

Historiographic Study of Partition Trauma in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

*Partition is an event which has redesigned and reshaped the destiny of South Asia in entirely new dimension. The Subcontinent is the land of three major religions: Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. All the three religions which have a long history of living together have also ruled the subcontinent for centuries. This cohabitation of hundreds of years resulted in creation of a common culture and a common identity for the people. This common culture and identity was based upon intercultural and inter-religious harmony. Partition of 1947 provoked communal hatred among followers of different religions which led to the escalation of unprecedented violence resulting in loss of millions of lives. A great deal of non-literary and literary work is produced on the event. Historians have focussed on the issues of freedom whereas literary writers have spent much ink on partition as a trauma. However, these writers have interpreted partition trauma in different ways due to the influence of particular frames of reference. Their perspective on partition is conditioned by their communal, ethnic and nationalistic sentiments. Bapsi Sidhwa and Khushwant Singh are among the prominent writers of the subcontinent who have interwoven the historiographic thread into the fabrics of literature with particular reference to the partition narrative. The historiographic reading of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* aims to investigate the convergences and divergences in the perspective of the two writers on the event of partition.*

Key Words: Historiography; partition trauma; intercultural; nationalism; communal hatred; religious reciprocity

1- Introduction

Historiography refers to the study of the process through which the knowledge of history is gained and channelized. It encompasses the writings of the story and the role of historical method by taking into consideration various elements such as authorship, rendering, mode, bias and audience. So, the study of historiography is not the direct study of historical events rather it analyses the

interpretation of the historical events in the individual works of writers and historians. Hence, historiographic study comprises the study of history as well as the biography of the author. Aviezer Tucker (2009) in *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography* explains the difference between history and historiography. The author says, “The scope of history is that of literate human civilization and the scope of historiography is the study of documentary evidence generated by such civilizations to infer descriptions of their past and evolution” (p. 2).

The writing of fiction which generally deals with the depiction of fictitious/imaginary tale is sometimes interwoven with the threads of history. Many novelists have constructed the plots of their stories on historical events. In recent years, traditional boundaries between genres and disciplines are being repudiated in the wake of movement towards interdisciplinarity. As a result, there is much emphasis on similarities between history and fiction. Post-structuralists are conspicuous for emphasising the convergences between history and fiction. They do not recognise traditional generic boundaries of discourse. In the words of Edgar Lawrence Doctorow, “There is no longer any such thing as fiction or nonfiction; there's only narrative” (in Flis, 2010, p. 11)

The partition of 1947 created two independent countries: India and Pakistan. The event is marked for violence and carnage. “Independence brought in its wake one of the bloodiest carnages in the history of India. The upshot of this was that twelve million people had to flee leaving their home; nearly half a million were killed” (Tank, 2011, p. 44). Unfortunately, historical writings of partition do not represent that trauma, and therefore lamented by many for this fact. Commenting on lack of genuine writings on partition trauma, Alok Bhalla says, “There is not just a lack of great literature, there is, more seriously, a lack of great history” (In Kousik Adhikari, 2013). In fact, this comes true when we look at Indian historiography that focuses more on the independence than on partition, more on the propagation of nationalism than on the conflicting forces that lead towards partition. For instance, Indian historic writings for a long time followed a traditional nationalist discourse, where the great Congress, the only national political party of India, and its leaders were always given prime importance; and the emphasis was always on the importance of national integration. Hence, the Indian nationalist narrative essentially told the stories and happenings that led towards independence and abstained itself from telling the divisive forces that caused partition.

Literature being the bearer of cultural significance is essential in order to fully understand a particular time period in history along with historical documents. History is assumed to be the upholder of factual accounts of past events and is marked with objectivity. But there is not a possible way for historians represent the objective and unbiased report of events. They generally pick and choose the facts they want to present and assign meanings behind those chosen facts. While artists and writers are considered to be more alive to what happens around them. Indeed, they respond much actively to the contemporary situation.

