

CHAPTER-3
FREEDOM
STRUGGLE

CHAPTER-3

FREEDOM STRUGGLE

After more than two centuries of British rule, India won independence on 15th August 1947. The Indian freedom struggle for freedom was not only based on *satyagraha* (the principles of truth), and *ahimsa* (non-violence) but also involved great masscare and bloodshed. Every Indian sacrificed something for it. Men and women, young and old, soldier and writer, Rightists and leftists, revolutionaries and oppressed castes, Hindus and Muslims, reformers, conservatives, moderates and rebels, the leaders of freedom fighters were drawn from every region and walk of life. Dadabhai Naoroji, Lokmanya Tilak, Acharya Narendra Dev, Sarojini Naidu, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Jayaprakash Narayan, Subhash Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Kasturba Gandhi, and other patriots embodied selfless patriotism.

Up to 1930's there was no Indian novelist who could claim sustained and considerable achievement in fiction originally written in English. Then came a sudden flowering, and it is significant that it came in 1930s, a period during which the glory that was Gandhi's, attained perhaps its brightest splendor. The Indian freedom struggle was more than a generation old, yet with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, it was so thoroughly democratized that freedom consciousness percolated for the first time to the very grassroots of Indian society and revitalized it. It is possible to see a connection between this development and the rise of the Indian

novel in English; of all literary forms it is most vitally concerned with social conditions and values'1(IJELLH: The Impact of partition on Indian writing in English.... 375)

Politics and social issues have played an integral part in the development of Indian English Fiction. The political movement, the freedom struggle and the role of the leaders in the freedom struggle always inspired the writers in English to explore it in their novels. Many writers turned away their plots from the romantic phase to contemporary issues. Through their novels they highlighted the political and social problems of Indian society. Bipin Chandra in his book *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*, writes:

The Indian national movement is perhaps one of the best examples of the creation of an extremely wide movement with a common aim in which diverse political and ideological currents could exist and work and simultaneously continue to contend for overall ideological political hegemony over it. While intense debate on all basic Issues was allowed, the diversity and tension did not weaken the cohesion and striking power of the movement; on the contrary, this diversity and atmosphere of freedom and debate became a major source of its strength.(5)

Novel is the best medium to present the panorama of changing society and living relationships. It was the impact of the freedom struggle and other national movements that Indian English fiction has suddenly changed from old dogmas to contemporary issues. Freedom struggle provided many important themes to the novelists like East-West encounter, partition, communal differences, class discrimination, exploitation and

oppression of economically weak people. The Indian English Fiction witnessed the British rule, the effect of western on Indian Socio- Political culture. K.Venkatta Reddy rightly says:

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 Indian 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. (web)

The Post-Independent novelists, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan, Khushwant Singh, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Kamala Markandeya, Arun Joshi, Attia Hossain, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Bharti Mukherjee, Nargis Dalal, Salman Rushdie and others deal with the themes of cross-culture differences, communal riots, loss of moral values and faith, the growth of Indian sensibility and identity crisis.

Satish Kumar impressed by the contribution of the Post-Independent era writers, wrote:

The novelist minutely analyses the significant and far reaching changes in individual passing through period of overall transition. His observant and penetrating eye watches the evolution of new values and new morality.....the creative artist alone is interested in these basic changes in the individuality of man and the evolution of new values and new morality is integral to the theme, action and characterization. All the novelists.....have sincerely and realistically recorded the revolutionary changes in human outlook and thus they have envisioned a new social order.

The story of nation building is connected with the story of nation destroying and this happened due to the power transfer. India has a great history that inspires the historians and the writers. Bipin Chandra, in his book, *India after Independence*' writes:

The freedom struggle was perhaps the greatest mass movement in world history. After 1919, it was built around the basic notion that the people had to and could play an active role in politics and in their own liberation, and it succeeded in politicizing, and drawing into political action a large part of the Indian people. Gandhi, the leader who moved and mobilized millions into politics, all his life propagated the view that the people and not leaders created a mass movement, whether for the overthrow of the colonial regime or for social transformation. He added, though, that the success or failure of a movement depended a great deal on the quality of its leadership. Satyagraha, as a form of struggle, was based on the active participation of the people and on the sympathy and support of the non-participating. (23)

There is one character, Mahatma Gandhi, who can't be neglected and he has been explored by every writer who wrote on the of freedom struggle. The writers have described Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance movement against the British and the cruel activity of them to destroy the Indians. Rowelt Act, the drastic massacre in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, the boycott of Simon Commission, the boycott of foreign goods, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the abolish of

Untouchability, the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the famous Dandi March, the Quit India Movement of 1942 and many other revolutionary activities during the pre-independence period have been presented by the writers in their novels.

The major novels which have picturised the influence of Gandhi and also the freedom struggle are- R.K.Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatama*, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges*, Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers*, Ahmad Abbas's *Inquilab*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Chaman Nahal's very famous novel *The Gandhi Quartet*.

In this present chapter I have endeavored to present the freedom struggle beautifully described by Chaman Nahal in his *Gandhi Quartet*. The idea of writing a quartet is a herculean task for a writer but Chaman Nahal did this in a very smooth manner. As the name implies, it consists of four books which focus on the historical movements. *Azadi* is the fourth one in *The Gandhi Quartet* series but Nahal wrote it first and the remaining three volumes thereafter.

Nahal's *The Gandhi Quartet* is much like Paul Scott's, *The Raj Quartet*, a four -volume novel sequence about the concluding years of the British Raj in India. The series was written during the period 1965–75. *The Gandhi Quartet* was written remarkably because Chaman Nahal had lived in that rambunctious time. *The Gandhi Quartet* is based on some of the most important historical events of the freedom struggle of India. Nahal has weaved a story which runs with the historical events; the

fictional characters are beautifully mixed with the real historical characters. The virtual world has been portrayed as a real one. The background of the novel is closely related to the historical perspective.

In *The Gandhi Quartet*, the fictional characters present the role of freedom fighters with their names changed. The characters were influenced either directly or indirectly by the real freedom fighters. As the title indicates Gandhi predominates in his every novel. He is omnipresent in all the four volumes. He was the ultimate hero of the Gandhi Saga but Nahal has also given much importance to the other revolutionaries. All the four volumes of *The Gandhi Quartet* revolves around Gandhi, the freedom struggle, the political and economical differences, the social evils and Gandhian movements to improve the society.

Nahal, while writing *The Gandhi Quartet*, might have been influenced by Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter Scott has also pictured historical incidents and historical personalities in a magnificent way in English Literature. The sacrifices of the freedom fighters, the valor of the revolutionaries, the influence of Gandhi, his love towards his country and the magnificent freedom struggle inspired Nahal for writing such a splendid piece of literature. Nahal while giving an interview accepts that the real heroes of freedom struggle had influenced him to write novels.

Surprisingly, I found other Non-Gandhian movements which contributed to the overall freedom movement, like the violent revolutionaries. Gandhi talked about non-violence. Ras Bihari, Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chandra Bose were people who

believed the British could be driven out through organized physical force. I'm fascinated by that too. (commonwealth novel in English :'Interview with Chaman Nahal.' 42)

In *The Gandhi Quartet* Nahal has presented joint family of Thakur Shanti Nath, with many of his family members. As time elapsed the Indian family system was also influenced by the western culture and the joint family got divide into nuclear families. Before independence joint families were very common in villages. From one book to other in the quartet the family of Thakur Shani Nath has also shifted from one generation to the other and in this way we encounter three generations of his family. The members of the family of all the three generations appear influenced by Gandhi and the other revolutionaries.

