CHAPTER III

ICE - CANDY - MAN

Literature is a powerful tool in the hands of a creative writer to modulate and change the societal framework, and Bapsi Sidhwa through her extremely absorbing and most important work, Ice -Candy-Man, seeks to contribute to the progress of change that has already started all over the world, involving reconsideration of women’s rights and status and a radical restructuring of social thought. Bapsi Sidhwa belongs to that group of women creative writers who have started to depict the determined women, for whom traditional role is inadequate, a woman who wishes to affirm their independence and autonomy and is perfectly capable of assuming new roles and responsibilities. In Ice -Candy-Man, Sidhwa wishes a world free from dominance and hierarchy, a world which is based on the principles of justice and equality and is truly human.

In this novel Sidhwa represents a series of female characters who have survived in a chaotic time of 1947 in India, which can be registered as a period of worst religious riots in the history of humankind. The whole story has been narrated by Lenny who relates the horrors of violence and her personal observation and reactions. She not only observes but analyses man’s lascivious and degrading attentions towards women, voraciousness of male sexual desires, women; as they are reduced to the status of sexual objects and relates the peculiar disadvantages, social and evil, to which they are subjected.
Ice - Candy- Man is a saga of female suppression and marginalization. It projects realistically women’s plight and exploitation in the patriarchal society. It exposes how men establish their masculine power and hence fulfill their desires by brutally assaulting women. While as on the other hand, it poignantly depicts how women endure the pain and humiliation enacted upon them

Bapsi Sidhwa is among the important signatures in Pakistani literary world. Being a Parsi, she is aware of her roots, past and the Parsi community. Ice-Candy-Man is her major novel which introduces a child-narrator Lenny who narrates the events in the wake of Partition of India. Sidhwa's concern for her Parsi community, place of women in Pakistani society, human struggle for survival and dignity of man are major themes in her novels. In Ice-Candy-Man, Sidhwa presents her Parsi community in a dilemma over the issue of support. Partition is imminent and the question of loyalty haunts the Parsi psyche.

They are loyal to the Raj but now Parsis have to side either with India or the newly formed Pakistan. Sidhwa depicts Hindu-Muslim riots without any social discrimination. As the narrative progresses, history moves to the background and struggle for survival becomes the focus of the narrative. There are a number of novels written about Partition of India like Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh, Tamas by Bhisham Sahni, Azadi by Chaman Nahal, A Bend, in the Ganges by Manohar Malgaonkar, The. Rape by Raj Gill, Ashes and Petals by H.S. Gill, Twice Born Twice Dead by K.S. Duggal, The Dark Dancer by B.Rajan, Sunlight on a Broken Column by Attia Hosain and Ice-Candy-Man by Bapsi Sidhwa. These novels realistically portray and depict the upheaval that the Indian sub-continent experienced. It was the most shocking and traumatic experience of division of hearts and communities. These literary works leave the
reader with the feeling of disquiet and disturbance. These novels deal with the tumultuous and traumatic moments in the life of one generation. (A Critic) observes that these works not only deal with the tumultuous times but also strips away the veneer of civilization that man hides behind. They also hold a mirror to the element of savagery latent in man. "It seems, a stressful situation reveals the animal streak just waiting to be unleashed. This is made all the more strong by the support of a mob feeding on hatred."

Ice-Candy-Man deals with human emotions at play at different levels, heightened by turbulent times. In the process of shaping history, human emotions and relationships are relegated to the background. The tidal waves of violence, hatred and communal violence change the feelings of fraternity. Aradhika observes: "Like some ancient Satanic rites of witchcraft, the power to destroy, springs forth from an unsuspected fount within and the sheer pleasure of humiliating and massacring the victim is so great that one forgets one's own mortality." Bapsi Sidhwa in her novel Ice-Candy-Man delineates his characters and their antecedents with fidelity and with a feeling of contemporaneity. In the narrative of Ice-Candy-Man, the reader is introduced to the kind-hearted Khansama who is a veritable rebel, the loyal khalsa refusing to leave Lahore, Tota Ram the frightened Hindu and a Parsi family oscillating between two viewpoints with neutrality hoping for their survival.

In Ice-Candy-man, the main characters are. Ice-Candy-Man and the 'Ayah', the maid-servant with the Parsi family. Ice-Candy-Man is a handsome and immensely popular youngman. He is a generous fellow who is miles away from religious fanaticism. But one incident shakes his entire existence and his belief in the goodness of man is shattered. He becomes a witness to the mutilated bodies of Muslims in the hands of Hindus and he takes a vow to avenge the death of
his Muslim fellows. This bitter experience wrenches out the darker side of his personality. This shattering blow transforms a kind and loving individual into a violent and frenzied person. On a crucial moment in the narrative, he asks the Ayah: "there is an animal inside me straining to break free. Marry me and perhaps it will be contained." Here Aradhika observes: "The ultimate betrayal is not by the innocent trusting little girl but by the devil of hatred that cannot be contained." Now the ice-candy-man plays the pivotal role of a raffish type man.

Like other novelists on Partition, Sidhwa also describes the ugly and terrifying face of Partition by recollecting the traumatic and agonising memories of those moments. Sidhwa also has tried to recreate history in emotion-laden and poignant scenes. The rumblings of Partition are felt in the beginning of the narrative and the atmosphere proper to the kind of a tale is gradually created. As the tension mounts, atmosphere becomes grim and awesome. Here one finds the worst kind of genocide in the history of mankind. Narratives like Ice-Candy-Man transport readers back into the corridors of time. This experience of being catapulted back into the dark and forgotten recesses of time leaves the readers shocked and unbelieving on the reaction of man. One witnesses the shocking and heart-rending scenes of the arrival of trains full of massacred Muslims chugging into the platform with crowds waiting for another gift from Amritsar. Man is transformed into a brute, a savage lusting for blood. He is ripped apart, dissected to reveal animal form. The colorful streets of Lahore look ominously dreadful and deserted. The Hindus are still reluctant to leave their ancestral property where their generations have lived and prospered. Now they visualise a future devoid of any hope. These painful experiences are like the agonising throes of a new birth. It is still painful to recollect those traumatic and dreadful moments that turned the noble ones into beasts. Indeed the Partition of India remains the most agonising experience in history. A number of writers who wrote on
Partition touch the gut of the problem in order that such blunders should never be committed by 'wise leaders'. Jagdev Singh observes, "The Partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 is one of the great tragedies, the magnitude, ambit and savagery of which compels one to search for the larger meaning of events, and to come to terms with the lethal energies that set off such vast conflagrations." These comments aptly throw light on the central theme of the novel Ice-Candy-Man.

