CHAPTER – IV

Hindu-Muslim

Relationships

Basti, Sunlight on a Broken Column, A Village Divided and River of Fire
Chapter – 4

Hindu-Muslim Relationships

Peoples of different races and cultures, in plain terms, have migrated to India over mountains and across seas, bringing with them an array of varying ideals and customs. Balancing their languages, race, religion and attitudes within the country for years, these different peoples have been wonderfully able to maintain peacefulness and harmoniousness. Yet during the last one hundred years, disunity, disharmony, and disintegration have been intensifying among different Indian communities. India had always been a country occupied by people of two separate religions, but there had never existed any deep cultural differences between the Hindus and Muslims. History is a witness to the fact that Hindus and Muslims shared a composite culture. “The social relationships between these two communities were co-operatives without any severe constraint or conflict despite religious distinctions” (Singh 8). They spoke the same languages, wore similar attires and furnished their houses in the same style. Also, their occupations and industries were part of one economic system. Before the British occupation, both Islam and Hinduism enjoyed representation in the government. Islam possessed enough political power in India’s government and never felt the need to organize its powers separately. Yet the appearance of a third party, the British, tore their cultural unity asunder and led each to organize themselves separately.

The relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims has had a long history in which it had to pass through many ups and downs in the Indian sub-continent. The early contact between Muslims and Indian Hindus was economic and the relationship between them was based on conviviality. Looking back to the regime of Mughals in
India, Akbar is highly acclaimed for promoting Hindu-Muslim unity. He tried to build up his relations with the Hindus by making marital relationships with Rajput princesses. It was he who listened to the teachings of the Hindu saints and philosophers in his Ibadat Khana (house of prayer). It is observed that “a large number of temples were built all over the country by him” (Mahajan 90). Even the customs and festivals of Hindus were celebrated in the court. Besides, the Muslim painters, musicians and authors, too, played a vital role in cementing the Hindu-Muslim relationship. During the time of Akbar the Gita was translated into Persian. Even during Shahjahan’s regime there were many Hindu musicians deputed in the court. Hence, one cannot ignore the contribution of the Muslim rulers in enhancing Hindu-Muslim relations. Undoubtedly, cruel rulers like Aurengzeb were also there who imposed partial taxes on the Hindus but such rulers were rare. Yet the relations between these two major communities were above suspicion, sharing each other’s sorrows and happiness despite religious distinctions. But the commencement of the partition clouded the sky of this relationship that had been running peacefully for many years.

The aftermath of the partition of India in 1947 saw large-scale sectarian strife and bloodshed throughout the nation. Since then, India has witnessed sporadic large-scale violence sparked by underlying tensions between sections of the Hindu and Muslim communities. “The violence that occurred between the two religious groups about the time of partition strained the relation between Pakistan and India so completely that hostility between the two nations continues even to this day” (Singh 8). These conflicts also stem from the ideologies of Hindu Nationalism versus Islamic Extremism and are prevalent in certain sections of the population. As discussed earlier, in pre-partition period, there was harmonious relationship between these two
communities. For instance, Hindu-Muslim solidarity was visible in the struggle for the independence of India. If one remembers the sacrifices of Indian patriots like Rajguru, Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shakhar Azad, one can equally remember the martyrs of 1857 like the sons and grandson of Bahadur Shah Zafar who were murdered by Major Hudson after the King's surrender to the British. The hanging ground of Lahore Jail and the Khooni Darwaja of the Red-fort stand as witness that both Hindus and Muslims died for the same cause. If Gandhi and Nehru were our leaders, Abul Kalam Azad, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Ajmal Khan were our leaders too. The British did not kill only Hindus in Jallianwala Bagh, they also massacred many Muslims. These political leaders were against the colonial rule and its cruelty. Similarly, the leaders of both communities demonstrated courage and bravery to liberate India and remained united. Even the Moulanas and Moulvis declared “subjugation, unjust and against the tenants of Islam” (Web).

But the turning point of Hindu Muslim relationship was the introduction of the Muslim League. The League had only one objective, namely, to create a separate status for Muslims. For all practical purposes, Muslim League had no agenda but to divide India. Unfortunately, it was successful and a separate state of Pakistan was created. The partition brought about animosity and dissension between the Hindus and the Muslims of India and the result has been religious polarization. In a nutshell, it may be observed that the relations between Hindus and Muslims have existed at three levels: harmony that is before partition; communal discord following the partition, and suspicion or reconciliation. In order to explore some of these aspects and probe those areas which directly or indirectly impinged on the sudden and total breakdown of long standing inter-community networks and alliances, it is necessary to locate the partition issues and debates outside the conference chambers. Without theory or the
rhetoric of Indian nationalism, it is important to examine why most people, who had so much in common and had lived together for generations, could turn against their neighbours, friends and members of the same caste and class within hours and days. So this chapter focuses on the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims, in terms of their myths, traditions and culture. It also seeks to underline how Muslim writers reacted to partition and viewed the relationships between these two communities.

I

In his classic work *Basti*, Intizar Husain offers a vivid record of his childhood in Rupnagar, a village in Utter Pradesh. In the opening section, there are descriptions of an ideal social community and the geographical location of his house in Rupnagar. He talks about his early education and his experiences of interacting with Hindus who were there in large numbers in his childhood. He feels elated when he hears about the mingling of the two communities in celebrating festivals like *Dusshra* and *Muharram*. During *Diwali*, Husain observes that “it was difficult to tell if the *diyas* were lit on the parapet of our house or on that of our Hindu neighbours. As a child, I would climb on to the terrace of our house and gather as many *diyas* as I could. The next morning I would count the number of *diyas* I had picked up” (Bhalla 79). This keen interest of a Muslim towards Hindu culture is indicative of his attitude. In brief, Hindu-Muslim relationship was cordial and co-operative as suggested by the author. But his decision to migrate to Pakistan was taken on the spur of the moment. When he reached Lahore, he found that riots were taking a great toll on human lives. There were looting and mindless massacres everywhere. While viewing the spectacle of the splitting of the nation, Husain takes a philosophic view. He says that “the partition is not a phenomenon of our times alone, but a part of the very civilization of India” (qtd. in
Arora 19). For instance, the entire history of exile and migration during the partition is a repetition of what people have experienced since the days of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Even in those days, the partition of the kingdom between members of the same family was a violent and disastrous event. What happened in 1947 was akin to what was described in the great Indian epics.

