

CHAPTER 1

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Writing is a popular and powerful medium of expression. Indian English Fiction is started as a small plant but attained great recognition and branched off into many directions. It is not difficult to trace its slow but steady progress from the initial stage to the realistic one. It has touched every aspect period from the ancient to the modern, and level from the village to the international level. It is due to the spark of Indian English Literature that we have achieved two Nobel Prizes in the field of Literature.

Literature is a lake which reflects the changing society. It presents opinions of a society. It is affected by the social, political and cultural panorama and affects them as well. Literature is directly connected with the human heart, mind and soul. The writer is bound to present his contemporary time and society in his works. Lucian Goldman in his article *the sociology of literature: status and problems of method* writes: “at any given moment social and historical reality always presents itself as an extremely complex mixture not of structures but of process of structuration and destruction....1” (511) A writer can't neglect the actualities around him; mostly his characters are taken from contemporary society and culture.

Joan Rockwell on giving the importance of fiction writes,

...fiction is not only a representation of social reality, but also a necessary functional part of social control, and also paradoxically an important element of social change. It plays a large part in the socialisation of infants, in the expression of

official norms such as law and religion, in the conduct of politics, and in general gives symbols and modes of life to the population, particularly in those less easily defined but basic areas such as norms, values, and personal and inter-personal behavior. The implications of this are that fiction can give us two types of information about society: first, in a descriptive way, facts about the state of technology, laws, customs, social structure and institutions. Next, is more subtle and easily obtained information about values and attitudes. (web)

India is the largest democratic country of the world. It is the land of various geographical landforms, more than twenty official languages, and twenty-two thousand dialects and over a billion individuals of every caste and religion. Here people live in a comfortable and secure zone and celebrate Diwali and Eid with the same love and happiness. We not only follow the ideals of non-violence of Gandhi but also respect the sacrifices of great revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh. Since long our country has been the centre of knowledge, religion, wisdom, culture and tradition. Unity in diversity can be easily seen here.

It is the land of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Jainism where greatest universities of Nalanda and Takshshila have been the centres of knowledge here. India is full of indigenous art, music, literature and craft. Every village and city has its own magnanimous history. The glorious temples, the great mosques and the peaceful monks all spread the message of love. Different kinds of music, dances, languages, dresses and cuisines make our country unique and incredible. In spite of so many

differences we still live like a family. The people of different religion and caste live with the feeling of brotherhood.

This incredible unity of India has attracted everyone. Many invaders attacked and ruled over India. The Aryans, the Alexander, the Arabians, the Muslim Emperors and other West Asian ruled in India for centuries. Finally the Europeans came here for trade and commerce and ruled over India for almost two hundred years. The reign of the English has been both, a boon and a curse. Indian English literature is the gift of the Britishers to India. Prof. M.K. Naik in his book *Dimensions of Indian English Literature* wrote: "...One of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of story-telling; the novel as we know today was an importation from the West." (99)

The introduction of English education in India was started by Macaulay's Minute of 1835 and gradually it attracted the whole world. H.W. William in his book *Indo-Anglian Literature-1800-1970: A Survey* wrote: "The history of Indo-Anglian literature is broadly speaking a development from poetry to prose and from romantic idealization to various kinds of realism and symbolism." (3)

Indian English Fiction is impressive and has attracted the attention of the world. In Indian English Literature the themes and subject matter are purely Indian. Some Indian writers have also attained international fame in the literary field. They have won international awards like the Nobel Award and the Booker Award etc.

Though Indian writers are greatly influenced by the language of the west but their contents like the religious conflicts, the socio political differences, the different cultures and the status of women are purely Indian. Praising the Indian English Literature K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar writes: “What makes Indo-Anglian literature an Indian literature and not just a ramshackle outhouse of English literature is the quality of its ‘Indianness’ in the choice of its subjects, in the texture of thought, and play of sentiment, in the organization of material and in the creative use of language.”(web)

The literature of a country cannot survive without its culture, tradition, values and others. The Indianness is the foundation of our Literature. The Indianess mentioned by Srinivasa meant the themes and the picture of Indian culture and tradition and the pros and cons of Indian society presented by the novelists in their novels. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s novel *Ram Mohan’s Wife* (1864) is the first novel of Indo Anglian Literature written which describes the patriotic feelings in Bengal and exposes the hypocrisies of contemporary society. Whenever anyone talks about Indian English literature we must mentioned the trio: Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand. They provided the foundation to Indian English fiction with their unique approach individually.