The theme of inter-community marriage is at the core of Sidhwa's novels like Ice-Candy-Man, An American Brat and the Crow Eaters. Her handling of the theme of inter-community marriages is relevant and contemporary. This sensitive issue arouses acrimonious debates in Parsi Community. In Parsi faith, it is believed that a Parsi could be one only by birth. In mixed marriages, the children lose their right to be members of Parsi community. The Parsis have a patriarchal society. While dealing with the theme of marriage, Sidhwa maintains a balance without revolting against rigid social codes. In her novel An American Brat, Sidhwa examines the theme of inter-faith marriage in detail. Its protagonist Feroza migrates to America where she intends to marry a Jew boy David Press. Her Parsi community opposes this marriage and Feroza has to withdraw her move but she expresses her conviction to marry to boy of her choice only, irrespective of religion.

In Ice-Candy-Man, Sidhwa presents the theme of interfaith marriage through the love relationship between the Ice-Candy-Man and the Hindu Ayah. On seeing his fellow Muslims massacred, the Ice-Candy man goes mad with rage and keeps his beloved Ayah in the brothels of Hira Mandi in Lahore. Then he realizes his mistake and marries the Hindu Ayah but now love has become powerless. The Ayah is rescued and is taken to a Recovered Women's Camp in
Amritsar. Thus, a number of themes have been well-integrated in the narrative of Ice-Candy-man.

Ice-Candy-Man describes the harrowing tale of Partition days when the lofty ideal of nationalism was suddenly bartered for communal thinking, resulting in unprecedented devastation, political absurdities and deranged social sensibilities. Sidhwa has sensitively portrayed the political anxiety and social insecurity which was shared by all the divided people during the Partition days.

The days preceding the largest forced migration of population in human history, and the demographic dislocation it entailed, had their own complexities. People who have survived this holocaust, or witnessed it from a distance try to exorcise this past through memories. Imaginative and literary recreation helps people to recover "some of the lost density of life. Perhaps this is the reason that prominent literary figures in India and Pakistan have constantly taken up themes related with Partition and try to. replicate their memories in all details. Chaman Nahal's Azadi, Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan, Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges, B. Rajan's The Dark Dancer, and Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines are expressions of different sensibilities about Partition.

However, Ice-Candy-Man is different from these works as it presents the turbulent upheaval of Partition from the viewpoint of a handicapped Parsi girl child. Stressing the vulnerability of human lives, and maintaining a fine balance between laughter and despair, Sidhwa presents various nuances and complexities related with a decision of political pragmatism through Lenny, a child narrator and chronicler. Lenny looks at characters belonging to different communities through the prism of her own Parsi sensitivity. Shorn of biases the
child's narration also imparts an authentic credibility to the novel. Like most of the other novels, Ice-Candy-Man also presents the horrifying details of cruelty, human loss and dislocation, but it does so with a subtle irony, witty banter and parody, forcing the readers to desist from maudlinly sensitive reactions, and to concentrate more on the inscrutability of human behavior. It also describes a society which has lost its courage, and therefore only crumbles away. It not only presents the barbaric details of atrocities perpetrated by one community over other, but also delineates various manifestations of pettiness and degenerated values which, like termite, had hollowed the inner structural strength of the society.

Ice-Candy-Man narrates a society which has deflated chivalrous attitudes, encourages petty self-serving tendencies and indifferent tolerance of pogroms so long the self stays alive with a whole skin; a society which was given what it deserved—a sanguine and blood-curdling mindset, which made Partition of India a grim reality. The characters and events of the novel suggest that "vanity, hypocrisy and self-deception . . . somehow constitute a truer reality than altruism, self-sacrifice and heroism, even when these are known to have existed. This reinterpretation, Andrew Rutherford argues, of historical and psychological reality by art involves an opposition not only between high and' lower mimetic modes, but between the low mimetic and the ironic, highlighting what he terms as "a disbelief in the psychological probability of the ideal.

Khushwant Singh in his review in The Tribune has commented that Ice-Candy-Man deserves to be ranked as amongst the most authentic and best on the Partition of India Githa Hariharan also comments in Economic Times that Sidhwa has captured "the turmoil of the times, with a brilliant combination of individual growing up pains and the collective anguish of a newly
independent but divided country. Seen through the prism of a marginalised minority girl-child, it focuses on the deteriorating communal climate in pre-Partition days. "Lenny's naivete, her privileged position, and her religious background lend her version of Partition a quality that other novels about this tempestuous period in Indo-Pakistani history lack. Protected by her religious background and her parents' status, Lenny is not directly affected by the contumelious situation of Partition days, but she keenly observes and comments on the events happening around her.

The tone of a reporter which she adopts for recording the events or commenting on them enhances the poignancy of the emotions which are linguistically underplayed. The hilarious tone of the Parsi's Jaslian prayer, organized to celebrate the British victory in the Second World War is soon replaced first by the acrimonious bickering between Mr. Rogers and Mr. Singh, then by the vague fears and apprehensions unsettling Lenny's group, and later on by the details of murderous mob fury unleashing death and destruction over whoever comes across them. Lenny learns that India is going to be broken, and has many un-answered queries, "Can one break a country? And what happens if they break it where our house is? Or crack it further up on Warris Road? How will I ever get to Godmother's then?"

Ayah ventures that perhaps a canal will be dug to crack India. Though Lenny is baffled by such questions, she simultaneously becomes aware of religious differences. She worriedly remarks, "It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves—and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols." In a changed world which responds not to individuals but religious identities Lenny feels that the Parsis have been reduced to "irrelevant nomenclatures." Her perception of people also changes and she becomes aware of religious symbols acting in, and moulding the individual lives—the tuft of bodhi hair rising like a
tail from Han's shaven head, Cousin's fresh crop of Sikh jokes, the subtle changes in the Queen's Garden, are presented with increasing regularity. Lenny's parents also acquire a strange black box containing, as we are told later, a gun. Their neighbours leave for safer places. Hari, the gardener, is circumcised and converted to Islam for protection, Moti, the sweeper, opts for Christianity, the masseur is killed grotesquely, the markets burn and living beings are torn asunder.

