salim Khan Gimmi pays little attention to the depiction of national movement in the novel, even from Muslim league angle, whereas in Sital's novel, the national movement has a central place. Baba Akali is a character, created especially to narrate the whole national movement at belief intervals, which he does to inspire Piruwala people to take part in national movement.

(iii) While Gimmi pays no attention to economic aspect of social life of Punjab and projects Hindu community in general as crooked one, Sital delves deep in the socio-economic analysis and he shows how Dhanne Shah and Lakkha Singh like moneylenders and enemies of innocent peasants and working people like Sajjan Singh and Ilamdin. These are the people who make no difference between Britishers or Indian rulers, as Dhanna Shah says that he can wear Gandhi cap after independence. For Sital, people are not good or bad, because of their religious background, but because of their economic status. For him, those who exploit working people are bad, irrespective of their religious identity and working people are generally good.

(iv) The concept of Hero is also different in both the novels. 'Saanjh's' hero Kadu Dad Khan is a heroic character in individual sense, but Tutan Wala Khuh's Baba Akali is hero in the national and cultural sense.

(v) Novelist Salim Khan Gimmi's vision is microscopic, while that of Sohan Singh Sital is macroscopic in nature. But both of them share the same thrust towards the basic social-personal unity of Punjabi people.

Thus we can observe that out of these two Punjabi novels focusing on partition of India, one is based on personal events, whereas the other novel is based on the national events. One has a narrow perspective, though it might have more fascinating construction of story line, because of its inherent romanticism, the other novel has much wider perspective, focusing on the events and tragedies of a total society and entire nation. Though both the novels indicate to essential human harmony, irrespective of religious faith, yet one is based on just emotion, the other novel has stronger focus on that harmony based on emotion and reason both. Thus 'Tutan Wala Khuh' (The Well Surrounded by Mulberry Trees) emerges as more representative novel of the tragic events of partition of India in 1947.

Partition and Hindi Novel

'Jhootha Sach' in two parts by Yashpal and 'Tamas' by Bhisham Sahani, which became very popular as a tele-serial, are two such novels in Hindi, which are considered very significant in depicting India of 1947 and can be viewed as representative novels delineating partition situation.

The first part of 'Jhootha Sach' appeared in book form in 1958 and its second and concluding part in 1960. It attracted the attention of Hindi readers when it was serialised in Dharmayug, a Hindi weekly from Bombay. Spread into more than twelve hundred pages in both parts, this is a political novel in the real sense and has a broad spectrum. Its story is spread into fifteen years span, touching 1942 in the beginning and concluding with 1957 general election results. Total social scenario of these fifteen years is sought to be presented in the novel.

'Tamas' appeared in 1973 and it was awarded Sahitya Akademi award in 1975. Compared to 'Jhootha Sach', it is small in size, of just about two hundred pages and its time span is even lesser. It is concentrated on the communal riots of Rawalpindi and around, occurred in the first week of March 1947, in the wake of partition. Though small in size, 'Tamas' has a central theme of communalism and its real impact could be measured only when it was brought out into visual form by Govind Nihalani on small screen.

In the first part of 'Jhootha Sach', Yashpal takes us to Bhola Pandey street in Lahore and gives us a very alive and vivid description of the street. Jaidev Puri and Tara, who later emerge as the central characters in the novel, are born and brought up here as son and daughter of Master Ram Lubhaya. The street is a panorama of Punjabi lower middle class life. Jaidev Puri emanates as the symbol of the product of national movement of Congress variety, which was to gain power from the British and later convert itself into the symbol of ugliness of power.

'Jhootha Sach' is further subtitled as 'Watan aur Desh' and 'Desh Ka Bhavishya' (The Future of the Country). Though in first part of the novel, there are some references of 1942-43, it is really placed in 1947 situation and some of the historic incidents of national movement are portrayed faithfully. As in Lahore taking out of his sword by Master Tara Singh at Assembly hall gate, the narration of Khizar Hayat's unionist ministry in Punjab and the demand for its actual dismissal, development of communal frenzy in the town, the sincere but ineffectual intervention of Communist cadres to check the communal drift, are some of the instances, where Yashpal has portrayed social reality of those days of Lahore in a very objective and sincere manner. While describing political process, Yashpal has not missed the economic aspect, the worsening economic plight of lower middle class is woven in the form of Master Ram Lubhaya's agony, the pressure of unemployment on youth is described in the form of Puri's helplessness even though he is a freedom fighter and had been behind bars for more than two years. He is a graduate, a commodity not found in much big numbers in those days.