In the novel, Zakir, the protagonist turns back to pre-partition India nostalgically. While sitting in Lahore, he remembers the days spent at Rupnagar before the partition. Literally, *Rupnagar* has been depicted as a place of communal harmony from where a ray of hope for positive thoughts could be had at the time of turmoil. According to the Hindu and Muslim mythographers in the novel, Rupnagar is and always has been an “imaginative realm of tolerance” (qtd. in Bhalla 22). As its name suggests it is not only a place of beauty crafted by the imagination of the divine but is also a basti in which each of its religious communities came into being at the same time. That is why the Hindus and the Muslims who live there can neither claim priority over the other nor be more ancient and hence, the rightful moral and political inheritors of Rupnagar. Later, in movements of extreme despondency in Pakistan, Zakir remembers that every gesture performed by the people who lived in Rupnagar, every change of season they consecrated with songs, every story they told, was a ritual repetition of cosmogony, a re-consecration of the basti and its people. In Rupnagar, Abba Jan tells Zakir that “Not a single word ever fell below the standard of civilized speech .... Not even during political rallies!” (*Basti* 18).

Indeed, whenever Zakir is distraught by the hallucinatory world of strikes, slogans, and riots in Lahore, memories of life in *Rupnagar* came surging up from some deep, abiding core of his self as a form of thanks giving. Zakir’s *Rupnagar* is simultaneously a vision of a civilization of pre-partition India, a repudiation of all
forms of identity politics, and a prophecy of culture we must aspire towards for our sanity and salvation.

Effortlessly, Zakir remembers how the myths of Bhagatji, a Hindu merchant and his grandfather, an orthodox Shia Muslim were acceptable and well liked among the people of Rupnagar.

Although their tales were different, yet the moral advice was unique. They explained their life world and its relation to the divine in their own way. For Bahgatji, since there was no transcendent God who existed outside the process of world making, it did not matter if the creation of the world was ex nihilo; his God was a participant in the world; he was both its creator and its creation. In Bhagatji’s mythic world, God entered the narrative of creation in medias res, even as the world was already in the process of moving through countless Yugas as they were created, dissolved, and begun again. For Abba Jan, Zakir’s father, there was an unambiguous sense of a holy creative being who existed before the world came into existence, in a moment prior to time. Both Bhagatji and Abba Jan, however, considered themselves commemorators and narrators of an unarmed habitat: “Men who saw in their basti, so splendidly named ‘Rupnagar’, the beauty of the divine unveil itself (63).

It is pertinent to note that Zakir and his childhood friends have been curious to hear the tales of Bhagatji and Abba Jan. Sometimes, he had to listen to the scolding of his grandmother for hearing Hindu tales from Bhagatji. His grandmother exclaims:

‘Son!’ Bi Amma glared at him. ‘Why were you born in our house? You should have been born in some Hindu’s house! Your father is always invoking the names of God and the prophet – he does not realize that his son has taken to Hindu stories!’ (25)
These lines of his grandmother are suggestive of the view that it is believed that if a Muslim hears the tales of Hindu culture, he is supposed to be more inclined to Hindus than the Muslims. Even today, a fundamentalist can never sit or eat with a person professing a different religion. For instance, a Hindu cannot be supposed to harbour any relationship with the Muslims. If he or she does, they are looked at suspiciously. The above remarks are indicative of the writer’s intention towards the people of different faiths. He seems to be neutral in relationship with the Hindus. It was partition which broke the hearts of such people who advocated unity in diversity. Zakir learnt the lesson through the example of the friendship between Bhagatji and his grandfather that means in an ethical community the claims of the ‘good’ are always higher than any assertion of solidarity with one’s own exclusionary group. The friendship between Bhajatji and Zakir’s father was so intense that nobody could imagine that his father had borrowed money from Bhagitji during the partition. At this, the author himself observes while conversing with Allok Bhalla in an interview saying “I went back to Dibai after my B.A. and met Bhagatji, he said to me, ‘Maulvi Sahib borrowed hundred rupees from me when he moved to Hapur. When you get a job and start earning, you can pay me back. It was then that I realized how deep a regard my father had for Bhagatji. He would never have borrowed money from any member of his own community” (Bhalla 82). It reflects how close relationship both of these communities had before the partition.

Besides, the site of action in Basti is marked by fabled places – variously named Rupnagar, Danpur, Ravanban, Brindaban, Shamnagar, Sravasthi, Karbla, Jahanabad – which are mythic spaces untarnished by history, and where each object on any common day is bright with hierophany and is saturated with the scared. These mythic sites, whose names are derived from Sanskrit, Arabic, and Pali sources
together form an allegoric map of Indian civilization in which the wisdom lore of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians is richly intermingled. In these fabled place names there is a plurality of gods and demons, human beings and animals, who talk to each other in their infinitely varied dialects, about things that matter. For instance, the tone and the idiom of the opening paragraph of the novel in which narrator, Zakir who has migrated to Pakistan, recalls his childhood in Rupnagar:

When the world was still all new, when the sky was fresh and the earth not yet soiled, when trees breathed through the centuries and ages spoke in the voices of birds, how astonished he was, looking all around, that everything was so new, and yet looked so old. Bluejays, woodpeckers, peacocks, doves, squirrels, parakeets – it seemed that they were as young as he, yet they carried the secrets of the ages. The peacocks’ calls seemed to come out from the forest of Rupnagar, but from Brindaban. When a little woodpecker paused in its flight to rest on a tall neem tree, it seemed that it had just delivered a letter to the Queen of Sheba’s palace, and was on its way back toward Salomon’s castle. When a squirrel running along the rooftops, suddenly sat up on its tail and chittered at him, he stared at it and reflected with amazement that those black stripes on its back were the marks of Ramchandr-ji’s fingers.

(Basti 1)
It is important to notice that after nearly about forty years, the writer’s attitude towards India is the same as he would possess before the partition. He seems to be nostalgic of Indian culture and its heritage bringing forth the environment, people and composite culture of the pre-partition India.

