

STUDY OF PARTITION IN *TRAIN TO PAKISTAN* (1956) AND *A BEND IN THE GANGES* (1965)

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The historiography of the partition of the subcontinent results into the creation of many different facets of the society. The society at the time and before the time of partition faced the innumerable losses. The indelible marks on the face of society were not easily removed. All the historical events had a deeper influence on the minds of the people, writers and of the society. The proposed partition of the country left it to witness the upheaval of unimaginable proportions on the eve of independence. The communal riots engulfed the country.

Most of the freedom fighters tried to restore the communal peace and normalcy. Gandhi did his best to restore the peace of the country through non-violence. Gandhi's non-cooperation movement (1920-22), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930) and Quit India Movement (1942) were based on Satyagraha. Many novelists tried to bring out the issue of the freedom fight in their works. They write about the literature of the society and the country. The writers were meant to portray the real picture of the society. And that is what they exactly had done. The ambit of the writers was successfully accomplished with the society. R. K Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* also mentioned about the partition of the country. And the protagonist Sriram, listened to Gandhi's speech attentively. The Mahatma pleaded for change of heart and for the freedom from all bitterness before one could ask the Britishers to go away:

‘...I want you really to make sure of a change in your hearts before you ever think of asking the British to leave the shores of India. It's all very well for you to take up the cry and create uproar. But that's not enough. I want you to clear your hearts and minds and make certain that only love resides there, and there is no residue of bitterness for past history. Only then can you say to British, ‘please leave this country to be managed or mismanaged by us, that's purely our own business, and come back any time you like as our friend and distinguished guest, not as our rulers, you will find John Bull packing his suit case. But be sure you have in your heart love and not bitterness. (19-20)

In response to the elisions and omissions of disciplinary practices whose subject is the community and the nation, and in order to tell the story of the ambivalence of secular nationalism, of the complexities of desires and identification that engendered sexual violence against women, of the violence done to the male bodies during the undeclared civil war that was partition. Scholars like Veena Das, Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon, and Kamla Bhasin have variously addressed the problem of communal violence; while das has examined Sikh women Experiences in 1984 anti-Sikh riots; Butalia, Menon and Bhasin have taken up the relationship

between communalism and nationality and the elision of partition violence by focusing largely on the experiences of women and children during partition.

The present paper aims at the detailed study of the two partition novels selected for the study. The study of both the novels *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1965) reveals the colonial rule and the complete subjugation of the people. Such cultural texts reveal as well as critique the varied forms of violence that inhabit and measure the distance between the nation and the individual, history and memory, making visible in the process as well as in the process of production as well as destruction of the gendered subjectivities, belongings and identities- ethnic and national.

Both the partition novels deal with the tragic theme of the partition of India and also the untold travails of the partition. The novel is the outcome of the cause of the communal fights. The novels are the eventual product for the society and that is what Khushwant Singh and Manohar Malgonkar expressed in their novels *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1965). Realistic portrayal aims at a reportorial account of the experiences of individuals, whereas the Indian tradition of the epic thrives on epic similes, ornamental language, conceit and hyperbole.

The two partition novels hinted at the traumatic partition and moreover the gendered persecution in the novels. Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956) was also adapted into the movie. The novel negotiates the tension between history, whose subject is the nation, and memory, whose subject is the individual, to articulate an imaginative resolution of the contradiction of the postcolonial freedom and dispossession, national and independence and a deathly failure of homeliness. The present chapter discuss about the ongoing riots during the time of the partition and moreover, all the incidents and events that happened at this time.

Khushwant Singh was a real man who belongs to the genre of writings. Before writing novels he wrote many short stories and articles for the newspapers. The writer has attained an international reputation among the other distinguished writers. He wrote a number of books and his *Train to Pakistan* (1956) was highly acclaimed worldwide. His realistic portrayal of the events and the lucid style of posing socio- political factors made his appraisal high. The award to him of the grove press India Fiction Prize in 1956 for his novel *Mano Majra (Train to Pakistan)* made him internationally known. Writing was his passion and moreover, the exploration of all the simple style was ultimately made him a renowned personality.

Khushwant Singh's mind and personality was molded by the western ideology but still he was a true Sikh at his heart. The different themes, settings and the exploration lead him to write the novel. The experiences of his childhood, his Punjabi culture and all other heading lead him to search for the identity. The writer's exploration of the rural India is the basic fact of his creative endeavor. The portrayal of the events and the incidents in the novel made the novel more powerful and rural. The whole set up of the novel clearly explains the division of the country. The moving migrants with all their belongings set up the desolate image of the partition.