In the first part of the novel, Yashpal has given details of negotiations for the transfer of power and how Congress Party succumbed to pressure. The party accepted partition of the country, though its leader M.K. Gandhi had once announced that Pakistan would be built on his dead body. With the acceptance of partition plan, the process of migration started. Lahore's destiny was not known till very late and Hindus and Sikhs of the city were confident that the city will remain in India, as eighty per cent of the property belonged to them; though in population they were equal to Muslims. The growth of communal frenzy developed side by side, though Yashpal has concentrated more upon the fate of his characters in the novel. With their fate, he relates the tragedy of the partition. Tara is his central character in the novel. Studying in B.A., she is brilliant and sensitive. She is proud of her brother's role in national movement and his progressive views of about life. She is engaged with a dubious fellow Somraj Sahni against her wishes. Her brother frustrates her in this situation. Though he is aware of the character of Somraj, he does nothing to prevent his sister's marriage to this loafer. Puri himself is in love with Kanak, but he does not tolerate his sister's love for Asad, a student federation activist. With the announcement of partition plan, Tara is pushed into marriage with Somraj and in the very first night of her 'blessed' marriage, Tara encounters all the hell, a woman could, in her life. Her husband humiliates and beats her and suddenly when there is riot he runs away, while Tara jumps for safety, but directly into the hands of a bad character Nabbu, to be raped brutally. This is the fruit of proposed freedom for two nations for a woman. She is rescued into Hafiz Sahib's house, where she is mentally tortured to become a Muslim convert. She refuses and again is thrown into wolves' hands.

At the conclusion of first part of the novel, she is rescued back to new India, paying the price of separation from her lover Asad, who was prepared to accept her as wife.

The critics have acknowledged that first part of 'Jhootha Sach' is more touching, more authentic and more realistic in presenting the social reality. The first part of the novel concludes with philosophic observation from the driver of the rescued people's bus....

"This caravan is also moving towards its 'Desh', leaving behind its 'Watan'. The countries of people have become countries of religion." He shouted: "Who were made one by the God, men by their superstitions and oppression, have cut them into two."

The second part of the novel is more political in its nature, though less touching in its human graphic. The second part begins with the suffering of the refugees, migrated from undivided India into divided India. The refugees by their sheer labour and a bit of cunning establish themselves in the new surroundings, and the novel moves on to describe the deteriorating character of Congressmen, now in power. Vishwanath Sood, a firebrand socialist of pre-partition days, turns into a thoroughly corrupted man and symbol of corruption in, less than a decade of enjoying power. Jaidev Puri, the idealist young man of yesterday turns into a crook in home and outside as well, who tells lies, does not meet his sister and ultimately divorced by his chosen wife Kanak.

Dr. Pran Nath, the economic advisor to British Government, as well as to Nehru Government and Communists, has been shown in better light. Tara also struggles and vindicates herself and becomes Mrs. Dr. Pran Nath in the end. But the weakest part of the novel is the conclusion itself. Vishwanath Sood is defeated in the second general election, Kanak gets divorce from Puri, Tara and Pran Nath are exonerated of the charges against them. The defeat of Sood is characterised as the victory of the people. Victory of the people it is, but the defeat of the system it is not; as the system keeps on producing Soods. Last six decades of Indian polity are best proof of production of Soods.

'Tamas' by Bhisham Sahani is more effective in the treatment of its theme. The novel begins with a dramatic situation. Nathu, the municipal sweeper, is killing a pig for five rupees paid to him by Murad Ali. He spends almost whole night to kill it and at last he succeeds just before dawn and the pig is thrown at a Masjid to create tension in the city. On the other hand, few Congressmen are doing public service in the morning, cleaning gutters, but the service is in name only.

