CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE GENESIS OF PARTITION HISTORY

If there is a country on earth which can justly claim the honour of having been the cradle of the Human race or at least the scene of primitive civilization, the successive developments of which carried into all parts of the ancient world and even beyond, the blessings of knowledge which is the second life of man, that country is assuredly India.(Bharati, 2006, 14)

India has always been the renowned land known for its cultural heritage that are diverse, very old towering traditions, faiths that are innumerable, rich practices and abundant resources. The Indus Civilization, an ancient civilization between 2500 BC and 1900 BC is perceived to bear the witness to India’s greatness. This civilization archives the glorious past of India in art and architecture, administration and belief system and even the beginnings of homespun technology. According to Fairservis, the Indus civilization belongs to the third millennium BC and “ranks as one of the best civilization of the early world”. (Hiremath, 1984, 45) India had relationship with the most parts of the world in terms of trade and economic activities. This bears witness to the fact that the finest and exotic products were produced in India. The variety of spices and crops produced in India show the fertility of Indian fields. India claimed to be the cradle of many religions. Religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism originated from India. India possessed many languages and people of India were multilingual from very early times. Indians seemed to have possessed rich knowledge in every field like art, craft, literature, music, dance etc. India was filled with
indigenous crafts and arts. The scores of adorning temples stand at every corner across the country and the awesome cave paintings, the rock cut and pillar cut edicts are the living examples of Indian mastery and its splendid era of craft, art and sculpture. Besides, Indian dance, music, literature and its varieties are incomparable. India, in general is full of varieties and diversities and Indians enjoyed a unity in diversity. In a nutshell, India has always been a land of variety, diversity and mixed ethnicity.

The vastness of the country created much diversity both geographical as well as racial, linguistic, social, religious and political. But at the same time there is basic national unity in this diversity and this unity has remained unchallenged and unsurpassed. (Majumdar et al. 1978, 1)

The complex history of ancient India has necessary relevance to the central theme of this research work – partition of India. A better understanding of the bifurcation of the nation at the end of the British colonial rule necessitates a diachronic review of past history, in particular the history of conquests and invasions. The political dynamics of partition are strongly rooted in the schisms that got introduced in earlier centuries to develop and lead into the inevitability and anguish of partition.

The earliest and the most distant past of India’s history could be obtained from ancient religious texts - grand narratives basically rooted in religious narration. The constitution of India itself uses the name ‘Bharat’ to describe the Republic of India. ‘India and Bharat’ are official names used in different types of discourse in India. The name ‘Hindustan’ was used widely only during the Moghul and European Colonial periods. The name ‘Bharath’ is said to have derived from the name ‘Bharathavarsha’ mentioned in Vishnu Purana, an ancient Hindu religious texts. ‘Bharatha’ is said to be the name of a very famous king and ‘Varsha’ means the country. This has been clearly
mentioned in Vishnu Purana (2,1,31), Vaayu Purana (33,52), Linga Purana (1,47,23) etc.

Vishnu Purana very clearly mentions the geographic contours of the ancient land thus –“*The country (varṣam) that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bhāratam; there dwell the descendants of Bharata.*” The Srimad Bhagavat Purana also mentions in Canto 5, Chapter 4 -

He (Rishabha) begot a hundred sons that were exactly like him... He (Bharata) had the best qualities and it was because of him that this land by the people is called Bhārata-varsha. (Srîmad Bhâgavatam, 2012). The Bhāratas were also a Vedic tribe mentioned in the Rigveda, notably participating in the Battle of the Ten Kings. The realm of Bharata is known as Bharātavarṣa in the Mahabhārata (the core portion of which is itself known as Bhārata) and later texts. According to the text, the term Bharata is from the king Bharata, who was the son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala and the term varsa means a division of the earth or a continent.

“(Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_for_India#cite_ref-17)”

Even though there are no authentic details about this period in books of modern history, the puranic narratives clearly make reference to highly evolved pre-historic settlements and societies in the Indian Sub-continent. Chronologically, from this pre-historic period evolved great civilizations like Indus valley civilization, Vedic civilization and the rise of powerful dynasties and empires spread over a period of three millennia through various geographic areas of this vast country. This period possibly is one of the most significant periods in the history of ancient India marked by the rise of Hinduism and later on Jainism and Buddhism. Then came the period of conquests resulting in the rise of Muslim power and later on European colonization.
The richness and vastness of India attracted invasions and conquests. The Aryan invasion theory is one of the often discussed and recurring themes in the history of conquests of India. This theory obviously has not been proved beyond doubt and there are historical interpretations which discount this theory. But available epigraphic and linguistic evidence might give credence to the possibility that the Aryans came from Central Europe and displaced the Dravidians who were the earlier inhabitants. The term ‘Dravidian’ is used “... to denote the race which was dominant in India before the advent of the Aryans.” (Majumdar et al. 1978, 24) Whatever could be the exact historical fact, the Pre-Dravidians, Dravidians and Aryans came together over centuries to weave the rich basic Indian tapestry which till today continues to be the basic social structure of India.

The real history of conquests appears to begin with the arrival of the Persians, Greeks and the Afghans.

Northern part of India consists of plains and does not present any serious problems to the invaders. Any of the invaders who can conquer Punjab can also reach Bengal without any difficulty. That is the reason why there have been so many invasions on India from the north. (Majumdar et al. 1978, 190)

The Persians invaded India in the sixth century BC. In the year 530 BC, Cyrus the great, the King of Persian Achaemenid Empire crossed Indian borders and during the rule of Darius I. By 520 BC, in the span of ten years, most of the north-western subcontinent was under the Persian Achaemenid Empire and Persians exercised their control over these areas for nearly two centuries. During these years, the Persian army was supplied with mercenaries by India. In the year 326 BC, Alexander the great, the King of Macedonia, invaded India. It put an end to the Persian ascendancy in the regions of north-western part of the country.
The western coast of India was almost acquainted with other western Asians and Arabs in connection with commercial expansions of the medieval period. India witnessed another invasion by a Muslim army which conquered Sind in the eighth century. In the early eleventh century, Ghazni Mahmud invaded India. He raided the north-western parts of India almost seventeen times and carried away vast treasures with him but he did not want to establish his dominion permanently in those areas. Following the Arabs, Afghans and Turks invaded northern India in twelfth and thirteenth centuries and established the Delhi Sultanate. Subsequently, Slave Dynasty established their regime by conquering large areas of northern India and ruled from Delhi.

Though India was invaded, ruled and exploited by many invaders, it was the entry of Europeans that became a threat to the heritage of India which was preserved for so many generations. The prime interest that attracted the Europeans towards India since the fifteenth century onwards was trade. The reason for the European’s interest in reaching India is thus described:

Europe perceived India and the East as an area yielding exotic, exciting and mysterious products which were seen as luxuries in the European markets. India was seen as a land of riches, and trade with such land offered prospects both real and imaginary, of fabulous gains. (Chakravarti, 2001, 3)

Among the Europeans, the Portuguese were the first ones to come to India. Soon after the discovery of the sea route between Indian subcontinent and Portugal they established the Estado Português da Índia, EPI i.e. Portuguese State of India for governing the colonies overseas. In fact, the arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut on the western Malabar Coast in 1497 marked the beginning of European colonization of India. During the early fifteenth century the European colonizers, traders and missionaries vigorously embarked upon their commercial and religious activities which helped them to gradually spread their political control.
through battles, intrigue and exploitation of the disunity and cowardice of the Indian rulers.

