CHAPTER- I

Partition and Two Nation Theory: An Introduction

1.1 Partition: The Historical Background

The Partition of India, 1947 is undoubtedly the most cataclysmic event in India’s contemporary history. India’s freedom was accompanied by a

...holocaust of unconscionable horror that bit deeply into the memories of its inhabitants.

In terms of its scale and its wide-ranging impact, Partition remains the singularly most important event and turning point. Ten to twelve millions people moved, within few months, between India and Pakistan. Between 500,000 to one million people are believed to have died, hundreds of thousands of children lost and abandoned, between 75000 to 100000 women were raped and abducted. Families got separated, fields of crops were left to rot, the homes were destroyed, India witnessed world’s largest mass exodus, accompanied by gross and the most inhuman slaughter and violence. People suddenly began to see each other as enemies. The violence of that vivisection deeply affected (and continues to affect) the psyche of people who had been thus divided. To quote G. D. Khosla:

History has not known a fratricidal war of such dimensions in which human hatred and bestial passions were degraded to the levels witnessed during this dark epoch when religious frenzy, taking the shape of a hideous monster, stalked through cities, towns and countryside, taking a toll of half a million innocent lives.
There is wealth and treasure of writing on the political aspects of Partition. However, the ‘historians’ have ‘remained silent’ on the experiences of the people - women, children, men, people differentiated by caste and class, by religion – who lived through it. Historical texts, until recently, talked little about what the experience of Partition meant for those who lived through it, how much loss, trauma and grief they faced, how they tried to cope with them, how they put their lives back together again. Urvashi Butalia refers it as:

…the silence about the human dimensions of the Partition.\(^3\)

While India never accepted that division, Pakistan continued to justify it on the basis of the Two - Nation Theory. The failure of Cabinet Mission Plan was followed by the Muslim League’s call for observing a Direct Action Day on August 16, 1946 when an armed and well - prepared mob of its supporters unleashed pre - planned violence in Calcutta.

*The spectre of death that the stress of Calcutta witnessed as a result indicates the limits human vindictiveness and collective psyche can reach.*\(^4\)

Violence broke out in other parts of India in the months that followed.

*The Great Calcutta Killings were followed by horrors of Noakhali.*\(^5\)

Bihar and after a brief interval, the tragic events enacted in the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Sind. G. D. Khosla rightly observed that:
In the history of communal relations, the years 1946 - 47 mark a period of unequalled mistrust, bitterness and frenzied warfare in almost all parts of India.\(^6\)

One official reported:

…seeing -3 women and 9 babies all dead in one well, a child of three or four with its face kicked in and then charred with fire, a women beaten to death while in the act of producing a baby, girls of twelve or thirteen raped and then killed by thrusting spears up them and ripping them apart.\(^7\)

The violence combined national and religious passions. The police and military seemed unable to deal with it.

A new and pernicious doctrine had come to poison men’s minds - that religion divides instead of uniting. And men’s minds were warped; they forgot their humanity and turned upon one another with the ferocity of jungle beasts.\(^8\)

Partition, perhaps is the most important event in the history of modern India. It changed the canvass of the nation and also, at the same time produced deep impact on the national psychology. It not only divided a united nation into two, but also created perennial enmity between two communities. The enormous loss of human lives as property is felt even today. Some sixty two years after the dreadful event.
The Partition of India in 1947 was the most auspicious incident in the history of Indian Freedom struggle. It played a very significant role in the Indian sub-continent. The Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims who struggled against the British unitedly for a significantly long period, turned one another enemies. Huge massacre was done on both sides. Excluding it was the Muslim communalism launched by Jinnah’s Two-Nation Theory that gave birth to the immorality of Partition.

