CHAPTER VI
PARTITION THE DISASTROUS EVENT REFLECTED IN
SAADAT HASAN MANTO’S SHORT STORIES

On the eve of 15th August, 1947 the Indian parliament resounded with the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s historic words, which mark the win of freedom struggle by Indians. He said:

“At the stroke of mid-night hour, when the world sleeps India will awake to the light and freedom.”

At the midnight hour of 15th August, 1947, Indians won freedom and independence marking the end of humiliation and slavery by the British Raj. Joy, sorrow, anger, bitterness of partition people exploded with different emotions and levels which in a manner gave way to a visceral rage against the members of the other religion.

In India, people celebrated freedom by burning down homes of their neighbours. Before partition they were two communities living in a country with some ups and downs and misunderstandings, but after partition they turned to be Two Countries, with their religion and beliefs standing in front, working hard to prove their selves true.

The Partition of India 1947, is somehow considered as a great and biggest uprooting of people. Around fourteen and half million people migrated, which is still a bigger number in the history of the world. Out of these fourteen and a half million people, perhaps two millions people suffered the tragedy which includes, man, woman, and children of all ages, irrespective of their caste, culture and religion.

Far from solving the Hindu – Muslim problem in India, partition and the creation of Pakistan, has worsened the condition and the tension of two split communities and the countries are still the issue of post- colonial South Asia. Memories of Partition were and are ritually invoked by both sides of writers, as being sometimes victims or observer, describing the brutal killing of Sikhs, Muslims and
Hindus at the hands of their own counterparts, just at the verge of revenge and in the name of religion.

As with the happy moment, for which people were waiting, after one hundred and fifty years of colonial rule, India won its freedom on 15th August 1947. People rejoiced with the thought of self-rule. But along with self-rule, India and its subcontinent had to pay a huge amount in the form of human lives and blood. As with the joy of freedom, people experienced the horrible and dreadful situation of partition. The series, chain of sufferings, sorrows, tears and humiliation got longer, which, till now seems to be never ending. The partition of India, 1947, brought so drastic change into our culture, caste, breed, religious tolerance and national identity that it seems to be unrepairable. Our thinking, visions, behaviour, tolerance and relationship got affected by the decision and till now people of this subcontinent, are unable to overcome from it. As in the search of reason for our present social, cultural and political conditions, when we get down jolting out the reasons, we see a series of happenings which resulted because of the decision and problems after the partition 1947. The social, cultural, political and psychological problems, which took birth because of partition 1947, are at present the vital issues to which the subcontinent is unable to cope with. The issues of independence, self-rule, nationalisms, national identity, religious intolerance, terrorism are the bitter gifts of independence. There is no other way to understand the problems and their solution than to go back into history and find out the roots of all problems. But sometime history too seems unable to give answers to questions which could satisfy one’s eagerness. Rather than history, it will be fruitful to investigate the base of literature because literature always gives a reflection of the happenings and situations, with the point of view of writers, who, by themselves live through the situations on which they are raising their pen. The description or narration that is being reflected or depicted in literature brings in front the reality of history. By reading literature of the time and country, a reader could reach to vision out the reality of the situations and happenings. A reader is able to understand and analyse the partition and its effects; socially, politically, culturally, by reading short stories written by Saadat Hasan Manto.

As we prepare a graph of the short stories and other literature written by Saadat Hasan Manto a huge sum depicts his harsh pen on the illogical decision of partition of India on the base of religion and faith. Many things or situations, about
society and politics, come to the forefront. A historical portrayal of human tragedy with an innovative exploration of the short stories, memories, letters, essays and sketches written by Saadat Hasan Manto, a reader can easily trespass the time gap and feel history in its full nakedness. The image that a reader develops, by reading those literatures, specially the short stories, appear to be all rotten, broken and cracked. The rapidly changing Indian social, cultural, linguistic and political faces are being reflected by Saadat Hasan Manto in his short literature. The image or the face that appears after reading those stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, on the issue of partition, one can make out his disagreement and pain on the issue. The flash that comes before seems to be bright as well as dark. These reflections, from the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, brings in front many and different ups and downs in the political and social life of the people of India and its subcontinent that the reader gets bewildered and then forced to think about the identity of self. By reading the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, one could understand the pain, sufferings and psychological unsolved knots and the rotten and poisoned sensibility of the people, who were forced to leave the land, where they were living for ages.

According to Nicholas, Mansergh, and Moon Penderal, in their book “The Transfer of Power”, Volume X, in which they discussed the work of then Viceroy who sends the report to the English government, mentioning his view that the whole world should get the understanding that Indians were given a fair chance to choose the form of government for themselves.258 Top to bottom, every one considered the decision of partition is from the people of other faith and religion. Everyone in the position thought the people of other religion as a satan, devil and swindler and their thoughts and decisions are reflected and written by them as:

“One day they will bitterly regret, the decision they are about to make.”259

After the conformation of the plan of partition by Lord Mountbatten, in June 1947, the huge task of deciding the frontiers became one of the hurdles in the decision. To overcome the issue commissions; Bengal Commission and Punjab Commission, were appointed. Cyril Redcliff headed both the commissions and within seven days the plan was ready. As while, completing the plan Redcliff enjoys
all the liberties to overcome the problems, such as social, political, etc. There were many other issues, which were left unresolved and were kept on the pending list.

The design and structure, by Cyril Redcliff, were so instant that the people along with politicians got confused and bewildered. The claims by the politicians, on the other side, made the issue more complicated and twisted. The frontiers decided by Redcliff was so labyrinthine that the people felt confused as where they belonged and where they are now? As we will take the example of Lahore, which was the political, cultural, social and economical hub of development, till 15th August 1947; people were unaware where it will get located in India or Pakistan. As Ajit Battacharya commented in ‘Outlook’ with the title, ‘National Divide’ that Lahore was the place where culture, faith, prosperity went hand by hand, it was one of the historical capital, which marked the economical prosperity, the people were left clueless about their country.260

Partition of India is the issue on which many of foreign writers and poets too commented on, as to quote one poem written by W.H. Auden, with the title as ‘Cyril Redcliff’. It is fruitful to quote in the poem as to reflect the foreign point of view on Cyril Redcliff and Partition of India. W. H. Auden writes:

“Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,
Having never set eyes on this land he was called to partition
Between two peoples fanatically at odds,
With their different diets and incompatible gods.
'Time,' they had briefed him in London, 'is short. It's too late
For mutual reconciliation or rational debate:
The only solution now lies in separation.
The Viceroy thinks, as you will see from his letter,
That the less you are seen in his company the better,
So we've arranged to provide you with other accommodation.
We can give you four judges, two Moslem and two Hindu,
To consult with, but the final decision must rest with you.'