The fictional characters have played important lively roles in the different movements of the freedom struggle. Nahal's knowledge of Indian History can be easily traced through the volumes of *The Gandhi Quartet*. The Satyagarh Movement, the Civil-Disobedience Movement, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Dandi March and the Quit India Movement presented by him realistically including historical details. In the Gandhi Quartet we see the whole journey of freedom struggle being performed and in the last volume *Azadi*, we witness the culmination of the journey, though the aim which the journey was started is not fulfilled in the way the people had expected to be. People longed for an independent united India where the people of all communities could live in harmony and brotherhood but the situations, had changed the outcome of the freedom struggle.

The holocaust of partition and the assassination of the national hero i.e. Mahatma Gandhi have been presented in the last volume of *The Gandhi Quartet*. P. Usha Rani in her book *The Novels of Chaman Nahal: A Study* writes:

‘Nahal has created a poignant human drama with a sure instinct for dynamic character and intense action. The *Gandhi Quartet* is a remarkable fictional venture in the history of Indo-Anglian novel in which author has admirably succeeded in effecting clear-cut linkage between the historical personage and fictional characters.’ (125)

In *The Gandhi Quartet* Nahal had not presented Gandhi as a superhero but as a victim of the British rule, in spite of the fact that he had many positive qualities and immense courage. This was why the people of India were enchanted by his policies of truth and non-violence. Chaman Nahal throughout the four volumes of the *Gandhi Saga* has depicted the live picture of Gandhi by providing the precise and minute details of his splendid personality. Many of the fictional characters in *The Gandhi Quartet* are directly influenced by Gandhi viz. unil, Rehana, Kusum and Vikram.

The Gandhi Quartet comprises of four novels—*The Crown and the Loincloth*, *The Salt of Life*, *The Triumph of the Tricolour* and *Azadi*. The first novel *The Crown and the Loincloth* describes the first phase of the freedom struggle of India, the Non Co-operation Movement during 1920-1922. It describes the conflicts between the British and the Indians and the conflicts between the moderates and the extremists simultaneously. As the title represents, the powerful British Empire is symbolized by the, “crown” and “loincloth” symbolizes the new leader of freedom

struggle. Ambuj Sharma in his book *Gandhian Strain in the Indian English Novel* wrote: “The ‘loin’ in the loincloth emerges as a towering figure against the atrocious attitude of the British crown towards the Indian masses.” (129)

Like other volumes of *The Gandhi Quartet*, *The crown and the Loincloth* also consists of three parts-‘Love’, ‘Perspective’ and ‘Affirmation.’ The two hundred years of British rule had created a huge difference between the aristocratic families and the exploited poor families, the highly literate and the village illiterate, the zamindars as also the farmers and community differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. Nahal has presented all these differences as also the exploitation by the British in India, in the novel. “Large-scale growth of industries in cities was discouraged by the British and they kept the Indians essentially an agrarian nation.”(CL 47)

The major historical events as the return of Gandhi from South-Africa, the Rowlett Act, the Non Co-operation, the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the spinning wheel movement are presented as the background in the novel. Nahal has presented the historical incidents chronologically. To make his book interesting Nahal collaborate historical incidents with fictional events beautifully.

The story of the freedom struggle in the novel starts from Thakur Shanti Nath’s joint family which includes his wife, his four sons and their wives, his three daughters and his grandchildren in Ajitha, an imaginary place in Amritsar. “Ajitha

was symbolic of the strategy through which the British ruled India-or at least in Punjab.” (CL 46)

Not only the British but the rich Indians like money lender also exploit the simple folk of the village. Ajitha was like any other village of India where people spent their lives in the village only and earn money by agriculture. In Ajitha the money lenders with the support of British badly exploited the poor peasants.

The British wanted to have a stable rural base, loyal to the throne, and only agriculturists with vast holding could serve that end.....small holdings quickly disappeared and passed into the hands of the trading classes or moneylenders. The British turned a blind eye when moneylenders charged exorbitant rates of interest, forged documents, and eventually swallowed up the land of their clients. (CL 46).

The poor Indians were not only the slaves of the English but also of the rich Indians. Gandhi had noticed the social differences in every phase and encouraged his followers and other countrymen to stand against it. Even Gandhi has launched many programmes to abolish the social discrimination. It was one of his influences that the fictional characters also discussed the problems of the social and the economical exploitation and stood against it.

O.P. Mathur in his book *The Novels of Chaman Nahal-A Penultimate view, Studies in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English*, has described the influence of Gandhi on the fictional characters:

.....clearly in this novel Nahal has taken upon; himself a difficult and challenging task to portray Gandhi both as an

individual and as a symbol to follow the lives and fortunes of a large number of fictional characters and to project the whole as a metaphor of the multi-farious strands of those tumultuous years of struggle generated by the opposing forces of the foreign government (the crown) and the popular uprising symbolized by Gandhi (the loincloth). (330)

The first historical incident mentioned by the writer is the Rowlett Act incident. Sunil, the protagonist is explains to his beautiful and educated wife Kusum the upcoming hartal to be conducted by Gandhi in Amritsar against this new law passed by the British Government. If the law was passed police would arrest anyone without any warrant. This law said, 'no lawyer, no appeal, no plea'

Against the new law passed by the government, the Rowlett Bills. Under these laws they can arrest us at will, without a warrant, and try us in courts without a jury. Gandhiji had given out a call that sixth April be observed as a hartal by the entire nation. I didn't mention to you, since I didn't think it would be any different from the run of hartals we have seen so often earlier. (CL 55)

It is the custom in the joint families that all members have to follow the rules made by the head of the family. Sunil wanted to join the hartal but Thakur Shanti Nath didn't want him to do so. There two special qualities of the hartal; first it was conducted by the national hero, Mahatma Gandhi and second people of every community with unbiased intentions participated in this hartal and it attracted each and every person of every religion and caste. The hartal symbolizes that the Hindus as well as the Muslims sacrificed their lives for the independence of the country.

Because it was not a hartal, it was an act of atonement. Gandhiji wanted the people not only to observe a hartal but also to fast for twenty-four hours to protest against such inhuman and brutal laws. And they observed mass fasts, they bathed in the Golden Temple the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs, they broke their bread together, drank water out of the same container and embraced each other in streets. And the police felt powerless. The sahibs and officers on horse-back couldn't look at the crowd straight, so humiliated were they at this display of unity. (CL 56)

It was the unity of the Indians which shook the foundation of the British Empire in India but unfortunately with passage of time this unity was badly shattered by the Britishers through their 'Divide and Rule' policy. Sunil, participated in the strike against Rowlatt Bills in spite of his father and family not agreeing to it. The fictional characters have their own ideals in this novel like Sunil represents Gandhi and Gandhian principles; Thakur Shanti Nath is in favour of British Raj and Rakesh, the school friend of Sunil at high school, praises the extremists and their revolutionary activities.

Nahal, in this novel have given equal importance to both the streams of the freedom struggle i.e. the moderates who followed Gandhi and his path of non-violence and the extremists who followed the revolutionary and the path of violence. Though their paths were different but their destination was same i.e. Azadi. Rakesh in a conversation with Sunil said,

...the British could be driven out of India only by force. He said Gandhi was a fool who was not taking the people forward but backwards. What would going to jail achieve-or fasting? ...They must have read about Lenin. If not, they should. We too had

leaders like him. Like Lala Hardyal. Or Ras Bihari Bose. Or Jathedar Kishan Singh. We should follow them instead. (CL 63)

Rakesh thinks men as well as women should participate violently in the unequal war with the British. He wanted a brave better half for himself and in his wife he expects; “A rebel, walking shoulder to shoulder with me with a gun in hand.” (CL 206) The anguish, the hatred against the British Empire and the landlord system can easily be traced in the heart of youngsters. It is the quality of the writer that he has painted the pain and anger of the youngsters so beautifully in his novel. Our history has witnessed the sacrifices of youngsters who were hanged for their country.

