Chapter - Three

Partition

History serves as a basis for many literary writings. Through their imaginative eyes, writers present before one the historical incidents. Such type of writing has a special appeal for the people. In the history of Hindustan, the Partition of Hindustan was a great upheaval that shook each and every corner of the country. As a result several kinds of writing based on the theme of partition have been produced. These types of works deal with partition, and depict communal clashes, violence and its implications.

The partition of India in August, 1947 was one of the greatest dislocations in modern Indian history. The impact of partition was so far reaching that it continues to evoke interpretation both factual and creative, even today. If one looks at the voluminous partition writing, it is proof enough how that one event has dominated, reshaped and revolutionized lives.

Writings on partition give poignant accounts of the tragedies suffered by the uprooted people. One of the themes that emerge repeatedly in these writings is that the Partition has brought with it not only physical and material loss but also an unbearable emotional loss. This leads to a fragmentation of self. Antipathy, chagrin and animosity are the crucial factors that have accelerated a death history and eventually, a Partition history. Mass exodus is one of the key components of the Partition history.

The Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League were united in their demand for independence. They struggled hard but were badly divided over the crucial question of Partition. On August 1947, when the country
felt the first fragrance of independence, innocent people had to pay a heavy price. The Partition of India accelerated the sensitive mind to write about the horrifying massacre, communal riots. Thus the trauma of the partition of the Indian sub-continent had sensitized the literature to write and rewrite the historical dilemma.

The Partition of India has a great impact over every genre of literature. As far as the field of fiction is concerned, many novels have been written on the Partition of India. The notable trait of fictional works dealing with the partition is the depiction of communal clashes, violence and its implications. The detail about the initiation of these clashes often tend to show how the peaceful atmosphere of communal harmony is suddenly disrupted and vitiating the communities that had been living together peacefully since ages turned into enemies.

The incidents involving riots, arson, rape, murder and bloodshed are placed against the background of the political and geographical partition of the country. The focus in these writings is generally centered on the rupture of a harmonious social fabric. The repercussions of this historical situation ultimately make the people, who were either involved in abetting violence or suffered it, more sensitive to realize its futility.

These fictional works have the story line that is often developed around the families or the situations in villages. The rural life before and after the Partition forms the setting of these fictional works. It brings out the agony, pain and the feeling of separation experienced by the individuals and the families belonging to different communities. Sometimes it focuses on the nostalgic–probability syndrome; people dreaming of an imaginary life sans Partition.

It makes people glorify their cultural past. The romance of an imaginary world is thus created by certain characters that have to face the onslaught of the
evil of partition. They indulge in romanticizing their past. It involves people from such generation that has experienced it and the people who hear about it. Such types of writings reopen the past memories of the reader.

Media employs the use of location elements, significant historical days, and major incidents, with the mention of important political meetings and the speeches of political leaders. Sometimes newspaper headlines are used as a point of reference. These elements help many of the literary works on the theme of Partition, through literary genres like drama, poetry, prose and short stories.

The different perspective to the saga of partition has been introduced by writers on a large scale. There are so many novels written on the Partition of India. Bhisma Sahani’s *Tamás*, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* (2000), Balachandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* (1938), Attia Hossain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* etc, can be seen as a few illustrations. The Partition of India has produced a vast range of fictional writings in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Sindhi, English and Bengali.

Not only in English but also in Hindi, Urdu and Bengali too, there are some brilliant novels on the theme of Partition—*Jhuta Sach* of Yashpal, *Adha Gaon* of Rahi Masoom Raza and *Epar Ganga, Opar Ganga* by Jyotirmimoyee Devi. Punjabi writers have also made their contribution in partition fiction like Swaran Chandan’s novel *Ujjara*, Aag Ka Darya by Quarrat-ul-Ain-Haider, Khoon *De Sohley* by Nanak Singh, Ulamha by Kulwant Singh Virk, Nahun *Te mass* by K.S. Duggal and *Allah Wale* by Gurumukhi Singh Musafir. All these works written in Punjabi language on the theme of partition portray pain and the trauma of the partition period in a realistic way.

There are several short stories which depict the agony of the refugees and how the partition created an unresolved dilemma in author’s life. *The Parrot in the
Cage, God’s Dog, Mother of Dhiren Mazumdar, An Unwritten Epic, and A Grave Turned Inside out, reveal how the Partition have caused an identity crisis in the life of the refugees. The stories throw light on the irretrievable loss, people had to encounter in the wake of partition. They were forced to flee their native land leaving their homes behind. When they took refuge in the land supposed to be their own, they were not welcomed. There they had to face the hostile attitude of animosity and a likeness among the people of their own community.

Mulk Raj Anand has vividly recorded this trauma of uprootedness of an old age refugee woman in ‘The Parrot in the Cage’. The old lady has only a parrot to keep company. She is a representative image of millions of those who were uprooted. They were kicked out of their native places for the only reason that they belonged to a particular religious community and that had no right to stay in Pakistan which was historically carved out for the Muslims. Rukmani escapes the rioters as a Muslim woman offers to help her. She says, “I only know if Fate had not given me a burqah to escape with, I should not be there” (195). She survives only to be given to misery. She has nothing to eat, nowhere to live. The community which has given her an identity has nothing to offer her here. She is left to fend for herself. Those who exhibit affection and attachment to their land are threatened first and later slaughtered mercilessly. The partition was such a social upheaval that it changed the credibility of the community causing fragmentation not only in the lands of Punjab and Bengal but also in the life of the people.

Shanti Mazumdar, the protagonist of Lalithambika Antharjanam’s The Mother of Dhiren Mazumdar is forced to be uprooted twice. It is a poignant story that deals with the identity crisis she has to face after the Partition and once again
after the creation of Bangladesh. Besides, the story also focuses on the sacrifices made by Shanti Mazumdar for her country which ultimately for the freedom of that country which turns its back her, refusing to recognize her as she is forced to abandon her soil as a refugee, an outsider (200).

Shanti Mazumdar has taught the lessons of Patriotism to her children to be loyal to the land. She always helps her son, Dhiren Mazumdar in his crusade to liberate India. Shanti Mazumdar is very sad and her mind is full of agony at the thought of partition. It is her deep love for the country that when Bengal gets divided in the name of religion and caste she raises pointed questions addressed to Nehru “With whose consent did you cut of Bengal’s Head? With whose permission did you separate US? Here no one is a Hindu, no one is a Muslim?” (203).