Shut up in a lonely mansion, with police night and day
Patrolling the gardens to keep assassins away,
He got down to work, to the task of settling the fate
Of millions. The maps at his disposal were out of date
And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect,
But there was no time to check them, no time to inspect
Contested areas. The weather was frightfully hot,
And a bout of dysentery kept him constantly on the trot,
But in seven weeks it was done, the frontiers decided,
A continent for better or worse divided.

The next day he sailed for England, where he quickly forgot
The case, as a good lawyer must. Return he would not,
Afraid, as he told his Club, that he might get shot.

*Partition, 1966* by WH Auden*.261

As to move ahead from the politics and politicians coming back to the short
stories by Saadat Hasan Manto, which broke false assumptions about partition.
It is the art of Saadat Hasan Manto to present, a picture or situation and to bring out
different consequences and effects of that situation, as while bringing out the
effects to spread it in different thoughts and to present those thoughts as alive. That
is the reason why we do feel those incomplete stories about facts, as the one better
medium than any other documents and it speaks something, which gnaws our
conscious. The partition of India took place on the choice of few, which turn out to
be the horrible, painful and burning history of India and a lesson to the world.
Thousands and lakhs of people were killed, double to it were injured and forced to be
a ‘muhajir’ (refugee).

Partition was not just as one issue or the accident to Saadat Hasan Manto.
For him it was a living issue, which got rooted very deep in his psychology.
Partition is a issue which shattered the existence of people, scorched the conscience
and shredded the basic standards of social, political and cultural sensibility and the
one which made people go mad, leaving all the consideration. The severity with
which Manto felt and suffered the situation with the same affliction he wrote down
on the canvas of his short stories.

Manto believed that even though partition took place and people got divided
according to their faith but the people who were divided are united on the cultural
platform. Though, as reality we see it looks as two parts but inside in beliefs and psychology they seem one. In his short stories Manto asked the restless questions which now stand in front of us and demand answers. ‘Yazid’ is the result of the same concept and thinking. We could understand the severity of partition in the beginning of the story where Saadat Hasan Manto connects the prevailing silence of the town to the after effects of partition and riots. He writes:

“Dangoo ke baad kareeb kareeb ek baras saara gaon kabrastaan sa bana tha. Jab Karim Dad ki barat chali aur khoob dhom dhadaka hoa tu gaon ke aadme saheem saheem gai. In ko aisa mehsoos hoa ke ye Karim Dad ki nahi kisi bhoot pareet ki baraat hai. Karim Dad ke doosto ne jab use ye baatai to who khoob hansa. Hastee haste hi us ne ek rooz is ka zikar apni nai naveli dulhan se kiya to who dar ke mare kanap utti.”

To which Khalid Hasan translates in Mottled Dawn as:

“This was the first happy thing to happen since the upheavals of partition and the celebrations were spontaneous. To some it almost felt like a ghost wedding, so unused had they become to lights and laughter. When one of Karim Dad’s friends mentioned this to him, he thought it was the funniest thing he had ever heard. He even told Jeena but she did not think it was funny. In fact, a shudder ran through her body.”

With the character of Karim Dad, Saadat Hasan Manto talks about the relationships between two newly created nations in the correct context and background without getting emotional on the issue. The story bears the date as 4th October, 1951, which gives us the understanding about Manto’s prudent thought about the people. The beauty of the story is the art of Saadat Hasan Manto who, without asking and mentioning the cost people paid for partition, brings one of the religious issues connected with the political situation in a very subtle manner. He
molds one of the issues which are much more religious to the one which he saw as in politics after partition. While constructing the story Saadat Hasan uses the character of Karim Dad as the representative of anger on the rumors of the construction of the dam, political relations and frustration of people on situations. The end of the story brings in the mature reaction of Manto towards all those upheavals as Karim Dad says:

“Zaroori nahi ke ye bhi wohi Yazid ho, us ne darya ka paani band kiya tha ye kholega.”

(It is not necessary that even he will do the same what Yazid did. He stopped water of the river mine will make it flow again.)

Because of the bitter reality of partition; Saadat Hasan Manto, migrated to Pakistan in January 1948 from Bombay, but over there too he couldn’t live in peace, he seems to be the character of Toba Tek Singh; who stood firmly on the no man’s land. With deep consciousness Saadat Hasan Manto, let the psychology of humans over flow in many of his short stories on the issue of partition. The personal behaviour of a person in different situations of riots and looting is the subject of his various short stories. How an individual could turn from his peaceful behaviour to cruelty from well-mannered to ill-mannered from soft attitude to difficult natured and the short stories like ‘Sahaye’, ‘Ram Khalawan’, ‘Mozail’, etc. are the best examples to discuss this.

The news of the killing of relatives at far off places and its effects on the relationship and friendship between the friends can be visible from the short story ‘Sahaye’ by Saadat Hasan Manto. As Jugal speaks to Mumtaz:

“If Hindu-Muslim killings start here, I don’t know what I’ll do?”

“What will you do?” Mumtaz had asked.

“I don’t know. May be I will kill you,” he replied darkly.”

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This very sentence of Jugal shatters the belief of Mumtaz, who seems to be very passionate about stopping the communal killings and riots and after a week, we see, in the story, Mumtaz getting ready for migration from Bombay to Lahore. The story doesn’t come with a date marked by Manto, but by reading this; one could make sense this story as the autobiography of Saadat Hasan Manto, who reflected his own agony and distress on the issue of partition and migration, in the short story with the character of Mumtaz.