Gradually the Indian English Fiction acquired a significant position in the literary world and our Indian writers acclaimed a huge success. Anand’s *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, Narayan’s *Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts* and Raja Rao’s

Kanthapura symbolize the beginning of Indian English Fiction. Anand has highlighted the culture; art and has created literature out of his own environment. His characters symbolize contemporary people who had been deprived of their rights by the oppressors. While Anand concentrates on contemporary Indian reality, Narayan has highlighted Indian customs and traditions and his characters are rooted in that very tradition. Raja Rao, the youngest of them dives deep into Indian metaphysics and gets at the roots of Indian tradition. He tells his stories by referring to the great epics like *the Ramayan* and *the Mahabharata* and explores the spiritual quest. His important novels include *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1962), *Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) and *The Chessmaster and His Moves* (1988).

Anand was a famous humanitarian and most of his characters belong to the lower middle or oppressed class of society while on the other hand Narayan is known as for his social realism. The psychology of his characters resembles the common man's psychology that we see in our day to day life, his characters are like next door people. The last of the Trio was Raja Rao who dealt with metaphysics, and his characters are very complicated and revolve around metaphysical theories.

After 1950, Indian novelists shifted their attention from the social to the individual world. They started to explore the individual's quest for the true meaning of life and the truth of existence in all different complex forms along with their problems in his works. Indian English Novel has gone through a

lot of changes from its initial days to the contemporary period. There are two types of writers who have contributed to the Indian English Fiction; one, who focused on the social issues of the country like poverty, class discrimination, social dogmas, complicated religious rituals and traditions which always attracted the west, and the other group of writers who include the diasporas, global Indians, and these Indians who are Indian by birth but they lived abroad, and watch Indian realities objectively.

Gandhi and his philosophy prevailed in the Indo-Anglian literature during the nineteen twenties and thirties. He was the undisputable leader in the social and political scenario of India and his teachings influenced every Indian. From 1918-1922 Indian English Novel, is socially, culturally and politically, influenced by Gandhi and his consciousness. His efforts, teachings, ideology of *ahimsa* and *satyagrah*, continuous protest against the Rowalt Act, the massacre in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, the Khilafat Movement, the boycott of the Simon Commission, and of foreign goods and clothes, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Salt Satyagrah, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Quit India Movement, Partition of the country, find special place in the novels of that time.

Many novels revolve around Gandhi and his principles. The socio-political movement that had caught the imagination of the entire nation also inspired Indian novelists and they realized that the novel too had a vital role to play in it. The Indian novelists of 1920s in English as well as in other languages

started focusing on contemporary issues. Gandhi appeared as a character in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) K.A. Abbas's *Inquilab* (1955), R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) and Nagarajan's *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961).

Raja Rao had not presented Gandhi as a character in his novel *Kanthapura*. He rather presented a vivid and faithful account of his impact on rural India. Devesh Basu an idealized character of Bhabani Bhattacharya's novel *So Many Hungers* is also influenced by Gandhi. In *Inquilab*, K.A. Abbas presented Gandhi as a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity with his faith in the ideals of non-violence. Anwar, the protagonist is influenced by Gandhi and decides to meet him in spite of his father's hatred of the Hindus. In R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Gandhi lives with untouchables, preaches non-violence, stays with sufferers and motivates people to take part in freedom struggle.

After the trio other novelists of the fifties and sixties like Manohar Malgonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya, R.P. Jhabvala entertained the people with their different contemporary themes as east-west counter, partition, communalism, themes of exploitation on different grounds, emergency, industrialization, materialism and others. Satish Kumar in his book *A Survey of Indian English Novel* writes:

The novelist minutely analyses the significant and far-reaching changes in individual passing through period of overall transition. His observant and penetrating eye is a reflection to the

evolution of new values and new morality. The creative artist alone is interested in these basic changes.(53)

The Indian English novel has undergone many changes that highlight every particle of the rich Indian customs and traditions. The novel presents the different faces of Indian culture from the pre-independence to the modern era in the 21st Century in a rational and entertaining way and directly or indirectly throws light on the transition. A growing combination of social, cultural, traditional and political transformation of opinions and ideas necessary is to bring about a healthy, peaceful and correct environment for the development of new generations.

The novelists have painted the history, the socio political, the economical and the cultural consciousness, in the colonial, the post colonial and the contemporary period. Certain national incidents have occupied a central theme in some novels and in the others these are either used partly or play a role in the background. It is the quality of the novelists that they have beautifully mixed reality with their fictional universe.