Kamleshwar’s how many Pakistan is a touching story relating to the tale of love and woes of Mongol, a Hindu boy and Bano, a Muslim girl. Apprehension of communal riots makes the friction of love impossible. Their different religions create obstacles. As such the protagonist is forced to leave Chinar for Bombay. He calls the moment of Pakistan’s creation as ‘a moment of torment.’ The author has successfully shown the effect of Partition and the severing of individual relationships during this event. In How many Pakistan at the news of partition one of the inmates cries bitterly. For him the subsequent parting from his fellow inmates is too overwhelming. Refusing to be a part of Hindustan on Pakistan, he climbs up a tree in frenzy asserting outright: “I want to live neither in Pakistan nor Hindustan … I will live on this tree” (Sharma 132).

Film Industry has also produced several films based on partition. Such films re open the deep wounds which seem to be nearly healed with the passage of
time. A recent film Gadar directed by Anil Sharma freshens the pathetic, horrible experiences of 1947. In movies based on Partition, it is shown that Partition is the most undesirable event to have afflicted India and Pakistan. In Gadar it is shown that the people fleeing towards safety and security are attacked by small and well organized bands of hooligans consisting of the people of their community. Overcome by the communal hatred people become so callous that they spare no one, a child, a woman or an old man. The film Gadar gives the poignant accounts of the tragedies suffered by the uprooted people and the crisis identity that remains a trauma for most of them. Pinjjar and Shaheed-e-Mohabbat Buta Singh are also movies like Gadar.

Following the cinematic traditions, now the writers have turned to a depiction on a different level. Large number of novels based on partition in different languages explores different aspects and implications of this historical event fuelled by cinematic configurations. The Partition Novels in English have plentiful to offer to posterity. The cataclysmic tenor of the times is attested to by the plethora of responses it has elicited in literature, mainly fiction, and the very expense and enormity of violence that attended Partition.

An overlay of savagery and violence—a routine description of the approaching murderous hordes, attacks and butchering, conversion, abduction and rape, the raging fires and wagon loads of corpses. All these have been presented in the fiction. Adil Jussawalla observes:

Partition caused a major crack in the Indian personality and the subsequent linguistic divisions of India, communal riots, territorial losses, unstable borders and big power rivalries on the sub continent
have, if anything, widened the crack and caused several, more to appear. (211)

The trauma of the partition of the Indian subcontinent has exercised and involved the energy of several Indian writers. The trauma of partition has been the subject matter of scores of novels and hundreds of short stories both by the Indian and the Pakistani writers. The harrowing experiences still continue to haunt the sensitive intellectuals and authors.

*The Shadow Lines* falls under the category of partition novels which recount the partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947. The narrative of the novel does not follow that usual story line of partition novels predicted on the events and incidents of communal frenzy that engulfed the religion during the partition. In the prominent partition novels viz. Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956) Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), Raj Gill’s *The Rape* and Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (1975), the major characters undergo the turmoil of communal frenzy whereas *The Shadow Lines*, by foregrounding the deliberate monolithic prescriptions of an insular nationalist ethos, challenges the validity of borderlines which actually for him are just shadow lines.

The minor riots allegorize the inter-connectedness of communities and continuity of social relations on both sides of the boundary which the narrator hero terms as ‘our looking glass border’ (Puniyani 233) The novel is the examination of Thamma’s brand of nationalism seeking political vis-à-vis the partition of the country. The political freedom eventuated into drawing of borderlines between the newly formed nation states on the one hand, and, on the
other unleashing of violence that has ruptured the communal harmony and blurred the common historical memory.

Another famous fiction on partition, *Train to Pakistan* written by Khushwant Singh, is one of the first full length novels dealing with the after effects of the partitioning of India. The story starts with the murder of Lala Ram Lal, the money lender, by dacoits, who on their way back home throw bangles over the wall of the house of Jugga. An ex-convict Jugga is himself busy in making love to Nooran in the fields. Hukum Chand, the Deputy Commissioner, is engaged in drinking and is found in the company of a prostitute.

The story takes a vicious and serious turn when the news floods in, of gruesome incidents across the border and the villager’s anger leaps up to a frenzy when a trainload of dead Hindus and Sikhs arrives from Pakistan. A young Sikh in his teens with a little beard glued to his chin with brilliantine urges upon Hindu and Sikhs the retaliatory philosophy of blood for Pakistan as he says:

Do you know how many train loads of dead Sikhs and Hindus have come over? The young Sikh asks and goes on asking, do you know of the massacres in Rawalpindi and Multan, Gujranwala and Sheikhpura? What are you doing about it? Then he derides them.

You just eat and sleep and you call yourself Sikhs – the brave Sikhs!! The martial class! (253)

The Muslims of Mano Majra do not want to leave their place. The village headman comes forward and pledges support to protect them. At last a plan is made to kill all the Muslims in the train. The plan is to stretch a rope across the first span of the bridge so that when the train passes under it, it will sweep off all the people sitting on the roof of the train. But the plan is foiled by the notorious
Jugga who loves Nooran, a daughter of a Muslim weaver who is also on the train. To save Nooran he makes up his mind to prevent the attack at any cost.

The decision of parting is not easy. It shakes the roots of togetherness that is centuries old. It creates a mournful numbness and makes them weep. Their tremendous sense of belongingness and the trauma of being uprooted from their soil are reflected in their words and tears. One of the characters of the novel says: “It is like this Uncle Imam Baksh. As long as we are here nobody will dare to touch you. We first die and then you…” (125).

Among partition fiction Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* has been considered as a complete fictional narrative on the partition. The treatment of the theme is comprehensive; Chaman Nahal covers almost all significant thematic aspects of the ordeal – theme of dislocation, rehabilitation, refugee problem, identity crisis, politics and exile.

The novel narrates the suffering saga of the Hindu family during the partition. It can be read as a biography of a family victimized by turmoil of the great divide. It deals with two sides, the human side of partition and the political side. Chaman Nahal questions the relevance of two nation theories and the logic behind it solving the minority problem. He observes, “How do you cut a country in two, where at every level the communities were so deeply mixed? There was a Muslim in every corner of India where there was a Hindu…” (85).