The Portuguese were the initial leaders in the race.

The whole of the 16th century saw the Portuguese monopolizing the European trade in South India … The Pope himself arbitrated and decreed that colonization of and trade in the western hemisphere should be the privilege of Spain and correspondingly Portugal should enjoy these privileges in the East. The protestant countries like England and Holland were left out of consideration. (Subramanian, 1997, 150-151)

Goa was effortlessly acquired and captured by the Portuguese in 1510 and made it as their headquarters in India. Next to follow the Portuguese were the Dutch. Their presence lasted between 1605 and 1825 in the Indian continent. Their early trade was for textiles and later precious stones, indigo, silk, salt, opium and pepper were added. They started to lose their influence in the second half of the eighteenth century. Following these two European settlers, the other two to come were the English and the French. The French establishment was said to be the last of all the European invaders and colonists in India. The French East India Company was established in 1664; Pondicherry in India was acquired by the French in 1674 and became the French headquarters in India and later Karaikal was annexed in 1739.

Among the Europeans, the English created the English East India Company and established their supremacy in India for which Jahangir the Mughal Emperor gave permission initially to set up its warehouses and factories in India.

It is customary to trace the roots of English presence on the Indian subcontinent to 31 December 1600, when Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to a few merchants of
London, giving them a monopoly of trade with India and the east. (Kachru, 1983, 19)

From this humble beginning to the battle of Plassey in 1757, it was a long and blood-spattered history of colonization which spread its irretraceable influence on the lives and future of the Indian people. The Company first set up its factory in Surat. Later on, it expanded its trade in the major cities of India like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The wealth of India and the trade prosperity really made the East India Company to establish their empire in India. In the mean time, unknowingly, the Mughal power was facilitating the territorial expansion of the English Company. The Company raised its own army in order to establish its supremacy.

The beginning of political supremacy of the English East India Company had its mark from The Battle of Plassey in the year 1757. The East India Company started to prosper in its trade. Nearly 60 percentage of the English imports from Asia comprised of Bengal goods. This made them to extend their fortification in Bengal. Siraj-ud-daulah, the then Nawab of Bengal ordered the English to stop the extension of their fortification. It resulted in the battle of 1757 and in it Major General Robert Clive defeated the Nawab. The East India Company also won another battle called The Battle of Buxar in the year 1764 against the allies of Mughal Emperors. These battles consolidated the Company's establishment in Bengal and in 1772 the East India Company established its indirect rule in Bengal. From then on, nearly for 100 years they built their strong empire. Also their battles against the French in the southern states of India having been won made the French to lose their hold and positions in India one after another.
In the mean time, during the eighteenth century, a few of the Indian states were continuously involved in protracted conflicts, since each one of them wanted to establish their political supremacy over the others.

India in the eighteenth century was a land rife with internal dissensions and devoid of any central political power. Muslim governors and Hindu chieftains vied with each other for the remnants of the Mughal Empire, while most of the population pursued their traditional occupations in relative indifference to the religious or regional origin of their rulers. (Rangila et al. 2001)

The English were considered to be a new prospect in the power game and many States collaborated in a diplomatic alliance with the Company. The Company manipulated these opportunities and expanded their imperial power and carried on their commercial activities without any hassle. Lord Wellesley who was appointed and sent to India as Governor General was later called back as his battles caused a lot of financial crisis. He came to India with dreams of conquest and personal glory.

The British had started its process of annexation in the later part of eighteenth century. The Company fought nearly four rounds of war over Malabar and Mysore with Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan. Lord Wellesley fought against Tipu Sultan in 1799 and won the battle and annexed his territory for the British. The English army defeated Sikh army in the first Anglo-Sikh war during 1845 and annexed Lahore. The Burma war paved the way for the Company to annex north-eastern India to their empire. Lord Bentinck annexed Coorg in 1834 and thus the company was able to build their vast empire.

Once setting up their empire, the British began the process of regulative administration and Anglicization. They started anglicization and regulative administration under Lord Cornwallis and Lord Wellesley.
Besides, the British introduced liberal education to the Indians and also began the other process of evangelization. The English man Thomas Macaulay, unlike most of the earlier English Generals did not want to conquer India through force but rather wished to culturally enslave the Indians. The complete control over its administration and trade activities that the Company had for a long time was shared by the British government. The Regulating Act of 1773 was enacted in the British Parliament to formally recognize the right to have control over Indian affairs and The Charter Act of 1831 announced the complete control and administration of India by the British government.

The British rule in India till 1947 had lasting impact and changed India totally. The prime intention of the British coming to India was its wealth and they could achieve their goal by several means. But the wretchedness they imposed on Indians was not like anything before that Indians had suffered. Even before the advent of the British, India witnessed a lot of invasions, civil wars, conquests, revolutions and famines but they did not have any such totally debilitating impact on India. The entire framework of the Indian society was broken down by the British and the Indian glory was all lost and the country was left in a state of utter deprivation and chaos. As Richter (1948, 308) points out,

Slavery and political enslavement is a fact of history that has broken not only individuals but also nations and societies by violating their dignity, destroying their inner sanctity and humiliating their identity.

The British were concentrating more on the revenue yielding departments and public works department. Agriculture was completely neglected by them. As the British neglected agriculture, their oppression became a greater suffering to the Indians. Not only agriculture but they crushed the other noteworthy professions of India like weaving and spinning.
Spinning wheel and handloom that were producing myriads of weavers and spinners were destroyed by the British. The introduction of machines and also the uprooting of traditional crafts started to show its impact on the whole of India.

The Indian village administration was claimed to be one of the world’s best and it was playing a pivotal role in uniting manufacturing industry and agriculture. Earlier in India, the administrative duties were carried out in a systematic manner by the line of officials in Indian village administration. Every village possessed the set of essential professionals like a village headman, a boundary man, a Brahmin, a teacher, an accountant and an astrologer. These set of fine village administrative system was destroyed by the British interference, their tax-collectors and soldiers. Indians started to lose their ancient civilization and the harmony among the families due to the rule of British in India.

British Imperialism is said to be one of the darkest chapters in world history. It shackled the peacefully and successfully living societies for generations and also created pseudo boundaries between people who were living harmoniously. Throughout the years they plundered and amassed Indian wealth and over shadowed an ancient civilization. By the time they left only a legacy of deprivation and conflict was left behind. They also laid the seeds of future civil wars by redefining the territories and disturbing the state of equilibrium between various ethnic groups of people in India.

The British built their empire at the cost of so many innocent lives. A number of Indians were killed by the British. One such example is Jallianwala Bagh tragedy on April 13, 1919, where General Dyer ordered to open fire on a non-violent gathering of unarmed civilians, men, women, and children and nearly killed hundreds of them. The British treated the Indian laymen as sub-humans, tortured and imprisoned them during freedom
struggle. They even separated Indians in the name of different religions especially the Hindus and Muslims by deploying their ‘divide and rule’ policy. The height of enmity between the Hindus and Muslims in India was reached only when the British used their tactic of divide and rule and they wanted to weaken and suppress the freedom struggle.