A lot of literature has been written on the Partition of the sub-continent. The dominant trend of fiction at that time was realism. The fiction writers were more actively responding to the riot-ridden contemporary situations. However, many of the writers projected Partition by presenting carnage scenes of bloody partition, and focused much of the demented hatred between Muslims and Hindus. Historians generally agree that literature represented Partition better. For example, Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, in their book *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy on South Asian History*, enunciate that “The colossal human tragedy of the partition and its upholding consequence has been better conveyed by the more sensitive originating artists and writers---for instance in Saadat Hasan Manto’s short stories and Ritwik Ghatak’s Film ---than by historians” (2004, p. 164).

Many writers, both Pakistani and Indian, have written on partition in their literary works. Most prominent among them are Saadat Hasan Manto, Khushwant Singh, Malgonkar, Bapsi Sidhwa, Anita Desai and Amitav Ghosh. Saadat Hasan Manto (1948) in *Siyah Hashye* (Black Borders) presents the unbiased and realistic picture of Partition, because his narrative transcends religious and communal differences. He is not concerned with people’s religion, their beliefs and rituals. Instead, he looks upon them only as human beings. Khushwant Singh’s (2012) *Train to Pakistan* untangles the violence that erupted during the time of Partition. Manohar Malgonkar’s (1965) *A bend in the Ganges*, explores the revolutionary violence, that broke out in the colony that was employed by the colonised nation as a political strategy to achieve their political goals of freedom. Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* (2012) is acknowledged as the most representative partition novel by a Pakistani writer. Instead of dealing with the creation of Pakistan, it focuses more on the tragedy of Partition and its fallout. Furthermore, the novel deals with the miseries and sufferings of women during partition violence.

As the present study deals with comparative study of *Cracking India* and *Train to Pakistan*, it is appropriate to briefly review the plots of both the novels.

Cracking India as the title indicates signifies the cracks which had happened not merely in India as a geographical entity but also in the psyches of the people, diverse cultures and intercommunal harmony of the region. In the novel, Bapsi Sidhwa describes the communal tension and turbulence during the partition through the narration of Lenny – an eight year old handicapped Parsi girl from Lahore. Lenny’s visualisation of the terror which has gripped the city of Lahore is depicted through the tragic story of her Hindu Ayah – Shanta. Ayah’s feminine charm fascinates men of varying backgrounds, occupations and religions. Of her suitors, Masseur and Dilnawaz (*Ice Candy Man*) have developed strong rift against each other in order to win her favours. Lenny is gradually becoming conscious of the amorous advances of Ayyah as well as the changing socio-political changes around her. The rumour of the partition of subcontinent is the talk of the town. The popular political slogans of political processions are independence from British imperialism and an independent country for the Muslims of India.

One day, the riots erupted in Lahore in a far off locality from Lenny’s residence which caused numerous deaths of the innocent people on both sides. The news of violence and killing spreads like wild fire. Soon, the fire of revenge and communal hatred takes over the entire province of Punjab. Taking undue advantage of the turbulent situation, Ice Candy Man, out of sheer hatred and jealousy gets Masseur killed to pave way for Ayah. Subsequently, he receives the worst shock when he comes across the ghastly scene of the mutilated dead bodies of the Muslim passengers on Lahore railway station while he was waiting for his sisters who had to arrive from Gurdaspur.

Train to Pakistan depicts a heart rending account of the trauma of Partition in the Indian village of Mano Majra situated on the banks of river Sutlej. The population of the village consists of the Sikhs and the Muslims who have been living together for centuries quite peacefully. Sikhs are the landed gentry of the village and the Muslims are their peasants. The district magistrate of the area is a Hindu, namely, Hukam Chand. The peaceful and harmonious life of the village is disturbed when a group of robbers kill the local money lender – Ram Lal. The police arrests Juggat Singh, a local notorious dacoit and a newly arrived young man namely Iqbal in connection with the murder.

The nearby railway bridge occupies a central position in the daily life and routine of the inhabitants of the village. They adjust and regulated their daily activity in accordance with the timing of the arrival and the departure of the

trains. They are quite indifferent to the political issue of partition and independence. The peace and harmony of the village is shattered when a train from Lahore arrives and is found to be packed with dead bodies of the Sikhs. This tragic incident provides an opportunity to the outsiders and political activists to incite communal hatred and vendetta.

