

Machiavellian Imperial Dominance and Division of the Subcontinent: A Reflective Study on Indo- English Partition Literatures

Kamlesh Dangwal¹, & Ali Alshhre²

¹ Associate Professor, College of Science and Arts, Muhayil, Asir, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

² Assistant Professor, College of Science and Arts, Muhayil, Asir, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Kamlesh Dangwal, Associate Professor, College of Science and Arts, Muhayil, Asir, King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia.

Received: September 5, 2022

Accepted: October 10, 2022

Online Published: October 14, 2022

doi:10.5430/wjel.v12n8p181

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v12n8p181>

Abstract

A momentous event in our modern history was the victorious crown of the British machination to promote and foster imperial interest and it was the division of the subcontinent into two separate sovereign nations India and Pakistan. The Machiavellian thirst to grab power, the indiscretion of politically biased leaders, and unrelenting clamour by the aggressive communal groups ensued towards the division of the sub-continent. The birth and transfer of power and people to two sovereign newly carved nations in the subcontinent besmear both the nations into ghastliness of communal frenzy before realizing the euphoria of independence. The cruellest and most gruesome violence that accompanied the decision to divide the subcontinent into two separate nations was the culmination of the British machination and manoeuvre. The gory of violence accompanied by partition shattered all modes of decency, nobility, and liberal humanistic values and ideals brutally and trampled all possibilities of amity, sanity, and peace forever. The cardinal features of Indian civilization i.e., peace, mutual tolerance, syncretism, socio-cultural amity, and universal brotherhood were destroyed forever.

Keywords: imperial dominion, Hindu- Muslim separatism, communal violence, intolerance, gory of violence

1. Introduction

Partition of the Indian sub-continent was uncouthly a landmark in the history of modern India. It was the division of the sub-continent into two separate independent states to foster the imperial interest. In addition, partition was the culmination of the prolonged separatist tendencies either under the influence of false religious fervor or under the inflammatory strands adopted by imprudent and politically biased, bigoted, and short-sighted politicians.

The cruelest and most gruesome violence accompanying the announcement of Partition benumbed all sensitivity of sane people. Scholars, social scientists, historians, and litterateurs have confirmed that the Hindu-Muslim separatist process, mutual alienation, and antagonistic practices were the grassroots for the upsurge of a necessity of a separate state for Muslims.

The twentieth century alone witnessed the partition of Bengal, the creation of the Muslim delegation, the foundation of the Unity Conference of 1932, and many other acts. Subsequently, the foundation of a separate nation took a fervent pitch. The creation of Pakistan is the culmination of the separatist tendency. The united and secular India was finally divided. Intellectuals, scholars, litterateurs, social-scientist have time and again put forward the prospect unanimously that the partition of the sub-continent was churned and mobilized only after the British surfaced on the Indian scene. On account of the prolonged British rule in India, a celebrated civilian John Strachay explains: "The existence of hostile creeds among the Indian people, side by side is one of the strong points of our political position in India." (Graver and Graves: 1998: 2411)

The deliberate, mechanized, and successful interference of the British in the compact composite culture and social structure aroused a rift among people. The British always had good reasons for the discord and animosity among the people of various communities. The British especially favoured the Muslim League. The chief motive and exceptional errand of the British is precisely recorded in the statement of a retiring British Secretary of State who made the following statement:

A predominant bias in British officialism in India in favour of the Muslim community, partly on the ground of closer sympathy, but more largely as a make-weight against Hindu nationalism (Heehs 1988:155).

The multidimensionality of human sufferings has been captured most sensitively by the creative writers, poets, and novelists who, had either personally experienced partition or listened to the accounts of partition from others. The creative writers in Hindi, English, Punjabi, Sindhi, Urdu, and Bengali have described not only mass migration, dislocation, uprooting, nostalgia, and dehumanizing picture of refugee camps but also made a sincere endeavour to depict the ineradicable deep scars of the human mind.

The remarkable Hindi writings to delineate the theme of partition are - Jootha Sach by Yashpal, Adha Gaon and Os Ki Boond by Rahi Masoom Raja, Aur Insan Mar Gaya by Ramanand Sagar, Tamas by Bhisham Sahni, Voh Phir Nahin Aayee by Bhagwati Charan Varma,

Wapsi and Laute Huye Musafir by Kamleshwar, Tat Ke Bandhan by Vishnu Prabhakar, Kath Putlee by Davendara Satyarthi, Mukti Path by Ila Chand Joshi, Yah Path Bandhu Tha by Naresh Mehta and Alochana by Dr. Ramesh Kuntal Megh, etc.

The Urdu writings about partition are – Aag Ka Dariya, Mere Bhi Sanam Khane by Qurratualin Haider, Zameen by Abdus Samad, Angan by Khadija Mastoor, Udaas Naslen by Abdullah Husain, Dasht-i-Soos by Jameela Hashmi, Basti by Intizar Husain, Main Kaun Hun by K.M Abbas, Khuda Ki Basti by Khawja Ahmed Abbas, etc. The significant Marathi novels to delineate partition is – Sunita by S.K Bivalkar, Biduce Katha by G.N Dandekar, and Elgar by S.N Pendse, etc. The significant Bengali writings on partition themes are - Nongor by Abu Rushid, Neer Sandhane by Anwar Pasha, Warish by Shawkat Ali, Sangshapatak by Shaheedullah Kaiser, Khawabnama by Akhtaruzaman Ilias, etc.

