

## **The Spasm With The Partition of India and Indian English Literature**

*Reetu*

*Assistant Professor*

*Department of English*

*S. D. Mahila Mahavidyalaya*

*Narwana, Haryana, India*

### **Abstract**

The terrible drama of division occurred when India attained its freedom. It was one of the most horrific incidents in Indian history, shocking the whole country into revulsion and loathing. The political philosophy of Indian unity, fraternity, and unity—through which India attained freedom—remains a failure, and the new, opposing chapter in Indian politics began right after the country was divided. The division affected Indians all around the nation, making it more than just a historical event. The nation was given a new direction for its future by the split rather than by adhering to the Indian tradition's worldview.

*Keywords : English Literature and Partition of India, Pain of Partition in English Novels*

### **Introduction**

Many people in India and Pakistan were motivated to write and make films about the deadly riots that occurred after the partition of India. While some works highlighted the killings that occurred during the refugee movement, others focused on the challenges that the refugees on both sides of the border experienced following the

division. Even now, more than a few decades after the split, novels and motion pictures are produced that deal with the division's events. The partition of India and Pakistan is cited by the founding members of the Progressive Artist's Group of Bombay as a major factor in the group's establishment in December 1947.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and several more short tales are included in the literature reflecting the human cost of independence and division. The plot of *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie (1980), winner of the Booker Prize and the Booker of Bookers, is based on the magically gifted children who were born at 12:01 am on August 14, 1947. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre's nonfiction book *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) detailed the circumstances leading up to the inaugural Independence Day festivities in 1947. Even though the body of literature is so extensive and varied, this essay makes an effort to highlight the most important contributions made to the study of India's division. Some literary works by well-known thinkers and authors are highlighted in this essay.

The British were compelled to make concessions before leaving. These accommodations were made piecemeal and only partially met the desires of the people living on the Indian subcontinent. A relatively tiny number of wealthy Indians were given the opportunity to serve on councils in 1909 according to the Government of India Act. Another Act established an Indian Parliament in 1919, but only wealthy Indians had voting rights. A subsequent Act from 1935 gave the Indian parliament additional authority while still keeping key departments under British control. Additionally, the 1935 elections showed the Muslim League that a Hindu-led state would rule an independent India.

Due to these actions, the people of the Indian subcontinent lost faith in the British to bring about any type of genuine freedom. When the Cripps Mission offered India

dominion status after the war in exchange for supporting the British war effort, this was reaffirmed in 1942. The offer was immediately rejected by Ghandi since comparable ones made before World War One were never kept. Indian nationalists were further alienated by the British when they put down the "Quit India Campaign" and detained hundreds of individuals.

It was obvious by March 1947 that the British were no longer in charge of Indian development. Mountbatten said that the British will leave no later than June 1948 when he landed in India in March 1947. After six weeks, Mountbatten came up with a proposal to divide India into two nations. After it, Mountbatten said that the British pullout date would be moved up to 15 August 1947. The British made a total mess of delineating the borders between the two countries, making partition now unavoidable. Due to being on the "wrong" side of the new borders, twelve million people became refugees and one million died as a result.

Manjit Sachdeva's 2013 book Lost Generations tells the story of the Muslim League massacre in rural Rawalpindi in March 1947, the massacres on both sides of the new border in August 1947 as seen by an escaping Sikh family, the family's settlement and partial rehabilitation in Delhi, and the family's ultimate ruin (including death) at the hands of mobs in 1984 after a Sikh assassinated the prime minister. There is optimism for the lifting of travel restrictions between India and Pakistan as a result of the 2013 Google India commercial Reunion (about the Partition of India).

Hindus and Muslims fought together in the insurrection of 1857, known as the first fight for independence, with the goal of conquering a shared foe. Because India was politically divided when the British arrived, they were able to establish their authority. As a result, they were aware of this unity and understood that their existence

depended on their ability to keep the people divided. This insight gave rise to the well-known British "Divide and Rule" doctrine.

