Chapter V

Conclusion
Through the study of selected novels by Balchandra Rajan, Attia Hosain, Bhisham Sahni, Bapsi Sidhwa, Rohinton Mistry and Manju Kapur remarkable facts of communal riots and its long-lasting effects afterwards on India and abroad are seen.

Communal riots are very complex historical events. There are different aspects of communal riots. The partition of India in 1947 was an undeclared civil war, and since then we have had disputed borders in every country of South Asia. The religion based division of the country anticipated many of the questions that trouble us how across the subcontinent ethnicity, communalism, the rise of religious fundamentalism and cultural nationalism sharply but poignantly, partition, posed the question of ‘belonging’ in a way that polarized choice and allegiance, aggravating old, and new, antagonism.

The division of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 on the basis of the two-nations theory gave birth to two nations-India and Pakistan.

Balchandra Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer* narrates the tragic story of Krishnan a protagonist with his love marriage, separation, reunion and identity crisis. This story of an individual is narrated against the backdrop of the Indian political turmoil. The communal riots affect also the lives of the major characters in the novel. The blood shedding scene shows a Muslim encountered by a Sikh during Krishnan’s journey. The communal riot in Shantipur depicts Kamla’s death at the hands of Hindu hooligans. The novel represents the melodramatic technique in the presentation of the communal riots.

Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) is a novel about the communal divide and riots. Attia Hosain depicts the trauma of the partition and communal riots through her narrator heroine Laila. The author shows her heroine Laila making a departure from tradition and customs. In the novel, politics begins to affect the family affairs. The son and father hold to two different ideologies. As a nationalist Muslim, Hamid calls the Muslim League communal. Saleem thinks that the Congress is an anti-Muslim organization. The novel provides remarkable insights into the socio-political attitudes of the Muslim during the partition with admirable objective.

In *Tamas* (1974), Bhisham Sahni presents realistic and vivid picture of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 at the time of the partition. The entire sub-continent was in the grip of a reign of bloodshed, terror and communal violence. The novelist very artistically describes and narrates the facts and incidents
responsible for this most unpleasant experience of the people of this sub-continent. The religious sentiments of both the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities are exploited and millions of people are rendered homeless.

Bhisham Sahni was an eyewitness to the riots in a small town in the North-West Frontier Province now in Pakistan. Sahni’s *Tamas* (1974) is remarkable for its unbiased portrayal of communal fanaticism and crippling effects of the partition on individuals. It is pointed out that the progressive, secular and national perspective of the writer is reflected in this entire works in general, but it finds its best expression in *Tamas*.

Bapsi Sidhwa is an author of Pakstani origin who writes in English. The writer belongs to Parsee family in Lahore. She narrates the story of the Indian partition, as she witnesses Hindu, Muslims, Christians, Parsees and Sikhs fighting for their land and their lives. The story is composed of different elements through group of characters from various social-economic, ethnic and religious. Bapsi Sidhwa reveals the violence of partition has serrated the roots of people of different communities, irrespective of ideology, friendship and rational ideas. The writer explores and consequences of communal riots at the partition time. The character Lenny realizes many problems of the events when her young Nanny or Ayah is kidnapped.

Bapsi Sidhwa artfully portrays the effect partition on the lives of ordinary citizens. She reveals the extent of human capacity
for brutality compassion and resilience. *Cracking India* depicts existence in a truncated India and a newly emerged Pakistan.

*A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry depicts the corrupt and brutal government. During the state of emergency, the country is on the edge of chaos.

The four characters form and unlikely alliance. Two tailors uncle and nephew have come to the city in flight from the cruel caste violence in their native village. A middle aged widow desperately tries to preserve her fragile independence and a young student from the northern mountains.

Rohinton Mistry creates unforgettable characters and vast social panorama. The novel gives us a vivid picture of life for member of the untouchable caste in remote villages.

The key theme of *Difficult Daughters* is the search for control over one’s destiny. Two events run parallel to each other in the novel. It refers to the independence aspired to and obtained by a nation, with a fateful partition. It is also the independence aspired by the protagonist, Virmati.

