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## **Communal Violence and Indian Novels: A Historical Survey**

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## Communal Violence and Indian Novels: A Historical Survey

How could literature, which bears close ties to life, avoid getting its shirtfront wet when life was drenched in blood?

-*Communal Violence and Literature*, Ismat Chughtai

### Lead In:

Literature makes a better sense in given socio-political background; context that is a reason and a locale for the very production of the text. In the context of political categories like 'communalism' and 'violence', it is but perennial to historicize them within the frame of literature. It would enable us to make better sense of the very roots and routes to the problem of communal violence in general and its representation in Indian novels in particular. It is difficult to say whether the representation of 'communalism' in literature started as an 'ism'! However, there has always been a dialogue between communal riots and literature from colonial era to the present day. The paper is divided into three parts: I) Communal violence and Literature: The Colonial Character, II) Communal Violence and Indian Novel: Partition Colour and III) Communal Violence and Indian Novels: Post 1970 Change.



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### I

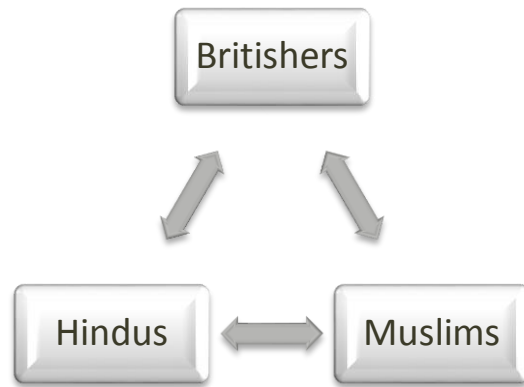
#### Communal Violence and Literature: The Colonial Character

The beginning of representation communalism in Indian literature became prominent after 1857 rebellion. 1857 is the date which separated communal literature from the patriotic one. In 1858, Ranglal Bandopadhyay composed a Bengali poem called *Padmini Upakhyan* (The Tale of Padmini) wherein he talked about a Rajput king from Chitore who had been oppressed by a Muslim king, Allauddin Khilji. The poet's perspective was to glorify the patriotism of the Indians. However, as the danger is so overt, it showed the Muslim as a villain. People of the time got the message that here the target was Britisher and not Muslims but it did hurt Muslim sentiments "and encouraged communalization of literature".<sup>1</sup> The glorified stories of Rajput and Maratha heroes against the Muslim kings added more hostility between Hindus and Muslims.

Literature written after 1857 rebellion has a unique and complex communal and patriotic colour: as for Britishers, Hindus and Muslims (as Indians) both were enemies, for Hindus Britishers and Muslims both were enemies (as foreign invaders) and for Muslims also Britishers and Hindus both were enemies (as foreign invader and as



community respectively). Sisir Kumar Das analyses the triangular relationship in order to explain the rise of the communalization of literature.



[Diagram showing reciprocal hatred among the three groups of people in colonial India after 1857.]

He elaborates the nature of patriotic literature as a starting point of communal literature:

Two major stream of patriotic literature can be easily identified in almost all the Indian languages, one, which was directly against the British without any reference to Muslim rule, and other, which was glorification of the Hindus, and quite often vilification of the Muslims. However, some qualifications are necessary about the nature of the second stream. It was primarily a glorification of one community, the Hindu writers eulogizing their part achievement. The Hindu India, thanks to Orientalists, was projected as the finest achievement of the Indians. The Hindu writers created heroes from the history of the Muslim India, almost all of them who fought for their kingdom or community against the Muslims. In doing so they presented Muslims as villains. But as already mentioned some of the writers tried to create a framework of the oppressor and the oppressed to project the contemporary Indo-British relation...The allegory was transparent enough even for the British to read the message, but it was dangerous too, as it did not take the Muslim sensibility into account at all. Either Hindu writer did not care for the Muslim readership or wrote exclusively for the Hindu readership. This is also true of some Muslim writers; at least some of their writings were meant exclusively for the Muslim readership<sup>2</sup>.

It in this regard, the relationship between communal violence and literature becomes matter of great scrutiny. Language has a medium of literary creation also played crucial role in widening the cleavage between the two communities. Even today, Hindi is faultily associated with Hindus and Urdu with Muslims. It also started with



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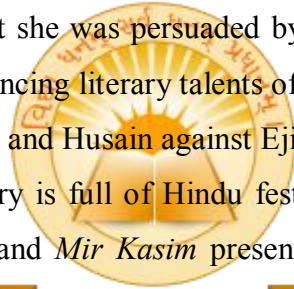
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British scholars. William Yeats, a missionary and a philologist observed that “Urdu is peculiar in its application to the Musalman population in every part of India while the Hindi applies only to the Hindus in the upper provinces.”<sup>3</sup>

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought with it the project of “nationalism” in full bloom in India. Came with it, a range of selfish interests among the communities, religious and others, and political parties. The biggest challenge in imbibing nationalism is to superimpose Western homogeneity over Indian heterogeneity. Quiet expectedly, nationalism nurtured false sense of superiority among Hindus and deep-sense of suspicion and distrust in Muslims.

However, it would also be erroneous to say that literature composed during this period has fanatic colour only! Attempts to harmonize communal tension were made by the writers of the time by using literature either. For instance, we have *Bangalaksmir Bratakatha* (1905) a political pamphlet in the form of religious discourse which records Ramendrasundar Trivedi who mentions that Goddess Lakshmi wanted to leave Bengal due to constant conflict between Hindus and Muslims but she was persuaded by efforts of Husain Shah and Akbar. One would also like to mention one of the most influencing literary talents of the time; Premchand’s play *Karbala* wherein he presented some Hindus fighting for Hasan and Husain against Ejd<sup>4</sup>. Similarly Muslim writers too partook in such a pious agenda; Nazir Akbarabadi’s poetry is full of Hindu festivities. The Bengali playwright Girish Chandra Ghosh composed two play *Sirajuddulla* and *Mir Kasim* presenting patriotism of Muslim heroes and brotherly concerns of the two communities.