Still it is felt by many Indians that the impact and exploitation by the British cannot be healed for many years to come. On the other hand, a few of the current generation view the British rule a boon in disguise. They argue that, to dominate others is an instinctive desire of humans, hence, had the British not done it some others would have done it and the same would have been worse than this. Despite their selfish administration and lootings, they did reasonable good things like improvised infrastructure. Some people favorably argue that the British brought together a desperate country and improved its economy and also brought to India their language which is universally the most popular one today. Some historians put forth their argument that it is unfair to measure the British rule in India by current standards.

An objective analysis of the British rule becomes a requirement for understanding the horrible reality of partition and the festering wounds that it left behind for ages to come. Political unification of India, geographic realignment, introduction of the western education system, the emergence of English language, massive infrastructure built by the colonizers – all these are actually projected to be the great positives of the colonial era. To an extent this is true but has to be also seen and understood as strategies that were necessary for colonial consolidation and exploitation. But it has to be also remembered that the British were not benign rulers who wanted to help India to grow and develop. They were colonialists whose primary agenda was
exploitation and the strategy which they adopted right from the beginning was
the strategy of divide and rule. As Rangila et al. (2001) points out,

The British Raj became bigger and bigger and more
powerful with the addition of territories from all over
India. These territories were added to existing provinces.
The provinces were only administrative units, never
thought of having any homogenous culture or language.

The ‘civilizing mission’ of the colonizers necessitated cultural and
religious aggrandizement. Their political strategy always demanded
maintaining a certain amount of dynamic hostility between antagonistic
groups. The British, in short, gradually and willingly aggravated existed
schisms which erupted violently when they left.

1.2 NATIONALISM AND ITS EMERGENCE

The emergence of nationalism and the freedom struggle waged
against the British by our earlier generations is noteworthy.
Mahajan (2000, 28) observes,

A number of books and biographies, which broadly fall
within the nationalist historiographical stream, do
recognize nationalism as the central cause of the British
withdrawal from India.

Soon after establishing a strong government, the British started to
intervene in India’s social and religious aspects. The British political power
went hand in hand with social changes and evangelization. It was believed by
the evangelists that Indian religions were dominated by superstitious beliefs,
idol worship, and complete oppression by the priests. Bandyopadhyay (2004, 138) states that the Indian religions were full of “... superstitious, idolatry and tyranny of the priests.” By introducing the English liberal education, they intervened in the working of the Indian religions. The
typical mindset of the colonizers is perhaps best expressed in the words of Charles Grant, an administrator and strategist of the British Raj in the late eighteenth century.

The true cure of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them would prove the best remedy for their disorders. (Grant, 1792, 60-61)

Many English missionaries came to India in the early nineteenth century. They started to translate the Bible and made it reach Indians. They also established many hospitals and schools in India. Thomas Babington Macaulay’s Minute on Indian Education in 1835 affirmed the arrival of English education in India. The British insistence on English education in India was actually to train Indians for subordinate official and public services. This introduction of English education in India slowly replaced the home grown tradition of classical learning. The oft-quoted words of Lord Macaulay as they appeared in the Minutes of Macaulay (1835, 34) are worth quoting here,

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern . . . a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. “(Source: www.columbia.edu)”

In the mid nineteenth century there rose a great aversion among the Indians against the British rule in India and the Indians were to experience a lot of bitter grievances against them. There was a Great Revolt in 1857 in
India against the British rule. It is believed that the Great Revolt of 1857 originated on March 29, 1857 and led by Mangal Pande, a Brahmin Sepoy of East India Company, from Barrakpur in Bengal. He refused grease cartridges to be used and made his fellow comrades to fight against the British for the sake of protecting their religion. For this, Sergeant Major Hudson ordered the other soldiers to arrest Mangal Pande but no one stepped forward to arrest him. When Sergeant Major Hudson himself tried to arrest him, he was shot dead by Mangal Pande. Similarly, another English officer who tried to arrest him was also shot dead by him. But on April 8, 1857 the British caught Mangal Pande and hanged him to death.

The Mutiny started by Mangal Pande spread across to the other Sepoys of various regiments of Indian army. The notable one among them was the Mutiny of Meerut Sepoys. A number of English officers and civilians were killed by them and they marched to Delhi. The mutiny echoed in Delhi and its adjoining districts. Delhi was captured by the rebel army. There were similar revolts in many places like Muzzafarnagar, Kanpur, Firozepur, Gwalior, Jhansi and so on. These revolts happening in Delhi, Meerut and its surroundings terrified the British. The British in order to strengthen their army and fight against the mutineers gathered English armies from Madras and Bombay and also got the support of the native rulers to their aid. After a terrible fight between the British and mutineers, Delhi was recaptured by the British on September 24, 1857. In the end, the mutiny was suppressed completely but still it proved to be a signal of awakening among Indians. It is clearly seen from the remarks of Lord Croame,

I want the young generation of the English people to read the history of the Mutiny of 1857, derive lessons out of it and imbibe those lessons in their hearts. In it we found so many lessons and warning. (Sharma, 2005, 33)
Following the Great Rising of 1857 there was a social and cultural awakening in India. Swami Vivekananda, the disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, founded The Ramakrishna Mission in 1896 to help the society to involve in social work and humanitarian relief. He popularized the religious messages of Ramakrishna, his guru. He condemned the Hindu rituals, superstitions and ceremonies. He vehemently condemned the caste system in India and urged the people of India to absorb the spirit of equality, liberty and freethinking. Naik (1982, 85) aptly states:

Perhaps the most effective interpreter of Indian thought to the world, Vivekananda is a Prophet with an imperishable message to his own countrymen.

Swami Vivekananda wanted Indians to stand forth, strong and self-reliant and also advocated the unambiguous program of reform:

What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel; Behold and fear not . . . We have to become ‘Abhih’, fearless; we must work, this is the time . . . for life is short . . . The time has come for the re-building, the re-constructing . . . The house has been cleansed; let it be inhabited anew. The road has been cleared. March ahead, children of the Aryas. The name ‘Hindu’ is now a term of opprobrium; we must make it the highest word that any language can invent ... He declared, Resurgent India has a great mission: Once more the world must be conquered by India. This is my dream of my life. (Naik, 1982, 83-84)

The fundamental assumptions of traditional Indian society were questioned by the educated Indian elite. This led to the formation of a number of educational, social and religious societies in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, considered to be the Father of Modern India, brought renaissance in Indian society by reviving Hinduism in the light of reason and also protested against the evil practices followed in India. He fought against child marriage, Sati, female infanticide and caste taboos. Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s healthy political
background influenced his religious and social reforms of Hinduism. He wrote:

The present system of Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interests…. It is necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort. (Bhatt, 1968, 24)

Many social and religious reform societies like Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Manav Dharma Sabha, Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj were formed in the nineteenth century. A new awakening or ‘Renaissance’ was brought into the Indian society by the members of these Samajs and Sabhas. Similarly, Aligarh Movement contributed a lot to the social, religious, educational and economic progress of the Indian Muslims.