Virmati, a young woman born into a strict and high-minded household, falls in love with a neighbor, the professor a man who is already married. That the professor eventually marries Virmati, installs her in his home alongside his furious first wife and helps her pursue is education. Virmati herself finds that the battle for her own independence has created irrevocable lines of partition and pain around her. *Difficult Daughters* realistically captures the
lives of women from three different generations Kasturi, Virmati, and Ida.

Partition novels show historical as well as political concerns. It narrates the course of political events and the rise and fall of the leaders. It is a story of viceroys, princes, leaders and common human beings. But it is the fictional representation of events which holds up mirror to its human dimension.

_The Dark Dancer_ occupies an important place in the history of Indian novel in English. The partition was a political decision, which had given the people the miseries and suffering. Balchandra Rajan’s novel provides a unique insight into one of the major political catastrophes of this country. _The Dark Dancer_ has a political dimension. Here, the novelist presents the significance of political freedom from different point of view: the elitist view and the view of the common man. For elite a rule is important and for the common man safety and security are important.

The freedom struggle had given a unified identity to the people who suddenly find that after Independence they get separated and divided and more than anything else displaced in their own land. The major problem, therefore, faced by the Indians during this period was self-definition, defining their roles under a different political ideology. The political freedom does not necessarily bring individual freedom with it. This sudden change in the pattern of life comes as a shock and builds the pressure on the minds of the intellectually sensitive people. It causes a sense of withdrawal and constant uncertainty about their roles in the society.
which is supposed to be free but totally shaken with the confused mass of common people who strive to shape their destinies.

In *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, political impact is very important. The growth of nationalism and struggle for independence semiotically equates with women’s struggle in the novel. The political movement initially focuses the mobilization of the Congress party and later on the Khilafat movement did not discriminate between communities. Political goal was to free the country.

The member of the Talukdar family contemplates on the condition of Muslims in India and the politics about them. While uncle Hamid supports Congress, Saleem supports the Muslim League. Uncle Hamid criticizes Muslim League of being communal and Saleem ironically remarks, congress has a strong anti Muslim elements. Son and father hold to two different ideologies.

The novel depicts the political background of those confused times of pre-Independence and post-Independence era and depicts the predicament, condition and pitiable outlook of the Muslims.

The first part of *Tamas* deals with communal politics, how upper class people whip up communal frenzy and the mischief of both Hindus and Muslims. The second part deals with the impact of Partition on individuals. Nathu has been asked by Murad Ali to fetch a dead pig. Later dead pig is found outside the mosque of the town. This fans the communal passions and violences. The
situation takes a political turn and the political parties jump to encase the moment. *Tamas* can be called a political text because it deals with the consequences of political decision and the rivalry between political parties. People are unaware of the agenda of the politicians. It is shown in the novel that the masses feel helpless over these developments and lament the consequences of political decisions. *Cracking India* is also a political text which shows the consequences of political decisions.

Through *Cracking India* Bapsi Sidhwa as a Pakistani writer, observes that M.K. Gandhi has been deified by Indian and British historians. It is a serious political novel. There are three stands in the novel namely political, narrative and the child narrator. It contains enough information about local and national politics and leaders. The Parsi community is seen to be in a fix over the question of loyalty. Its Leaders are not able to decide whether to support swaraj or to remain loyal to the throne. Bapsi Sidhwa shows the Parsi community pondering over choices to support independence movement or to remain loyal to the Raj. A number of Parsis like Colonel Bharucha, Lenny’s father and Dr. Mody support the nationalists. Some people advise to observe the developments on the political arena. In the meeting, the Parsis agree to be on the side of the ruler, whether British or Indians. It turns out to be a resolution of self interest. Here the Parsi community is shown as lacking political participation in Indian independence movement. In the narrative of *Cracking India*, one finds references to the names of political leaders like Mahatma

Bapsi Sidhwa also paints a vivid picture of the political scenario when the nationalists were struggling to break the shackles of slavery.