K. Venkata Reddy on focusing the socio political evils writes in his book *The Indian Novel with a Social Purpose*:

Parallel to this struggle for political freedom was a social struggle-a fight against superstition, casteism, poverty, illiteracy and many other social evils that were eating into the vitals of Indians society. The socio-political movement that had caught the imagination of the entire nation also inspired the Indian novelists in English who rightly realized that novel too had a vital role to play in it. (1-2)

Without being biased many writers have penned such changes and if it is somehow their responsibility to present their contemporary period in their writings as a heritage for their successors. P.P.Mehta and P.N. Bhatt, both having same opinion wrote in the book *Theory of Literature.*, “A work of art changes in course of time. Its structure is dynamic. This process has never been interrupted and the task of the historian is to describe this process.” (170) when we talk about such writer the name of Chaman Nahal comes to our mind who has beautifully presented the entire scenario of our freedom struggle. He is undoubtedly a very bright star of Indian English Fiction, who has spread his light in the literary universe through various memorable works. His writings cover a vast expanse of diverse issues such as national identity, religion, gender, ethnicity, language and history.

Chaman Nahal was born in Sialkot, Pakistan in 1927 in United India. He grew up in an Indian environment and culture. He took his M.A. degree from the University of Delhi and Ph.D. degree from the University of Nottingham (British Council Scholar) in 1961. Nahal worked in different universities as a Reader in English in the Rajasthan University, Jaipur, Professor of English in the University of Delhi, visiting Fulbright fellow in the Princeton University, New Jersey, and visiting lecturer at several universities in the U.S.A, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, Canada and North Korea from time to time.

He had contributed collective short stories in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* since 1957 and his writing was

because of intensive native touch praised by many Indian and British critics. In 1981 these stories were published in book form under the title *The Weird Dance and Other Stories*. Mulk Raj Anand, a great novelist praised him for his splendid collection.

Nahal is a reputed author of twenty two books that includes novels, short stories and an autobiography. His creative works include, *The Weird Dance and other stories*, *Tons in the Statesman* (1977) *The Light on the Lake* (1984), *The Take Over* (1985). His contribution to the realm of fiction is, *My True Faces* (1973), *Into Another Dawn* (1977), *The English Queens* (1979), *Sunrise in Fiji* (1988), *Azadi* (1975), *The Crown and The Loincloth* (1981) *The Salt of Life* (1990), *The Triumph of Tricolour* (1993), *The Gandhi Quartet* (1993) etc. Nahal wrote three children's novels, *Akela and the Blue Monster* (2007), *Akela and the Asian Tsunami* (2009) and *Akela and the UFOs* (2009). There are several academic awards and prizes to his credit. These include Sahitya Academy Award, 1977, Federation of Indian Publisher Award 1977, 1979.

Chaman Nahal's fictional work reflects the socio-economic problems and traditional-modern differences of the contemporary Indian society. In an interview he accepted that:

I have dealt with the theme of how to live personally in a society that is so inhibited because it discourages individual living. One is constantly being asked to sacrifice one's pleasure for the sake of the society, for the sake of the clan, for the sake of the family. (Thirveni B. & Prasad, V.V.N.Rajendra. *In the Beginning is the End In the End is the Beginning Chaman Nahal's My True Faces*. Pune Research 1)

Nahal has almost touched all the fields of life. In his novels we could find the glimpses of mythology, personal dilemmas and emotions. The canvas of his themes is too wide from personal to social, emotional to political, and regional to international.

He has written about the innocent and simple world of children also presented the complex and horrible circumstances of the freedom struggle and partition. Nahal gives a realistic account of both the political and the social India. His dedication towards his work can be easily understood through his writings. *The Gandhi Quartet* is the best example of his vast knowledge of his country and its history where he vividly describes the heart-touching period of the freedom movement. It is the story of Gandhi and Nahal has painted his character very beautifully. Nahal explores Gandhi's personal and socio-political life in his works. Ambuj Sharma in his book *Gandhian Strain in the Indian English Novel*, expresses his opinion as follows:

The Gandhi Quartet is a realistic, plausible, picturesque, rational, touching and frank picturization of Gandhiji's life and covers a period of about thirty three years- from his voyage from south Africa to the end of his life. Nahal has skillfully and meticulously interwoven all the significant episodes of Gandhiji's life with the main story of all the four novels of *The Quartet* making it a marvelous piece of fictional world. *The Quartet* presents a vivid, credible and enthralling picture of the father of the nation and his key and pivotal role in the freedom struggle.(203)

His first novel *My True Faces* was published in 1973 and it shows the various pulls that appear in the life of an individual

and which affect the masses also. The novel reveals his knowledge about Indian myths. The book is influenced by the one of the chapters of the holy book of Hindus, '*BhagawadGita.*' The main protagonist, Kamal, was a university teacher and who grew up in a traditional and custom ridden Hindu middle class family where he was attached to his grand-mother who used to tell him many mythological stories. The next main character is his wife Malti who has a western attitude. Kamal and Malti are present two different outlooks of the two diverse poles of the universe. The orthodox Kamal and the modern Malti ultimately get separated from each other. When Malti left home with their child then Kamal hunts for them. His hunting is symbolic of happiness of his life and this has made him think about the real happiness and real meaning of life.