The notable Punjabi writings on the theme of partition are – Pinjar by Amrita Pritam, Jaman Bhoomi by Devendra Satyarthi, Phatu Marashi by Gurbachan Bhullar, Sarhde Jaghm by JaswantSingh Kanwal, Pakistan Hamara Hai by K.S Duggal, Khabal by Kulwant Singh Virk, etc. Indian writing in English also delineated partition as the primary theme. The worth mentioning Indian writing on partition themes are – My Brother's face by Dhangopal Mukherjee, Murugan, and the Tiller by K.S. Venkatramani, The Changeling by Hasan Ali, We Never Die by D.F Karaka, Alien Hearts by K.S Duggal, Tomorrow is Ours, and Defeat and Death, Inqalab by K.A Abbas, So Many Hungry by Bhabani Bhattacharya, Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh, Sunlight on a broken column by Attia Hosain, A Bend in the Ganges by Manohar Malgoankar, Azadi, The Crown and the Loincloth by Chaman Nahal, Waiting for the Mahatma R.K Narayan, The Dark Dancer by B.Rajan, Some Inner Fury by Kamala Markandaaya, A Time to be Happy by Nayantara Sahgal, The Transit by Venu Chetale, Midnight Children by Salman Rushdie, etc.

How many people died in the communal riots and massacre which accompanied partition is unknown. The magnitude of dislocation and uprooting is unprecedented in the recorded history of the land. Time and again politicians, historians, social scientists, and litterateurs have attempted to review and offered an objective account of partition from the available sources and shreds of evidence. These sources flash sufficient light on trauma, mass migration, communal riots, social and cultural changes, and causes of suspicion, hatred, fear, and disharmony. Besides this, the maddening frenzy of communalism, terror-stricken and pathetic condition of the refugees, degenerate camp life, and prolonged rehabilitation process, evacuation management made by the new government finds sufficient delineation in the hands of the creative writers of the subcontinent.

The intense nostalgia, cultural and social amity of the undivided past, the role of individual leaders, the failure of Gandhian ideology, party differences, and rivalries in various disciplines did not skip the penetrative eyes of the intellectuals and bureaucratic stalwarts and profound expression in pamphlets, prose works, poems, and novels. The interesting concept to note here is that most of them had expressed amazement at the fact that how a nation that was built around shared ideals, moralistic codes, and social and cultural, traditional values so easily fragmented and how the dream of a united and secular India withered into the air. The historical perspective of partition provides penetrative insight and understanding into partition novels. The historical perspective has been taken into purview to encompass the tumultuous decades which nurtured the seeds of nationalism and communalism alike. The infectious roots of which still sprout from time to time and resurface the horrendous and terrifying experiences of the past. As the magnitude of havoc unleashed was unexpected and unprecedented, many of those who lived through the trauma of partition failed to comprehend how a nation is woven around the common codes of socio-cultural, economic, and conventional ideals so instantly fragmented. In the tumultuous storm of partition, the moral, social, familial convention, social decorum, and the ideals and nuances absorbed by all communities alike withered in the air. The generation's long cherished values and moralistic codes were most callously ruptured and violated. The fantastic dream of a secular and united India was destroyed.

Interestingly, the overnight-turned-bloodthirsty communities had lived in an environment of mutual peace tolerance, and harmony for as long as generations could remember. On the holistic series of events that erupted at the time of independence and partition sociologists, historicists, intellectuals, scholars, politicians and litterateurs have specified several theories. But, the commonality of these theories is that the partition was the outcome of communal politics, the seed of which was sown in the late nineteenth century. It was mechanically nurtured and watered by the British. Gandhi rightly remarked, "This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with the British advent" (Collins and Lapierre: 1995:13). Thus, the partition holocaust witnessed and suffered by the people in the sub-continent was the crown of British machination and culmination of their policy of divide and rule. The perennial source of Imperial domination was the rigorous divisive forces injected into the people by them to promote Colonization across the world.

2. Literature Review/ Historical Background

1. The British role in polarization

The British, very cunningly and methodically utilized mutual aversion and opposition in two communities against each other. The abhorrent and corrupt practices of the fanatic rulers of the medieval Islamic (Mughal) period again resurfaced with their poisonous instincts. The denunciation erupted between the Hindu and Muslim communities because of the endless confrontation and liquidation process adopted by some imprudent and fanatic rulers during the Muslim rule in India. This tendency of Islamization not only poisoned and sullied the generation-old cultural heritage of Indian civilization but also created a rift and separate tendency between the two communities forever. The separatist tendency was further aggravated by the British discriminatory tactics, whereby they encouraged the replacement of the Persian script with the 'Devnagri' script. Urdu language which follows the Persian script was ascribed to the Muslims and Hindi language which followed the 'Devnagri' script was assigned to the Hindus. In this way language too was allocated a

communal tangle. The language struggle created diversion and differences between the two communities owing to the preservation of Indian culture and civilization. Now the changed scenario compelled people to separate on account of language. The two languages stand for two people. Hindi and Urdu now stood for Hindus and Muslims respectively. The discriminatory tactics culminated by the British in the expulsion of Muslims from all authoritarian positions. The Muslims were incapacitated to a pitiable condition. The British enfeebled them so as never to let them rise.