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Though the songs play vital role during India’s fight for the freedom, ‘*Vandemataram*’, Sisir Kumar Das mentions, ‘is the most significant instance of literature-religion-politics nexus’.<sup>5</sup> The problem with the song was its second unit which is an expression of agony of nation as well as celebration of several Hindu goddesses like Sarswati, Lakshmi and Durga. The song had dual impact on both the communities; on one hand it evoked patriotic feeling among freedom fighters and it reminding Muslims its association with Bankim Chandra’s *Ananda Math*.<sup>6</sup> There started very subtle modes of communalism in literature, sometimes unnoticed also. Sarat Chandra’s novel *Srikanta* mentions a football match between Bengalis and Muslims clearly indicated his Hindu subconscious idea of separatism.<sup>7</sup> This shows Sarat Chantra’s apprehensions in accepting Muslims as very much part of the mosaic called India. For instance he wrote that, “Muslims are looking towards Turkey and Arabia. They have no love for this country”.<sup>8</sup>



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Rising Hindu consciousness of Muslim separatism and Muslims' reservations regarding Hindu domination was marking its impact on literature of the time. Rabindranath Tagore's *Ghare Baire* (1916) discussed prevailing fury of communal riots and how politician turned blind eye to the ethical concerns of humanity. Due to the project of nationalism, two fine literary talents of time got communally sensitive; Iqbal and Savarkar. Both were, initially, patriotic in feeling and expression but latter on they were leaned towards their respective communal allies. Colonial period saw seeds of communalism in Indian psyche which would be a poisonous tree for the generations to come. Despite the political and communal provocations, by and large literature did not get divided on communal grounds during this time.

### II

#### Communal Violence and Indian Novels in English: Partition Colour

Partition of India, being the darkest hour of Indian history, destroyed and stigmatized cultural vision of India. Some blame political leaders, some condemn British and some blame their own fate for the holocaust they met. The writers of the time can be easily bifurcated into two groups; victims and witnesses. Literature written during and after partition documents brutalities executed by the both the communities against each other as well as anguish and grief of leaving ones' homes.

It is very interesting to look at how Indian writers started dealing with issue of 'communal violence', that too such kind of violence. Das observes:

For the first time our writers realized how violence sustained by ideology could be challenged by unmotivated violence or violence that totally commodify human-beings. Violence could be a game, a source of pleasure, like sex. And it is not a coincidence that both violence and sex became dominant in our popular literature after 1948. Attempts were made by critics, and other literary intermediaries, to legitimize both violence and sex under the banner of politics, psychology and modernity.<sup>9</sup>

Indian novels written on partition have become documents of horror, arson, rapes, looting, hooligan, murder. These novels juxtapose basic human goodness and insanity of people during such a critical time. Let us survey how Indian novels in English captured and represented communal violence after partition. Though we have plethora of novels written on the agony of partition, in this section, we will try to critique nature of communal violence some of the canonical novels on partition such as:



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- *Pinjar -The Skeleton* (1950) by Amrita Pritam
- *Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Singh
- *Aag Ka Dariya-The River of Fire* (1959) by Qurratulain Hyder
- *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) by Manohar Malgonkar
- *Aadha Gaon-A Village Divided* (1966) by Rahi Masoom Raza
- *Azadi*(1975) by Chaman Nahal
- *Midnight's Children*(1981) by Salman Rushdie
- *Ice-Candy Man-The Cracking India* (1988) by Bapsi Sidhwa
- *Shadow Lines* (1988)by Amitav Ghosh

Written soon after the partition of India, *Pinjar*(1950), translated as *The Skeleton*by Khushwant Singh, seems to be the first dispassionate narrative of outcry of the sufferer of the event. Amrita Pritam had to migrate from Lahore to India during partition which made her witness much of violence, lost human faith, enraged communities and what not.

As we have discussed violence and sex are two major motifs in partition novels, *Pinjar* too, takes up abduction of a Hindu girl, Puro, by a Muslim man, Rashid, and how the woman struggles to make sense of her life. Communal violence, here, operates at two levels; one at the level of inter-community violence i.e. a Muslim kidnaps, abducts, forcefully marries a Hindu girl and at the level of intra-community violence: Puro is not accepted back in her own family due to the scornful social attitude of her own community that she is “impure” now! Where would she go now? Puro goes with Rashid to Pakistan and starts living a “new” life as Hamida in all unfavourable circumstances. She even adopts son of a mad woman out of her motherly concerns. Came as victim, Puro fights hard as brave-soldier to save her sister-in-law Lajjo from harassment and plight with the help of Rashid.

Representation of the actual event partition remains the subtext in the novel by focus on its repercussions; unlike many partition novels, the author does not go into the details of who partitioned India? What was the strategy employed? What was the latent politics? Rather she is more interested in *what it did* to the lives of the folks, lives of people like Puro, Lajjo, Rashid etc. While narrating lives of these individuals, the novel condemns ossified social system and hypocrisy of communities.

Throughout the novel, Puro stands for the woman power glorifying author's own desire to invoke suppressed power within all women. The optimistic end of the novel wherein Puro's brother accepts his wife despite knowing



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that she has been abducted by a Muslim, and Puro's sister-in-law is accepted by her husband promising to treat her with dignity and respect, shows the attitudinal change among the masses. On one hand author tries to depict vivid picture of communal disparities at the larger level, she peeps into lives of the individual who are victims of the events on the other. In doing so, she comments upon the basic human follies that erupt during such events when human life is at the stake. The entire course of the novel generates a dialogue between the victims of partition with the new forms of life, between inability to understand what is happening at personal level and what should happen at communal level, between fractured 'self' and 'abducted' bodies with the medium of violence.

*Pinjar* is an immediate reaction to harrowing situation of people that partition created, especially females. Puro and other women, irrespective of the community, were being objectified and reduced to 'bodies'. Amrita Pritam asks and tries to answer complex questions; is life possible during events like partition? How can one reconcile scattered self, body and social realities? What is the nature of love between individuals of two communities brought together by fate and hatred? Is it necessary to go back to one's community which is not ready to accept or to move ahead somehow?

The novel talks about various kinds of 'skeletons' that keep haunting those women who were taken to either of the sides against their will, some have willy-nilly accepted it has the ultimate fate whereas some consider it has a 'pinjar' to liberate from someday somehow! Partition made humans to develop, systematize and use new language called violence.

*Train to Pakistan* (1956) written in English by Khushwant Singh is one of the most powerful and popular partition novel. The novel has setting of a village called Mano Majra at Indo-Pak border in Punjab and it is around 1947 when partition of India was taking place. Millions of people, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were migrating from both the side; many got looted, women harassed and raped, children tortured and killed etc. on their way. Khushwant Singh being a master of narrative and a witness to the holocaust gave excellent account of communal brutality of the time. The village is far from the madding crowd and that is why remains relatively untouched by the happenings of the city. We find in the opening of the novel how Singh was trying to balance his communal stand, "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). Village has equal population of Muslims and Sikhs which made them live quite peacefully.

