These are the remarks of Sir John Strachey, ICS in his lecture delivered at the Cambridge University in 1884.

This is the first and the most essential thing to learn about India that there is not and never was an India, the men of Bombay, Punjab, Bengal, Madras never feel that they belong to any great Indian nation.¹

The feeling of oneness does not come easily to the colonial people. There could not evolve national consciousness under conditions of slavery and disunity. The most arresting fact about colonial India was that her soil was rich but her people poor. R. Palme Dutt writes, "India in 1938 had more than half of the total colonial population of the world".² He further writes, "India contributed 1/12 of the whole national income of England".³

It is difficult to explain this paradox of British India, extreme poverty amidst extreme plenty. Thus India was a classic colony and national

³. Ibid., p. 71.
consciousness does not come easily to coloured people. Indians who received western education and read authors like J. S. Mill, John Milton, Mazzini as well as the American War of Independence and French Revolution, could not but cherish aspirations for the emergence of independent India.

The literature dealing with colonialism is wide ranging. It covers social reforms, cultural emancipation, western education and most of all the economic exploitation by the British rulers. By the end of the 19th century, India was completely transformed into a classic colony, because it was the largest and the longest dominated country of the world. As Saroj Sharma says,

*The story of the British rule in India is that of ruthless exploitation of a country by a conquering power. India was the pivot of the British Empire. It constituted a sustaining pillar of the whole of British imperialism. India was the largest, longest dominated and utmost exploited, colonial possession of Imperialist England.*

Nationalism in India emerged as a consequence of foreign subjugation. It resulted in common interests and sympathies and served to unite the heterogeneous population of India in a common hatred for its

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colonial oppressor. The national movement in India too was of great importance as it changed the attitude and thinking of the Indians to a considerable extent. It was not merely a political struggle but an all pervasive and ideological experience that had spread for a longer period of time compared to any revolution in the world history.
MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP UNDER COLONIAL REGIME - THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT:

It is usually observed that literary activities increase whenever there is a change in socio-political condition of a country. The Indian writers in English made efforts to give vent to their expressions to their national spirit in the choice and execution of themes. They made efforts to trace the impact of the national movement and overstretched their imagination to the impact of Gandhi on the national movement. These writers have depicted the various phases of the freedom struggle with the implied motive of making the Indians conscious of the cause of freedom.

The maturation of national consciousness in India took place slowly between two world wars. Life was not the same and every segment of our national life took, more or less, a pronounced Gandhian hue. As Gandhiji grew in stature in the eyes of people, the national awareness also increased. His magnanimity and humanism made him a world figure. He dreamt of a nation free from slavery, superstition and religious bigotry. A clerk in a Government office who is drunk with the wine of freedom in K. S. Venkataramani’s novel “Kandan, the Patriot” puts it this way.

_No more am I a slave at the desk grinding accounts for an alien rule to keep a pampered system going... the thing is in the air who can escape it_.

5. K. S. Venkataramani, _Kandan, the Patriot_, Svetaranya Ashrama: Madras, 1932, p.224.
Gandhiji influenced a majority of writers and left an incessant and indelible impact on them. Due to Gandhi's magnetic personality, creative literary writers found huge variety of themes in his movements. Every novel of this phase has at least one Gandhian character of its own. Kandan, Sriram, Moorthy, Devesh are a few names one can reckon.

Even women were not far behind men. M.K. Naik depicts it thus:

>This was unique in the entire history of India the spectacle of hundreds of women taking part in the political mass movement, picketing the liquor shops, marching in demonstration, courting jails, facing lathi charges and bullets.6

Women not only participated in demonstrations but they organised themselves into small groups with independent programmes. Their houses were turned into mini congress offices. Raja Rao gives a picture in his novel "Kanthapura",

>They said Rangamma's house was now becoming something of a Congress House, and there they were always piling books and books, and they had even brought spinning-wheels from the city.7

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During this stage of India's freedom struggle, the man-woman relations were at their level best because men treated their wives as compatriots. They were fired with the only idea of country's freedom and thus cordial relations existed between them. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi played a big role in bringing men and women on equal footings. Notwithstanding this, in certain instances, Gandhiji became the focus of misunderstandings, while determining the man-woman relationship, especially in respect of sexual abstinence between husband and wife during the Satyagraha. The Mahatma advocated celibacy to the Satyagrahis. According to psychologist Erick Erickson, Gandhiji was promoting the suppression of the natural instincts, between husband and wife for the practice of Satyagraha, which was causing undue stress to them.

Bhabani Bhattacharya, in his novel "Shadow from Ladakh" (1966) seems to have completely misunderstood Gandhiji. Satyajit, the hero of the novel tells his wife.

*Take your freedom.*

*My freedom? The puzzlement in her voice was also pain.*

*What shall I do with my freedom?*

*Marry again. . . .
Marry someone who will give you true happiness.  

When Gandhiji asked his followers to refrain from sex during the time of Satyagraha movement, he did not mean that they should divorce their wives.

B. A. Pathan expresses his views in the right spirit thus:

*This is clear distortion of Gandhiji’s concept of Brahmacharya. Did Gandhiji ever ask his followers to divorce their wives? What Gandhiji himself would not do how can he ask his followers to do? This is not Gandhism but Satyajitism fathered upon Gandhi. It should be borne in mind that Gandhi alone could do Gandhian gestures.*

Even R. K. Narayan has rightly interpreted Gandhiji in his "Waiting for the Mahatma". *Sriram* approaches Gandhiji to seek his blessings to marry Bharati.

*We are waiting for your blessed permission to marry.*

*Mahatmajji looked from one to the other with joy.*

*Do you like each other so much?*

Sriram burst out, I've waited for five years thinking of nothing else.

What about you, Bharati, you are saying nothing.

Bharati bowed her head and flushed and fidgeted.

Ah, that is a sign of a dutiful bride, said the Mahatma and asked, Does this silence means yes? . . . When is the happy occasion, tomorrow?

Yes, if you bless us so.

Very well. Tomorrow morning, the first thing I do will be that I will be your priest, if you don't mind.10

Celibacy was prescribed for the Satyagrahis so that their minds should not go astray during the time of Satyagraha. Nevertheless, Gandhiji encouraged man-woman relations to blossom; he never believed in the suppression of the natural feelings between them.

The freedom movement in India was not just a political revolution but had social, cultural and economic aspects too. Along with obtaining political freedom, Indian leaders strived to eradicate social evils like sati, untouchability, purdah system, child marriage etc. and to introduce widow remarriage. So the political upheaval in India was also a socio-cultural event.