According to Manmath Nath Das, a well-known historian, the responsibility of the unfortunate decision of Partition falls on the:

*Upper class Muslim elite which feared Hindu domination over a Muslim minority at the end of the British rule.*

In 1937, Iqbal wrote a letter to Jinnah asking him whether he did not think that the time for such demand was ripe. The poet, Muhammad Iqbal, another visionary of separatist tendencies, also realised that in order to solve the problems of Indian Muslims, it was necessary to redistribute the country and to provide one or more Muslim states with absolute majority. According to him it was the fitting reply Jinnah would give to Nehru’s ‘atheistic socialism’. He also hoped that it was Jinnah who was able to discover some way out of the difficulties of the Muslims.

Muslim leaders had begun imperative their demands for a separate Muslim State ever since 1867 when Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, claimed “It is now impossible for Hindus and Muslim to progress as a single nation” and in 1882 he stated that:
All individuals joining the folds of Islam together constitute a Nation of the Muslims.\textsuperscript{10}

It was the British who made them horizontal to the separatist tendencies by creating separate electorates for dissimilar classes. It was then that Choudhary Rahmat Ali, a youth studying at London, thought over the problem seriously and coined the nomenclature, Pakistan, including almost all North-Western frontiers which also meant ‘Land of the pure’.

Within individuals days Jinnah was not recognised hitherto as a political strength. By the side of the polls, near the beginning in 1937, the Congress won a considerable victory by securing 716 legislatures out of 1161 which the party has contested. The Congress secured a clear preponderance in six provinces out of eleven and it involved as the largest single party in three other provinces. On top of the opposing, the Muslim League won only 109 out of the 482 seats securing 4.8 percent of the total Muslim votes. It did not get clear majority in any of the Muslim majority provinces. Thus the Muslim voters discarded to vote the communal Muslim League. This disturbed Jinnah. The Congress too, suffered a lot, it received a setback in the provinces like Sindh and the Punjab. But the Congress leaders became confident that they could take the Muslims out of their communal barriers and lead them in the national movement under the banner of Congress. In this way the election of 1937 proved very accommodating to the Congress while harmful to the future of the Muslim leaders. But the –

\textit{Communal leaders saw in the Congress more a threat to their very existence. They felt that, unless they organised themselves like the Congress and regained their popularity with the masses, they might get up one fine morning to find that the Congress had walked away with their flock.}\textsuperscript{11}
As a result, the Congress leaders refused to accept Jinnah as the leader of the Muslim or negotiate with him from forming an alliance Government. Nehru didn’t consider the intransigent League worth reorganizing as partner in politics.

On the other hand, this computation of Nehru proved extraordinarily regrettable in the history of Indian politics. It was because of this approach of Nehru and the Congress that he embarrassed Jinnah found out the catch word ‘Pakistan’. He began to win over the Muslims through religious and emotional programmes rather than political ones. The emotionalism made him the greatest leader of the Muslims, since Aurangzeb. Thence forward Jinnah kept of reiterating his demand for Pakistan. In consequence, the old Jinnah who was the adherent of G. K. Gokhale and the ambassador of Hindu – Muslim unity who once had remarked:

_I am an Indian first, and a Muslim afterwards_,¹²

set upon a radically different mission.

Conversely, the World War – II gave a very diverse turn to the Indian politics. In March1940, Jinnah traumatized India by giving a call to free the Muslim majority areas from the slavery of the future Indian Government. He furthermore requested the British to give them a separate Muslim state if they required restoring peace and happiness in the Indian sub-continent. To put it in his words:
The area in which Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Western Zones of India should be grouped to constitute ‘Independence State’ in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.\textsuperscript{13}

This public statement at the Lahore session of the Muslim League widened the rift between the Hindus and Muslims. The British Viceroy was ecstatic by all this. It was then on 8\textsuperscript{th} August 1942 that Gandhi asked British to quit India. He urged the Muslims and the Hindus that they should first have the original Hindustan and then fight for Pakistan and India. The Muslims however didn’t respond to the call of Gandhi. The Muslim League criticized the congress and the movement. The leader also asked the Muslims to remain unapproachable from the movement which was useless for them. Winston Churchill was incredibly happy over the widening rift between the major communities of India. It was due to Jinnah and his followers that Churchill declared at Delhi in September 1942 that the,

