

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 4. Issue.4., 2017 (Oct-Dec)

ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

RECOLLECTING 1947'S PARTITION: STUDY OF QURRATULAIN HYDER'S NOVEL
MY TEMPLES TOO

Dr.Y.SUNEETHA¹, SK.SHAKILA BHANU²

¹Assistant Professor, Acharya Nagarjuna University

²Research Scholar, Acharya Nagarjuna University



ABSTRACT

India had been colonized for many centuries by different colonizers. Unbelievable gains of other colonies in India and its own wealth amassed in no time in this exotic country, made the British to conspire with the native rulers and gain from their intra-rivalry. British Raj absolutely enjoyed their reign in India for nearly two centuries. The period between late nineteenth century and up to 1947 is considered as colonial era in what British made Indians to accept and follow their policies. In 1947 they left India divided, this great divide in history remembered as Partition 1947. This current research paper discusses the consequences of partition through close study Qurratulain Hyder' novel *My Temples too*.

Key Words: Partition, Colonial India, Qurratulain Hyder, *My Temples too*

Introduction

During colonial rule, Indian society was divided culturally and also politically that made it vulnerable. Inexplicit, chaotic political condition thrown country into anarchy, and that gave an opportunity to British colonizers. 1857's Mutiny taught British not to let Hindu and Muslim together that lesson made them to divide Bengal in 1905 and even at the time of transferring power they divide India into three parts: India, Pakistan and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) leaving poor masses in confused condition.

This Present Novel *My Temples too*, concentrates the condition of people during and after Partition. This novel comprises many lively characters representing of young and educated Indians.

The novel, *My Temples Too* is Qurratulain Hyder's first novel, in Urdu it is titled *Mere bhi Sanam Khane*. She translated it into English in 2004. The novel opens with the description of a province in pre independent India. A Shohaila Rehman, a young budding poetess has been introduced at starting who informs about the return of protagonist Rajkumari Rakshanda Begum from Iran. Dr. Salim, a self made man who serves as army doctor also introduced as a typical minded person. The novel consists many kaleidoscopic characters from all strata of contemporary society. First half of novel discusses the united India and rest half post bifurcation.

The protagonist of novel, Rajkumari Rakshanda Begum of Karwaha Raj, is a young educated, enthusiastic woman who believes in Gandhian policies and strives for Hindu-Muslim unity. She is an editor for 'New Era' a magazine and active member in her group that includes her brother Peechu and her friends, Kiran, Vimal, Diamond and Ginie. She is considered as 'Local deity'.

Rakshanda Begum is detested by her mother Kanwar Rani Saltanat, who is a descendent from royal family always holds herself high. Rakshanda is dear to her father, who is compassionate towards his daughter

and provides everything she asked for. He takes old customs, traditions and institutions for granted and hates the new middle classes. He also takes the basic structure of an Indo-Muslim civilization for granted.

Rakshanda is an idealist and strive for united India. She always voices the same in her magazine the *New Era*. She likes Dr.Saleem, her brother's friend and he also admires her but never liked her romantic ideology of perfect society with Hindu-Muslim unity. Peechu loves Christbel, English wife of his friend and cannot forget her. Kunwar Rani detests it and angry with her son. Rakshanda organizes a show to raise funds for helping the poor peasants in which Queen Rose is hired to perform. In that event, Rakshanda comes to know about the affair of Queen Rose and Dr.Saleem. At the end of the novel, Dr.Saleem marries Rakshanda's beautiful cousin Khamar Ara.

Rakshanda receives an anonymous letter of threat which warned her to stop spreading her policies by means of *New Era* otherwise her friends' and hers connections would make public. Peechu after knowing it felt low and asks her to change her policy about new era for what she is against. Peechu doubts about the revolution of peasants who are weak and easily get provoked. Time witnesses many turns in story. Kunwar Raj dies after partition of India with grief. Polu, elder brother of Rakshanda starts planning his business with left over assets.

Christabel leaves both her husband and Peechu left for London. Frustrated Peechu meets his end in a fight at boarders. Good Kiran finds his end in a bomb blast at army camp. Dimond along with her family migrates to Pakistan. Vimal continues his job in Radio. Rakshanda remains insane and reach a rehabilitation centre at the ending of the novel.

Two Nation Theory

Rakshanda published idealism nationalism and about Hindu and Muslim unity in *The New Era*. But, it was not so encouraged by common people, as soon as Iftikhar published about the Two Nation Theory they got attracted to it and started splitting in their loyalty. Peechu felt that these masses were fit for nothing good and they would discord their policies as a pair of shoe for new one. That was true that many people who were potent to fight for nation, concentrated on their benefits and involved themselves in political games. The same was proved in history of India that common men also polarized for their advantages. It helped a few political leaders to bring the idea of Two Nation Theory and there by Pakistan.