As the news regarding Muslims from the village are to be sent to Pakistan for their safety reaches the village, a character proclaims, "What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have



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lived amongst (Sikhs) brothers” (126). Very soon communal wind started blowing in and around the village; a group of religious agitators and provokes a local gange to try mass murder while Muslims leave for Pakistan in train. Communal violence was being engineered and came corrupt government officials who irrespective of partition problem were harassing common people. Educated people were trying to pacify the tension by explaining hopes of freedom.

Jugga and Iqbal Singh Bhinder, a man who believes in action and a man believes in ideology are two important characters along with Hukum Chand. They have been accused of the murder of the local money lender Ram Lal they have not committed. Both of them try to save mass murder of Muslims in the train to Pakistan. These three characters are put together at a crucial point in the novel which tests their integrity of character, religion and community. Singh puts highly complex issues of right and wrong, ethical and unethical through the character of Iqbal Singh in order to make readers wonder whether people of that time could think on these lines during frenzy of communal violence. For example, he ponders over:

The bullet is neutral. It hits the good and the bad, the important and the insignificant, without distinction. If there were people to see the act of self-immolation...the sacrifice might be worthwhile: a moral lesson might be conveyed...the point of sacrifice...is the purpose. For the purpose, it is not enough that a thing is intrinsically good: it must be known to be good. It is not enough to know within one's self that one is in the right (170).

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This is how by putting question of ethics during violence Singh is trying to glorify the presence of human conscience when in conflict.

Much like Amrita Pritam, Khushwant Singh is also not interested in the politics of the Partition, rather he is searcher of human element in it. For a novelist like him, the kind of change that partition brought in humans is more important than the genealogy of the actual event. Nearly everyone is to be blamed, but in doing so sufferers will go unnoticed that is why nobody is blamed in the novel. Quite ironically, Singh depicts the evils that came with freedom which could have been otherwise evaded. One wonders what might have happened to those Muslims whom Hukum Chand the magistrate pass order to leave India and go to Pakistan; people were subjected to loss of all kinds including 'life'.

*Train to Pakistan* remains successful in capturing the local pulse of the aftermaths of partition. Though Iqbal, Jugga and Hukum Chand save many lives, it is not implausible to think that such a happy end could not have been





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possible during actual exchange of trains full of dead bodies! The novel brings together religious conflicts, local politics, reform movements etc. in order to show traumatic violence people had to face.

*Aag Ka Dariya- River of Fire* (1959) is magnum opus of Qurratulain Hyder which discusses historical and philosophical legacy of Indian cultural integrity and pluralism. Though the novel is not directly written on or about partition or communal violence, it raises some of the very serious issues of religion and community in India. Spread on a grand scale of time and space, the novel takes journey from 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the post-independent India.

Structurally, novel is segmented into four sections dealing with four epochs of history of India: Mauryan Empire, Lodhi dynasty, East India Company and the time of India's freedom fight. As against hatred that nationalism has created among the communities and castes in India, Hyder offers tolerance of pluralism and love for humans as alternatives of separatist secularism of the West.

The convincing worldview that the novel presents is the challenge to the modern idea of narrow idea of identity; caste, class, community, religion etc. What interests us is the very proposition of cultural syncretism against the dichotomies of "us" and "them", "insiders" and "outsiders", and "inclusion" and "exclusion". Author's reflections of pluralism have key role to play in understanding communal violence which is a result of religious unrest and political manipulations. For example, she considers the 1857 rebellion as mutual trust among communities not by eliminating religion but accepting religious differences. On a Gandhian line of thinking, she believes that religion should not be removed from political and cultural spheres of human life as they as quintessence of very foundations of life in India. The novel ends with conviction that no religion has all the answers to rebuild a civilization and with the hope that all the communal affiliations would fail.

*A Bend in the Ganges* (1965) by Manohar Malgonkar stands out to be an excellent work of literature on partition. Novel's setting is a pre-partition India and the onset of the independence. Malgonkar's was brought up in those years of Indian history when freedom fight movement was its peak as well as the decease of communalism was spreading. *A Bend in the Ganges* gives stunning account of that time when the author juxtaposes joy of freedom with murder, rape, mayhem, chaos etc. The novel is one the exemplary works of literature on partition for its treatment of violence; as during partition three hundred thousand people were slaughtered and more than hundred thousand women were raped and abducted. Millions of people wondered homeless. Novel depicts vivid background of these events.



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The novel revolves around how such violence affects lives of common men and women during partition. There are three major characters; Gian who happens to be the die-hard follower of Gandhi, Debi Dayal is a fervent nationalist terrorist and his sister Sundari, Shafi a pseudo-nationalist and his beloved Mumtaz who then becomes Debi's wife.

The novel complicates the issues of imperial rule, freedom and communalism by suggesting how British converted the whole nationalistic movement into communal turmoil between Hindus and Muslims which caused partition. Debi Dayal and Shafi, though once together against British, are now blood thirsty enemies. Debi takes away Shafi's beloved Mumtaz and marries to her. On the evening of Independence Debi's family is caught while crossing from Pakistan to India; Debi's (Muslim) wife Mumtaz gets gangraped as Debi is found to be a Hindu due to his being uncircumcised.

The novel comments on the nature of the planned riots during partition. For example, Shafi passes a communal remark about how Hindus remained lukewarm about it:

a year....two years....they would then plunge into the war.....The Hindus were planning to do so to....but they are ultimately pacifists at hearts...their leaders are fond of extolling secularism. They were soft and shrank from bloodshed. They would never be amatch for Muslims in civil war..... not even the Mahasabhites who were nothing but a reaction to Muslim nationalism.(175)

Revengeful Shafi wants to take Sundari, Debi's sister in exchange of Mumtaz but she is saved by the anti-hero of the novel, Gian who has always been in love with Sundari. Apart from the storyline of the novel, Malgonkar reinvents the debate of violence and non-violence by summoning none other than the Messiah of non-violence - Gandhi. He quotes Gandhi's own doubts about non-violence in the very epigraph of the novel:

This non-violence, there seems to be due mainly to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true, voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? It is not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his neighbour? (A Bend in the Ganges, Author's note)

It is this ideological background that remains subtext on which he graphs communal violence during partition. The overall fabric of the novel takes into account almost all the major aspects of the record of the partition both at the



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level of enormous violence and at the level of human psyche. That is why perhaps K R Srinivasa Iyengar, believes:

the shame and agony of the partition, the glory and the defeat of the hour of freedom, the tryst with destiny that was also the death-trap fashioned by the malignant time spirit; the horror and the humiliation; the terror and the pity of it all are the theme of Malgonkar's novel. It is a bolder experiment in artistically fusing the personal and historical perspective in fictional terms...(225)

Thus, the novel portrays two fold dimension of communal violence within the context of partition: (1) the crux India's fight for freedom was hijacked by the pseudo "freedom-fighters" who in the process nourished seeds of communalism and prepared grounds for the evitable partition and (2) the independent India failed to tame the demon of communalism and violence due to petty leaders and their lust for power.