‘Toba Tek Singh’ is the finest example of Manto’s writings, where we feel the sparks of his disagreement over partition. Though the story begins with the narration and description about the mental asylum but the end of the story, gnaws our self consciousness to feel the pain of partition. It begins with the realization, on the part of the governments of India and Pakistan, after two or three years of independence the need of exchanging the inmates of lunatic asylum, which means the Muslim lunatics in India should be exchanged with the Sikh lunatics in Pakistan. After many conferences and meetings it was decided by the learned people that it should take place within some time, without thinking on the idea that, whether it is logical or not, to transfer the people who have lost their senses.

Bushan Singh alias Toba Tek Singh is the central character of the story who belonged to the village called Toba Tek and so got the name. Nobody saw him sleeping for the past fifteen years and at the same time nobody saw him sitting or relaxing. He was continuously standing on his feet because of which his legs got swelling. When the time comes for the lunatics to get exchanged and when his turn comes he asked the officer there on duty:

“Where is Toba Tek Singh in India or Pakistan?”

After getting the answer he runs back to his fellows and when forced to migrate he stood firmly on his feet and spoke unrelated words as:

“This is Toba Tek Singh, upper the gurgur the annexe the bay dhayana mung the dal of Toba Tek Singh and Pakistan.”
And when forced he denied to move from the place where he was standing to move to India. After many attempts by the officials, they decided to leave him where he was standing as he was a harmless person. But the result of the psychological war in his mind, about the partition, migration and the location of his village which ends with tragic notes:

“Just before sunrise, Bishan Singh, the man who had stood on his legs for fifteen years, screamed and as officials from the two sides rushed towards him, he collapsed to the ground.”

With this story Manto sarcastically brings to the forefront the reality of the common people, who were not ready to migrate and were unhappy because of the partition and few people who were doing or accepting it just for their own aim and needs. Manto is internationally known for the story ‘Toba Tek Singh’. Commenting on the short story ‘Toba Tek Singh’ Tarik Ali writes:

“The price of separation was high. Saadat Hasan Manto; one of the most gifted Urdu writers of the subcontinent, wrote a four-page masterpiece entitled ‘Toba Tek Singh’, set in a lunatic asylum in Lahore at the time of partition. When the whole cities are being ethnically cleansed, how can the asylum escape? The Hindu and Sikh lunatics are told that they will be transferred to institutions in India. The inmates rebel. They hug each other and weep. They have to be forced on to the trucks waiting to transport them to India. One of them, a Sikh, is so overcome by rage that when the border is reached, he refused to move and dies on the demarcation line which divides the new Pakistan from new India. When the real world is overcome by insanity normality only exists only in the asylum. The lunatics have a better understanding of the crime that is being perpetrated than the politicians who agreed to it.”
'The Dog of Titwal’ is another fine story by Manto in which he describes the tussle among the people, who were appointed on the border, soldiers: their mental, physical, social and psychological scenario. It was the first attempt by any writer to bring to the forefront their agony, pain, confusion and sufferings of the people appointed to safeguard their new countries: as before some time or before partition they were standing together for one cause against one enemy but now they were standing in front against each others, considering their friends as their enemies.

The irony of the dog is somehow the picture of the common people who were not able to make out, “Why this is happening and where to go to survive with safety?” In the story, when the soldiers of both the frontiers, kill the dog with their bullets one army man as while scratching the mud he observed:

“Even dogs will now have to decide if they are Indian or Pakistani.”

‘The Last Salute’ is yet another story, which brings tension on the borders between the keepers of the country. The story begins with the lines:

“This Kashmir war was a very odd affair. Subedar Rab Nawaz often felt as if his brain had turned into a rifle with a faulty catch.”

The story is about two soldier friends, Rab Nawaz and Ram Singh, who, before partition used to fight for one common enemy, who was not their real enemy perhaps, for the sake of employment, rewards and medals. Rab Nawaz could not solve the puzzle which was continuously chasing him.

He thinks that whether they are fighting for Kashmir or the Muslims there in Kashmir? If they are fighting for the Princely state of Kashmir so why not for the Princely states of Hyderabad and Junagarh and for Muslims there? And if it is an Islamic war so why not the other Muslim countries of the world join shoulder with them to safeguard religion? And with no conclusion for these intricate and subtle issues he wonders the aim of his fighting the war.

Both the friends standing on their positions talk about their good past, give remarks to each other, calling each other with their teasing names and somehow refreshing the past, when they were together fighting the wars. As the story moves
on, Rab Nawaz saw someone standing on the other side of the border and he opened fire. After he realized that it was his own friend Ram Singh, when he realized his mistake he shouted on Ram Singh to do so, and requested for urgent medical help on the wireless to Major Aslam.

Both friends in the middle of the war talked to make the pain less felt for Ram Singh and when, before sunset Major Aslam arrived with the news that there was no doctor Ram Singh was laying between consciousness and death.

The end of the story shuffles our consciousness to think about the pain of the soldiers, who were earlier friends but now they are enemies because of the parted India. The story ends as:

“Ram Singh opened his eyes and stiffened his body as if he was coming to attention, with one great effort he raised his hand and saluted - - - with half opened eyes, he looked at Rab Nawaz, took one last breath and died.”

Till now the people of the subcontinent of India are under the confusion regarding the issue of Kashmir, as recently Pakistani Army Chief Raheel Sharif, commented on the issue, which made headlines for the newspapers here in India in the month of June, 2015, he said:

“Kashmir is the unfinished agenda of partition.”

Both the stories discussed earlier are stories based on partition and the changing behaviour and loyalty of the individuals. But this story is far more ahead in reflecting the confusion and frustration of people, who were placed against each other to safeguard their newly formed motherland. In the characters of Rab Nawaz and Ram Singh, Saadat Hasan Manto talks about the change of loyalty. The story seems to be very interesting with friendly conversations between soldiers of both the regiments. But it turns out in a sorrowful situation, when Ram Singh gets injured in the firing and dies. Though Rab Nawaz moans his death but was unable to stop it. In the story, the writer brings in once again the fact and behaviour of the people, who were forced to be civilians of a particular state, rather than choosing on their will. As mentioned by the Army Chief of Pakistan, in his recent comment, the
situation becomes more clear for the reader, as Manto was asking the same in the story which he wrote nearly sixty or sixty five years ago.