According to critic Som Deva,

> The battle that India was fighting was fought on many fronts. On the political front success seemed to be hiding beyond the horizon. But on the social front the battle was crowned with victories at many points. Social consciousness was roused, blinding orthodoxy and superstitions were being thrown away; widow remarriages became more and more frequent; the caste system was shaken from its very foundation; untouchability was being gradually kicked out and social injustice was to be abolished.\(^{11}\)

The changing political and economic scenario not only influences human relationships, but also endorses a sociological fact. Great national events, struggles and revolutions certainly upset our traditional values and change our social priorities. The *Sita-Savitri* image of the Indian woman completely catapulted as she braved herself to face the turmoil of India’s struggle for freedom. The earlier image of a subdued woman gradually faded away and in her place a bolder, assertive and willing-to-fight-for-her-rights sort of woman’s image emerged in the history of modern India.

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Before the women got involved in the freedom struggle, efforts were made by some individuals and institutions to liberate woman from male chauvinism. The large-scale participation of women in the independence movement did a lot good to Indian womanhood. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and others gave the woman equal importance as that received by the man during the political struggle. This enabled women like Qudsia Aizaz Rasul, Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali and thousands of others to come forward for the cause of the country. It was for the first time in the history of India that women experienced themselves as being equal to men. One more important aspect of this struggle was that, like many other revolutions, it did not affect only the affluent city-bred women classes, but also the lower most rung of rural women folk. These women willingly sacrificed their gold and money to reinforce the freedom movement. They too got the opportunity to work shoulder to shoulder with men. Gandhiji knew that by keeping women away from the freedom struggle, nothing substantial could be achieved. It was, in more than one sense, a people's revolution. Hence, not only men but also women fought bravely to achieve freedom.

Whenever there is any socio-political or religious upsurge in the country, the literary stimulus also gets catalysed. The national movement of India also changed to a great extent the attitude of the people towards political freedom, social justice and economic independence. It gave
impetus to creative writing in India. Sisir Kumar Das expresses his opinion about it,

_The Indian writer was more keen to address the political tensions in the country and their impact on literature. A large part of the literature became the natural vehicle of socio-political movements as much as these movements received momentum from literary texts and activities._\(^\text{12}\)

Political freedom also had some impact on human relationship. It brought about man and woman at par with each other. A few of the educated women like Dr. Sushila Nayar, Saraladevi Choudhurani, Rassundari Devi, Meherbai Tata and others became role models for other women. They invited the women to come out of their houses and prove their mettle. There were some Muslim women who worked hard and got a pat on their backs from Mahatama Gandhi and Nehru. To name a few, they were Qudsia Aizaz Rasul, who became the Deputy Speaker of Uttar Pradesh in 1937, Jahanara Shahnawaz, who established National Women’s Organisation, Hazara Ahmed, the first Muslim lady to join the Communist Party of India and Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hussein, who started schools for girls on a very large scale. The Indian English writing is full of such bold, assertive women characters that command respect and are role models for other Muslim women. The improvement in man-

woman relationship signalled an era of equalitarian co-existence between them.

Even A. V. Krishna Rao voices his opinion on the role played by women in the Independence struggle.

*Women in modern India have not only shared the exciting though dangerous roles in the struggle for Independence but have also articulated the national aspirations and the consciousness of cultural change in the realm of literature.*\(^{13}\)

After the end of First World War in 1918, its impact gradually began to be felt in literature from 1921 onwards. The war, with its grim carnage, had stirred the conscience of the world. Gandhiji too had arrived from South Africa and therefore the Indian freedom struggle was intensified to a very great extent. This period produced novelists like K.S. Venkataramini, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, D.F. Karaka, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, Ahmed Ali and others. None of the novelists could turn a blind eye to the socio-political holocaust. The Indian freedom movement was in its full swing. Thus, each one of them managed to produce at least one novel describing the freedom struggle.

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The period between 1920s and 1930s was the era of political motivation and the beginning of Independence movement throughout the country. The work of these novelists, arranged chronologically, create intricate designs of human relationships, against the background of the freedom movement. K.S. Venkataramani’s novel “Kandan, the Patriot”, R.K. Narayan’s “Waiting for the Mahatma”, Bhabani Bhattacharya’s “So Many Hungers”, Raja Rao’s “Kanthapura”, each have a strong political theme involving human relations. The interplay of finer sentiments of love, pride, devotion, frustration, fulfilment, negation, etc. against the backdrop of freedom struggle, has enriched the Indian English Novels of that period.

K. S. Venkataramani’s novel, “Kandan, the Patriot”, reflects the vision of renascent India under the leadership of Gandhiji. The novel, which was written after the Civil Disobedience Movement, depicts active participation of women in the freedom struggle and their changed social status. The author presents a strong female personality in Rajeshwari, who is a young educated girl, enthused with the feelings of nationalism. With her strong and assertive character she moulds the lives of the people around her.

*Rangaswamy, Kandan and Rajeshwari* are the main characters in the novel. *Rangaswamy* alias *Rangan* and *Rajeshwari* (*Rajee*) both are Oxford educated and have dedicated themselves to the task of rural
reconstruction. They worked in making the rural masses conscious of their duties towards their motherland. They both represent India's intellectual class and their attitude towards the freedom struggle. Rangan is in love with Rajee, but they push their personal sentiments under the carpet, so that they could be free to devote themselves to the cause of the nation. Rajee wanted that the whole system had to be changed, which was only possible when freedom for all would be gained. She remarked.

\begin{quote}
It is a sin for an Indian to toil at the desk in these critical days when the remaking of a new India is going on under the glorious leadership of the greatest living man of the world.\footnote{K. S. Venkatramani, Kandan, the Patriot, Svetaranya Ashrama: Madras, 1932, p.24.}
\end{quote}

Kandan, the hero of the novel, is drawn towards nationalist cause under the impact of Gandhi, for whom his father works in South Africa. One of the reasons for this was that while at Oxford as an ICS probationer his disappointment in love shatters and disillusiones him. He leaves his job there, returns to India and dedicates himself for the upliftment of low caste people and exploited peasants of village Akkur, in Southern India. Rangan is his batch mate at Oxford who prefers to serve the country while in the government service.

A critic of great repute K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, vouches for the fiery nationalistic spirit of Rajeshwari. He says, "Rajeswari Bai has a veritable
Rani of Jhansi touch of fiery idealism.\textsuperscript{15} Rajeshwari(Rajee) a strong female personality is inspired by the feelings of nationalism. Being a staunch disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and a strong admirer of Annie Besant, Rajee has a very assertive nature. She takes the vow of Brahmacharya till the attainment of freedom. She tells Rangan,

\begin{quote}
Resign your job and join the Congress ranks, and work for the masses. If only you have seen the brimming tears of sorrow running down their pale cheeks! Brave imprisonments and lathi charges and carry the flag of our country to undreamt heights of honour then these frail hands and body are yours for ever so that the children that spring of our loins may see the light of the day in a free country.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The words of Rajee inspire Rangan to the extent that he resigns his government job when he is transferred to Palani Hills as a Settlement Officer.