Rakesh narrates the Black Hole incident of Calcutta to Celia Ashby, an American woman and says that every jail of India is a Black hole in itself and the British system is a system of exploitation where the series starts from the king and ends with the village patwari. Through the character of Rakesh Nahal presents the revolutionary group of India which wants to get rid of the British and their exploitation system.

Rakesh knew that the Indian possessed a lot of power but they hadn't yet realized it.

Burke! He had called the Indians a bunch of grasshoppers making all that noise under a tree. They had to show the British they were *not* a bunch of grasshoppers; they were men, with vitality and vigour, and with a sense of determination. Did the British yield their hold on America willingly? No. The poor Americans petitioned and petitioned. And the British only laughed

at them. And then a handful of them rose and wrested the power from their hands. That's what the Indians must do, too. (CL 67)

On the importance of both groups Radha K. opines that,

In *The Crown and the Loincloth*, the novelist succeeds in weaving the story of Gandhi and that of Sunil and his family, giving equal importance to both. They merge quite naturally, without being yoked together by violence. (web)

With the support of the other revolutionaries Rakesh organized a group named, "Himmat" an Urdu word which means Valour or courage. Rakesh was the head of the group. It represents the small regional groups who had contributed a lot the Indian freedom struggle. In support of such small courageous groups R.C.Majumdar in his book *Struggle for Freedom* wrote:

It is hard to distinguish the terrorists from the nationalists. The essential and fundamental ideas were the same in the two cases but while the nationalist relied mainly on passive resistance or other forms of self-assertion on an organized basis, the extreme let school had no faith in these methods and activities and regarded armed resistance as the only feasible way of destroying British Power. (69)

While Rakesh was actively running his organization 'Himmat,' Sunil was under the influence of *Hind Swraj*, a famous book of Gandhi and he fully applied the instructions of the book in his life. The two characters symbolize the two different modes of the freedom struggle i.e. the moderates and the extremists. "Organized violence and organized non-violence were both forms of strength, were both feats of endurance and

courage. Only organized non-violence was a greater force, a great power, said Gandhi.”(CL 67)

We meet General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer in this novel that was responsible for the heartbreaking Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. Dyer was born in India and had been living here from forty five years. Dyer conducted this huge massacre because of his suspicion that the huge mass present there had assembled to plan a revolution against the British. Kenneth Ashby, the Assistant Commissioner of Amritsar had even informed him about the intentions of the huge mass.

They have just finished celebrating Hindu festival of Ram Navami when hordes of them are here from the country to bathe in the Golden Temple. There is a cattle fair on in the city. And today also happens to be Baisakhi, the Indian New Year Day.(CL 76, 77)

But Dyer did not listen to him and planned for lots of killing. While describing the historical incident Bipin Chandra, a great historian writes *India after Independence*;

On 13th April, Baisakhi day, a large crowd of people, many of whom were visitors from neighboring villages who had come to the town to attend the Baisakhi celebrations, collected in the Jallianwala Bagh to attend a public meeting. General Dyer incensed that his orders were disobeyed, so he ordered his troops to fire upon the unarmed crowd. The shooting continued for ten minutes. General Dyer had not thought it necessary to issue any warning to the people nor was he deterred by the fact that the ground was totally hemmed in from all sides by high walls which left little chance for escape. The government estimates was 379 dead, other estimates were considerably higher’12(’188-189)

The effect of Jallianwala Bagh had been picturised beautifully by the novelist

Last night, the household of Thakur Shanti Nath in Ajitha was reaked by three termors. They heard that more than five hundred Indians had been shot dead in Jallianwala Bagh at pointblank range by a British general and his troops that evening.(CL 105)

On the same night Shyama eloped with Rakesh when sunil was lying unconscious in his home because police had beaten him brutally. His mouth was bleeding and lots of bruises were visible on his body. The situation became worse in Punjab after the huge massacre. Dyer had crossed limits when he had made the pujabies crawl on their bellies.

The government had imposed martial law in the Punjab immediately after the Jallianwala Bagh firing and, though public meetings were banned, vernacular newspapers closed down and the leaders gagged down or put in jail,.....Mass arrests, mass torture, mass abuse.....He ordered the electricity supply to the city cut. He had ordered the water supply cut. He confined people to their homes and forbade them to go out, even to bury their dead. (CL 120, 121.)

People hoped that Dyer would be punished for this inhumane crime but on the contrary he got lots of praise in the British Parliament.

On the 10th of June the martial law had been withdrawn from Punjab. r Gandhi visited Amritsar twice in October where he intended starting a movement against the British for their inhuman deeds naming it the: Non Co-Operation Movement. “Non-cooperation. No more loyalty to this

government, no more allegiance.”(CL 141) The incident of Jallianwala Bagh had made Sunil strong and he left his job and home too. He took an oath to become an active life member of the Non-Cooperation Movement. He after getting the advice from Gandhi opened a khadi bhandar in Ajitha and started supplying the homespun cotton material, Khadi material which according to Gandhi, would provide economic strength to the Indian people as Gandhi was always against foreign clothes. Describing the importance of khadi Maganlal in a conference said:

He was at pains to stress the value of the spinning programme. Even if the Congress launched no political campaigns, or if its political campaign were defeated, the khadi bhandars would go on, the spinning would go on. There could be no political freedom without economic freedom and the key to the salvation of the teeming millions lay in spinning.(CL 164)

Finally in 1920 Gandhi presented his programme of non-cooperation movement before the Congress,

...in the year 1920 Gandhi did present his programme to the Congress and became its undisputed leader.....The revolutionary nature of Gandhi's ideas frightened many of the seasoned leaders like Lala Rajpat Rai, C.R.Das and Mohammad Ali Jinnah (who was then a member of the Congress), but Gandhi remained firm and carried the vote.(CL 153, 154)

Sunil was the first volunteer who supported Gandhi in the Non-Cooperation movement and Rehana, Sunil's neighbor and Muzzafar's wife helped him at every stage. She was arrested by the police in Bareilly. This incident set an example of the role of women in the Indian freedom struggle.

Sunil as a true disciple of Gandhi tried to eradicate untouchability, while living in Shimla, he hired a cook from lower caste and then organized a dinner for all ranked personalities and after dinner he disclosed the truth about the cook belonging to a low caste. Nahal has also presented the fragrance of communal difference in this novel through the conversation of Muzaffer and Sunil

1921 was a memorable year in Indian History because the visit of the Prince of Wales to India was scheduled that year; “the Prince of Wales was coming to India on a state visit and now was the time to show the mighty Crown the strength that lay in a flimsy loincloth.”(CL 179) People had started to show their disloyalty. This represented the intensity of their struggle for independence. The freedom fighters involved themselves in burning the foreign clothes. Sunil and Muzaffer were arrested for boycotting foreign goods in Hall Bazar and it was the growing influence of the Non Cooperation Movement that many people had joined it,

In 1921, a large number of people joined the movement, a good many of them waved the black flags at the Prince of Wales, thousands of them suffered the lathi blows unflinchingly, hundreds picketed the textiles mills, many still picketed the liquor stores, numerous blocked the police vans and the police horses, and so forth.(CL 13)

Nahal has beautifully presented the scene of the Indians burning the holi of foreign clothes. Celia Ashby, aunt of Kenneth Ashby, noticed the crowd in the Hall Bazar;