One of the finest things to divide the population, according to theory, was religion. It serves as a powerful tool for achieving social, political, and other objectives. Additionally, the British exploited religion as a tool to splinter India's collective might. The Muslims were severely persecuted by the British up to 1870 since they were blamed for the uprising. The British altered their tune after 1870 and began to support the Muslim minority. British dominance in India had been endangered by the emergence of nationalism, thus attempts were definitely made to stifle it. An essential aspect of the national movement was that the Muslim community waited longer to adopt it.

As a result, members of the Hindu, Parsi, and Christian communities made up the majority of the early nationalist movement. The British promptly got to work making sure that Muslims did not join the movement after noticing their absence from it. The British also started putting measures into place that supported the actions of local forces and split the national battle.

Since the education culture had not yet extended to the Muslim Community, who felt left out and demanded a specific quota, the majority of jobs were filled by Hindus when the British opened up the country's bureaucracy.

Former nationalist Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan began to lean toward communism. The writing of Indian history also promoted communalism. Community polarisation was facilitated by socio-religious reform groups like the Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharam, Aligarh, Wahabi, and a few other outliers.

On October 16, 1905, Lord Curzon, the viceroy of India at the time, divided Bengal. The argument used to support partition was that Bengal, a very big state with a vast population, left the eastern part of the country poorly administered. The true reasons for the division, however, were different.

Hindus in Bengal would be in a weaker position because Muslims would now rule the East, leading to Hindu resistance to the partition while Muslims were strongly in favour of it. Another component of the "Divide and Rule" policy was this division.

Muslims embraced the division because it favoured them, while Hindus opposed it because it favoured them. As a result, the Hindu community started the Swadeshi Movement by shunning British products. When the British opted to back the Hindus in this situation, the Muslims were upset. The message encouraging the Muslims to return to their country was moderate.

Muslims established the Muslim League as a new political party in 1906 as a result of the rising communalism. At first, it was limited to Muslims who were educated. The Indian National Congress, which included young Muslims, started to gain widespread support from its supporters about the same period.

In truth, until 1920, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, one of the key figures in Pakistan's founding, was a member of the Indian National Congress.

During British control in India, the Khilafat Movement (1919–1924) was an important Islamic movement. The Sultan of Turkey, often referred to as the Caliph, or the successor of Prophet Muhammad, was regarded as the spiritual head of Muslims throughout.

This was the country's first mainstream Muslim-led religious political organisation. However, this movement was initially solely intended for well-educated and aristocratic Muslims.

Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru, who connected his Non Cooperation Movement with it, supported the Khilafat Movement. The other political parties banded together to defend the injustice experienced by the Muslims since significant Congress leaders had joined forces with this campaign.

The two Ali brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, were the major architects of the Khilafat Movement. They were among the protesting leaders who, although imprisoned, made their views heard in periodicals and newspapers, arousing the Muslim community.

The hub of this movement was Bombay, where they had their first conference wherein discussing the issues of the Movement. The Muslim League became increasingly marginalised as the Indian National Congress gained widespread support. As a consequence, the Muslim League received just 109 of the 492 seats allotted for Muslims and only 4.8 percent of all Muslim votes, demonstrating the lack of widespread support for the party among Muslims themselves. Muslims performed well in the 1937 elections, whilst Hindus had a less than favourable reaction. For instance, Punjab's Hindu Mahasabha had only won 12 of the state's 175 seats. The parties eventually united as a consequence in order to guarantee their existence.

When the Congress forbade communalists from working within the Congress organisation in 1938, the situation grew worse. As a result, the Congress came under fire for advocating that Hindus were the only people who lived in India. This gave rise to the "two nation hypothesis" as practised by Hindu fundamentalists.

The "two nation doctrine" featured the Hindu Maha Sabha, which claims that only Hindus have a right to the country and that Muslims must either find another country or submit to Hindu authority. As Pakistan has the largest Muslim population, it is the only choice, according to "the Muslim League," to defend the interests of Muslims.

