

**A Postcolonial study of Bapsi sidhwa’s “Ice candy Man”**

**Zohra Khatoon**

Ph.D Scholar Dept. of English

J.S University Shikhoabad U.P



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\* Corresponding author

**Abstract:-**

Postcolonial literature refers to writing from regions of the world that were once colonies of European powers .the term refers to a very broad swath of writing in many languages „but my emphasis in this class is on writings in English .The writers in this course come from quite different backgrounds , but they struggle with some similar issues ,chief among them being the legacy of colonialism -of European dominance postcolonial literature is of particular importance partly because much of it is stylistically original and different from earlier European literature. The best postcolonial literature aims to tell good, entertaining stories while seriously attempting to represent some of the most troubling conflicts and injustices imaginable. Postcolonial writers attempt to develop their own literary voices in regions of the world that may where literature and have been described in the colonial era as "primitive" or "savage" culture were considered absent or somehow illegitimate. The larger project of moving past this colonial legacy, what we might call the "decolonization" of writing, brings up a wide array of themes. In this course literature, politics, and social theory will be inextricable for the simple reason that the texts themselves are intensely concerned with social and political problems. The postcolonial experience has been extremely violent and complex, with new forms of oppression and violence.

Here I would strictly wish to observe the theme of partition under the light of post-colonialism. A Number of novels in the Indian sub-continent have been written on this theme, This unforgettable historical moment have been captured as horrifying by the novelists like Khushwant Singh Train to Pakistan (1956) ,Bapsi Sidhwa 's Ice -Candy – Man (1991). These novels examine the inexorable logic of Partition as an offshoot of fundamentalism and fanaticism sparked by hardening communal attitudes. They effectively and realistically depict the vulnerability of human understanding and life, caused by the throes of Partition. The Two novels share a lot of de tails while retaining their individuality as well. Instead of depicting the events in

political terms, the novelists have provided human dimensions which bring to the event a sense of reality. horror and believability. Bapsi Sidhwa narrates the story of upheaval of the 1947 partition of India through the eyes of a young Parsee girl Lenny growing up in Lahore. The character of Ayah is introduced to refer to several millions of displaced, looted and raped Hindus and Muslims during one of the harshest political phases in the history of the subcontinent. While on the other hand, Train to Pakistan not only records man 's bestiality, but it also proves that men is essentially humane and sincere. Even society's marginalized characters like Juggat Singh can be a ray of hope and life for the depressed and distressed souls.

**Keywords:** post colonial literature, partition, Bapsi Sidwa's Ice - Candy – Man, communal attitude, India, Pakistan, oppression and violence, Abduction and rape of women.

**Introduction**

Post colonial literature is a body of literary writings that has been written against the process of colonization. It has always been a dominant subject for famous writers such as Ashish Nandi, Salman Rushdie, Khushwan Singh, Kiran Desai, Chitua Achebe, Joseph Conrad and Michael Ondaatje and so on. The chief function of these authors is to show that the pernicious effects of colonialism do not end with the withdrawal of British rule in their native areas. An analytical understanding of colonial history will undoubtedly delineate the prevalence of impact of colonialism. Nagarajan explains the post colonial by saying that, "Post colonialism examines and analyses the aftermath of colonization, and the effects of colonial oppression. In other words, it analyses the literature that was affected by the imperial process, the literature that grew in response to colonial domination ." (Nagarajan 185). The root of colonialism always continues to spread, although these are not clearly visible to the common masses. Being aware of the colonial and its drastic impact, Bapsi Sidhwa effortlessly shows these impacts of colonialism in her most critical and influential novel called *Ice - Candy Man* (1988).