The crowd was new to this type of protest; they stood somewhat sheepishly, each man hidden behind the one ahead of him. Yet there was that huge pile of shirts, suits and saris in the middle of the bazaar.....it was like a collage, that bundle with trouser legs, jacket sleeves, shirt sleeves, ends of neckties, end of shoes and shoelace, frilled and lacy bits of slips and bras, and stockings, both men's and women's sticking out from every opening in the bundle. As they threw the bundle on the fire, the crowd with one breath shouted: 'Bharat Mata ki jai.' Soon the extremities of the collage were burning. It was like a crown burning, thought Celia Ashby diabolically. (CL 188)

When the protest against the British Crown was at its peak the seeds of communal difference had been sown in the Congress. Nahal has explained the differences through the communication between Sunil and Muzzaffar. Muzzaffar said that Congress was a Hindu Organization and said a lot of bitter things about it;

you have to admit that if a man like Mohammad Ali Jinnah leaves the congress, there must be doubts in the minds of many Muslims.....Gandhi as his prayers meetings devotes three-fourth of his time to Hindu mythology and thought. And mark you; this is a highly insidious method Hinduism has to first engulfing and then wiping out a sect opposed to it. The Hindus have practiced it for centuries. This is how they would wipe out Islam, given the chance. The formula is simple. Follow some of the rituals of the opposing sect and make them follow most of yours.....Look at Buddhism. There are not a hundred thousand practicing Buddhists today in the land that gave birth to Buddha. I think it is the same game that the Congress is playing. It's only biding time to inflict Hinduism on Islam.(CL 270, 271)

It was in an open protest against the Prince of Vales that various violent activities began to occur in the different parts of the country. Twenty two policemen were killed by the revolutionaries at Chauri-Chora in U.P. They have burnt the police-station. A khadi bhandar at Rohru in Shimla was burnt by the police and by being disappointed due the violent activities of the extremists Gandhi suddenly called off this successful non-cooperation movement. Great national leaders like Moti Lal Nehru and his son Jawahar Lal Nehru and the common people of the country criticized Gandhi for suddenly calling off the movement.

It was a bitter personal defeat for Gandhi. No organization could have been more hostile to its leader as that AICC. Though eventually Gandhi won, throughout the delegates hurled abuse at him. Why should he have taken a national decision single-handed? Why did he not consult the AICC before suspending the movement? Who was the real master in a national organization: the individual or the elected representatives? The grievances against him were far too numerous. The delegates from Bengal and Maharashtra openly opposed Gandhi at the session.(CL 405)

Finally the Prince of Vales arrived in Bombay on a four months tour on 17th of November 1921 and this journey was organized by the British to impress the people of the subjugated Indians, but the revolutionaries planned to attack the Prince and kill him. Many Indian revolutionaries started to coming to India from different countries on reading an advertisement in a newspaper under the wanted column

WANTED

Heroes to organize revolt

Remuneration: Death

Reward: Martyrdom

Pension: Freedom

Place of work: Hindustan. (CL 393)

Being attracted by the advertisement many Indians began to come to India. A revolutionary Darbara Singh arrived in India on a ship Kamagata Maru. The police fired on that ship when it docked at Budge Budge harbour, in the Hooghly River.

Many revolutionaries were killed, arrested and deported from India in this historical incident. When the Prince of Wales reached Punjab, Rakesh with the help of other revolutionaries attacked him but unfortunately Sunil was killed in this attack while trying to save the life of the Prince. He became a national hero because he sacrificed everything; his family, his love Rehana and at last his life too in the freedom struggle. After the death of the hero of the novel his wife Kusum left Ajitha and moved to Sabarmati Ashram with her son Vikram where on 18th of March 1922 Gandhi, on the charges of sedition, was sentenced to six years of imprisonment.

K. Venkatesh Reddy on the success of the novel writes:

Nahal achieves a remarkable success in recreating a momentous period of Indian History with a meticulous attention to detail and truly human understanding of people and situations. It acquires an epic sweep of events that shaped them. The great variety of character and action, the deft mingling of the historical and the fictional, the powerful play of the tragic and farcical, and the moving multiplicity of sense and incident, all combine in making *The Crown and The Loincloth* a forceful recollection of the first of the three phases of the age of Gandhi. (web)

Nahal's second novel *The Salt of Life* starts from the point where the first volume of The Gandhi Quartet *The Crown and The Loincloth* culminates when Gandhi was released from the prison by the government on health grounds in January 1924 though he has been imprisonment for six years till March 1928. As in the first volume Gandhi is the central figure in this volume too.

Nahal has beautifully elaborated the picture of Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chanra Bose, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and other historical characters and Vikram the son of Sunil, the hero of *The Crown and The Loincloth* is the main protagonist and like his father he also follows Gandhi and his principles. Like all the volumes of the Gandhi Quartet, this volume is also divided into three parts-Whispers, Temper and Choices.

The Salt-Satyagrah, Dandi March and other freedom movements are discussed here and the taste of communalism becomes bitter with the passage of time. Kusum reflects the image of a woman 'Shakti' or 'Bharatmata'. The novel starts with a few negative points in the historical as well as the fictional panorama. Gandhi's got arrest in 1922, the beginning of the Second World War began, and the failure of Round Table Conferences in 1930, the execution of the very young Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries, the underground revolutionary activities of INA which met a fatal end and the constant obstinacy of Muslims for Pakistan play a vital role in this novel.

After Sunil's death Kusum, his wife along with her son Vikram, Thakur Shanti Nath's family follows the path of Gandhi

and leave Ajitha. Shyama, the daughter of Thakur Shanti Nath married Rakesh's friend Zahir and embraced Islam. Zahir was a member of the revolutionary group 'Himmat' but after escaping from Andaman prison he quit the group but achieved new voluntary revolutionaries joined 'Himmat'.

The revolutionaries sacrificed their lives happily for the sake of freedom. Bipin Chandra describes one of the violent scenes in his book *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* and writes,

Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt were asked to throw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly on 8 April 1929 against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill which would reduce the civil liberties of citizens in general and workers in particular. The aim was not to kill, for the bombs were relatively harmless, but, as the leaflet they threw into the Assembly hail proclaimed, 'to make the deaf hear.' The objective was to get arrested and to use the trial court as a forum for propaganda so that people would become familiar with their movement and ideology. (239-240).

Being non-violent Gandhi condemned the violent revolutionary activity. "No one was hurt but the gesture accomplished its task: it made even Gandhi sit back and search for his conscience." SL 58 and when people asked him about the incident, he said: "...they started out with violence. Brave though they are, I cannot approve of their acts." (SL 22). The character of Gandhi has been portrayed in a very complicated manner by the writer;

the British officials felt so much dismay, so much frustration, so much confusion, as while dealing with Gandhi.