The situation presented in the novel is of March 1947 of Rawalpindi and around. The British deputy commissioner Richard is getting tense, but the deputy commissioner is not worried. The two communal groups—Hindus and Muslims— are preparing for communal clashes. Vanprasthi is giving training to Hindu youth to kill Muslims. Muslim communal leaders are also preparing for communal frenzy. The pig is got killed by Muslim leaders themselves to spread tension and a cow is killed in retaliation, but more than animals, it is human beings, who are killed in much worse fashion. The poor are killed for fun, but the rich keep their ties alive and help each other to rescue their life, limb and property.

The first part of novel depicts the situation in the city; in the second part the situation in surrounding villages is described. More than a hundred villages were affected by the communal passion. Sikhs and Muslims fought in the villages, killing each other brutally. Twenty-two women resorting to Johar.... Twenty two women along with their milk-sucking infants kill themselves by jumping into a well.

There are Congressmen and other old people in the city as well as in villages, who think that it is the British colonialists, who are responsible for communal riots. They express the view that if British authorities deploy forces, the communal frenzy could be checked. In proof of this view, an aeroplane is shown taking rounds in the air, over the city and, the villages after four days of rioting and killings and are becoming normal as the rioters are retreating.

British deputy commissioner Richard is presented in the true colours of colonial master. His wife Liza keeps on questioning him about the differences between Hindu, Sikh and Muslims. Richard, who is an art lover, a sensitive person (like IAS bureaucrats of today), but he is very clear in his mind about British colonial interests. He tells Liza that if these people keep on fighting among themselves, the Britishers are safe. Liza is sharper in her expression as she accuses the Britishers of making natives fight among themselves.

The main core of author's concern in the novel is to show that—(i) it was the British who made Indians fight each other in the name of religion or communities to delay the process of granting independence to India, and (ii) to grant independence only after weakening it considerably by communal divisions, so that its economic interests are safe and the divided countries remain weak in every respect even after getting independence.

While Bhisham Sahani is successful in depicting colonial interests as of the real cause of communal divide in the country, his other plea that effective administrative measures could check communal divide, seems to be superficial. It may have temporary effect on the situation, but till the communal ideas, its strength, its representative forces are present in society, purely administrative measures can hardly check the communal drift in the society, as has been shown in so many instances in the post-partition communal situations in the country.

As a readable novel, 'Tamas' did not create as much a stir, as its tele-adaptation created. After Govind Nihalani fully exploited its dramatic possibilities with best of direction, making it into a powerful film of five hours, the whole country was aroused into a stir. The forces which were shown communal in pre-partition days were as ferocious four decades later at the telecast of the episodes of 'Tamas'.

The progressive forces in 'Tamas' are shown as weak as shown earlier in 'Jhootha Sach'. Their moral position is also weak; they are expecting secular sanity from the very forces, which have communal leanings. Moreover, they, at that time, had defended the two-nation theory based on religion.

One the whole, both 'Jhootha Sach' and 'Tamas' interpret the social and historic facts of partition days in an objective and realist manner. The social reality of those days has been drawn in a dispassionate fashion.

Both writers have historic outlook towards social reality. Both have tried to depict historic events in a dynamic and moving fashion, not in static or mechanical fashion. Their historic outlook is product of their progressive political thinking.

In both the novels, authors have not only documented the social facts, as one critic has even described 'Jhootha Sach' as the 'collection of newspaper clippings', they have a purpose as well. While caring for the aesthetic aspect of their creations, they wish to effect a change in their readers' thinking. Both writers try to impress upon their readers the futility of communal thinking and its destructive potential, which can destroy human life and society in any manner..

Since the communal situation in the country is as serious, if not more, as it was at the time of partition, novels like 'Jhootha Sach' and 'Tamas' have their social and political relevance, apart from their aesthetic entity.

Partition and Manto's Writings

SAADAT Hasan Manto was born and brought up in undivided India. Born in a village near Samrala in Punjab on May 11, 1912. He lived in Amritsar, Aligarh, Bombay, Delhi and Lahore. He went to Pakistan after partition and lived for less than eight years in Lahore. He passed away in the age of less than forty three years. Out of forty three years Manto lived, he gave twenty one years to writing, which did not give him much solace while he was alive, but which gave him a status of a major writer of world literature later.