Chaman Nahal’s novel, *Azadi*, uncovers the concealed totality of life. It gives a realistic description of how millions of innocent people, both Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan and Muslims in Hindustan are killed, abducted and looted and how several women are raped and paraded naked.
Likewise, Bapsi Sidhwa is a superb storyteller, sprinkling her novel *Ice-Candy-Man* with tersely captured vignettes, which increasingly knit together into a story of passion and betrayal, “the unscrupulous nature of desire” and “the pitiless face of love” (88). *Ice-Candy-Man* has also been made into a film in 1947 ‘Earth’ by noted Canadian Director Deepa Mehta. The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* reveals the hard realities of life. Sidhwa, through this novel has painted the true picture of 1947. The novel shows the hair rising events; how the whole earth reddened with bloody events. Bapsi Sidhwa has highlighted the pathetic situations. The images of horror and bloodshed have been depicted through several scenes in *Ice-Candy-Man*.

*Ice-Candy-Man* makes it evident that the Congress and the League are undoubtedly the big players in the actual transfer of power when cities are allotted to India and Pakistan, like pieces on a chess board. But the terror of partition cannot entirely be blamed on the British. The impending but colossal upheaval of partition, which mercilessly dislocates and renders millions of people homeless raising questions of identity and liberty, produce the agony of social alienation. More so, it causes seemingly inexplicable symptoms in everyday life. This has been effectively brought out in the feelings of a Sikh granthi in the novel. His utter disbelief finds expression in his words: “I don’t know what to say. They talk of a plan to drive the Muslims out of East Punjab... To divide the Punjab. They say they won’t live with Mussalmans if there is to be a Pakistan. Owlish talks that, You know city talk...its madness can’t amount to anything” (*Ice*107). Memory here makes a hazardous bridge and *Ice-Candy-Man* becomes a painful remembrance of a dismembered past and Sidhwa relies on the complex phenomenon of memory to restructure a fractured past. The novel talks about how the leaders are struck with
the ferocity of a lusty beast. They give no ultimatum to the people. They just strike like a bolt of thunder within days. They cause an upheaval of magnitude which even a Tsunami cannot equal. Commenting on the potential of the novel form to reflect life’s experience comprehensively, George Lukas writes, “The novel seeks by giving form, to uncover and construct the concealed totality of life” (185).

Historical accounts of the episode focus on factual details – mainly events leading to the division of the subcontinent. Preoccupied with the political side of the partition they end up giving partial picture of the partition. But fictional narratives offer the holistic experience. They not only deal with the political side but the humane side also. By transcending politics, they portray episodes in a human perspective. The flexibility of the novel form provides larger freedom to the writer while capturing the volatile experience of the ordeal in greater detail. Hence the actualities of human experience of the tragedy easily come through fictional narratives.

What makes *Ice-Candy-Man* different from other novels is the fictional representation of Bapsi Sidhwa, which includes not only the calamities of partition but also the life of all the people of India and Pakistan. The novelist has shown the Hindu, Muslim, Parsee and English, in all terms of experience are too versatile to be reduced to a category of funny, tragic ground on the one hand and fundamentalist propaganda, political rage, divided loyalties, betrayal and arson on the other. The other thing which makes *Ice-Candy-Man* different is that it is the first novel written by a Parsee sensitivity through which the cataclysmic event is depicted. *Ice-Candy-Man* is primarily a novel of partition, the partition as a historical event and not an emotional convulsion.
The division of the map is at once the moment of celebration of freedom from the colonial rule. But the suffering humanity is suddenly thrown into the uncertainty of new boundaries and broken homes. The promise of the new beginning is overshadowed by a torturous migration of populations across a new demarcation. Over a million people lose their lives; thousands of women are raped or abducted and countless became refugees. Partition is an upheaval which metamorphosed millions of people on both sides of the border.

This harrowing tale of partition has been well explained in *Ice-Candy-Man* where people simply forget the ideas of nationalism and start quarreling over religious and communal biases. Sidhwa has sensitively portrayed the political anxiety and social insecurity which are shared by the people of India and Pakistan alike. The survivors of the partition have still not forgotten the memories of those furious days. Some of them have lost their identity and are still trying to retain it. In *Ice-Candy-Man*, Lenny reveals the trauma of partition through her memories with a sprinkling of humor, parody and allegory describing how friends and neighbors become helpless and ineffective when faced with mob frenzy.

*Ice-Candy-Man* again, renders the horrible events of partition. It is stated in following quotation:

*Ice-Candy-Man* is a novel which is extremely taut, highly sensitive and its heart rendering realism is best brought out with the familiar elements. The treatment, much to the fulfillment of the reader, is not only delightfully different but also inimitably exclusive...Sidhwa’s somewhat Joycian insight into Child Psychology and keen observation of child behavior is what makes the book to compelling and virtually excellent.
The cruelest exchange of population during partition changed the destiny of every individual. Thousands of people lost their lives and valuables. Thousands were homeless and rootless. Friends and relatives who were once ready to sacrifice their lives for their friends and relatives were during the partition days, ready to suck the blood of each other.

In the beginning of the novel one sees the basic unity among the various religions of India through the group of Ayah, which includes her admirers. Ayah is a Hindu and her admirers belong to different religions. At the Queen Park in Lahore, friends and colleagues argue endlessly about the impossibility of violence against each other and of the feeling for their homeland. As the tension between the two countries arises, sanity, past friendship, relationship and human feelings all are forgotten and people become conscious of their religion.

Hindus and Muslims begin to hate each other so much that people, even change their religion in order to protect themselves. Some Hindus leave Lahore. Ayah is a Hindu, but protected by her Parsee employers. Sidhwa aptly shows how the danger of violence has threatened the integration of the subcontinent because of this communal frenzy. The gossip of Ayah and all her admirers Hasseur, Butcher Ice-Candy-Man and Sher Singh centers only on the national politics. The child narrator, Lenny senses this change in the days before partition when she comments: “I can’t see to put my finger on it…but there is a subtle change in queen’s garden” (Ice 96).