The Muslims were severely entreated. They were subjected to suspicion, social and judicial injury, and mistreatment at the authoritative level. All bureaucratic terminuses are bent on undermining them. They became literally backward, economically deficient, and fanatic in their social and cultural dominion. The aloofness of the Muslims rendered them insecurity, economic deficiency, backwardness, and alienation from the national mainstream. This discrimination was successfully churned by the British by providing all opportunities to the Hindus only. Muslims were seen through suspicion. All these strands played by the British made the Muslims politically inexperienced, economically insecure, and educationally backward. The whole Muslim community was trampled by the British. However, the pretext and propaganda resounding in the air was the Hindu hostility against them. The whole process led the Muslim community to stagnation and bewilderment. On the other side, the Hindus made a tremendous rise in the business, administration, education, and at nationalistic levels.

In the late Nineteenth century an upsurge of nationalism, an idea of the free nation on democratic principles, and Hindu Muslim brotherhood gained momentum. The nation realized the essence of Hindu-Muslim unity for the attainment of freedom from the British yoke. And it emerged as a big challenge to the Imperial government. The British very practically and mechanically played another card. In the changed circumstances the British now strategically began to support and encourage the Muslims. The British patronized the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Sayyid Ahmed Khan. The purpose of this institution was to incite Muslim separatism. The Muslims were set in discord with the only nationalistic organized party i.e., the Indian National Congress. Besides this, it also divided the two communities on the basis of Hindu dominion and Muslim subservience in all political, social, and religious setups. Eventually, the Muslims were convinced that the establishment of the democratic institution would mean the end of their cultural heritage. The Muslims predominantly realized that the Indian National Congress was a Hindu party and subjugation to it would mean permanent subservience of the minority forever.

Therefore, the Muslim leaders discouraged the Hindu-Muslim alliance and persisted in their faith and devotion to the British government. In this context, Choudhary Khaliqzuman (1961:225-26) in his memoir vehemently purported:

Democracy too, was only a ploy by Hinduized Congress to 'dominate the minorities. Its promoters were interested in 'awakening and rekindling...the dormant historical feuds between Hindus and Muslims.... That is why the Muslim masses heartily rejected it.

The British imbibed the strategy of "Divide and Rule." The separatist tendencies finally culminated in the birth of the Muslim League in 1906. The second half of the Twentieth century authenticated the failure of party conferences, the disintegration of the unity conference in 1932, the failure of the Shimla conference, the Jinnah-Nehru hostility, etc. The communal deadlock for power dominion further deteriorated the glaring conditions. The rise of nationalism across the country, and nationwide agitation intensified the Indian National Congress' yearning to establish Home-Rule. The idea of Home Rule provoked the British to conjure the communal tangle. The British encouraged and provided assistance to the Muslim League ostensibly to win Muslim confidence and devotion but largely to weigh and curb Hindu nationalism in the Indian political scene.

The uncalled and aggressive intervention of the revivalist movements and religious institutions in both inside (political sphere) and outside (socio-cultural) fabric messed up and sullied the situation to an irreparable state. Instinctive and poisonous whiff wafted by these religious institutions affected the whole nation. The communal segregation gradually divided the whole nation into two deadly hostile camps. The involvement and association of many illustrious and renowned leaders from the Indian National Congress in religious propaganda and revivalist movement ignited communal ire to a nauseating degree. The passage of time gradually intensified the repulsion and alienation in the social decorum. The perpetual nagging of the revivalist groups on the preservation of cultural and religious heritage and values intensified the communal tangle and discord in the society. The emergence of Hindu Maha Sabha, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, RSS and Arya Samaj further deteriorated the flagrant situation. It caused deep fear and distrust in the minds of the Muslims.

The Hindu fundamentalist's hasty call for all Indian Hindu organizations threatened the Muslims. In this regard, Bipin Chandra (1987:159) judiciously quotes Nehru's proclamation:

To some extent, this fear is justified, or is at least understandable in a minority community... A special responsibility does attach to the Hindus in India both because they are the majority community and because economically and educationally, they are more advanced. The Mahasabha, instead of discharging that responsibility, has acted in a manner which has undoubtedly increased the communalism of the Muslims and made them distrust all the more.... One communalism does not end the other, each feed on the other, and both fatten.

The strands of religious movements and the revitalization process threatened nationalism and national unity. And, finally, the religious fervour and extreme hostility snapped the least possibility of congenially living together with respect and tolerance. In the vulnerable and rapidly deteriorating environment, humanistic values and sanctity were most callously ruptured. Amidst such an atmosphere, Gandhi, a lonely and only figure set a unique example of national consciousness.