The novel pictures the brutal, realistic story of political hatred and of mass passions during, the tragic days of the black days of the partition. It was really bad when human values were killed by the demons of the communal violence. The people of the opposite communities were transformed into rogues who merely worked for spreading communal fights only. They merely act as an active catalyst in the freedom fight. The story of the novel revolves around the freedom struggle. Moreover, the title of the novel hints at the reason of chaos which began in the novel. The predominant fact of the novel is the stark realism, expository portrayal of the

characters and the events of the tragic separation of the contemporary Indian history, partition. All the characters in the novel were really presented as desolate people, who suffer not only from the inhumane treatment but the ghastly sacrifice of the people for their nation.

Khushwant Singh was the man with lot of talent in his hand. He was among the best known writers of the world who made his own place in national as well as international writings. He was the winner of several national and international awards. The novel *Train to Pakistan* was originally entitled as *Mano Majra* (1956) but then it was changed to former one. The title of the novel was symbolic in its nature and matter. As the novel, explicitly manages to represent the political and socio-economic status of the country. Khushwant Singh was himself a witness of this cataclysmic event.

The novel *Train to Pakistan* is both a symbolic and political novel. The train is itself a symbol, of movement, of the mass exodus of people. When we talk of partition we can immediately get all the inferences and images of the trains fully loaded with people. The train has other connotations as it can be represented in other multitudes of people who are heading for other safer destinations. On the partition of the sub-continent, most of the people headed to migration from India to Pakistan and vice-versa. So the train carries the significance of carrying people of different communities and religion in one way. All the diverse religions were varied in the train, which carries millions of people who seek for refuge and safety.

The novelist main motive in the novel is to hint at the aspect of partition and communal riots. My area of research explores the study of partition from the feminist perspective. The novel is divided into four parts; Dacoity, Kalyug, Mano Majra and Karma. The novel's sequence can be ultimately experienced right from the beginning of the novel in which Singh states;

Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing.
According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is,
both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and
clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped. (1)

The incidents of the novel were ultimately revolves around the two main male characters; one is Juggut Badmash and the other is magistrate Hukum Chand. They both were corrupt people who had a strong lust for the women and who always search for the opportunity. The novel was filled with the catastrophic events right from the start, by the murder of the village moneylender Ram Lal, and the suspect Jugga badmash. Jugga was a very clever rogue and a Sikh. He loves the Muslim girl Nooran. He was under the spell of this beautiful girl, Nooran. He could not resist himself from staying away that night and went to her place. By some trick he reached at her place. Then the sensuous images arose were really erotic. As the novelist was known for his bold words, he defines the scene as following:

Juggut Singh's caresses became lustful. His hand strayed
from the girl's face to her breasts and her waist...her
other arm was already under him. She was defenseless.
(14)

Juggut Singh was in deep love with that Muslim girl and he frequently visits her place. The religion dominant was also one of the themes of the novel. The Hindu- Muslim- Sikh religion was dominated the idea of the novel. Romance and communal frenzy goes with hand in hand. The love affair of the village rogue was the matter of talk for all the people. He shows her love to Nooran violently. He thinks that he can also control her like the whole village.

She could not struggle against Juggut Singh's brute force. She did not particularly want to... she pushed Juggut Singh away. He lay down beside her. (15)

The women psyche was completely reflected in the novel. The women always were raped, mutilated and killed. The atrocities against the women sex were very much gruesome. Urvashi Butalia in her work *The Other Side of Silence Voices from the Partition of India* says;

Mass scale migration, death, destruction, loss- no matter how inevitable partition seemed no one could have foreseen the scale and ferocity of bloodshed and enmity it unleashed. Still less could anyone have foreseen that women would become so significant, so central and indeed so problematic. (188)

Almost at the same time Hukum Chand, the divisional Commissioner, who has arrived earlier at the same time was busy with a teenaged prostitute, Haseena. The lust of these two people was increased with the rapidity of the time. The novel is full of these small instances, where we can find that men escaped and find alone time with their female partners. Singh tried in her effort to bring out the matter of women victimization, but he was not able to make it out in this novel. Though women were not much highlighted in partition, but the eminent scholars like Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin have worked out and made a comprehensive study. Butalia in her book *The other side of Silence* says;