The character of Rajee is to be analysed in order to understand what makes her so assertive and emphatic in her nature. There seem to be two elements that make Rajee acquire a strong personality. In the first place, the freedom struggle, which brought Rajee and the like to the fore,


\textsuperscript{16} K. S. Venktaramani, \textit{Kandan, the Patriot}, Svetaranya Ashrama: Madras, 1932, p. 27.
is an important factor. When a person is caught in an extraordinary political situation, the best in him or her gets focussed. And so was true for Rajee who detaches herself from personal sentiments such as love. Rajee believes that her duty towards her country has made her bold, assertive and capable of walking shoulder to shoulder with men. Thus the political turmoil in the country makes Rajee a feminist.

Secondly, Rajeshwari’s active participation in the freedom struggle may be due to her contact with the West, which made her a humanist. Her stay at Oxford, might have given her the opportunity of coming in contact with feminists and humanists of the West.

The novel, “Waiting for the Mahatma”, written by R. K. Narayan shows Bharati as another such female character who exhibits courage of conviction and zest for life. Writing about her K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says,

_Bharati herself is a masterful young heroine, a Malgudi Portia rich only in her natural endowments, whereas Sriram can easily qualify for a Malgudi Bassanio. It is Bharati who makes a patriot and a man of Sriram, and in marriage he is certain to find in her the saviour strength that is woman’s shakti._17

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Sriram happens to meet Bharati when she comes to collect donations in connection with Mahatmaji’s visit to Malgudi. This casual meeting gradually develops into love between them. However, for Bharati, the cause of the nation is above personal sentiments. She says that she is ready to marry Sriram, provided Mahatmaji agrees to the union.

Sriram’s desire to marry Bharati compels him to join the freedom struggle. H.M. William, a critic, comments about this and says:

Sriram’s love for Bharati deflects him from an idle, aimless, probably criminal life into a comedy of slogan-painting followed by a tragic involvement in freedom struggle. Narayan skillfully delineates the conflict in Sriram’s devotion to his Granny clashes with his passion for Bharati.18

Sriram too wants to contribute something for his country. Bharati makes Sriram a member of Sevak Sangh busy spreading Gandhiji’s message of khadi, spinning and Swadeshi Movement among the masses. She gives a purpose and direction to Sriram to pursue in his life. Bharati deserves all the compliments as she is a true devotee of Gandhiji and carries out his mission with devotion and sincerity, whereas Sriram is too

weak for the purpose. Bharati manages to instil in him the required courage and due to her guidance he is able to work sincerely for the cause of the country's freedom. In spite of a long wait and undergoing physical and mental torture in the British jails, the marriage of Sriram and Bharati could not take place. The spiritual father of Bharati, Mahatmaji, who has agreed for the Kanyadan, (giving away the bride) is assassinated.

In this story also, the man-woman relationship is depicted against the background of the freedom movement of India. 'Bharati', as the name itself indicates, is the symbol of the daughter of India. The immediate task before Bharati and her like in India is the freedom of India rather than basking in the warmth of love. Personal sentiments have to be sacrificed for a greater cause like that of the country's freedom. As according to Harish Raizada,

In the person of Bharati, Narayan has portrayed an ideal Indian girl who is strong in head, heart and character. She is an embodiment of Gandhian ideals and she sticks to her principles zealously. She discourages her lover from all unhealthy thoughts and advances till they are married. . . In the character of Bharati, Narayan has tried to conceive of
a girl who is brought up and nurtured on Gandhian ideals.¹⁹

In this novel the man-woman relationship are linked with the political destiny of our nation. The writer never denies that Bharati and Sriram are ordinary human beings; as such they too have bodily urges. But while striving for a greater cause, one has to sacrifice one's sentiments. Sexual drive alone cannot be taken to be the cause of togetherness between man and woman. Many nobler causes like patriotism and service to humanity can also bring man and woman in intimate contacts. The goal of life for men and women can be striving for a noble cause rather than fulfilling humane desires. Though Bharati has a liking for Sriram, her preoccupation and commitment to the cause of nation, makes her unattainable to Sriram. He feels small before her. Sriram is a man of turbulent nature whereas Bharati is a woman of strong will and courage. She is a follower of Gandhi and takes inspiration from him. About this Holmstrom says:

*Bharati is a follower of Gandhi’s way of life in which personal emotions are less important than non-violence, truth and self-discipline.*²⁰

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Bharati appears too magnificent to be Sriram's wife. She moves with the Mahatma in the disturbed areas of Noakhali in Bengal, when the entire nation is getting itself ready to celebrate the dawning of India's freedom. Sisir Kumar Das has something to say,

Gandhi appears as a Christ like figure, and Bharati, the heroine, represents the Indian woman's role in the freedom struggle.\(^\text{21}\)

Both Sriram and Bharati hold Gandhiji in great esteem. They take his consent for marriage and he gives them his approval. In this context, P.S. Sundaram says:

Waiting for the Mahatma is not like Waiting for Godot. Sriram waits on him for permission to marry Bharati. Godse waits for him (Mahatma) with pistol in his hand. A sub-continent waited in the confident hope that he will bring Swaraj for its millions. He did not fail in any of them.\(^\text{22}\)

In “Waiting for the Mahatma” the Bharati-Sriram love affair is relegated to the background as Bharati's involvement in the gaining of Independence for the country is in the fore.

"So Many Hungers" by Bhabani Bhattacharya's, is another memorable novel, depicting human relationship in general and man-woman relationship in particular, against the twin background of India's freedom movement and the gruesome famine of Bengal in 1943. The naked dance of human greed in creating artificial scarcity by black marketeers and hoarders puts every one to shame. Even the words in the title of the book, 'so many' have ulterior connotations. It is not only the physical hunger due to the artificial scarcity of rice, but the hunger of political power, of sex, of money and of corrupt means towards selfish ends. It tells the pathetic tale of millions of people in general and Kajoli, the main character in the novel and her family in particular, due to the heinous crime of the hoarders. Kajoli, is made to pass through all these and much more, before she liberates herself from the petty considerations of belly and body.

The novel, "So Many Hungers" is the product of a sad experience, Bhabani Bhattacharya gains from the 1943 Bengal famine. It depicts a pathetic tragedy of colossal human suffering that gripped Bengal just after the Second World War. In fact, the novel is an authentic record of man's inhumanity towards man. Bhattacharya himself recalls it:

*The great famine swept down upon Bengal. The emotional strings I felt more than two million men, women and children died of slow starvation amid a man-made scarcity, were a sheer compulsion to*
creativity. The result was the novel So Many Hungers.23

Bhabani Bhattacharya is a conscious and sensitive writer, who understands human values and the problems present in the contemporary Indian society.