The lives of common people in post-independent India, *A Fine Balance* captures the socio-political cultural turmoil of this period. Mistry achieves the remarkable feat of mixing historical slices with their personal lives and attempts to portray the reality of India by weaving together four worlds in the fabric of the novel. The first is middle class, urban world of Dina Dalal, a pretty window in her forties. Then there is a glimpse into rural India provided by Ishwar Darji and his nephew Omprakash-Chamars who liberate themselves from caste stereotypes by becoming tailors in Bombay. There is another world symbolized by Maneck Kohlah, a sensitive Parsi body, whose perambulations bring the readers occasionally into the predatory world of the university student.

The novel is as much about the shared lives of these four major characters, which at one stage live under the same roof, as it is about their separate entities.

Manju Kapur’s novel is set in a social-political framework and the focus of the novelist is on the turbulent events of pre independent India. Virmati’s character develops according to the social conditions and changes that take place around her.
The politics of partition of the Indian continent is incorporated in symbolically and actually. It’s symbolic presentation is found in the division within Lala Diwan Chand family. His first son’s wife, Lajawanti, sows the seeds of the family partition. Since she has only two children, she becomes intolerant of her co-sister, Kasturi as she has eleven children. She feels that there is inequality in enjoying the fortunes of the joint family. She coaxes her husband to demand for the partition of the family.

Balchandra Rajan is a writer with a strong historical sense. He is a creative writer as well. He is a novelist with a sense of historicity. His *The Dark Dancer* deals with historical past.

The novel depicts an important phase in the political history of India—the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947.

In *The Dark Dancer*, Balchandra Rajan chooses that period in the Indian history which provides the background of the crumbling of an Empire and the birth of a nation, a painful process in which the individuals get crushed and paralyzed.

*Sunlight on a Broken Column* deals historical background and the most tumultuous period of India’s history. In 1919, Jalianwala massacre took place. Khilafat movement was followed during 1919-1922 with a cry for Hindu-Muslim Unity. The novel covered a socio-politically turbulent period of Indian history from 1932 to 1952.

Bhisham Sahni’s *Tamas* address all aspects of the history of partition. It deals with the various issues of partition with a sense
of balance and impartiality. Murad Ali, the self-seeking politician of small town decoys the poor sweeper Nathu to kill a pig. Without telling him the real reason, he then gets the dead pig thrown on the steps of a mosque with a view to create a communal tension in the town to indicate that the Muslims cannot live in peace with the Hindus. The novel tries to recapture the history of partition and the human tragedy. While narrating the story, Sahni maintains an objective approach. Though he has suffered from inside during the partition, he depicts a balanced view of things. He touches upon the problems of loss of identity.

A novel in the Indian sub-continent has been written on the theme of the partition of India. This unforgettable historical moment has been captured as horrifying by the novelist.

Here one finds the worst kind of genocide in the history of mankind. *Cracking India* 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 heartrending scene 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. The colourful streets of Lahore looked ominously dreadful and deserted. The Hindus are still reluctant to leave their ancestral property where their generations have lived and proposed. Now they visualize a future devoid of any hope. These painful experiences are like the agonizing 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 agonizing experience in history. The novel is a major novel on the partition which treats history of both India and Pakistan.

In *A Fine Balance*, the political historical dimensions of the novel are also obvious. The novel is a saga that spans the momentous events of India’s history from the turbulent times of the country’s Partition. *A Fine Balance* is not merely a political novel. Mistry succeeds in interweaving national history with the personal lives of the protagonists. Thus, the novel has historical background.

*Difficult Daughters* is a social realism of the classical type. Kapur’s writing delineates the human relations and their social context with great sensibility and close attention to the details of daily life. Kapur beautifully entwined the major historical event with the lives of her characters and depicts the political situation with the same fervour and graphic detail as she describes the protagonist. The history of partition was a history of deep violation-physical and mental for women.

Historically, novelist writes against the backdrop of the Indian Freedom Movement, the Partition of India and the war between Allied and Axis forces. Altogether it delicately tenders a threadbare analysis of modern dynamics of man-woman relationship particularly in Indian social background.
It can be said that the partition of the Indian sub-continent was the single most traumatic experience in recent history. The violence it unleashed by the hooligan action of a few fanatics, the vengeance that the ordinary Hindus, Muslims and Sikh wrecked on each other worsened social sense, distorted political judgment.