The insensitivity of the social climate is highlighted and individual deeds of kindness and support eclipse out. The massacre of Pir Pindo narrated in the words of a young boy Ranria presents perhaps the vilest side of adult nature which continuously haunts the reader. Lenny senses the changing situation and is perturbed. Listening to the verbal parrying of Ayah's admirers she closes her eyes in frustration, "I close my eyes. I can't bear to open them they will open on a suddenly changed world. I try to shut out the voices."

The brutal realities of the Partition depicted in Ice-Candy-Man with a candour, do not overshadow the resilience of spirit exhibited by several characters in the novel. Rodabai, the God-mother arranges free education for Ranna, Lenny's mother and Electric-Aunt store petrol in order to facilitate the escape of their friends, Hamida is rehabilitated. Dormant possibilities of the resurgence of human spirit can also be sensed in Ayah as, taking a bold decision, she determines to go back to her family. She rejects the constricting present and decisively wants to face future in all its tentative probabilities. The resilience of women characters saves the novel from being a heart-rending depressing rendition of journalistic reporting.

Ice-Candy-Man also includes several comments on contemporary political figures. Sidhwa has presented the Pakistani perspective regarding these figures and almost all the major
con-temporary Indian political figures are either caricatured or pre-sented in an unfavorable manner. During her interview with David Montenegro, Sidhwa comments:

The main motivation grew out of my reading of a good deal of literature on the Partition of India and Pakistan. . . . What has been written has been written by the British and the Indians. Naturally they reflect their bias. And they have, I felt after I'd researched the book, been unfair to the Pakistanis. As a writer, as a human being, one just does not tolerate injustice. I felt whatever little I could do to correct an injustice I would like to do, I have just let facts speak for themselves, and through my research I found out what the facts were(18).

Gandhi's visit to Lahore is presented in such light as makes him "an improbable mixture of a demon and a clown." Lenny recalls how he interminably talks about enema, personal hygiene and sluggish stomachs. Sidhwa portrays him as a politician, changing his stances to suit his needs. During the heated discussions among Ayah's admirers the butcher snortingly terms him as "That non-violent violence-monger—your precious Gandhi-jee." In an attempt to soothe him the masseur says, "He's a politician yaar. It's his business to suit his tongue to the mo-ment." Lenny remembers him as a small, dark and shrivelled old man very much like their gardener Hari. Sidhwa also criticizes the British designs, commenting that after obtain-ing their objective to divide India, they favoured Hindus over Muslims: "they [the British] favour Nehru over Jinnah, Nehru is Kashmiri, they grant him Kashmir. Spurning logic, defying ra-tionale, ignoring the consequences of bequeathing a Muslim state to the Hindus." She further says in derogatory terms. "Nehru wears red carnations in the button holes of his ivory jackets. He bandies words
with Lady Mountbatten and is presumed to be her lover. ... He is in the prime of his Brahmin manhood." Similarly the Akalis, led by Master Tara Singh, are termed as "a bloody bunch of murdering fanatics."

Sidhwa has also tried to redefine Jinnah's role in history. She feels that most of the Indian and British writers have dehumanized him, holding him responsible for the Partition. While Nehru has been portrayed as a "sly one," Jinnah is lauded for his intellectual capabilities. The off duty sepoy remarks during one of the discussions held regularly at Queens Gardens, "Don't underestimate Jinnah. He will stick within his rights, no matter whom Nehru feeds! He's a first-rate lawyer and he knows how to attack the British with their own laws!" Jinnah is portrayed with a sympathy not showed for any other political leader. He is depicted as "austere, driven, pukka-sahib accented, deathly ill, incapable of check kissing", past the prime of his manhood, he is "sallow, whip-thin, sharp-tongued and uncompromising." Sidhwa also quotes Sarojini Naidu to substantiate her portrayal of Jinnah. As the story unfolds, we are introduced not only to Jinnah, the political leader, but also to Jinnah, the lover of an eighteen year old, breathtakingly beautiful Parsi girl, who had braved the censure of her wealthy knighted father to marry a Muslim. Lenny feels sad on learning her premature death, but her sympathies clearly lie with Jinnah:

But didn't Jinnah too, die of a broken heart? And today, forty years later, in films of Gandhi's and Mountbatten's lives, in books by British and Indian scholars, Jinnah, who for a decade was known as 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity', is caricatured, and portrayed as a monster(91).
The analysis of the political leadership during the Partition days by Sidhwa is subjective and at times seems even prejudiced. Despite it, the final message of the novel is clear and unambiguous. It rejects the two nation theory and suggests that religious, social and cultural differences are artificially created and exploited by unscrupulous people. She also suggests that power should be used for the good of the people and to suppress the evil. In her interview with Julie Rajan, she comments on the main theme of Ice-Candy-Man:

I was just attempting to write the story of what religious hatred and violence can do to people and how close evil is to the nature of man. Under normal circumstances people can be quite ordinary and harmless; but once the mob mentality takes over, evil surfaces. Evil is very close to the surface of man(101).

Ice-Candy-Man is criticized by some critics for misrepresenting historical facts. Sidhwa's description of Gandhiji's visit to Lahore can be quoted as an example. There is no historical record of Gandhi's visit to Lahore during the pre-Partition days. Similarly, the reference to the famous Dandi March by Col. Bharucha dates it in 1944, whereas it had actually taken place in the early months of 1930. The vivid description of the Sikh attack on the Muslim village of Pir Pindo is also historically inaccurate. Such inaccuracies are however fictionally justified as these events are imaginatively used to impart an easy continuity and flow to the narrative and communicate the author's point of view successfully.