During Partition, people were taking their own revenge. The hero of the novel, Ice-Candy-Man loves the Hindu Ayah. Before partition he always tries to make her happy but as the tension arises between different religions, even for Ice-Candy-Man, revenge is the major motivation. Ice-Candy-Man, becomes the part of
the frenzied mob which has abducted Ayah and pushes her into the brothels of Hira Mandi. So the passion of love is powerless against religious bigotry. Master Tara Singh, a prominent character in the novel is also caught by religious feelings. He is religious, and in white kurta, and silken beard flowing creamily down his face, comes forward with Sikh soldier-saint, and he shouts:

We will see how the Muslim Swine get Pakistan!! We will fight to the last man! We will show them who will leave Lahore! Raj karega khalsa’ Aki rahi na koi. The Sikhs waving and clashing their swords, kirpans and hockey-sticks were roaring; Pakistan Moradabad!! Death to Pakistan! Sat Siri Akaa! Bolay So Nihaa! But the Muslims on the other hand were shouting their own slogans or dialogues. They were asking, We’ll play Holi-with-their blood! Hoo-li with their bl-o-o-d! (Ice 139)

Such horrible pictures during the partition of India and Pakistan are vividly depicted by Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy-Man*. Sikhs and Hindus shout their religious slogans which activate restlessness in Muslims. They chant Allah-o-Akbar! Yaaa Ali!! And Pakistan Zinda-baad.

According to Bapsi Sidhwa, the people of different faiths once had been living in Lahore amicably but soon the atmosphere changed with political communal tensions. Lenny, an eight year old girl child, from whose objective view point the novelist interprets partition, becomes nervous as the friendly discussions in the park took a communal colour. The novelist observes:

There is so much disturbing talk. India is going to be broken. Can one break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is? … And I became aware of religious differences. It is
sudden. One day everybody is themselves…and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all-encompassing Ayah-she is also a taken-A Hindu. (*Ice* 145,146)

Bapsi Sidhwa has been realistic enough to give an access to the inner recesses of the perverted minds of those killers who find happiness in massacres. Many innocent people are killed without reason. Even Ice-Candy-Man’s hatred is triggered by one such train. “Ice-Candy-Man comes to an abrupt and jolted halt. He is breathless, reeking of sweat and dust, and his frantic eyes rake the group… A train from Gurdaspur has just come in; … he announces, panting. Everyone is a dead butchered” (149).

Soon, his grief aggravated fanaticism. He also becomes party to rioters, and his way of looking at his fellows, Hari, Moti, etc. becomes strange. The Ice-Candy-Man, appearing restless and maniac, finally retaliates thus: “I’ll tell you to your face--- I lose my senses when I think of the mutilated bodies on that train from Gurdaspur… that night I went mad, I tell you!! I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindus and Sikhs” (156).

Bapsi Sidhwa highlights the patterns of madness that exist within ‘self’ which is rendered helpless to maintain one’s calm and cool at the sight of such ghostliness. The psychic friction that gripes the people of different religious ideologies and loyalties worsen the situation for women and children. Kamleshwar warns against the impacts of an epoch of unrestrained repression on civilization thus:

Man will never cease to reap harvests of thorn from fields irrigated with human blood. Women will remain perennial victims of rape
and assault. Their offspring will be afflicted by mental illness. He
echoes Fanon, who treated war-victims as the wretched of the
earth. (*Ice* 39)

Ayah in *Ice-Candy-Man* symbolizes a woman cracked by Partition,
uprooted so many times at multiple levels that she can connect anything in life. She
is kidnapped from the house where she is working, raped and then forced in to a
religious conversion. She is dragged into marriage by the Ice-Candy-Man. Bapsi
Sidhwa observes ayah’s depersonalization thus:

Where have the radiance and the animation gone? Can the soul be
extracted from its living body? Her vacant eyes are bigger than ever:
wide opened with what they have seen and felt: Wide …
colder…the illusion is dispelled the moment she opens her eyes- not
timorously like a bride, but frenziedly, starkly…and says: I want to
go to my family? Her voice is harsh, gruff; as if someone has
mutilated her vocal-cords. (260)

Godmother tries to console her; advises her to forget and forgive; but,
crushed in body and spirit, she replies: “But I cannot forget what happened’…. I
am past that, ‘says Mumtaz. I’m not alive” (262). Godmother can also perceive the
damage done to ayah as she finds her “Emptied life? Preparing?” Even baby Lenny
had discerned the truth; “When I think of ayah I think she must get away from the
monsters who killed her spirit and mutilated her angel’s voice” (264).

Lenny is an eight year old girl, who is taken care of by the beautiful young
Ayah. There is a change in communal relations between Lenny’s first and second
visit to Pir Pando. During her first visit, the Sikhs and the Muslims have pledged
their lives to save each other from any outsiders. But during her second visit Lenny
finds that all people have migrated into a new world. In the heat of violence Akalis are ready to kill anyone who comes in their way. The roots of communal enmity in rural Punjab go so deep that people are ready to sacrifice.

Prakash and his family migrate to Delhi. Sher Singh, the zoo attendant flees from Lahore, due to insecurity after his brother-in-law is killed. Partition is categorized as a series of images and events depicting human loss and agony. People who have been dislocated from the settled life have to suffer a lot. This is revealed in the keen observation of Lenny about the chances in Lahore. In awe she observes: “Lahore is suddenly emptied of yet another hoary dimension. There are no Brahmins with caste marks or Hindus in Dhotis with Bodies, only hoards of Muslims refugees” (247).

In explaining the story of *Ice-Candy-Man* and Shanta and the ayah, the novelist has a purpose in her mind. She has connected this personal story with the story of Partition. She starts with the story of Shanta and her love for Shanta’s love for Masseur, Ice-Candy-Man’s love for her, and then gradually she draws attention at the national level, showing abduction, cruelty and the political atmosphere of that time. The Queen’s Garden is one cultural site of people from all the religions and communities. Differences between them arise sharply and shatter their feelings.

As the time passes, the Partition passion gains further momentum and every segment of city life comes under the spell of sporadic violence of action and words. The dog of police Roger is murdered. The Muslims, the Sikhs, the Hindu leaders rise for power and autonomy. As the conflict comes to an end the British Empire gathers its last rays, everything is changed not only externally but internally also. Ayah and her admirers who meet in Queen Park, a place where
men of all religions and creed rub shoulders with one another, now started meeting in wrestler’s restaurant. The geographical shift is not only a change of place, but also the change of opinion.

The value of Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man* lies in the fact that the cataclysmic event of partition is seen from the Parsee point of view in a general Pakistani version. The novel draws attention to the dilemma of the Parsee community faced at the dawn of independence—whom do they cast their lot with? Historical accounts or social histories in the form of fiction generally tend to give a patriarchal version of the partition. Though women are very much a part of the millions who have witnessed Partition, they seldom figure as the subject in the master/male narratives. Accounts of women as agencies do occur but are projected only as supplementary to the male action. Women as victims are also mentioned but no specific attention is given to their traumatic experiences.