In each of these instances, partition stories and memories were used selectively by the aggressors: Militant Hindus were mobilized using the one sided argument that Muslims had killed Hindus at Partition, they had raped Hindu women, and so they must in turn be killed, and their women subjected to rape. (7)

The present paper aims at the study of partition facts with respect to feminism, in the selected two novels; *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and *A Bend in the Ganges* (1965). Manohar Malgonkar was born in 1913 in a royal family. He was born when India was struggling for its freedom from the rule of the Britishers. While growing up, he witnessed many historical events. All the political events had a great influence in the writings of Malgonkar. He himself witnessed Civil Disobedience Movement and Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, which left indelible mark on his mind.

The novel is set in the pre-independence days, before the onset of freedom. He in his novel depicts the violence and communal fights that occurred at the time of the partition. The novel also aimed at the violence and non-violence followers of Gandhiji. The three central characters of the novel; Debi, Gian and Sundari like all others were the young people who were affected by the freedom struggle and who involve themselves in the struggle.

The novel *A Bend in the Ganges* poses the two groups in the novel. One is the follower and other one is non follower of non-violence. Malgonkar takes an objective view of the turbulent years of struggle and independence and resolutely stands outside the subject examine these conflicting ideologies of non-violence. A novel written at the time of partition and that without bloodshed and mass killings was not possible. The novel opens with the message to boycott British goods. The freedom struggle starts with the onset of sense of fight among the natives and to do that they need to boycott all the foreign materials. The people of the village burn all their British materials in order to oppose them. They say;

Let them come forward; bring their hats and coats and shirts and ties, to add fuel to this fire...Boycott British goods! That is the message. (2)

After reading some pages we got an idea that freedom struggle was not easily achieved it was on the cost of lives of our freedom fighters. Malgonkar is best known for blending the history with fiction and that too with references. The women role in the novel was not much but, still there is one main character, Sundari who is portrayed as a very strong girl. The women victimization and subjugation is not significantly portrayed, but somehow there were instances in the novel, so that we can easily find out the women's dual suppression. The incident of the novel was really very forceful, where Debi's mother was raped by a soldier and he saved her mother. He witnessed there, 'a blind rage had swept over him. He jumped off his bicycle and hurled himself at the man' (54). The partition changed the life of many people. Rapes and prostitution was the common practices. Girls and women were sent to brothels and also they were forced to change their identity. The women were the worst sufferers of the partition.

The later part of the novel explains the other oppression against women. The incident of throwing acid on the face of the women was really pitiable. The protestors think that this is the best method to humiliate people by insulting their women. The partition of the sub-continent not only divided the people but also rise the demons in them, which ultimately lead to the doom of humanity.

Someone threw acid at her face- an electric bulb filled with sulphuric acid. That is the standard weapon of the Hindu-Muslim riots, don't you know? That is what has happened to the face of India- the mutilation of a race conflict. (245)

There were other instances of the women suppression and their sexual harassment in the novel. The main concern in the novel was to study the reasons of partition and the other aspects of partition. Malgonkar chooses his characters with force and extols their passions and principles to develop a coherent creation that is captivating and yet completely convincing. The essence is to authenticate the happenings and events and weave them into the fabric of strong and forceful narration. Malgonkar in his work himself says;

For every Hindu that had to die, five will die because of the way the doctrine of non- violence has caught on. More women will be raped, abducted, children slaughtered, because their men will have been made incapable of standing up for themselves. (247)

Love was not at all exist in the world of Malgonkar. He says that the people were completely transformed into communal fighters. The women were earlier treated as goddess, but during the time of the partition they were changed into devils. Men of all communities were involved in the business of selling and buying girls. Malgonkar catches the reader's attention by his true depiction of the political situation and the portrayal of the human relationships that developed in this situation.

Thus, in the study of the two novels, it is revealed that women were brutalized and sexually maltreated. The portrayal of the violent picture in the novels shows how the childhood memories affect and change his personality. In a review of *A bend in the Ganges* R.T. Robertson in *Richmond News Leader* in 1965 comments on the ending of the novel and says;

Although the action and the author's comments seem throughout to depreciate Gian and elevate Debi Dayal, the conclusion appears to point to a gigantic irony-or to the suggestion that modern India was made by heroes like Debi Dayal and consists of a nation of Gians.

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