Bhabani Bhattacharya describes human relations caught in crisis. It involves hunger for wealth, for happy life, for prestige, for titles and finally for the prosperity of one’s children. Happy human relationship is the paragon of a civilised society. The society that is infested with so many social evils, like the ones in Bengal in 1943, cannot breed happy human relations. This is precisely what Bhattacharya wants to communicate.

"So Many Hungers” deals with the travails of a famine stricken peasant family of Baruni. Kajoli is a well-bred peasant girl of Baruni, wherein lived another great patriot Devesh Basu, a prototype Gandhi. She comes under the influence of the Gandhian ideas through him. Kajoli’s patriotism can be seen at the flag saluting ceremony when she is still a teenager. There is hardly any discrimination between man and woman in that village which makes Devesh Basu alias Devata to remark:

"It was a business as much of the women as of the menfolk". Kajoli dresses herself for the occasion in her white home spun sari with green border and wears an orange half blouse. Thus Kajoli, a living tri-colour, vows to remain "true to the flag even unto death". The girl pledges that she will be loyal to the flag till her death, and will not let Dadu (Devesh) overtire himself.

The British Government arrests Devesh Basu for participating in the Freedom Movement. Though the family members of Kajoli are left unprotected, they face the hardships boldly. Even when the British Government arrests Kanu, the only earning male member of their family, they face the grim situation in a dauntless manner. Kajoli works in the fields with the help of her youngest brother Onu, for survival. It is through her hard toil Kajoli realises that, "the peasant earns every grain of corn at the expense of innumerable drops of sweat".

After some time Kajoli's father sends Kishore, who was a prison cellmate, to meet his daughter. Kajoli guesses her father's intentions in sending Kishore to meet her and both get married. Acute poverty and starvation makes life impossible in the village. When Kajoli is pregnant, Kishore leaves for the city in search of a better livelihood. He is gunned.

25. Ibid., p. 71.
down by the armed guards while trying to take a short cut to the railway station.

Kajoli, along with her family, proceeds to Calcutta looking for food. She is separated from her mother and younger brother Onu. Unable to bear the pangs of hunger, Kajoli asks for food from a soldier passing by. The soldier gives Kajoli something to eat but in return rapes her. Hunger thus becomes a root of all prevailing evils. The soldier who rapes Kajoli, feels quite guilt stricken for his wrongdoing and only feels comforted after he places her in the care of a qualified doctor.

Kajoli falls ill and is treated in a hospital. When she comes out from there she is again faced with the same problem of hunger and starvation. A betel-woman tries to lure Kajoli into the age-old profession of flesh trading. The hungry girl would have easily fallen in the trap of the wicked woman had she not seen a young boy selling the daily newspapers. This fills her with a new ray of hope. Avoiding all temptations of easy money, Kajoli sells ‘Hindustan’ newspaper and finds out a way for survival. Dorothy Blair Shimer has summarised all this as follows:

The journey toward the “Utopia” of Calcutta is marked by harrowing days of starvation, the rape of
Kajoli, and the ultimate degradation of life on the city streets.27

"So Many Hungers" is a slightly different novel, showing human greed and hunger that desensitise people. Kajoli surrenders her body for some crumbs of bread. Later on she stands boldly against all odds to earn a decent livelihood. This way she manages to salvage her self-respect to a considerable extent. Kajoli "beats evil and moral death embodied in the betel-woman, and returns to healthy life".28 However, what is significant in this context is her faith in living and living respectfully. When human life is saved, then only human relations are restored.

Raja Rao's, "Kanthapura", is another debut novel written in France against the background of the freedom struggle of India. It is a socio-political novel giving a graphic account on the pervading influence of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian freedom struggle in 1930s and its impact on the Indian masses. 'Kanthapura' is a typical traditional village on the slopes of Western Ghats in Mysore. It convulses with the whirlwind of Gandhi's charismatic influence and infuses people with new life. Kanthapura acts as a microcosm of the rural India. An old grandmother Achakka, who has witnessed people of all caste and community,

participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement, narrates the story. The atmosphere in Kanthapura is surcharged with nationalism during the non-co-operation days. The theme is about Gandhian philosophy and its impact on rural India.

There are some male characters like Moorthy, Range Gowda and Sankar, but the women folk such as Rangamma, Narsamma, Nanjamma, Satamma, Gauramma, Vedamma and of course the dynamic Ratna, dominate the scene. All of them are busy from the beginning till the end of the novel. Moorthy, a young and educated boy of the village, comes under the hypnotic spell of Gandhi and is made the president of the Kanthapura Congress Committee followed by Range Gowda as its protector and Rangamma as the first woman member. Ratna, a child widow, gives up her widow’s austerity and mixes with men folk for the cause of freedom.

Gandhi’s arrival from South Africa infuses new life, vitality and inspiration among the Indians to fight for the freedom. Kanthapura, an obscure and sleepy village in South India, too awakens to activity, due to the impact of Gandhiji’s freedom struggle with the weapons of non-violence and non-co-operation. Moorthy or Moorthappa, the central figure of this novel, is a staunch Gandhi man. He has given up his education to involve himself in the freedom struggle. He is the very source of life and
spirit in the freedom struggle of Kanthapura. He insists on spinning and using khadi cloth. Women have taken to spinning of khaddar and they cooperate with men to fight against the British rule in India.

Moorthy is the first Gandhian who mixes with the pariahs, and becomes an eye-sore for the caste Brahmans and the traditionalists. He forms the Congress Committee in Kanthapura and updates the village folk with the happenings in the city by reading newspapers. He carries the message of Swadeshi and Charkha to every house. He is a crusader for the cause of India's independence and is against the oppressive regime of the British. Though, at a certain stage he is attracted towards Ratna, he is able to overcome his sentiment of love for the sake of his country. Moorthy’s love for Ratna gets sublimated and he just wants her to pray for him.

Ratna is the widowed daughter of Kamalamma, sister of Rangamma. She is a young widow of fifteen, attractive and charming. She has a strong desire to revolt against the age-old traditions. Her new ideas depict the wrong doings of the society towards Hindu widows and she wants them to be liberated from the sufferings. She is a modern version of Indian widowhood, who boldly faces the criticism of village women.
Critic Som Deva says, "Ratna defies society and puts up her case as a young widow with memorable stoutness".  