Very soon, a feeling of hatred and insecurity came to surface with the emergence of Bangladesh. During the cataclysmic event of 1947, similar fear and awe was noticed among the masses. When Zakir reached Vyaspur in Pakistan and spent a few years, he found a different environment dealing with politics and attitudes of the people towards India. He noticed the Pakistanis who are of the view that their nation-state was formed in opposition to a Hindu majority India. The reason for the formation of Pakistan was that the Muslims, as majority, would be forever at the mercy of the Hindu majority in a democratic polity. This seemed a fate they could not abide and, therefore, Muslims needed a country on their own from the Hindus. Thus for Pakistan, “the partition of India represented a division of the subcontinent between a Muslim Pakistan and a Hindu India, a division between those parts of India which were predominantly Muslim and those which were predominately Hindu” (Pande 23). This religion based partition led both communities to hatch a conspiracy against each other. This conspiracy is reflected in the novel when people of Pakistan consider India responsible for facilitating the formation of Bangladesh. Most of the fanatical forces consider India an imperialist country with an intention to impose imperialist policy on Pakistan. It was partition which changed the psyche and behaviour of the people at once. Suddenly communal riots and suspense began to be perceptible all around. At this similar situation, Intizar Husain observes that “once riots began in our region the attitudes of the ordinary people began to change” (qtd. in Bhalla, 22). In Vyaspur such ordinary people like Salamat seems to be a
fundamentalist and tries to convince everyone to unite against India. But Ifran and Zakir never respond to him in this matter. Consequently Salamat says wrathfully:

Imperialist devil, your tricks won’t work any longer!
You want to save yourselves by creating a confederation with India, you want to suppress the voice of the poor. These tricks won’t work. There will be no confederation with India. There will be war.

(Basti 96)

The above remarks by Salamat are indicative of the psyche that has been changed by the partition of India. Therefore, the novelist tries to depict the situation realistically that prevailed in Vyaspur.

In brief, the novelist has delineated the relationship between the Hindus and Muslim in a vivid manner. His depictions of pre-partition relationship between these two communities reflect how peacefully the people of both communities lived and participated in each other’s religious celebrations. For the external peace, the novelist seeks to look back India which has been a permanent source of inspiration during the riot torn days in Pakistan. So far as Muslim religion is concerned the author himself does not adhere to the fundamentalism and fanatical forces. Even he says that “I am a Muslim, but I always feel that there is a Hindu sitting inside me” (qtd. in Tiwari 62). It is on account of Indian background where he was born and brought up. So it is quite natural for him not to have ill-will against his motherland. The author is nostalgic while writing on partition and its effects on the psyche of the people. At last but not least, the relationship depicted by the novelist is somewhat cordial but a slightest change can be noticed when the partition took place.
Sunlight on a Broken Column traces communal relations with the help of three major patterns. The first pattern of communal amity depicted in the novel relates to the pre-partition period when the Hindus and Muslims fought for a common cause against the British collectively. The second pattern is revealed in the interruption between the Hindus and the Muslims because of the rise of the fundamentalist and opportunistic forces among the Muslims who invite a head on collision with the secularist Hindu forces manifest in the Indian National Congress. The schismatic division within the Muslims into two nationalities but also disintegrates the Muslims community itself. The third pattern of communal reconciliation is given away in the home-coming of one of the protagonists who feels overwhelmed by the warm welcome he receives from the members of the other community in his native place on his return from Pakistan.

A similar situation where unity between these two communities can be seen during pre-partition appears in the novel with political upheaval. The Hindus and the Muslims are together in their struggle against the British. This togetherness is best described by V.K. Chopra who says that “both the communities fought shoulder to shoulder for India’s freedom” (Chopra 13). The pattern of communal amity between the two communities become clear from the relationships Laila’s friend Ranjit Singh whose grandfather “did not eat with Baba Jan, but was his greatest friend (SBC 197) implicit in this relationship between Baba Jan and Ranjit’s grandfather is the difference as not touching each other’s food. Such differences, however, take a back seat in communal relations between the Hindus and Muslims in the pre-partition period. Likewise, an Englishman, Mr. Freemantle had requested in his will that he should be buried near his friend, Laila, Baba Jan, Syed Mohammed Hasan. And “a
simple marble cross distinguished his grave from the others in the family just as the
Ram Lila ground adjacent to the English cemetery in Sialkot in *Azadi* symbolized composite culture, similarly in this novel the graveyard at Hasanpur gives shelter to the corpses of both of communal trust and goodwill. It is in the light of this attitude that Laila’s uncle, Hamid comments: “I always found it was possible for Hindus and Muslims to work together on a political level and live in a personal friendship” (234). These remarks describes that one should be possessed by love for humanity. It reflects that human relations are above politics and selfish ends. This type of relationship was apparent before the partition which was eclipsed with the passage of time.

It was the British who felt that they could continue their uninterrupted regime in India only if they were able to divide the Hindus and Muslims. Hence, they followed the policy of ‘divide and rule’. Basically “the British rulers were neither the true friends of the Muslims nor the foes of the Hindus; they were the true friends of British imperialism” (Grover 13). To weaken the national movement they created a rift between the Hindu Nationalists and the Muslims and tried their best to sow the seeds of hatred and separation. In this novel the pattern of communal discord begins to become noticeable with mounting of communal tension in the city following the partition of India. The novelist projects different communal background and prejudices against each other through contradictory views of a group of friends with different religious affiliations:

“Do you mean Kemal wanted to marry her (Sita)?” He did. But for all her sophistication, scratch her and you will find an orthodox Hindu full of prejudices against Muslims”. “That is not fair, Saleem. Could a Muslim girl
marry a Hindu boy? Our religion forbids it"…. "But Sita’s attitude opened my eyes to the realities of the communal problem, what can you expect from a religion which forbids people to eat and drink together? When even a man’s shadow can defile another? How is real friendship or understanding possible? (SBC 196-97)

The above conversation among them shows how far the two communities have drifted away from each other. The tendency to take for granted the religious differences had evaporated. Instead, these differences are now spreading in the communal atmosphere like a poisonous gas infecting all that comes in its way. Thus the pattern of communal discord is rapidly affecting the pattern of amity. Even today the atmosphere of communal amity is shaken during conflicts and war in the largest democratic country like India.

Moreover, having shown the emerging pattern of communal tension and hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims in the first part of the novel, the novelist explores as to who had fanned the flames of these differences. The conversation between Lalia and her cousins, Asad and Zahid makes it amply clear:

He (Zahid) has learned the lesson the English teach us,"

"said Asad. “Hate each other – love us.” Why should there be a riot?” Asad said, “May be because there havn’t been any for too long, not even Hindu-Muslim ones. Something must be done to prove that the British are here to enforce law and order, and stop us killing each other. (56)
Asad’s reprimand of Zahid for being duped by the British who wish to widen the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims shows how a section of the Muslim intelligentsia did not allow itself to be swayed by the British propaganda and designs. At this relationship or conversation Jagdev Singh observes that “it invites comparison with the views of communal harmony voiced by the Muslims of Pir Pindo and the Sikhs of Dera Tek Singh in Bapsi Sidhwa’s Ice Candy Man” (Singh 51). Attia Hosain, however, does not draw an unsophisticated line between the attitudes of the rural and urban people. She explicates how within the urban Muslim community itself, there were different shades of opinion. While Zahid represents the exclusive approach, Asad represents the all inclusive approach.