Through the character of Kamal the novelist tries to express that one must have true faith in God and himself. Religion in India affects the love and man-woman relationships. Indians accept religion without analysing its pros and cons. The society, the corrupt politicians get profit from it. Nahal has used irony in his earlier novels but in this novel Kamal's blind faith in his religion destroyed his happy family life.

The great source of Nahal's portrayal of his characters and themes is his Gandhian vision and philosophy. Like Gandhi his own thoughts were influenced by the *Bhagvadgita* and the great Indian epics the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharata*. He has trust in the innate power of the Almighty, the purity of spirit and accepts

life as a total unit with all its pleasures and pains but he does not follow the religion blindly. The readers make a picture of the novelist in their minds who sometimes resembles the characters of his works.

His next novel *Into Another Dawn* was published in 1977. Though written after his most famous novel *Azadi*, it deals with the theme of east-west differences and universal love. Chaman Nahal says about this novel, “It is an attempt at bringing together two different cultures....It attempts to tell how in spite of cultural and religious differences, a ground for affirmation can be forged, within which human bonds are very vital”. (web)

Ravi, the protagonist is a poor unmarried Indian student who runs a shop in Rishikesh. One day Steve Coney, an American Professor of History at Columbia University, and his wife, Liz Coney advised him to take admission in a college of U.S.A. for a Master’s programme in Business Management. It was like a new dawn in the suffocated world of Ravi. As Usha Rani in her book *The Novels of Chaman Nahal: A Study* observes, ‘From the darkness of Hardwar he moves to the bright day of America. His aimless and drifting life acquires a sense of direction. What takes him to that country is not the pursuit of higher studies as much as the urge for freedom from an inhibiting, constricting and hostile environment. (Usha Rani 142)

Ravi got married with Irene, an American woman in U. S. A. Ravi and Irene are not from the same social backgrounds as Malti and Kamal in Nahal’s earlier novel *My True Faces* but they love each other dearly. When Ravi contracted from by cancer then all the worldly pleasures failed to give him happiness

and he always found himself hanging between the two different cultures and traditions. He never got satisfaction in U.S.A. Finally when a black doctor made him realize that life is too short to live fully and one should live the present moment at one's life only. Realizing this fact he left the west and moved to Haridwar, his holy birth place to die. The first phase of happiness rather worldly happiness dawned upon Ravi when he got rid from the clutches of his old traditional family life, but spiritual happiness dawned upon him when he faced his certain death due to blood cancer.

This novel presents Nahal's love towards Indian culture and tradition. He presents the value of self satisfaction which we can't buy with money. O. P. Mathur in his book *Indian English Novelists* remarks, "...it is a powerful statement of the theme of the meeting of the East and the West at the level of human emotions". (92)

Nahal's next novel *The English Queens* was published in 1979. It is a pure satire on those Indians who feel ashamed of their culture, customs, tradition and language. Through this novel Nahal has made a satire on Indians for their lack of knowledge of the English language. It is a satirical story of six women 'crowned' as the Queens, though in the real sense the women are neither queens nor English.

The story of the novel revolves around six queens. The first queen Miss Sumitra Pandey, was a spinster and snob, who pronounced Lawrence as Laurence, Shelley as sell-eh, and Shakespeare as six pair. The second queen Renuka Chopra is the

wife of Brigadier Bhupesh Chopra, and belongs to the army circle. She is famous for her showy manners and strident English. The third queen Caroline Oaks is an Anglo-Indian. She is proud of her English ancestry. The fourth queen is Barbara Smiles, an English waitress who comes to India along with her Indian husband and her Anglo-Indian son.

Shrimati Hemakant Mathur, wife of a retired judge was the fifth queen. She is also an honorary director of a woman's organization. Sardarni Satwant Kaur, the sixth queen is most fashionable, brassy and exorbitant. She was famous for suffixing 'ji' to any word or sentence like yes 'ji', no 'ji' 'I am ok ji' etc.