But Gandhian ideology, philosophy of life, and religious values too could not escape the shaft of communalism. His ideas on truth,

non-violence, the conception of 'Ram Rajya', and inner voice were accused of spiritualizing politics and baffling mysticism. Gandhi spent his life campaigning against untouchability and communalism. Gandhi's speech at the Weavers Meeting on 31 August 1919 testifies to his conception of humanity and religion. Gandhi (1919:81) fairly states: "To think that it is pollution to touch any creature of God is sin."

However, Gandhi's religious values were charged with introducing the Hindu religion into politics. Sharply contradicting Gandhi's conceptions of religious values Akeel Bilgrami (1998:384) accuses:

It would be foolish and sentimental to deny the plain and well-known fact that Gandhi... encouraged the Hindu communal elements in the national movements...

He further accused "Gandhi for his own benefit supported the reactionary Muslims of the Khilafat Movement." Gandhi's efforts for cow protection, use of symbols, myths, and conception of idol worship were also misinterpreted. It was charged against him that these ideals standing for Hindu tradition find downright negation in Islam. Naturally, it created fear, suspicion, discontentment, and unrest in the Muslim community. Subsequently, at the political level Muslims were convinced that under the leadership of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress, only Hindus will be benefited. The Hindu dominion and aggression always feared the Muslims.

The political and religious awakening in the Hindu and Muslim communities led to the demand for Pakistan, a purely Muslim state under the dominion of Muslims. The national issue transformed from political independence to the liquidation and subjugation of religion and culture. The tendency which gets the hand of was the protection of holy places, the Arabic language, and the Turkish Empire from the independence struggle. The Hindus were addressed as "Kafirs" (non-believers) and the Muslims were called "Mlecchas" (untouchable) to denounce and subjugate each other. Finally, the two communities were bent upon the extermination of each other. Therefore, the religious frenzy and communal carnage were not unexpected.

2. British Role in 'Two Nation Theory'

The separatist tendency finally culminated in the foundation of the "All India Muslim League" in 1906 which ostensibly stood in the interest of Muslims but actually aimed to oppose Hinduism and the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League was supported and encouraged by the British. The British reinvigorated the Muslims apparently to safeguard them and to ensure their encroachment from Hindu political dominion. The British became protectors of the rights and interests of Muslims in India. Under the pretext of different reforms, schemes, and policies, the British perpetually divided the national agenda of integration and rigorously encouraged communalism. The religious institutions, organizations, and 'revivalist groups' whipped perpetually on the antagonistic practices of the two communities and intensified the communal tangle. A ray of hope which was stimulated after the commencement of the Non-Violence, and Non-Cooperation Movement finally collapsed with the failure of 'The Khilafat Movement.' The British successfully parted ways with the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League uncompromisingly. The Congress and the League stood for Hindus and Muslims respectively and downrightly opposed each other.

In the 1930s, the great poet Muhammad Iqbal visualized that North- West Indian- Muslim states sound to be the final destiny of the Muslims. But it was Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, the leader of Muslim students in England who for the first time in his pamphlets of 1933 and 1935 demanded the creation of a separate Muslim nation in the North-West of India. It was proposed that the new nation would be called Pakistan from the first letter of Punjab. It would include the Afghan province (NWFP) and Baluchistan in the province. The significance of the Lahore Resolution is implicit in Kamruddin Ahmad's assertion:

The Lahore Resolution... envisaged independent and sovereign States in north-east and north-western areas on India... Muslims of Bengal who were searching for an identity for three years found it. They were no longer a community, but a nation with its own defined territory. The Lahore resolution gave them a sense of nationhood. The younger generation especially the Muslim community of Bengal, welcomed it because until its adoption they were confused. Until 1940 their knowledge of Political science which they acquired from university textbooks was different from what they heard from their elders. They wanted a full part in the struggle for independence along with the younger generation of the other countries of Asia. The Lahore resolution had given the Muslims a sense of new direction. They felt that they were no longer interested in constitutional safeguards and assurances. Henceforth the dominant theme in Muslim politics was not a complaint against Hindu injustice but demand for separate political existence (Chakravarty and Hussain 1998:38).

Due to this, in the 1940s the idea of the two-nation theory caught stimulus. Moreover, the rapid deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relationships, the failure of the Indian leaders to draft a constitution accepted by all parties, the failure of the Congress to rectify the situation, the failure to fabricate modalities, the failure to assess the prolonged consequences of the divisive tendency, etc. were largely responsible for the acceptance of the idea of another nation.

The demand for a separate nation caught the most fervent pitch after the resignation of the Congress Ministries in 1939. The fatal demand for an independent state with autonomous and sovereign constituent units arose in the Lahore annual session of the Muslim League on 24 March 1940. To the great dismay and shock of the Indian national agenda the Indian assembly, negating its previous ideology now built, that there would be two separate nations in the Indian subcontinent. The demand and its acceptance also highlight the failure of the Indian Nationalists to check out a common program for the two communities. The League's demand for a separate nation was realized by the Muslims as the only safe outlet from the domination, exploitation, and oppression of Hindus. It also rejuvenated hope for the glorious future in the Islamic nation erected on Islamic culture and ideology. In response to all these alluring prospects, the Muslim League gained tremendous strength and popularity. The fundamental communal groups aggravated and worsened the crucial situation on both sides. The

Muslim League encouraged by its strength changeover to a new slogan 'Divide and quit' in 1943.