Indian history shows that Muslim rulers have been dominating India since the time of Babar bringing forth Islamic ideals on the surface. For instance, cruel rulers like Aurangezeb imposed special taxes on the Hindus and demolished many temples of Hindus. Consequently, Hindus were fraught with anger and a flame of retaliation began to be raged in their hearts. Hindus’ feeling of revenge against Muslims is illustrated through Saleem who feels that Hindus can now democratically take revenge. The rift became clear: the secular Muslim nationalists remained in the Congress, while the communal Muslims leveled grave charges against the Congress that was termed as a purely Hindu organization. The latter challenged the secular nationalists. It was cleared that the policies and programmes of the Congress were deceptive. Commenting on this acrimonious exchange between the father and the son over the changing pattern of communal relations, Sarcos Cowasjee remarks perceptively, “the politics of the street have invaded the drawing rooms of the sophisticated and even the father and the son find themselves in opposite camps” (Cowasjee 25). Politics entered sophisticated houses like Ashiana where Laila and
other lived in. A heated argument between Hamid and his son, Saleem, is apparent in this novel. Criticising the Muslim League, Hamid tells Saleem with sarcasm: “This Muslim League in which you are so interested, I have heard it called communal and reactionary by nationalist Muslims” (SBC 233).

Saleem retorts forcefully and accuses the congress of having anti-Muslim elements. He felt that the need of the hour was Muslim unity, and the game of power politics would bring to light the hidden reactionary elements. In a very powerful vein, he flushed spitting poison against the Congress, saying:

I believe the Congress has a strong anti-Muslim element in it against which Muslims must organize. The danger is great because it is hidden, like an iceberg. When it was just a question of fighting the British the progressive forces were uppermost; but now that power is to be acquired, now the submerged reactionary elements will surface. Muslims must unite against them. (233)

The conversation between the father and the son reflect that Saleem has intention of retaliation towards the Hindus and urges all Muslims to unite against the rising Hindu power in Politics. The present scenario also appears to be the same in which Muslims are living under the fear of Hindu majority country like India. The writer tries to portray the plight of Indian Muslims who are fated to live in a Hindu majority country. This feeling of insecurity is noticed when any communal violence takes place. The idea of Pakistan as is well known, had little support in the areas that now comprise that country. Its battle was fought essentially by those Muslims who
lived in the Hindu majority areas, which remained a part of India. It was Iqbal who advised Jinna “to ignore Muslim minority provinces” (Puri 15). Ironically, it was the same Muslims who fought for the freedom of Pakistan, now were ignored. One can find many opportunistic Muslims or politicians who ignore their supports after having achieved their selfish ends. Besides, another relationship came to existence after the partition, that is, of humanity. In the novel many helpless Muslims were rescued by the Hindus who were left in peril by the opportunistic Muslims. Notwithstanding communal fury against Muslim rule, a section of the Hindus does come to the rescue of their Muslim brethren in distress. Laila defended and praised the Hindus for saving the Muslims. She scoffed at the Muslim leaders, who fanned hatred and violence and ran away to safety on the other side of the border, leaving their followers behind. This hidden pattern of communal amity is illustrated by Laila who tells Zahra, who is on a visit to Hasanpur:

Where were you, Zahra, when I sat up through the nights, watching village after village set on fire, each day nearer and nearer? Sleeping in a comfortable house, in Pakistan guarded by policemen, and sentries? Do you know who saved me and my child? Sita, who took us to her house, in spite of putting her own life in danger with ours. And Ranjit, who came from his village, because he had heard of what was happening in the foothills and was afraid for us. He drove us back, pretending we were his family, risking discovery and death. (SBC 304)
The novelist shows that despite all the enveloping fury of communal passions in the wake of partition, communal amity between the Hindus and Muslims was not completely knocked out. What was, however, true was that the communalists among both the Muslims and the Hindus had got an upper hand over the secularists among them. Thus communal amity between the secular minded Hindus and the Muslims may have been eclipsed by communal hostility between the communalists on both the sides, but the former is not completely annihilated. Obviously, the Muslim writer praises the Hindus for their sense of responsibility and duty, and remains unprejudiced without taking sides. In our present society, some people of one religion appear to be helpful to the other religious persons during conflicts and communal crisis. This attitude reflects humanitarianism which is above all religions.

A thorough analysis of communal relations between the Hindus and the Muslims in the novel reveals that the period before partition of the country is marked by communal amity despite religious differences. “The one during partition by the total eclipse of communal amity by the hyperbolic exaggeration of religious differences manifested in the communal conflagration of partition and that after partition by the resurgence of communal amity and goodwill anchored in the wisdom of the harrowing past” (Singh 59). The novel makes a strong appeal to leave hatred and violence and to follow the philosophy of love and non-violence. It is only by coexistence and tolerance that the world is going to survive and not by hatred and violence. The novelist shows that the national movement for freedom had no communal considerations but then that induction of religion into politics poisoned the minds of the millions of Muslims, Hindu and Sikhs. Despite all that Attia Hosain does not lose hope for the reconciliation of the two major communities of India which gives this novel an optimistic hope. The attitude of the writer is that life after the partition was worse but it might not be worst in future.
In *A Village Divided*, Rahi has explored various patterns of communal relations between the Hindus and the Muslims before, during and after the partition. It is the artistic delineations and evocations of the harmonious relations between the Hindus and the Muslims in Gangauli in the pre-partition period that provides a pattern of communal amity. Indeed, *A Village Divided* asserts the perfect communal harmony that exists in Indian countryside, before the partition. Both communities i.e. the Hindus and Muslims co-existed peacefully. It was observed that “Hindus and Muslims had lived together in peace for hundreds of years. They could continue to do for hundreds more” (Singh 295). Gangauli is a village where all sects and people of different religions live peacefully. Today in small towns and villages all over north India all communities take part in Moharram. Similarly, in Gangauli, Shias, Sunnis and Hindus all form part of the procession during religious occasion. But partition shook the inner psyche of the people of Gangauli bringing forth hatred, suffering and mental agony to them. Besides, Gangauli is a symbol of composite culture where Muslim Nais, Hindu Thakurs, low caste labourers, ahirs, the chamars live together as in our present society. But it has been observed that only a few differences like avoiding eatable touched by the lower caste people are visible. But a major relationship that matters was between the Hindus and the Muslims, for these two communities were the root cause of the bloodiest event partition of India. This relationship is narrated in the novel at two levels: the relationship between high caste Hindus (with land property) and the relationship between Muslim landlords and their low caste subjects. The relationship between high class Hindu and the Muslims of equal rank were normal and cordial. For instance, Thakur Harnarayan Prasad Singh, the Thanedar had very cordial relation with the Muslim Samiuddin Khan, his havildar.
Although they were typical Muslims and Hindus respectively, yet they would make fun of their religions and one another. A similar situation appears when Thakur Sahib makes fun of Islam while communicating with Samiuddin Khan saying:

