

Chapter - I

THE PARTITION : THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

I

The partition of India in 1947 was the most fateful incident in the history of Indian freedom struggle. It played a very critical role in the Indian sub-continent. The Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims who struggled against the British unitedly for a considerably long period, turned one another's enemies. Tens of thousands of men from both the sides were massacred, an equal number of women raped and abducted, children mutilated, property destroyed. Communalism of both kinds - Hindu and Muslim - was responsible for this carnage of thousands of innocent people. But it was the Muslim communalism launched by Jinnah's two-nation theory that gave birth to the evil of partition.

According to Manmath Nath Das, a well-known historian, the responsibility of the unfortunate decision of partition falls on the

"Upper class Muslim elite which feared Hindu domination over a Muslim minority at the end of the British rule."¹

Though the sub-continent was partitioned in 1947, the Muslim leaders had begun pressing their demand for a separate Muslim State ever since 1867 when Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, claimed "It is now impossible for Hindus and Moslems to progress as a single nation", and in 1882 he

stated that, "All individuals joining the fold of Islam, together constitute a Nation of the Muslims."² It was the British who made them prone to the separatist tendencies by creating separate electorates for different classes. It was then that Choudhary Rahmat Ali, a youth studying at London, thought over the problem seriously and coined the nomenclature, Pakistan, indicating almost all North-western Frontiers : 'P' standing for Punjab, 'A' for Afghan, 'K' for Kashmir, 'S' for Sind and 'Tan' for Baluchistan. Thus, he coined the term 'Pakistan' which meant the 'land of the pure'. In his thesis he lavishly criticised the Muslim League and its leaders. He discarded their policy and asked them to come out of the Indian sub-continent. It was Rahmat Ali who alarmed the Indian Muslims by saying that Islam was in danger and to save Islam they should have their own nation. In this way were the seeds of separatist tendencies sown by the visionaries like Rahmat Ali and tended by the leaders like Jinnah.

The poet, Muhammad Iqbal, another visionary of separatist tendencies, also realized that in order to solve the problems of the Indian Muslims, it was necessary to redistribute the country and to provide one or more Muslim States with absolute majorities. In 1937, Iqbal wrote a letter to Jinnah asking him whether he did not think that the time for such a demand was ripe. According to him, it was the fitting reply Jinnah could give to Nehru's

'atheistic socialism.' He also hoped that it was Jinnah who was able to discover some way out of the difficulties of the Muslims.

In these days Jinnah was not recognised yet as a political force. At the polls, early in 1937, the Congress won a substantial victory by securing 716 legislatures out of 1161 which the party had contested. The Congress secured a clear majority in six provinces out of eleven and it evolved as the largest single party in three other provinces. On the contrary, the Muslim League won only 109 of the 482 seats securing 4.8 per cent of the total Muslim votes. It did not get a clear majority in any of the Muslim-majority provinces. Thus, the Muslim voters rejected to vote the communal Muslim League. This disturbed Jinnah. The blow Jinnah received by his own men was too terrible for a hot-headed man like him. The Congress, too, suffered a lot : it received a set-back in the provinces like Sind and the Punjab. But the Congress leaders became sure that they could take the Muslims out of their communal barriers and lead them in the national movement under the banner of the Congress. In this way, the elections of 1937 proved very helpful to the Congress while harmful to the future of the Muslim leaders. But the

Communal leaders saw in the Congress more a threat to their very existence. They felt that, unless they organised themselves like the Congress and regained

their popularity with the masses, they might get up one fine morning to find that the Congress had walked away with their flock."³

Consequently, the Congress leaders refused to accept Jinnah as the leader of the Muslims or negotiate with him for forming a coalition government. Nehru did not consider the reactionary League worth recognising as a partner in politics. He declared that the future contests lay between the British and the Congress. Thus, Nehru underrated all parties except the Congress.

However, this calculation of Nehru proved very unfortunate in the history of Indian politics. It was because of this attitude of Nehru and the Congress that the humiliated Jinnah found out the catchword 'Pakistan'. He began to win over the Muslims through religious and emotional programmes rather than political ones. The emotionalism made him the greatest leader of the 'Muslims' since Aurangzeb. Thenceforward, Jinnah kept on reiterating his demand for Pakistan. Thus, the old Jinnah who was the disciple of G.K. Gokhale and the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity who once had remarked, "I am an Indian first, and a Muslim afterwards,"⁴ set upon a radically different mission.