To experience the change in the behaviour of individuals in society Saadat Hasan Manto’s short story ‘Ram Khalawan’ becomes one of the important documents. The story bears the title name of the main character, who is a washer man. He is a very loyal type of washer man who used to work for the unnamed narrator of the story. The washer man is much talkative and when he sees the picture of his old masters, in the said kholi (room) of the narrator he expresses his astonishment. He becomes more bewildered when the narrator introduces himself as the elder brother of the person in the picture. Ram Khalawan was much confused on his living conditions, but was altogether happy that somehow he is working for one of his old master’s family. When the narrator gets married he asks his wife to be soft with the washer man, because he never demanded something extra or his wages may be on time, his wages.

After marriage the narrator leaves for Delhi and spends around two and half years there. Later, when he returns, he gets a room on rent at Mahim and was living with his wife. His wife was very annoyed because of the behaviour of the new washer men who would always go wrong with wages, or may be unclean clothes. When the couple was on the condition of leaving the issue of washer man, Ram Khalawan comes up as good news and he starts working for them. In the course of time when the partition talks started, Ram Khalawan falls critically ill and was on the verge of death. The wife of the narrator takes him to a doctor and with medicines and proper treatments he gets well. He was so touched by the action of his madam that whenever he would come to collect or deliver bags of clothes he would bless them in his illiterate language.

When partition took place, wife of the narrator migrated to Lahore and was eagerly waiting for the narrator to finish off with his work and to come over there. When the situation became more horror full, the narrator decides to leave for Lahore. He decides to leave on the weekend but then realizes about his clothes which were lying with Ram Khalawan. On realizing, he decides to go to the dhobi ghat and to collect his clothes. On his visit when he reaches the dhobi ghat he finds himself in the big circle of drunk washer men, who wanted him to reveal his identity, whether a Muslim or Hindu. On reaching there and realizing his mistake and
understanding the situations, the narrator asks for his washer man. When Ram Khalawan appears before him the narrator becomes more worried as he too was completely drunk.

At first Ram Khalawan attempts to kill the narrator but on realizing who he was, he asks his companions to leave him because his wife once saved his life. He says in his illiterate tone as:


(He is not Muslim. He is my master. The husband of the madam, who came in a motor . . . took me to the doctor . . . who gave me the medicine for purgative).

The next day when the narrator was waiting for the tickets, Ram Khalawan comes with his bag of clothes. He asked for forgiveness about his behaviour and was repenting for his attitude. In the character of Ram Khalawan, Manto depicts the behaviour of individual, which is being framed by the crowd in a particular situation. We could find the narration of the crowd and individual psychology in many other short stories by Saadat Hasan Manto. He is a lover of humanity and individualism, but he never wanted to know about individuals in limited space, whereas he wanted to bring out the psychology of an individual, when he or she comes in contact with the crowd. His first short story ‘Tamasha’ is a proof of his knowledge and understanding about psychology of the crowd, which is written on the incident of Jallianwala Baugh massacre. Throughout his life he observed and depicted the psychology of the crowd in many of his short stories. As in the story Ram Khalawan turns into a killer when being agitated by the people in the crowd, in the mayhem situations of partition and communal killings. Many a times it could happen that all the people in the crowd cannot understand the main motive, importance or need to behave in a certain pattern but in a wink, they will change their beliefs, relations as following the psychology of the crowd.

‘Siyah Hashiya’ by Saadat Hasan Manto is a collection of short stories in which at many places in his stories, he depicts the pressure of the crowd affecting psychology of individuals. As in the story ‘Price of Freedom’. In this story Gulam Ali, when gets married with Nigar, in the background of freedom struggle, he
announces to the people present in the procession that they will live as friends rather than as a married couple. One could get this decision of Gulam Ali and Nigar as their love for their other land. But when we get deep in the consciousness of an individual and examine the psychological pressure of the crowd, it comes to the understanding that the decision was much more intra forced decision. As in the same story we see Gulam Ali, who once announced that they will not start their married life till achieving of Sawraj, living happily with his wife and child in the enslaved India.

We could understand the behaviour of an individual in the crowd as more depicted in the next short story ‘Taawan’ which was translated by Khalid Hasan as ‘Cooperation’. In the story Manto talks about the partition and the communal riots. In the story, he talks about, the lootings during the riots. The crowd gets into a very big residential home with the view of looting all worthy items. When they all enter, everyone wanted to grab the most worthy items or things than the others. In between, one man appears, who guides them properly in an arranged manner and they were successful in their looting.

In the other story ‘1919 ki Ek Baat’, Thaila Kanjar redirects the anger and energy of the people in the crowd, to damage, to some extent, the British Government. He asks them to kill the English soldiers rather than damaging the Queens’s statue. He says:

“Why are you wasting your energy? Why don’t you follow me? We’ll go and kill those Tommies who have shot and killed so many innocent people. I swear by God, if we’re together, we can wring their necks with our bare hands.”

Though both the stories bear different situations and time but with the narration Saadat Hasan Manto depicts the psychology of individuals in the crowd. The crowd which forms big energy needs proper direction, to do whatever work or task is what Manto wanted to depict in his short stories. By writing these stories Saadat Hasan Manto wanted to bring to attention, of the politicians and the name sake owner of the society, for proper leadership before, during and after partition events. Along with depicting the psychology of humans Manto reflected
the horror of partition which made people go mad with their counterparts, friends and known people.

The time was completely unsafe for people. The communal riots, which were a result of partition, made human beings so wild and hypocritical that they were not ready to spare women or children just in the name of religion. The rape and assault of Sakina of ‘The Return’ by the volunteers of the same community is a slap on the face of the people who boast their loyalty to their religion.

Sakina’s mother was killed by people during the riots. And while dying her mother asked her father to protect Sakina and her grace and honor from those animals trying to just work on their instinct just like animals. But in this mayhem Sakina got separated from her father on the way to Pakistan. Her father somehow manages to get the volunteer to agree to get Sakina back from Amritsar to him.