As one heads in time from the actual event of partition, one develops objective and dispassionate view of the event; it is here that one starts analysing causes of the event. *Aadha Gaon-A Village Divided* (1966) by Rahi Masoom Raza is in that sense discusses what happened before independence that led to the partition of the country.

The novel is about village called Ganguli in eastern UP which is portrayed as a microcosm of India before freedom. Ganguli like India is mixture of various castes and religious communities. The Shias of the village are reluctant to accept a low caste Hindu woman as a wedded wife of a snooty Siyad community. But Raza shows inherent paradox in the entire matter, for example, kept women are accepted, lovers have to fight for their love to their own families and communities or elope. Muslims of Ganguli and their Qaid-e-Azam are all set to divide the village. Ganguli

The novel criticizes War, Gandhiji, Muslim League, Jinnah, Urdu, the creation of Pakistan, post-independence political situation of the country. In the middle of the novel, Raza writes that he is least bothered about from where his ancestors came, nor is he bothered about his 'rightful' home, what he is concerned about is his roots in Ganguli. It is this that made Indian Muslims identify themselves with the characters of the novel. Creation of partition made Muslims leave India, but what about those millions of Muslims who do not want to go to Pakistan for the reason said above. The novel argues that if one has one's heart-rooted at a place, one should not be forced to leave that place.

The novel is a humble attempt to describe what Indian Muslims felt about partition. Raza's voice is the voice of



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the history of the refusal to go to Pakistan.

Chaman Nahal being refugee himself during Partition pours realism and authenticity of representation into the novel *Azadi*(1975). It covers all the three major aspects of partition; historical, political, and religious. He penetrates an eye-witness' account of communal violence during the tragic events of the Partition. As many partition novels, *Azadi* too narrates the archetypal murders, massacre, rapes burning, looting and the condition of uprooted refugees, but more gravely. K R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes, "*Azadi* is about the partition of India that held the subcontinent in a nightmare of horror for months and left a trail of phenomenal bitterness and misery. Even at this distance of time, the wounds bleed afresh at the prod of memory."

The novel is divided into three parts; 'Lull', 'Storm' and 'Aftermath' which correspond to the peaceful atmosphere before declaration of Partition, the tragedies that occur during partition and pathetic conditions of refugees who have been uprooted from their homelands. Novel focuses on seven families of a town called Sialkot to talk about the situations of refugees.

Unlike Amrita Pritam and Khushwant Singh, Nahal interrogates reasons for partition, especially the role of British through the protagonist Lala Kanshi Ram. Kanshi Ram looks at British from two perspectives; on one hand he appreciates qualities of Britishers and criticises their faults. For instance Nahal comments on Lala's views on how Britishers brought peace to this country:

They are a nation which cannot be easily beaten, he thought. A handful of them have kept us under their feet for over two hundred years. And now that Hitler too has met the same fate at their hands. An absolutely invincible race Lala Kanshi Ram also praised the controlling power of the British rule and police officers. For example, he had great faith in General Ress. But just before leaving his house Lala Kanshi Ram blames the British for not protecting the refugee. He also blames the faults of the British. If the British were going to lose India, it was not because of Gandhi or the awakening amongst the masses, it was because of the tactical error they made in sending out an ugly Viceroy in the crucial days of their Raj. (157)

Lala Kanshi Ram is one those who dislike partition and opposed it for he has great faith in Gandhi. Naturally he condemns the British by saying, "Yes, they (the British) are the real villains, they had let the country down, they had let him down, he who put such faith in them" (189).



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Novel has a very interesting treatment of Hindu-Muslim unity wherein Lala Kanshi Ram's friendship with Chaudhari Barkat Ali and love of Arun and Nural-Nissar. Arun is ready to convert as Muslim for his beloved's sake. Thus, overall atmosphere of the Sialkot remains peaceful to such an extent that such inter-religious marriages are likely to take place. Arun has to leave behind Nura and then Chandani who gets abducted on their way to India which is another sad part of the novel.

But the announcement of Partition makes Muslims celebrate with drum beating and firecrackers. When they pass across Lala's house, stones are thrown at his home. Looting of shops starts in the Bazar, even Lala's shop is looted. Muslims start setting fire to the Hindu mohallas every night. At the same time, a train containing dead bodies of Muslims comes from Amritsar which excites Muslims in Sialkot even further. Very soon Hindus are forced to leave for the Refugee Camp. *Azadi* like *Tamas* has a very emotional treatment of the life in refugee camps; here one finds new dimension of communal violence: people are trying to reconcile their lives with wounds of all kinds; physical, psychological, cultural etc.

*Azadi* problematizes issues of sacrifice, conflict, violence and non-violence within the context of partition. Without valorising bravery, love or chivalry, it renders grotesque picture of the individuals both at personal and communal levels. Subtly Nahal describes how Indian psyche at that time was completely mesmerized by power of English empire to which Indians started indentifying. It was a matter of great pride to talk about how they have defeated Hitler and to be friends with Englishmen. The same Englishmen break the confidence of masses by partitioning the country and gave its people death and destruction.

Women, as we have discussed, became first targets of all incidents of communal violence during and after partition. The description of Sunayana, her grace and sophistication and then the way she is dragged and ill-treated by Rahmat-Ullan Khan is heart-bursting. Women could not protect themselves against mass brutality. In many ways *Azadi* shows disillusion of people after independence; people expected liberty, equality and fraternity and what they received was opposites of these terms. Refugees from Pakistan were treated very badly, they considered as nuisance rather than victims of fate. Lala Kasnhi Ram is humiliated when he demanded a room to set up a shop. Thus *Azadi* is novel asking: why did we demand Azadi-freedom at all? What happened to the promises which were to come with Azadi? Who are "we" and who are "they"?