The Cripps movement failed in 1941 to realize self-government in India. On the other hand, the Muslims were adamant on their demand to segregate certain provinces from the proposed union. The Mission's agreement to this proposal was violently countered by the nationalists. But as Mishrul Hasan (1991:25) points out the Muslims claimed, "Partition is the only solution to India's constitutional problem." After the failure of Cripps Mission C. Rajgopalachari proposed that the only way to ward off the communal deadlock between the two communities was to accept the demand for a separate state. It is to be noted here that in his addressing speech to the Allahabad session of the Muslim League, the great poet, Sir Mohammad Iqbal in the 1930s declared that the "formation of a consolidated North-West India Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of Muslims" (Hechs 1988:158). The League's resolution was finally accepted for the formation of a provincial Interim Government. It demarcated certain contiguous districts to the North-West and North-East where the Muslim population was in absolute majority.

Sir Staffords Cripps Mission came with the proposal of self-government in India and proposed to disaffiliate certain provinces from the proposed union. The Congress leaders reacted sharply against it. It was a severe blow to the prolonged unity and solidarity of the nation. But the Muslims fervently welcomed the proposal. The proposal and its foundation promised the Muslims a pure land of Islamic culture. The communal deadlock continued for two successive years after the failure of Mission in 1943. The Congress on the behest of the demand for independence implored the League's support for the formation of the Interim Government and in exchange for this cooperation, the Muslim League reiterated its Lahore resolution which was helplessly accepted. This failure led Lord Wavell to design a plan for self-government in India. A conference was held in the summer capital Shimla in 1945. At the conference, leaders of Congress, League, Sikh, Scheduled Cast, and other groups were invited. Despite an optimistic note from Gandhi, Jinnah flatly refused to cooperate. Jinnah accused the Congress position as a direct sham. The Muslims were convinced that they could never receive fair dealing from Congress. The Muslim leader Jinnah persuasively began to expound on a new theory. Jinnah persuaded the Muslim masses along "The western doctrine of national independence, the two-nation theory. For the masses he hammered on the dangers of Hinduization and Hindu provocations." (Spear: 1998:278).

The Shimla conference was announced as a failure. Elections were conducted for the central and provincial legislative assembly in August 1945 for the establishment of the executive council in India. The League won almost all seats reserved for Muslims both at the provincial and central levels. The Indian Muslims entrusted their future into the hands of the League. A Cabinet Mission was set up on 16th May 1946 to unravel constitutional deadlock and to dismantle discontentment. The Mission promised to break the communal deadlock and guaranteed the unity of the nation. Both the Congress and the League subscribed to the plan. The Mission rejected the idea of Pakistan. The Congress' later declaration that their party is free from all constraints and will deal with every situation as it evolves frustrates the Muslims. The Muslim League, therefore, demanded the immediate establishment of Pakistan. For this, the League called for "Direct Action Day" (Chakravarty and Hussain: 1998:22) on 16th August 1946, which unleashed communal violence on an unprecedented scale in Calcutta. In the annals of history, the Calcutta riots are known as the "Great Calcutta killings of 1946" (Chatterjee: 2002:68). Jinnah's "Direct Action Day" besmeared the land into communal rioting across the country from Bengal to Bombay and further from north to west Punjab. The precipitation of atrocities in the name of sectarianism, religion, and savagery necessitated the immediate evacuation of minorities to the newly formed nations.

The passivity of the British government, the administrative vacuum, and the power-hungry political arena worsened the condition of the evacuating masses. To the British, the fallout of independence and partition was nothing but a cataclysmic avalanche. The breakdown of law and order brought terrible cataclysms and victimized the weakest and most vulnerable people. Exhaustive degree of disruption, prolonged disagreement, and oppressive pressure from the British for the transfer of power compelled the nationalists to take the decision of partition. The transfer of power is illustrated by (Zakira: 1998:12) as:

To Gandhi's utter dismay, the decision to partition the country was taken by the principal players - the British Labour Government led by Attlee, the Indian National Congress, and the Muslim League.

The communal violence in Calcutta was so violent that it soon engulfed Tripura, Bihar, and Eastern Bengal. The contagious and infectious sting soon poisoned Punjab, United Province, and Bombay. The whole of northern India was almost set to a communal frenzy. Thus, the euphoria of independence, the new dawn of promised land which ushered independence could not be realized, instead, it ushered an unnerving shock, bewilderment, disillusionment, and brutal amputation from the past forever. The Interim Government failed at all junctures to fend off communal frenzy and sectarianism in the Indian masses as the domination of power was in the British hands. And the British let things loose to turmoil. The Muslim League refused to accept the leadership of Nehru. Therefore, elections were presumed for a constitutional assembly in which ninety percent of seats were secured by the League. Elated by their landmark victory the League boycotted the constitutional assembly. Due to the failure of all negotiations, Prime Minister Attlee on 20th February 1947 publicized two great historical declarations. Firstly, the government's definite intention was 'to transfer power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948.' The second decision is to replace Lord Wavell with Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten as Viceroy. Thus, Lord Mountbatten entered the Indian political scene at very crucial hours of power transfer. He held six unsuccessful meetings with Jinnah. The Muslim leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah incessantly and obdurately stressed the Hindu-Muslim differences. He emphasized on their mutual differences on the basis of language, art, law, moral code, custom, history, and tradition.