Partition is a pathogen of the male lust for power. It is a typical male construct where women are made the site of macabre enactment. In this hyper masculine revenge drama of mutual humiliation, women’s bodies are the territories that are violated, mutilated and tattooed with sago masochism. Women on the both sides were at receiving ends of violence. They are the victims. Those who are sexually molested and those who are widows are treated as outcastes and untouchables. Finally, yet pathetically, they are left to pick up the scattered threads and begin a new the process of rehabilitation and resettlement of their families.

The tone of neutrality manifests in the narrator Lenny is anticipated in the Parsee meeting at the Fire Temple in Lahore. Col. Barucha, the domineering Parsee doctor and the President of *Parsee Anjuman*, sounds the note of caution: as he says, “There may be not one but two or even three-new nations! And the Parsee
might find them championing the wrong side if they don’t look before they leap!” (*Ice* 37). An ‘impatient voice’ in the congregation replies sarcastically, “If we are stuck with the Hindus they’ll swipe our business from under our noses, and sell our grandfathers in the bargain: if we are stuck with the Muslims they’ll convert us by the sword! And God help us if we’re stuck with the Sikhs” (*Ice* 38).

Col. Barucha’s advice to his community is, “Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We’ll abide by the rules of the land!” (*Ice* 40). The attitude of neutrality adopted by the Parsees with regard to the tug of war among the three major communities of India. The neutral attitude of the narrator-character, Lenny, has its roots in the racial psychology of the Parsees.

What follows Partition is the uncontrolled ventilation of the pent up rancor between the two communities on both sides of the border. Just as Hindus and Sikhs of Lahore undergo a harrowing experience, the Muslims of Pir Pin do – that fell on the Indian side of the border-are subjected to mass slaughter by the marauding gangs of the Akalis from the surrounding Sikh villagers. The entire family of the cook in Lenny’s house, Iman Din, has been occupied out in Pir Pin do. The little boy Rana alone has survived miraculously to tell the gruesome tale. Rana’s father pleads with the Sikh gang that the children be spared and even converted to their religion but he sees his father, uncles, old brothers beheaded. Though badly injured, a remarkable instinct for survival leads him finally to the refugee camps. In this case even willingness for conversion does not convince the murdering Sikh mob.

The country is not only divided, on the communal basis, but there is division among the people physically, psychologically and culturally. People are forced to dislocate and migrate and they are not able to adjust with their new
identity and new culture. They remain alien to the new environment. When this
cflict is over, Ayah is found in Heera Mandi.

Sidhwa has explained the psychological impact of partition not only on
elders but on children also. The sense of loss is aptly demonstrated as Lenny
and her brother wandering through the garden observe: “Adi and I wander from
group to group peering into faces beneath white skull caps and above ascetic
beards. I feel uneasy. Like Haminda I don’t fit. I know we will not find familiar
faces here” (237).

The uprootedness of partition is revealed as Lenny drifts through the
Queen’s Garden searching in vain for familiar faces and acquaintances. What
makes this novel different from other partition novels is that Sidhwa has written it
not only from Pakistani point of view but also has given a Parsee angle to it. To
highlight this she even goes thirteen hundred years back, when Parsees came to
India. The following quote warrants mention: “Sidhwa, a Parsee living in Pakistan,
is a rarity even in swiftly changing Asia – a candid, forthright, balanced woman
novelist. Her twentieth century view of Indian life can only be compared to
V.S.Naipaul. Sidhwa is among the most invigorating Indian writers” (12).

When the flames of conflict between India and Pakistan reach Lahore, the
Parsees, who have maintained a distance till now cannot help themselves remain
neutral and they act as messiah to the victims of the Partition, whether they are
Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs. Lahore is one of those cities where the flames of
communal conflagration are very high. Parsees in Lahore cannot keep themselves
alien and they are sandwiched between the hostile Hindu, Sikh and Muslim
communities.
The conflict of partition is between Hindus and Muslims and the Parsees do not suffer like Hindus and Muslims but their agony is no less intense. They are the detached observers of this bloody event. They have to make a choice whether to support Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs and being a minority they do not have much of a choice to make. Caught between the conflicting demands of the major communities of the country, they undergo a new identity crisis and a sense of insecurity.

The Parsees are under the influence of the British and they prospered owing to their loyalty to the British. Now they face a sense of insecurity when the country is on the verge of a painful partition. As the novel is rites, if we’re struck with the Muslims they’ll convert by the sword and God help us if we’re struck with Sikhs (37).

The ice-candy-man also shows the identity crisis and the sense of insecurity which the Parsees have been facing since the day of their dislocation from Persia. They have always tried to assimilate themselves into an alien culture and country, not caring for the loss of their identity because survival is the chief concern for them. But at the time of partition they feel that all their efforts of assimilating into Indian culture are futile because they have to face the identity crisis as they have faced in the beginning and they are not able to decide which country they are going to support. They have devoted thirteen hundred years to accept the Indian culture and now at the time of partition they have to take side of only one community.

In the Parsee get-together for the Jashan prayer to celebrate the British victory, at the Fire Temple in Lahore, Col. Barucha, the domineering Parsee Doctor and the President of the Parsee Anjuman say:
Hindus, Muslims and even the Sikhs are going to jockey for power and if you jokers jump into the middle you’ll be mangled in chutney! There maybe not one but two or even three new nations! And the Parsees might find themselves championing the wrong side if they don’t look before the leap. (36)

The neutrality of Parsees is shown in all the characters of the novel, especially in the character of Lenny. But the neutrality is not because of indifference but a form of complicity due to complex historical reality. The novelist depicts the psychological impact of the horror of partition on the lives of people. Zoroastrian religion confirms their loyalty to the ruling authority. The Parsees have been always loyal to the British but at the time of partition they become confused about their loyalty whether they should support the British or not.

Besides being a novel written by a Parsees novelist, another fact which makes this novel different is that it presents the turbulent upheaval and the pangs of partition from the view point of a handicapped Parsee girl. A Parsee girl, Lenny, who is eight years old with a handicapped foot, narrates the story of a changing world with sophistication and wonder. Lenny’s naive position and her religious background lend the version of partition, a quality those other novels about this tempestuous period in Indo-Pakistan history lack. When she comes to know that India is going to be broken she innocently asks. “Can we break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is” (48).