Whose side was he on, with his own people or with the rulers? He made it seem he was on bothAnd the British not only feared Gandhi, they somewhat despised him, too. Why couldn't he act like a man, state his claims, and stick to them? (SL 20)

Gandhi while talking to Kusum explained the result of his freedom movement:

What had the British done during the ten years in spite of all the noise? Sent out a mission now and then, which repeated the old clichés in the report it submitted? What had the Simon Commission done for India, which was here for two years ago...Jawahar was hit with the lathi blows in the demonstration against this commission. Pandit Pant had been hit with lathis. Lala Lajpat Rai had been hit with with lathis and had later died because of the blows.'... and what of the common people...They had been trampled upon in the most brutal manner, their bodies mutilated, their spirits crushed yet again. (SL 44)

Gandhi has always condemned the violent activities of the young revolutionaries. The death of Lala ji influenced the revolutionaries and the writer has beautifully presented this historical incident and its effect. While reading the novel a reader feels patriotism in his heart. Bipin Chandra in his book *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* mentions the death of Lala Lajpat Rai in this way:

The death of this great Punjabi leader, popularly known as Sher-e-Punjab, was seen by the romantic youthful leadership of the HSRA as a direct challenge. And so, on 17 December 1928, Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru assassinated, at Lahore, Saunders, a police official involved in the lathi charge of Lala Lajpat Rai. In a poster, put up by the HSRA after the assassination, the assassination was justified as follows: 'the murder of a leader

respected by millions of people at the unworthy hands of an ordinary police official . . . was an insult to the nation. It was the bounden duty of young men of India to efface it. . . We regret to have had to kill a person but he was part and parcel of that inhuman and unjust order which has to be destroyed.(SL 239)

Thus the Simon Commission failed in India and Sir John Simon himself was aware of his failure. After negotiations with the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald gave the idea of round table conference to be held in London. In the round table conference, leaders of different political parties and the prince participated and tried to solve the problems of Indians.

Here in India, Gandhi was ready for his second mass movement, Salt Satyagrah. Gandhi announced “I’ll be walking to the seashore and I won’t return to Sabramati until India’s freedom is won,” (SL 47). But Kusum refused to follow him in this Salt March. Bipin Chandra put light on the importance of Salt Satyagrah explaining the power of civil disobedience, in his *India’s Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*, he said:

Supposing ten persons from each of the 700,000 villages in India come forward to manufacture salt and to disobey the Salt Act, what do you think this Government can do? Even the worst autocrat you can imagine would not dare to blow regiments of peaceful civil resisters out of a cannon’s mouth. If only you will be stir yourselves just a little, I assure you we should be able to tire this Government out in a very short time. (263)

The historical Dandi March started on 12th march 1930 when Gandhi with his seventy eight followers, including a boy of thirteen set out from his pious ashram in Sabarmati. They walked 240 miles to Dandi, the sea coast of the Arabian Sea. The

thirteen year boy was no one but Vikram, Kusum's son who left his mother when she got married with Raja Vishal Chand. Even Gandhi had not given permission to her for remarriage. Gandhi started this Satyagrah to break the salt law imposed by the English, "set out to register his protest against such a law, which crushed even the poorest of the poor in the country," (SL 176). On the way Gandhi said to Vikram that if he dies his ashes should be thrown into the holy river Ganges or in the Indian fields. It presents the simplicity of Gandhi and his devotion and love towards his country.

Finally Gandhi on 6th April reached Dandi; "after marching 240 miles from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad on fifth April. He took twenty three days to do so, covering ten miles a day on an average" (SL 261) and broke the salt law.

When he reached Dandi, merely picked up a lump of natural salt from beach and thus violated the law by possessing contraband salt. At his signal, 700,000 villages in India came forward to do the same in any of the forms prescribed by Gandhi. (SL 261)

The Britishers didn't arrest him because they knew the power of the single man. The result of the movement of 1930 was more compact and powerful than that of 1921,

75,000 people met on the sands of Sabarmati river to pledge allegiance to Gandhi; 15,000 men raided the police armouries at Chittagong and carried away all the arms; 10,000 people surrounded the police headquarters in Peshwar, when their leader Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was arrested; 80,000 join his party, the Red Shirts, a branch of All India Congress; 65,000 textile workers down tools in Bombay; 30,000 railway workers in

Mymensingh walk out of their sheds;100,000 clothe merchants observed a six day hartal in poona and keep their shutters down; 500 men in Sholapur took charge of the municipality and ran the town for one week; 20,000 Muslims in the Punjab found a new party, the Ahrar Party and hoist the Congress flag at their meeting in Lahore; 25,000 dock hands in Madras refuse to unload the cargo from British ships.(SL 260, 261)

The writer was so impressed by the movement that he named his book after it. Just as salt makes our food tasty, this incident also changed the mood of the countrymen because the salt law was broken in almost each and every part of the country. The British were shaken by noticing the unity of Indians and the power of a frail man. Bipin Chandra in his History book *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* had mentioned that;

On 6 July, Gandhi Day was declared by the Congress Working Committee to protest against large scale arrests, and about 50,000 people took part in the *hartal* that day with workers from forty-nine factories downing their tools.'(208)

On 4th may 1930, Gandhi was arrested by the police in Dandi and imprisoned in the Yervada prison in Poona. Vikram too was hit and hospitalized in Bombay. Kusum and Angela Davis, wife of Kenneth Ashby booked a first class coupe in Frontier Mail as Kusum wanted to visit the hospital where Vikram was admitted but unfortunately their seats were taken by two white persons Percy Wand and his sister Jennifer Wand and they refused to leave the seats for Kusum. It could be said that it was the influence of Gandhi that Kusum fought for her right and won when finally she got her seat, "it was yet another act of Satyagarh" (SL 275).

Nahal has beautifully captured the scene in this novel and presented Kusum as a symbol of power.

Kusum possibly lead this impetuous, vibrant mob, in the unbiased expression of power, of energy which she had just gotten hold of, which she was sure Gandhi would approve of too, the woman as shakti, as an intense vital flame of molten lava, demanding her rights. (SL 277)

After the boycott of Simon Commission, first Round Table Conference was held in a Fiasco in London in December 1930 and it was an unsuccessful conference because no settlement on India could be done without the presence of effective leaders of the Congress and Gandhi. The government released Gandhi from the prison in January 1931 so that the Round Table Conference could be successfully conducted. In this series during of March 1931 a pact was signed in Delhi between Gandhi on behalf of the Congress and Lord Irwin on behalf of the government and is known as Delhi-Pact or Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Bipin Chandra in his book, *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* explaining the terms and conditions of the pact wrote;

The terms of the agreement included the immediate release of all political prisoners not convicted for violence, the remission of all fines not yet collected, the return of confiscated lands not yet sold to third parties, and lenient treatment for those government employees who had resigned. The Government also conceded the right to make salt for consumption to villages along the coast, as also the right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing. (273)

The government as was its nature betrayed Indians and hanged four revolutionaries.

And on twenty-third March, in spite of all Gandhi's repeated appeals for clemency to the viceroy, the government hanged Bhagat Singh and Charulata in the Lahore jail; two of their associates, Rajguru and Sukhdev, were hanged with them. (SL 337)

The news of their hanging spread like a wild fire in the country and people sympathised for the young revolutionaries because these were not mere revolutionaries but the heart throb of the Indians also. The beauty of the words used by the writer make his reader's eyes wet. It is his narration skill that makes the scene so life like and live. Bipin Chandra in his book *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* expressed his last message,

In his last message of 3 March 1931, he declared that the struggle in India would continue so long as 'a handful of exploiters go on exploiting the labour of common people for their own ends. It matters little whether these exploiters are purely British capitalism, or British and Indians in alliance, or even purely Indians. (247)

Gandhi said that it was the insult of the whole nation including him. But lots of people criticized him and greeted him with black flags when he was going to Karachi to endorse the pact and to attend the annual session of the Congress, people said that he should not sign the pact. Before sailing for London to participate in the second Round Table Conference in 1931 Gandhi visited Simla to meet the new Viceroy, Lord Willington. The Congress President Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan followed him, but this meeting also failed because Willington doubtfully questioned the unity in

Congress and the government again used the weapon of ‘divide and rule’ by launching an award, ‘Communal Award.’ Many historians also criticized this incident in their books.