There were two streams of leaders demanding political changes, the Extremists and the Moderates. Amidst the leaders of the Congress, a few who belonged to the younger generation were not satisfied with the mild passive demands for changes in the political scenario. They claimed to be the Extremists and boycotted English goods and institutions. Some of them even used pistols and hand grenades and involved in political extremism of revenge and murder. There was a wave of youthful patriotism spreading across the country against the Moderates who were demanding changes with their passive methods of agitation. There were volumes of books written on the exploitation of British on India by Lokmanya Tilak, R.C. Dutt, Dadabhai Naoroji and others. In 1905, Lord Curzon divided Bengal into two provinces with the Hindu majority on one side as West Bengal and the Muslim majority on the other side as East Bengal. This clear move in the game of ‘divide and rule’ created big agitations in Bengal.
The period between 1906 and 1911, brought in revolutionary leaders. The history of the western liberalism inspired them and they hoped to get supplies of ammunition and arms from Anglophobe countries. The Indian National Army came into existence. The concept of Indian National Army was initiated by the Giani Pritam Singh. The senior most Indian officer Captain Mohan Singh, who also had been thinking of raising an army to drive away the foreign rulers from India, joined Giani Pritam Singh. After a long discussion between Giani Pritam Singh and Captain Mohan Singh along with the Japanese Army Officer, Major Fujiwara, *The Azad Hind Fauj* (Indian National Army) was symbolically formed and Captain Mohan Singh was named General Officer Commanding (G.O.C) of that liberation army.

For the first time in the history of the British Indian army, the sky reverberated with full-throated shouts of ‘Azad Hindustan Zindabad’ and ‘Azad Hind Fauj Zindabad’ from men of that army. (Ayer, 1972, 30-31)

Subhas Chandra Bose took over its direct command in 1943 when he reached Japan. At once after taking charge of the Indian National Army, Subhas Chandra Bose addressed the Indians in East Asia through a radio broadcast from Tokyo, Japan thus:

> It is not possible for our countrymen at home to organize an armed revolution and to fight the British army of occupation with modern arms. This task must, therefore, devolve on Indians living abroad—and particularly on Indians living in East Asia... The hour had struck, and every patriotic Indian must advance towards the field of battle. When the blood of freedom-loving Indians begins to flow, India will attain her freedom. (Ayer, 1972, 42)

The Indian National Army along with the Japanese troops left Rangoon in 1944 and was able to capture certain parts of Eastern India. But the entire operation of the Indian National Army ended in failure because
The flames of self assertion and opposition to slavery sparked by the mutiny of 1857, slowly but steadily lit up the fire of nationalism and quest for freedom. The 1857 revolt was crushed by the British military might but it inspired Indians to develop a fighting spirit. Revolts broke out sporadically all over the country raising the banner of opposition to foreign rule. The Indigo revolt of 1859-61 in Bengal and the Santhal revolt of 1871-72 in Bihar were remarkable. Down South heroic chieftains like Kattabomban of Panchalankuruchi in Tamilnadu heroically fought against the military might of the British. The Kuka movement in Punjab was another great moment in the long history of the struggle for freedom. The Kukas are the religious leaders of Punjab who launched an inspired non-cooperation movement in Punjab in which they boycotted the railways, post offices and defied British administration to establish a sort of parallel government. All these heroic movements were brutally handled by the British and mercilessly suppressed. This led the nationalists and freedom fighters to realize towards the end of the nineteenth century that sporadic rebellion confined to certain areas alone was not going to win freedom. The need for a nation-wide, organized and democratically sustainable freedom movement was felt by intellectuals and frontliners. Organized resistance and politically sustainable efforts were considered to be need of the hour.

The first step in this direction was taken in Bengal when Surendra Nath Banerjee founded the Indian Association of Calcutta in 1876. This was the first organized political party started with the view to end colonialism. It had a very progressive and a liberal agenda which included the repeal of the Arms Act and protection of the Cultivation Rights of tenants tilling the fields.
of Zamindars and highly punitive British planters. Banerjee was a great orator and he travelled all over the country meeting people and exposing British misdeeds. His visits created such great response among the people that Surendra Nath Banerjee conceived the idea of an All India National Conference. In 1883, the first meeting of this conference was held in Calcutta with participation by representatives from all over India. It was the success of this All India National Conference which led to the formation of the Indian National Congress later on.

The Indian National Congress was in fact founded by a combination of Indian Nationalists and fair minded British intellectuals who were active in the Theosophical Society. Notable among them was A.O. Hume who was a retired Civil Servant. The first move to start the Indian National Congress had its genesis at the time of the Theosophical Convention held at Madras in 1884.

Hume took the initiative, and it was in March 1885 that the first notice was issued convening the first Indian National Union to meet at Poona the following December. Founded in 1885 with the objective of obtaining a greater share in government for educated Indians, the Indian National Congress was initially not opposed to British rule. (Girija, 1938, 499)

The credit for starting the Indian National Congress goes to a British national and this may appear a bit strange to many. But the fact of the matter was that the role of British nationals created tricky legal problems for the British government because the British nationals had the right to seek intervention by British courts. The initial agenda of the Indian National Congress was to obtain a greater role for Indians in governance and not necessarily any blind opposition to the British rule. But within a few years because of the hostility of the British government the Indian National Congress also became aggressive and started initiating steps towards freedom.
and independence. By 1907, two great leaders emerged in the Congress heading two factions. The faction headed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak was considered more militant as compared to the other faction led by Gopal Krishna Gokahale, a moderate himself.

The evolutionary history of the Indian National Congress had three phases. The first phase between 1885 and 1905 had leaders from educated middle classes from cities. The second phase was between 1905 and 1916 and there were a lot of new and young members with the goal of achieving Swaraj. The third phase was between 1919 and 1947 called the Gandhian era. Purna Swaraj i.e. complete independence was its goal. The Gandhian whirlwind swept all the corners the country, upsetting the well established strategies in the political arena and led them to follow new methods and ideas which really shook Indian lives in many spheres to the core. Nehru (1946, 303) aptly stated:

Gandhi … was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths.

Mahatma Gandhi’s contributions were seminal in attaining Independence. He introduced country-wide Non Cooperation Movement in 1920.

The movement proved to be a baptism of fire which initiated the people into a new faith and new hope, and inspired them with a new confidence in their power to fight for freedom. (Majumdar, 1968, 368)

Nearly after ten years, Gandhi introduced The Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930. Though, it substantially differed from the Non Cooperation Movement, the goal of both the movements remained the same.

The first was passively and the second was actively revolutionary. The first hoped to bring government to a
standstill by withdrawing from the administration; the second sought to paralyse the government by mass performance of specific illegal acts. (Spear, 1965, 351)

Then he launched Dandi March in 1930 and the last Satyagraha campaign in 1940. He launched all these movements against the British and used them as his weapons to free the country from the British rule. The entire period of almost three decades of Gandhian era was one of influential changes not just in the political arena but also practically in all spheres of Indian life.

Meanwhile, a lot of selfless leaders emerged and joined the protests in achieving freedom to India from the clutches of the British. The demands and protests of the Indians were spearheaded to the maximum. At one point in time, the British found it very difficult to control the vast masses of India and finally decided to free India from its rule and grant independence.