As the title suggests, 'it is a very funny but hard-hitting satire against the elitism of the English-speaking groups in India, such as the officers of the defense forces, the nouveau riche, the highly placed civil servants, or the Indians having foreign wives. Nahal unfolds a fantastic plot hatched by Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India, to ensure India's subjugation to Britain. On the eve of handing over political power to Indian, he prepares a charter for the "safe transfer of linguistic power" by which he gives the English language to India. To "preserve, propagate and spread" English in India he appoints six women in New Delhi to "The Order of the Queens." Rekha, the daughter of one of these queens, horrifies them by wishing to marry a young man from a slum. The young man wears Indian clothes and is an expert in Indian classical music.

The novel takes a fantastic turn when the bridegroom reveals himself as an avatar of Vishnu, who has come to destroy

the pernicious second-hand English Culture. He flies back to heaven with the charter, but it drops out of his hand accidentally, so he comes back to continue its destructive work; perhaps even God could not help India in rectifying the mistake. “Nahal is not against the English language as such; his satire is against the kind of Indian who thinks that it is shameful to know anything about his own culture.” (web)

Nahal had an optimistic perspective towards life which he has presented through all of his novels. In the book *Interview with Chaman Nahal, Commonwealth Novel in English* B.S.Goyal Nahal expressed:

I believe in an affirmation of life in spite of all its odd and setbacks. Life is a series of crisis until one emerges powerful and resplendent. I don't have commitment with a aslant, I am only committed to the affirmation of life. Life consists in taking on the challenges and in the refusal to be beaten down. (42)

Nahal through his novels depicted the changes occurring in society and human life. These changes from socialism to individualism, from spiritualism to materialism, from the tradition to the modern and from the east to the west reveal a various reflections in developing the Indian society.

History changes with the passage of time, it has been noticed that in spite of availing materialistic comforts and reputation people are continuously losing their inner satisfaction and self-control. All of Nahal's novels end with a positive note, because he believed that life is full of troubles, pains and

pleasures but is still a worth living. His philosophy of life is that suffering, pain and death are only the beginning of a new life which is full of hopes and new directions. In his vision of life, he appears much influenced by the approach of Bhabani Bhattacharya.

Nahal's next novel *Sunrise in Fiji* published in 1988 is much like his earlier novel *Into Another Dawn*. Nahal in an interview explained the theme of this novel and said, "The theme of individual pride, individual integrity, individual loneliness and individual sorrow."¹⁹ (B.S. Goyal: *Culture and Commitment: Aspects of Indian Literature in English* 68) In this novel Hariwansh, the protagonist is an Indian architect who comes from a small town, Sonipat, now in Haryana. He is successful and wealthy and completely involves in the sophisticate modern world. He is rationalistic, secular, and a very practical person who isn't influence by the metaphysics and religious rituals of Hinduism. Though well settled and reputed businessman is but emotionally alone and feels mentally tired. He plans to visit Fiji in search of true happiness and to introspect himself. The journey is planned in such way that he can find the true meaning of life.

The novel comprises of eleven chapters, and also has an epigraph, a poem by Anita Nahal, the youngest daughter of Chaman Nahal which concludes the entire content of the novel. In it the people try to find the truth about life and to lead life as true humans. They perceive that one truly makes efforts to know the true meaning of life; one can definitely find a positive way that leads to fulfillment. The novel describes Harivansh's life as

a journey from death to life. An individual is always affected by the social, political and cultural scenario of his times and Nahal too has beautifully explored the circumstances of his own time in his novels. As Stephen Spender in his famous book *World Within World* expressed that: “...the writer who refuses to recognize the political nature of the age must to some extent be refusing to deal with an experience in which he himself is involved.”(215)

Nahal has acclaimed an international reputation for his book *The Gandhi Quartet*, a collection of four books. In each book Gandhi is an omnipresent character, Nahal has presented Gandhi beautifully along with his personality, his opinions and his beliefs. Nahal in his real life was much influenced by Gandhi. Like Gandhi, he also believed in non-violence, God and the Hindu philosophy.

According to the sequence of historical incidents, the book *Azadi* should have been the last book of *The Gandhi Quartet* but Nahal wrote *Azadi* first and then the remaining three books. All four books of the quartet deal with the theme of Indian freedom movement and its results. Nahal had himself witnessed the freedom struggle at the time of partition when he was 19 years old, and it might be a one of the reason behind the success of this novel.