2- Discussion

There is a general consensus among Pakistani and Indian writers of partition narrative over the horrendous sight of partition which has affected millions of people and even continues to affect them and their countries till today. But they differ in interpretation of the event because their responses and interpretation are conditioned by their particular frames of reference. Same is the case with Bapsi Sidhwa and Khushwant Singh. The narrative of the two novels unfolds the fact that the violence, horror and trauma in the subcontinent during partition was unleashed only when people on the both sides of the divided happened to receive train full of human corpses. So it is the train that is the sole cause of uncontrolled violence and bloodshed.

2.1 Convergences in Sidhwa and Singh on partition trauma

Both the writers consider partition as a tragedy. They narrate the miseries and the sufferings of their people during migration across the frontiers. Bapsi Sidhwa writes about the sudden changing socio-political climate of Lahore (during partition). Khushwant Singh focuses on the communal tension which escalated in Mano Majra in the wake of the partition which slaughtered and uprooted millions of people and also deprived them of their homes, land, belonging and relation.

Furthermore, both the novels establish intercultural and inter-religious harmony in pre-partition society of the sub-continent. Khushwant Singh narrates that life in Mano Majra commences with the words of Azan, a religious call which is followed by the Sikh priest's prayers. The day comes to an end with the same cycle of religious reciprocity. The train's arrival and departure to and from Lahore to other regions of the country symbolises geographical unity of India. Other writers like Attia Hosain (1992) in *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and Chaman Nahal (2001) in *Azadi* have also depicted cultural and communal harmony among followers of different religions before it was broken into pieces by the political upheavals that ensued the partition.

Similarly, Bapsi Sidhwa narrates the same story of mutual co-existence between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and the Parsees.

Muslims and Sikhs lived together like brothers irrespective of considering their religion, culture before partition. They shared each other sorrows and happiness. They considered the children of their friends of another religion as their own. To participate in one another's festivals, ceremony, happy occasions were considered as an honour (2012, p. 105).

Individualism and possessiveness are the prominent themes of both the novels. Individualism is a natural human sentiment which highlights the moral worth of an individual in terms of his contribution towards society. In *Train to Pakistan*, Khushwant Singh tries to establish this trait of the Sikhs whom he depicts as generous and magnanimous. Juggat Singh who finally turns out to be protagonist of the story saves the train due to the presence of his beloved in it. Juggat Singh was absorbingly in love with the daughter of Imam Bakhs, Nooran. He remained committed to her till end. As soon as he comes out of the prison, he immediately rushes to his village and enquires from his mother about the whereabouts of Nooran. On knowing about her departure through train, he ensures that she reaches Pakistan safe and sound. Ralph Crane (1992) in *Inventing India: A History of India in English-Language Fiction* says that "the portrayal of the essential humanity of the individuals by Singh shows that love and humanity can win against all odds of the world" (p. 148). But during the partition riots, this generosity and humanity that Singh showed in *Train to Pakistan* is not recorded in other non-literary discourses. Singh gives the new identity to the Sikhs. This is the portrayal of the Indian perspective on Partition.

In *Cracking India*, we come across a similar representation of individuals as this novel signifies the presence of Parsee being an integral part of the society during the turmoil. The Parsee characters like Godmother (Rodabai) and Lenny's mother who symbolise selfhood and devotion, feel the pain for humanity and try to save the women as much as possible. Sidhwa portrays these Parsee characters as heroic and humanitarian who try to save the lives and property of all human beings irrespective of their religious affiliations. When a Hindu girl, Ayah Shanta, requests Godmother to manage her freedom from the clutches of cruel Ice Candy Man, the Godmother secures her from the merciless Ice Candy Man and sends her to her family in India. Sidhwa also shows that Parsee women are devoted wives and mothers: they remain faithful, and serving. They follow the moods of their husbands. In the whole novel, we do not find a towering character like Godmother who sharp witted having indefatigable stamina, social commitment and boundless love for humanity. In spite of her old age, she has marvellous sense of humour, power to mould and modify not only the

individuals but also the system. She is authoritative and has the ability and understanding to handle the crisis. Her authoritative tone makes Ice Candy Man speechless when she makes him realise of the infidelity he has shown towards Ayah: “Is that why you had her lifted off – let hundreds of eyes probe her- so that you could marry her? You would have your own mother carried off if it suited you! You are a shameless badmash! Nimakharam! Faithless!” (2012, p. 78).