With full sympathy the volunteers agree to help old Sirajuddin and promised that if she is alive they will get her back and Sirajuddin, the father of Sakina, was waiting restlessly for her arrival. Even though the young volunteers spotted and got Sakina back but the wildness in them has rubbed off the moral within them and she got humiliated and raped by those people, who were the hope of the migratory, to meet their separated loved ones. After many days the news of an unconscious Sakina lying in a hospital reached Sirajuddin and he runs to get his daughter, the only survived person of his family other than him.

The story takes a turn when he spotted Sakina lying on the hospital bed in an unconscious state. There he just wanted to know whether she is alive or not. Here the pen of Manto gets the naked reality of humanity with skillful use of words and we feel a slap on the face of humanity and honor of a woman. The lines go as:

“The doctor looked at the prostrate body and felt for the pulse. Then he said to the old man, pointing at the window, ‘Open it’. The young woman on the stretcher moved slightly. Her hands grasped for the cord which kept her salwar tied round her waist. With pain full
slowness, she unfastened it, pulled the garment down and opened her tights.

“She is alive. My daughter is alive”, Sirajuddin shouted with joy. The doctor broke into cold sweat.”

Here in the story, Saadat Hasan Manto forces his readers to think again on the cause of the partition and the humiliation to womanhood.

As in the other story ‘Bitter Harvest’, when the father sees the naked, blood ridden body of his daughter, he, as in revenge humiliates a girl of other faith. In the story when Qasim enters his home, he sees the blood soaked body of his wife lying in the courtyard, which made him forget the pain of a bullet embedded in his thigh. He wanted to take revenge of the killing of his wife when suddenly he remembers about their daughter ‘Sharifan’. He went on shouting frantically in the house searching for her, calling her by name and assuring her of his presence in the house. When he reaches to two closed doors, with courage he breaks open it. Looking at the picture inside the room, he almost fainted. His daughter, Sharifan, was naked and dead. On seeing the sight he was so negative affected that he was shouting abuses to the mothers and sisters of his enemies and people of the other religion, who did it, takes an axe in hand and leaves out to take revenge.

On the way he sees a big hulk muscled Sikh in the main square and frantically he rushed towards him. His attack was so sudden and ferocious that the man fell to the ground and died. He was not satisfied by this and when he sees a group of five or six men on the road he moved towards them. On realising the danger even those people came to attention, but with the axe in his hand Qasim manages to kill three of them and along with those dead bodies he too lay on the road.

He felt disgusted on realising that he was alive. But when he remembered the naked body of his daughter, he feels as if someone had put molted lead in his eyes. He gets up and starts running. He took a small street but when realized that it is a Muslim neighbourhood, he moves out. On the way he reaches a home on which there was a sign in Hindi. Qasim, in revenge, barges in and sees a girl of around Sharifan’s age. Without any second thought he gets over her ad ravages her like an
animal. When finished with the madness, he realizes that in the emotion of revenge he had clutched the throat of the girl, with both his hands, and the girl had fainted.

With the sight of the girl’s body he remembered the body of his daughter and he breaks into cold sweat. At the same time a man with a sword in his hand enters in the house and inquires the reason of his Qasim’s presence in his house. He recognized Qasim and calls him by name. When the man pulled off the blanket, which Qasim threw on girl’s body, he staggered out of the house yelling his daughter’s name:

“Bimla, my daughter, Bimla”.277

Saadat Hasan Manto, through the medium of his short stories brings to notice, his readers, the cruel and bitter happenings, where a person rapes and kills, Qasim’s daughter. In revenge Qasim rapes and kills the daughter of other faith and in revenge the next man moves out wailing and it could be the thing he will do the same to somebody else’s daughter. In this story Manto brings in the chain of reactions which were taking place one after other: the madness, which took over the mind and psychology of the people, as a result of communal riots rising after partition.

Following the same track talking about the adverse effects of the decision of partition, Manto writes stories named “Khani ka Khulasa” and “Allah Datta” in which he depicts the psychological conditions of men who, without any shame and feelings, make physical relationship with their daughters. Woman, being the victims and soft target of the mayhem, the event of partition forms a loud voice in the stories of Sadat Hasan Manto. Sadat Hasan Manto brings out the ill spreading, in society because of partition and communal disharmony. In the story “Kahani ka Khulasa”, Bimla gives birth to a baby, which she conceived by her father’s act only. Whereas in the story “Allah Datta”, Zainab becomes the target of her father, who maintained a physical relationship with her, after the death of his wife during the communal riots after partition. The same act, when he tries to repeat with his niece, who is the wife of his son, Zainab rose in furry and demands an exile of Sugra out of the home. Both the stories talk about incest issues but with deep and critical reading one could understand the effect of partition on their psychology which is somehow responsible in molding out their behaviour.
In a light but critical tone Manto describes the birth of independence in the story ‘Mrs. D’Silva’. It is the story which talks about the struggle of Mrs. D’Silva with the delivery of her child. The D’Silva couple was already blessed with a child and it was their second child. Mrs. D’Silva talks about the pattern she used like her mother, for conceiving and delivering a child. She talks the mentioned dates and years of their future children.

This seems something unrelated to the reader as a woman talking about her decided pregnancy schedules. But as we look at the theme of the story with some other perspectives we could make out the similarities between the patterns as Mrs. D’Silva writing the dates for her pregnancy and Britishers along with politicians discussing and deciding the date of the birth of the nation. In the story with the example of some another woman’s womb, Manto talks about the defect in the pattern of politicians and freedom struggle. Manto writes:

“Hamare padoos me ek aurat thi jo dedh baras se pet se thi, doctors kehte the ke uske rehem me koi kharabi hai. Bacha mojood hai jo peeda ho jaye ga magar us ki nashunuma thode thode wakfoo ke baad chukee ruk jaati hai is liye abhi tak itna bada nahi hoa ke paida ho sake”. 278

(There lives a woman in our neighbourhood, who was pregnant since last one and half years. Doctors were of the view that the fetus is present in her womb but because of some defects in her child bag, the growth of the child stops after a particular intervals and the fetus in the womb is not matured to take birth).