However, the World War II gave a very different turn to the Indian politics. In March 1940, Jinnah shocked India by giving a call to free the Muslim majority areas

from the slavery of the future Indian government. He also requested the British to give them a separate Muslim State if they wanted to restore peace and happiness in the Indian sub-continent. To put it in his words,

"the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Western Zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."⁵

This proclamation at the Lahore session of the Muslim League widened the rift between the Hindus and the Muslims. The British Viceroy was elated by all this. It was then on 8th August 1942 that Gandhi asked the British to quit India. He urged the Muslims and the Hindus that they should first have the original Hindustan and then fight for Pakistan and India. The Muslims, however, did not respond to the call of Gandhi. The Muslim League criticised the Congress and the movement. The leaders also asked the Muslims to remain aloof from the movement which was useless for them. Winston Churchill was very happy over the widening rift between the major communities of India. It was due to Jinnah and his followers that Churchill declared at Delhi in September 1942 that the

"Congress does not represent India and ninety millions of Mussalmans are fundamentally opposed to the Congress.

I have already expressed my views about the Congress movement. It is not possible to defend the indefensible. I particularly want to emphasize that this is not merely a declaration of war against the British and the Government, but it is a war against the Muslim League."⁶

This resulted in Jinnah's helping the British to crush the Quit India Movement so that he could demand his price in terms of the British help for the creation of Pakistan.

According to Cyril Henry Philips, a well-known historian,

"----- there was nothing inevitable about the partition. It was not delivered from the womb of time but had its start and early course between 1937 and 1942 in the politics and decisions of men who might have chosen differently. By 1945 it was a movement of ideas, ambitions, greed and rancour (both political and personal), a river in full flow by 1946, it had become a moving torrent tearing great holes in the fabric of society and administration and no man or group of men could then have stopped it. All of the major parties - the British, the National Congress, the Muslim League - bear a heavy responsibility for what was on any reckoning, short or long-term disaster, a reckless squandering of the fruits of the hard-won British raj."⁷

The ground for the impending danger of partition

was thus prepared by the Muslim leaders well in advance. Viceroy Wavel had also prepared the design of the division of the Indian sub-continent. It was some two years prior to the arrival of Mountbatten the partition of the sub-continent was finalised. In 1945, the British Government asked the Congress to form Interim Government which, however, proved to be a failure due to the non-cooperation of Jinnah and his insisting upon taking more and more Muslim executives in the Interim Government. In the meantime, Churchill was replaced by Attlee and the hopes of the nationalists were revived.

Matters had become too critical for Churchill's Ministry to find out any solution to the problem. Hence they did not take up the problem for an immediate solution : they decided to study Jinnah's demand and its repercussions on the Congress. Not realising the difficulty in solving the problem, Jinnah kept on demanding Kashmir, Punjab, Bengal and Assam. The Punjabis, on the other hand, warned the British Viceroy that if they were forcibly included in Pakistan, there would be nothing but bloodshed. Assam had no Muslim majority except in the Silhet district. There was, thus, no meaning in the vague demand of Jinnah, who was still adamant. The Hindu Mahasabha and Master Tara Singh challenged Jinnah's claims and threatened Attlee with a very serious and violent reaction in the Hindu-majority provinces. By this time Jinnah had emerged the most popular

leader of the Muslims.

Attlee and his cabinet could not take any decision acceptable to both the parties. They tried to avoid the anticipated serious consequences in the Indian sub-continent. Attlee himself was convinced that 99 per cent of the Muslim population of India supported Jinnah in their apprehension of Hindu-domination. However, the Breakdown Plan of Navei containing two main points was submitted to the Government : the points being

- 1) If the Muslims insisted on self-determination in genuinely Muslim areas, this must be given, and
- 2) There could be no question of compelling large non-Muslim populations to remain in Pakistan against their will -

Attlee was also of the same opinion. He showed his readiness to give sovereignty to Pakistan in the Muslim - majority provinces but not in the Punjab, Assam and Bengal.