There were also others reasons for the British decision for leaving India. The strengthening of the Indian National Movement alarmed the British in India. The British Army troops diminished during the World War II. The Indian forces were so loyal to the British and its loyalty helped the allied powers in its victory. Besides, there were also many people abroad like Pearl Buck, Norman Thomas, Louis Fisher and Lin Yutang advocating the cause of India’s freedom which made the British finally decided to grant independence to India. Jawaharlal Nehru in his Speech on the Granting of Indian Independence, August 14, 1947 states:

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of
the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will
awake to life and freedom . . . At the dawn of history India
started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are
filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and
her failures . . . To the nations and peoples of the world
we send greetings and pledge ourselves to cooperate with
them in furthering peace, freedom and democracy.
“(Source: http://legacy.fordham.edu)”

At present, there are two divergent ways in which the influence of
British colonial rule is looked at. Some believe that the British colonial rule
destroyed the basic architecture of Indian civilization, distorted its ancient
culture through imported ideologies and mechanisms and superimposed
western culture and lifestyle on Indian people. From 31st December 1600,
when the Queen Elizabeth I granted a trade chapter to a few merchants of
London to the Battle of Plassey (1757), which really marked the beginning of
British Raj, the British rule severely affected and changed and reoriented the
Indian nation to a point of no return. But there is also the view that British
rule unified India as a Nation-State and bequeathed all modern institutional
infrastructure and models of developments. As Rangila points out,

India in the eighteenth century was a land of rife with
internal dissensions and devoid of any central political
power. Muslim governors and Hindu chieftains vied with
each other for the remnants of the Mughal Empire, while
most of the population pursued their traditional
occupations in relative indifferences to the religious or
regional origins of their rulers. (Rangila et.al, 2001, 4)

The country which was so diverse and disunited was said to have
been united into one nation by the control mechanism of the British Empire.
The English language also played a crucial role in this unifying process.

Acculturization, westernization, modernization and the
overall implementation of the ‘civilizing mission’ were
undertaken by the colonials as part of the ‘white man’s
burden’. The twin aims of these processes were the
‘creation and exploitation of the Indian market for the British goods on the economic front and spreading of Christianity and western values on the cultural front. (Spitzbardt, 1976, 63)

Total political control became a prerequisite for the British to realize their colonial agenda. The attempt of the British colonizers was to understand India in order to exploit it and to control it to facilitate such exploitation. In Boehmer’s words, ‘an attempt at both extensive comprehension and comprehensive control’ (1995, 97) Religious, linguistic and cultural differences across this vast land and the multiplicity of rulers and provinces with their perennial differences made the task easy for the British. Through this political control the geographic mass called India became an administratively linked political entity.

The enforced uniformity created by the British system of administration, the establishment of higher judiciary across India based on British Jurisprudence, the use of English language across the length and breadth of the country for administration and judiciary were instrumental in this nation-unification process. There is another important aspect of British colonialism which immensely benefitted India and is very often overlooked. It is the creation of the Railway system and networks of roads created by the British primarily for economic exploitation and consolidation of their own power. But the newly introduced transportation system brought Indians together and gave them, perhaps for the first time in the history of the nation, the opportunity to visit different parts of the vast subcontinent and establish people to people contact. In fact, Karl Marx in his political analysis of Indian history pointed out the importance of the railway system and said, “that the railway system would become in India truly the forerunner of modernity.” (Amba, 1954, 499)

1.3 INDIAN INDEPENDENCE AND PARTITION
A new chapter opened in Indian history by the formation of the Indian Muslim League in the year 1906. It was formed to insist separate representation and special privileges for Muslims in the political and government services. The Muslim League even advocated the Muslims to stay away from the national movement and also not to mingle with the Congress. Mohammed Ali Jinnah joined the league in 1913. Till 1930 Allahabad Session, the League did not know the likelihood of a separate state ‘Pakistan’. Sir Mohammed Iqbal said in 1930 for the first time in history:

… a North West Indian Muslim state was desirable for the final destiny of the Indian Muslims. (Jayapalan, 2000, 192)

Muslim separatism and its growth had reasons behind as there were certain realities the Muslims faced in many provinces where Muslims were in minority. In such Muslim minority provinces there was a dearth in terms of employment and education. They felt humiliated and wanted to safeguard themselves from their dwindling position. The imbalanced imperial interest, economic development and limitations of electoral politics expanded the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah presided over the Lahore Session of the League in March 1940. In that session, he proposed a separate state and advocated the Two Nation Theory anticipating friendliness between the Hindus and the Muslims. Jinnah in his presidential address said:

The British Government, for the happiness of the Indians, should allow the major nations separate homelands by dividing India into two autonomous national states. (Jayapalan, 2000, 193)
In 1944 there were serious talks between Jinnah and Gandhi. Jinnah demanded that the Muslims alone would decide the future on the existing provincial boundaries in their majority provinces. Gandhi, however, rejected the Two Nation Theory but approved to have the Muslims some limits in the form of self determination in their majority provinces. But the talks were in vain in the end, as Jinnah was not ready to accept anything less than that of complete sovereignty given to the Muslims.

In the Cabinet Mission there were possibilities for the separate state ‘Pakistan’ but the Mission blatantly declared against Pakistan. The proposal did not satisfy Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Jinnah appealed to Atlee,

… avoid compelling the Muslims to shed their blood and give them honourable existence. (Mahajan, 2000, 224)

The Congress leaders did not expect that Jinnah’s ideal could ever be achieved by any means. They even declared that they would not hear any more of their mischievous demand for Pakistan. Mahajan quotes Jawaharlal Nehru’s mocking statement in 1946:

I would like to see a revolution in India called by Mr. Jinnah. It is one thing to call for a revolution and another to carry out a revolution. (Mahajan, 2000, 222).

The plan of Direct Action was formalized by Jinnah and in April 1946 in the Delhi Session of the Muslim League, Pakistan was defined as two independent states, one in the north-west and the other in the east of India. Mohammed Ali Jinnah in his inaugural speech said:

If, unfortunately, the British are stampeded by the threat of blood-shed, which is more a bluff than a reality, this time Muslim India is not going to remain passive or neutral. It is going to play its part and face all dangers. Nehru is greatly mistaken that there might be trouble, as he
says, but not very much. He is still living in the atmosphere of ‘Anand Bhawan’. (Mahajan, 2000, 224).

On August 16, 1946 in Calcutta, the first communal gun shot was fired. The Muslims are said to have initiated it and the Hindu communal groups retaliated to it. Many were killed and the death toll rose to more than five thousand. The dreadful turn of events took the Congress leaders by surprise. In spite of the incident, the Congress representative alone formed an Interim Government and was sworn in on September 2, 1946.

Meanwhile, the League was preparing themselves for their Direct Action and what they called as ‘Jihad’. Wavell clearly survived Mohammed Ali Jinnah’s stubbornness, as he said:

I put in a great deal of hard work and had some acrimonious discussion at times trying to get the best possible deal for the League; and it was largely Jinnah’s own fault that we did not succeed in getting an Interim Government on what would have been very good terms for the League. So I feel a little sore myself at the line Jinnah and the League have since taken. (Mahajan, 2000, 230 - 231)

On October 10, 1946, there broke out another communal riot in Noakhali in East Bengal and it spread rapidly across the entire district and its surroundings. Then killing, looting, raping and forced conversions became very common. The victims of this riot were mostly the Hindus as they constitute only eighteen percentage of population in the Noakhali district. The trouble and the situation in East Bengal painfully exposed to the leaders of the Congress that the harsh reality of their position in the Interim Government was one of the reasons and they could not work without exercising their power. Mahatma Gandhi worried that his ‘Ahimsa’ was not able to work with his own countrymen and rather yielded fruit of its labor with the British. Both the British and the Congress tried to have a compromise
with Jinnah every time, but ended in vain. Jinnah did not wish to compromise with anyone and always went on his own way. Nehru thus remarked on Jinnah’s attitude:

During the past few years it had been our repeated experience that Mr. Jinnah does not commit himself to anything and does not like coming to a settlement. He accepts what he gets and goes on asking for more. (Mahajan, 2000, 253).