Jinnah strongly propagated that only speedy surgical operation is the way out to sustain peace and harmony in the two communities.

Mountbatten advocated for a united India and put forward that partition would be disastrous. But Jinnah adamantly declared, "I don't care how little you give me so long as you give it to me completely." Jinnah further claimed:

India has never been a nation. It only looks at the map. The cows I want to eat, the Hindu stops me from killing. Every time a Hindu shakes hands with me he has to wash his hand. The only thing the Muslim has in common with the Hindu is his slavery to the British (Chand: 1974:372).

Long before Nehru entered the Indian political scene the ideas of secularism, legal codes, social and religious reformations, norms of equality and non-violent politics were an integral part of the national movement and had been considerably discussed throughout the nineteenth century. But surprisingly Akeel Bilgrami (1998:384-401) considers Nehru's secularism as *sui generis*. He writes:

Nehru's secularism is nothing more than pure liberal fantasy. It is established by an ahistorical, philosophical argument. It was not earned through negotiations but was *sui generis*.

In the beginning, leaders opposed the dismemberment of the proposed union but the perpetual opposition and disruptions made by the League vexed them. All their efforts were exhausted to retain national integrity. Now, partition was seen as the only way out to get rid of all the prevailing tumultuous development in the sub-continent. Gandhi proposed to make Jinnah, the leader of the government of undivided India, but this proposal was denounced by the nationalists including Nehru and Patel. Even the League called this proposal fantastic. However, Nehru and Sardar Patel denied accepting the prejudiced and reluctant Jinnah as the head of the government. Gandhi's withdrawal after being frustrated and defeated in his entire feat to commence peace ended all hopes of the union.

Boundary Commission was set up to delineate the frontiers between Muslim and Non-Muslim areas of Punjab and Bengal. Sir Cyril Radcliff, the chairman of the boundary commission was imposed to cleave the country into two pieces in five weeks. The provinces which were assigned to Pakistan were Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), West Punjab, Baluchistan and Sindh. Later, Lord Mountbatten announced the partition of the country. As a result of which India and Pakistan emerged as two independent sovereign states in the sub-continent.

3. Research Methodology

A descriptive study on the historical, political and social scientists' columns over the division of the subcontinent and methodical study of political pamphlets, critical treaties, and all major works of Indo-English literature pertaining to the partition of the subcontinent being thoroughly and reflectively studied for the research paper. In addition to Indo-English novels, personal memoirs, interviews of illustrious writers, and expositions of political bureaucrats and social scientist has been encompassed for the proposed research work.

4. Research Questions

The partition victimized the most vulnerable section of people. It is the innocent people who had undergone demographic dislocation, riot, murder, indignity, brutality, abduction, and rape during and after the partition. The three familiar figures which surfaced and superseded the political arena were the Imperialists (the British), the Pakistani (the Muslim League), and the Indians (the Hindus). The common issues raised by these three advocates were - what led to partition? Was it inevitable? Could it have been avoided? How would the shape of Hindu-Muslim relationships be in undivided India? What is the share of the Colonial Power (divide and Rule), India (Hindu domination and Congress authoritarianism), and Pakistan (Muslim majority and separatism)? Most Indians held Muslims responsible for the vivisection of the Indian subcontinent whereas, the Muslims counter accuses the Indian National Congress and the Hindus of the same. The Indian National Congress failed to ensure equal rights and security to Muslims. How did the dream of a united and secular India wither into the air is a matter of lasting debate among intellectuals? However, persistent alienation finally led to an uncompromising point of parting ways. The British parliament passed the Indian Independence Act in July 1947, leading to the creation of two new states.

Partition as reflected in Indo-English literature:

How many people actually died in the communal riots and massacre which accompanied partition is unknown. But it is estimated that about seventeen million people had to relocate across the newly drawn boundaries. The magnitude of dislocation, uprooting, and massacre is unprecedented in the recorded history of our recent history. Time and again politicians, historians, social scientists, and litterateurs' have attempted to review and offered an objective account of partition from the available sources and pieces of evidence. These sources flash sufficient light on the trauma, mass migration, communal riots, social and cultural changes, and causes of suspicion, hatred, fear, and disharmony. Besides, this maddening frenzy of communalism, terror-stricken and pathetic condition of the refugees, degenerate camp life, and prolonged rehabilitation process, evacuation management made by the new governments finds sufficient delineation in the hands of creative writers of the sub-continent.