The real sorrow of the partition, however, as portrayed in the novels under review, that it brought to an abrupt end a long and communally shared history and cultural heritage.

Balchandra Rajan’s manner of characterization is a remarkable feature of his art. His characters are V.S. Krishnan, Kamala, and Cynthia Bainbridge.

The characters delineate frustrations, lostness, uprootedness and helplessness in the face of the destructuring of one power and the restructuring of the other. The extinction of one power and the emergence of the other power condition the characters. The three characters in *The Dark Dancer*, who are of real interest to us, are V.S. Krishnan, Kamala and Cynthia Bainbridge. The problem may seem to be one of love tangle. Everyone is on a higher than normal key. Most characters, including minor ones, strain under the effort of their solos, and sometimes they tend to balance precariously or too long on their special note.

There are different religious groups on the basis of shared history and shared cultural experience. There is a remarkable strength in Attia Hosain’s art of characterization. The novel begins with Baba Jan on his deathbed. In the novel Baba Jan,
Thakur Balbir Singh, Raja Hasan Ahmed of Amirpur and Laila is central character in the novel. There are several characters in the novel, Abida and Najida and Majid’s seventeen years old daughter Zahra.

In Tamas, Sahni present a veritable portrait gallery of characters. Sahni’s characterization shows his insight and a wonderful understanding of human nature. There are characters like, Bakshiji, Jarnail Singh, Shahawaz, Harman Singh and also persons like Murad Ali, Ehsan Ali Ramzan. These two set of characters belong to the life supporting groups and the second one believe in selfish fulfillment. The division between the characters belonging to the rich class of society and the lower class is clearly visible in the narrative. It is found that the rich irrespective of religion and creed helped each other as is illustrated by the friendship of Shahnwaz Khan and Lata Laxmi Narayan. Bhisham Sahni also introduces characters like Richard and Liza who are a part of the colonial rule. The characterization in Tamas is highly convincing and imparts a thematic unity to the structure of the novel.

Bhisham Sahni pauses for a moment when he introduces characters like Richard, Vanprasthiji, Harman Singh, Banto, Rajo, Iqbal Singh, Murad Ali and Ranveer avoids the psychological analysis. It is due to the nature of the action that the event lacks the subjective analysis. The novelist has to report about hundreds of people engaged in a battle for survival. Sahni accomplished the task of containing and reporting a large number of events.
artistically. The episodic plot of the novel makes it an interesting study. Though the large number of characters and events hinder the uniform movement in the plot, yet the narrative does not lose its interest till the last leaf is turned over.

*Cracking India* is a novel of upheaval which includes a cast of characters from all communities Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis. This novel serves as a prism of Parsis sensitivity through which the cataclysmic event is depicted. It is the only novel written by a Parsi on the theme of partition.

The novel *Cracking India* brings out Sidhwa’s qualities as a prolific writer, heightened sense of story and character and her moral vision of her community. Astute characterization is a trait of Sidhwa’s writing style.

Mistry’s characters are in any way able to change the power balance which in the first place made their marginalization and silencing possible. In fact they appear to maintain the titular ‘fine balance’ between the exploiter and the exploited.

Mistry’s novel is composed for the most part of middle-class to lower-middle class citizens as well as subalterns, the homeless poor, the working class and the rural migrants. Most of his characters are seen battling annihilating forces in difficult social context.

*Difficult Daughters* has a large number of characters. They are businessman, educationists, political activists, servants, etc. Several male characters like Virmati’s father, grandfather,
uncles, friends and above all her husband, Harish come from real day to day life. There are a host of women characters in the novel. Virmati’s five sisters her aunt, her cousin’s mother-in-law and her friends at Lahore and several other women are shown representing their respective class. Some of them are very traditional, husband fearing and orthodox types.

Though there are a good number of characters in the novel, it is Virmati, the protagonist, who is the only important character in the novel. Virmati, though a central character in the novel, is not more than any ordinary Indian woman. Her revolutionary nature is the only characteristic that is worth praising.