By January 1946, the Congress seemed to favour the partition, if it became inevitable. Except Gandhi, all leaders of the Congress were ready to accept it. In the meantime, Attlee appointed a Cabinet Mission which could not receive welcome as the situation had become worse. The Muslim League grew stronger than ever before. The relations between the Hindus and the Muslims became so strained that they viewed each other as enemies. In the

elections now the League won a considerable number of seats which again boosted up their morale.

The Congress analysed the results of the elections very differently. Mehru construed that a vote for the Muslim League was no vote for Pakistan. On this background and the Cripps Commission declared division of both the Punjab and Bengal. This, too, could not bear any fruits. Apprehended by the domination of the Congress leaders, Jinnah discarded every proposal and gave a call of "Direct Action Day" to be observed on 16th August 1946.

Jinnah, in spite of his sickness, made a historic declaration to the League Council by quoting a famous Persian poet, Firdousi,

"If you seek peace, we do not want war, but if you want war, we will accept it unhesitatingly."⁸

Thus, Jinnah severed off his relations with the Congress as well as the Interim Government. He and his party went on the mission of the "Direct Action Day" and thus inaugurated the bloody Indian Civil war. The great Calcutta Killings of that day showed the fight Jinnah was prepared for. In his interview with the writers of Mountbatten and the Partition of India, Mountbatten says to Gandhi,

"----- and don't forget Direct Action Day in Calcutta which was a warning of what he (Jinnah) could do (August 1946) - I mean he killed 5,000 people and wounded 15,000 people just as a

demonstration, and I think he has the capacity to cause Civil War if we don't meet him half-way."⁹

This great Calcutta Killings was followed by the communal killings in many other parts of the sub-continent. In Bombay and Allahabad, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, the Punjab and Kashmir this fire of communalism flared up so quickly that it became very difficult for the Viceroy to bring the situation under control. The Muslims butchered the Hindus and the Hindus massacred the Muslims. Tens of thousands of men, women and children became the victims of the observance of the Direct Action Day. It is on this background Gandhi requested Jinnah to become the Prime Minister of India and to avoid partition and violence. But it did not come true. In December 1946, Attlee invited the Indian leaders to England.

It was V.P. Menon, who, in his thesis published at the beginning of 1947, discarded the possibility of Cabinet Mission Plan of forming government and suggested that the country be divided rather than letting it in the lurch of a civil war. He also added that if the Congress agreed, Jinnah could not ask for the partition of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam.

When things had become worst, Attlee appointed Mountbatten as the new Viceroy of India. In fact, the decision of partition was already taken and the only work

left for the Viceroy was to convince the Indian leaders about the shape of Pakistan and India. Mountbatten, however, studied the problem in detail along with the Mountbatten Plan. Due to the force of circumstances, the Congress Party was coming round to accepting partition. In March 1947, they passed a resolution calling for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Gandhi, however, opposed to any kind of division of the sub-continent.

Thus, when Mountbatten arrived in India, this most difficult problem was almost solved. Now before him was the task of convincing Jinnah about the Pakistan he had demanded. The Viceroy met all Indian leaders. He found Nehru to be the most compromising personality and Jinnah 'a psychopathic case.'¹⁰ He also came to realise that when it became inevitable, the Congress also came round to accept partition.

Thereafter, the Viceroy, in his meeting with Jinnah made him to accept partition within partition i.e. the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Thus he reduced the size of the proposed Pakistan. Jinnah appealed to him frantically "not to give a moth-eaten Pakistan"¹¹ Mountbatten's shrewd comment was :

"I simply could not visualise being so inconsistent as to agree to the partition of India without also agreeing to partition within any Provinces in which the same problem arose."¹²

As a result of this firm stand taken by Mountbatten, Jinnah was stunned. The dream of 'his' Pakistan was shattered.