All the narrators of the partition confirm that women were the worst victims of the cruelties perpetrated during partition. They were kidnapped and brutally raped; their children were killed before them on the both sides of border. In *Cracking India* the worst scene was Ayah’s kidnapping by Ice Candy Man and Muslim mob. She was forced to prostitute her body and was sent to *Kotha (Red area)* unwillingly. Though at the end of novel she gets free from the chains of Ice Candy Man and is sent to her family Amritsar. But rest of her whole life she will be marked as defilement during partition. She will suffer mentally, psychologically and emotionally. People “can’t stand their women being touched by other men” (p. 227).

In *Train to Pakistan*, Khushwant Singh highlights the cruelties that were perpetrated on women. He describes the tragedy of Sundari, who after the fourth day of her marriage, was going to Gujranwala with her husband to her new house. Hina was fresh still on her hands. She was day dreaming of her new life with her husband. Bus was attacked by the Muslims. Her husband was stripped naked and dismembered before her eyes and she was gang raped.

The mob made love to her. She did not have to take off any one of her bangles. They were all smashed as she lay in the road, being taken by one man and another and another. That should have brought her a lot of good luck (2012, p. 187).

Cruelties of partition were not confined to any particular class or gender. Even the children were not spared. Sidhwa’s concern for the miseries and sufferings of the children during partition establishes her as a keen observer of life and events. She even takes into account the psychological traumatic conditions of the children during the partition. But Khushwant Singh only presented sufferings of the adults to reflect upon the complexities of the partition.

2.2 Divergences in Sidhwa and Singh on Partition Trauma

In terms of historiography, Bapsi Sidhwa and Khushwant Singh differ from each other because they interpret the trauma of partition from different angles, perspectives and frames of reference. Sidhwa in *Cracking India* narrates that the atrocities by the Hindus and the Sikhs were started by the Hindus and Sikhs.

Muslims retaliated after receiving the train full of the mutilated bodies of Muslim refugees coming from India. “A train from Gurdaspur has just come in; everyone in it is dead butchered. There are no young women among the dead! Only two young gunny bags full of women’s breasts” (2012, p. 159). She also narrates the brutal behaviour of the Sikhs who had turned maniac after listening to the address of Master Tara Singh who incited them to attack Muslims. “The Sikhs milling in a huge blob in front wildly waved their swords, kirpans and hockey-sticks and punctuate their shriek with roar: Pakistan ‘murdabad’ death to Pakistan!.... And the Muslims shouting: so? We’ll play Holi with their blood.” (p. 134). However, Sidhwa does not use any abusive words to show the hatred of Muslims for Hindus and Sikhs.

Whereas in *Train to Pakistan*, Singh tries to establish that Sikhs had no plan to do any harm to Muslims. They considered them their brothers and were ready to save them from all problems of partition. Sikhs did not even retaliate when they received first train full of mutilated dead bodies of Sikhs. But after watching the second train full of dead bodies of Sikhs, they lost their composure and attacked train of Muslim refugees going to Pakistan.

