

CONCLUSION

Life is like a dark dreary desert where “happiness is but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain” (Hardy 348). Life begins with innocent cry as we come out of mother’s womb and end with sad exhausted groan when we depart for the unknown territory. The period between birth and death is normally known as life or life-span. This period is suffused with countless bitter tears, and helpless sighs and groans intermittently bedecked with some flickers of brief smiles. However, during the course of worldly life, we easily forget unpleasant and sorrows and behave in such a manner that nothing had ever happened to us in the past. Our short memory helps us overcome the pangs of sorrows, separations and bereavements. Time heals wounds and unpleasant events that permanently settle down in our memory to be covered by the sands of time. On rare occasions they make up our memory and unsettle our normal life. We become highly emotional when the rituals of such losses are observed in the form of some anniversaries. The Independence Days of India and Pakistan also represent such anniversaries. While observing them most of the survivors of the partition tragedy get filled with immense sorrow and poignancy. To think of the trouble days their wounds become green again.

The term ‘partition’ is sinuously used for the contrived dismemberment of the Indian subcontinent into two independent nations, i.e. India and Pakistan. But if we look back seriously at the history of human beings we find that dismemberment of this world has taken place so many times, as a result of which a number of countries have come into existence. Sometimes dismemberment takes the shape of ethnic clashes and sometimes takes place in the name of political expediency which is termed as the popular demand of the people. Whatever cause may be behind such division or fragmentation, one thing is almost certain that division generally has a huge toll of human lives; and it inevitably brings in its train endless sorrow, deprivation and cruelty in different forms. One of the most dangerous elements that Partition brought with it is the demon of Communalism, relentlessly destroying the peace of the Indian subcontinent. Even though the term communalism is used in a much wider connotation and Partition in a localized form relevant only to the Indian context, they are now so interrelated and interdependent that we can use them as synonyms standing for the cataclysmic events which engulfed the entire region with a trail of terrific violence and bloodshed. The devil still refuses to die, always re-emerging

from its ashes in new incarnations of somewhat more dreadful aspects and fiercer forms. With its cyclic visits and revisits bringing traumatic experiences in its wake, communalism continues to hold the entire subcontinent to ransom. Naturally, it has become a crucial problem which has invited the attention of the political thinkers as well as the creative writers especially the novelists of every Indian language including English, Hindi, Urdu and Bengali.

Indeed some of these novelists have produced tremendous works, which deal with the theme of partition and especially the greatest demon resulting from partition i.e. Communalism with such profundity and thoroughness that they have become interesting and authentic documents of this phenomenon. Through these novels, these novelists have provided a wealth of material enabling their readers to develop an insight into the mysterious workings of the various side effects of partition that took place in the name of religion, politics and social welfare of the people. Studied from various angles, in chronological way or in clusters formed on the basis of language, region, community or nationality, these fictional accounts of calamitous events yield startling facts which has astounded human sensibility. With the interpretation of these facts one can go on to reconstruct the scenario of the demons of partition suffered by the subcontinent that completely dehumanized the rival communities. With a perceptive analysis of these complex events one can probe into the entire tragic phenomenon, for understanding its genesis its moods of operation, and the problems that raise their ugly heads in its aftermath.

Although most of the novels dealing with the theme of partition only refer to the present Indian experience, Communalism in fact has a long history. It has energized as much the crusades as the bloody clashes between the whites and the non whites. Communal ill-will was at the back of the sectarian strifes among different sets of Christianity, say the Catholic and the Protestant; atrocities committed Yazd and his men on Imam Husain and his followers, and clashes among different Hindu sects. Nevertheless, most of these violent confrontations were mostly of localized nature, limited in their scope and operation. With the few exceptions, communalism often assumed historical, geographical and religious dimensions to affect human sensibility for long or disturb world-peace. The religious or the sectarian conflict of the past seldom invited global attention as did the tragic events of the present communalism of the Indian subcontinent portrayed in the novels.

