



The impact of partition on Indians and Pakistanis in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*

Mrs. R. Lakshmi Priya

Assistant Professor of English, Srimad Andavan Arts and Science College (Autonomous), Trichy.

priyabalami.thun@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article presents the impact of partition on the people of India and Pakistan in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*. It brings out the myriad condition that prevailed during the partition. It presents the horrible and violent phenomena after the outcome of partition socially, psychologically and politically in both India and Pakistan. Bapsi Sidhwa holds an important position in the literary world of Pakistan. Being a Parsi, Sidhwa through her novels focuses attention on the rapidly changing scenario in her Parsi society and culture.

Key Words: Bapsi Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man*, violence, partition, Parsi culture, etc.,

Ice Candy Man is Sidhwa's important novel which is based on partition of India. In this novel, she deals with the partition crisis, the Parsi Mitieu, the problem of Asian women and theme of marriage. *Ice Candy Man* was published in America under the title *Cracking India* in 1991. It is a politically motivated novel. Sidhwa describes the event of partition from Pakistan's point of view. The novel begins with a description of the family and domestic characters. Partially ayah, Lenny's sensuous, Hindu nursemaid, who protects her but also introduces Lenny to the world of male female relationships. Through various conversations and events, Lenny is exposed to the prejudices and growing conflict between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis as they operate in her small world, but, then expand beyond to the larger horrors that culminate in the partition, *Cracking of India*. The

climate occurs for Lenny when a gang of Muslim men, led by the *Ice Candy Man*, enter her parents home and abducts Ayah after Lenny, trusting the *Ice Candy Man* exposes her whereabouts, when the family eventually discovers that the *Ice Candy Man* has married Ayah and has turned her into a prostitute, Lenny's Godmother (aunt) initiates the rescue of Ayah, who in the end refuses to be a victim.

Sidhwa's third novel, *Ice Candy Man* recounts events surrounding the partition through the eyes of Lenny, a precious Parsi girl who has been disabled by polio throughout the novel, Lenny relates the effects of the partition on her family and community. During the course of these events Lenny's beautiful Young Hindu nanny, Ayah, is kidnapped and raped by a group of men who had previously courted her. The Ice Candy Man, a local pop sided vendor, is among this group of suitors – turned kidnappers. The novel is both the story of Lenny's coming of age and a complex history of the growing divisions among Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities of India at the time as well as a scathing social commentary about the British Colonization of India. It deals with the partition of India and its aftermaths. This is first novel by a woman novelist from Pakistan in which she describes about the fate of people in Lahore. It opens with the verse Iqbal from his poem complaint to God". With this the child narrator Lenny is introduced. She is lame and helpless. She finds that her movement between Warris Road is limited. She sees that salvation Army wall with ventilation shifts which makes her feel sad and Lonely.

My World is compressed Warris Road lines with rain gutters, lies between Queen Road and Jain Road both wide, clean orderly streets at the affluent fringes of Lahore (ICMI). Ice candy man which is narrated by Lenny, a Lenny, Parsi child. Sidhwa wrote Ice Candy man using the first person narrative voice of a child. She has also not been self conscious to write the circumstances of her life. This made distance herself from the characters of Lenny (ICM P 1).

It is shown in the novel as an extremely passionate who tries to get the girl he wants by hook or crook. The novel does not show the love of ICM till the end of the tent. ICM is shown as a nice person who has some feelings far Ayah. The murder of the masseur and the way his body was put in a gunny bag near Lenny's house would now seem to be the IC Man's deed. Later in the novel, when God Mother discovers Ayah, and when the Ice Candy man explains his reedy, one is about to empathise with him but not sympathise with him. In ICM, The main characters and ICM and the "Ayah" the maid servant with the parsi family.

ICM is a handsome and immensely popular young man. He is a generous fellow who is miles away from religious fanaticism. But one incident shakes his entire existence and his belief in the goodness of man is shattered. He becomes a witness to the mutilated bodies of Muslims in the hands of Hindus and he takes a vow to avenge the death of his Muslim fellows. This bitter experience wrenches out the darker side of his personality. This shattering blow transforms a kind and loving divide into a violent and frenzied person. On a crucial moment in the narrative, he asks the Ayah; There is an animal inside me straining to break free. Marry me and perhaps it will be contained (ICM 240).