Bipin Chandra, in his book *India’s Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* wrote:

The British policy of ‘Divide and Rule’ found another expression in the announcement of the Communal Award in August 1932. The Award allotted to each minority a number of seats in the legislatures to be elected on the basis of a separate electorate that is Muslims would be elected only by Muslims and Sikhs only by Sikhs, and so on. Muslims, Sikhs and Christians had already been treated as minorities. The Award declared the Depressed Classes (Scheduled Castes of today) also to be a minority community entitled to separate electorate and thus separated them from the rest of the Hindus. (283)

The meeting baffled the other leaders and Gandhi because he understood the intentions of the British and explains it to his fellow members in an angry tone that the British wanted to divide the country by institutionalizing religion. They would cut the country first into Hindus and Muslims and then into small pieces based on caste, the shiyas, the sunnies, etc.

In the series of conferences the third and final Round Table Conference was held in 1932 but also failed because the Congress leaders boycotted the conference. Here Gandhi was facing failures in his political life and Kusum in her personal life because she has become a widow once again and had joined the ashram again.

Nahal in the last part, 'Choices' of this novel portrays the emergence of Subhash Chandra Bose and narrates his role in the great freedom movement. Bose left the Congress in 1939 and formed his own party, 'Forward Bloc' "...Forward Bloc-to march forward, to achieve forward rapidly. Though the two had never met, it was this speed, this pace of the freedom struggle that Bhagat Singh had died for." (SL 379) and the wave of freedom struggle reached every village. Congress was operating in almost all of the villages, the national flag was being waved (Congress Tricolour) in every village and everybody sang no other song but Vande- Matarm. It shows the every village was now standing against the British Imperialism.

The freedom struggle was at its peak and people had now started openly protesting in the streets. On twenty second of June, 1941-

.....crowds had already come out on the streets in many towns in protest. There had been heavy firing on them in Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. In Delhi the crowd had stoned Linlithgo's car. In Bombay five hundred thousand people had gathered at Chowpatty, defying the ban on public meetings. In Madras as many people had gathered at Maria Beach. In Calcutta the crowd in retaliation had set the Howrah Bridge on fire. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, had suffered a broken wrist, while resisting a police baton attack on him near Allahabad. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was with Azad, had suffered a lathi blow on his shoulder. The youth camp on Vikram in Nagpur was raided and participants forcibly dispersed; Vikram was arrested and sent to jail. (SL 546)

The fire of communalism which had started in the thirties was now spreading very fast and was effecting appealed lots of minority people,

And in the annual conference of the Muslim League in Lahore in 1940, the League openly came out with this as its political aim: a free India, yes but a free Hindu India as one unit, and a free Muslim are as the other unit....By 1940, the Muslims even added a name for their separate state; they wanted it to be called Pakistan, the land of pure, of the believers. This choice of the Muslim masses was personified by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a Bombay based Muslim Lawyer. (SL 376, 377)

When all the Round Table Conferences failed the British Government presented the act of 1935,

It offered popular governments at the provincial level but on the basis of separate franchise but accepted office and formed governments in many of the provinces under the new Act. This was nominal power though- all major portfolios still saying with the governors and their advisors. (SL 377)

In the last part of the novel the writer has introduced the Second World-War which he has elaborated in his next novel, *The Triumph and the Tricolour*. Tricolour is our national flag and Nahal has presented the history of the Tricolour in the first volume of *The Gandhi Quartet* that;

The Congress had for the past some months adopted a national flag. It was Gandhi's brainwave, though the idea was suggested to him by a Punjabi-by Lala Hansraj of Jullundur. Gandhi wanted all the sets of the country to be represented in the flag, which was impossible- considering the number of minorities. Eventually, after many experiments, the Tricolour emerged. The flag had three colours, in the form of three brad horizontal strips.

The saffron band represented the Hindus, the green one the Muslims, and the white took care of the other ethnic groups. In the middle of the white band, there was a spinning wheel, representing the poor masses. And Gandhi declared to the nation here is your flag, you live and die for it. CL 23)

Every country has a flag which represents the whole country and its tradition and culture. A flag is not only a piece of cloth but it is such a thing which creates patriotism in human heart and in this volume Nahal has beautifully presented our national flag, its history and its importance. Nehru unfurled the national flag for the first time in the annual session of Congress in December 1929 and delivered a message to the people of India- “Remember once again, now that this flag is unfurled, it must not be lowered as long as a single Indian man, woman and child lives in India.” (TT 24) The flag had been announced but some Muslims raised their voices against the sequence of colour bands because they thought that saffron dominated the green and therefore the green band should be on the top.

Like other volumes it also consists of three parts: Defiance, Constraints and Release. This novel deals with the last phase of freedom struggle. All four volumes of *The Gandhi Quartet* are linked together. In this novel Nahal has beautifully presented the last ultimatum given by the Indians to the British to quit India immediately. The influence of Second World War, The arrival of Cripps Mission, the Cabinet Plan, Quit India Resolution, Burma War, Bengal Famine, and Formation of Interim Government are the principal historical events mentioned in the novel.

The connection of historical characters and fictional characters is beautifully weaved by the writer and the accuracy of historical incidents is magnificent. The story of freedom struggle and the story of Thakur Shanti Nath move simultaneously. The novel started with the speech of Gandhi when he was delivering his opinion about Quit India Resolution passed in August 1942 and watering the seeds of freedom in Indian's heart. *Bharat Choro*, Quit India Movement is also called August Revolution because it started in the month of August. The year 1942 was remarkable in Indian History because: "for the first time, the Congress deleted all words of supplications from its resolution." (TT 13)

Gandhi was so dissatisfied and in pain that in one of his speech he said,

A nation of four hundred million people was still a slave nation, which couldn't raise its head in its own right. It had no national flag which could flutter alongside the flags of other nations; it had no national anthem which could be sung alongside the flags of other nations. (TT 13)

The influence of Second World War had been described by the writer beautifully Japan had invaded Calcutta and could invade other parts of the country. Though Japan is our neighboring country and it could never invade India but the presence of British provoke them to do so. After the failure of the Cripps Mission in 1942 all the leaders of Congress realized that Britain would not make any particular and honourable constitution for India nor they would leave it. Even Gandhi realized that any more silence could be dangerous for the future

of India, so Gandhi said: “The British must leave, retire, exit, go, vanish, disappear, pass out, and pass away.”(TT 14) The person known for truth and non-violence, Gandhi understood that Indian had given many opportunities to the British government for settlement. The attitude of Gandhi shows the aggression, hatred, anguish and rebel of every Indian.

The non-cooperation movement of 1921 and civil-disobedience movement had been suspended by the Indians because they had trusted on the promises and commissions made by British but it was all in vain as India was still a slave nation. The Congress started their last movement, Quit India Movement in 1942. Gandhi in his speech on the day when the Quit India Movement bill passed said;

How long could India keep on waiting? How long could it beg? There was no question of giving the British another chance at readjustment. The Congress was no longer asking for readjustment; it was asking for a total withdrawal.(TT 15)

All the countrymen knew that it was the policy of divide and rule that created an insecurity among Muslims and they wanted an Islamic nation for themselves but Gandhi always focused on the unity of the two major communities of India;

And what other homeland these Muslims could have, but India? A majority of them were of the Indian stock; they had emotional and sentimental ties with India which couldn't be snapped. If Pakistan was being claimed by the Muslims for an Islamic presence in India, that presence was already there. Could a decent Hindu disown his debt to Islam...And that pulse nowhere demanded separation of brother from brother, of community from community, it demanded unity. (TT 15)