The theme of horror accompanying the transfer of population in 1947 has been delineated by several authors in Indo-English fiction. In his essay "The Partition in Indo-English Fiction" Saros Cowasjee has commented on the characteristics of the Partition novels. He says
that most of the Partition novels written by Sikh authors portray a romance between a Sikh boy and a Muslim girl, strive for historical accuracy loading their fiction with documentary evidence gleaned from newspapers, government reports and G.D. Khosla's Stern Reckoning: A Sur-vey of the Events Leading upto and Following the Partition of India (1949) and suggest that Sikh atrocities against the Muslims had taken place only in retaliation. Cowasjee has based his argument on a study of Raj Gill's The Rape (1974), H.S. Gill's Ashes and Petals (1978), Kartar Singh Duggal's Twice Born Twice Dead 1979) and Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan (1956). Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges, selected by E.M. Forster as the best novel of 1964, probes the Gandhian ideology of non-violence in relation to man's hidden capacity for violence. Chaman Nahal's Azadi (1975) propagates the theme of human kindness.

Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961) has the distinction of being the only novel on Partition by a Muslim woman. It tells us of the effects of Partition not on those who were forced out of their homes, but on the members of a Muslim family who, far from the scene of action, struggle to keep their family from splitting up and argue over the priorities of different loyalties. Balchandra Rajan's The Dark Dancer is saturated with idealism and hope and concentrates on the basic nobility of human nature. In Hindi, Urdu and Bengali too, there are some brilliant novels on this theme—Jhutha Sach of Yashpal, Tamas of Bhisham Sahani, Adha Gaon of Rahi Ma-soom Raza, and-Epar Ganga, Opar Ganga by Jyotirmoyee Devi, The Skeleton (1987) by Amrita Pritam can be mentioned as examples. The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh and What the Body Remembers (1999) by Shauna Singh Baldwin are more recent attempts to grapple with the memories of Partition which, as Krishna Sobti has remarked, is difficult to forget but dangerous to remember." Ghosh's novel traces the sources of communal violence. Ghosh effectively uses political allegory to stress the need for a synergetic civilization to avoid a
communal holocaust. His novel is against artificial divisions and violence and is an affirmation of unity and enrichment of life. Baldwin traces the oppression of men which the female body remembers with contrasting and constantly shifting viewpoints in her novel.

Ice-Candy-Man stands apart in its rendering of the theme of Partition. Lenny reveals the trauma of Partition through her memories with a sprinkling of humor, parody and allegory, describing how friends and neighbours become helpless and ineffective while faced with the mob frenzy. Sidhwa also describes how political leaders manipulate the ideals and generate feelings of suspicion and distrust in the psyche of the common man. Once communal and obscurantist passions are aroused, the social fabric is torn asunder, leading to wanton and reckless destruction. Sidhwa has also commented on the historical inevitability of social process, suggesting that people who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it. The tragic events combine with the witty freshness characterizing the narrator’s attitude of a distanced watcher. The novel poignantly describes the mindless Partition violence and focuses on its socio-historical consequences to women. Moreover, “the craft of describing violent and humorous scenes alternatively and of freely mixing historical tragedy with witty comedy is not the result of a compromise but it rather displays a lively authenticity which very few novels can be credited with.” Ice-Candy-Man enables the readers to understand the extent of the trauma of Partition and review it in its historical context, and thus suggestively delineates the fruitlessness of violence in individual and collective lives.

Ice-Candy Man is a novel which shows you the pre-partition and post-partition world through the curious, innocent and observant eyes of Lenny - a 10 year old daughter of a Parsi household. Ridden with a deformity in her leg, Lenny is under continuous care of her Ayah -
Shanta - who is perhaps the most influential person in her life. Ice Candy Man is essentially Ayah's story. It is the story of her world - the one of domestics - and of her many harmless affairs with men belonging to her social strata. Of the many that admired her and had particularly obsessive-possessive tendencies towards her was the titular character - the ice candy man. Ayah, after flirting with ice candy man, finds comfort in the warm and affectionate presence of another of her admirers - the masseur. Our titular character does not take Ayah's transgressions lightly, and wrecks revenge on her in the worst possible way.

Besides the story of these individual characters, the story of a nation is taking shape in the background. India is on the verge of partition, and Bapsi Sidhwa, in her novel, has unravelled the impact the impending partition was going to have on the Parsi community in Lahore - a community which can be called the minority of the minorities. This community has a history of mixing within the cultural landscape of place like sugar in milk - but with an event as large as the partition looming large in front of their eyes, they could not remain totally detached from the fanaticism of communal politics being played out in front of them. One of the most powerful characters of the book, in fact, is a Parsi matriarch, called Rodabai - Lenny's Godmother - who represents a very firm and progressive facet of Parsi women in the pre and post-partition society. Ayah, being a Hindu residing in Lahore was one on whose body the frenzied destructive dance of partition had been performed - whatever little salvation could come her way came from Rodabai.
Bapsi Sidhwa, herself being a Parsi, has written a novel which is so credible in its delineation of characters and events, that it is not difficult to believe that a Lenny, or Rodabai, or Ayah might have existed in Lahore in 1947, to see their land being ravaged by the forces of communal hatred. This novel had earlier been published under the title 'Cracking India' - to signify the cracks which had occurred not just on India as a geographical entity, but to emphasize on the fragmentation which had occurred in psyches, cultures and among people. There are strong autobiographical tones in the novel, for Sidhwa also had a limp in her leg - identifiable with the narrator of the novel. The narrative dwells on not one, but many issues - political, communal and sexual. She does a wonderful job particularly of reflecting on the female condition. Even better is Sidhwa's prowess at characterization. The character of Ice Candy Man had been one of the most interesting and complex characters I have come across in fiction - and his psychology has been the toughest to decode.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel Ice-Candy Man deals with the partition of India and its aftermaths. This is the first novel by a woman novelist from Pakistan in which she describes about the fate of people in Lahore. The novel opens with the verse of Iqbal from his poem 'Complaint to God', with this, the child-narrator Lenny is introduced. She is lame and helpless. She finds that her movement between Warris Road and Jail Road is limited. She sees the Salvation Army wall with ventilation slits which makes her feel sad and lonely. The narration is in the first person. Lenny lives on Warris Road. The novelist describes about the localities in Lahore through the Child-narrator. Lenny observes: "I feel such sadness for the dumb creature I imagine lurking behind the wall." Lenny is introvert and she is engrossed in her private world.
One day, Lenny is in her pram, immersed in dreams as usual. Her Ayah attends to her. Suddenly an Englishman interrupts them and he asks Ayah to put Lenny down from her pram. But Ayah explains to him about Lenny's infirmity. Lenny is a keen observer. She has seen how people are fascinated with the Hindu Ayah's gorgeous body. She notices how even beggars, holy men, old people and the young men adore her for her feminine grace.