*Midnight's Children* (1981) by Salman Rushdie is novel much discussed and appreciated for its treatment of Indian history and magic realism. The novel analyses various phases of Indian history of which India's freedom is the key event. The allegory tells us that on the stroke of midnight, August 15, 1947 a thousand children were born



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with supernatural powers. Saleem Sinai, the protagonist of the novel is one of them who can assemble the rest of the magic children in his mind. Saleem Sinai stands for India and his life suggest what happens to India before and after independence. Rushdie says:

A nation which had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us into a world which, although it had five thousand years of history, although it had invented the game of chess and traded with Middle Kingdom Egypt, was nevertheless quite imaginary; into a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will-except in a dream we all agreed to dream.(129-130)

*Midnight's Children* chronicles three generations of Saleem's life India's history; starting from his grandfather Adam Aziz- ( is pre-independence India) followed by his father Ahmed Sinai- (the time of partition) and Saleem , the protagonist-he stands for (India's fate after independence) covering events like India's war with China and Pakistan, creation of Bangladesh and Emergency-sterilization campaign of 1975.

Needless to say that the novel is blaming 'history' itself and the children of Independent India for what happened to India. Though it does not depict communal riots and violence in detail as other partition novels, its significance lies in explaining the historical and political background in which lives of individuals were put at stake and communalism was firmly rooted in the hearts and heads of the people.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy Man*(1988)is the first novel by woman novelist from Pakistan in which she depicts conditions of people in Lahore during and after partition. The story is narrated from a child narrator Lenny's perspective. She observes how people like beggars, holymen and young men are so much interested in her Hindu Aya Shanta's beautiful body.

Once, a character called Imam Din takes Lenny to his village Pir Pindo where Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims live peacefully. There she observes that villagers are assembled to discuss the situation of other cities in Bihar and Bengal. They got disturbed by the news of communal riots. Naturally everybody blames Britishers for not taking any action when riots break out in the country.

Announcement of partition and with the murder of Mr. Roger, riot break out in Lahore. People were shifted to the safer places though peasants were so confused about whether to leave their homes and property. Communal riots were spreading from cities to villages like Pir Pindo; communities became thirsty of one another's blood. Hindus and Sikhs were leaving from Lahore to Amritsar for safer life. Parasi community in Pakistan was confused



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because it was safe yet unsafe. Muslim mobs were attacking Hindu homes. Meanwhile a mob stops at Lenny's house to inquire about Hindu servants; especially about Shanta but they are told about her fake departure. But when Ice-Candy man asks Lenny, innocently she reveals her hiding and Shanta is taken to prostitute bazaar. Lenny narrates, "They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet that want to move backwards-are forced forward instead (164)"

On the other side, Sikh crowds are torturing Muslims in Pir Pindo; Muslim women are ganged-raped. Again women are the likely to be the prime victims during communal violence; their own body is their enemy. Children are slaughtered mercilessly. One of Lenny's playmate Rana is also wounded and gets buried under the heap of dead bodies though fortunately is saved. Narration of Rana's escape is heart rending. Sidhwa depicts women's pathetic situation wherein it was decided that all girls and women of Pir Pindo village would gather in Chaudhari's house and pour kerosene oil to burn themselves alive but nothing works. Out of all these only Rana gets escaped to Lahore. The strange feeling that he has is worth noticing because it indicates a different kind of violence of destitute children:

"It is funny. As long as I had to look out for myself, I was all right. As soon as I felt safe, I fainted"...There were too many ugly and abandoned children like him scavenging in the looted houses and the rubble of burnt-out buildings. His rags clinging to his wounds, straw sticking in his scalped skull, Ranna wandered through the lanes stealing chapatties and grain from houses strewn with dead bodies, rifling the corpses for anything he could use ... No one minded the semi-naked spectre as he looked in doors with his knowing, wide-set peasant eyes." Later, Ranna was herded into a refugee camp at Badami Baug. Then "chance united him" with his Noni chachi and Iqbal chacha.(187)

Like Puro converts as Hamida after marriage in *Pinjar*, Shanta is known as Mumtaz after her marriage to Ice-Candy man, who vows to keep herself happy by all means. But Shanta wants to go back to her relatives in Amritsar. With the help of police machinery Godmother sends Shanta to India to her family and Ice-Candy man follows her to India as a true lover-fakir.

Parasi viewpoint of the novel is also significant to balance the communal stand of the author herself as well as to present the condition of Parasi community. Similar condition can be that of Sindhis who happens to be the greater victims of partition. Sidhwa's choice of the child's perspective of looking at violence brought with partition seems to be appealing as gruesomeness is heightened and its awfulness is criticized like a child does. It is a successful portrayal of inter-religious culture of pre-independence Lahore which becomes conducive for all communal riots



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and violence.

*The Shadow Lines* (1988) is novel by Amitav Ghosh exploring events of partition of Bengali culture and East Pakistan. Ghose is indulging himself in re-reading history and details of political decision in order to make sense of personal and social order of life. He does not see history as mere data or facts but as something extremely valuable that people experience and live and that is why all the characters in the novel tell some part of the history while telling their respective stories. They present their views on how freedom, nationalism and communalism during various phases of Indian history changed our lives. August 15, 1947 was a historical day for many to celebrate independence but it was also historical day for others to mourn, to part from their homelands, to get killed. This date bifurcated Bengali community and culture. *The Shadow Lines* is an attempt to bring about vainness of drawing lines across a nation and make it two (latter on three).

Thamma, narrator's grandmother belongs to that generation of people who had to leave their homeland in 1947. Her own idea of freedom got shattered, she faced numerous difficulties in moving ahead with her widowhood in the class-caste ridden society which was not changed after independence. Her uncle's views on nation and partition are noticeable, "I don't believe in this India-Shindia. It's all very well, you're going away now, but suppose when you get there, they decide to draw another line somewhere? What will you do then?" (178). Her attempt to liberate her uncle and bring him on a homeward journey brings about death of three people-her uncle, the rickshaw puller and Tridib. Though she fails to understand that national liberty does not assures individual liberty. Narrator's cousin Ila thinks that freedom is to liberate one's self from the restrictive customs that confines individuals so she flees to the West, to England.

Ila has no right to live there [in England] she [my grandmother] said hoarsely. She doesn't belong there. It took those people time to build that country; hundreds of years, years and years of war and bloodshed. Everyone who lives there has earned the right to be there with blood: with their brother's blood and their father's blood and their son's blood. War is their religion. That's what it takes to make a country. Once that happens people forget they were born this or that, Muslim or Hindu or Bengali or Punjabi: they become a family born of the same pool of blood. That is what you have to achieve for India, don't you see? (76)

Freedom then, as Ghosh seems to opine, is nothing but a mirage as the shadow lines that separate individuals.