On October 25, 1946, yet another riot broke out in Chapra, Bihar. Similarly the death toll was more than five thousand and this time most of the victims were Muslims. The leaders of the Congress and the League hurried to Chapra to safeguard and to console the victims.

The three incidents of utter brutality sent waves of insecurity and fear and really shook the solidarity and unity of the country. Almost in all provinces, the minority communities began to seek help from the centre for their protection. The Hindus in Bengal felt insecurity and a sense of terror under the League’s rule. Mahajan (2000, 279) clearly records what Lady Abala Bose wrote to Rajendra Prasad:

It breaks our heart to think of dividing our beloved Bengal, but there seems to be no other alternative. This is certain that we cannot live under the League Government.

Communal polarization at a mass level was witnessed in the entire north Indian belt. Two new organizations came into existence. The one was Muslim National Guard, a disciplined paramilitary volunteer organization, raised by the Muslims. The other one was called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a nationalist organization built by Hindus. The communal riot that broke out in Calcutta soon surrounded most of the subcontinent. Riots broke out in September, October, November and December in Bombay, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab respectively. These riots resulted in a huge
loss of lives and property amounting to more than one hundred fifty million rupees. Almost four thousand shops and houses were just swept away in a week’s time.

Constant and continual efforts brought an end to the widespread communal violence across the country. Bandyopadhyay (2004, 545) states,

By March/April 1947, many of the Congress leaders had more or less reconciled themselves to the idea of conceding Pakistan and accepting freedom with Pakistan.” and even Clement Atlee admitted: “It would be quite impossible … for a few hundred British to administer against the active opposition of the whole India.

The transfer of power by June 1948 was decided. In order to expedite the process, Lord Mountbatten came to New Delhi on March 22, 1947. Lord Mountbatten foresaw the inevitability of partition and realized the impossibility of united India, announced his new plan of advancing the date of transfer of power to August 15, 1947 from June 1948.

Lord Mountbatten then appointed two boundary commissions for Bengal and Punjab separately under Sir Cyril Radcliffe and gave him six weeks to accomplish the task. Pakistan, a new nation was discovered on earth on August 14, 1947 and its power was handed over to Jinnah by Mountbatten in Karachi and Jinnah became the first governor general of the Dominion of Pakistan. The next day, India with Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India, got its freedom. Notably, Mahatma Gandhi one among the many who dreamt of Indian freedom all those years was not willing to participate in any of the celebrations feeling that ‘his place was not where people were celebrating but where people were suffering’ and spent his day in prayer and fasting.
Many historians have criticized the reckless speed in which the power was transferred. The hurry in which the power was transferred, Pakistan when created ultimately, held only 60 million and the other 35 million Muslims were left behind in the non-Muslim India. Many feel that the transfer of power was too early and at the same time a few others feel that it was too late. A big nation like India to be partitioned in a 72 day assignment was actually done like a joke of history. Even Cyrill Radcliffe admitted himself that what he had done was not just. In one of the letters written to his nephew, he says,

Nobody in India will love me for the award about the Punjab and Bengal and there will be roughly 80 million people with a grievance who will begin looking for me. I do not want them to find me. I have worked and traveled and sweated … oh, I have sweated the whole time. (Butalia, 1998, 86)

And after a long time in an interview when he was asked whether he had been given sufficient time, and whether he would have done something different in deciding the boundary between India and the Pakistan, he said:

Yes. On my arrival I told all political leaders that the time at my disposal was very short. But all leaders like Jinnah, Nehru and Patel told me that they wanted a line before or on 15th August. So I drew them a line. (Butalia, 1998, 86)

Above all, if questioned, who was responsible for such decision, a blame game would only be the answer. Mujtaba in his book The Demand for Partition of India sums it up as follows: “Muslim League wanted it, Congress consented to it and the British executed it.” (2002, 1)

1.4 INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH AND PARTITION NOVELS
Indian Writing in English is one of the offshoots of Indo-British encounter. The literary renaissance launched by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others in India had released a sudden flow of writing in English by their successors. Indian Writing in English today needs neither introduction nor defense because it has established itself firmly all over the world. Indian English writers have today attained such high standards and status that they have even surpassed native English writers in certain domains.

A group of many brilliant writers emerged powerfully in Indo-Anglian writing at, before and after independence. They have attracted the attention of the literary world and many of them have achieved great recognition. *Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Chaman Nahal, Anita Desai, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Arundhathi Roy, V.S. Naipaul, Arvind Adiga* are some of the writers of Indian writing in English who have got recognition and reputation in the western world.

The Indo-Anglian novelists are mostly committed to issues like social reforms, Gandhian philosophy, the partition, terrorism, revolutionary activities and so on. The latter trend in the Indo-Anglian novels and among the Indo-Anglian novelists has been to depict through the complex and chaotic social transition of the developments of the Post-Independence era, the conflict between the sensibility of the contemporary Indian and his traditions, social, economic and political.

The partition of India and Pakistan was an event of greater magnitude that strongly affected the Indian psyche and has brought many creative arts and artists under its impact and influence. Many artists like painters, Television programme producers and film makers have explored this tragic event in their respective work of art. There were TV serials like *Tamas, Buniad*, films like *Garam Hava, 1942 – The Earth, Hey Ram* etc.
These have been produced and performed not only to appeal to the audience but to educate them about partition. But it is the novel and fiction that provided a great platform to the creative and artistic genius to deal with the theme of partition. Before the advent and universal spread of visual media fiction alone, as an art form had the potential of creating and recreating the real as well as the imagined worlds of human experiences. For the previous generations of literates fiction was the equivalent of today’s cinema, Television and the digital media. Over the past three hundred years or so the verbal magnetism of the genre of fiction has held captive generations of people under its spell. When Charles Dickens’ novels were serialized in England, each month’s installment had the characteristics of a national event. When novel began to be written in Hindi and other Indian languages, the power it cast over the populace was truly magical. In every South Indian language, for example, there are novelists and fiction writers who have become legends in their own lifetime. Looked at from this angle the tragedy and turmoil of partition have been powerfully captured by fiction only and has not been as powerfully portrayed by other media like Television and movies as of now. The historical novel in particular attempts to convey the spirit, manners, happenings and social conditions of a past age with realistic details and mostly perfect fidelity to historical happenings. As Marion Crawford said, ‘the novel is a pocket theatre’ (Nair, 2005, 46). This genre of ‘fiction’ has really attracted the creative writers in all Indian languages. The readership in vernacular languages is very much limited while Indo-Anglian fiction has wide international readers. It has attracted the global attention of authors, scholars, readers, critics and students of Indo-Anglian fiction.

The first ones to respond to the partition in various literary works happened to be the Sikhs as the Punjab was the first to face the horrors of partition and their psyche was naturally to respond to it. Nanak Singh’s novel in two parts *Khoon De Sohle* (1947) and *Agg Di*
Khund (1948) is concerned with the riots in Amritsar, Punjab at the time of Indian independence. The Communal hatred and its unashamed exhibition are vividly picturized in them. His novels Mazdhaar (1949) and Chitrakaar (1950) that followed his earlier novel also deal with the consequence of partition i.e. the problem of refugees. Kartar Singh Duggal’s novel Nahun Te Maas translated in Hindi as Choli Daman (1968) deals with communal hatred that took roots and grew deeper was also later telecast on the Doordarshan as a serial. Amrita Pritam’s Pinjar (1950) notably presents the quandary of a Hindu woman who returns home after being kidnapped by Muslims, with a more psychological insight.