Though there is a mutual attraction between Moorthy and Ratna, Raja Rao does not allow the relationship to blossom further because their relationship is based only on their active participation in the freedom struggle. The man-woman relationship in the novel "Kanthapura" is centred on the relationship of Moorthy, the staunch Gandhian and Ratna, the child widow. In fact there is hardly any relationship, as it fizzles out before it could bloom. Both the main characters in the novel leave aside their sentiments and suppress their desire for marriage and vow to work for the cause of the country’s freedom. Their zeal for the country’s freedom, is at the fore, and makes them keep aside their momentary attraction for each other. In this novel the man-woman relationship is mainly related with their patriotic feelings ignited with their zeal of acquiring freedom for the country. Personal sentiments of love and attachment for both Moorthy and Ratna did not matter much at a time of crisis like this. Their duties of self-sacrifice and devotion and their obsession with the Gandhian principles towards their country carried more importance. This as justified was the topmost priority and hence they ignored their sentiments and participated in the freedom struggle. Even Dr. Raghukul Tilak voices his opinion that,

Kanthapura lacks in that love-interest which is considered essential for a novel. We feel that the novelist has committed a serious error of judgment in not exploiting the love-theme and thus missing an opportunity of adding to the charm and interest of his work.\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{Ratna}, the young widow with her progressive and enlightened views, along with hordes of other women of Kanthapura bear the lathi charges by the police, arrange picketing shops and organise \textit{prabhat pheris}. When \textit{Moorthy} is in jail, \textit{Ratna} takes the lead as the head of the \textit{swayam sevikas}. She infuses spirit and courage in the women community. Of course, this novel does not have the ingredients of romance as found in other novels. According to Som Deva, the novelist has committed a serious error by not adding the charm of a love-story between them, which becomes the basic ingredient for a novel to flourish. He writes,

\begin{quote}
\textit{The inner workings of the masculine or feminine ferments of youth have been consigned to oblivion by the novelist. There is a shade of emotional love between Moorthy and Ratna, a widow but it has been}
\end{quote}

sublimated with ugly haste in the narrative. Thus it deprives the novel of the general appeal.\textsuperscript{31}

The critic Som Deva says that the romantic tinge which forms the base of most of the novels is found lacking in this novel,

\textit{Raja Rao in 'Kanthapura' throttles the basic human impulses. Altruism and the mission of a samaritan overpowers the human instinct, and its amorous expression. He ignites the candle of love in the faint beginnings of love between Ratna and Moorthy but soon extinguishes it with a hurried breathing at the tiny wick.}\textsuperscript{32}

As in other novels, written at the time of Independence Movement, in this novel too the man-woman relationship is more of an involvement in the freedom of the country, rather than their personal happiness. Moreover the novels written during this period had a purpose. So it was a novel with a purpose than a novel meant just for entertainment.

After the death of Ramakrishnayya, who used to read the philosophic texts and tell the mythological stories, there is no suitable

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 96.
substitute to do the job. Therefore, it is decided that Ratna should read the text and Rangamma would comment on it for the benefit of the listeners. This tradition of mythological story-telling is called ‘Keertan’ and it is a man’s job. Women proved that they were capable of performing any duty that man could do. However, the distinction between man’s work and woman’s work is forgotten under the stress of time and woman is equal to man in all fields of life. Hence it is found that during the freedom struggle, she is a real woman and after that she remains merely a ‘woo man’.

When women of Kanthapura are holding meetings and taking out processions every day in the early morning, singing patriotic songs, just like the men, the husbands feel that their wives are going a bit too far. They complain, "Was there nothing left for our women but to vagabond about like soldiers?"33 At this Rangamma advises the women folk not to neglect their homes, as it is a little nation for them. She further tells that husbands and children have to be looked after properly, and then only they would belong to Mahatma Gandhi in true sense. The very name of the Mahatma is enough for the women to make them go back to their homes. In this manner they belong not only to their families but also to their country. Consequently their husbands too appreciate their zeal for the country’s freedom and encourage them for picketing in front of toddy shops or to organise bonfire of foreign goods and clothes.

Therefore, in the man-woman relationship before independence, one would certainly say that since there was a cause, greater than personal sentiments, the human relations were subordinated to it. There was a free flow of ideas between them; hence the man-woman relationships were at their natural best. Husband and wife were companions rather than the traditional role players of master and slave. In fact such aspects become irrelevant, when a greater determinant is guiding the path of both men and women.

In this part of the discussion, there are four female characters namely Rajeshwari Bai in “Kandan the Patriot”, Bharati in “Waiting for the Mahatma”, Kajoli in “So Many Hungers” and Ratna in “Kanthapura”. All these female characters that belong to the pre-Independence period show a common instinct, that is, to get the freedom of the country by sacrificing their personal needs which gets relegated.

Of the four women, Rajee is highly educated, in fact a foreign returned, whereas Bharati and Ratna belong to the rural Southern India. Kajoli also belongs to the rural area, and the novel shows how she is engrossed by the city of Calcutta. All these women represent different strata of Indian society before independence. Whatever be their social standing, all of them are fired with the zeal of earning freedom for their motherland which makes them different from the rest of their clan. They are bold, courageous, shrewd and capable of understanding the
complexity of the time which made the women to act the way they did. Therefore, the first element of feminism during independence was the extraordinary courage shown by women towards winning freedom for India.

Secondly, there was no discrimination made between man and woman, in the process of fighting against the foreign rule. Gandhiji allowed women to participate in the freedom movement whole-heartedly. Therefore, feminism as power was not bestowed upon them before independence, but was earned by women with their boldness, courage and tolerance. Hence women were equal to men in all walks of life.

Thirdly, the feminism that is noticed among the women characters during independence movement has some limitations. Women’s assertion of self-identity, sense of equality with men, their courage of conviction and burning patriotism were only their outdoor activities. Once indoors, the women were again reverting to their Sita and Savitri role which is very clear in the novel “Kanthapura”. When the women of Kanthapura under the able leadership of Rangamma started picketing shops, taking out Prabhat Pheries (morning procession) and doing physical exercises in the open, the husbands did not like their wives to ‘vagabond about like soldiers’. Even their leader Rangamma, advises them to go back to their homes soon after their out door activities. Women then were happily performing their dual roles - fighting for freedom, shoulder to shoulder.
with men and also performing their household chores equally well. Initially women only performed house hold chores, but were brought to the fore due to the inspiration of Gandhi’s multi-dimensional personality and magnetic influence. Hence their position changed from the usually submissive one to the bolder and challenging personality.
The Indian writings in English, which depicted the freedom struggle, socio-political discontent and Gandhian principles of non-violence and Satyagraha in the attainment of independence in 1947, later on shifted to the theme of holocaust of partition. It was the worst carnage that ever took place after the attainment of India's freedom. The great national events, generally serve as a store house of literary materials, as can be seen from the literature of other countries also. Many novels like "War and Peace", "A Farewell to Arms", "The Naked and the Dead", "Dr. Zhivago" are such examples. The novels that deal directly or indirectly with the partition theme are Khushwant Singh's "Train to Pakistan" (1955), Balchandra Rajan's "The Dark Dancer" (1958), Attia Hosain's "Sunlight on a Broken Column" (1961), Bonophul's "Between Dream and Reality" (1961), Padmini Sengupta's "Red Hibiscus" (1962), Manohar Malgonkar's "Distant Drum" (1961) and "A Bend in the Ganges" (1964), Chaman Nahal's "Azadi" (1975) and H. S. Gill's "Ashes and Petals" (1978). Among all these novels, "Train to Pakistan" and "Azadi" are considered as novels of partition as they directly deal with the theme. It tells about the problem and the turbulence that defaced India at the time of partition.