The story of *Ice-candy Man* is based on the real tragic history of the partition of India into two independent nations called India and Pakistan .The novel is famous not only for the presentation of partition of India but also for presenting the aftermath effects of colonialism after the independence of India. It demonstrates and prevents myriad incidents showing the brutal murder killings ,migration of people ,and heinous rapes of women, arson ,riots between Hindu or Sikhs and Muslims .The novel begins with the happy lives of close friends including Lenny ,imam Dinn, Aaya ice -candy Man ,Masseur, Hamida, Mini Aunt and Muchhu. The important aspect of the novel ,which distinguishes it from other ,postcolonial novels is the employment of a child narrator named Lenny .The reason behind employing the child narrator is to be impartial and non-prejudice in presenting the real events of partition without any personal thinking and approaches of the novelist. History undoubtedly demonstrates British rulers always uses the policy of divide and rule to dominate Hindu-dominated country. In Indian history, there renowned stories of brotherhood and close relationship between Hindu and Muslim community. But this deep unity of Hindu and Muslims was partially disintegrated by British rulers through their tricky policies. This traumatic situation can be observed in the *Ice-Candy Man* through the relationship of Ice Candy Man, Masseur Aaya. Ice Candy Man confesses:"I lose my senses when I think of the mutilated bodies on that train. That night I went mad, I tell you! I lobbed grenades through the windows of Hindus and Sikhs.....I want to kill someone for each of the breasts they cut off the Muslim women...The penises!" (Sidhwa 156).

In the beginning of the novel, there is no place for the feeling of enmity among Hindus and Muslims but with the passage of the time this friendly situation completely reverses and they become killers of one another. To avenge murder of his sisters who are raped and murdered in riots of Hindu and Muslim, Ice Candy Man murders Masseur who loves Aaya and promises to marry her. He also gets indulged in other activities of violence. The novel clearly shows that this reversed situation is not a sudden result of any particular incidents but a result from policy of divide and rule used by the British rulers. They create uncertain and dangerous atmosphere where Hindu and Muslim can remain and live together for long time. Hindu and Muslims start hating one another for the cause. In this situation, thousands of innocent people including women, children, old people and so on are killed mercilessly by Hindus and Muslims without thinking who really is responsible for the situation.

History shows that women have always been victims of violence whether it is religious riots or caste based riots. Therefore, they cannot be spared from the ill effects of colonialism. The novel demonstrates that the revenges are realized through the victimization of women in riots. During the partition, women are raped and murdered in the open street as presented in following lines:

Setting fires, looting, parading the Muslim women naked through the streets- raping and mutilating them in the center of village and in Masjids. The Bias, flooded by melting snow and the monsoon, is carrying hundreds of corpses. There is intolerable stench where the bodies. In the bends, have piled up (Sidhwa, 172). Sometimes it happens that she gets failed to understand from where the sound of wailing of women is coming: "The mystry of the women in the courtyard deepens. At night we hear them wailing them wailing ,their crises verging on the inhuman sometimes I cannot tell where the cries are coming from. From the women or from the house next door infiltrated by our

indivisible neighbors" (212)The character of Aaya and sisters of Ice Candy Man are not just characters but they represent those innocent people who become the victims of partition of India crafted by Indian rulers The novel evidently narrates the hidden and vested interest of the British government which has no personal interest in the development of india with economic policies .they knowingly introduced such acts and rules which could suit their personal interests .Although this aspect of development is not clearly presented in the novel but a deep study of the novel reveals that such policy and action are taken by the British government to develop and improve the Ravaged economic condition of India in the novel there is no a single character who can be said to be flourished and economically strong .they all belong to poor families without any fixed job. Ice Candy Man is the best example of the situation .Having no permanent occupation ,Ice Candy Man always changes his profession there are no plans to create jobs for common masses .All the resources are transported by British government into England.

**Like** Chinua Achebe's narrative in Things Falls Apart ,,Bapsi Sidhwa has used the native words in the novel to show her anti colonial attitude. The amalgam of English language with indigenous words shows that she is delighted to write the novel in English but the significance of the indigenous words are not neglected. These indigenous words show the importance of the words whose essence cannot be expressed in words of alternative language. At one side she writes the novel in English, on the other hand she uses Indian diction such as pahailwan, 'shabash. Ghar ki murgī dal brabar, kotha' etc. By using these words she wants to represent Indian culture. Bapsi Sidhwa's anticolonail attitude is apparent when Iqbal's poem "Complaint to God" is recited.