Political Setting in Colonial India and Idea of Pakistan

In 1936(7) elections, Jinnah and other Muslim League leaders were great deal competitors in all stands. But, after elections League found confined its position only to papers, these state of affairs thrown League leaders in great apprehension and predicament. Mohammad Iqbal's idea of creating new Muslim state which was ignored by most Muslim leaders figured out again. The idea was materialized with proper plan of action. Saiyd Ahmad Khan wished Muslim nation should have equal importance and get payable treatment within Hindu nation. In 1933, PAKISTAN came on to the screen, by the late nineteen thirties Iqbal and Rahmat Ali's desires were aided by a superfluity of Muslim intelligent schemes, each looking at better solution for Muslim community's cause. Ayesha Jalal and Sugata Bose discussed the emergence of idea of Pakistan in their work *Modern south Asia History, Culture, Political Economy*. They hold that, " Chaudhri Rahmat Ali, a student at Cambridge, to invent the word 'Pakistan' — etymologically, the 'land of the pure'. 'P' stood for Punjab, (.....) Rahmat Ali's envisaged a confederation of Muslim states in the subcontinent linked to the 'original Pakistan', including all the Muslim countries in West and Central Asia up to the Bosphorus(174)". Rahamath Ali's defining Paksitan's boundaries as, 'P' stood for Punjab, 'A' for Afghan (North West Frontier) Province, 'K' for Kashmir, 'S' for Sind, and 'tan' for Baluchistan, were different from Iqbal's demand of all Muslim populated states.

Intensions of Muslim League and Indian congress were no different from common political leaders. Both the sides, leaders aspired to become a celebrated leader of free India or of Pakistan. British thought of enjoying the supremacy over its colony for a little more period and native leaders' aspirations about political career, casted pre-Independent India into more complex and chaotic conditions.

In *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* Sugata Bose, and Ayesha Jalal hold Jinnah's perception about partition very differently, they observed that, Jinnah was not so sure about the British's concern of granting freedom to India. He never anticipated that English would delay the transfer of power and

rethought about partition but, it had granted in a hurry. Even Jinnah misestimated the Gandhiji's charms in Congress: he thought mahatma ardently stood against the partition and congress would go great lengths to accept it. In *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, Yasmin Khan viewed that, Congress became a gargantuan umbrella party by housing all manner of thinkers, politicians, idealists. Gandhiji even announced that it should be unbanded after Independence as it failed to deliver the real idea of purna swarajya (complete independent country) after 1929. But it had been transformed as ruling party from liberation movement the scenario was reflected in novel that people were deserted and deprived of minimal rights and means of living in their own country.

Rakshanda thought that, it was a known reality for every politician that all Indian villages were drenched in poverty what is result of unemployment and illiteracy. For centuries people had not seen any newness in their lives they were extremely bored and accrued with negativity and hatred that would signpost towards killing of their fellow beings.

The fields are covered with frost. Labouring women returned home at sunset, dragging their bare feet on muddy roads. The house appeared mean and shrunken in dusk, and sickly looking children and dogs howled incessantly in the lanes. The silence and the dirt, filth and misery, the poverty, disease, inertia and fatigue of centuries that had engulfed all the villages of India, including hers, seemed to bear down and crush her. As she gazed at the little men ambling along to that tiny bazaar, looking sorrowful and tired, it occurred to her that men have been slouching like this from birth to death with the same boredom on their faces for centuries thus till one day they would die killing each other. (MTT:124)

Indians were in destitute condition as result of colonial rule of a few centuries and the political games started before independence. Their position was not so better than animals. They were found living in same state of poverty and destitute from their birth to death. This boredom need to be replaced by some newness what they could not positively find in uncertain political conditions. On occasion of Diwali all houses were lit and songs were sung to welcome goddess Lakshmi, Rakshanda felt that was God of Death lurking as it was year 1947 of India. He (God of Death) was already entered thousand of Indian homes and is going to arrive in thousands of others very shortly. The same thing was sensed and published in many newspapers. It was true that 'Idle mind is Evil's den'. People could not find proper employment due to draught that would come religiously every year this led to idleness of citizen. They were waiting for opportunity to show their frustration and anger.

Nehru felt in *The Discovery of India* that partitioning country would affect the modern historical and economical development, and the progress is possible by only real effective plan. In India each region is dependent on other region's supplies, in such conditions partitioning of country would affect the development of country. Moreover, in the world small states are disappearing in slowly to form vast independent democracy.

The relation and emotion between colonizer and colonized what Nehru reflected in *The Discovery of India* was well described by Albert Memmi in *The Colonizer and The Colonized* clearly. Memmi put a clear image of colonizer and colonized before the reader.

How can one believe that he can ever be resigned to the colonial relationship; that face of suffering and disdain allotted to him? In all of the colonized there is a fundamental need for change. For the colonizers to be unconscious of this need means that either their lack of understanding of the colonial system is immense or that their blind selfishness is more than readily believable. To assert, for instance, that the colonized's claims are the acts of a few intellectuals or ambitious individuals, of deception or self interest, is a perfect example of projection : an explanation of others in terms of one's own interests. The colonized's refusal resembles a surface phenomenon, but it actually derives from the very nature of the colonial situation. (163)

Albert Memmi said that, Colonizer either under pretext or blind selfishness talked about the enlighten or development of colonies what never reflected in their policies. They discovered the image of colonized as 'The body and face of the colonized are not a pretty sight' they are mere victims merely living on terms of

colonizers. But the colonized who were content and claim the colonial system positively well off and drawing fruits of the system. Poor and illiterate and desperate colonized's refuse and plea observed as superficial phenomenon and overlooked many times. The same was done to Indians by the British. The British, who developed their colony in India under pretext of developing country looted it and left it in destitute condition. To this worse situation of India, many political leaders and educated young served their best with their divided loyalty.