The writer had presented a scene when the members of the revolutionary group, 'Himmat' met Gandhi. The freedom fighters that were captured in Cellular Jail in Andaman and a lot of other such freedom fighters scattered all over the India, negotiated with the Congress leaders to accept them and their revolutionary methods in the fight against the British. Their means of fighting might be different from the Congress but ultimately their goal was the same i.e. Azadi, freedom. Darbara Singh, a revolutionary on behalf of revolutionaries said to Gandhi: "We are at a moment of war with the British.....and in a war we fight to win-whatever the methods."(TT 23)

The revolutionaries expressed their thoughts about the equality of violence and non-violence. If Gandhi thought that Christ and Budha were great because they fought with the power of non-violence then there were other leaders who had powerfully fought and won and we can't forget their sacrifices. He said:

....at this juncture in our freedom movement, hold the great Shivaji in any lesser esteem merely because he fought violently? Would you hold Rana Pratap in any lesser esteem? Or Rani of Jhansi? No, Mahatma ji, if you are honest with yourself, you will have to honour and applaud both the groups.(TT 23)

At this point, the freedom struggle took a sudden twist and Gandhi, a priest of non-violence looked indifferent towards the methods of struggle. Gandhi gave a powerful mantra to the Indians, i.e. 'Do or Die.' Bipin Chandra in his book *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* expressed;

Here is a *mantra*, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is. "Do or Die" We shall either free India or die in the attempt: we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.(464)

The influence of Quit India Movement could be easily understood. Nahal writes:

the forces that the Quit India resolution had unleashed could now only go forward; could only demand, only insist on, engagement. Gandhi had eventually succeeded in this. He didn't want the people to sit around; he wanted them to act. And they were vying with each other to be in the vanguard of that action. While she could rationalize about his earlier movements, this one was utterly beyond her comprehension. The response it had sparked off in the whole country, even he perhaps...the iron might never be as hot again and they had to strike at the anvil now. What did 'Do or Die' the call Gandhi had given otherwise mean? (TT 188)

He neither fully rejected the violence nor fully sanctioned it when he said to the revolutionaries, "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) and praise Darbara Singh by saying,

My Sikh friends here might have been driven into the freedom struggle from as pure a non violent motive as I. And yet what if in the process they might have been unable to retain the non-violent stance? So long as you don't start out with violence, so long as you start out with non-violence, you are free to interpret the way you want it. (TT 29)

Civil- disobedience movement was more powerful than the non-cooperation movement but Quit-India movement was more powerful than both of them because the British government was really frightened by this last mass movement. One reason behind its huge success was that at this time, Violence and Non-violence were united to fight for the ultimate aim. All the newspapers also highlighted the news,

All the local papers had brought out special editions, with 'Quit' figuring prominently on the front page. 'The Congress wants the British to quit now,' shouted newsboys as they raced along on their cycles. Now. Abhi. Fauran. (TT 25)

In this novel we meet the third generation of Thakur Shanti Nath who were also sacrificing their lives for the freedom of their motherland. Naval, the grandson of the Thkur joined, 'Himmat' and Gyan, his second grandson who had initially joined the navy gave up his job and rebelled against the government and Vikram was living with Gandhi from his very childhood. Not only the boys but Abha, had his granddaughter too helped the revolutionaries to achieve their aim. The freedom movement was in young hands at the time of Quit India movement. There were lots of families who are sacrificing their lives for the freedom of the country from their different generations.

Nahal expressed the combination of two pillars:

for the first time in the freedom struggle the leadership truly passed on to the younger people; the older ones lay languishing in jails. And for the first time in the freedom struggle, the violent and the non-violent revolutionaries truly worked

together in terms, in tandem Gandhi himself having expressed doubts about the limits of non-violence.....the mode of action emerging in the post 1942 India was different from anything that had ever been done in the country before. The younger leaders no longer believed in just filling the jails, or in just perpetuating violence. (TT 51, 52)

Without crossing the limits of violence the young leaders were beautifully taking the freedom struggle ahead. Many people boycotted their work. The young people joined hands with the leaders and made the police helpless as their policy of movement had become really complicated and made confused and baffled the police;

what could the police do if all the sweepers in a town struck work and dumped the dirt in the local kutcheri- as they did in Allahabad in October 1942? What could the police do if all the workers in the factory down tools- as they did in the loco workshop in Ajmer on hearing the Gandhi's fast in February 1943? What could the police do if all the students of a university refused to take their exams-as they did in Lahore in April 1943? (TT 52)

The incidents taking place frequently in a series and the motive behind it was just to engage the government. The master mind behind the strategy according to many historians was a Bihari Leader, Jayaprakash Narayan and a few others. Nahal narrated an incident of the mutiny of Lonavla where ten people died and in response to this incident many workers all over the country resigned from their jobs,

the ratings in the Castle Barracks(which housed sailors awaiting appointments to othet ships), in the Central

Communication Office (which handled all signal traffic for the navy), the Colaba Receiving Station (a wireless centre), the Mahul Wireless Station (which had the powerful transmitters), the Sewri Naval Hospital (with 300 beds and 200 staffs), all struck work partially or wholly, for the succeeding week. And incidents of sympathetic protest occurred in over sixty naval ships-sixty!- when ports and shore establishments in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, Vizagapatam, Mandapam, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Jamnagar, Cochin, New Delhi, Aden and Bahrin, all joined hands with the Lonavla dead. (TT 52, 53)

While Gandhi and other leaders were busy in the Quit India Movement, Subhas Chandra Bose was preparing his army INA. The first phase of INA was formed in September 1942, by an Indian officer in the British Indian Army, Mohan Singh and the second phase was prepared by Subhash Chandra Bose himself in 1943. The Indian Prisoners Of War (POWs) were handed over to the Indian officers by the Japanese. Special trains were bringing them Darabar and Joseph Daniel with the help of Vikram planned to hijack the trains at Sialkot and prepare those POWs for INA.

In 1943 the famine of Bengal and the careless attitude of government put ghee in the fire of freedom struggle;

A famished Bengal in the government's opinion, would be like a minefield in the way of the Japanese; they would find no subsistence here and their line would be snapped. In a way, therefore, the government encouraged the famine. TT 117)

When the people were suffering from the pain of famine and epidemics the government was busy in collecting funds for war but the people refused to donate anything. Nahal has presented the scene of Delhi where the Muslims has refused to contribute towards the war collection because,

Hundreds of Muslims had died because of cholera and famine. The government had no right to ask for any donations toward the war fund from the Muslims. They should quit the Muslim mohallas, they should quit Delhi, and they should quit India. They protest against the collection team in a high manner; 'The Muslims inside were offering a qurbani- a sacrifice, a self mortification. Against a corrupt and indifferent regime, which had allowed epidemics and famines to spread? And every Muslims in the bazaar was in a hurry lest he be left behind before the arrests were called off. By the afternoon, two hundred men had been arrested. People were still lined up at the nukkarhs. (TT 155)

Gandhi was released from jail on 6th May 1944 while all the other leaders were kept in jail as Gandhi had suffered the immense loss of his wife Kasturba in 1943. On the role of Kasturba, P.Usha Rani in her book *The novels of Chaman Nahal: A Study* expresses:

Looking at Kasturba's role in The Gandhi Quartet retrospectively from The Crown onwards, it is clearly borne out that unalloyed love and respect for Gandhi, deep concern for his health and happiness are combined with courage to speak out her mind when necessary and caution him whenever he goes to excess in self denial. She resents his chalking out her life for her, and

reluctantly accepts many of his vows, including celibacy. She does not hesitate to express her exasperation at Gandhi's vows...(382)