Manto wrote in many genres. He wrote stories, essays, radio plays, sketches, etc. His writing on man-woman relations made him much controversial writer, for which he was dragged to courts many times, both in India, as well as in Pakistan. But the writings, which made him really immortal, and in a sense classic writer, are focused on the partition of India. These writings include both short stories and satirical writings. In this paper we shall discuss some of his stories and satirical writings, published under the title 'Siyah Hashiye' (The Black Margins). As 'Tobha Tek Singh', Manto's classic story on partition, has been subject of discussion since last forty-five years or so, in many languages, this story will not be discussed in this paper. In fact there are other very sensitive stories and other writings on partition by Manto, which have been rather clouded by the overwhelming presence of 'Tobha Tek Singh'. The purpose here is to bring those other important writings to focus.

"Don't say that one lakh Hindus and one lakh Muslims have been killed Say that two lakh human beings have died and this is not so big tragedy that two lakh human beings have died, the real tragedy is, the dead have not gone into any body's account . . . after killing one lakh Hindus. Muslims would have thought that Hindu religion is dead, but it is alive and will remain alive. . . . the same way after killing one lakh Muslims. Hindus would have boasted that Islam is finished, but the reality is before you. Islam has not got even a little scratch"

This is the opening stanza of 'Sahai', a touching story on the situation of partition by Manto. As one can see from this stanza, Manto was deeply humanistic in his perception of partition situation. Manto, who penned one full book of short stories—'Maktal'—on the theme of partition, which include thirteen stories. Apart from these stories, Manto also wrote many biting pieces on 1947 Hindu-Muslim riots, to which he gave a very apt title of 'Siyah Hashiye' (The Black Margins). His stories include 'Tobha Tek Singh', 'Khol Do' and 'Thanda Goshat' etc. His satirical pieces include thirty-two small and not so small prose pieces, which can be called in western terms as pieces of 'Black humour'.

For Manto, partition of India was just partition. He never perceived the partition as 'Independence' and birth of a new nation. Manto never eulogised Pakistan, though he did migrate to that country. It was rather a painful development for him, which even contributed in cutting short his life, as he was never emotionally comfortable in that new country, called Pakistan. All of his stories and other writings regarding partition are expression of his deep pain and anguish. Manto, like many other writers, did not go into the political reasons behind partition; he confined himself to the human suffering caused by this upheaval.

'Sahai' the story mentioned above deals with the agony of partition to human level in most intense fashion. Mumtaz the Muslim character in the story is leaving for Karachi on ship and his three Hindu friends have come to see him off. The quotation, quoted above, is the words of Mumtaz addressed to his friends, who have come to see him off.

The locale of the story is Bombay. The narrator, Jugal, Brijmohan and Mumtaz are very close friends. The partition of the country was announced and the riots had begun, Jugal received a letter from Lahore, informing him about the killing of his uncle there. Other friend's families had suffered financial losses. Under the shock of these events, Jugal in a routine conversation, told Mumtaz that he could kill him (Mumtaz), if the rioting started in their locality. Mumtaz was stunned and he was completely mum for eight days. After eight days, he announced that he was leaving for Karachi, that very day in the evening. All the three friends had come to see him off and Jugal is feeling guilty that his utterance has caused Mumtaz's decision to migrate to Karachi. While Mumtaz remaining quiet for eight days, became suddenly very talkative, particularly a few hours prior to his departure, Jugal became absolutely quiet. He started drinking and became even quieter after having three or four pegs. His mind was engulfed with the fire of his own utterance.... "I think . . . there is every possibility I could kill you . . . !"

Mumtaz after settling down with luggage in his cabin, came out with friends and looking at the point where sea and sky looked meeting each other, took Jugal's hands into his own and said, "This is just an optical illusion ... the meeting of sea and sky . . . but how attractive is this optical illusion, this meeting . . .".

Jugal, gulping his peg in one go, expressed himself rather crudely, "Please forgive me Mumtaz I think that I hurt you that day!"

And afterwards the story becomes even more philosophic, as Mumtaz tells him that even if he had killed him, he would have killed a human being and not a Muslim. About himself also he tells his friends that his co-religion people would have bestowed upon him the status of a martyr, but he did not wish that status.