Singh blames Muslims and calls them by bad names. “Their intentions were evil. Muslims are like that you can never trust them” (2012, p. 126). He also criticises Baluch soldiers for participating in killing Hindus and Sikhs. “The Baluch soldiers have been shooting people whenever they were sure there was no chance of running into Sikh or Gurkha troops” (p. 130). Singh’s biased treatment of Muslims is also reflected in the portrayal of the Muslim characters. All the Muslims of Mano Majra are inferior to the Sikhs and are their peasants. They obey Sikhs and depend on them to fulfill their necessities. Even the singer (Haseena) who comes to entertain the Hindu deputy commissioner is Muslim. Nooran, the daughter of Muslim Imam who has illegitimate relationship with a Sikh scoundrel Jugga belongs to a low caste of weavers. Above all the Muslim Imam is a blind person which suggests his ignorance. He does neither know about his daughter’s relation with a Sikh nor does he know about people’s opinion regarding his daughter. Khushwant Sing uses word *Pig* for Muslims to show the hatred of Sikhs for them after the bloody clashes started between the two communities, “What we are to do with all these pigs we have with us? They have been eating our salt for generations and see what they have done” (p. 166). These words clearly show how much hatred and intolerance had grown with the passage of time.

The theme of partition cannot be completed without highlighting the sufferings of the refugees. Sidhwa uses the imagery of the “Waves of Muslim refugees” which symbolises the horrible consequences of partition.

Khushwant Sing gives a similar account of atrocities being inflicted upon refugees of other religions. He describes the story of Sundari. After the fourth day of her marriage, she was going to Gujranwala with her husband to her new house. Hina was still fresh on her hands. Bus was attacked by the Muslims. Her husband was stripped naked and dismembered before her eyes. She was gang raped. “The mob made love to her. She did not have to take off any one of her bangles. They were all smashed as she lay in the road, being taken by one man and another. That should have brought her a lot of good luck” (2012, p. 187). The writer also described the condition of refugees that came in Mano Majra from Pakistan.

Sidhwa did not favour any particular community or group while describing the event of partition. She says all communities equally participated in the destruction and brutality to make partition rather worst. She presented the whole event neutrally and objectively.

Sidhwa was much conscious about the social and cultural differences and biases between Hindus and Muslims. She says that though there was much co-operation between them for centuries yet there was a big wall of social and cultural differences. A Hindu will not touch his food in the presence of a Muslim. A Hindu considers that his kitchen gets polluted with the presence of a Muslim. “One man’s religion is another man’s poison... He (Brahim Pandit) looks at his food as if it is infected with maggots” (p. 112). This shows the deep hatred and disliking of the caste Hindus for the Muslims, who followed blindly the ideology of purity. This hatred of the Hindu forced the Muslims to work for their own identity. So, they demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims of India. “The partition was caused by a complicated set of social and political factors including religious differences and the end of colonialism in India” (Agatucci, 2006) Sidhwa also argues that British rulers are also responsible for this holocaust because the decision of the division of India into two states was an ill-planned one as the English rulers were in a haste to pull out of India after Second World War. “There were many reasons of the destructive results of the existence of these two states; one of them was Britain’s decision to leave India immediately without settling all affairs” (Crispin Bates, 2011).

However, Khushwant Sing is highly subjective in his descriptions of the event. He shows that Sikhs by nature are very loyal and peace-loving. They are quite

harmless. They have much courage and stamina to withstand all hardships. They are not revengeful until compelled to retaliate. Except for a group of bad persons, no native Sikh of Mano Majra gave any injury to the Muslims when they were leaving village. The writer even glorifies Juggat for sacrificing his life to save the passengers going to Pakistan.

Regarding Sidhwa's perspective on partition, Crane (1996) in *A Passion for History and Truth Telling: The Early Novels of Bapsi* argues that Sidhwa, a Pakistani writer, writes against official version of Partition. But this is her own independent judgement on the Partition. She affirms that the act of partition is based upon brutality, inhumanity and unnaturalness. She questions that while Muslims and Hindus were living together from centuries, then why did the Muslims demand for a separate homeland. She argues that Muslims betrayed India by the demand of its division. The Hindu Ayah is a symbol of India and she is abducted and taken away by the Muslims against her will. Sidhwa does not reveal her identity. Instead she says that Muslims' demand for partition after centuries of their rule over India is the worst betrayal. Ice Candy Man's decision to make Ayah prostitute shows the disgrace heaped upon Shanta (India) by her own lovers (Muslims).