Is this any religion? The Prophet Sahib himself married a full nine times, and all other ‘Muslims have to make do with four.’ Samiuddin would immediately answer back, ‘Thakur Sahib, it all depends on the strength of a man’s back. If that respected gentleman had wasted his strength in misdoings like us, he would not have married more than four times. Arre, Sahib, now it has become difficult enough to control one wife. But still we cannot have do with one wife to five brothers like your heroes did in the Mahabhart. What sort of arrangement was that? (A Village Divided 67)

This relationship suggests communal harmony between these two communities. Samiuddin Khan was a very strict Muslim. He was as orthodox a Muslim as the Thakur Sahib himself was an orthodox Hindu. Samiuddin would not have anything touched by a Hindu. Similarly, Thakur Sahib also would not lay his hands on anything touched by a Muslim. Here the novelist shows a glimpse of the multicultural Indian society where the two major communities lived in cordiality, though there was no inter-dining and intermarrying between them. Thakur Harnarayan Prasad Singh and Thakur Kunvarpal Singh were treated at par with by the Muslim Zamidars and were given due honour. Therefore, it is noticed that the relation between high class Hindus and high class Muslims was commendable before the partition.
Another instance of amity between these two communities appears when Chinkuriya does not consent with the Master Sahib who observes that Muslims destroyed the land of India. The novelist tries to project Gangauli a microcosm of secular India and its integrity. Chinkuriya considers that no such thing had happened in Gangauli. No Muslim came here to destroy its cultural unity so far. She explicates how the Muslims of Gangauli would donate during Hindu religious occasions:

The Miyans of Gangauli gave donations to Dussehra celebrations and Zaheer Miyan had given five bighas of revenue-free land to the monastery of a Hindu holy man. (160)

The above discussion suggests that Chikuriya gives a picture of those Muslims who support the Hindus during their religious festivities; therefore how could such people harm Gangauli and its inhabitants. In the present time India, many Muslims share their happiness with the Hindus during religious occasion. A significant instance of this relationship is apparent in Wagha border where Muslims distribute sweets to the Hindus on the eve of Id and the Hindus do the same on Diwali.

Another instance of Hindu-Muslim relationship is perceptible in the Ganga-Jamuna culture of Gangauli. To be clear, it is a culture which celebrates thousand years of history of Hindu-Muslim solidarity and cultural participation. The author believes that such harmony is a consequence of mutual respect shown by both the Hindus and the Muslims for the beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, gods, goddesses and saints of either religion. Chikuriya, the son of Gaya Ahir, is not ready to believe that Imam Sahib was Muslim. The illiterate Chinkuria argues with the Master Sahib and asserts his unflinching faith in the martyrdom of Imam Husain and his age-old loyalty
to Phunnam Miyan. The sanctity of Imam Sahib is beyond Hindu or Muslim faith for the illiterate Chinkuria. He, like many others, is not ready to give it up for some rhetoric of Hindu Muslim animosity. According to him, no other person is eligible enough to be called a martyr except Imam Husain. Larger historical events along with their broader sweep of generalizations are of no significance to people like Jhinguriya and Chinkuria who have lived amicably with the Saiyd Zamindars of Gangauli for ages. It is strong rejection of a discourse that attempts to represent Hindus and Muslims as antagonistic communities having altogether opposite cultural interests — the communities that have shared a thousand years of courtship and cooperation. Invasion and conflicts of their initial encounters gradually subsided and got transformed into support, cooperation, mutual respect and loyalty.

But with the formation of Pakistan, a drastic change came in the psyche of the people of both communities. A religious based partition led both the communities to hatred, cultural confrontation and suspicion for the years to come. Analyzing the grim political and social scenario, the eminent Pakistan historian K.K. Aziz writes that, “The cultural differences were in fact, at the root of separatism. The gulf was too deep to be bridged and too wide to be crossed. The two cultures stood side by side, adamant, exigent and inexorable” (Aziz 100). Such differences kept creeping in and things began to worsen. Similar situation appears in the novel when Phunan Miyan communicates with Farooq dealing with the existence of Pakistan exclaiming: “All the Hindus were murderers waiting to slaughter us. Arre, Thakur Kunwarpal Singh was a Hindu. Jhinguria is also a Hindu” (AVD 141).

This conversation between Phunan Miyan and Farooq indicates that the Hindus have an intention to rule over the Muslims democratically and avenge their ancestors who
had been the victims of Muslim rule in the past. Even a large section of Muslims have a fear of Hindu Raj on account of Hindu majority in the country.

Rahi Masoom Reza and the Ganguilans of this novel have a clear understanding of what it is to live in a heterogeneous society, a space with plurality as a living reality. It has a space where multiculturalism breeds smoothly, and which not only defines their sense of belongingness, but also their sense of identity. To them, the whole idea of partition, or to say, dividing a nation into two on the basis of religious identity is a myth and a mere abstraction. They hardly believe the notion of dividing India into two on the lines of clearly demarcated religious ideologies. During this communal charged atmosphere, Tannu, a soldier, derides the policies of Muslim League, which he believes to be impractical and far-fetched. He argues:

I am a Muslim. But I love this village because I myself am this village. I love the indigo godown, this tank and these mud lanes because they are different forms of myself. On the battlefield, when death came very near, I certainly remembered Alla, but instead of Macca or Karbala I remembered Ganguaili .... ‘People like you selling out the Indian Muslims to the Hindus!’ said the black shervani angrily. ‘Have you no shame? Are you comparing the Noble Ka’ba with this miserable village?’ ‘Yes, that’s just what I am doing!’ replied Tannu. ‘And neither am I ashamed to do so. Why should I be? Ganguaili is my village. Mecca is not my city. This is my home and the Ka’ba is Allah Miyan’s. If God loves His home then won’t He be able to understand
that we too can love our home as much as He loves His?’ (234)