As for the genesis of this violent instinct of antagonism and dominance, there may be different interpretations. In Biblical terms, it is rooted in fratricidal instinct within human nature that led Cain to kill his own brother Abel. In religious terms it leads various groups of one and the same religion to commit atrocities on their co-religionists. In pathological terms, it is a social virus which infects not only individuals but also communities and the body-politic causing wide-spread turmoil and devastation. In psychological terms, communalism is rooted in the destructive and antagonistic tendencies deeply entrenched within human psyche that are intent upon destroying various irritants both internal and external.

However, Indian novelists have their own interpretations to offer. For Khuswant Singh communalism might be a phenomenon of 'Kaliyuga' in which everything becomes topsy-turvy and human nature becomes perverted for Kali-Yuga in which goddess Kali is indulging in blood-bath. In the second section of the novel Khuswant Singh talks about the 'Kalyuga,' when the late running trains suddenly changed the peaceful rhythm of life of Mano Majrans which in turn became instrumental in disturbing the life of the village. This disturbance was further enhanced by the arrival of the ghost trains as Singh writes:

The arrival of the ghost train in broad daylight created a commotion in Mano Majra. People stood on their roofs to see what was happening at the station. All they could see was the black top of the train stretching from one end of the platform to the other. The station building and the railings blocked the rest of the train from view. Occasionally a soldier or a policeman came out of the station and then went back again. (Singh 121)

The people of the village were dumb founded. The bloody scene of the train load corpses was too horrible to even people like Hukum Chand, the police official. It unnerved him. He suffered from mental fatigue and cold numbness. His fear suggested the terror that blew in the atmosphere. His horror could not be mitigated even by the arrival of his sweet heart Haseena. This spectacle of violence sent shock waves throughout Mano Majra.

Khuswant Singh speaks of the monsoon which increases "the tempo of life and death" (Singh 138). With the arrival of monsoon rains, Hukum Chand's mind became obsessed with the brutalities committed on the frontiers. He realized that retaliation must follow. Hence he became

concerned with the safe evacuation of the Muslims of the locality. He told his sub – inspector, that “these days one should be grateful for being alive. There is no peace anywhere. One trouble after another...” (Singh 141). The tragic mood of the villagers was reflected through the vagaries of the monsoon, the late arrival of which left them high and dry since it did not bring relief but more disaster.

Religious antagonism rooted in pathological, or social elements inherent in human nature, go a long way to build up volatile situation charged with communal frenzy, in which an innocuous event is enough to mount tension and trigger violence. In *Train to Pakistan*, the arrival of the ghost trains loaded with the dead bodies was sufficient to trigger tension and a feeling of communal suspicion among the villagers.

Indian novelists, deal with the theme of partition in the back-drop of different territories, different scales of time, and with different sets of characters. While most of the Indian English and Hindi novelists take frontier-regions, to enact their stories, the Indian Urdu novelists prefer central regions of India. For instance, Khushwant Singh, Yashpal, Manohar Malgonkar, Bhisma Sahni, Chaman Nahal and Bapsi Sidwa prefer mostly the cities and villages of Punjab. Amitabh Ghosh has a liking for a border region comprising Bengal and Bangladesh. However, the Urdu writers assume a radically different stance. They adopt the central regions of the country like the province of Avadh or Oudh that include Urdu and the Bhojpuri speaking area to explore the germs of the idea of Pakistan which spoilt the social harmony of the entire sub-continent and caused communion riots.

The myth of the unending battle for supremacy between gods and demons is well known. In fact, this battle could be interpreted as a battle between two opposite ways of life. It could also be called a battle between two diverse cultures. Similarly in the mythical story of Ram- Ravana, we find a battle between two kinds of cultures. Needless to mention, these battles certainly led to a huge toll of lives, mass scale displacement and untold human suffering. As these myths are directly linked with the religious faiths of a community, they are termed as crusades or battles for justice and dignity. In the absence of proper historical evidences these tragic incidents of our past are generally rejected as the figs of our imagination. They are also termed as man’s imaginative creations lacking in veracity. But from the study taken in previous chapters it becomes clear that accepting the facts and figures, reality is almost the same. The ancient mythical battles were also