The Gandhi Quartet covers Indian history from 1915 to 1947: *The Crown and the Loincloth* (1981) covers the period of 1915-1922, and deals with the historical incidents of Gandhi's arrival from South-Africa to India and the heart touching Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in Punjab. The second book is *The*

Salt of Life (1990), as its title indicates; it revolves around the Salt Satyagraha. Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement and other revolutionary activities are the main attraction of the novel. *The Triumph of the Tricolour* (1993) covers the period of 1942 when the quest for liberty was at its peak and the Quit India Movement had started. The last book *Azadi* (1975) is considered the finest of Nahal's novels and it highlights the last phase of India's freedom struggle and the holocaust of Partition.

In the three novels of the Gandhian epic- *The Crown and the Loincloth*, *The Salt of Life*, and *The Triumph of the Tricolour*, two plots go in parallel, first that of the conflict between British colonialism and Indian nationalism and the second the different modes of the freedom struggle; the non-violent methods of Gandhi and his followers and the violent methods of the revolutionaries on the other.

All the dramatis personae and the real historical figures have been beautifully portrayed by Nahal. The fusion of real history with the virtual fiction is fantastic and his narrative style is effective and quite impressive; his methods of story narration and merging of historical incidents has made his novels interesting. He had presented the story in a lively and natural way and this reflects his mastery over technique, subject matter and narration. All of his characters seem live and known.

In the book, *The Gandhi Quartet* Nahal has reflected his personal observation of life and made an interesting use of historical facts of the freedom movement. It becomes the duty of a novelist writing on historical themes, to explain and represent

the historical facts to suit his objectives and creativity. He should make an effort to explain history from a different point of view, with a different perspective to entertain the readers.

The Gandhi Quartet is an imaginative reconstruction of the Indian freedom struggle, spanning a period of almost thirty five years, beginning with Gandhi's non-co-operation movement of 1920 till the holocaust of partition. As a writer who focused on political and social themes he has presented new image of women who is free from the clutches of patriarchal society. In the form of Kusum, Rehana, Shyama, Charulata and Abha we meet new kind of women who can fight for their rights and live their life freely. It is a new dawn for the dark chasm of a custom ridden male dominated society.

The Crown and the Loincloth, as the title suggests is a powerful novel of Nahal in which the British Empire is symbolized by the 'crown' while the 'loincloth' represents the Indians and their new leader Gandhi. In the novel Nahal has presented the three faces of contemporary India, Thakur Shanti Nath follows the crown, the old British system, Sunil, the protagonist and ideal Gandhian followed the rules and methods of Gandhi and Rakesh, a colleague of Sunil followed the revolutionaries and their violent methods to make free the country from the clutches of Britishers. The indulgence of fictitious characters with the historical figures in the freedom struggle is beautifully expressed by the writer.

Nahal writes about the life style of the joint family of Thakur Shanti Nath who lived happily in a huge haveli in a small

town Ajitha in Punjab. Thakur is a landlord and through his character Nahal has highlighted the grandeur of the landlords of that time. All the family members were living a luxurious life in the small town but the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre changed their life and Sunil, the son of Thakur Shanti Nath along with his wife Kusum joined Gandhi and left his family and job for the sake of the nation. Shyama, Shanti Nath's daughter eloped and got married Rakesh.

Gandhi started the non-cooperation movement in response to the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, inspired and encouraged by Gandhi Sunil started a khadi bhandar and a few of his Muslim neighbors helped him in running the shop and spreading the message of Gandhi to avoid using foreign clothes and use khadi. In May the congress headquarter sent Sunil to Simla hills to settle a dispute among the labourers and the timber merchants. Nahal has presented the pathetic condition of the untouchables- the sweepers, the barbers, the cobblers and the washer men who were called low-castes and were treated so badly. Here the writer has commented on the social evil untouchability. The low caste people live separately, cook separately, have separate wells and they can't touch the people of other castes. Sunil made many efforts to uplift their social status.

Sunil returned to Ajitha with his wife Kusum and Muzzaffar moved to Bareilly to receive Rehana, who was being released from prison. When she was released all the four members visit Naintal where unfortunately Rehana died in a landslide. Sunil lost his love Rehana and his wife Kusum also

left him. After returning to Ajitha he met Kenneth Ashby who invited him to a meeting where the Prince of Vales was to come. The revolutionaries made an attacked the Prince at the fair and Sunil sacrificed his life to save Prince of Vales. Kusum left her home with her four year old son Vikram to Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram. The novel ends with Gandhi's imprisonment for six years.