There are a number of characters in the narrative of Ice Candy man like Lenny's Cousin. Lenny's God Mother Imam Din, the cook, Hari the gardener, the Mass ever Dr. Bharucha, Mr.Rodgers. They are parts of Lenny's World.

Sidhwa is at her best while delineating character sketches with their aspirations, moods and frustrations. Every thing that happens to them is perceived and felt through the eyes of the child narrator Lenny. She also shows how a feeling of communal hatred transforms good people like ice candy man into savages.

It describes the horrors of the partition again very well and the reader is drawn into the tales. The fear the insecurity and the hatred that was bred in the people by the politicians of that time for their own vested interests are much caricatured in the novel.

The changing loyalties of the circle of friends who in the end become friends bring forth the brace of horror of partition when friends become traitors. The description of the massacre of Ranna's village shows how humans behaved like savages killing their own countrymen.

It presents a scene of Holi, not of colours but of blood in the living inferno. The partition of India proved to be the greatest communal divide in the Indian sub-continent. In fact, the novel ICM is a Pakistan version of the partition just like Khushwant Singh's. *Train to Pakistan*

Sidhwa shows that during communal strife sanity and human feelings are forgotten. In fact riots anywhere in the world follow the common pattern where distrust and rumour reign everywhere which leads to bloodshed and terror. As Novy kapadia rightly observes: with a sprinkling of humour, parody and allegory Sidhwa conveys a sinister warning of the dangers of compromising with religious obscurantism and fundamentalism of all categories otherwise a certain historical inevitability marks this historical process. Though her novel is

about the traumas of partition, Sidhwa like Amitav Ghosh reveals that communal riots are contemporaneous and that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it (105)

In *Ice Candy Man*, she shows how friends and neighbours turn to be enemies overnight. A Muslim village Pirpindo is attacked by Sikhs and Muslim men and women are killed. Sikh families in Lahore are attacked in Lahore and the chain reaction continues.

People like Hari and Moti become converts to save their lives. Ayah's lover Masseur is filled. Bapsi shows that the communal frenzy has a distorting effect on the masses and leads to feelings of distrust and frenzy. In such an atmosphere of communal frenzy and hatred simple people like *Ice Candy Man* lose their temper when he sees the mutilated bodies of Muslims revenge becomes the only motivation in his life. Friendships and personal relations are forgotten.

The atmosphere becomes malicious and Ice-candy mob joins the frenzied mob which abducted Ayah and keeps her in the brothers of Hira Mandi. He tries to mend his ways and forcibly marries Ayah and Changes and name as Mumtaz. But she finds this disgusting and with the help of Lenny's godmother she reaches a relief camp in Amritsar. The novel conveys a serious warning of the dangers of communalism and religious obscurantism.

Ice Candy Man deals with human emotions at play at different levels, heightened by turbulent times. In the process of shaping history human emotions and relationship are relegated to the background the tidal waves of violence, hatred and communal violence change the feelings of fraternity. Sidhwa also has tried to recreate history in emotion – laden and poignant scenes. The ramblings of partition are felt in the beginning of the narrative and the atmosphere proper to the kind of a tale is gradually created. As the tension mounts, atmosphere becomes grim and awesome. In the novel one finds the worst kind of genocide in the story of mankind.

The novel contains number of poignant scenes along with scenes of murder and violence. It is a masterful work of history as it relates political went through the eyes of child. It has also been called as a multifaceted jewel of a novel. It deals with bloody partition of India through eyes of a girl Lenny growing up in a Parsee family surviving through female bonding and rebellion.

Ice Candy Man shows the naked human emotions that are revealed whenever passion runs high and it also shows how they can be good and evil in the same person.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Dhawan, R.K. and Norey Kapadia, eds. *The novels of Bapsi Sidhwa*. New Delhi Prestige, 1996.
- [2]. Sharma Bapsi Sidhwa's , *Ice-Candy – Man*, New Delhi. Moti Press, 2003.
- [3]. Sanger. C. Jaina *South Asian Literature in English An encyclopaedia*, London Greenwood Press, 2004.