However, Liaquat Ali, the other important leader of the Muslim League accepted the plan of partition within partition when he declared,

"I would in no circumstances prevent Provinces from being partitioned if I accepted the principle of Pakistan."¹³

Being an intelligent Viceroy, Mountbatten had a clear idea about the Indian leaders. He tackled Jinnah very cleverly and outwitted him in no time. He also dealt with leaders like Gandhi and Patel very skillfully. Patel, however, blamed the British Government which encouraged Jinnah in his increasing demands. He told the Viceroy that,

"Jinnah would yet accept the Cabinet Mission Plan if the force of circumstances gave him no alternative."¹⁴

Mountbatten who gauged the consequences of partition wanted to prove that the British were not responsible for it. In April 1947, he informed the Secretary of State that partition had become inevitable. All this goes to prove that the responsibility of partition goes to Jinnah and his Muslim League. Though the Congress tried to avoid the partition, it became inevitable due to the acts and moves taken by the Leaguers.

Acharya Kripalani and Nehru showed their readiness for the partition. By the end of April 1947,

Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Constituent Assembly, announced his acceptance of partition in principle. Thus Jinnah, was in a most disturbed and frustrated mood due to the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. He tried to argue with Mountbatten, who scolded both the parties very sternly. On 30th April 1947, the draft of partition was presented to Jinnah who rejected it straightaway. He charged the British of dishonesty and insincerity. By that time, however, the Viceroy had finalised his Plan of Partition. But before that, on 28th April, The Statesman printed the confidential news of partition and caused a tremendous sensation throughout the sub-continent. The Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims all were disturbed by the contents of the Plan.

In the second week of May, Mountbatten went to Simla to finalise his plan of partition. It was at Simla that he received a few modifications in his plan, according to it the British Government wanted to form some new independent kingdoms. It was nothing but a poor fragmentation of India, Nehru, however, very strongly opposed any change that affected India. Mountbatten, too, did not approve of it. He communicated the reactions of the Congress leaders to Attlee who called him to London at once.

By then Jinnah put forth his demand for a corridor from Pakistan to Bengal. This demand was also rejected by the Congress. But it disturbed the Viceroy's

discussion with ^{the} British Prime Minister. On 1st May, Mountbatten returned to India along with the approved plan of partition. As soon as he arrived, he briefed the plan to all his governors. He did not want to give any opportunity to any Indian leader to interfere in it. He had also feared of bloodshed and massacre on a large scale. He wanted to avoid all that.

On 2nd June, the Congress and the muslim leaders and the Viceroy along with his staff assembled at the Viceroy's House in New Delhi to decide the destiny of the Indian sub-continent. Nehru and Jinnah reluctantly accepted the Plan as it was inevitable. Mountbatten feared only Gandhi's reaction, who reportedly lay in bed musing in low voice,

"Today I find myself all alone. Even the Sardar and Jawaharlal think that my reading of the situation is wrong and peace is sure to return if partition is agreed upon ... They did not like my telling the Viceroy that ever if there was to be partition, it should not be through British intervention or under British rule ... Let it not be said that Gandhi was party to India's vivisection."¹⁵

On 3rd June, the Viceroy announced the Plan over All India Radio. Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh, too, followed suit. Thus the plan of partition was announced even before they had Gandhi's consent.

Attlee got the Bill passed in the House of Commons. He told the House that as the Indian leaders had failed to agree upon a united India, partition had become the 'inevitable alternative.'

On 4th June, Mountbatten declared the possible date of India's Independence as 15th August. Mountbatten named it as 'The Gandhi Plan' due to the advice and suggestions given by him. Gandhi had asked him to leave to the Indian people the choice of their own future. Hence, the Viceroy had given an opportunity to the Indian people to decide their future. In this way, though Gandhi never offered his support, he never opposed the Viceroy's plan openly. There lies the success of the mischievous and hard-won plan of Mountbatten.

But after the plan was accepted, the communal killings and bloodshed became the order of the day. The massacre reached its climax. The Hindus and the Sikhs living in Muslim-majority provinces were butchered mercilessly and the Hindus and the Sikhs took revenge by killing the Muslims. History witnessed a very fatal and fateful period in those days. The situation had gone beyond control even before the transfer of power. The Legislative Assemblies of the Punjab and Bengal voted for partition while Sind and Baluchistan decided to join Pakistan.

On 15th July, Attlee Government passed the Bill of granting Independence to India and Pakistan thus :

"As from the fiftieth day of August, nineteen hundred and forty-seven, two independent Dominions shall be set up in India, to be known respectively as India and Pakistan."¹⁶

In this way the Plan of Partition was prepared, passed and executed by the British Government which left the Indian sub-continent in the most fateful and agonising condition.