His second novel *The Salt of Life* opens at the point where his first novel *The Crown and the Loincloth* ends; Gandhi was released after four years of imprisonment on medical grounds. Gandhi didn't take part in any political activity directly for the next two years until the completion of his imprisonment. The title of the novel reveals the significance of the salt agitation. When Gandhi came to know the British monopoly on salt, he decided to break the salt law. On 12 March 1930 Gandhi started his march with seventy eight members of his ashram. He traversed three hundred eighty five kilometers to reach Dandi in Arab ocean. People from all over the country encouraged Gandhi in this salt agitation and joined him. Many people who didn't join Gandhi broke the salt rule in their repective areas. Nahal has highlighted the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Churchil's decision to punish the freedom fighters and the death of Lala Lajpat Rai due to lathi blows.

Kusum in this novel is presented as an image of a modern and independent woman as Shakti or as Bharatmata. She is married to Raja Vishal Chand, a king of a small town Lambini. Here we meet the third generation of Thakur Shanti Nath's

family, Vikram, who was in his teens living with Gandhi in his ashram. Nahal has beautifully mixed the historical and fictitious characters. Even he got the idea of including the Salt March when Kusum was seen teaching her students the importance of salt in daily life of common people.

Gandhi's decision of discontinuing the Civil-Disobedience Movement, the round table conferences, the hanging of freedom fighters and great revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Charulata, Sukhdev and Rajguru and the Gandhi Irwin Pact were the main historical incidents which Nahal has narrated in this novel. Destiny played its role and Kusum again turned to the ashram as Raja Vishal Chand died. Nahal added few more historical and fictitious characters here. Nahal in this novel has described many social evils as he had done in his earlier novel like untouchability, ignorance, consumption of liquor, crime of sati practice and ignorance.

The third novel in the 'Quartet', *The Triumph of the Tricolour* was published in 1993. This novel played the role of a bridge between *The Salt of Life* and *Azadi*. As a part of the 'Quartet' the writer continued his fictional characters from *The Salt of Life* to *The Triumph of the Tricolour* and unlike the first two novels the revolutionary activities in freedom struggle also played a vital role in this novel. Kusum has played an important role in all the first three novels. *The Triumph of the Tricolour* raises serious doubts about the triumph of Indian freedom and Independence.

His third book *The Triumph of the Tricolour* opens with the speech of Gandhi when the congress passed the Quit India Movement in August 1942. Gandhi said: Nahal in his book *The Triumph of the Tricolour* writes: “A nation of four hundred million people was still slave nation, which couldn’t raise its head in its own right. It had no national flag which couldn’t flutter alongside the flag of other nations....” (13) The story of Kusum’s family moved ahead with the story of freedom struggle.

The Congress wanted that the Britishers to leave India as soon as possible, so all the Congress leaders participated in the special session in Bombay and passed the resolution. The novel has focused on the events starting from the Quit-India Movement to the Cabinet Mission’s visit to India to sort out the issue of freedom, Cripps’s Mission and Burma War. The novel weaved the plot for Nahal’s next great novel *Azadi*.

Most of the fictional characters in this novel were influenced by Subhash Chandra Bose instead of Gandhi and his principles of non violence, though at last they ultimately accepted the Gandhian principles. Kusum’s two sons Vikram and Amit follows the two different paths, Vikram as the product of Gandhi ashram follow the Gandhian methods, while his step brother Amit goes against the philosophy of Gandhi and follows the path of revolutionaries. Even Kusum, the true follower of Gandhi helped the revolutionary parties. For the first time in the freedom struggle the revolutionaries and the Gandhian’s work together.

Gandhi to one of the revolutionaries said: “you know I have come to the conclusion that in the present circumstances, you are free to interpret non-violence the way you want It.” (TT 27) The leadership of the freedom struggle was in young hands. Workers and employers of different companies and offices boycott their work and protest openly. Vikram and Darbara Singh, a revolutionary got some POWs (Prisoners of War) released near Jammu and Kashmir and Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Indian National Army (INA) with the POWs and join hands with the Japanese to drive the English away from India. After the resolution, Indian sailors on the ship Lonavala in the Arabian Sea started a Navy Mutiny. The white officers insulted Indian ladies and Gyan, the grandson of Thakur Shanti Nath felt angry and didn't listen to the commander and killed many white officers. It was an open revolt against the white officers.