\textit{Congress doesn’t represent India and ninety millions of Musalmans are fundamentally opposed to the Congress. I have already expressed my views about Congress movement. It is not possible to defend the indefensible. I particularly want to emphasise that this is not merely a declaration of war against the British and the Government, but it is war against the Muslim League.}\textsuperscript{14}

The argument of approaching danger of Partition was thus prepared by the Muslim leaders well in advance. This resulted in Jinnah’s plateful the British to crush the Quit India Movement so that he could demand his price in terms of the British help for the creation of the Pakistan. Viceroy Wavel had also equipped to design the division of the Indian sub-continent was finalised some two years prior to the arrival of Mountbatten. In 1945, the British
Government asked Congress to form Interim Government which, conversely, proved to be failure due to the non-cooperation of Jinnah. In the meantime, Churchill was replaced by Attlee and the hopes of the nationalists were rejuvenated.

Due to decisive matter Churchill ministry determined to study Jinnah’s demand. Not realising the complexity in solving the problem, Jinnah reserved on demanding Kashmir, Punjab, Bengal and Assam. The Punjabis, on the other hand, warned the British Viceroy that if they were forcibly included in Pakistan, there would be nothing but bloodshed. Assam had no Muslim majority, though Jinnah was still inflexible. The Hindu Mahasabha and Master Tara Singh challenged Jinnah’s claims and threatened Attlee with a dreadfully serious and violent reaction in the Hindu-majority provinces. By this time Jinnah had emerged the most popular leader of the Muslims.

1.2 Two Nation Theory: Political Background

Attlee and his cabinet could not take any decision acceptable to both the parties. They tried to avoid the anticipated serious consequences in the Indian sub-continent Attlee himself was convinced that 99 percent of the Muslim population of India supported Jinnah in their apprehension of Hindu-domination. However, the breakdown plan of novel containing two main points was submitted to the Government, the points being

1) If the Muslims insisted on self-determined in genuinely Muslim areas, this must be given and
2) There could be no question of compelling large non-Muslim populations to remain in Pakistan against their will-

Attlee was also of the identical opinion, he showed his inclination to give sovereignty to Pakistan in the Muslim preponderance provinces but not in the Punjab, Assam and Bengal.
In the meantime, Attlee appointed a cabinet Mission which could not receive welcome as the situation had become worse. By January 1946, the Congress seemed to favour the Partition. If it became inevitable. Expect Gandhi, all leaders of the Congress were ready to accept it. The Muslim league grew stronger than ever before, the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims became anxious that they viewed each other as enemies. In the elections now the league won a substantial number of seats which again boosted up their morals.

On this background the Cripps commission declared division of both the Punjab and Bengal. The Congress analysed the result of the elections very differently. Nehru construed that a vote for the Muslim league was no vote for Pakistan. This too could not tolerate any fruits. Apprehended by the dominated of the Congress leaders, Jinnah discarded an extraordinarily proposal and gave a call of “Direct Action Day” to be observed on 16th August 1946.

Jinnah, in spite of his sickness made a historic declaration to the League council by quoting a famous Persian poet, Firdoual:

\[ If\ you\ seek\ peace\ we\ do\ not\ want\ war,\ but\ if\ you\ want\ war,\ we\ will\ accept\ it\ unhealtatingly. \]

As a consequence, Jinnah sheltered off his relations with the Congress as well as the Interim Government. He and his party crave on the mission of the “Direct Action Day.” and thus inaugurated the bloody Indian Civil War. The Great Calcutta Killings of that day showed the fight Jinnah was prepared for. In his interview with the writers of Mountbatten and the Partition of India. Mountbatten says to Gandhi:
--- and don’t forget Direct Action Day in Calcutta which was a warning of what he (Jinnah) could do (August 1946) – I mean he killed 5,000 people and wounded 15,000 people just as a destruction, and I think he has the capacity to cause civil war if we don’t meet his half-way.\(^{16}\)

Tens of thousands of men, woman and children became the victims of the observance of the Direct Action Day. This great Calcutta killings was followed by communal killings in many other parts of the sub-continent. In Bombay, Allahabad and Bihar, the Punjab and Kashmir this fire of communalism flared up to quickly that is become very difficult the Viceroy to bring the situation under control. The Muslim butchered the Hindus and the Hindus massacred the Muslims. It is on this background Gandhi requested Jinnah to become the Prime minister of India and to avoid Partition and violence. But it did not come true. In December 1946, Attlee invited the Indian leaders to England.