II

As a critic like W.H. Hudson says "Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it ..."¹⁷ it is a reflection of human life, in all its vicissitudes. The historic event of partition has naturally been reflected in the realistic form of literature viz. the novel. The novelists depict how the political imbroglio of the forties triggered off suspicion and hatred among the communities which led to the massacre of innocent people of both sides. What is probably reassuring from a study of these novels is the triumph of individual love, irrespective of religious fanaticism and personal heroism in rescuing humanity from utter despair.

Some of these novelists such as Kushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, K.S. Duggal, Amrita Pritam seem to have been actually involved in this historic event. They have narrated their stories as eye-witnesses to the holocaust of partition. They look at partition from a humanistic

point of view - giving vent to the human agony and suffering rather than apportioning the blame for partition in a direct way. In the ultimate analysis, what mattered was the tremendous loss of life, property and the death of humanity.

These novelists have selected their characters mainly from the middle class as also from different walks of life. They also present different attitudes and different opinions at the prospect of partition. The Indian novelists in English are concerned with these attitudes and opinions in their novels.

The political theme of partition, thus, has gained the significance of a historical event. And so these novels remind us of and are as much important as the 1857 Mutiny novels. Great events in history have always inspired the novelists throughout the world to write novels on them. For instance, Tolstoy dealt with the Napoleonic Wars in his world-famous novel War and Peace and Dickens wrote his A Tale of Two Cities on the background of the French Revolution. Similarly, the 1857 Mutiny in India provided a number of English novelists to attempt to recreate the spirit and time of the Mutiny and its effects on the English society in general. As Shailendra Dhari Singh has pointed out in his introduction to Novels on the Indian Mutiny (1973),

"Considering novels alone, there exist not less than fifty novels written by Englishmen and women about the Indian Mutiny."¹⁸

In fact, the 1857 Mutiny is supposed to be the first war of Indian freedom. Partition of the sub-continent into Hindustan and Pakistan in 1947 is an event of such magnitude that it is a surprise that there are actually only a few novels - not more than fifteen at best - that deal with the theme of partition. However, none of these novels could be considered as a great masterpiece like War and Peace, though, of course, all these novels in their own way recreate the situation of partition and its aftermath and they serve at least the purpose of documentation.

In his essay 'The Political Novel in Indian Writing in English' Dr. M.K. Naik says,

"Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan is a copy-book example. The story here befits any popular film ... Packed with incidents of rape and murder, loot and arson, spying and accidents, this tale of an accomplished story-teller degenerates into the meaninglessness of a melodrama. Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges is another political novel which is seasoned with melodramatic effects."¹⁹

He has taken Train to Pakistan and A Bend in the Ganges for his discussion. Dr. Naik has treated these novels as melodramatic and has not considered the deeper significance of these novels as they deal with the traumatic event of partition that has inspired the novelists. It is essentially the political upheaval causing the tragedy on

a massive scale which is the main theme of the novels, while, undoubtedly, there are melodramatic elements in both the novels, they also attempt an ideological analysis of the different sectors which led to the partition.

III

I intend to deal with four major novels which treat partition as the central theme. These novels are Train to Pakistan (1956) by Khushwant Singh, A Bend in the Ganges (1964) by Manohar Malgonkar, Asadi (1978) by Chaman Nahai and When Freedom Came (1982) by Sharif Askaridam where the theme of partition is a major preoccupation of the novelists. But there are not the only novelists who have been deeply affected by the stupendous historic event; and there are quite a few who have dealt with the theme of partition in their novels either marginally or incidentally. These are, for instance, R.K. Narayan's Waiting for the Mahatma (1955), Balchandra Rajan's The Dark Dancer (1959), Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961), Padmini Sengupta's Red Hibiscus (1962), Raj Gill's The Rape (1974), H.S. Gill's Ashes and Petals (1979), Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children (1980), K.A. Abbas's The World is My Village (1984), Mahmud Sirra's From the King's Throne (1985) and so on.

Even the novelists in regional languages have treated this theme in their novels. For instance, K.S. Duggal's Twice Born Twice Dead (1978), Amrita Pritam's

The Skeleton (1977), and Bhisham Sahani's Kites will Fly (1982) are also available in English translations. They provide a measure of comparison with the novels written in English.