Lenny is surprised by the changing atmosphere around her. The violence of partition shakes the roots of all the communities. The violence has a frightening impact on Lenny which is revealed in her peculiar behavior. As the novelist writes,
“I pick out a big, bloated celluloid doll. I turn it down and pull its legs apart. The elastic that holds them together strengthens easily. I let one leg go and it snaps back, attaching itself to the brittle torso” (138).

This act shows the violence of partition and its horrific effects on the child. Communal violence has never been known to spare the innocent. The final betrayal comes when the men come for Ayah and, among them are also those who are supposed to be her friends, the butcher and Ice-Candy-Man. As the novelist writes:

They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet that want to move backwards are forced forward instead. Her lips are drawn away from her teeth, and the resisting curve of her throat opens her mouth like the dead child’s screamless mouth. (183)

The novel shows that the beast surfaces in man and man here is not generic for mankind; it really does seem to be male. Women do not turn beasts during the partition. Yet they are the prey of the beasts.

A symbolic reading of ayah’s character suggests that she represents the innocent natural sexuality of woman which in the unnatural conditions imposed by social value systems and the still more unnatural world of hate and violence generated by the partition, becomes the prey of debauched male desire. It implies in this world of repressed sexuality all that is required is for the normal restraints imposed by social and state institutions to be lifted to enable sexuality to rage in its most bestial form.

The women are not only gang-raped, but also subjected to the utmost pain and indignity. Several questions tease the mind. It is inhumanity; latent in human beings which surfaces when an opportunity comes to indulge in it with impurity
there is then some latent hostility to women that finds release in hostility to extreme as to torture them.

For an understanding of this one has to analyse the practice of the nationalist discourse and how it treats women. Fictional and historical narratives portray the rise of the modern nation state which often mobilizes the figure of woman in the construction reproduction and transformation of ethnic national categories. Feminist critics have demonstrated that concern about women’s status in the colonial and the post–colonial contexts often has less to do with patriarchal struggles over community, autonomy and the right to self- determination.

The manner in which women are kept under guard, separated from the community, and the way the servants evade questions as if there is something shameful going on leads Lenny to think that they must be guilty of some crime. She is haunted by the despairing cries and wails of those women and asks ayah’s replacement, Hamida, who has just been released from the camp, as to the reason. Hamida sees herself as a ‘fallen woman’ and tries to explain that the women are ‘fate-smitten.’ This however does not satisfy Lenny who recalls: “I’ve seen Ayah carried away-and it had less to do with fate than the will of man” (89).

When she asks the godmother to clarify what Hamida means by calling herself ‘a fallen woman,’ Godmother explains that: “She was taken away to Amritsar. Once that happens, sometimes, the husband- or his family–won’t take her back” (95). Lenny is outraged at the scapegoating of the women. She thinks that “it is monstrously unfair but also notices that Godmother’s tone is accepting” (96).

Lenny’s interrogation of the normalized assumption that informs abducted women’s treatment helps to make visible the way the patriarchal conservative
nationalist interests produce their identities as victims. Moreover, her off-centre view highlights, how the women’s suffering is both a product of their abduction from and rejection by their original families and communities and the state’s effort to erase history.

Lenny’s words carry Bapsi Sidhwa’s interpretation of the historical event of partition; in those words lie her indictment of the male as the perpetrator of beastly cruelty. The woman Hamida may attribute her predicament and that of other women in the recovered women’s camp to fate; but Lenny is certain that it had to do more with the will of man. Of course this comment is made in the context of ‘fallen women’ but considering the fact that it is men who are responsible for the communal riots and bloodshed and the women bring the worst affected on either side of the border, Lenny’s words acquire crucial significance. By making Lenny, the novelist lends weight and validity to the feminine perspective of the nature of surrounding reality.

*Ice-Candy-Man* reveals that the female characters pulsate with a will and life of their own. Bapsi Sidhwa turns the female protagonists into the moral centre, while most of the male characters either remain apathetic or indulge in destructive violence and disintegrative actions. As opposed to male discourse, in a feminist text, it is the woman who performs and controls and promotes the action by her active involvement and concern and in the process it is she who acquires the attributes of heroism and glory. Ayah is the focal point of sensuousness and female vitality that controls the actions and emotions of her male admirers. She represents the strength of the femininity of the female: she is fully aware and confident of herself as an individual, who cannot be taken advantage of.
At the same time, her fierce loyalty to the family she serves and extreme protectiveness of Lenny are undoubted. She is the formative influence of Lenny infusing in her the ideas of independence and choice. The child narrator’s relationship with her cousin throughout the novel upholding the principle of equality, even assertion, is an excellent example. Sidhwa has also written the *Ice-Candy-Man* on feminist perspective. It is aptly said that ‘Sidhwa is a feminist and a realist: “One sees in her women characters the strength of passion, the tenderness of love, and courage of one’s convictions”’ (200).

As per Lenny’s understanding of the national scene, remote and calculating men, create the climate for violence and ordinary men carry out the acts. Women, she learns, are often victims as if the case with Ayah and countless women have been raped and then placed in rehabilitation centre. Contrary to this, she witnesses the display of strength and social commitment in her mother and aunt, while she sees the godmother as one powerful personality, which can tackle wrong doing and can correct matters. This reveals to her the important truth that women do not resort to violence to solve problems, men do.

This necessitates a glance at how the men who make decisions, especially the political leaders, are portrayed in this novel which in turn highlights another aspect of significance, namely, the Parsee representation of the partition. Despite their latent ethnocentrism, religious exclusivity and identity crisis, the Parsee have been able to carve a niche for themselves in India on account of their close contacts with the Europeans, their inner dynamics, social orientation and their willingness to learn. Ethnocentrism of the Parsee, however, goes hand in hand with a spread anglophile based on a high degree of Anglicization. Mention has already been
made of the dilemma and ambivalence of the Parsees in regard to the imminent vivisection of India.

Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man* is a novel which does not admit a monolithic reading of its significance. It is the first novel by Parsee woman who does not belong to either of the two communities which has perpetrated mayhem on each other. As Bloomsbury observes:

Sidhwa, a Parsee living in Pakistan, is a rarity even in swiftly changing Asia – a candid, forthright, balanced woman novelist. Her twentieth century view of Indian life can only be compared to V.S.Naipaul’s. Sidhwa is among the most invigorating Indian Writers. (9)

One would expect Sidhwa’s novel to be a more neutral and objective account of the traumatic event of partition. Though hard facts are in general not distorted, still the Parsee standpoint is vividly highlighted in rendering the event. This treatment, nevertheless, cannot avoid traces of the Pakistani version of events leading to the cracking of the country. Having chosen to be on the margins, the Parsees are forced by circumstances to act in manner in which they are drawn into the conflict.