On labor pains Mrs. D’Silva visited the hospital twice but was asked to go home as the doctors and nurse think that there is still time for the child to take birth. The second time she becomes very ashamed, as the woman from the locality came to inquire about her inability to deliver. And after a week when the narrator of the story was taking a nap, after lunch, she hears the crying sound of the new born and rushes to the flat of Mrs. D’Silva. Over there she discovers that, to avoid the third time humiliation by going to hospital, Mrs. D’Silva gave birth to the child at home.

As we read the story we could understand and relate the series of happening and similarity between the birth of the child to Mrs. D’Silva and birth of our new
independent nation. In the same manner as Mrs. D’Silva approaches the hospital twice but the doctors and nurse feeling the time has come for the delivery but with the denial of the doctors, turn back to her home. In the same way our freedom fighters struggle for achieving freedom for us. For example the first war of independence 1857, where, because of lack of coordination between the kings and owners of the states, we lost it, the way Mrs. D’Silva sent back from the doctors, informing as still the time is pending for delivery. The second time when the struggle started under the leadership of national leaders, again the British government denies for independence. And before the third attempt we were declared independent. Everything happened swiftly that no one had the time to think for some action as Mrs. D’Silva gives birth to the child at her home.

But as with the condition of Mrs. D’Silva, Sadat Hasan Manto tries to depict the sudden decision and it’s after effects, the communal riots, as she lies in her home in a pool of blood without any help. It is the act of Sadat Hasan Manto, who creates the similarity between the birth of a child and the birth of our independent nation. As discussing the tool of Mrs. D’Silva, Manto discussed the hardships of our freedom fighters. At the end Manto seems to be asking the question about the need of bloodshed and decision of partition.

Other than his short stories, in essays written by Sadat Hasan Manto, we could see his realistic approach and bitter pen, towards the disaster caused by partition. In the essay “Sawal Paida Hota Hai,” which is being translated as ‘A Question is Produced,’ Sadat Hasan Manto in a harsh attitude writes:

“Allah sends down natural disasters to control population explosion. He encourages us to go to war; He creates Pakistan and Akhand Bharat. In doing this, he teaches humans innovative methods of birth control.”

Where as, in the essay, “News of a Killing”, we could read his sorrowful thoughts on killings. As he writes:

“We thought of what had happened during partition that brought the human race to shame the parading of naked and helpless woman, the murdering of
lakhs of human beings, the raping of thousands of girls. We thought that after this, the problem was behind us. That partition would rid us of the hatred and the violence. But now we learn that the hatred has not been expanded. If thrives.”

This essay was originally produced by him with the title “Qatal -O- khoon Ki Surkiya”. In this essay whatever Manto wrote, seems to be coming true, as in the essay he points out the continuation of barbarism, killing in the name of religion and religious intolerance. He pointed out in one of his stories “New Constitution” the things, of the future he writes:

“Many say “It is no doubt the result of a holy man’s curse that Hindus and Muslims keep slashing each other up every other day. I have heard it said by my elders that Akbar Badshah once showed disrespect to a saint, who angrily cursed him in these words: “Get out of my sight! And yes, your Hindustan will always be plagued . . . can see for yourselves. Ever since the end of Akbar’s raj, what else has India known but riots after riots?”

Though the curse, Akbar’s disrespect to the saint and his angry words, didn’t seem to be true but by fantasizing he brings to the attention and understanding of his readers that for what the people of the other countries will know about. He was completely against partition on the basis of religion and, thus in the essay, asks and explains about the bitter harvesting. He writes:

“That one even obliterated of this. An event so blood as never witnessed before. What happened then is done and there is little gain in a analyzing it. But it’s absolutely essential that we examine its fallout. The changes that have come because of it. This is not the work of judges therefore, but psychologists. They alone can investigate the phenomenon and come out with some solution.”

As in the story ‘Saheb -e- Karamat’, when the police started recovering the goods and possessions which were looted during riots, people started leaving things as to avoid any arrests. A man, while trying to leave his two bags of sugar into a nearby well, falls into it and by help comes out but unfortunately dies within some hours. The next day when people used the water from well it tasted sweet. Quickly the wrong news spreads and people started believing him a man of God.

In the other story “Kasar-e-Nafsi” a mob stops a passing train and kills the people of another religion. The next, after finishing with their act, they treat the remaining people in the train; those who belonged to their religion with sweet, milk and fruits. When the train starts moving the head of mob speaks to the people as:

“Bhaio aur Behno! Hame gadi ki aamad ki itlah bahout der me mili. Yahi wajah hai ke hum jis tarah chahte the us tarha aap ki khidmat na kar sake.”

(Dear brothers and sisters! As we received the news of the arrival of the train late we could not arrange the service as we wanted to treat you all)

In the next mini story “Islah” the mob captures a man and asks him about his faith. He reveals by shouting the slogans of religion. But the mob was not satisfied they ask him to lower his pants. On seeing, they inquire about his faith again. The man in fear informs that as he has to cross the area of the other religion people so he performed the circumcision to avoid danger. People in the mob were not ready to believe and one shout and others follow. He says:

“Uda do galti ko”. Galti uda di gai. Dharam Chand bhi saath hi ud gaya.”

(Finish off the mistake. The mistake was finished, along with it Dharam Chand too.)
In the other story “Bekhabri ka Faida” two unnamed people went on firing aimlessly on the road. As with first round of fire a man, who was peeping out of the window, died. The second bullet hits and punctures the water-carrier’s musk. Along with the musk the man falls to the ground and his blood gets mixed in water and began to flow on the road. The third time it missed the target and drops on a wall. The shooter gets disappointed. The fourth bullet targeted an old lady, who died without making a noise. The fifth and sixth bullets went missing nobody got killed. The man becomes angry and points his gun towards a child who was coming from the other side. His friend who was along with the shooter asks him about his act as the bullets were over. The shooter replies:

“Tum khamosh raho … Itne se bache ko kya maloom?” 

("You keep quiet, what will that little child knows about?”)

In the next story “Munasib Karwai”, when the husband and wife come out of hiding, they see their home taken over by other people. As being not able to cope up with hunger and thirst the husband asks those people to kill them. The new owners were confused and inform that they are Jains and killing is forbidden in their religion. So with the discussion in the family, they hand over the couple to the other faith people to do what is required.