To sum up, it can be undoubtedly said that Sidhwa is a master of representing the postcolonial aspects in her famous novel named Ice Candy Man. The novel not only confined itself with one particular aspect of post-colonialism but also touches upon the issues relating to women's physically and mentally exploitation, divide and rule policy British policies, communal as well as religious riots between Hindus and Muslims, exploitation of resources of India by British ruler and etc. While reading the novel, readers feel that they are not just but feel that they are not just reading the novel but feel that they are clearly watching and experiencing the incidents presented in the novel. Ice-Candy Man can be called a representative of postcolonial literature. Khushwant Singh shows that the Sikh protagonist sacrifices his life to save the lives of the Muslim refugees and that of his Muslim beloved. Crane in Inverting India calls it the portrayal of the essential humanity of the individuals by Singh. Crane believes that Singh shows that love and humanity can win against all odds (1992), but this display of generosity and humanity on the part of Sikhs during the

Partition riots is not recorded by other non-literary discourses. Singh creates a new identify of the Sikhs. This is the portrayal of the Indian perspective on Partition.

Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* does not say anything on the conduct and role of the British in Indo-Pak partition and communal riots bursts after the declaration of partition. Bapsi Sidhwa highlights the controversial role played by the British government and officials during the days of partition in *Ice Candy Man* and *The Bride*. Sidhwa raises questions on the image of Britishers being competent, capable and neutral. She blames the rulers of the empire for not paying enough attention to issues concerning partition. Post-colonial Sidhwa holds them responsible for the bloodshed and massacres, staining the dawn of freedom with the blood of millions of people. Bapsi Sidhwa in *The Bride* (1987) shows the British in rush and hurry to wind up and quit. Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice Candy Man* shows that the Radcliffe Commission members were dealing out Indian cities between the two countries like pack of cards. Sidhwa is extremely conscious about the criminal negligence and lack of seriousness by the British, while undertaking and supervising the partition. On the other hand Khushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan* does not say much about controversial role of the British and their failure towards India and its people in maintaining peace and neutrality between the major communities. Bapsi Sidhwa in her novel *Ice Candy Man* repeatedly projects the price of partition. She wants her readers have fresh assessment of partition. She shows that the millions of victims of partition pay a terrible price for freedom. She presents the readers with constant sufferings of human.

beings and their misery. However, she holds both Muslims and Hindus responsible for partition and related violence without becoming partial, Sidhwa does not oppose the partition openly like Chaman Nahal in his famous novel *Azadi*, wants the reader to come up with final judgment. Sidhwa shows in *Ice Candy Man* the greatest migration in the history of human civilization as a result and price or impact of partition. Khushwant Singh like Bapsi Sidhwa, in *Train to Pakistan* also depicts the migration that accompanied the partition. He highlights miseries and sufferings of the Hindus moving towards India and Muslims towards Pakistan. The partition of India has to pay a large amount of price in the form thousands of lives, abductions, massacres... etc. by the partition affected people of both nations. Train massacres are very oftenly described both Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa. She presents the train massacres as the most horrible association of the partition of India for inhabitants of Punjab. The Muslim protagonist of *Ice Candy Man* is waiting for relatives from Gurdaspur, instead he meets with mutilated bodies and sacks full of breasts cut off from Muslim women (p.149). Khushwant Singh in his *Train to Pakistan* also refers to the repeated train massacres of Sikhs by Muslims, which brought about chaos in society. Khushwant Singh described very horrible scene of thousands of Sikhs murdered by Muslims is disposed of by burning with wood and kerosene oil collected from the village- Mano Majra. The whole village witnessed the cremation of Muslim cruelties and Sikh victims, Singh does not show the picture of Muslim atrocities against the Sikhs. (p.75), Singh presets train as a Ghost train which is arriving from Pakistan are full of Sikh and Hindu corpses, Singh points out that Bulldozer is used to dispose of the corpses of Sikh and Hindu refugees. (p.126).

#### **Conclusion:-**

To sum up ,it can be undoubtedly said that Sidhwa is a master of representing the postcolonial aspects in her famous novel named *Ice candy Man*. The novel not only confined itself with one particular aspect of post-colonialism but also touches upon the issues relating to women's physically and mentally exploitation, divide and rule British policy, communal as well as religious rights Between Hindus and Muslims, exploitation of resources of India by British rulers. While reading the novel, readers feel that they are not only just reading the novel but feel that they are clearly watching and experiencing the incidents presented

in the novel. Ice-Candy Man can be called a representative of postcolonial literature. The novel evidently narrates the hidden and vested interest of British Govt. which has no personal interest in the development of India with.

economic policies. They introduced such acts and rules which could suit their personal interests. Although, this aspect of development is not clearly presented in the novel but a deep study of novel reveals that such policy and action are taken by the British Govt. to develop and improve the ravaged economic condition of India in the novel.

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