Colonel Bharucha is Lenny's doctor. He is a surgeon. Lenny is brought to the hospital for her limp in one leg. In the first attempt, plaster on Lenny's leg is removed but still she limps. Soon a new plaster is cast over her leg. Lenny cries out of pain but her mother takes care of her.

Dr. Bharucha's surgery pains Lenny as she has become bed-ridden. The news of Lenny's operation spreads in small Parsi community of Lahore and she has visitors but she cries for Godmother. Lenny lying on the bed observes keenly the reaction of visitors and her parents. After one month, Lenny is allowed to be taken in a stroller outside her house. Her eighteen year old Ayah Shanta takes her to a zoo.

Lenny's Ayah Shanta has a number of admirers. Ice-Candy-Man is among her admirers. Another companion of Lenny is her electric-aunt, a widow. She also picks up a brother. His name is Adi and Lenny calls him Sissy. He goes to school and Lenny studies at home. When winter comes, Ice-Candy-Man turns into a birdman and in the streets of Lahore, he is seen with birds. Rich ladies give him money for these poor birds to be freed. Ice-Candy-Man is a chatter-box and he can talk on any topic.

One day, the Parsi community assembles in the community hall in the Parsi temple. Two priests prepare for the worship of fire. Lenny observes everything with curiosity. Then the
meeting of the Parsi community begins on their stand on Swaraj. Col. Bharucha holds the mike and apprises all about the latest political developments. After discussions and questions, all agree to observe the middle path— to observe and see. They will not be with the Indian nationalists to oppose the Raj. They fail to come out of their dilemma.

The Ayah takes care of the helpless child Lenny like a sister. Lenny's mother too loves her. A portion of Lenny's house is lent to the Shankars who are newly married. Shankar's wife Gita is seen welcoming him in the evening. The children observe this couple with curiosity. Gita is a good cook and a good story-teller. She is popular with children. The reader is now introduced to Hari, the gardner, Imam Din, the cook of Lenny's house. Here one finds focus on the character of Imam din. He is sixty five years old. He is "tall, big-bellied, barrel-chested and robust." Imam Din likes to play with children in his spare time. One day Imam Din takes Lenny to his village on his bicycle. Lenny observes every thing keen on her way to the village. There she meets children Ranna and his sisters Khatija and Parveen. This is the village Pir Pindo where Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims live peacefully. Villagers have assembled beneath a huge she sham tree to discuss about the situation in other cities like Bihar and Bengal. They feel disturbed over the news of Hindu-Muslim riots. The villagers blame the British government for 'inaction in the wake of communal riots. The Chaudhry of Pir Pindo assures them about the safety of everyone in the village if riots break out. Later Lenny and Imam Din return to Lahore.

Ayah has now two more admirers—a chinaman and the Pathan. They are fascinated by her feminine grace. They visit Lenny's house daily to talk to her. Lenny does not go to school. She goes to Mrs. Pen for her studies. Her house is next to Lenny's Godmother's house on Jail Road— opposite to Electric-aunt's house. Ayah accompanies Lenny to Mrs. Pen's house. After
tuition, Lenny goes to her Godmother's house for sometime. One day Mahatma Gandhi visits Lahore. Lenny goes to see Gandhijee with her mother. She is surprised to see him because she has always taken him to be a mythic figure only. Gandhi jee blesses them all and advises them to follow the enema-therapy. Lenny fails to understand as to why people call him a saint. To her, he appears to be 'half clown and half-demon'.

Now it is April and Lahore is getting warmer day by day. Ice-Candy-Man finds his business prospering. By now it has become clear that India is going to be broken. Muslim league wants Pakistan to Muslims. Imam Din, the cook at Lenny's house is worried over the news of communal riots and plans a visit to his village Pir Pindo. Lenny insists to join him on his trip to the village. She still cherishes the memory of her earlier visit to Pir Pindo. On Baisakhi, they visit the Dera Tek Singh near the village. Dost Mohammad joins them. They enjoy the mela and the feast. Now people apprehend trouble. One day the relatives of Imam Din arrive in Lahore to stay with him. They are accommodated in Servant's quarters. Military trucks arrive in Pir Pindo to evacuate Muslims to safer places but the Muslim peasants are confused. They can't leave their home, property and harvest all of a sudden. Mr. Roger's mutilated body is found in the gutters. He was the Inspector General of Police. This news sends shivers among the people of Lahore. Children including Lenny find it a strange incident. Ayah loves Masseur's songs and Ice-Candy-Man loves Ayah for her blooming youth. Ice-Candy-Man is disturbed over the developments in the nearby areas. People start moving to safer places. Riots begin and this leads to confusion among people.

Communal riots spread from towns to small villages like Pir Pindo. Muslims and Sikhs become enemies thirsting for each other's blood. In Lahore, people begin to move to safer places.
Hindus and Sikhs leave their houses behind and reach Amritsar. People hear announcements on
All India Radio about the division of districts into India and Pakistan. The Parsee community in
Pakistan is safe but still worried about its future. Muslim mobs attack Hindu houses. A mob
stops outside Lenny's house and enquire about its Hindu servants. They ask about the Hindu
Ayah Shanta but the cook Imam Din tells them about her fake departure. Ice-Candy-Man comes
forward and asks Lenny about Ayah. Out of innocence, Lenny discloses about her hiding. The
angry Muslims drag her out of Lenny's house. This shocks Lenny and she repents for her
truthfulness. A truth can also ruin one's life, Lenny discovers. Ice-Candy-Man takes her to Hira
Mandi, the bazaars of prostitutes. Ice-Candy-Man's mother was also a prostitute and Ice-Candy-
Man becomes a pimp. He is fond of reciting Urdu poetry.