In the next story “Taqsim” one man selects a large wooden case and when tried to pick it up finds it very heavy. The other person offers him help and both get ready on a fifty percent partnership. When they decide to open it and see what lies in it. Rather than any wealth, a man appears out of it, and cuts both of the owners into proper two pieces.

In ‘Halal aur Jhatka’, two friends were talking about the way they killed the people. One said he used the proper way of killing as being specified in his religion, whereas the other with a jerk kills the first person and talks about his faith and way of killing.

The story “Riaayat”, gets over in just two sentences as one says:
“Mere aankho ke samne meri jawan beti ko na maro”. “Chalo is ki hi mante hai- kapde uttar kar hank do ek tarf.”

(“Don’t kill my young daughter in front of my eyes please.” “Ok we will respect your wish. Just tear off all the clothes and shoo her away.”)

‘Jelly’ is the story which asks about the worth of blood of a human. The man who used to carry the ice on his hand vehicle and to sell it, somebody killed him near around seven in the morning. The blood of the person gets mixed with ice water and somehow gets frozen. Nearby, around eleven, the same day, police vehicle gets the body out, leaving all the dirt and blood uncleaned. On the way with his mother, in a tonga, a child gets attracted to the freshly frozen mass and asks his mother, bringing her attention to the shining jelly.

In the story “Nigrani” Sadat Hasan Manto talks about the attitude of the police towards the killings and riots in the story, passing by from the place. ‘A’ inquires about any dangerous activity which could have taken place in the nearby locality, to a military person. He was on his way to drop his friend ‘B’ to a safe place and to avoid any mishaps, stops to inquire. The military about the role of military, the man said:

“Kyon nahi - sab kaam issi ki nigrani me hota hai.”

(Why not- everything was done under his supervision)

“Aaram ki Zaroorat”, is the story which again talks about the attitudes of people towards communal riots and killings. In the story when one informs another about the condition of one attacked victim, the answer brings in front the tiredness of the killers towards it as:

“Mara nahi – dekho abhi jaan baki hai. Rehne do yaar mein thak gaya hun.”

(“Still not dead – look it is alive.” Let it be friend. Now I am tired).
In the mini stories, by Saadat Hasan Manto, the reader could see a very direct approach and bold narration of the situation, happenings, killings, attitudes and behaviour of the people, who were affected because of sudden decisions and jerks of partition and communal riots.

Sadat Hasan Manto never just tried to raise the reality related to partition, along with it, the way he portrays it surrounds one’s consciousness. He speaks about the limits of the effects on human psychology. His stories never give us details about partition and communal riots, but bring in front the people and their situations in so bitter a manner that the act of partition stands without any answer. As we read the stories of Sadat Hasan Manto, on partition we could feel sweat on the forehead of humanity and the dream of achieving independence. One of the quality of the short stories by Manto is herein the reader never finds happening, not about the number and nor do the summarizations, whereas the reader finds a cry, which is being folded under oppression, fear, terrorist mind and body and a deep regret hidden under silence.

The short stories or the fiction, by Sadat Hasan Manto, are not the exploration or narration of duplicate relationships between people of two different sects. There is no show off of brotherhood in a mechanical pattern. If one is to talk about the collection of his short stories, under the title “Siyah Hashiya”, one could understand the small happenings in the large communal political disturbed situations.

Partition was surely a tyrant decision, which had shaken our very base of social and cultural unity. Sadat Hasan Manto felt this danger of loss, quite in advance and was writing about it with acute descriptions. Formation of new independent states: India and Pakistan, the deadly accident, which Manto felt with intensity. Partition, is one of the burning issues which wounded the thoughts, behaviour and psychology of the people and Manto too.

Many other writers and thinkers spoke on the madness, which followed after partition, as Dr. Firoz Malik quotes the words of Khalid Ashraf in his article with the title “Manto aur Takseem”. He writes:

“Takseem-e-Hind is barsagir ki tareekh ka sab se aaham wakiya tha. Do koomi nazaree ki bunyad par ki gai is takeem ne inte masail to hal nahi kiya

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jitney naye masail ko janam diya. Samraji kowato
ki sazish ke taheet ek karoor afraid apne sadyoo
purane ghar-o-shaheer chood ke ajnabi dayroo me
panha lene par majbhor hoi. Takseem ne apno ko
begana kar diya, bhai ko bhai se juda kar diya,
admi se is ki insaneyat cheen li, katal, khoon-o-
fisadat ka ek toofan khada hoa. Jahalt, tasoob, aur
bhoomari ke shikar log mazhabi junoon me ek
doosre ke khoon se daman rangte rahe. Un fisadat
me insane ne jis paymane par barbaryat ka
muzhara kiya is ki doore missal is barsageer ki
tareekh me kahi nahi milti.” 289

(Partition of India, is one of the most disastrous happenings in the history of
the subcontinent. Far from solving the issue Partition, on the base of Two Nations
Philosophy, gave rise and birth to many new issues and problems. Because of the
colonial conspiracy, millions of people were forced to leave the place, where they
were living for decades and to take refuge in unknown surroundings. As a result
known became strangers; it has also robbed and snatched the brotherhood and
humanity from people, gave rise to a storm of killings and riots. The people, were
the victims of ignorance, bigotry and starvation and in the religious madness were
participating in the killings without any defined motto).

On Sadat Hasan Manto’s attitude towards the issues related to partition and
riots, Fauziya Aslam writes:

“Fisadat ke afsane ka jayaza le to mehsoos hota
hai jaise kuch likhne wala insane doosti, bahiman
amazalim, mitti hoi izzatto, khoon samandar aur
apni commitment ke sath likh rahe the. Hamare
likne walo me Manto ek aham naam hai jis ne ek
taraf to fisadat ki hakkikat pesh ki aur doosre tarf
afsane ki takneeek aur asloob ke nai johar bhi
dikhai. ‘Khol Do’, ‘Toba Tek Singh’ ‘Yazid’,
‘Gurmukh Singh ki Wasiyat’, ‘Akhri Salute’,
‘Titawal ka Kutta’, Manto ke murke ke afsane hai.”