The intense nostalgia, cultural and social amity of the undivided past, the role of the individual leaders, the failure of Gandhian ideology, party differences, and rivalries did not skip the penetrative eyes of the intellectuals and bureaucratic stalwarts and found expressions in pamphlets, prose work, poems, stories and memoirs, autobiography and novels. Most of them have expressed their bewilderment over how a nation is woven around shared ideals, moralistic codes, and sociocultural values that are so easily fragmented.

However, the historical and literary perspective of partition provides a penetrative insight and understanding into the partition. Interestingly, though there are chaotic wallows of assumptions, postulations, and opinions in the context of the precipitation of separatism between the Hindu and Muslim communities. The commonality of the theories of historians, sociologists, intellectuals, scholars,

politicians, and works of literature is that the seed of partition was shown in the late nineteenth century and mechanically nurtured and watered by the British. In this context, Gandhi rightly remarked, "This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with the British advent" (Collins and Lapierre: 1995:13).

The partition victimized the most vulnerable and innocent people who had undergone demographic dislocation, riot, murder, indignity, brutality, abduction, and voracious rape during and after the partition. Referring to the ethical war between the two communities Mohammad Umar Menon (1987:13) observes:

I wonder if partition, which was accompanied by so much bloodshed and horror, can ever be discussed in the vocabulary of religious awe and if it is even ethical to do so. I also wonder if it makes any sense to believe that centuries of history after the arrival of Islam, with all its infinite contingencies, were actually a preparation for the achievement of an Islamic telos called Pakistan. I rather suspect that there is no moral glamour to the idea that is accompanied by the waste of millions of human lives.

The colossal event, partition, which followed an unprecedented magnitude of exodus, violence, and trauma, can in no way be undermined as the catastrophic end of one era. The psychosis of partition disturbingly throbs even in the present times. Partition is not merely a shadowy or distant event but its entire milieu is still prevalent in the present time. In this context the notable partition writer and critic Alok Bhalla (2006:11) asserts:

Partition fiction offers a testimony that is different in kind from the politically and socially infected archives that historians primarily use. Fiction narratives should be read besides historical accounts, political documents, police reports, religious pamphlets, or personal memoirs.

In the creative writings, the existential anguish for inane violence has been sardonically reflected. The profundities of hidden currents of the tumultuous time are exposed in various literary genres. Exploring the profundity of partition literature Alok Bhalla (2006:12) further writes:

Partition novels are, no doubt deeply scattered with the rage of those who had suffered, and they present with great sympathy for characters that can neither be consoled nor be urged to forgive. They carry with them the acrid smell of ash, rubble, and rot which can never be washed away.

The irreparable damage of partition of the subcontinent is so demoralizing that even after a span of over sixty years the irreparable and unerasable scars of partition resurface in the psyche of people the nightmarish experiences of the mayhem and murder makes one shiver even today and are nowhere close to healing. The imaginative creative writing recreates all incidents of demonic strain and ghastly beastliness to meet a cathartic purpose. The partition fiction reveals the falsity of religiosity, the efficacy of the two-nation theory, the futility of the boundary line, the hollowness of Muslim fear, deviation from ideological principles, identity crises in the newborn nations, disillusionment and bewilderment in the new promised land, etc. Therefore, introspective and critical analysis of partition literature has a manifold purpose.

5. Conclusion

The partition literature, a symbiosis of fact and fiction is the richest source of purgation from all social evils, communalism, hatred, animosity, suspicion, alienation, and political bigotry. The magnitude of death and destruction in World War I and II, subsequently found abundant treatment in western literature. It is surprising that, though the magnitude of death, destruction, carnage, and disintegration of moralistic and humanistic concerns far exceeds in the partition of the subcontinent, yet it is curious to note that this cataclysmic and historical event did not stir the creative imagination of many Indian writers.

Ironically, the writers who delineated the trauma of partition as central theme can be counted on fingertips. Some of the writers to delineate India-Pakistan partition on a vivacious and vast canvas are Khushwant Singh, Bhisham Sahni, Manohar Malgoankar, Sahuna Singh Baldwin, Raj Gill, Intizar Husain, Joginder Paul, Attia Hussain, Kamleshwar, Rahi Masoom Raja, Krishna Baldev Vaid, Balachandra Rajan, Qurratulain Hyder, Amrita Pritam, Krishna Sobti, and Bapsi Sidhwa. These writers have treated the theme of partition proficiently in a naked and trenchant manner.

Partition stories are also a poignant account to mobilize and persuade the succeeding generation. Common people, men, women and children who lived the 'living inferno' have been whispering stories into the ears of their progeny. Many of such stories are of literary corpus and are peerless. These stories are the poignant and suitable ingredients to yield insight horror, humiliation, and zone of eerie silences, sadness, psychosis, horrific dismembering of women and psychological death of women. Partition witnessed the most derogatory and loathsome treatment of women. Regarding the plight of women Agnes Flavia (1996:98) remarks:

Their bodies mutilated and disfigured, their breast and genitalia tattooed and branded with triumphal slogans their womb torn open, foetus killed, rampant raping all this male savagery used the women body as an easy site to dishonour the other community.