In Pir Pindo village, Sikh crowds attack the Muslim community. Imam Din's family is in
trouble but nothing can be done. There is confusion. Muslims in Pir Pindo village get killed and
their women gang-raped. Children are butchered mercilessly. Ranna, the playmate of Lenny in
Pir Pindo is also wounded and buried under the heap of dead bodies. After some time, he safely
moves to other place. His journey of hide and seek has been dealt with in detail by Bapsi Sidhwa.
Sidhwa narrates Ranna's ordeal of escape in full fifteen pages. A little boy wounded and
shocked, running for life finds suddenly himself alone in the world. Earlier, it had been decided
that the women and girls of Pir Pindo would gather at Chaudhry's house and pour the kerosene
oil around the house to burn themselves. It was also decided to hide some boys and men in a
safer place but nothing worked. Muslims are killed, women molested and children butchered.
Only Ranna escapes and finds shelter in a camp in Lahore. When he reached Lahore, he
observed, "It is funny. As long as I had to look out for myself, I was all right. As soon as I felt
safe, I fainted." Before reaching the camp, Ranna had a tough time: "There were too many ugly
and abandoned children like him scavenging in the looted houses and the rubble of burnt-out buildings. His rags clinging to his wounds, straw sticking in his scalped skull, Ranna wandered through the lanes stealing chapatties and grain from houses strewn with dead bodies, rifling the corpses for anything he could use ... No one minded the semi-naked spectre as he looked in doors with his knowing, wide-set peasant eyes." Later, Ranna was herded into a refugee camp at Badami Baug. Then "chance united him with his Noni chachi and Iqbal chacha."

After the abduction of Ayah by the Muslim mob, Lenny remains sad and dejected. She is shocked over the betrayal by Ice-Candy-Man. She finds him to be a changed man. The day he saw the mutilated bodies of his Muslim brethren, he became a different person. His beloved Ayah becomes a Hindu for him. "They drag Ayah out. They drag her by her arms stretched taut, and her bare feet that want to move backwards—are forced forward instead." This sight proves to be traumatic for poor Lenny and she repents for telling the truth to Ice-Candy-Man. She is guilt-driven: "For three days I stand in front of the bathroom mirror staring at my tongue. I hold the vile, truth—infected thing between my fingers and try to wrench it out: but slippery and slick as a fish it slips from my fingers and mocks me with its sharp rapier tip darting as poisonous as a snake. I punish it with rigorous scourings from my prickling toothbrush until it is sore and bleeding." This act of Lenny shows her sense of guilt. There has been Papoo's marriage but Lenny feels lonely without Ayah. By now Lenny has become mature both in body and mind.

Lenny's Godmother is an influential lady. She loves Lenny, she has established a network of espionage in Lahore. She has information from each corner of Lahore. One day, Lenny's cousin comes with a news that he has seen the Ayah in a taxi dressed like a film actress. After a few days, Lenny too sees Ayah in a car. Now she tells everyone about it and the search for Ayah
begins. One Monday, Lenny visits her Godmothers house to tell her about the Ayah. She is told about the Ayah's husband's visit to Godmother's house in the evening. Lenny finds it difficult to wait for the evening. At six o'clock, the bridegroom of Ayah arrives. He is none but Ice-Candy-Man, now dressed in flowing white muslin. He recites a verse from Urdu poetry and greets everyone. He informs that she is married to him and has been accepted in the family of dancers. Godmother scolds him for ill-treating Ayah and let her be raped. But he confesses: I am a man! Only dogs are faithful! If you want faith, let her marry a dog." But Godmother reacts wildly by saying: "You have permitted your wife to be disgraced! Destroyed her modesty! Lived off her womanhood! And you talk of princes and poets! You're the son of pigs and pimps!" Ice-Candy-Man weeps and cries but asserts that now he will make her happy by all means. Lenny has been listening to all this. She is angry with Ice-Candy-Man to such an extent that:

‘There is a suffocating explosion within my eyes and head. A blinding of pity and disillusion and a savage rage. My sight is disoriented. I see Ice-Candy-Man float away in a bubble and dwindle to a grey speck in the aftermath of the blast(128).’

Ice-Candy-Man stands there with Jinnah—cap in his hand and "his ravaged face, caked with mud, has turned into a tragedian's mask. Repentence, grief and shock are compressed into the mould of his features." Then, Godmother plans a visit to see Ayah, now Mumtaz after her marriage. Lenny insists of going with her to Hira Mandi. They reach Hira Mandi in a tonga. They are led in a well-decorated room with the fragrance of sprinkled flowers. Ice-Candy-Man brings his Mumtaz, the Ayah dressed as a bride before them. Lenny is shocked to see sadness in Ayah's eyes. Lenny observes: "Where have the radiance and the animation gone? Can the soul be
extracted from its living body? Her vacant eyes are bigger than ever: wide-opened with what they have seen and felt... She, buries her head in me and buries me in all her finery; and in the dark and musky attar of her perfume."

Leaving Ayah with Godmother rand Lenny, Ice-Caiidy-Man goes to fetch tea. Now Ayah pleads that she will not live, here anymore and she must go. Godmother asks her to think over it again but Ayah (Mumtaz) insists of going back to her relatives in Amritsar. The visitors return after assuring Ayah that she will be rescued.

Lenny's cousin asks her about a Kotha and her impression of it. Lenny understands by Kotha to be a place of dancing girls. By now Lenny also understands that "the potent creative force generated within the Kotha that has metamorphosed Ice-Candy-Ma not only into a Mogul Courtier, but into a Mandi poet. No wonder he founds poetry as if he popped out of his mother's womb spouting rhyming sentences."

After her visit to Hira Mandi, Godmother contacts the government machinery. One day a police party comes to Hira Mandi and takes Ayah away from Ice-Candy-Man. She is put at the Recovered Women's Camp on Warris Road which is well-guarded. Ice-Candy-Man visits the camp to see his beloved but is beaten up badly by the Sikh sentry. Ice-Candy-Man has become a dejected, wandering lover searching for his lost love. He has acquired a new aspect: "that of a moonstruck fakir who has renounced the world for his beloved." Ice-Candy-Man places flowers for Ayah over the wall of the camp every morning and his "voice rises in sweet and clear song to shower Ayah with poems." This routine of offering of flowers and singing of love songs continues for many days.
One day, Lenny learns that Ayah has been shifted to Amritsar with her family there. Ice-
Candy-Man has also followed her across the Wagah border into India to pursue his love. The
novel ends on this sad and tragic note. The novel contains a number of poignant scenes
alongwith scenes of murder and violence. "The novel is a masterful work of history as it relates
political events through the eyes of a child." Ice-Candy-Man has also been called as a
multifaceted jewel of a novel. The novel deals with "the bloody partition of India through the
eyes of a girl Lenny growing up in a Parsee family, surviving through female bonding and
rebellion.