I would like to take a brief survey of the novels in which the theme of partition occurs either marginally or incidentally with a view to gaining a wider perspective on the topic of my study. It will be a brief survey of the novels from 1955 to 1985. The novels are discussed chronologically.

R.K. Narayan is perhaps the earliest novelist to deal with the theme of partition. In his Waiting for the Mahatma (1955), we come across Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent agitation against the British. He succeeds in his mission but he is disheartened to see the communal killings, riots, massacre and several other inhuman atrocities that accompany the independence of the nation. R.K. Narayan has presented Gandhi as one of the characters of his novel. He has shown Gandhi visiting the partition-haunted area of the Indian sub-continent. The major part of the novel is, however, devoted to the Gandhian agitation against the British and to the love-affair of Bharati and Sriram. However, the theme of partition in this novel is extremely marginal.

Balchandra Rajan's The Dark Dancer (1959) is the first novel of this critic of Milton. Krishnan, the hero of the novel returns to India after his ten years stay in England. This novel is about his problems of adjustment on

his return to India. But the India he returns to is caught in the partition fever. Krishnan, however, marries Kamala and moves to a comfortable job at Delhi Secretariat.

He is happy in her company and with his service but then the atmosphere of the partition is oppressive and the coming of Cynthia, his Cambridge friend, changes the very course of his life. He is married to Kamala but attracted to Cynthia. Kamala goes to Shantihpur, the partition-affected city, and begins her life as a nurse. After a few days, Krishnan realises his mistake and he too, goes to Shantihpur. On way to Shantihpur and in Shantihpur itself, the communal poison is at its work. Kamala becomes the victim of partition, while attempting to save the life of a Muslim girl. Thus, "There are two clear strands in the story : the tragedy of Krishnan's marriage and the tragedy of partition."²⁰ These two strands are, however, linked with each other. It is the national tragedy of partition that causes a personal tragedy - ^{the} murder of Kamala.

Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961) is a story of a girl growing up in an upperclass Muslim family in Lucknow before and after independence. Laila, the narrator-heroine of the novel narrates the story of her family. This novel also deals with the theme of partition which has been a subject of discussion in the house of Laila. What is important here from the nationalistic point of view is the account of the national

movement separating the secular Muslim nationalists under the banner of Congress and the communal Muslims under the banner of Muslim League.

Laila, being a Muslim girl experiences everything at her home, She is, however, not a direct participant in either of the movements but she cannot remain aloof from it. She sees her near and dear ones opt for Pakistan and pass through the great national calamity of communal violence. Thus, the novel attempts at showing the holocaust of partition that results a large scale massacre and historic migration only as an outcome of the great freedom movement. This novel written by a Muslim novelist can be viewed from the Muslim angle. Here too we come across the League Muslims who follow the communal stand taken by the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah. The Congress-Muslims, however, oppose the partition and in the houses of Muslims too there is an artificial partition.

Padmini Sengupta's first novel Red Hibiscus (1962) deals with the theme of freedom-struggle and partition. It is, in fact, a moving tale of a reputed Bengali family - Dr. Bimal and his wife Kusum. It also deals with the problem of untouchability. It is as well the story of a girl caught between tradition and modernity.

The action of the novel begins in the pre-independence days and ends on the day of freedom, 15th August 1947, which is accompanied by the horror of partition. Padmini Sengupta portrays the ghastly things

happening in and around Calcutta. She has described the tension that prevails among the Hindus and Muslims. The call of Direct Action Day given by Jinnah opens the fury of hell in the entire Bengal, and kills thousands of Hindus, is also portrayed.

Raj Gill's novel, The Rape (1974) describes the political aspect of partition. It is a love story, set in a West Punjab village and its purpose is to describe how the small and sleepy village of the Punjab becomes aware of the impending freedom and the simultaneous partition of the country.

There are some similarities between The Rape and Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh. Like Train to Pakistan, the novel under discussion explains how the petty leaders from the towns and cities come to the villagers and enlighten them on the situation, incite them and prepare them for a fight against their Muslim brothers. Even the ex-soldiers of Subhash Babu's army come and train the people in warfare. The novel ends with the depiction of the whole region converted into a scene of loot, arson, rape and slaughter.