Ila seems to a product of colonialism wherein the colonial subject rejects his/her past and community and escapes to the Western world, world of colonizers. After the death of Tridib narrator realizes that communal riots are born





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of gross political manipulations of communal sympathies. *The Shadow Lines* reverse the traditional novel of development but makes it clear that lines and the world are mere shadows. The novel ends with the development of illusion or spiritual conviction that mature people should develop imaginative sympathy in order to transcend all kinds of shadow lines.

With the tragedy of Partition, Indian novels became more conscious of the larger questions and categories of 'nation', 'race', 'community', 'minority' etc. The partition is the most important event in the history India, Pakistan and Bangladesh which has shaped the way communities used to perceive and represent one another. Novels discussed above, and many more not discussed, are but written in such a situation when writers could not help themselves but to write about what they saw and felt. All the novels discussed here can be classified into two groups: initial reactions-'descriptive' novels and revisiting history-'analytical' novels. The first groups of novels are those which are written immediately after the holocaust; as an inevitable reaction to the event. Novels like *Pinjar*, *Train to Pakistan*, *Ice-Candy Man* etc. tried to look at the violence and human agony caused by it because during the time they are written, objectivity was not possible. They are highly disturbing and heart rending in nature; as they depict pictorial descriptions of various forms of communal violence including rapes, murders, mutilations, abductions. Narratives discussed lives of ordinary men and women who had no idea of nation or two-nations at all.

The second group of novels are the narratives of distant and relatively objective analysis of partition and human suffering resulted from it. These novels include *A Bend in the Ganges*, *Aadha Gaon*, *Azadi*, *Shadow Lines*, *Midnight's Children* which are creative and intellectual response to the Partition tragedy. Unlike the first group of novel these novels asked more complex questions like: Who is responsible for partition? What role did the project of Nationalism play in nurturing communalism? Why did not Hindus and Muslims decode Brishers' intention of communal divide? How did Muslim League and Hindu Maha Sabha come into existence? What happened to the Gandhian ideals of Swaraj and Non-violence? Stories and characters are mere tools to search answers to these questions. In these novels, focus of the communal violence, has been shifted to the political manipulation from just religious fanaticism. Partition saw seeds of historical prejudices in the masses.

### III

#### Communal Violence and Indian Novels: Post 1970s' Change

The communal tension got worst in India during and after 1970s; the number of people dying in communal riots and techniques of engineering the riots have increased. Almost every state is an epicenter of communal riots. Now it is not just communal as it used to be during the time of partition; it more, much more than just "communal". The



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meaning of communalism and communal violence is expanding in a big way; fanaticism, terrorism, class-caste violence, gender violence, regionalistic violence, intra-communal violence to name a few, are now part and parcel of communal violence. The promise that partition would solve all the problems, including that of communalism, could not stand after independence.

In post 1970 India, riots are recurring phenomena in the country. Political opportunism is governing communal scenario of the nation. Some of the major riots that took place in country were in Ahmedabad 1969, Jalgaon, Bhiwandi, Mahad 1970, Varanasi 1977, Sabhal-Up 1987, Jamshedpur, 1979, Moradabad 1980, Biharsharif, Godhara, Pune, Solapur 1981, Meerut, Vadodara 1982, Hyderabad, Malur-Karanataka 1983, Bombay, Aurangabad 1984, Punjab, Delhi (Sikh Riots) 1984, Ahmedabad, Kashmir 1986, Meerut 1987, Bhagalpur, Indore, Kota, Orissa 1989, Kashmir, Jaipur, Agra, Kanpur, Patana, Hyderabad, Beawar, Maharashtra 1990, Baroda 1991, Mumbai, Surat 1992, Madras, Kerala, Bihar 1995, Ajmer, Kanpur, Moradabada, Hyderabad 1998, Ahmedabad, Surat 1999, Kolhapur, Karnataka 2000, Jammu, Kanpur, Rajsthan, Orissa 2001, Ahmedabad-Godhara, Kathiyal, Hariyana 2002, Marad, Kerala 2003<sup>11</sup>, Aligarh 2006, Orissa 2007-08, Bareilly-UP, Degana, 2010, Assam 2012, Muzaffarnagar 2013.

It is perhaps this recurrence of the communal riots that disturbs writers and compels them to articulate their voices with regard to communalism in India. Besides, these riots are now coloured with internal politics unlike the partition violence wherein there was always the third enemy-British to blame at. There are two very distinguished aspects of communal-political scenario of India: 1984 Blue Star Operation and Sikh Riots, Demolition of Babri Masjid.

Let us critique post 1970 Indian novels written on communal violence in order to understand, firstly how they differ in representing communal violence and secondly what is nature-character of communal violence found in these novels.

*Tamas*(1972)is a significant novel by Bhishm Sahani on communal violence for several reasons. The events described in the novel are real accounts of communal riots occurred in Rawalpindi during partition which were witnessed by the author himself. However, it is actually written as a response to the writer's visit to riot-stricken Bhiwandi in 1970. Apparently, we feel it is a typical partition narrative but apart from being one, it looks deeper into to the nature of 'new' communal riots which were taking place after partition. It has bifocal agenda; one is to narrate the role of the Britishers in inciting the inter-communal hatred, but simultaneously it links repercussions of partition in the small towns with the emergence of local politics around communalism.



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The very beginning of the riot in the town by throwing dead pig on steps of the mosque is the archetypal way in which riots of 1970, one like in Ahmedabad, occurred. It is a terrific narrative of how neighbours living harmoniously for decades, suddenly turn monsters eating away each other. The first part of the novel deals with politically charged discussions of leadership and commitment of Congress party along the line of the nature of work undertaken by socialist peace workers, nationalists were criticising non-violence movement. Needless to say that it is a subtle attempt to comment of the role of government after nearly twenty years of freedom. In the process Sahani unfolds minds of the rioters by diving very deep in the psychological layers of violence.

Communal violence which started as a phenomenon of communal hatred on the line of partition was gradually doing deeper and deeper of individual psyche and the collective unconscious. *Tamas* brings to forth some of the highly complex issues of psychology of human relations during troublesome situation. As in a Sikh couple came as refugee in a Muslim house, killing of Milkhi, incident of Iqbal Singh, violence in the gurudwara etc. represent what was happening in the middle class narrow-minded people of small towns during riots.

*Tamas* highlights the role of local political leaders in engineering riots and failure of educated people to pacify communal tension. While discussing rise of Indian middle class, the novel unlocks the webs of the economics and religious complexities exploited during riots. Interestingly, Sahani problematizes issue of caste and class in fostering communal affairs. Post 1970s riots have unique colour, they are organized and targeted forms of communal violence with full support of political-religious leaders wherein socially backward class is manipulated to take active part in the riots, religious places and communities prepare/train themselves for riot, polarizations of mobs etc. In this sense, *Tamas* is the record of how communal 'darkness' started spreading from partition, was now emerging from within. That is why we would call this a link-novel of pre and post 1970 communal violence prevalent in India.