Though being Muslims, some of them were not ready to go to Pakistan. These people seem to be in fine fettle having shared a composite culture which has been co-existing over the years. They never bothered about whom India would be reigned. It reminds us of Bapsi Sidhwa’s statement in which he observes that “we stay where we are. Let Hindus, Sikhs or whoever rule. What does it matter” (Sidhwa 283). A similar situation is seen in Gangauli when Tannu conversing with Hakim Sahib, a typical Muslim, exclaims:

Anything constructed on a foundation of hate and fear cannot be auspicious. Even after the creation of Pakistan, Gangauli will remain in India, and Gangauli is after all Gangauli. (AVD 235)

These lines epitomize the condition of the Shia Muslims and their relations with the Hindus in a very vivid manner. It is Tannu who considers Gangauli a place of unity, a symbol of cultural integrity and a blending of composite culture.

It is extremely surprising to note that the storm of communal frenzy did not disturb the serene atmosphere of Gangauli, particularly at the time when the raging fire of communal violence spread rapidly. Though the haughty Saiyids of Gangauli debate the issue of communal riots with profound seriousness, curses Hindus of Calcutta and Delhi and hurl abuses at Congresswallahs, they are not ready to harm the Bhars, the Ahirs and the Chamars of Gangauli, who have been an integral part of their lives. It appears absurd to them to avenge the barbaric killings of Muslims in Calcutta and Delhi by killing the Hindus of Gangauli. The discriminatory version of history overlooks such personal emotions in favours of empirical truth.
The novel also refers to the Hindu fundamentalism in the persuasive speech of Pandit Matadin, instigating the Bhars, the Ahirs and the Chamars of Ghazipur to take revenge on the Muslims of Barikhpur, Ghazipur and Gangauli. A little later, the writer provides another instance of the overwhelming sense of communal harmony when Bafati-cha, the vegetable seller and other Muslims are saved by the Thakur Prithvipal Singh from getting assaulted and murdered by the Hindu fundamentalists.

Besides, the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims were not the same. It differed sometimes owing to social status. Thakurs of high class were given respect by the Muslims whereas the same behaviour was not seen while interacting with Jhinguriya or Gaya or Chinkuriya and the alike. All these are associated with lower castes and are poor. Naturally, they depended on the Muslim landlords for survival and were subjected to ever possible exploitation against which they could not raise voice. Naturally, there was hardly any reason or situation to lead to communal disharmony or conflict.

It is not surprising that “the characters in the partition stories are unable to forget their abandoned homes and they are unwilling to acknowledge that the villages they had left behind were marked by a long history of communal violence,” (Hasan 414) and their nostalgia is often accompanied by tears and curses, inconsolable sadness and pain. It is the time of pre-partition period when each religion or sect had, they now realize, enabled the other one, different from it, to achieve its ritual aspirations; each had defined its finest qualities in the presence of others without any serious attempt to negate or erase them. Generally, Muslims adhere to the Islam slavishly and give regard to Imam Hussain by heart and soul. They fear if the common people adopt the titles like ‘martyr’ for themselves. Coming to the principles of Quran, it observes that “a Muslim is a Muslim first and a Turk, an Afghan, or an
Arab afterwards” (Kidwai 168). This Quranic way of treating human beings is reflected in the novel when Chinkuriya is told by a Pundit in school that his father, who had been hanged by the British, was a ‘martyr’ in the cause of freedom. Here, Chinkuriya objects vehemently: Don’t say all these things, Master Sahib if the Imam hears there will be hell to pay” (AVD 160). It is Chinkuriya who lifts the tazia (replica of the tomb of Imam Hussain at Karbala) every year during Muharram and is convinced that Imam Hussain is only one who deserves to be called a ‘martyr’? The Imam, he tells the Pundit “comes to the village for ten days every year and blesses everyone who lives in it” (qtd. in Bhalla 11). This relationship between Chinkuriya and the Pundit is worth mentioning that universal laws of Islam are true.

Rahi Masoom Reza observed Muharram closely as a child and he appears in the book as a young boy called Masoom – literally ‘innocent’ lame as a result of tuberculosis. The Muharram he describes is one in which many of traditions are localized. He believed that Muharram was an occasion in which all communities participated joyfully. Rahi expresses his everlasting attachment and belongingness with the soil of Gangauli in the “Introduction” which he placed at the end of the novel. The purpose of this is to give a fitting reply to both the Hindu and the Muslim fundamentalists. He became extremely furious when they taunted him about his village, home, nationality and heritage. He reasserts his claim on India, and especially his village Gangauli, as his homeland, not as a novelist or as a citizen, but as a human being:

The Jan Sangh says that Muslims are outsiders. How can I presume to say they are lying? But I must say that I belong to Ghazipur. My bonds with Gangauli are unbreakable. It is not just a village, it is my home ....
And as long as this ‘because’ is alive, I will remain Saiyid Masoom Reza Abidi of Ghazipur, wherever my grandfather hailed from. And I give no one the right to say to me, ‘Rahi! You don’t belong to Gangauli, and so get out and go, say, to Rae Bareli.’ Why should I go sahib? I will not go. (AVD 273)

Although one can witness the deaths of three characters–Phunnan Miyan, Chikriya and hakim Sahib, yet the novel ends on a note of optimism. The writer does not end his novel with the dark clouds of the Partition hovering around and haunting the inhabitants of Ganguali. He chooses to end his novel with a fresh morning on the distant horizon of the sky, which vividly reflects his optimism. The ending of the novel affirms Rahi Masoom Reza’s faith in the regenerating power of culture, village, language, home and above all life itself. Thus he ends:

Outside the morning was most beautiful. In the courtyard a cock was chasing a chicken and a crow was sitting on the ridge of the roof, calling out to heaven knows who. A flock of sparrows flew past Fussu Miyan’s shoulder. At the edge of the pond or three naked children were throwing water over each other, and to one side a young woman was sitting scouring pans with her sari lifted up to her knees. Stirring up the dust, a jeep was heading over the winding road paved with river pebbles. Opposite, near the tank, thick smoke was pouring out of the chimney of a brick kiln. A young child, a schoolbag over his shoulder, ran past at
great speed. Fussu Miyan watched him until he turned
to the left and disappeared from sight. (327)

It is Masoom who objectively delineates the relationships between the Hindus and the Muslims before and after the partition. The attitude of the writer is neutral regarding Hindu-Muslim relationship. He never comments on Hindus and their culture but lay emphasis on Gangauli and its composite culture. His narrative reveals a hope of reconciliation and peace in near future.