During Gandhi's absence from the active political scene the revolutionaries performed many violent activities. Kusum was living in Banras, a holy city of India, after Raja Vishal Chand's death and helping INA indirectly when one battalion of INA accompanies the Japanese army to the Indo-Burma front and for the Imphal Campaign. Kenneth Ashby visited to Kusum and informed her as the situation of the INA in the Imphal Campaign. The INA men had been completely demoralized because they were facing a discriminatory attitude and had to even do menial work with the Japanese units. Kenneth said, "These revolutionaries don't have a chance. Things are pretty bad for them in the east; they are already beaten there." (TT188) but Kusum was not ready to accept the truth and when he enquired about her indulgence in revolutionary activities she indirectly refused and said,

....they all have my blessings. I'm sorry Vikram was arrested in Delhi; I would have liked him to go as well. I would have liked Amit to go but he's too young. But those, who go, they have my sympathy, and love, and respect. (TT 188)

Kenneth Ashby sensed the warm effective air of the Quit India movement but he tried to convince Kusum that the fate or revolutionaries in the east was not bright. He opened his briefcase and showed some images of the men of INA;

Some wore makeshift uniforms, some were in mufti, others in dhotis. But there they lay, their faces and their bodies riddled with bullets, their mouths open, and their clothes in disarray. They were all in a heap, piled up in a bit, or fallen in a line. They lay next to telegraph polls or walls or village wells. Many were no older than children. Each had a gun in his hand, or the gun lay next to him. Kusum could see that many of the persons in uniform were actually women wearing blouses and trousers. Kusum fished out the photo of an old Sikh who lay slumped against a tree trunk. His teeth were protruding out and his white beard was smeared with blood. A machine gun lay in his lap, across his legs. (TT 195,196)

This heart melting scene of INA makes us recall the Sepoy Movement of 1857. The sacrifices of the freedom fighters are immortal in Indian History. Gandhi might have realized the importance of their sacrifice so even after having witnessed the great violence he had praised the revolutionaries and suspended his movement as he had done earlier. Nahal writes,

May be violence had occurred, may be many underground workers didn't even belong to Congress, but today, in 1944 Gandhi couldn't condemn one of them, not one. Today, in 1944, he was willing to hail Bhagat Singh, as a son of India. Today, in 1944, he was willing to hail Subhash Bose-with whom he had such basic differences-as a great son of India. (TT 203)

Gradually the fragrance of freedom could be smelled by the Indians and they were now expecting that they would be able to breathe in an independent country very soon but they were unaware of the nightmares of partition because they trusted that their leaders would definitely solve the problem however

unfortunately the sores of communal frenzy were very deep. The talks between the main leader of Muslim League, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi failed.

Then one of Gandhi's colleagues C.Rajgopalchari suggested to Gandhi that the idea of Pakistan could be at least examined by the congress but the Two-Nation Theory was unexpected for Gandhi and he said,

And if there were two, there were ten nations in it, there were twenty. A community, a kaum, owing allegiance to whatever faith, whatever creed, whatever myths, whatever legends, whatever sacred books, whatever taboos, whatever religion, whatever political system, whatever dress, whatever food, whatever language, did not constitute a nation (TT 209)

Gandhi was focusing on the might of unity and he presented a lot of examples when both the communities had worked together and lived together like a single family while he defined a nation,

A nation meant being born together. That's it; it meant a group of people who were born together, who lived together, who grew up together, who died together.the Hindus and the Muslims of this subcontinent were born together here, on this soil, this earth, virtually on the same bed, in the same cradle. Yet now they were talking of a separate zone for the Muslims. Did the great Lodis ask for a separate zone for the Muslims? Did the great Moguls? When Shivaji became an emperor, did that Marata stalwart ask for a separate zone for Hindus in his kingdom? Did the plumed Rnjit Singh ask for as separate zone for the Sikhs in the Punjab? (TT 210)

Finally in March 1946 the newly formed Attlee cabinet of the Labour Government sent another committee comprising of three Britishers. They were Pethic- Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and A V Alexander. Gandhi openly boycotted their arrival while being baffled by it. He said to the workers that just like their predecessors, the members of committee would also enjoy here and make a report of five hundred pages but fail to solve the problem of the Indian. The members of the cabinet mission visited the whole country and then presented the proposals publicly. The main recommendations were that “elections were to be held in each province to Legislative Assemblies.”⁴³³ both the Congress and the Muslim League participated in the elections to form an Interim Government.

It was declared by the government that the election would determine the future of the sub continent whether it would be united nation or it would be split into two. The result of the elections is presented by Bipin Chandra in his book, *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* –

The Congress won over 90 percent of the general seats (including twenty-three of the thirty-six labour seats) in the provincial elections while the Muslim League made a similar sweep in the Muslim constituencies.⁽⁴⁸⁰⁾

It was clear that the British would leave the country within a few months and wanted to leave as soon as possible as they knew they would not be secure once the Indians got freedom. They perhaps sensed the upcoming communal frenzy and

holocaust of partition. Gandhi was still trying to unite the two communities he started a padyatra, from village to village and Nehru followed him to many places and consoled the people that very soon a new government would be formed and it would protect them but he knew that it was just a wild goose chase to console them.

Estelalar

WORKS-CITED

Azadi. Allied Publication, New Delhi.1990.Print

The Crown and the Loincloth. New Delhi: Allied Publisher Ltd. Delhi. 1990. Print.

The Salt of My Life. New Delhi: Allied Publisher Ltd. 1990. Print.

The Triumph of the Tricolour. New Delhi: Allied Publisher Ltd.1990. Print.

Chandra, B. *India after Independence* ', Penguin Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi. 2000. Print.

Chandra, Bipin. *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*. Penguin Books Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.2000.Print

Dhan, Dr. Deepika. *Social and Historical influences in promoting the rise of the Indian English Novel by Indian English Writers*. International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities. Vol. III, Issue V, July 2015. Web. ijellh.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/25.

Sundararajan, J. *The Impact of partition on Indian Writing in English with reference to Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan, Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend In The Ganges and Chaman Nahal's Azadi*. International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities. Volume II.Issue IX.january 2015.web<ijellh.com>uploads>2015>02>36

Jha, Rama *The Fiction of Chaman Nahal, rev. of The Crown and the Loincloth*, *The Humanities Review*.Jul-Dec1981. Print.

Majumdar, R.C. *Struggle for Freedom*.Vol.xi. Bharatiya Vidyabhavanam Publication, Bombay. 1978. Print.

Munideva, P.Rajendra.*The Novels of Chaman Nahal*, Tapovanam Publishing House.1967.print. A.N.Diwedi.Allahabad: Kitab Mahal.1987.Print.330

Mathur, O. P. *The Novels of Chaman Nahal-A Penultimate view, Studies in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English* (ed).

Radha K., *Mahatama Gandhi in R. K. Narayan and Chaman Nahal*, R.K.Narayan: Critical Perspectives, ed. A. L. Mcleod. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.1994.web shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>bitstream

Rani P.Usha, *The novels of Chaman Nahal: A Study*. Web.

Reddy, K.Venkata & P.Bayappa Reddy,ed. *The Indian Novel with a Social Purpose*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.1999.print. [http:// www.advancearticle.com](http://www.advancearticle.com)

Reddy.K.Venkatesh. *Novelists as Affirmationist, the Achievement of Chaman Nahal. Critical Studies in Commonwealth Literature*. Prestigious Books Publication, New Delhi.1994.Print. web: shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>bitstream

Gandhian Strain in the Indian English Novel, Sarup & Sons Publication, New Delhi.2004.print.

Sudhkar, Ratnakar Jamkhandi, *Interview with Chaman*
Nahal. commonwealth novel in English.
vol.4.No.1.Spring.1991.42

Estelalar