Mumtaz then narrates the story of a person named Sahai, who was a pimp by profession, but whose soul was that of a saint. Sahai, a Brahmin from Benares, had come to Bombay, to earn money. Circumstances made him a pimp, but he treated all the girls, as his daughters. He had opened saving account of every girl in post office and every month he would deposit the earnings of the girls in their accounts. He used to give these girls, weekly off and would even marry the girl, if she could find a husband. His only wish to earn thirty thousand rupees and go back to Benares, to open a cloth shop there. He had already earned twenty thousand rupees, when the riots started and Mumtaz found him in a gravely wounded condition on a roadside. When Mumtaz was about to leave him due to scare, Sahai with difficulty stopped him and wriggling in pain, got out some ornaments and twelve hundred rupees. He handed these over to Mumtaz, requesting him to hand these over to Sultana. Mumtaz met Sultana and handed over the amount given by Sahai and Sultana was in tears.

The narrator asks Jugal, "Do not you think that Mumtaz is calling Sahai's soul, to be his co-traveller . . . ?"

And the last sentence of the story is: Jugal said only this, "Would that I was Sahai's soul . . . !"

In my view, this story represents the real human concerns of Manto in context of the partition.

Manto was one of those talented writers, who delve deep into the fathoms of human soul. Manto was not bothered about the upper and surface layers of human characters. He was interested more in deeper layers. And from deep layers of human characters, he would find extremely human characters among those, whom the 'Suave' and 'Cultured' society discards as 'dirty people'. In this sense, like Gorky, Manto was the writer of 'lower depths'. One can see that Sahai, the pimp, is much greater character than these four educated and cultured middle class friends. The same is true of 'Mozel', the story of a Jewish woman.

The locale of 'Mozel' is also Bombay, where Trilochan a Punjabi Sikh has come to work and met Mozel, the Jewish woman, in Advani chambers, where he rented a flat. Mozel's flat was in front of his flat. He fell knee deep in love with Mozel. She became his weakness. But Mozel was an unusual character. She has many friends and would not allow Trilochan to take liberties with her beyond a point. She would tease him and say that if he would shave, only then she can marry him.

Trilochan was a religious person but in one situation, he even got himself shaved. They decided to go in for civil marriage in Poona, but Mozel did not turn up at given time. Later Kirpal Kaur from his own village in Punjab came to Bombay with her family and Trilochan fell in love with her. He started growing hair again and it was the time, when riots began. Kirpal Kaur and her family got trapped in the house, where rioting was going on. It was Muslim area and Trilochan was worried to get them out. Here the greatness of Mozel's character is revealed. She accompanies Trilochan to that area and with a tactful behaviour help them get out of the disturbed area and in the process sacrifices her own life. But the dying sentence by her is biting indictment of religion.

"Mozel removed Trilochan's turban from her body, Take this . . . this religion . . ." and her arm fell without motion over her strong breasts."

The story has depicted Mozel as an easy-going character, who neither bothers to wear underwear nor gives two hoots about making many male friends and spending time with them. To save a human life, she can walk even naked and while dyeing she does not want her body to be covered with any religious symbol in this case turban, as Trilochan has insisted upon, to go to Kirpal Kaur's house wearing turban so that his fiancée is not shocked to see him with hair cut. In fact Mozel is in love with Trilochan, but she cannot reconcile with his strong religious 'Samskars'. It is her real love for Trilochan, as well as with humanity, that she gives up her life in as easy fashion as is her way of life. Mozel, to whom, the cultured society would look down upon as easy going woman is a great character for Manto and his readers.

'Sharifan' and 'Gurmukh Singh Ki Vasiyat' (The Will of Gurmukh Singh) are two stories, which can be termed as stories of black humour. In 'Gurmukh Singh Ki Vasiyat', Gurmukh Singh has always paid respects to a Muslim Judge, who has done justice to him. But his son came to their house, after the death of Gurmukh Singh, when retired Judge and his family were encircled by rioters and the judge himself is paralysed. Gurmukh Singh's son hand over the sweets to judge's daughter and informs about his father's death. And the four persons with kerosene and firearms are ready to put on fire the judge's house. Gurmukh Singh's son gives them nod, to complete the task.

And in 'Sharifan', Kasim goes wild after seeing his young daughter Sharifan's naked dead body and in revenge, he goes to a Hindu's house, he rapes his young daughter and kills her. And when he is able to see her, she is daughter of his friend, when the man enters the house, Kasim indicates to the dead body by uttering one word: "Sharifan . . . !" And the armed man goes out crying . . . "Bimla, Bimla . . ."