Kenneth Ashby has narrated the pathetic condition of the soldiers of INA. They were badly killed and were suppressed just like that of the mutiny of 1857. Gandhi was impressed by the revolutionaries and their valour and hailed Bhagat Singh and Subhash Chandra Bose as the great son of India. He also met Mohammad Ali Jinnah to convince him to drop the idea of Pakistan but the meeting failed and finally with the suggestion of C. Rajgopalchari, Gandhi agreed to consider the idea of Pakistan. The Labour Government headed by Atlee decided to grant freedom to India. So they sent a three men delegation to India to decide on conducting elections in India to form an interim government under the British national flag. Politicians now

started to spread corruption and eligible candidates were skipped from contesting the elections. Finally the Congress won the elections and Jawaharlal Nehru formed an interim government on 3rd September 1946. Gandhi still attempted to avoid the Partition and the spreading of communal violence but it in vain.

In the end of the novel Nahal has presented the immense communal frenzies and the crucial situation in which the country was divided into two parts. Nahal started his most famous novel entitled, *Azadi*, which is an Urdu word meaning freedom. It is Nahal's best novel and it won him Sahitya Academy and The Federation of Indian Publishers Award. It begins with the announcement of the Partition and this is where Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1962) ends. India got freedom in 1947 the Muslim dominated northern state became Pakistan which the Hindu predominated part became India.

The attainment of Indian freedom was followed by the tragic drama of partition. The Indian unity, brotherhood and political ideology, through which India achieved freedom, failed and the new chapter of Indian politics started from the very time of partition. The holocaust of partition left an imprint which is impossible to erase from the minds of the few writers who themselves were of victims of the holocaust and butchery.

Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) and *Distant Drum* (1960), Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988), Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1991), Balchandra Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*, (1959), Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken*

Column(1961), and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*(1975) are directly penned on the theme of partition while some other novelists used it as a background.

Nahal's *Azadi* has been translated into many regional and international languages. It has been translated into Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Malyalam, Hungarian and Russian. Nahal had presented the scene of partition realistically. It was what he had himself experienced while running away from his birth place Sialkot to Punjab during the period of partition, when he was young. The traumatic experiences which he had undergone, the holocaust which he had seen helped him in framing the scene of partition in *Azadi*.

Nahal's *Azadi* deals with the dawn of freedom, the tragedy of partition and its aftermath. The novel comprises of three parts- The Lull, the Storm and the Aftermath -that represent correspondingly the beginning, the middle and the end of the great event. It not only reflects the massacre and atrocities of Partition, but also highlights the reasons that caused the tragedy. Khushwant Singh in his *Train to Pakistan* narrates the circumstances of Indians during partition in India while Chaman Nahal has presented the scene during partition in Pakistan, in his novel *Azadi*. "...of all the attempts made so far, Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* is the most ambitious one." *Azadi (A Review)* *Indian Literature* 114)

The novel is set in Sialkot a Muslim dominated city in West Punjab (now in Pakistan) and spans a period of about eight months from June 3, 1947 to the death of Gandhi on 30th

January, 1948. The story of the novel opens on June 3, 1947 with an announcement of the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten, declaring the division of the country into two parts—India and Pakistan. Lala Kanshi Ram, a wholesale grain merchant was happily living in Sialkot with his family. Barkat Ali, a bosom friend of Lalaji and Nur, his daughter loves Arun, Lalaji's son. Before partition all the people lived happily; 'they spoke a common tongue, wore identical clothes, and responded to the weather, to the heat and first rains, in an identical manner.' (*Azadi* 47)

This announcement had changed the complete scenario. The innocent still couldn't believe the announcement. They neither believed on the consolation of Nehru nor the fast of Gandhi. The Muslims started to celebrate it by firing huge crackers, and taking out different kinds of processions in the streets. The Muslims in the procession shouted 'Pakistan Zindabaad' so loudly that it frightened the Hindus. The police and army failed to secure the Hindus and when the situation became worse the Hindus were compelled to leave their families, homes, business etc. to settle in refugee camps.

Murders, rapes, looting, killing, putting houses on fire became the daily routine. When Lalaji was staying in a refugee camp he heard the news of his daughter Madhu's and her husband's murder. A very heart touching scene of the hatred between the two communities has been presented by Nahal, when Abdul Ghani, on the death of Madhu had told Arun, 'who told you your sister was killed, my boy? But don't worry. I put her and her husband into the fire with my own hands, and

they're now on their way to dozakh, to hell'...he made no effort to disguise his venom'. (Azadi 155)

The convoy faced a lot of suffering; the poison of communal frenzy crashed the lives of many people. The rape of Sunanda, the murder of Suraj Prakash, the circumstances which provoked Niranjan singh to commit suicide, and the most horrible one of these is the taking out procession of naked Hindu and Sikh women brought out tears in the eyes of readers. In the end Lala Kanshi Ram reached Delhi where he could get a roof over his head.

It is Nahal's quality that all of his novels end with a positive note and this quality attracts his readers most.

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