H.S. Gill's novel, Ashes and Petals (1979) describes the trauma and turbulence of post-partition India with an extraordinary intensity. The very opening of the novel is with the bloody scenes of partition. The first chapter 'The Train' portrays the horror, the massacre that takes place on the train bound for India.

K.S. Duggal's Twice Born Twice Dead (1979)

translated from its original Punjabi, is a powerful emotional document that communicates the trauma that people suffered during the dark and fateful days of partition, which was the most cataclysmic happening in recent Indian history.

The touching directness of the saga moves the reader many a time. The novelist very skilfully delineates the perverseness of people when the logic of insensate animality rules them. Even on such a background, too, we find characters like Sohno-Shah, Allah-ditta, Rajkarni, Satbharai and Kuldip, who represent human values of compassion and love. The novel is full of inhuman deeds committed by the people which the novelist shows with unmistakable authenticity.

Salman Rushdie's sensational novel, Midnight's Children (1980), covers the period of thirty years from August 1947 to 1977. The hero of the novel Salim, is born at the midnight hour of 15th August 1947, and hence is inextricably connected with the national history : "... I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country."²¹ The novel is written in three parts, and the action of the novel begins from the day of the Jallianwallah Bagh incident and ends on the end of the Emergency that was in India in 1977. In this novel also we have some occasional references to the tragedy of partition.

K.A. Abbas's recent novel The World Is My Village (1984) is written as a sequel to his novel Inquilab (1955). Anwar Ali, the Hindu-Muslim hero with a joint parenthood is a journalist. He marries Mahmooda and begins to live in Delhi. It is during these days that the Muslims of Delhi, living in Jama Masjid, Darya Gunj and other places, are attacked by Hindus. Abbas, however, looks at partition as one of the most fateful decisions taken by the Indian leaders. Some historical facts are also presented and Anwar and Bob, an American journalist, are shown visiting Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah and even Mountbatten, to get the details of the inside story of partition.

Mahmud Spira's first novel published under the title Pawn to King Three (1985), has been one of the most recent novels on the theme of partition. Set against the background of the terror-stricken days of partition, the novel also is a fast moving narrative of passion and intrigue of shady deals in high places, of trust and betrayal. It also narrates of those who play a still deadlier game in a world in which history has turned full circle and religion once-again an emotive force in power politics.

Pawn to King Three is the story of a survivor - a single small boy, Adnan, out of one of the bloodiest train-massacres that happens in Amritsar when the Lahore bound train is halted and almost all Muslim refugees are

killed. What is striking about the novel is that even after a lapse of thirty years, Mahmud Sipra's partition world seems to be fresh and realistic. This novel is written by a Pakistani writer where we can have the Pakistani attitude towards partition.

IV

What we observe from the study of these novels is that the historical fact of partition was the result of Muslim communalism which apparently left no choice for the Congress as 'faite accompli.' Many of the novelists like Khushwant Singh, Amrita Pritam, K.S. Duggal, Chaman Nahai, H.S. Gill, Raj Gill were born on the Indo-Pak border. Hence, their descriptions of the massacre and other cruelties have a ring of authenticity about them. Historical and philosophical attitudes emerge in Malgonkar who challenges the very philosophy of Gandhi's Ahimsa - He suggests that Ahimsa actually led to more violence than a full scale war of independence involving death and destruction.

All novelists find a tentative solution to the division of communities and conflicts - a fictional solution, romantic solution - love-affairs between Hindu or Sikh boy and Muslim girl or vice versa. The tendency of the novelists seems to concentrate on the physical vivisection of the Motherland which provides an opportunity to the writer to describe scenes in a melodramatic manner.

When Freedom Came seems to be a solitary example of a novel which does not deal with the partition of the

Muslim majority states directly but deals with the psychology of the Muslims living in big cities as well as small villages away from the scenes of violence. In fact, the action of the novel is far away from the actual bloody scene of partition. The novelist's concentration is on how the Muslim mind even in the remotest villages developed schism, how it felt betrayed and how it reconciled itself with the situation.

All in all the Indo-Anglian novelists who deal with the theme of partition appear to have dealt with it on a surface level and in a somewhat simplistic manner. These novelists have not been able to improve upon the Dickensian formula of the historical romance.