Ice Candy Man presents violation of human rights and pathetic conditions during the
partition of Subcontinent in 1947. Through the character of Lenny, Bapsi Sidhwa gives the
details of how the political changes affect the citizens of India. The novel realistically represents
the exploitation and suppression of women. Men using their masculine powers fulfil the desires
and brutally assault the women. Sidhwa as a novelist talks about the power and skills of women.

Feminism is a movement which plays a very important role in highlighting the
suppression of women in a male dominated society. In this society women are considered
inferior to men and they are not given their rights. Many writers suggest some solutions to the
degradation of women based on cast, creed, religion and gender biases. Ice Candy Man
represents a series of female characters who survived the worst time of 1947 in India. The novel
represents the realistic picture of Hindu Muslim clashes and the changing political scenario.
Emotional turmoil, weakness, killings, brutalities and much more are suffered by women. The
whole story is narrated by a female protagonist who shares her personal experiences of partition.
She minutely observes men’s intentions towards women, the lustful desires of males and the way they treat the women as sexual objects.

Lenny as a narrator moves from childhood to adolescence and during this course of time she understands the changes occur in society and behaviour of men with women. The whole journey helps her to develop a mature vision of life. She gives a close look at the relationship between men and women. Being a handicapped girl her world is restricted to her house. She spends most of her time with her Godmother. Being a child she had no inclination to female possession. She never played with dolls. The sexual identity thrust upon her again and again. Her schooling is stopped by her doctor because she is suffering from polio. He said she can marry and live a good life. She does not need to take burden of studies. This suggestion makes her feel that her fate is sealed and marrying and carrying out responsibilities of domestic affairs are the only aims of women. Since ages it is considered that woman’s duty is to look after the house, raise children and give comfort to her family. Shashi Deshpande suggests that women should be given enough space to realize their true personality. Simon de Beauvior holds the opinion that mothers are responsible to inculcate the sense of submission in women. Lenny learns that marriage of a girl is of utmost importance to their parents. Independence and self identity is for men. As a child she enjoys the love of her mother and the protection of her father but the story of Ice Candy Man’s love for Ayah destroys her concept of love. The meeting of Godmother and Ice Candy Man open her eyes to the wisdom of truth and compassion. She watches women being rapped and men turning to beasts. Women including Ayah become prey of men. Lenny was shocked to see the human mind corrupted so easily. Men were declaring superiority over each other by sexually assaulting women. Shashi Deshpande states that rape is a violation of trust between two people and a greatest violence.
Lenny is shocked to see the changing faces of men and she became aware of religious differences. She knows that men of different religions can never become friends again. To take revenge is the sole purpose of their life. Ayah is kidnapped and she decides to hunt for Ayah, who became a prey of Hindu Muslim riots.

Throughout the novel, Lenny appears as bold, courageous and strong. Sidhwa has given feminist touch to her character who moves forward despite many hurdles. By observing the life of many women she understands the limitations associated with women lives in patriarchal society. Bapsi Sidhwa states that women are always marginalized and she always protest against it. Lenny’s mother is another female character, a servile housewife, she limits herself to her home. She represents the traditional woman who never expresses their desire. Through Lenny Sidhwa shows that men have to dilute their ego and women have to be strong. The mind sets need to be changed in order to establish equality between sexes.

Sidhwa exposes the society, which marginalize women, their growth and development. She has a constructive approach towards women’s betterment. Just as Bepsi Sidhwa said about the marginalization and degradation of women, it is true. Women are always being marginalized and considered inferior over centuries. They are not given their rights. A big change is required at social level, which will acknowledge women as human beings having souls, desires and feelings. Women should utilize their potentials beyond the domestic life to have their own individuality.

In Ice-Candy Man, Lenny is the narrative persona. Her narration starts in her fifth year and ends after her eighth birthday. She recalls her first conscious memory of her Ayah thus: “She passes pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu god-dess she worships.” She also
remembers her house on Warris Road in Lahore and how she used to find refuge in her
God-mother’s “one-and-a-half room abode” and succeeded in getting away from the “gloom”
and the “perplexing unrealities” of home. These perplexities include her own polio affliction,
which she uses as an armour against a “pretentious world,” her mother’s extravagance, her
father’s dislike of it, her strain to fill up the “infernal silence” during her father’s “mute meals”
by “offering laughter and lengthier chatter” (“Is that when I learnt to tell tales?”). These
perplexities also involve the household staff. It includes her very dear Ayah, an eighteen-year-
old dusky beauty, Shantha, Imam Din, the genial-faced cook of the Sethi household, Hari, the
high-caste Hindu, Moti, the outcaste gar-dener, Mucho, his shrew of a wife, Papoo, his much
abused child—and the Ice-Candy-Man, a raconteur and a “born gossip” who never stops
touching Ayah with his “tentative toes”—and masseur, a sensitive man who loves Ayah and is
loved by her, much to the chagrin of Ice-Candy-Man; and last but certainly impressive Ranna,
the boy whom Lenny befriends when she visits his village with Imam Din and numerous others.
Lenny leads us on, dwelling on interesting facts mingled, as it were, with picturesque language.
The main events, besides the end of the Second World War, India’s Independence and Partition
of the subcontinent into Pakistan and India, revolve around Ayah. She is—not unlike India
itself—a symbol of larger-than-life reality, truly “perplexing.” Lenny also notices that, “beggars,
holy men, hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists” lust after her. Hasn’t India been a
much-looted country, which finally is forced to make a new beginning? With such emerging
connotations, the novel sustains our interest at the personal and political levels.

For Lenny, in a few years’ time a whole world, which is also her world, undergoes a sea
change marked by “blood dimmed anarchy.” Her focus switches from her own “sense of
inadequacy and unworthy” and the “trivia and trappings” of her learning, to the world outside,
which she finds is dark and dangerous. With greater perception, she notes the fast, unstoppable and violent changes that leave her and those around her, particularly Ayah, “wounded in the soul.”