Balchandra Rajan understands human nature and uses social language in *The Dark Dancer*. It is surprising in this context to note that the novel, for all its traditional narrative mode, is highly poetical. One could even suggest that it could be more usefully read as a longer poem where images, symbols, thought patterns and themes rear with renewed connotation, where we seem to be moving simultaneously in the past as well as the present, ‘realizing’ the momentum gathered at every moment. Language in fiction bears a complex relationship both to the internal structure of a novel and to a variety of external situations. One does not read a novel merely for its story or the development of a character. Verbal structure is an integral part of prose fiction and often acts as a powerful symbolic device to explore human relationship, to reveal a character or to project the precise quality of experience.
Sunlight on a Broken Column is the autobiographical novel that allows personal experience to provide the narrative both momentum and also make it impersonal. There is a parallel between the events of the novel and the life of Hosain against the backdrop of the freedom struggle.

Even the narrative technique makes Sunlight on a Broken Column one of the few novels where the partition of India has been presented in all its aspects-political religious, social and personal. It enables the novelist to give a realistic description of the traditional way of life among the Muslims in India while drawing most of the characters from the higher echelons of the Muslim aristocracy in India.

Bhisham Sahni’s style has a wide range and variety. Sahni has a good grip of language that enables him to handle different emotions and situations in an arresting manner. With his brilliant mastery of language, he can evoke a sense of horror as in the case of the arresting description of Nathu’s killing the pig or the description of Ranveer’s initiation as a ‘warrior’, youth wing by Master Dev Vrat by making him kill a ‘white’ hen. He has the right word and right phrase for describing the presentation of Iqbal Singh and religious fanaticism turning into animalism in hands of his victimizers like Ramazan, Nur Din and others.

Bhisham Sahni uses the local Hindi, Urdu, Panjabi or Sanskrit words, which lends a realistic touch to his style. He uses words such as Naya Mohalla, Kuccha, prabhat pheri etc. He uses words like Chamar, Jamadar etc. They appear instead of translating.
them in English which makes his style artificial. Sahni uses the pidgin English and naturalizes it very skillfully. His use of local words as such in his sentences provides a typical Indian atmosphere to his characters and story conveyed through them.

*Cracking India* by Sidhwa’s employs the narrative strands. In her narrative strategy, she makes use of a child narrator. The story is told from a child’s point of view. When the novel opens, the narrator Lenny is eight years old and suffers from polio. The child narrator records the incidents relating to the partition. The device of the child narrator enables Sidhwa treat the holocausts of partition. As the narrative progresses, history moves to the background and struggle for survival becomes the focus of the narrative.

Narrative like *Cracking India* transports readers back into the corridors of time. Sidhwa’s narrative skills are rather unsophisticated. Though she rewriters the history and tries to present cruelties of history in almost all her novels, she has a brilliant sense of humour. Laughter does so many things for us. It has the quality of Exposing wrongs and gets rid of anger and excitement. Sidhwa is a notable writer because of her sharp wit and ability to blend humour with social realism. She believes humour brings balance in life. In all her novels *An American Brat, The Crow Eaters, The Pakistani Bride* and *Cracking India*, Sidhwa uses parody, wit, humour, irony and hilarious language to present various themes.
Sidhwa uses language as a source of humour and contrast of cultures. She interweaves satirical fiction, wit and humour to depict historical facts, which she has witnessed as a child. In her novel, *Cracking India*, Lenny, eight years old girl is a narrator.

Rohinton Mistry’s novel, *A Fine Balance* with the narrative spanning the pre and post colonial India highlights the period of Emergency imposed by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. Another portrayal of life during Emergency shows how absolute power can corrupt a leader absolutely in the name of restoring peace and order in the country.

The narrative here highlights another perspective of Indian reality, i.e. gender discrimination and asserts that every aspect of society is ‘gendered’ conferring specific advantages to men and disadvantage to women.

Rohinton Mistry’s language is typically the language of a Parsi gentleman. Though he has been living at Toronto in Canada since 1975, his English is very much Indian. Mistry’s fiction focuses on the Parsi identity. It also reveals how Parsis are learning to cope with the reality of postcolonial India and how they are coming to terms with their new lives in the west. Like other postcolonial Indian writers, he also uses the form of alternative narratives and employs anti-realist modes of narration.