Partition was a watershed for most of historians that divided the past of South Asian subcontinent from its future. And it left its citizens in a state of delirium where they had to choose between nation and religion and caught between pull of identification as Indian Muslim or Pakistani Hindu. In dawn people found themselves at on alien land, what was their home yesterday was not theirs today. It was emotively described by Urvashi Butalia in her *Partition: The Long Shadow*, 'Few of us today understand what it meant to be torn the love for home land, and fierce loyalty to emergent nation and its leaders; and to be forced to choose between the two'. says someone in this book.

Crossing the border into Pakistan had been easier than I thought. Getting a visa was difficult, through ironically, the visa office at the Pakistan High Commission ran two separate counters, one for people they called 'foreigners' and the other for Indians. At the latter crowds of people jostled and pushed, trying to get together all the necessary paper work while outside, an old man, balding and half-bent at the waist, offered to take instant photos, using a small bucket of developer to get them ready. Once over the border, however, everything looked familiar at the airport – the same chaos, the same language, the same smells, same clothes. What I was not prepared for however, was the strong emotional pull that came with the crossing. I felt – there is no other word for it- a sense of having come home. (Butalia:2000)

Urvashi Butalia explained how she crossed the border to go Pakistan and met her uncle. She told that two counters were run for getting visa one for foreigners and one for Indians. It's really irony that one complete counter for Indians. Butalia felt everything is same as other side; same people same language; same cloths; same stories and same clothes but emotion pull they felt towards their home land while crossing the border would be different. She also added in her work, *The Otherside of the Silence* that she listened to her parents and grandparents fondly talking about their Muslim friends and sometimes talking prejudicially about her uncle marrying a Muslim woman.

What discussed above by Butalia was one side of the coin, when refugees entered other country the attitudes of a community towards another started altering. In the novel *My Temples too*, when a Sikh refugee fought with local Muslims, Hindus thought that it was friction between two people and they need not to involve.

Rakshanda felt that, the actual trouble started in Lucknow, when Punjabi refugees were dropped in the scene. There were many freak and unexpected and stray incidents happened in bazaars. One refugee beats a Muslim shopkeeper in the bazaar which sparked the riot. Even then local Hindu who was expected to save his Muslim brother didn't take part in the issue as it was fight between outsider Hindu and local Muslims. Such incidents led to division of localities and English entered to restore the peace and order in troubled areas. India then fully awakened and sensed that she was going to get long yearned freedom. Along with the freedom in guise there was agony, confusion, fear and hope.

The reasons for the great divide were discussed ambiguously in disjunction in three spheres by historians as well as by fiction makers. Many historians of Indian nationalism put major and principal responsibility on British Raj for cutting two countries apart which had been bonded together for many centuries. In their belief division of Indian sub continent was the strategy of British: 'divide and rule' policy what they had punched on Bengal division in 1905 and deliberately employed against Hindus and Muslims at the time of independence or even before.

At the second domain All India Muslim league and representative of it, Jinnah, person who was considered the father of Pakistan. And finally, the profound negotiations happened among the British, Indian national congress and the Muslim league leaders. As many historians opined a handful of functionaries (from

British Raj), political leaders (both Congress and Muslim league) decided the fate of voiceless millions and made them to trouble themselves and other after the partition. And the consequence of what is complete pandemonium and mayhem that is resulted into hatred between two communities.

The novel, *My Temples too* established a real picture of Partition and result of partition majorly in back drop of Lucknow in pre and post independent period. Next chapter discusses the colonial and post colonial Bengal through the novel *Fireflies in the Mist*.

References

- Azad, Moulana Abdul Kalam. *India Wins Freedom*. New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited, 1988. Print.
- Bose, Sugata and Ayesha Jalal. *Modern South Asia History, Culture, Political Economy*. New York: Routledge , 1998. Print.
- Butalia, Urvashi. *The Otherside of the Silence*. New Delhi: Penguin Publications, 1998.
- _____. *Partition: The Long Shadow*. New Delhi: Penguin Publications, 2015.
- Hossain, Attia. *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2009. Print.
- _____. *Translating Partition* . edited by Ravikanth and Tarun K Saint, New Delhi: Katha, 2001.
- Hyder, Qurratulain. *My Temples too*. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004.
- Memim Albert. *The Colonizer and The Colonized*. London: Earthscan PublicationsLtd., 2003. Print.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Before Freedom: Nehru's Letters to His Sister, 1909–1947*. edited by Nayantara Sahgal. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2004.
- _____. *Glimpses of World History*. Gurgaon: Penguin Books India, 2004.
- _____. *The Discovery of India*. Gurgaon: Penguin Books India, 2004.