In this short story Manto has tried to prick the conscience of wild men of 1947, not with a pin, but by piercing a sharp knife into their buffalo-thickened conscience. The men had gone so blind in fury, that they were raping and killing their own daughters.

'Khol Do' is again a story of pricking the conscience with a knife, when young girl has been so repeatedly raped by her fellow religion 'volunteers', that at the sound of 'Khol do' uttered in the context of opening a window of hospital room, she unknots her shalwar, while still being unconscious by the trauma. The irony takes the shape of black humour, when father cries in joy that his daughter is alive. The father's joy makes the doctor sweat from head to toe. The utter inhumanness and the lowest depths of partition days are depicted in the short story in such devastating fashion that even the reader is shaken to the core.

'Thanda Goshat' (The Cold Flesh) became quite controversial story because it is focused on sexual life of its characters, which is affected by the riots and the sexually vigorous character becomes impotent after becoming aware that he was trying to have sex with a dead girl. Manto has depicted the sexual aspect of human life in many of his writings, as natural part of life, which has shocked many orthodox readers of literature, particularly among Muslim clergy. Because of this reaction, Manto has been persecuted many times for some of his stories 'Thanda Goshat' being one of those stories, for which, Manto was persecuted in Pakistan.

Apart from his short story collection 'Maktal', focusing on partition, Manto also wrote biting satirical pieces. He gave these pieces the title of 'Siyah Hashiya' (The Black Margins). Manto dedicated this book to that man, who, while talking about his bloody deeds, said, "When I killed an old woman, felt that I have committed murder"

These are the pieces to laugh with tears in eyes. There are very small pieces like 'Daawate-Amal' "When the fire broke out, the whole Mohalla was burnt, except for one shop. The shop which has the signboard hanging upon it—'here you get all the material for construction'."

There is another small piece (Khabardar), 'Beware' which reads like that.... The rioters/dragged out the owner of the house with great difficulty/ he got up while dusting his clothes and told the rioters. You kill me, but beware of touching my money . . . !"

This is the kind of black humour, which Manto has created by "the brush like touch of his pen. Even in the worst of conditions, the inherent human nature is revealed in ironies like the one mentioned above.

Again a short piece like the little stories of these days, "Two friends chose a girl out of ten-twenty and purchased her for forty two rupees. After spending the night with her one of them asked her name and he got annoyed, as she was from their own religion. The seller has told a lie in referring to her name. So the friend ran to the other friend telling him

'The bloody has deceived us ... he gave us the girl of our own religion Let us go and return her . . . !'

This is the piece which shows the level of humanity has fallen in those days. The volunteers of "Khol Do" enjoy raping the young girl of their own religion whom they are supposed to rescue and the characters in the 'loosing deal' are upset at being given the girl of their own religion for pleasure. Worst still the girl is treated like a thing purchased in the market, so they decided to return to like a thing

These things might or might not have happened in reality. Manto may have taken recourse to fantasy in creating these black images of humanity of partition days, but behind the urge to fantasize the black days of partition, is the deeply felt human concern of the writer.

Then there is another piece which says "See, you have charged black market price and gave such useless petrol that not even one shop could be burnt . . . \"

Another piece 'Need for rest'—"Not yet dead . . . look there is still life!" "Let it be yaar I have got tired!"

The man has killed so many people that he needs rest.

After a cursory perusal of Manto's stories and satirical prose pieces on partition, one can perceive the underlying scepticism and somewhat cynicism also in recreating the partition days. The inhuman cruelties in the form of rioting, looting, raping women and killing innocent people on all sides, have been delineated by Manto with exceptional kind of detachment as creative writer. But the detachment of the writer is expressed only in the form of creation, which has become very powerful and effective. At the level of perceiving the human situation, the writer is not detached; he is rather completely submerged in the anguish and sufferings of his characters. Not only his characters seems to be the victim of these cruelties, the writer himself seems to be present in these characters, be it 'Sahai', or 'Sakeena' or 'Mozel' or 'Mumtaz'.

The partition of India in 1947 has been a tragic historic event. Very few writers in any language have been able to recreate the human sufferings of this event. Manto is one of those few writers, who have achieved real greatness in recreating the human sufferings at such deep level. And Urdu literature in general comes out stronger in its writings on partition.

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