The Hindi novelists who have dealt with the theme of partition are considerably more in number. They may roughly fall into two groups. The one group deals with the partition and the factors responsible for it and the other, deal with the event. Vishnu Prabhakar’s Nishikant (1958), Bhairav Prasad Gupta’s Sati Maiyaka Chaura (1959), Bhagwatcharan Verma’s Bhule Bisre Chitra (1961), Amritray’s Bij (1967), Kamaleswar’s Laute Hue Musaphir (1971), Bhisham Sahani’s Tamas (1973), Yashpal’s Meri Teri Usaki Baat (1974) fall into the first group that deal with pre-partition India and the various factors responsible for the event. The other group of novels that are very much concerned with the event itself are Ramanand Sagar’s Aur Insaan Mar Gaya (1948), Acharya Chaturse Shasatri’s Dharma Putra (1961), Yashpa’s Zootha Sach (1969), Gurdatt’s Desh Ki Hatya (1966), etc.

Rahi Masoom Raza’s Aadha Goan (1966) and Kamleshwar’s Laute Hue Musaphir (1971) cover a large span between pre and post independent India.

Irrespective of the time span, the writers have interpreted partition from different perspectives. Bhairav Prasad Gupta in his novel Sati Maiya Ka, has a leftist point of view and suggests that blind faith has come to an end and
it is to be realized that in India people belonging to different faiths existing together would be certain. Yashpal in his novel *Meri Tei Usaki Baat*, has a progressive outlook and he considers economic inequalities being the factor responsible for communal disharmony. Kamleshwar in his novel *Laute Hue Musaphir* depicts the transformation in the psyche of the people and their attitude that kills the harmonious atmosphere of the village though nothing undesirable happening there. Acharya Chaturse Shastri’s *Dharmaputra*, through the complex design of his theme, presents the contrasting characteristics and elements of communal feelings. Gurudatt in his novel *Desh Ki Hatya* has a Hindu point of view that is rather very much orthodox. Ramanand Sagar in his *Aur Insaan Mar Gaya* depicts the dark side of the event; the death of man and of human values and the fact that even the strongest of humanistic people cannot resist but fail in the frenzied situations. Rhai Masoom Raza in his novels *Aadha Goan*, *Topi Shukla* and *Os Ki Bund* presents the changes that happen in the liveliness of a village and also the relations between the Hindus and Muslims after the formation of Pakistan.

Besides novels, this theme of partition has been extensively used by the writers in the form of short stories also. Though a variety of themes are offered, most of the writers opted to deal with the violence of one form or another. It is often found that abduction and rape are their favorite subjects. Some writers tried to present the graphic description of women being physically mutilated and abused, and mostly succeeded in depicting the painful and the nauseating. But with some master story tellers, the theme of rape ended up with the presentation of some of the most heart-wrenching stories that have ever been written. Among these are Saadat Hasan Manto’s *The Reunion*, Kartar Singh Duggal’s *Kulsum*, and Khwaja Ahmad Abba’s *Revenge*. 
The partition novel can be considered as a major branch in Indo-Anglian fiction. The novels written about partition are of two kinds. First there are some, which deal with India’s struggle for independence and in the course of describing the events leading to it, focus briefly on the division of the country. The important novels of this type are Manohar Malgonkar’s *A Bend In The Ganges* (1964), Balchandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* (1959) and Attia Hossain’s *Sunlight On A Broken Column* (1961). The second category of the novels, consisting of Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Raj Gill’s *The Rape* (1974), Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (1975), H.S. Gill’s *Ashes and Petals* (1978), and Kartar Singh Duggal’s *Twice Born Twice Dead* (1979), focuses mainly on the partition, that is the events immediately before it, the holocaust caused by it and its aftermath. Since the novels of the second group are exclusively devoted to this theme, it is relevant here to attempt a general and overall evaluation of their treatment of this theme.

The hasty speed at which partition was consummated with no regard to an orderly relocation of population between the two newly formed states led to a great holocaust. Even by an old fashioned estimate nearly ten million people took to the road in search of a new home. A million among them failed to make it. Trains loaded with Muslim refugees, all of them brutally killed, arrived in Pakistan with messages displayed on the sides of the carriage reading ‘*A gift from India*’. In retaliation the Muslims sent back the trains packed with butchered Sikhs and Hindus with the message ‘*A present from Pakistan*’. Foot convoys, some of them 80,000 strong and 70 miles long moved between the two new states. Thousand were killed on the way, an equal number of people fell victim to deadly diseases. One Captain Atkins recalls a road on which a convoy had passed.

Every yard of the way there was a body some butchered, some dead of cholera. The vultures had become so bloated
by their feasts and could fly no longer and the wild dogs so demanding in their taste they ate only the livers of the corpses littering the road. (Cowasjee et al. 2002, xi)

The horror accompanying the transfer of population has been a major theme with Indo–Anglian writers. The partition novelists fall roughly into two groups: the Sikhs and the Hindus. Though in general the Hindu writers far outnumber the Sikh writers, the majority of the novels on the partition are written by Sikhs. Khushwant Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Raj Gill and H.S Gill are the most important ones among them. This is not surprising for the Punjab was the homeland of five million Sikhs and it was to them that the province owned its prosperity. They were considerably richer than their Muslim counterparts. When Punjab was cut into two, the two and a half million Sikhs whose homes fell in Pakistan were enraged—not so much by threat to their religion as by fear for their very considerable material possessions. The hungry Muslims, who had long envied the Sikhs, at last found an opportunity to enrich themselves quickly by looting Sikh property. There is much truth in Leonard Oswald Mosley’s observation that, “This was not a Hindu-Muslim war but a Sikh–Muslim war” (Collins, 1975, 167)

A determined pattern is seen running through the novels by Sikhs novelists. Firstly the main characters in the novel are all Sikhs and each novelist portrays a love affair or romance between a Sikh boy and a Muslim girl. Secondly most of the Sikh novelists strive for historical accuracy and stack their fiction with documentary evidence published from newspaper and government reports. Thirdly, the Sikh writers admit to Sikh atrocities against the Muslim but argue that they were done only in retaliation for what the Muslim had done to them. This last contention is not, however, supported by independent observers.
All these novels depict in detail the horrible and heart-rending scenes of violence, brutality and hatred. The irony was that the two communities, the Hindus and the Muslims, carried out their fight against the British people and could reach the target of achieving freedom almost without bloodshed, but when they were close to their long–cherished goal, they plunged into detestable inhuman activities against their own fellow countrymen and bathed in each other’s blood. Perhaps that was the sudden eruption of the long–suppressed feelings of hatred, indignation and vengeance.