fought either for the sake of a patch of land or a woman or some slices of bread for imposing a way of life on the unwilling party. The tragic incident of partition also took place on account of the said reasons. The minority Muslims felt unsafe in Independent India amidst the majority Hindus. They thought that they would be denied opportunities of full growth and developments by bureaucrats and politicians, mostly Hindus sitting at the helm of the state affairs. Their suspicion and apprehension were doubled when the cunning British reminded them of the ruthlessness and atrocities of their Mughal ancestors. Consequently they became easy victims to the insinuation of the British. More or less majority Hindus and Sikhs were also incited for revenge by the British.

Thus by sowing the seeds of dissension and disbelief between the major Indian communities which had been living together for centuries, the British manoeuvred to prolong their stay in India on some pretext or the other. But when they were pressed by these communities to quit India at the earliest, they decided to spoil the goodwill and the harmonious relations existing between these communities. On the basis of their knowledge of Indian history the British knew that religion was the greatest weakness of every Indian whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. So they decided to play the card of religion while working out the freedom of the country. By talking about the apprehension of the Muslims, they finally succeeded in making the Congress Leaders accept their plan of the trifurcation of the country. Even this did not suffice their desire to ruin. They further made the situation worse by bungling at the time of drawing a boundary line between the two countries. The Chairman of the Boundary Commission Mr. Radcliff purposely showed some Hindu and Sikh dominated cities like Lahore and Sialkot in the map of newly created Pakistan and Muslim dominated Amritsar in India. In the changed scenario goodwill and trust vanished at once and the Hindus and Sikhs living in Pakistan began to feel unsafe and insecure in the Pakistani territory and vice-versa.

There is another part of this tragic story. It is related to man's selfishness and greed. When possessed by these passions he forgets the ethical norms of the society. He starts demolishing the edifices of ethics and morality which are supposed to be the foundation of each and every civilized society. In the wake of the partition similar things came to be noticed. Some big industrialists, business tycoons, big landlords and powerful somehow arranged to manipulate the division of the country in such a way as to suit their needs and demands. In Khuswant Singh's

Train to Pakistan we find that the people living in the bordering areas suddenly change their colours and turn hostile to the members of their diverse communities, obviously aiming at some easy gains. Under the materialistic garb of religion and faith they tried to conceal their temptation for material things and flesh. The Mano Majrans had no reason to be hostile to their Muslim brethren who were completely integrated with the land of their birth regardless of their different faith. The Sikhs and Muslims held each other's ways of religious worship as equally sacrosanct. They found no difference between the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *Koran*. Even in their normal get together, their religions never came in their way. Members of both the communities vowed to live and die together in case of all odds. But the sudden prospect of easy gains changes the attitude of the Sikh youths. They begin to cry for revenge against their Muslim neighbours and they join hands with hardened criminals like Mali and his men. In fact by resorting to the rumours of atrocities and killings of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan, they try to cover selfishness and greed.

Mullah Imam Baksh, and the Lambardar of Mano Majra remain true to their faiths. There is no shifting in their opinion even during the most turbulent days. The main reason behind such solidarity is the lack of temptation in any form. As they are real men of religion, matter and flesh fail to have any adverse effect on their personalities. Even an outcast like Jugga doesn't feel agitated to hear of the Partition of the country on communal grounds. The news of the downloading of train load of corpses of the Sikh and Hindu victims from Pakistan doesn't affect his normal behaviour. He doesn't vow to take any revenge for such killings. But the real Sikh in him comes out when he is informed that the miscreants are planning to sabotage the night train to Pakistan, carrying his beloved Nooran. His undying love for the Muslim mistress leads to his sacrifice.