The novel reveals a formal problem by giving the Parsees such a pivotal role in conflict that does not concern them in any significant way. It is possible that the valorization of the Parsee is part of the intention of the novel. But the novel seeks to achieve more than the simple celebration of one community. It is here that one gets a glimpse of the major motif in the novel. Sidhwa’s novel is hardly about men.
The novel becomes a significant testament of a geocentric view of reality in which the feminine psyche and experience are presented with freshness. Lenny’s observation that it has less to do with the fate than the will of men sums up the novelist’s interpretation of the historical tragedy. Ayah’s final departure from Lahore is probably the moment of optimism in the novel.

Sidhwa not only provides the possibility for Ayah to become the mistress of her own fate but also presents the female bonding and the feminine empathy as antidotes to the violence and corruption which wrought the centuries of male dominance in religion and politics.

Bapsi Sidhwa’s _Ice-Candy-Man_ reveals how the political partition of India caused one of the great convulsions of history. Never before have had so many people exchanged their homes and countries so quickly. In space of a few months about twelve million people moved between the new truncated India and the two things, East and West of the newly created Pakistan. The novel renders how the political partition has brought in its wake harrowing experiences to millions whose lives have changed forever.

The tragedy of the Partition of India lies not in the division of the country but in the success of the English to permanently implant the feelings of hatred and distrust in the minds of Muslims and vice versa and also in creating a chasm so deep and wide between both the communities that nothing ever will fill the divide. Bapsi Sidhwa’s _Ice-Candy-Man_ written on the partition of India serves as a discourse on the role played by the English in increasing the divide between the Hindus and Muslims belonging to the vivisection of the country.

Sidhwa presents both sides of the picture. If the Hindu suffers in the hands of the Muslims, the Muslims too suffer in the hands of the Hindus. No community
can claim clean hands. The demand of Pakistan on the basis of religion is the most unreasonable demand for instead of solving the problem it became the beginning of all the problems which probably Jinnah had not envisaged. Within three months seven million Muslims and five million Hindus and Sikhs were uprooted. It was the largest and most terrible blame of the loss of human lives and property which fell entirely on the British who first to remain in power favored the Muslims and instilled in their minds the feelings of separation.

Many novelists have written novels centered on human right violation. But Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy-Man* stands apart because it presents the partition with subtle irony and parody in order to gain the sensitive reaction of the readers. It concentrates more on the shattered feelings and relationship.

The Partition novels of Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal focus on Punjab and dislocation of life not only in one region but in the most of the regions where the flames of partition reach. But *Ice-Candy-Man* presents the trauma of partition and its effect especially on the lives of Parsee.

Through the history of Partition, Bapsi Sidhwa warns against the danger of fundamentalism of all categories. The communal frenzy makes millions of people suffer. They lose their religion, their people and their life. So Bapsi Sidhwa warns them against the brutality of partition because those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

Bapsi Sidhwa’s presentation of history of partition through her characters is not an attempt at the approbation of Nehru or Gandhi, but a willful endeavor to debunk the dubious idea of nationhood and nationalism. She shocks the reader into a critical stance viz-a-viz history and feels that such an idea of nationalism is not a spontaneous process stemming from a naturally given sense of nationhood. Had it
been so, partition would not have occurred at all. Partition is the consequence of the unwillingness of the Muslims to work towards a unified India. *Ice-Candy-Man* is an attempt to shift the angle of vision in favor of the real and to portray history as no more than an ideological construct.

The theme of Partition has been depicted in *Ice-Candy-Man* in an extensive way. It presents the issues and causes of partition. Bapsi Sidhwa tries to describe the factors responsible for causing the partition. She has also blamed the political leaders. Communal riots and arson are the leading factors behind migration. The rumours regarding violence circulating in the atmosphere segregate the people of one community from the other. People get alienated from their homes. For security reasons people move to refugee camps, where they have to lie in the open, exposed to the hostile weather, under the most unhygienic conditions. Pneumonia type ailments have caused the death of many such people. The condition of those campers, who were once landlords, became more pitiable when the innocent villagers of the community instead of understanding the situation, grumbled against their desertion by the landowners.

Bapsi Sidhwa tells one about the Damocles’ sword hanging above humanity in her novel. As far as the fate of women is concerned Muslims and Hindu girls are abducted by the ruffians. Some of them are hidden behind the closed doors, some are killed and some were taken to the bazaars for naked processions. The same feeling echoes in the mind of the female protagonist of the novel named Ayah that this has been the fate of women for centuries, to be abducted, raped, humiliated ending up in violation of her chastity. The protagonist is a Hindu who has been deceived by her lover and caught by a Muslim Gouda.
Having the theme of partition, *Ice-Candy-Man* raises many questions regarding the ugly price which innocent people have to pay for freedom. Sidhwa declares that freedom comes through the streams of blood. She asserts that freedom has been achieved at the cost of the colossal sacrifice of women. She is of the view that the partition had increased the number of prostitutes by more than thirty thousand and more than twelve lakhs were sacrificed at the altar of freedom.

Eleven thousand persons had to undergo conversion compulsorily and during the recovery period of ten years, more than five hundred children were recovered from opposite community-and they were deprived of the affection of one parent; mother or father. The same number of the children left behind became the responsibility of the state to be taken care of. The violent riots, killings and heinous crimes brought the morale of the people to its lowest ebb. These gashes on both the sides and of the colonial divide still haunt both the nations.