The summer of 1947 has gone down in the annals of Indian history as an era of unprecedented heartless frenzied violence. The explosion of communal violence that rocked the Indian sub-continent in the wake of freedom dwarfed in scale and magnitude anything India had experienced in the past three and a half centuries. The violent demand for a separate country for the Muslims left no other choice than to split the country on religious lines, into Pakistan for the hundred million Muslims and India for the three hundred million Hindus, Sikhs and the Indian Christians. And then began the painful process of migration that sparked off an orgy of hatred and violence. Rather than settle down in peaceful co-existence or permit a passive exchange of population, the partisans on both sides set out on a violent Campaign of annihilating the communities that were trapped on their ancestral lands beyond friendly borders. The long awaited freedom achieved through Gandhi’s non–violent campaign brought with it one of the bloodiest upheavals of history. Million had to flee leaving their beloved homes. Nearly half a million were killed. Over a hundred thousand women young and old were abducted, raped and mutilated.
The partition of the country and the inhuman violence that accompanied it were shocking and saddening experiences for the creative artist as they were for the national leaders and right-thinking citizens. The shame and agony of partition was unbearable and unforgettable for Indo-Anglian creative writers like Manohar Malgonkhar, Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Raj Gill, H.S Gill and Kartar Singh Duggal. Interested in the history of their motherland they wanted to record it in their novels, so that it could serve as an eye-opener and warning to their fellowmen and to the generations to come.

These writers want their compatriots to place time-honored values above religious fanaticism and communal affinity. Religious fanaticism and communalism have unfortunately become the common penetrating ills of the Indian society and it is the foremost duty of every right-thinking citizen to fight these ills uncompromisingly and create an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. Hence, creative writers and artists have taken upon themselves the paramount task of recalling to their countrymen the sordid happenings of the past with a view to forestalling any repetition of the bloody holocaust. The telecast of Govind Nihalani’s production of Bishan Sahani’s TAMAS on the Doordarshan in the midst of violent opposition is a forward step in that direction. It was aimed at helping to create awareness in the minds of the youth about the urgent need for communal harmony and peaceful co-existence. Dismissing a petition against the telecast of the film, the Supreme Court bench have rightly pointed out that if some scenes of violence, some nuances of expression or some events in the film can stir up certain feelings in the spectator, an equally deep, strong, lasting and
beneficial impression can be conveyed by the scenes revealing machinations of selfish interest, scenes depicting mutual respect and tolerance, scenes showing comradeship, help and kindness which transcend the barriers of religion. This is exactly what fiction writers have attempted to accomplish. Indo-Anglian novelists like Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh have taken up the task of turning contemporary history into literature in order to draw a lesson from our country’s past history, expose the motives of persons who operate behind scenes to generate and foment conflicts and to emphasize the desire of persons to live in amity and the need for them to rise above religious barriers and treat one another with kindness, sympathy and affection.

Novelists like Khushwant Singh, Manohar Malgonkar and Chaman Nahal stand out prominently among those who have treated the theme of partition, while R.K.Narayan, Balachand Raja and Attaia Hosain have dealt with it cursorily in their novels. Recently, Sikh Indian English novelists like Raj Gill and Kartar Singh Duggal have delineated the theme artistically and comprehensively. But amazingly enough, no full-length study of the theme of partition in the novels of these latter writers has hitherto been made. Hence, the need and justification for a thorough examination of this subject of considerable significance becomes relevant.

A critical study of Khushwant Singh, Raj Gill and Kartar Singh Duggal reveals that these three Sikh novelists treat the theme of violence in the wake of partition. The major protagonists of their novels happen to be Sikhs and the endings of the novels may be a little too theatrical to carry conviction, but the sacrifices made by the Sikh characters transcends the barriers of caste, race and religion.
Hence, the objective of this study is to examine Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, Raj Gill’s *The Rape* and Kartar Singh Duggal’s *Twice Born Twice Dead*, with a view to investigating the validity of the various constructs that form the central core of their novels. The attempt is not merely to enumerate the details of social-political upheavals as portrayed in these novels. Partition is too emotionally loaded an issue that has left deep scars in the collective consciousness of a nation and views points expressed both in the fictional and non-fictional modes are bound to be polarized. But these kinds of polarized views of one sidedness are not in tune with the way the matrix of human history and evolution is looked at. Postmodern and Postcolonial discourse teaches us to look at things from redrawn perspectives and as Gandhi (1998, 119) points out,

\[\ldots\] the foundation of the postcolonial nation – state embodies the paradigmatic moment of generic conformity between anti-colonial nationalism and its antagonistic European predecessor.

Post modernism evolved from modernism and to an extent coalesced with Post structuralism to accept diversity, variety, deviation and differences. Partition perhaps gives the fundamental narrative of intolerance to differences. Post modernism would provide a soothing antidote suggesting in its wake that differences and diversity are natural phenomenon. As Barry (1995, 84) points out,

\[\ldots\] For the postmodernist, by contrast, fragmentation is an exhilarating, liberating phenomenon, symptomatic of our escape from the claustrophobic embrace of fixed systems of belief. In a word, the modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it.
A postmodernist interpretation of Sikh perspectives on partition would be a worthwhile analytical way of looking at the issue.

In the same way, adoption of postcolonial constructs to interpret Sikh perspectives on partition could also be, in the view of this researcher, a purposeful way of interpreting partition saga. Postcolonial thinking and way of looking at things basically means trying to erode the colonial ideology and identity and seek to dismantle the colonial super structure imposed on native existence. Being aware of European representation of the colonized also is an important requirement of postcolonial thinking. Colonialism is not merely political but it is multi-headed monster which influences every aspect of the colonized societies creating double identities and troubled identities. The postcolonial has the responsibility of facing the complexities thus created and understanding things from a proper perspective. The recognition of the double identity in the experience of the colonized which gets often described powerfully in the partition novels.

Thus, from the postcolonial perspective it becomes imperative to reclaim one’s own past. The entire gamut of partition novels, apart from describing the carnage of partition, are also preoccupied with this reclaiming of one’s own past, in this case the identity and the past glory of the Sikhs. Partition shattered the fixed orderliness of an early existence and broke the existing social order into pieces. Untold miseries and suffering were heaped upon the Sikhs as was the case with the other side across the border. As Gandhi (1998, 164) points out, “The evacuated and fictional space of nationalism is now animated by the new fictions of exile and migrancy.”

Hence, viewed from the above constructs Post modernism and Post colonialism are sought to be used as analytical frameworks to interpret Sikh perspectives. This thesis seeks to pursue this line of analysis of partition and related issues as portrayed in the chosen novels.
A study of this problem, the various causes for this, and the attempts made by literary men to highlight it through their works will be of great relevance today. Hence, this research work attempts to study the issue of partition and its aftermath through the eyes of Sikh writers whose community was greatly affected in the holocaust.

This Thesis deals with the Introduction, an attempt to draw an exterior background of historical events leading to partition and partition novels and also an overview of Indian history and a general account of the foreign invasions, freedom movements and the split developed between them and the two group of partition novels. The following chapter, *Martyr As The Hero*, deals with the exploration of the theme of partition holocaust in Khushwant Singh’s novel *Train to Pakistan* and the melodramatic traits, display of excessive emotionalism as a symbol of partition holocaust and the elements of nativism, a postcolonial implication that are found in the novel. The third chapter, *Conflict and the Loss of Values* deals with an analysis of Raj Gill’s novel *The Rape* that projects the novel’s uniqueness in portraying the horror of partition and that they are on par with the historical documents and also how the novel is realistic and succeeds in creating social, religious and political reflections on partition. The fourth chapter, *Quest Across Borders* is attempt to explore Kartar Singh Duggal’s novel *Twice Born Twice Dead* as a blend of actuality of history and the imagined vibrancy fiction, a vivid portrayal of the partition holocaust and also to interpret the story in terms with its political and social criticisms of the events followed by partition. The final chapter, Conclusion, is very precise and sums up by enumerating distinct points that are identified in the three novels chosen for study as the common threads that connect literary discourse to history.