IV

As it has been discussed earlier that the final chapters of River of Fire are, undoubtedly, an attempt at coping with the trauma of the partition, but this representation is less focused on the violence of the partition and more on the experience of living the new formed national unity or identity as it unfolds across the Indian landscape. In the novel, the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslim has been depicted by Hyder in a very realistic manner. Neeru Sharma observes that “Oudh is the main setting of her novel’s modern historical part. The choice of Oudh over Delhi is strategic and deserves our attention” (Sharma 160). There were two major cultural centers of the pre-British India under Muslims: Delhi and Oudh. The British essentially treated both these political and cultural centers as two major political activities. In choosing Lucknow as a model of Indian possibilities, Hyder privileges the possibilities of convergence over difference, for it was in Lucknow, the most culturally diverse city in the Kingdom of Oudh, that the Muslims and the Hindus were able to develop a culture that transcended their religio-linguistic objective differences. Hyder portrays this meticulous aspect of the Lucknow culture in a lucid
way. It is Lucknow that has undergone long periods of Muslim rule, and “has historically been viewed as centre of the so called syncretistic Hindu-Muslim culture” (Varshney 172). Some of the Muslim and Hindu rulers not only promoted Hindu festivals but also took active participation. Alivardy Khan of Bengal and the grandfather of Sirajudaulah and in his court “officially played Holi for seven days running. Two hundred tanks in Murshidabad were filled with coloured water” (RF 121). The Muslim rulers not only celebrated Hindu festivals but also tried to eliminate irritants that could spoil religious harmony. Some of them also built temples. In the novel, Hindu-Muslim relationship is depicted by Hyder in this way:

The Nawab Vazirs of Oudh banned the Killing of monkeys in deference to the Hindu Monkey-god, Hanuman. Dussehra and Holi were officially celebrated by many Mughal kings in the Red Fort at Delhi, Holi and Basant were official festivals in Lucknow. Asaf-ud-Daullah’s mother, Nawab Bahu Begum used to come to Lucknow from Fyzabad to celebrate Holi. Sadat Ali Khan, the fifth Nawab Vazir’s mother, Raj Mata Chhattar Kunwar, built the famous Hanuman temple in Ali Gunj, Lucknow, with a crescent atop its spire. The Nawab vazirs created a culture which combined the finest elements of the civilizations of Iran and India. (131)

Having observed Lucknow culture, one can easily understand that the relation between the Hindus and Muslims in groundwork were cordial and looked upon each other reverentially.
Historically speaking, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed at least two moments of Hindu-Muslim solidarity and brotherhood. The first was in 1857 when the two communities combined together to oust the Britishers. The second was the Khilafat Movement, when Hindus and Muslims spoke in one voice to oppose the English suppression of Turky. Likewise, the divisive forces made their presence felt during the division of Bengal in the first decade of twentieth century. Describing the Hindu-Muslim brotherhood which had its greatest moment of triumph in 1857, Hyder observes that

Twenty seven thousand Muslims were hanged in Delhi.

Thousands of Hindus and Muslims were sent to the gallows in Cawnpore, Allahbad, and other places. (166)

The British government had seen the Hindu-Muslim unity during this revolt, and it grew during the National Movement in which the Hindus and the Muslims fought together for India's freedom. Now the British observed that "they could continue their uninterrupted regime in India only if they were able to divide the Hindus and the Muslims" (Chopra 13). This inter-religious alliance frightened the British regime. In the novel, Hyder also portrays the degree of inter-religious alliance during the Indian rebellion. Her narrative relies heavily on the aesthetic aspects of the relationship of loyalty and honor accorded to the Oudh's rebel Queen by her Hindu as well Muslim nobles. In a chapter entitled "The Queen and her Knights" of the novel Hyder captures this inter-religious allegiance in these words:

On the 16th of September Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde,
entered Lucknow with his army. The Queen had summoned the feudal barons to her aid, and
swashbuckling knights arrived on their charges from all sides....The Begum visited the front lines on elephant and Palki, our men fought valiantly in defence of the city. On the 25th of February 1858, in the fierce battle of Alam Bagh, the Begum again rode out on elephant and took part in the action. Raja Man Singh of Shahgunj showed such valour in Alam Bagh that Begum Hazrat Mahal called him her son and gave him her own dupatta, along with the robe of honour. (RF 160-61)

It reveals an account of peace and wartime alliances between the Muslim rulers and their nobles invokes a past of collective sharing and struggles for the Hindus and the Muslims. It is this shared heritage, privileged by Hyder that had to be abandoned to articulate the future of Hindu-Muslim politics of India. Hyder foregrounds in and so many other passages the fact that at one time in Indian history the Muslims and Hindus lived and died together, and that if history plays any role in articulating the nation – which it does then forgetting this history is a great loss.

Another instance of Hindu Muslim amity is perceptible when it is observed that the Begum’s alliance with her Hindu and Muslim nobles is not only a matter of material gains and interests; it is posited on the plane of honor, and lasts even when the Queen had lost her influence. In another moving passage Hyder describes the loyalty of the Queen’s Hindu nobles after the defeat:

Raja Beni Madho Singh had reached his castle in Shankarpar. He told Lord Clyde that he would surrender his fort because it was his property, but he
would not give himself up because his person belonged to his Sovereign. (162)

This captures the hegemonic aspect of the Muslim Hindu alliance. The nobles were a part of the Muslim Queen's loyal group through their own consent and this consent was generated through a much deeper inter-cultural understanding. If the Muslim-Hindu differences had always been irreconcilable, then alliances like this would have never lasted, especially when the Muslim power was on the wane. By imaging and rearticulating this aspect of Indian history in the novel, Hyder foregrounds an important aspect of Indian history that does not get much attention in the Pakistan departmental history against the normalized terrain of Indian and Pakistani post-partition historiography and it is this aspect of the novel that makes it into a critique of the nation-state. Lucknow as a setting also provides a real live historical place where "Muslims and Hindus were able to create a composite 'high culture' which the later national divide erased" (Raja 53). Therefore, relations between the Hindu Kings and the Muslim Kings were worth mentioning and cordial. They sacrificed everything for the sake of each other's respect. Hyder depicts the situation by explicating how the Indian kings worked together irrespective of caste, religion and sect against the Britishers. But it was partition which made them enemy.