Many literary writers have also searched for the ideal concept of androgyny. A patriarchal society where the concepts of 'purity', 'chastity', and 'honour' were incorrigibly trenchant, the official rehabilitation programmes could not make the people's heart to accept the abducted women. The agony of women remained perennial. Therefore, a critical study is required to analyse the pain, anguish, humiliation, and silences absorbed by women. It is an invitation for the deeper understanding of large scale of sexual abuse and dampening of patriarchal snobbery. Writers like Saddat Hasan Manto, Asfaque Ahmad, Intizar Husain, Ismat Chughtai, Krishna Sobti,

Ahmad Nadeem Quasmi, Alok Bhalla, Kuluwant Singh Virk, Bhisham Sahni, Attia Husain, Kamleshwar, Surendra Prakash, Salil Chaudhary, Vishnu Prabhakar, Jamila Hasmi, Rajendra Singh Bedi, Syed Mohammad Ashraf, and Ram Lal etc. have realistically captured and recorded the shocking events of predatory times.

The partition of the sub-continent in 1947 left an ineradicable imprint in world history. The terrible world history gave birth to about twelve million refugees on both the sides of the border, and left a million dead. Yet partition literature is inadequate to expose the on-route savagery. The available work on partition exposes both kinds of experiences. On one side it exposes the social fabric woven by generation old values, faith, traditional, and cultural values while on the other side it exposes the tormented voices, plight of the refugees, machination of foreign rulers, Hindu-Muslim conflicts, and anguish for the nostalgic past, and ruptured consciousness of the people. The creative writers amply showed their excellence in both the genres. Creative writers in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali unanimously condemned communalism at all level. The division of the sub-continent has been depicted as the victory of British machination and communal politics. All the creative writers have extolled communal harmony, religious tolerance, universalism, humanity, liberal humanistic values and the composite and syncretic culture and civilization in the sub-continent.

Partition literature aesthetically interprets the physical and psychological turmoil of the time. At the same time partition literature dispassionately deals with the historical and socio-political condition of the time. The saga of the sub-continent has been delineated by the creative writers in a consummately simple and subtle style without any reservation or inhibition.

All forms and manifestation of partition find ample expression in the hands of the creative writers. Even after a deep penetrative study into partition literature, it is mind boggling what demonic strain brooded over the masses for such ghastly beastliness. The imaginative writing recreates all incidents to meet a cathartic purpose. The critical analysis of partition fiction reveals the falsity of religiosity, efficacy of the two-nation theory, futility of the boundary line, hollowness of Muslim fear, deviation from the ideological principles, identity crises in new-born nations, disillusionment and confusion in the promised land, etc. Therefore, introspective and critical analysis of partition literature has a manifold purpose. It enables us to decipher human tragedy in many dimensions. It makes a linkage with the past and acts as an acute medium to recall and share the collective memories and chaotic experiences of the past. Thus, partition literature being a symbiosis of fact and fiction is the richest source of purgation from the excesses of all social evils, communalism, hatred, animosity, suspicion, alienation, and political bigotry. It acts as a most reliable object to recall our previous blunders and mistakes substantially. It also provides a safe outlet to learn a lesson from the past for the betterment of the present.

References

- 1974-84. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol: 16*. New Delhi : Publication Division.
- 1977-84. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Vols. LXXXVIII-XC*. New Delhi : Publication Division.
- Ahmad, K. (1978). "A Socio-Political History of Bengal and Birth of Bangladesh." In. Chakravarty and Mazar 1978.
- Bhalla, A. (2006). *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a lost Home*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Bilgrami, A. (1998). "Secularism, Nationalism and Modernity" In Bhargava and Chatterjee 1998.
- Chakravarty, S. R., & Hussain, M. Ed. (1998). *Partition of India: Literary Responses*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication.
- Chand, T. (1974). *History of Modern India*. New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
- Chatterjee, P. (2002). *The Films of Ritwik Ghatak and the Partition*. Settar and Gupta.
- Collins, L., & Dominique, L. (1975). *Freedom at Midnight*. New Delhi. Vikas Publishing Housing Pvt Ltd.
- Flavia, A. (2004). *Redefining the Agenda of Women's Movement within Secular frame Work*. In Kumar 2004. Gandhi, Mahatma. 1974-84. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Vol. 10*. New Delhi: New Delhi : Publication Division.
- Grover, B. C., & Graves, S. (1998). *A New Look at Modern Indian History*. New Delhi: S Chand and Company Ltd.
- Hees, P. (1998). *India's Freedom Struggle*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Khaliqzuman, C. (1961). *Pathway to Pakistan*. Lahore: Longmans.
- Kumar, S. P. (2004). *Narrating Partition: Texts Interpretation and Ideas*. New Delhi: India log Publication. Pvt. Ltd.
- Memon, M. U. (1998). *An Epic Unwritten: The Penguin Book of Partition Stories from Urdu*. New Delhi: Penguin Book India.
- Settar, S and Gupta, Indira B. Ed. 2002. *Pangs of Partition: The Parting of Ways Vol-I*, New Delhi. Manohar Publishers and Distributors.
- Spear, P. (1998). *History of India Vol. II*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Zakaria, R. (1998). *Price of Partition Recollection and Reflections*. Mumbai: Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).