When things had become worst, Attlee appointed Mountbatten as the new Viceroy of India. In fact, the decision of Partition was already taken and the only work left for the Viceroy was to convince the Indian leaders about the shape of Partition and India. Mountbatten, however, studied the problem in detail along with the Menon plan. Due to the force circumstances, the Congress party was creating round to accepting Partition. In March 1947, they passed a resolution calling for the Partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Gandhi, however, opposed to any kind of division of the sub-continent.

It was V.P. Menon, in his thesis published at the beginning of 1947, discarded the possibility of Cabinet Mission plan of forming government and suggested that the country be
divided rather than letting it in the lurch of civil war. He also added that if the Congress agreed, Jinnah, could not ask for the Partition of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam.

As a result, when Mountbatten arrived in India, this most difficult problem was almost solved. Now before him was the task of convincing Jinnah about the Pakistan he had demanded. The Viceroy met all Indian leaders. He found Nehru to be the most compromising personality and Jinnah,

...a psychopathic cause.\textsuperscript{17}

He also came to realise that when it become inevitable, the Congress also came round to accept Partition.

Thereafter, the Viceroy in his meeting with Jinnah made him to accept Partition, i.e. the Partition of Punjab and Bengal. Thus he reduced the rise of the proposed Pakistan. Jinnah appealed to his frantically:

...not to give a Moth-eaten Pakistan\textsuperscript{18}

Mountbatten’s shrewd comment was:

\textit{I simply could not visualize being so inconsistent as to agree to Partition of India without also agreeing to Partition with provinces in which the same problem across.}\textsuperscript{19}
As a result of this compact stand taken by Mountbatten, Jinnah was stunned. The dream of his Pakistan was traumatized.

However Liakat Ali, the other important leader of the Muslim League accepted the plan of Partition within Partition, when he declared:

I would in no circumstances prevent provinces from being partitioned, if I accepted the principal of Pakistan.\(^2^{0}\)

Being an intelligent Viceroy, Mountbatten had a comprehensible idea about the Indian leaders. He tacked Jinnah very undoubtedly and outwitted him in no time. He also dealt with leaders like Gandhi and Patel extremely skillfully. Patel however blamed the British Government which optimistic Jinnah in his increasing demands. He told the viceroy that:

Jinnah would yet accept the Cabinet Mission plan if the force of circumstances gave him no alternatives.\(^2^{1}\)

Mountbatten who gauged the consequences of Partition wanted to prove that the British were not conscientious for it. In April 1947, he informed the Secretary of state that Partition had become inevitable. All this goes to prove that the responsibility of Partition goes to Jinnah and his Muslim League. Though the Congress tried to avoid the Partition, it became inevitable due to the acts and moves taken by the leaders.

Acharya Kripalani and Nehru showed their readiness for the Partition. By the end of April 1947, the other leader, who was the president of the Constituent Assembly, announced his
acceptance of Partition in principle. Thus, Jinnah was in a most disturbed and frustrated mood due to the Partition of the Punjab and Bengal. He tried to argue with Mountbatten, who scolded both the parties very strongly. On 10th April 1947. The draft of the Partition was presented to Jinnah who rejected it straightaway. He charged the British of deceitfulness and disingenuousness. By that time however, the Viceroy had finalised his plan of Partition. But before that, on 25th April 1947. The statesman printed the confidential news of Partition and causes a tremendous beneation throughout the sub - continent. The Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims all were disturbed by the contents of the plan.