As observed by lyengar, in a novel “Action, passion, con-templation, feeling, even the unconscious mind find place.” In Sidhwa’s novel, one finds different shades of human thought, feelings and behaviour truthfully voiced. Every character in the novel lets us glimpse into his inner reserves and we are con-stantly surprised at the reality of it. Passages describing bloodshed and murder highlight the brute in human beings. After Master Tara Singh’s rousing address against the division of Punjab, the mob turns “maniac.” Even the police were targeted. And then there is towering inferno in Lahore. Lenny observes:

The whole world is burning. The air on my face is so hot. I think my flesh and clothes will catch fire. I start screaming: hysterically sobbing—how long does Lahore burn? Weeks? Months(132)?

The working of native psyche is well brought out by an ingen-i ous use of various devices by Sidhwa in this novel. She shows us, with graphic clarity, how little Lenny’s mind sees, grasps and ponders over the world around her through her nightmares, witti-cisms, description of people, their mannerisms and feelings in idioms and metaphors, both homegrown and alien. An enslaved country’s total plight is shown in the line Queen Victoria’s statue imposes the English Raj in the park.

Before the conflict, Muslims and Sikhs lived in peaceful har-mony. They celebrated and participated in each other’s festivals such as Baisakhi and Id. But once the big trouble started
“One man’s religion is another man’s poison.” This entire scuffle between two countries was caused and furthered when “the Rad-cliff commission deals out Indian cities like a pack of cards.” And at the end of a gory day “the moonlight settles like a layer of ashes over Lahore.”

Besides idioms which evoke a terrible national tragedy, Bapsi Sidhwa also makes use of devices such as nightmares, jokes involving bathroom humour, poetry by the popular Urdu poet Iqbal, Parsi entrance into India, their customs, prayers, fire temples, and funerals in Towers of Silence, elaborate discussions and debates on national politics by the haves and the have-nots, detailed accounts of villages such as Pir Pindo inhabited by people of different religions, and the bitter change of later times, forced conversions, forced child marriages and many other minute yet grave details, which succeed in bringing to the reader a whole gamut of tragic-comic and tragic incidents. As the narrative progresses, everything is filtered through the consciousness of Lenny. Her interest in things around her is somewhat unnatural as we find her recording each and every-thing like a video camera. There are no restrictions on her movements and she seems to be enjoying all the happenings around. She can attend the Parsi meeting to discuss the future course of action in the wake of Partition conflicts and can also loiter around parks, cheap hotels, and such other places along with her ayah and can have access to the popular opinion. Because of her physical disability and precocious nature, she is loved and cared by all, and even her parents do not keep restrictions on her. She is even allowed to accompany Imam Din in his visits to Pir Pindo, a village in Punjab. This visit provides her with an opportunity to meet Raima, the boy who later becomes a tool in the hands of the novelist to detail the events of inhuman brutality heaped on the Muslims across the border by the Sikhs, thus complementing the account of Partition narrated by Lenny.
The narrative design that Bapsi Sidhwa follows in the novel apparently looks very simple and straightforward, but on a closer look one realizes that its simplicity is merely deceptive. Although the main narrator is Lenny, the voice that emerges from the novel is far from being a monologue. There are moments when it is hard for the readers to believe that a little girl like Lenny can utter the words that have been put into her mouth. Like the one that is quoted here: I am held captive by the brutal smell. It has vaporized into a milky cloud. I float round and round and up and down and fall horrendous distances without landing anywhere, fighting for my life’s breath. I am abandoned in that suffocating cloud. I moan and my ghoulsh voice turns me into something despicable and eerie and deserving of the terrible punishment. But where am I? How long will the horror last? Days and years with no end in sight.

And again:

My nose inhales the fragrance of earth and grass—and the other fragrance that distils insights. I intuit the meaning and purpose of things. The secret rhythms of creation and mortality. The essence of truth and beauty. I recall the choking hell of milky vapours and discover that heaven has a dark fragrance(151).

Passages like this make the reader aware of the presence of the author in the child, Lenny voicing her adult reactions to her childhood situation. Of course Sidhwa narrates the novel in the first person putting everything in the mouth of the child protagonist, but one thing is for sure that she does it with a serious purpose. She does not want to sound political and controversial, yet cannot turn herself back from the purpose at hand, i.e., to present the other side of the truth regarding the Partition riots—the Pakistani or in her own right the neutral point of view. It is another thing that at times she sacrifices even the decency and decorum of a literary artist, just
flaunting the emotions of millions of people. Like we find in her observations and comments about Gandhi and Nehru. Lenny reflects on Gandhi:

He is small, dark, shrivelled, old. He looks just like Hari, our gardener, except he has a disgruntled, disgusted and irritable look, and no one’d dare pull off his dhoti! He wears only the loincloth and his black and thin torso is naked.

Gandhijee is certainly ahead of his times. He already knows the advantages of dieting. He has starved his way into the news and made headlines all over the world. Despite the occasional limitations like the one we have noticed above, this goes without saying that “no other novel catches as this one does India’s centuries-old ways of living with religious difference before Partition.” Lenny is inquisitive and notices everything: clothes, smells, color, and the patina of skin, sex everywhere, and eyes—olive-oil-colored, sly eyes, fearful eyes. In writing which is often lyrical, always tender and clever, with a nuance here, a touch there, Sidhwa shows us the seedbed of the Partition massacres—an abused Untouchable, the ritual disem-boweling of a goat, a priest shuddering over the hand of a menstruating woman. This laughing, gentle tale, told through the eyes of innocence, is a testament to savage loss, and a brilliant evocation of the prowling roots of religious intolerance.

Thus though Bapsi has been accused by some diehard Indian nationalists of presenting a Pakistani view of history, we must not forget that this is a novel and not a work of social documentary; it limits itself to one child’s perspective through which the dissenting, disagreeing voices she hears are refracted; and what Aamer Hussein says, “insofar as a novel can be objective, Bapsi is in the grand tradition of the Progressive writers on both sides of the border, scrupulously fair to all parties concerned, ap-proaching politics with the empathy and
compassion of a humanitarian feminist.” In fact the point of view Bapsi adopts, is one of the novel’s most successful ploys. We believe we are witnessing the events of Partition through the eyes of an innocent child, but strategically placed flash-forward signal, in a subtle manner, that the adult Lenny is actually reliving the past in order to make sense of the events that baffled her when she was too small to comprehend; simultaneously, she restricts herself to the experiences and sensory perceptions of the child she was. Thus we are given a double even dialogic perspective that layers innocence on experience, introspection on hindsight.