The novel poignantly focuses on the socio historical consequences of the partition to women. The novel awakens those horrible, bloody days of partition in our mind. It projects the message that partition is the consequence of the unwillingness of the Muslims and Hindus to work towards a unified India. Sidhwa has fully succeeded in portraying the theme of partition in *Ice-Candy-Man*.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning a similar writer of Sidhwa’s intellectual verve. Chaman Nahal is hailed as a brilliant Indian English novelist of the second generation. He has enriched the field of political fiction, which is very poor as compared to the other forms of Indian English fiction. His Gandhi Quartet has an epic sweep covering the whole prospect of the Gandhian era in Indian life. Azadi, which happens to be one of the four novels of the Gandhi Quartet, offers an intensive picture of the effect of the traumatic experience of the Partition of the
country into India and Pakistan on the life of the people living in the north western border area of India. As all the historians and political thinkers of India know, the Indian freedom was won after a long struggle and sacrifice by the Indian leaders and masses. It remains a memorable experience in the pages of Indian history. There are countless books and tracts dealing with the antecedents and consequences of Partition, but the novels dealing with the same theme are very few in number. Chaman Nahal’s Azadi belongs to this group of novels and succeeds in giving a very convincing and graphic picture of the horrors and paradoxes of Partition experience felt by the people of north western part of India around 1947.

Chaman Nahal has depicted the horrors of Partition experience by concentrating on the life of the Lala Kanshi Ram; the protagonist of Azadi becomes a spokesman of the Hindus, who are deeply disturbed by the unprecedented political event. Lala Kanshi Ram tries to see the principle of spiritual unity in human life and therefore thinks that a man is created by God.

All created matter was one, man and beast and bird, and the flowers and the trees to boot. And these angrez were another aspect of the same Brahman, who constituted total reality … Their Hurrah Parade had been ruined by these nasty dogs, which no one owned and which were a nuisance to the entire community. They must help them to corner these scavengers and destroy them… (23)

Lala Kanshi Ram observes with keen interest the political turbulence that is going on in India during the colonial period. Like all other Indians, especially Hindus, he hopes that India will achieve freedom sooner or later. He knows that Gandhi and Nehru and the other Congress leaders are trying their best to outset the British rulers from the country. But alas, their hope is not realized totally. Like
Kanshi Ram, the members of his family and the neighboring families listen to the radio regularly to learn the latest developments in the political arena. They fear about the creation of Pakistan, which would create several problems for the country. “He articulates his fear about the partition to his wife; everything will be ruined if Pakistan is created” (40). Chaman Nahal offers every subtle picture of Kanshi Ram’s fear about the Partition and the consequent problems that they will have to face:

Didn’t Gandhi and Rajaji themselves as much as offer Pakistan to Jinnah in 1944? They were the ones, who put the idea in his head, if you ask me. Take a section in the East of India and a section in the West, they said. Only let’s have a common defense and foreign policy. Until then Jinnah had talked of Pakistan, but did not quite know what he meant by it. Gandhi, by going to him, not only gave Pakistan a name, he gave Jinnah a name too. Who took Jinnah seriously before 1947? It was doubtful if he took himself seriously either. Even since then he had been sharpening his teeth and becoming more and more menacing. If the Congress would give this much, why not go for complete separation Gandhi had meanwhile asserted he would never accept that. Over our dead bodies alone, the Congress leaders said. We would shed the last drop of our blood, but we would not allow India to be partitioned. Lala Kanshi Ram’s last hope of peace on the sub-continent seemed to be giving in too.

(Azadi : 34-35)

Once the inevitable partition is decided and announced, it creates a mental shock to the Hindus and the Sikhs, who begin to worry about their future safety
and peace. But the news creates a lot of jubilation among the Muslim population. Both the Hindus and the Sikhs on the one hand and the Muslims on the other become suddenly aware of their separate identities. Whereas the non-Muslims feel insecure and fearful, the Muslims jubilate over partition by shouting slogans like ‘Pakistan zindabad! Long live Pakistan!’ etc. firecrackers illuminate their houses with countless eastern lamps and they take out processions in the main lanes of Sialkot. They display their joy by dancing, mock fighting and singing and by forcibly taking the procession through the Hindu Mohulla, where Lala Kanshi Ram and his friends live. The Police Superintendent and the Deputy Commissioners try their best to control situation. The Hindus and the Muslims begin to hate and fear each other suddenly with some rare exceptions like Lal Kanshi Ram and Chaudhri Barkat Ali, who attended Gandhi’s speech at Ramatalai in 1929. Both of them were deeply impressed by Gandhi’s views on the Hindu-Muslim unity, home industry, nationalism, Purna Swaraj, non-violence, self-discipline and self-sacrifice and had sworn to be life-long friends and never thought of the communal barrier between them.

Immediately after the speech, and before the re-awed shouts of ‘Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai’ had died down, Chaudhri Barkat Ali turned towards Lala Kanshi Ram and said seriously: ‘You’re my brother from today.’ Lala Kanshi Ram chuckled. He had always regarded Chaudhri Barkat Ali as a brother; he did not need a Gandhi to make him aware of that (101).

The communal hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims, which was latent so far becomes blatant and expresses itself in so many details. The Muslims burn down the houses of the Hindus, burgles their houses, rape the Hindu women and murder the Hindu population indiscriminately and ruthlessly. But
unfortunately the Hindus cannot retaliate strongly and properly because of lack of solidarity among them. There is a similar hatred between the Muslims and Sikhs also. The Sikhs murder many Muslims. Sometimes they compromise with the situation by shaving their beard and removing the paraphernalia of Sikh symbols like turban and kangan, etc. Thus, there is a general atmosphere of mutual hatred and distrust among the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs. All of them suffer from some kind of psychological restlessness, anxiety and insecurity.

The traumatic experience of psychological separation between Hindus and Muslims is inevitably followed by the physical separation between the two. Politically the border between India and Pakistan has to be fixed. The Hindus of newly created Pakistan have got to leave for the newly created Pakistan. The government appoints a Boundary Commission to decide the precise boundaries of Pakistan and India. Once the boundaries line is decided, the pent up anger and hatred are vented out vehemently and shamelessly everywhere. The Muslims of Sialkot begin to disturb the peace and happiness of the Hindus by stabbing them, looting their houses and shops and raping their women. The life of Hindus becomes utterly miserable and infernal.

Azadi is thus, an important novel, which deals with various aspects of the traumatic experience of partition of the country into two. Chaman Nahal shows his remarkable powers of observation of the human nature in general and the political behavior of Hindus and Muslims in particular. Though the novel is tragic in its tone, it is epical in its vast canvas. The greatness of Chaman lies in his balanced and impartial picture of the Hindu-Muslim hatred and love, their emotional and political relationships and the ambivalent relation between Indians and British officers in a very realistic and elaborate manner. The novel is a landmark in the
realm of Indian English political fiction providing a solid material both to the literary critic and to the political psychologist for aesthetic enjoyment.