In the second week of May, Mountbatten went to Simla to finalise his plan of Partition. It was at Simla that he received a few modifications in his plan. According to the British Government wanted to form some new independent kingdoms. It was nothing but a poor fragmentation of India. Nehru, however very strongly opposed any change that affected India. Mountbatten, too, did not approve of it. He communicated the reactions of the Congress leaders to Attlee who called him to London at once.

By then Jinnah put forth his demand for a corridor from Pakistan to Bengal. This demand was also rejected by the Congress. But it disturbed the Viceroy’s discussion with British Prime Minister. On 1st May 1947, Mountbatten retuned to India along with the approved plan of Partition. As soon as he arrived, he briefed the plan to all his governors. He did not want to give any opportunity to any Indian leaders interfere it. He had also feared of bloodshed massacre on a large scale. He wanted to avoid all that.

On 2nd June 1947, the Congress and the Muslims leaders and the Viceroy along with his staff assembled at the Viceroy’s House in New Delhi to decide the destiny of the Indian sub-continent. Nehru and Jinnah reluctantly accepted the plan as it was inevitable. Mountbatten feared only Gandhi’s reaction, which reportedly lay in bed moaning low voice:
Today I find myself all alone. Even
the Sardar and Jawaharlal think that my
reading of the situation is wrong and
peace is sure to return if Partition
is agreed upon... They did not like my
telling the Viceroy that even if there was
to be Partition, it should not be through
British intervention or under British
Rule... Let it not be laid that
Gandhi was partly to Indian’s vivisection.22

On 3rd June 1947, the Viceroy announced the plan over All India Radio. Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh, too, followed suit. Thus the plan of Partition was announced even before they had Gandhi’s comment. Attlee got the pill paused in the House of common. He told the House that as the Indian leaders has failed to agree upon a united India, Partition had become the ‘inevitable alternative’.

On 4th June 1947, Mountbatten declared the possible date of India’s Independence on 15th August. Mountbatten named it as ‘The Gandhi plan’ due to the advice and suggestions by him. Gandhi had asked him to leave to the Indian people the choices of their own future. Hence, the Viceroy had given an opportunity to the Indian people to decide their future. In this way, though Gandhi never offered his support, he never opposed the viceroy’s plan openly. There lies the success of the mischievous and hard plan of Mountbatten.
But after the plan was acknowledged, the communal killing and bloodshed became the order of the day. The massacre reached its climax. The Hindus and the Sikhs living in Muslims-majority provinces were butchered mercilessly and the Hindus and the Sikhs took revenge by killing the Muslims. History witnessed a very fatal and momentous period in those days. The situation had gone beyond control even before the transfer of power. The legislative assemblies of the Punjab and Bengal voted for Partition while Sind and Baluchistan decided to join Pakistan.

On 18th July 1947, Attlee Government passed the Bill of granting Independence to India and Pakistan thus:

As from the fifteenth day of August, nineteen hundred and forty-seven, two independent
Dominions shall be put in India, to be known respectively as India and Pakistan.23

In this way the plan of Partition was prepared, passed and executed by the British Government which left the Indian sub-continent in the most fateful and agonising condition.

As critic like M.H Hudson says:

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it...24

It is a reflection of human life, in its entire vicissitudes. The historic events of Partition have naturally been reflected in the realistic form of literature viz. the novel. The novelists depict how the political imbroglio of the forties triggered off suspicion and hatred among the communities which led to the massacre of innocent people of both sides. What is probably reassuring from a study of these novels is the triumph of individual love, irrespective of religious fanaticism and personal horoison in reducing humanity from utter despair.
Same of these novelists such as Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, K.S. Duggal and Amrita Pritam seem to have been actually involved in this historic event. They have narrated their stories as eye - witness to the holocaust of Partition. They took at Partition from a humanistic point of view - giving vent to the human agony and suffering rather than apportioning the blame for Partition in a direct way. In this decisive analysis, what mattered were the tremendous loss of life, property and the death of humanity.