Khushwant Singh who considers partition as an illogical step reveals his Indian identity and projects the official ideology of India. He emphasizes that two communities have inseparable social, cultural and political past. Furthermore, Singh affirms that Sikhs killed Muslims only in retaliation. Besides, all the Muslims were living a fearless life in Sikh Majority villages. Nooran, a Muslim girl who conceives a child of, Juggat Singh, Jugga, claims that she carries his child "Beybey, I have jigga's child inside me" (2012, p. 139). Commenting on it, Muhammad Ayub Jajja (2012) says, "Singh uses this child inside the body of Mother girl fathered by a Sikh as a metaphor for the intermingling of the Hindu-Muslim strands and the Hindu Sikh contribution to it" (p. 5). It indicates the joint social, cultural and political past of the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs and their peaceful co-existence, indivisibility of combined and hybrid identity. But the threat of partition played havoc with all this unity and harmony.

These interpretations of the event point to Singh's partiality and subjectivity. Furthermore, Singh in his novel affirms that only Sikh and Hindu women are pious and honourable. They will commit suicide but let not touch any person themselves except their husband. "Our Hindu women are so pure that they would rather commit suicide than let a stranger touch them" (p.22). Sub inspector confirms that Sikh Women killed their children and themselves but did not

handover themselves to strangers, Muslims. “Women killed their own children and jumped into well that filled to the brim with corpses” (p. 22).

In *Train to Pakistan*, Singh (2012) uses the personification of the river Sutlej that flows from Pakistan to India. The river is a silent witness to all the atrocities.

They were murdered. An old peasant with a grey beard lay flat on the water. His arms were stretched out as if he had been crucified. His mouth was wide open and showed his toothless gums, his eyes were covered with film, his hair floated about his head like a halo. He had a deep wound on his neck which slanted down from the side to the chest (p. 151).

The author further narrates that the river was steamed with dead bodies and the kites and vultures were seen hovering over the floating carcasses. “They pecked till the corpses themselves rolled over and shooed them off with hands which rose stiffly into the air and splashed back into the water” (2012, p. 151).

Like Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, Parsees have their own perspective on partition. But unlike the other writers, Parsee novelists did not express their opinion openly. But Bapsi Sidhwa has highlighted all the facets of Parsee mind during the partition in *Cracking India*. Sidhwa projects this world through the mind of Lenny, an invalid Parsee girl. Sidhwa’s mind is free from religious prejudice. Her motive to re-write the history is very clear. She wants to justify Pakistani point of view about partition. Her support for Pakistani perspective does not mean her support for official version of Pakistan on partition. She feels that the books written on the partition by English and Hindu writers/historians cannot project the Pakistani perspective. She explains her intention in her conversation with David Montenegro:

The main motivation grew out of my reading of a good deal of literature on the Partition of India and Pakistan... what has been written by the British and the Indians. Naturally they reflect their bias. And they have, I felt after I’d researched the book, been unfair to the Pakistanis. As a writer, as a human being, one does not tolerate injustice. I felt whatever little I could do to correct an injustice I would like to do. I have just let facts speak for themselves and through my research I found out what the facts were (In Roy, 2010, p. 64).

Her support for Pakistani perspective on partition also represents the psyche of Parsees who are adaptable by nature and are ready to mould themselves according to the need of the time and place.

Both the writers clearly reflect their perspective on the politics and politicians. Sidhwa praises Jinnah but depicts Gandhi through the words of Lenny:

He is knitting. Sitting cross-legged on the marble floor of a palatial veranda, he is surrounded by women. He is small, dark, shriveled, old. He looks just like Hari, our gardener, except he has a disgruntled, disgusted and irritable look, and no one's dare pull off his dhoti! He wears only the loin-cloth and his black and thin torso in naked (2012, p. 83).

She deconstructs his much propagated image and presents him not as a political saint but only as a faddist.