Viceroy Linlithgow actively supported the Muslim League when World War II broke out and utilised Pakistan's influence to defy the Congress' request that the British make a commitment to free India after the war and promptly transfer real authority to Indians as a sign of their integrity. The British sought an agreement between the Muslims League and the Congress organisation that specified no political settlement should be formed that was insulting to the Muslims League before making any promises or deciding on a specific course of action. Through this pact, Jinnah would be granted a kind of future "veto" authority.

The major figurehead of the Muslim League, Jinnah, had an alternative perspective on religion and its customs. One of Jinnah's biggest flaws was that he primarily backed the wealthy Muslims while exhibiting little concern for the uneducated and backward Muslims. Muslim Landlords and Nawabs were the only elite Muslims who were to get the benefits that the Muslim League sought to provide to them. The Muslim League sought to stir up religious sentiments to follow a devoted path because the Muslims were not unified in the days before partition.

Low caste Muslims sought to forge their own route because they felt undervalued by the Muslim League, coming from regions like the South and North West province where they backed the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League used abusive rhetoric after realising this situation.

Elite Hindus like as zamindars, moneylenders, and other elites founded a group to incite anti-Muslim sentiment while also fighting the India National Congress in 1870. Their only aim was to drive the Muslims out of the nation. Hindus came first and Indians came second in their eyes. This idea gave rise to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, formerly known as Hindu Mahasabha (RSS).

Hindu Mahasabha misrepresented their sense of patriotism by using phrases like "Bharat Mata," or "Mother India," to suggest that they sought a nation free of Muslims. They believed that Muslims and Hindus belonged to different nations. By comprehending the origins of communalism, we must realise that it does not represent religion or nationalism as a whole but rather well-being. The religious groups are further separated into categories like elite class, lower class, and language, however it is important to understand that no religious group is uniformly communalist. These specific issues are shared by the Muslim and Hindu communities. The Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha purposefully barred the low caste from participating, creating linguistic and cultural barriers that split their respective religions along caste-based lines.

### **Conclusion**

Train to Pakistan, The story is set in the fictitious border town of Mano Manjra, whose residents had long coexisted happily before Partition rumours and then the real Partition tore the neighbourhood apart. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*: It's not technically a "Partition book" because the narrative famously opens with the narrator being born at the stroke of midnight and being "handcuffed to history." However, it does make a return to his ancestors and parents in pre-Independent India, mentioning the impact of Partition and the riots that followed. One character, who rails against Partition, points to the half-an-hour time difference between the new nations: "Those Leaguers plan to abscond with a whole thirty minutes!" The



Shadow Lines, Amitav Ghosh: Set in London, Dhaka and Kolkata, and not primarily about Partition per se, but the event casts a long shadow in the remembrances of a fractured family and their friends. Clear Light of Day, Anita Desai: Set in Old Delhi, ranging between the past (the time of Partition) and the present, covering fissures and misunderstandings in the lives of a family over the years. Supposed to be at least partly autobiographical.

### References

- [1] Amitav Ghosh, The Shadow Lines (1988).
- [2] Amur, G.S. Manohar Malgonkar. New Delhi. Arnold Heinemann, 1973. Print.
- [3] Anand, Mulk Raj (1968) Death of A Hero. Delhi: Hind Pocket Books.
- [4] Andrew Rutherford, The Literature of War : Fine Studies in Heroic Virtue (Hong-Kong : Mcmillan, 1978), p.3.
- [5] Asani, Shyam M. New Dimensions of Indian English Novel. New Delhi: Doaba House, 1987.
- [6] Asghar Ali Engineer, On Sociology of Communalism, 2003.
- [7] Aziz, K.K. History of Partition of India. Vol. I-IV. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1995.
- [8] Bipan Chandra, Communalism in Modern India, Vikas Publishing House Private Ltd., New Delhi, 1984, p.1.
- [9] Butalia, Urvashi. The Other Side of Silence. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998.
- [10] Chakravarty, Joya. Indian Writing in English: Perspectives. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2003.
- [11] Chakravorty, D.K. The Indian Novels in English: Essay in Criticism. ed. by R.N. Sinha and R.K.Sinha. Ranchi and Calcutta: Ankit, 1987.
- [12] Chaman Nahal (1975), Azadi