1.3 Significance of a Historical event in Novels:

These novelists have selected their characters mainly from the middle class from different walks of life. They also present different attitudes and different opinions at the prospect of Partition. The Indian novelists in English are concerned with these attitudes and opinions in their novels.

The political theme of Partition, thus has increase the significance of historical event. And so these novels remind us of and are so much important as the 1857 Mutiny novels. Great events in history have always inspired the novelists through the world to write novels on them. For instance Tolstoy dealt with the Napoleonic wars in his world - famous novel War and Peace and Dickens wrote his A Tale of Two Cities on the background of the French Revolution. Similarly, the 1857, Munity in India provided a number of English novelists to attempt to recreate the spirit and time of the Munity and its effects on the English society in general. As Shailendra Dhari Singh has pointed out his introduction to Novels on the Indian Mutiny (1973):
Considering novels alone, there exist not less than fifty novels written by English men and women about the Indian Mutiny.  

In actuality, the 1857 Mutiny is hypothetical to be the first war of Indian freedom. Partition of the sub-continent into Hindustan and Pakistan in 1947 is an event of such enormity that it is a surprise that there are in reality only few novels - not more than fifteen at best - that deal with the theme of Partition. However, none of these novels could be considered as a great masterpiece like War and Peace. Then of course, all these novels in their own way recreate the situation of partition and its aftermath serve at least the purpose of credentials.

In his essay ‘The political novel in Indian writing in English’ Dr. M. K. Naik says:

Khushwant Singh’s ‘Train to Pakistan’ is a copy-book example. The story here befits any popular film... packed with incidents of rape and murder, loot and arson, spying and accidents, this tale of an accomplished story-teller degenerates into the meaninglessness of a melodrama. Manohar Malagonkar’s ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ is another political novel which is seasoned with melodramatic effects.

He has taken Train to Pakistan and A Bend in the Ganges for his discussion. Dr. Naik has treated these novels as melodramatic and has not considered the deeper significance of these novels as they deal with the traumatic events of partition that has inspired the novelists. It is essentially the political upheaval causing the tragedy on massive scale which is the main theme of the novels, which undoubted. There are melodramatic elements in both the novels; they also attempted an ideological analysis of the different sectors which led to the Partition.
I intend to deal with four major novels which treat Partition as the central theme. These novels are *Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Singh, *Azadi* (1978) by Chaman Nahal, *Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh and *Midnight’s Children* (1980) by Salman Rushdie where the theme of Partition is a major preoccupation of the novelists. But there are not the only novelists who have been deeply affected by the stupendous historic event, and there are quite a few who have dealt with the theme of Partition in their novels either marginally or incidentally. These are, for instance R.K. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), Balchandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* (1959), Attia Hosain’s *Red Hibiscus* (1962), Raj Gill’s *The Rape* (1974), H.S Gill’s *Ashes and Petals* (1979) K.A. Abbas’s *The World is My village* (1984), Mahmud Sipra’s *Pawn to King There* (1965) and so on. Even the novelists in regional languages have treated this theme in their novels. For instance, K.S. Duggal’s *Twice Born Twice Dead* (1978), Amrita Pritam’s *The Skeleton* (1977), and Bhisham Sahani’s *Kites Will Fly* (1962) are also available in English translations. They provide a measure of comparison with the novels written in English.

I would like to take a brief survey of the novels in which the theme of Partition occurs marginally or incidentally with a view to gaining wider perspective on the topic of my study. It will be a brief survey of the novels from 1955 to 1985 the novels are discussed chronologically.

R.K. Narayan is conceivably the most primitive novelists to deal with the theme of Partition. In his *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955), we come across Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent agitation against the British. He succeeds in his mission but he is disconsolate to see the communal killings, riots, massacre and several other inhuman atrocities that go together with the independence of the nation. R.K. Narayan has presented Gandhi as one of the characters of his novel. He has shown Gandhi visiting the Partition - haunted area of the Indian sub-continent. The major part of the novel is, however devoted to the Gandhian agitation against the British and to the love - affair *Bharati* and *Sriram*. However, the theme of Partition in this novel is extremely marginal.
Balchandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* (1959) is the first novel of the critic of Milton and Krishnan; the hero of the novel returns to India after ten years stay in England. This novel is about his problems of adjustment on his return to India. But the India is returns to is caught in the Partition fever. Krishnan, however marries Kamala and moves to a comfortable job at Delhi Secretarist.