After the era of awakened national consciousness, one encounters an era of political turbulence. Bidulata Choudhary, in her critical work,
says that the tragedy of partition which resulted in complete chaos and
destruction provided rich source of treasure for the pen. These writers
were able to probe deep into the matter and were able to vent out their
feelings and bring out the human sufferings that the country had to face.
She says,

The problem of partition, more of a treasure island
than a problem itself, continued in supplying both
material and manure for the vigorous growth of the
Indo-Anglian fiction. The impact on the writers
refracted images of various shapes crushing and
corroding, wailing and choking, like the shadows of
hundreds of thousands that suppressed the loss, the
havoc of complete ruin. 34

The human tragedy, caused by the partition of India, has found
explicit expression in “Train to Pakistan” and “Azadi”. Other novels which
deal with that theme indirectly are, “The Dark Dancer”, “Sunlight on a
Broken Column”, and “A Bend in the Ganges”. These novels deal with the
death, destruction and suffering of men and women from either side of
the boundary. According to Novy Kapadia,

34. Bidulata Choudhary, Women and Society in the Novels of Anita Desai, Creative
Partition was not just a legacy of colonial British rule but an offshoot of fundamentalism sparked by hardening communal attitudes.  

"Train to Pakistan" by Khushwant Singh is the first novel having the pivotal theme of partition of India into India and Pakistan. The novel reflects how the gender relationship gets affected due to the devastating impact of partition. About "Train to Pakistan", Madhusudan Prasad says,

Singularized by its symbolic technique, mordant satire, ruthless realism and verbal frugality, this novel depicts the holocaust through a simple plot building up to a spine-chilling climax. 

Khushwant Singh's "Train to Pakistan" is a novel, dealing primarily with the catastrophic events of the partition of the country and subsequently with distorted human relations. The train symbolises death and disaster which carries the refugees towards Pakistan. Juggat Singh becomes separated from Nooran, who is going to be the mother of his child. He sacrifices his life for his beloved, who is in the train, proceeding

towards Pakistan carrying Muslim refugees. S.Z.H. Abidi says about Juggat Singh,

*He transcends himself and his criminality and, for the sake of love, makes a heroic sacrifice worthy of a tragic hero, to save Nooran and other passengers of the train from annihilation. Nooran is at the centre of the regeneration of humanity in a Budmash No. 10.*

*Nooran* has to face a bleak and gloomy future. Though she is safe on the other side, the predicament that lies before her is left only for guessing. The political trauma shatters the lives of the lovers leaving the lone *Nooran* to fend and struggle for herself in Pakistan. She becomes a helpless victim of political disturbances and her lover *Juggat Singh* is not alive to support her across the boundary which shatters her life along with hordes of other people.

*Juggat Singh* who is serving a prison sentence on many charges, is released from police custody. On his arrival to Mano Majra, he finds his beloved *Nooran* in the refugee camp. She is later on to be carried away by the train going towards Pakistan. The Hindu fanatics have planned to blow the train with dynamite at the railroad bridge. They burn with the fire of vengeance for the wrong done to the Hindus in Pakistan. *Juggat Singh* succeeds in saving the train from being blown up, but at the cost of

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his own life, as in doing so the train passes over him, while proceeding to Pakistan.

The partition and its aftermath is the worst national tragedy of modern India. This event has cast dark and dangerous shadows on human relations. Many hearts were broken, houses were burnt and age old brotherhoods of neighbourly relations forgotten. Among all the death and destruction around, the love between Juggat and Nooran stands tall. Here not only man-woman relations are disturbed, but the inter-relationship between each gender is also disrupted. Man is killed in the name of god! Realisation of the bad is an essential pre-requisite for the promotion of good. This consciousness was lacking in the people, who were consumed by communal frenzy. Therefore Juggat Singh is the only character who symbolises the triumph of good over evil. In fact the tale of one man is closely linked with that of the community. The conclusion is obvious that collective destiny dominates an individual’s fate.

"The Dark Dancer", a novel by Balachandra Rajan is the story of V. S. Krishnan, a Cambridge educated South Indian Brahmin. It is his sophisticated western education that makes him liberal in his thoughts and beliefs. He returns to his ancestral home in India after staying for ten years abroad. He has an arranged marriage with a sober girl Kamala, who has done her M. A. in Sanskrit. In the beginning he prefers to be a school teacher but he thinks that it is not a lucrative job and hence joins
Government Secretariat in New Delhi. There in Delhi he meets a girl named Cynthia Brainbird in a club. Their meetings become regular under one or the other pretext. He is torn apart between his duty for his wife and his affliction for his new found love. He is like a dancer in the dark who does not know with whom he is dancing. According to A. N. Dwivedi:

The title of the novel so aptly chosen verily applies, by means of suggestion, to Krishnan, who always dances in the dark without having an idea of his right position in a tradition-bound society. He is evidently pulled by the twin urges of love and duty.\(^{38}\)

 Krishnan is torn between his loyalties to Kamala, his wife belonging to the East and Cynthia, his girl friend representing the West. He wants to carry on his life with both, but it becomes impossible. Standing between these two women of different cultures, he feels that he belongs to neither. In the end it is Kamala who wins. Cynthia is rejected by Krishnan because she wants to possess him totally which repulses him. Kamala on the other hand is compassionate and is never harsh to him in spite of his adultery. She leaves for Shantipur in the South to see her ailing mother. Krishnan also joins her after sometime. According to Meenakshi Mukherjee,

Kamala, like the earth, with her source of mysterious strength, her belief in non-violence and right action

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rather than happiness, her patience and self-sacrifice
is an idealized portrait of Indian woman-hood. 39

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says about the character Kamala in "The Dark Dancer" that she was an embodiment of compassion and understanding.

The novel certainly merits praise on account of Kamala who incarnates Shakti in her essential strength and unfailing gift of compassion and understanding.40

On the eve of the independence, riots break everywhere and the sleepy Shantipur also suffers the brunt of it. There is looting, arsoning and killing. When cholera breaks out in this town, the paramedical officer with the help of Kamala and her husband Krishnan bring it under control. Kamala gets killed while trying to protect a Muslim girl from the rioting public. The brutality and bloodshed at the time of partition usurped delicate human relations.