The fashion of writing novels on haunting memory of partition continues in the 1980s and 90s also, for example we have *Ice-Candy Man and Shadow Lines* published in 1988. In the same year, *Curfew in the City* by Vibhuti Narayan Rai got published which represents various nuances of what happens during curfew. As one observes, in all communal riots, curfews play an important role in the lives of ordinary folks. Generally, novels dealing with communal riots do not adequately deal with the time of curfew and inside situations. That is perhaps because no writer, except one like Vibhuti Narayan Rai as a policeman, has any experience of actual curfew. *Curfew in the City* is one of the characteristic post 1970 novels written as an eye-witness of an actual communal riot in India. As it is written as a response to the firsthand experience of the author Vibhuti Narayan Rai in the Allahabad Riots as Senior Superintendent of Police.



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As against, the real engineering of riot, significantly enough novel unravels role of police during communal riots and curfew, for example novel shows how police searches homes of common men in order to find “supposed” weapons and explosives and what they “do” during searches. Though, the story does not depict loud images of rapes and murders, killings and brutality which are generally found in other such novels, but rather shows problems of ordinary people during riots and curfew. Here we can see subtle forms of violence and the undercurrents of extremely prejudiced governments. For instance, there is a character of Sayeeda whose little daughter dies of cholera during the curfew and the family has to struggle to get some water from the public tap to wash the corpse and seek curfew passes to take the dead body to the graveyard for burial. There is yet another feature of post 1970 communal riots i.e. communities are not only physically attacked but they are also kept devoid of basic facilities for days to teach them lesson.

Rai has conducted a research project on role of police during curfew and we can see his analysis being reflected in the novel. For instance, novel shows children shouting how Police and Hindus have ganged up to torture Muslim. Not only this, police receives great hospitality in Hindu lanes and that is why Hindu are free to roam during curfew in reciprocation. One really wonders if curfew is to control communal violence or it is another tool to subjugate Muslims! Though there is a chapter on rape, but hardly can be compared to the rapes that are found in other literary works on communal violence. The girl and the rapist remain anonymous that suggest how such incidents became so normal during riots. Novel decodes how political leaders, authorities and journalist join their hands but do nothing except for some formal peace committee that would do nothing.

*Curfew in the City* is the novel making significant remarks on the subtle exploitations of minority which is a counterpart of *Lajja* wherein situation of minority in Bangladesh. It is interesting to note that post 1970s novelist refer to journalist reports and participate in activism in order to authenticate the representation. Being an insider, author has become one with the victims and gives true account of reality without complicating it with imagination.

As we have mentioned that the controversy and demolition of Babari Masjid has changed the face Indian history of communal violence. *Lajja* (1993) is written soon after the demolition of the masjid in 1992. Novel, though written by a Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen, it has all the aspects of Indianness for considering it as potentially an Indian novel. It is documentary account of communal violence erupted in Bangladesh due to the demolition of Babri Mosque in India and what happens to Hindus, as a minority in Bangladesh. It interrogates some of the very basic questions of communal violence across the borders by interweaving the common past.

*Lajja* narrates the story of a Dutta family; an idealist Dr. Sudhamoy, his intellectual son Suranjan, silent Kironmoyee and helpless Maya. Muslim community is deeply hurt by what Hindu fundamentalists have done in



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India; it was taken as an attack on their sacred space which is why they started avenging against Hindus in Bangladesh. The novel discusses and depicts all the major forms of communal violence: ranging from looting of property to rapes, from destroying temples to murders in the duration of thirteen days.

Novelist seems to argue that the main cause of communal violence is the shift from Bangladesh as a democratic country to a country run on fundamentalism. Sudhamoy, Suranjan's father recollects how in the war of liberation he was caught and tormented by Pakistanis, how his wife had to stop wearing the *sindur* for the fear of getting identified as a Hindu. After Bangladesh was declared free, Sudhamoy thought his problems would be over but after that Bangladesh was being converted into an Islamic state from being secular.

As we have observed post 1970 communal violence is more subtle in nature; Sudhamoy is discriminated because he is a Hindu, as he is not promoted in his job, his son is denied of job and is unemployed at the age of 33. The novel is asking serious questions to the so called intellectuals whether they have any intellectual/ideal solution to this problem. In fact the novel shows how due to their 'idea' love for the nation and homeland that entire family is suffering from many years. Most of their relatives started going to India which reminds us that around 10 million refugees moved to India due to Bangladesh liberation war. During the riot, Dutta family is attacked and Maya, Sudhamoy's daughter is abducted and she gets lost or kidnapped or may be raped and killed, and never returns home. How does Suranjan take out his frustration of his sister's loss by raping a Muslim prostitute in his house? What kind of violence is it, self-directed, 'inter-personal violence' or 'communal violence'.

Needless to say, *Lajja* is written from a Hindu viewpoint by a Muslim writer which makes it objective and sympathetic account of the real events occurred and that is why the author has to suffer a lot from her own community. People believing in secularism and democracy would certainly get disturbed by death, arson, rapes, murders etc narrated in the novel. Though novel is not written on those aesthetically pleasing literary sense, the very disturbing elements are of great value. We need to read it from a different perspective and see how the issue of communalism gets more intensified with journalistic data. Taslima Nasreen is continuously asking why Bangladesh converted itself into an Islamic state treating Hindu minority violently.

The birth of Bangladesh has generated a new space for communal violence to take place with the suffering of Hindus as minority which is the counterpart of the kind of communal violence felt in India by the Muslim minority. Many critics deny the role of majority and minority in leading to communal violence but *Lajja* shows how it is one of the major tools to exercise and take away power.



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*Riot (2001)* is an objective analysis of how history was smartly manipulated in order to demolish Babri mosque, both ideologically and practically. Shashi Tharoor conducts network analysis of communal violence caused during the demolition of the mosque wherein he complicates religious, intellectual, political, economic, social and moral concerns. The novel is actually based on the field data on communal riots in 1989. The story begins with the murder to Priscilla Hart, an American student who has come as a social worker in a small town called Zalilgarh in the midst of a riot.