He is contended in her companionship and with his service but then the atmosphere of the Partition is oppressive and the coming of Cynthia, his Cambridge friend, changes the very course of his life. He is married to Kamala but attracted to Cynthia. Kamala goes to Shantihpur, the Partition affected city, and begins her life as a nurse. After a few days, Krishnan realises his mistake and he too goes to Shantihpur. On way to Shantihpur and in Shantihpur itself, the communal poison is at its work, Kamala becomes the victims of the Partition, while attempting to save the life of a Muslim girl. Thus,

…there are two clear strands in the story, the tragedy of Krishnan’s marriage and the tragedy of Partition.27

These two strands are, however, linked with each other. It is the national tragedy of Partition that causes a personal tragedy, murder of Kamala.

Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on Broken Column* (1961), is a story of a girl growing up in an upper class Muslim family in Lucknow before and after Independence. Laila the narrator-heroine of the novel narrates the story of her family. This novel also deals with the theme of Partition which has been a subject of discussion in the house of Laila. What is important here from the nationalistic point of view is the account of the national movement separating the
secular Muslims nationalists under the banner of Congress and the communal Muslims under the banner of Muslims League.

*Laila*, being a Muslim girl experiences everything at her home, she is, however, not a direct participant in either of the movements but she cannot remain aloof from it. She sees her near and dear ones opt for Pakistan and pass through the great national calamity of communal violence. Thus the novel attempts at showing the holocaust of partition that results a large scale massacre and historic migration only as a custom of the great freedom movement. This novel written by Muslim novelists can be viewed from the Muslim angle. Here too we come across the League, Muslims who follow the communal stand taken by the Muslims League under the leadership of Jinnah. The Congress - Muslims however, oppose the Partition and in the houses of Muslim too there is an artificial Partition.

Padmini Sengupta’s first novel *Red Hibiscus* (1962) deals with the theme of freedom - struggle and Partition. It is, in fact, a moving tale of a reputed Bengali family- Dr.Bimal and his wife Kusum. It also deals with the problem of untouchability. It is as well the story of a girl caught between tradition and modernity.

The action of the novel beings in the pre - independence days and ends on the day of freedom, 15th August 1947, which is accompanied by the horror of Partition. Padmini Sengupta portrays the ghastly things happenings in and around Calcutta. She has described the tension that prevails among the Hindus and Muslims. The call of Direct Action Day given by Jinnah opens the fury of hell in the entire Bengal, and kills thousands of Hindus, is also portrayed.

Raj Gill’s novel, *The Rape* (1974) describes the political aspect of Partition. Its purpose to describe how the small and sleepy village of the Punjab becomes aware of the impending freedom and the simultaneous Partition of the country.
There are some similarities between *The Rape* and *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh. Like *Train to Pakistan*, the novel under explains how the patty leaders from the towns and cities come to the villagers and enlighten them on the situation, incite them and prepare them for a fight against their Muslims brothers. Even the ex-soldiers of Subhash Babu’s army come and train the people in warfare. The novel ends with the depiction of the whole region converted into a scene of loot arson, rape and slaughter.

H.S. Gill’s novel, *Ashes and Petals* (1979) describes the trauma and turbulence of post Partition India with an extra ordinary intensity. The very opening of the novel is with the bloody scenes of Partition. The first chapter ‘The train’ portrays the horror, the massacre that takes place on the train bound for India.

K.S. Duggal’s *Twice Born Twice Dead* (1979) translated from its original Punjabi, is a powerful emotional document that communicates the trauma that people suffered during the dark and fateful days of Partition. This was the most cataclysmic happening in recent Indian history.