According to Uma Parameswaran "The Dark Dancer" is an Intense story of the self-division and maturation of an individual and of a nation, of the cyclic

phenomenon of fratricidal war and its message
transmitted in the blood-consciousness of the
people.41

The two strands of the story, the catastrophe of Krishnan's
marriage and the tragedy of partition do not merge with each other but
simply stand apart. That is why this novel does not reach the height of
"Dr. Zhivago", wherein the personal and national perspectives merge
together. Krishnan tells his Oxford girlfriend that the British had stirred
up all the trouble for the whole generation to come. The girl retorts —

In all our three hundred years of occupation we
haven't done what you have done in three weeks of
your freedom.42

"The Dark Dancer" is the story of triangular relationship where
Krishnan is swayed towards Cynthia Brainbird. This extramarital
relationship however is short-lived when he realises his duty towards his
wife, Kamala. There is alienation between the husband-wife for a short
duration, due to the entry of a third person. When wisdom dawns upon
him he returns to Kamala and there is re-unification of husband and wife
and both peace and happiness are restored. But later on, Kamala dies a

41. Uma Parameswaran, A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelists, Vikas
martyr’s death, which disturbs Krishnan. Yet he learns to face the grim situation through Kamala’s determination and devotion.

“Sunlight on a Broken Column”, is a novel by Attia Hosain, which mainly represents partition as the most tragic event in independent India and its adverse impact on the life of the Muslims on either side of the partition. The first three parts of the novel describe Laila, the heroine, falling in love with Ameer. Soon after that Ameer joins the army and dies.

The fourth part of the novel deals with the critical period of Indian history. The communal violence in the country changes the narrator’s idealistic outlook of life. After the partition, strangers migrating from the other side of the boundary occupied her ancestral house. Attia Hosain writes:

There were strangers living in the rooms once so private and guarded, strangers who were names in Government files balancing Saleem’s name against theirs--he labelled ‘evacuee’, they ‘refugees’. Their presence here, and Saleem’s in their erstwhile homeland, was part of a statistical calculation in the bargaining of bureaucrats and politicians, in which
millions of uprooted human beings became just numerical figures.43

In this way, the partition uprooted people from their homelands and threw them away. Most affectionately maintained human relations are destroyed because of the partition.

"A Bend in the Ganges" by Manohar Malgonkar, compared to Khushwant Singh's "Train to Pakistan" and Chaman Nahal's "Azadi" gives a detailed historical background of the past and its impact on the present due to partition. The partition was like a volcanic lava, heating up within and erupting suddenly thereby spreading havoc all around. Abidi S.Z.H. says that the partition was the result of a long political decision which exploded all of a sudden with a bang.

The Partition, which came as a "fellow traveller of freedom" was not the outcome of an overnight political decision. It was rather the culmination of a steady process that slowly gathered momentum and exploded with a bang.44

In the novel, Malgonkar depicts India’s struggle for independence and its aftermath. The later part of the novel, especially the chapters ‘The Anatomy of Partition’, ‘The Sunrise of our Freedom’ and ‘The Land they were leaving’, constitute the plot of the partition. The characters in the novel like Gian Talwar, Debi-dayal, Sundari, Shafi Usman, Mumtaz, Tek Chand and his wife are all caught in the holocaust of partition. Both good and bitter experiences exist in tandem, that is, the glory and happiness of freedom and the shame and pain of partition.

Manohar Malgonkar opines that the volcano of partition must have burst due to the long suppression of violence observed by the principles of non-violence practised by Gandhiji. According to S.Z.H. Abidi,

A Bend in the Ganges serves as an interesting illustration of his vision of human nature. Unlike other Indo-Anglian novels, his novels are novels of outdoor life, action, adventure and violence. A major element that mostly contributes to continuous external action, violence and adventure in his fiction is the theme of revenge. It is a recurrent feature of his novels and it ultimately acquires the status of a major motif in them.45

45. Ibid., p. 4.
The author calls in question the Gandhian tenets like *Ahimsa*, *Satyagraha*, and one by one accounts them as human demerits. He calls *Ahimsa* a creed of cowards.

*Debi-dayal, Basu* and *Shafi Usman* are dedicated freedom fighters and work hard to overthrow the British Raj through violence. But slowly *Debi-dayal* and *Basu* turn into fanatics due to the communal poison that was brewing at the time of partition. *Debi-dayal* has a feeling of disillusionment whereas *Shafi Usman* is an ardent communalist. *Mumtaz*, a prostitute enters the life of *Shafi*. However, opportunist *Shafi* escapes the police, leaving *Mumtaz* behind. *Debi-dayal* marries *Mumtaz* in order to humiliate *Shafi* and they decide to go back to *Debi's* town Duriabad.

*Debi-dayal* and *Mumtaz*, on their way to Duriabad, witness human massacre everywhere while crossing the boundary of West Punjab, Muslim rioters stop the train. *Debi-dayal* is discovered by the Muslim rioters and in spite of *Mumtaz’s* pleadings he is dragged out and killed. In spite of her trying to protect him he is separated from her half naked and screaming. The way in which both *Debi-dayal* and *Mumtaz* are wrenched apart and the way *Debi-dayal* is brutally murdered, show the pathetic picture of partition. When *Mumtaz* is being taken away, her cry is heart chilling. *Debi-dayal*, lying half dead could also hear her heart rending cries,
And the last thing he ever heard was his name being shouted by his wife with all her might.

‘Debi! Debi, my darling! I shall never live without you! I am coming with you too . . . I am coming . . . ’

He surrendered himself to the pain, not knowing what she was trying to tell him, but taking a childish, pathetic consolation in the fact that she wanted to be with him wherever he was now going; go with him as she had always wanted to go wherever he went. 46

Debi-dayal, who eagerly waited the freedom, could no longer enjoy its fruits.

Malgonkar addresses many of his doubts and assumption, through the mouth of his characters. They hotly debate these issues and the conclusion they arrive at, is a typical Malgonkar’s truth. His characters belong to all hues - nationalists, terrorists and prostitutes. Every one has his or her precise role in the context of the novel. The conversation between Debi and Basu that the British set the Hindus against the Muslims is just an old time cliché.

S.Z.H. Abidi, comments about the novel, “The Bend in the Ganges” and says that,

To sum up, *A Bend in the Ganges* is a ‘romantic’ novel in a very special sense. Malgonkar’s flair, for out-of-the ordinary largely contributes to this impression. But his romanticism, if it is romanticism at all, is paradoxically realistic. His survey and documentation of the nationalist movement, the war, the partition and other socio-historical aspects of India is marked by authenticity, extra-ordinary objectivity and detached realism, although it is also equally true to say that he has betrayed his partisan attitude and bias at certain places as in the documentation of partition atrocities.47

“A Bend in the Ganges” is a novel typically describing partition as it deals with two specific points; first, factors responsible for the creation of two nations and second, the probe into the ideology of *Ahimsa*. Gandhi was opposed to a separate Muslim state and he was right about it. Even after creation of Pakistan, almost an equal number of Muslims still live in India. In spite of this, Pakistan being a Muslim country, cannot tolerate having people of other religion there. Even on the issue of calling *Ahimsa* as ‘a creed of cowards’ the novelist has committed blunder. When Malgonkar does not provide an effective alternative to *Ahimsa*, his criticism of Gandhi appears meaningless.