Sidhwa's condemnation of Nehru is covert and concealed. She takes special care to mention how Nehru influences the Viceroy, overshadows Jinnah, and slaughters Muslims interest. "But that Nehru, he is a sly one ... Jinnah or no Jinnah! Sikh or no Sikh! Right law, wrong law, Nehru will walk off with the lion's share...And what's more, come out of it smelling like the Queen-of-the Kotha!" (p. 125),

Sidhwa portrays the Sikh saint as a militant spitting fire. She paints him as a trouble maker in white Kurta and a sheathed Kripan. "His chest is diagonally swathed in a blue band from which dangles a decoratively sheathed Kirpan. The folds of his loose white pyjamas fall above his ankles; a leather band round his waist holds a long religious dagger" (p. 132).

In *Cracking India*, Sidhwa not only breaks up the portrayal of non-Muslim religious and political leaders, but also tries to show the real character of Pakistani leaders especially Jinnah that has been tarnished by the British and the Hindus. She feels that Jinnah's role as depicted by the Indians and the British is absolutely unfair and smacks of prejudice. "Sidhwa in *Ice Candy Man* not only tries to resurrect the image of Jinnah but also seeks to demystify the images of Gandhi and Nehru. Jinnah in the novel is highlighted as an ambassador of Hindu Muslim unity" (R. Roy, 2010, p. 64).

Commenting on the condition of politics, Singh affirms that "Gandhi disciples are minting money. They are as good saints as the crane. They shut their eyes piously and stand on one leg like a yogi doing penance, as soon as a fish comes near--- hurrup" (2012, p. 22). He condemns Gandhi for keeping silent on the atrocities perpetrated on Hindus and the Sikhs by the Muslims "What is happening on the other side in Pakistan does not matter to them. They have not

lost their homes and belongings, they haven't had their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters raped and murdered in the streets" (p. 22).

3. Conclusion:

The historiographic reading/study of the two texts alongwith ample references to other texts for the sake of comparison establishes that both Bapsi Sidhwa and Khushwant Singh consider partition as a trauma. They equate it with evil and destruction. Both of them emphasise upon peaceful co-existence in pre-partition India. However, they agree that this mutual co-existence and communal harmony was not without difficulties and challenges. As far as Singh is concerned, his perspective on partition confirms to the official Indian position which takes partition as artificial, unnatural, illogical and undesirable. In contrast to Singh, Sidhwa's perspective on the undesirability of partition does not subscribe to the official Pakistani position. She persistently raises questions about the rationale of partition and continues to highlight the price of partition in more than one way. She shows that the millions of victims of Partition have paid a heavy price for freedom. The traumatic experiences of the refugees during partition will continue to haunt their memories and lives for years. This helps the readers to have a fresh assessment of Partition. She has her own independent judgement on partition which establishes her intellectual honesty and integrity. Sidhwa's autonomous and independent perspective on partition has also been endorsed and claimed by N. Zaman (2001) in *A Divided Legacy*.

In comparative term, Khushwant Singh is subjective in his interpretation of the events. He apparently blames both the communities equally for carnage and killings. However, he suggests that the violence was started in the Muslim dominated areas and the Sikhs started killing only in retaliation. In this way, Singh conforms to the persistent pattern running through the novels by Sikh writers. He continues to identify himself with the Sikh community in the portrayal of different aspects of Partition. While associating himself with the Sikh community and by portraying the Muslims as lesser and lower people, Singh again upholds official Indian perspective. On the other hand Singh in *Train to Pakistan* projects and highlights the details of the violence committed by the Muslims against the Sikhs. Sidhwa's portrayal of the violence that accompanies and ensues the partition is realistic, neutral and objective. She affirms that both the communities are equally responsible for the cruelties and atrocities.

The study further indicates that Sidhwa like a postcolonial writer also focuses upon the controversial role and the conduct of British government during

Partition. She rejects the euro-centric and imperialistic assumptions of superiority and portrays the British rulers from the perspective of the Indian. To sum up, Sidhwa emerges as a superior writer to Khushwant Singh due to her impartiality, objectivity and intellectual integrity in dealing with the different aspects of Partition.

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