The touching directness of the saga moves the readers many a time. The novelist very skillfully delineates the perverseness of people when the logic of inseneate animality rules them. Even on such a background, too, we find characters like Schne - Shah, Allah-ditta Rajkarni, Sathbharai and Kuldip, who represent is full of inhuman deeds committed by the people which the novelist shows with animal takable authenticity.

Salman Rushdie’s sensational novel, *Midnight’s children* (1980) covers the period of thirty years from August 1947 to 1977. The hero of the novel *Salim*, is born at the midnight hour of 15th August 1947, and hence is inextricably connected with the national history,
… I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinee indissolubly chained to those of my country.  

The novel is written in three parts and the action of the novel begins from the day of the Jallianwallah Bagh incident and ends on the ends of the Emergency that was in India in 1977. In this novel also we have some occasional references to the tragedy of Partition.

K.A. Abbas’s recent novel The World is My Village (1984), is written as a continuation to his novel Inquilab (1953). Anwar Ali, the Hindu-Muslim hero with joint parenthood is journalist. He marries Mahnooda and begins to live Delhi. It is during these days that the Muslims of Delhi, livings in Jama Masjid, Darya Gunj and other places, are attracted by Hindus. Abbas, however, looks at Partition as one of the most momentous decisions taken by the Indian leaders. Some historical facts are also presented and Anwar and Bob, an American Journalist, is shown visiting Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah and even Mountbatten, to get the details of the inside story of Partition.

Mahmud Sipra’s first novel published under the title Pawn to King Three (1985), has been one of the most recent novels on the theme of Partition. Set against the background of the terror- striken days of Partition, the novel also in a fact moving narratives of passion and intrigue of shady deals in high places, of trust and betrayal. It also narrates of those who play a still dead hair game in a world in which history has turned full circle and religion once again an emotive force in power politics.

Pawn to King Three is a story of a survivor- single small boy, Adnan, out of one of the bloodiest train - massacres that happens in Amritsar when the Lahore bound train is hated and
almost all Muslims refugees are killed. What is striking about the novel is that even after a lapse of thirty years. Mahmud Sipra’s Partition world seems to be fresh and realistic. This novel is written by a Pakistani writer where we can have the Pakistan attitude towards Partition.

What we observe from the study of this novel is that the historical fact of Partition was the result of Muslim communalism which apparently left choices for the Congress; the fact of Partition was the result of Muslim communalism which apparently left no choice for the Congress as Faite accompli. Many of the novelists like Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Amitav Ghosh, Amrita Pritam, K.S. Duggal, H.S. Gill, Raj Gill, were born on the Indo-Pak border. Hence, their descriptions of the massacre and other crueltian have a ring of authenticly about them. Historical and philosophical attitudes emerge in Malgonkar who challenges the very philosophy of Gandhi’s Ahimsa. He suggests that Ahimsa actually led to more violence than a fall scale war of independence involving death and destruction.

All novelists find a tentative solution to the discussion of communities and conflicts - a fictional solution, romantic solution-love - affairs between Hindus or Sikhs boy and Muslim girl or vice versa. The tendency of the novelist seems to concentrate on the physical vivisection of the motherland which provides an opportunity to the writer to describe scenes in a melodramatic manner.

When Freedom Came seems to be a solitary example of a novel which does not deal with the Partition of the concentration, is on how the Muslim mind even in the remotest villages developed schism; how it felt betrayed and how it reconciled itself with the situation.

All in all the Indo - Anglian novelists who deal with the theme of Partition appear to have dealt with it on a surface level and in a somewhat simplistic manner. There novelists have not been able to improve upon the Dickenson formula of the historical romances.
References:

5. Batabyal, ibid.
6. Khosla, op.cit. p.vii
15. Ibid., p. 76.


18. As per 1) *Partition and Independence of India*, (New Delhi: Vision books, 1982) p. 84

19. Ibid., p. 84.

20. Ibid . , p. 87.

21. Ibid . , p. 87.