It is the cultural integrity which makes everyone united and cooperative despite religious or ethnic differences. It is this Lucknow of the Indian history in which Hyder's post-partition characters were born and raised. This is the heritage upon which they draw, as Talat, the narrator for this part of the story, narrates her childhood memories to her expatriate friends while sitting "in front of a fire in a flat in St. John's wood in London" (RF 184) in 1954. The Indians of history have now become the residents of the metropolitan and their combined experiences have already
been sundered by the post-partition realities that this part of the novel captures: how do you reconcile the present difference with a collectively shared past? Precisely, how do a people learn to be two different nations? Almost all the characters can trace their link to one particular house in Lucknow. Gulfishan; Talat, Kamal and Tehmina are siblings who lived in Gulfishan, where their cousin, Amir Reza, joined them in 1936. Hari is the adopted Hindu member of the family and Tehmina is his “rakhi sister” (187). We also get to know Champa, from a lower middle class Muslim family, who becomes a part of the group in Lucknow and Gautam who joins them as well. On the whole all these expatriates now living in the heart of the empire are living their post-partition existences in the former center but their collective experiences go beyond the national divide. Their relationship can be best described in the metaphor of the family. Hence, this gathering of people formerly linked to each other with blood as well as cultural connection is a brilliant staging of the traumas of the nationhood after the national divide.

It is also important to note that Hyder’s views of the Hindu-Muslim relationship fall in the middle of two major political stances on the subject. These two ways of dealing with the subject are quite aptly expressed by F.K. Khan Durrani and B.R.Ambedkar in their respective works. Writing about the history of the Hindu-Muslim relationship, Durrani argues that:

Much has been written on the irreconcilability of the religious conceptions, beliefs and practices of the Hindus and the Muslims...Yet, in spite of them all, there is something in their respective faiths, which enabled the two peoples to live amicably together for many centuries and which, if what they have learnt and
suffered under British rule could be washed out of their minds and the same old religious mentality could be created in them which inspired their forefathers of a century ago, would enable them again to live amicably together as good neighbours and citizens of the same state. (Raja 55-56)

In Durrani’s views, then, the Hindus and the Muslims had maintained non-antagonistic relationships, a practice that, in his view, because contaminated by the nationalistic thought introduced due to the divisive influence of colonialism. And as it is not possible to retrieve that unsullied past, for Durrani the creation of Pakistan is the only solution to the Hindu-Muslim problem. It is important to note that for Durrani the Hindus and the Muslims and share a past in which their separate religious identities did not make them into belligerent communities. For Ambedkar the tarnished history of Muslims and Hindus makes it impossible for them to reconcile their differences and live as the only prudent way of solving the Hindu-Muslim problem. These two historians – one a Muslim and the other a Hindu touch open two important aspects of the Hindu-Muslim relationships and both of them, though different in their approach to early history of Islam in India, consider partition as the only true solution. Hyder too lays much emphasis on partition which would lead to a peace and prosperity.

To conclude, the real sorrow of the partition as portrayed in the four novels was that it brought to an abrupt end a long and communally shared history and cultural heritage. The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims were not always free from
suspicions, distrust or the angry rejection, by one group of the habits and practices of
the other; but such moments of active malevolence and communal frenzy were a rare
and transient exception to the common bonds of mutual goodwill and warm feelings
of close brotherhood. Organizations which nurtured violent hatred towards each other
and incited communal passions did exist, but at the very margins of social and cultural
order. It has been discovered that it was only rampant decision of partition and hollow
love of nationalism resulting in disorder, insecurity, malice all around. However,
many writers tried their best to understand the cause of mistrust between these two
communities and were hopeful in solacing the wounds in near future. Writers like
Intizar Husain and Qurratulain Hyder have notably contributed a lot through their
long narratives in a nostalgic mood reflecting their past life in India and its grandeur
that is still unique. On the other hand, Rahi Masoom Reza tries to depict the situation
through his narrative that politics cannot break the thread of love and cooperation
between the Hindus and the Muslims. Finally, Attia Hosain is optimistic in her
portrayal of Laila who comes to India after a gap of many years. She hopefully
predicts that reconciliation can be achieved by having bilateral agreements and a
positive thinking which should be above the matrix of politics. Therefore, all these
writers have condemned and critiqued partition in their own ways and they
simultaneously explicated how partition affects the lives of Muslims. They plausibly
focus on the proper consolidation of the relations between these two communities that
has been seen suspiciously since 1947.

It is implicitly avowed that Hindu-Muslim relations have not merely been
governed by religious factor alone but, more often, by political and social cataclysm.
However, from time to time, these relations between two communities became
alarmingly tumultuous. It is therefore, not surprising that the traumatic political
upheaval, that this sub-continent experienced since 1947, whether it was the emergence of Bangladesh, or anti-Sikh riots of 1984, or the blood-letting that followed the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, or the present mayhem in Kashmir, or ethnic conflicts in Sindh; all these have persistently been seen in the context of that one frightening event so called partition of India. In the present, many initiatives have been taken by the governments of both the countries to ensure normalization and socialization of the relationship between these two communities. For instance, cricket match spreads the beans of solidarity and succor between India and Pakistan. These emotions are being tactfully used as a metaphor for the state of the relationship between the two countries. Agra summit was also a million dollars initiative taken by the Indian government which unfortunately fell flat leaving a gust of broken faith behind. But sometimes, relations get escalation by the nationalistic spirit and apprehension of each other’s hidden motives and moves. Sometimes this nationalistic ideology becomes a cause of fear as observed by Kancha Ilaliah that “India produced five, ‘Hindutva bombs’: in retaliation Pakistan produced six ‘Islamic bombs’ in a row” (Iliaiah 53). Besides, many writers are still working on the project to normalize the relation between these two communities.
Works cited


Hosain, Attia. *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2009. Print. All subsequent references to the novel are to this edition and have been incorporated in the text.

Husain, Intizar. *Basti*. Trans. Frances W. Pritchett. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print. All subsequent references to the novel are to this edition and have been incorporated in the text.

Hyder, Qurratulain. *River of Fire*. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 1998. Print. All subsequent references to the novel are to this edition and have been incorporated in the text.