Manju Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* is a traditional linear narrative, representational in character. It begins with a funeral scene from this end the narrative moves to the beginning. Located primarily in the India of the 1940s Manju Kapur speaks of the idea
of independence aspired to and obtained by a nation and also independence yearned after by a woman. The novel movingly evokes the multiple frustrations encountered by the central character, Virmati, in her efforts to educate herself and establish a domestic space. While in the generation of Kasturi, women’s role was confined to child bearing and kitchen work. The generation of Virmati takes some bold and radical steps in joining the political movement for India’s freedom. Ida is the narrator through whose voice Virmati’s tale is told. It is a tale from a present day perspective, by Ida who seeks to reconstruct her late mother’s life story.

Manju Kapur has made sincere effort in making her novels realistic and appealing through the use of her chutinified language incorporating English, Hindi and Panjabi words. Her language fascinates the readers and captivates them to identify with the characters.

Manju Kapur has indeed created sensation in the literary world by voicing the inner tribulations of her protagonists in an emphatic manner. Manju Kapur has amply brought regional influences in her writings showcasing the prominence of Indianization in the individuals. Manju Kapur’s novels are full of instances of Indianization of vocabulary, loan translation, use of repetition and linguistic creativity. Her novel incorporates a number of Hindi and Panjabi words, phrases and expressions. She voices her joys and hopes by using colorful words of colloquial Punjabi and creates a wonderful cultural context for her novel.
Where words from the vernacular are concerned, the novel abounds with such borrowings. They are from different languages. Hindi primarily, but also Panjabi as well. The words may be categorized under several lexical fields, such as names of food items, names of Gods, other Hindi and Urdu words, Indianism, Indian words and expressions, and translations of Indian expressions.

The title *The Dark Dancer* is fully integrated with the theme. By using the symbol of Shiva as the Dark Dancer, the novelist emphasizes the fact that all the powers of creation, preservation, and destruction are combined and contained in one fold. This tends to bring out the essentials of Indian cultural which has all the three powers of destruction, creation, and preservation in its values.

The title of the novel *Tamas* is also significant. The word *Tamas* means darkness. The novel explores a series of incidents that occurred in 1947, when partition and independence went on concurrently. While Gandhiji warned Independence without any division of India, the Muslim League led by Jinnah was keen to have a separate identity for Muslims and carve a new Muslim nation, Pakistan. In this novel, Bhisham Sahni depicts the pre-partition riots which caused a big divide between the communities who have long lived together peacefully. Bhisham Sahni has used the title of the novel to illustrate the battle between the beastly and humanitarian forces. The title of the novel in this sense becomes
more suggestive and meaningful. It aptly conveys some idea about the nature of the theme of the novel.

The title *Cracking India* is symbolic of the character of the politicians of partition. When the novel appeared in 1988 in London, its original title was *Ice Candy Man*. In the 1991 America edition changed it to *Cracking India*. It was thought that the expression “Ice Candy” would be confused with drugs by the America. However, its original title *Ice Candy Man* is more communicating. The title bears political connotations. The word “icy” points to unstable quality of the politicians who were engaged in determining the fate of the nation. In their outlook, they appeared to be icy and slippery. They were not firm and consistent in their political views. They did not maintain a stable character. They changed their decisions from time to time. They were just like the *Ice Candy Man* who changed his roles in frequent manner. When there was a fall in the sale of *Ice Candy Man* in the cold weather, he changed his profession and became a birdman that took pride in deceiving his customers.

The title *A Fine Balance* is struck by opening the book with the stoppage of the suburban train service because of suicide by an unidentified character and closing the book with a similar stoppage of train service due to a suicide by one of the main young aspiring characters whose dreams of India are shattered so badly that he decided to commit suicide.

The very title of the novel is assertive. By placing the adjective ‘difficult’ before ‘daughter’, the author sends a signal that
characters in the novel are not soft and pliable. They are not likely to yield to pressures familial and social, and are sure to carve out the unconventional course that meets their aspirations. They are for daring choices in the unkind world.