The lecherous bureaucracy which the British government gifted to India was very cleverly and clearly symbolized in the flabbiness of the district magistrate Hukum Chand who was posted at Mano Majra during the partition ordeal. It was because of his mastery in the art of lying, cheating and buttering his higher officials that he rose to the present post from a mere foot soldier. The police administration he reared was comparable to the feudal system under the Nawabs and the Rajas. He behaved like the colonial master not only with his officials but also with the innocent villagers of Mano Majra. While the whole of Punjab was drowned in flames of

violence, Hukum Chand instead of managing the condition believed to keep silent at the same time wanted to have almost every night a girl of sweet sixteen to respond to his impotence. The extra flesh hanging loose on his decaying body was a pointer to the whole system of governance gone plump and floppy. Khushwant Singh very vividly and aptly recaptured the police savagery with a corresponding savagery of expression. The police system which continues even in the contemporary time in its worse forms was the worst feudal gift the so-called British liberals chose to make for the modernization of India.

The thoughts and behaviours of Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector attending on him remain almost unchanged in the beginning. They do not work in a partisan manner. Slight change in their behaviour becomes visible only after the arrival of ghost trains from Pakistan and on the news and rumours of untold suffering of the Hindu communities living there. Even then they wish safe displacement of the Muslim evacuees, though the bureaucracy secretly instructs to withhold their major belongings. In the light of these revelations it can be said that greed and selfishness were mainly responsible for the tragedy in the wake of Partition. Pseudo religion could be called its secondary cause.

Love conquers all and it is the panacea of all evils existing in human society. Even when it is restricted to physical plane, it gradually leads to sublimation and has a unifying effect on the life of man. A hardened criminal like Jugga is a victim of carnal love. His love for Nooran is purely physical and lecherous. But he is almost purged of his carnal desire when he comes to know that his mistress life is in danger. The news of threat to Nooran's life has a regenerating effect on his dormant soul. On being enlightened by the words of Bhai Meet Singh he makes his supreme sacrifice and dies like an honest Sikh. No class, caste and creed discrimination comes in the way of the performance of his duty. In fact through *Train to Pakistan*, Khushwant Singh suggests that unblemished love is the greatest religion, and by adopting it we can save humanity from catastrophic events and annihilations. Singh's message sounds pertinent even today when ethnic clashes often surface and erupt in different parts of the world such as Sri Lanka, South Africa, Zimbabwe etc.

Fantasy helps man overcome boredom and misery of his life. It also sweetens his life temporarily. But when reality confronts him, he gets despaired and feels shattered. During the Pre-Partition days the Indian citizens, irrespective of their community, suffered from this fantasy

that freedom was the panacea of all the problems. They hoped that Independence would bring in its train unexpected joy and happiness. But with the dawn of freedom they were scared to notice bad blood, distrust, anarchy, displacement, victimization and dehumanization of the human society. This shocking realization almost unhinged them. As a result they became rather abnormal in their thought and behaviour. Cynicism crept into their personalities and in the absence of the spirit of harmonization and mutual adjustment they started inflicting torments and pains on each other, guided by sectarian concerns. The Hindus and Sikhs began to feel insecure and unsafe in the cities of Pakistan and so felt the Muslims in India.

The Post-Partition novelists like Khuswant Singh, presents an objective exploration into the major causes of the Partition most realistically in his novels. He does this probing when things are almost settled or in the way of settling down, in a mood of tranquillity. He has tried to put the theme of Partition in the right perspective. In the post- Partition light Khuswant Singh has depicted in a powerful way the Postcolonial Masculinity still working in this sub-continent in its varied modes of operation. Moreover, by adopting the technique of Moral Paradox he has highlighted this masculinity in a crystal clear way through the hypocritical behaviour of the various individuals and the institutions imparting influences in their respective spheres. As a skilled writer he has also touched the complicated issue of religion which is being used as a powerful weapon to exploit the innocent men and women. This Postcolonial Masculinity with its exploitative mechanism may lead to some serious consequences in the country in the time to come, hence pragmatically it should be dealt with more care and consideration to avoid the unwanted obstacles in the Postmodern era of Indian society.

Notes and References

Singh, Khuswant. *Train to Pakistan*. New Delhi: Roli Books Pvt. Ltd., 2009.

Hardy, Thomas. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991.