Initially Priscilla's parents visit to India along with an American journalist and meeting various people with a view to investigate murder mystery becomes the main text. But as we move on, it becomes the subtext and issues of communalism become the main text. Throughout the story, author shows multiple perspectives of looking at the problem; for example we have a Hindu fundamentalist who elucidates why Hindus want to erect temple at Ayodhya and why he hates Muslim, we have a Muslim professor who explains rise and growth of minority psyche with his scholarly historical and ideological reasons. Reader gets amazed by the incessant dialogue that takes place among characters on the very Indian problems of the age like communities, cultures, professions, religions, genders etc. For examples, time and again we find characters justifying their stands, communal or otherwise, for sorting out Ram Janmabhoomi issue. Often we find one or the other idealist character which has lofty solutions to communal tension but *Riot* depicts characters with their peculiarities and extremism.

Novel allows discussion on communal violence at individual level and at communal level by involving intricacies of emotions like love, hate, anger, guilt which get affected communal tension on one hand and history, fundamentalism, communal prejudices, political opportunism on the other. It is made possible by Shashi Tharoor by employing an interesting narrative technique wherein the story is told through letters, diaries, poems, interviews, reports, transcribed conversations etc and makes it neither first person nor third person narrative. Communal violence is condemned on one hand and justifications of a layman are weighed too in order to understand the problem in a better way. level with strong logic of their own. Such technique of multiple narrations is helpful in order to understand multifaceted nature of truth in the time of postmodernism. The narration goes back and forth in historical times, with various viewpoints weaving them together to form a novel.

After the volumes on one sided views (secularist, nationalist and communalist) on communal violence around partition, we have a very comprehensive treatment of the issue by innovative mode of representation. When we look at the plot, narrative technique, language and characterization around the theme of communal violence, we find *Riot* as an excellent work of art on communalism. But one observes that it shows how in the post 1970 riots are mere tools in the hands of political parties who can use it as vote-bank strategy.



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Kamleshwar's *Kitney Pakistan-Partitions* (2004) is one of the most complicated narratives on violence and communal violence. It starts a journey back in the time-space in order to understand the root of the problem of communal violence in India. The story, as such, has three main issues; one being the partition of India, second is the preparation and demolition of Babari Masjid and violence of all kinds in various parts of the world. The narrative tells us impossibility of making the full sense of communal violence in the country; for it is encouraged and justified from so many agents like history, politics, language, religion to name a few.

The narrative takes shape of courtroom of an anonymous author-*adeeb*-who is now hearing pleading of injustice done during various ages in the various countries of the world by making every victim and victimizer stand in the court of Time and share their versions of truth. The novel depicts various incidents situated around the traumatic event of partition; like the political leaders and their split commitments, British, faiths and blind-faith in superiority of one religion over the other etc. One of the potential issues that the novel challenges is the fabrication of 'history' by colonizers and neo-colonizers. Author shows how manipulation s 'history' has caused and is still causing communal tension in India to attain all kinds of political agendas. We see in the novel that the so-called written history is contested and during the trial our well celebrated heroes are found guilty.

During the trials, we find causes that have given birth to communal violence due to the issue of Babri mosque and Ram Janma Bhoomi. The issue is juxtaposed along the lines of reasons for partition so that we can see through history. The novel claims that Babar has got nothing to do with erection of a mosque at Ram Janma Bhoomi rather he challenges the very existence of Ram's Ayodhya. (See discussion on the controversy of Babri-Ram Janmabhoomi in the fourth chapter.)

As we distance ourselves from actual events of partition and demolition of Babri Masjid, we tend to analyse the cause in a more objective manner. In the similar manner, novel is a series of revelations about some of the unknown and unsaid aspects of the history. For example, it declares British officials as solely responsible for manipulating history after 1857. It also reveals some of the unnoticed facts about Allama Iqbal, Jinnah, Savarkar, Chengiz Khan, Chandrakant Bhardwaj, Aurangzeb etc. How does one otherwise explain communal violence if not by putting all the accused on the same ground? The narrative calls everyone into the courtroom box for cross-questioning regarding their role in fostering communal violence in India.

Like *Riot*, *Kitney Pakistan* also criticises politicians and their selfish interests which cause riots in the country. Besides, it talks about how violence is getting deeper and deeper in human heart that has become integral part of the modern socio-economic mechanisms. Written in the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century, novel is is ` recognizing terrorism as a dangerous phenomenon merging with communalism and anticipates the worst problems that it may



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cause.

### Lead-Out:

The problem of historical studies in context of literature is the selectivity of text and the period; one is likely to fall short in terms of presenting the total picture. However, it has a merit too; it allows a historical space which becomes a gateway to enter various other domains of the bigger picture. In this paper, we have tried to discuss: I) Communal violence and Literature: The Colonial Character, II) Communal Violence and Indian Novel: Partition Colour and III) Communal Violence and Indian Novels: Post 1970 Change. Reason for such segmentation is to trace and examine how the nature of the relationship between communal violence and Indian novels emerged, developed and changed historically. In short, communal violence is one more category that Indian fiction is engaging itself with quite politically!

### Endnotes:

1. p.130-131, *A History of Indian Literature: 1800-1910*, Sisir Kumar Das, Sahitya Akademi. Sisir Kumar Das mentions that the rebellion did not create a cleavage between the Hindus and Muslims. The British, however, manipulated the situation to create differences between the two communities. Every Muslim was a suspect. Ghalib wrote, “every particle of dust in Delhi thirsts for the blood of Muslims”
2. Ibid, p.131-132
3. Ibid, p. 141
4. Premchand’s other notable works depicting communal harmony are *Smrti Ka Pujari*, *Muktidan*, *Ksama*, *Mandir aur Masjid*, *Himsa Paramo Dharma Mahatma Sheikh Sadi*, *Kalam*, *Tyag and Talwar*, *Rangbhumi*, etc.
5. p.350, *A History of Indian Literature: 1911-1956*, Sisir Kumar Das, Sahitya Akademi.
6. Ibid, pg. 351, ‘the novel is a complex narrative of a frustrated dream of a Hindu State.’ As we know on several occasions the book was burnt and its author condemned.
7. Ibid, p. 354 according to Badruddin Umar, a distinguished essayist, such attitude emerged from the general attempts to keep the Muslims separate from the Hindus for political and economic reasons.
8. Sisir Kumar Das quotes *Sarat Chander Aprikaskita Racanabali*, Calcutta, 1958, p. 199
9. Ibid, p. 382
10. For detail chronology of communal riots in India, refer to the article *Communal Riots In India: A Chronology (1947-2003)* by B. Rajeshwari, IPCS.





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16. Tharoor, Shashi. *Riot: A Novel*. Penguin, New Delhi, 2001. Print.
17. Kamleshwar. *Kitney Pakistan*. Rajpal, New Delhi, 2004. Print.