Chaman Nahal’s novel, “Azadi”, describes both pain and pleasure during the attainment of freedom of India and the partition thereafter. “Azadi” depicts the role played by Indian politics in the lives of both the Hindus and Muslims in general and Arun and Nur in particular. According to Mohan Jha,

Chaman Nahal’s Azadi is a monumental novel, a moving saga of the division of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan and the accompanying disaster that hit these two newly-declared independent countries in 1947.48

The action in “Azadi” centres around the political frenzy, let loose at the time of partition. It also tells about the impact of the worst tragedy on human relations. Partition had been a nightmarish and heart-rending event in the annals of Indian history. According to Ambuj Sharma who says about partition with reference to Chaman Nahal’s novel “Azadi” that,

It was so despicable, so condemnable, so ugly, so unpleasant, so hideous, so tyrannical that the words do not suffice to describe the vulgarity, barbarity, tyranny and ugliness of that incident.49

“Azadi”, particularly, deals with the impact of partition on the lives of the lovers, Arun and Nur and Arun and Chandni.

Love between Arun and Nur is quite transient and short-lived. The partition of India acts as a backdrop in the lives of Arun and Nur. Their love is torn apart, just like the partition divides the country into two parts. In the novel, the lovers are forcibly made to separate from each other due to the dominant political turmoil which makes their future appear too bleak to them. Arun, who lives in Sialkot with his parents, has to leave the place because it becomes a part of Pakistan. He cannot take Nur along with him because of the communal frenzy.

Both Arun and Nur fall in love with each other. It has been only two years since both of them spoke of love to each other.

And yet every time he approached her, wherever he approached her, he longed for her as if it were the first encounter. There was ever a flutter in his heart.50

After the announcement of the partition of India, Muslim boys menacingly watch Arun, a Hindu boy, for falling in love with a Muslim girl. The political crisis, stands as an obstacle between these two young lovers, as they belong to two different religions, making them quite helpless.

Arun earlier assures Nur that he will embrace Islam to marry her, but the whole picture gradually changes with the occurrence of partition. He demands why Nur cannot embrace Hinduism. Nur is stunned to hear this. It is something beyond her anticipation, beyond her wildest imagination and dream. Amidst tears she says to Arun that she is a defenceless girl and cannot force her will on her family. She pins her hope on Arun to make sacrifices for her, he being a man and thereby more independent.

Arun’s love is unfulfilled because of the political frenzy, which causes havoc in his life and more so because of two different religions. Arun, a Hindu boy and Nur, a Muslim girl, are both caught quite unaware of the partition of India. They did not have the least notion, that one-day their love would end abruptly. The oaths and promises of love made by both remain unfulfilled. Due to the partition of the country, there is an enervating change in the placid love of Arun and Nur.

Besides the geographical division of the land, the partition also built wall between people of both the countries. It was the wall of religion, caste, colour and hatred. The army, the bureaucracy and the neighbours, who were friends till the other day, became sworn enemies at that time.

Not unnaturally, the division of the country on a blatantly communal basis does bring about a psychological wedge, an emotional and spiritual rift among the civil, police and military personnel of...
undivided India. Everything looks so confused, so uncertain, so tense and grim. In this sickening climate of communal bitterness and hatred even the pure and profound Arun-Nur love-relationship ceases to be a private, personal affair, and, almost in spite of them, it comes to acquire communal or political overtones.51

Arun’s inclination from Nur to Chandni makes one feel whether his love for Nur was a real one or was a mere infatuation. He was probably trying to fill up the vacuum created by Nur. His attention towards Chandni’s “heaving breasts” makes one feel, that Arun’s love for Chandni, was not a true love but a mere physical attraction. In all, it appears that Arun is indeed trying to escape from the unpleasant past – a gloomy debacle. He is in a way trying to forget Nur by giving Chandni a place in his heart.

In the refugee camp Arun is attracted towards Chandni. However even the second woman, who enters his life, is snatched away from him due to the turmoil of partition. His promise to marry her, when they reach India, remains a mere wish. She is abducted from the camp at Narowal, when Pakistan attacks the refugee camp. This is a second major blow to

Arun. Now Arun loathes both his father and Padmini, the mother of Chandni. He believes that they were solely responsible for his separation from Chandni.

Chaman Nahal’s "Azadi" depicts a hopeful dawn of Indian Independence and the game plan of power hungry politicians, whose decisions ruined several families and killed nearly a million innocent people. The frustrated love stories of Arun-Nur and Arun-Chandni show how the partition has destroyed peaceful co-existence and also human relations carefully nourished for centuries. Just like a surgical operation of Siamese twins, partition of the country resulted in terrible bloodshed. But there is the over rejuvenating presence of life in death itself, which provides a kind of transfusion of moral and spiritual values. The cosmic pain and bloodshed are but a prelude to the birth of new humanity and new relationships. The novel closes with,

\[ \text{The machine went whirring on, its wheel turning fast} \]
\[ \text{and its little needle moving up and down, murmuring} \]
\[ \text{and sewing through the cloth. The doors of both the} \]
\[ \text{rooms shook with its vibration.} \]^{52} \]

The three novels, "Train to Pakistan", "A Bend in the Ganges", and "Azadi" project the horrors of partition. All these three novels have a

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frustrated love story each, which makes the picture of partition more grim and heart-rending. The tragedy is felt more because it depicts how the gender relationships get affected due to the division of the country. All the pair of lovers Juggat Singh and Nooran in "Train to Pakistan", Debi-dayal and Mumtaz in "A Bend in the Ganges", and Arun and Nur and later Arun and Chandni in "Azadi" are the ones who are affected by the partition of India. Juggat dies while trying to save his beloved Nooran when the train in which she is travelling gets sabotaged. Debi-dayal and Mumtaz are also separated by rioters in the train, Debi-dayal is killed whereas Mumtaz is taken away and her fate is unknown. Arun has to part from Nur and later on from Chandni, both due to no fault on his part, but due to partition. In the novel "The Dark Dancer", Kamala while trying to protect a Muslim girl from the clutches of murderous people has to sacrifice her life. In "Sunlight on a Broken Column", Laila, the heroine, loses her husband Ameer who dies while in the army. The partition makes her to live among strange people and everything gets uprooted.

These novelists viewed partition from different angles. Khushwant Singh takes the political aspect into his consideration. For him the partition was inevitable. Manohar Malgonkar on the other hand looks from the point of view of Gian and his creed of non-violence, Debi-dayal the terrorist, Shafi Usman and Hafiz the communists.
Perhaps, Chaman Nahal is the only writer who considers the partition as directly connected with him. Others discuss the issue as a political miscalculation. Malgonkar neither convicts the British nor the Mahatma. He bravely accepts the mass murders, plunder and people's crying as a celebration of the Baptism of freedom.