(As we review the literature of partition, we could make out that some of the writers were writing about human friendship, tyrant oppression, killing of honors and the pool of bloods with their commitments. Among those, the name of Sadat Hasan Manto appears to be important, as he while writing about the real picture of riots gave new patterns and manners to writing. Among all the stories by Sadat Hasan Manto, ‘The Return’, ‘Toba Tek Singh’, ‘Bitter Harvest’, ‘The Assignment’, ‘The Last Salute’, ‘Dog of Titwal’, are some of the stories where a reader can find a violent approach of Sadat Hasan Manto, towards the issues and happenings related to, during and after the decision of partition and actual happenings).

Partition has shaken our very basic thoughts and pattern of social, cultural beliefs. It costs us our human values and we like Toba Tek Singh stood all confused to decide our nation and our national loyalty. The phase is still ongoing at present when we are celebrating our sixty-eighths Independence year; we are the slaves to our thoughts, religion, beliefs, faith, misguided and unhealthy politics. Sadat Hasan Manto realised this very danger, under all its pressure and power, long before, anyone did. He not only described those dangers in his short stories but reached to its roots while depicting them, in his fictional but true canvas. Once, on writing about himself, in a very perplexed manner he writes:

“But it may also come to pass that Saadat Hasan may die and Manto may not … Now if he was to die and I do not, it would be like being left with an eggshell that has been emptied of its yellow and white.”

We could make out the harsh attitude of Sadat Hasan Manto, towards partition, the riots and the madness follows it in the very beginning of the story. “Sahaye”, Manto wrote, as commenting on killings in the name of religion and gives very clear understanding about the foundation, practice and its continuation in the words of Mumtaz as he speaks very passionately.

“Don’t tell me a hundred thousand Hindus and the same numbers of Muslims have been
massacred. The great tragedy is not that two hundred thousand people have been killed but that this enormous loss of life has been futile. The Muslims who killed a hundred thousand Hindus must have believed that they had exterminated the Hindu religion. But Hindu religion is alive and well, and will remain alive and well. And after putting away a hundred thousand Muslims, the Hindus must have celebrated the liquidation of Islam; but the fact is that Islam has not been affected in the least. Only the naïve can believe that religion can be eliminated with a gun. Why can’t they understand that faith, belief, devotion, call it what you will, is a thing of the spirit; it is not physical. Guns and knives are powerless to destroy it.”

Partition, in short stories, is the issue which, is being talked, reflected and written by the authors of both the frontiers in Urdu, Punjabi and Sindhi languages specially. Writers like: Saadat Hasan Manto, Intezar Hussain, Khawaja Ahmed Abbas, Gulzar, Kudratullah Sahab, Niranjan Tasneem, Qurraitulain Haider, Krishna Chandra, Asmat Chughtai, Dewendra Satyarthi, Afzal Hasan Randhwa, Kartar Singh Duggal, Guru Dev Singh Rupana, Raji Seth, Vishnu Parbhakar, Sawindra Singh Uppal, Sayyed Waliullah and many others.

To conclude, we could say that Sadat Hasan Manto had minutely observed in his short stories the effects on human psychology, brotherhood, gaps and confusion, which were the result of partition. The incidents and happenings being narrated in those stories are so true to life that a person, who must have gone through the pains of the decision of partition, can give evidence to their truthfulness. But do these only stand for giving this narration a certificate of eligibility, of good literature? Other than the true depiction of the events, the short stories by Saadat Hasan Manto, is the height to the artistic and thought full approach of Sadat Hasan Manto. These stories not only stand out as acting as the true documentation to the readers, but also they give the critics a challenge to judge them on the basis of the
diction, choice of words, new formats and patterns. Many of the short stories seem to be on the bases of some or other real happenings and as at the end, Sadat Hasan Manto brings out the pain and sufferings of humans and society. The plain narration, choice of words, pattern of dialogues, critical and sarcastic remarks and way of writing made Sadat Hasan Manto, stands out from a group of writers. There is no doubt that partition and migration have affected a lot on the psychology of Sadat Hasan Manto; we could make out his sharp and disturbing words, in his writings which his grand niece Ayesha Jalal writes and quotes as:

“Despite trying, I could not separate India from Pakistan and Pakistan from India. He had innumerable questions and no obvious answers. In what ways would Pakistani literature be distinctive? Who owned the literature written in undivided India?” “Would it be divided as well?” “Weren’t the basic problems confronting Indians and Pakistan’s the same?” “Was Urdu going to become extinct in India and what shape would it assume in Pakistan?”

The trauma of 1947 partition, which marked the height of inhumaness and the feeling of revenge, without keeping into consideration the values and morals, cannot be minimized in these short pages. Many Indian writers like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Khushwant Singh etc. are among the list of writers, who commented and wrote on the issue of partition. But the realistic attitude of Manto, about the riots creates a sad atmosphere, where the fault of human beings comes alive automatically, because the riots are unnaturally aroused because of human misunderstandings, but it never thinks of the affection, love, moral, values and purity.

He wrote forcing our minds to think on the issue and to realize it with its cruelness, making the readers hair stand on ends, asking for justice:

“And who would pay the women the wages for carrying those children in their wombs for nine months? Pakistan or India? Or would it all be put
down on the God’s great ledger that is if there were still any pages left.”

Saadat Hasan Manto wrote many short stories and sketches on partition and its effects, before and after migration, but he never saw people as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians they all were humans to him, who were candidates to hold all the decitness and cheating. That is the reason he talks about the prostitutes and the common people heroically, rather than writing about the burocrats, who are just with their false sympathy and care forms the upper position in the society.

To conclude we could quote a couplet by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, which supports the views of Saadat Hasan Manto on partition. Faiz writes:

“Ye dag dag ujala, ye shab-e-gazida saher,

Who intezar tha jis ka ye who saher to nahi,

Ye who saher to nahi, jis ki aarzoo lekar,

chalee the yaar, ke mil jayege kahin na kahin

falak ke dashat me taaroo ke manzil.”

(This stained dawn, this night bitten morning, no this is not the morning for which we were waiting. This is not the morning, for which we hoped, as thoughts of getting the destination of stars in the jungles of the skies).