

The Invisible Borders: A Comparative Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice Candy Man and Ritu Menon's the Border and Boundaries

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Abstract

The paper entitled "The Invisible Borders: A Comparative Study of Ice Candy Man by Bapsi Sidhwa and The Borders And Boundaries by Ritu Menon" highlights the impacts of partition which have been articulated especially by women writers like Urvashi Butalia, Hena Khan, Bapsi Sidhwa and Ritu Menon on the basis of their unique experiences during partition. This event proved to be the most horrible and devastating in human history because during of incidents such as burglary, theft-robbery, kidnapping, rape, and murder. People's homes and places were burned, most people were executed, women and children were assaulted and exposed to their siblings. Since the actors of partition were men, it is considered a male construct. This was why Partition Literature contains most male authors like Kushwant Singh, Amitav Ghosh, Manto, and Intzaar Hussain. Sidhwa's Ice Candy Man and Menon's Borders and Boundaries weave together the idea of freedom by juxtaposing social and political, past and present in diverse contexts. This study will help to give an insight into communal hatred, and gender discrimination in the patriarchal society during the partition of India and Pakistan.

Keyword: Partition, 1947, India, Pakistan, Conflict, Gender Violence, Trauma

Introduction:

The loss of partition is insurmountable. There were several communal riots during the partition of India, as is always the case. Thousands of people were uprooted as a result of the Indian partition, which heightened the horror of the period. On both sides of boundaries, people have seen violence, kidnapping, exploitation, identity issues, rape, killings, and the widowhood of thousands of women. India simultaneously experienced division and independence. The issue of "belonging" arises as a result of partition. Since the 1947 partition of India was an undeclared civil war, it appears that since that time, people have been unable to fully express their sorrow and sometimes even their rage and hatred. Everyone was impacted by the partition of India and Pakistan in one way or another, but it had a particular effect on the lives of women. The terrible division and the shift in the paradigm seemed to signal the zenith of the marginalization and oppression of women. Intezzar Hussain's Basti, Amitav Ghosh's Shadow Lines, Saddat Hassan Manto's Cold Flesh, open it, Toba Tek Singh, and Salman Rushdie's Midnight Children are just a few examples of the majority of the partition literature written by men. This is because the majority of the

actors in the partition were men, making it a male construct. In the whole era of this patriarchal society, there were women writers like- Bapsi Sidhwa, Ritu Menon, Hena Khan, Amrita Pritam who decided to break the silence and try to bring out the horrific concept of partition through eyes of women because we all are aware of the bitter fact that during any war or division women come to be seen as a territory to be occupied so no one can reveal the true experience of women as both victim and survivor of violence except women as they struggled to put their life back together again.

A significant amount of Indian and Pakistani literature has focused on the problem of identity crises and belonging of the common during the partition of India and Pakistan. However, relatively little writing—especially by women writers—depicts the violence committed against women at the time. For instance, the works of Ritu Menon and Bapsi Sidhwa, *Ice Candy Man* and *Borders and Boundaries*, both deal with the issue of pain and the individual experiences of women. Women's identities that were oppressed and alienated during the 1947 partition are brought to light by Bapsi Sidhwa and Ritu Menon. The ramifications of women's class are illustrated in the two texts *Ice Candy Man* and *Border & Boundaries*. In their book *Border and Boundaries*, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin describe the history of women's partition in the context of gender, violence, and religion. That is how women began to be killed in the guise of upholding family's dignity and national honour. Additionally, how these women rebuild themselves and support other women in rehabilitation. The book includes an oral history of how the partition affected women in India and Pakistan and what it actually meant to them. Pakistan became predominately a Muslim nation at the split, while India became a Hindu nation. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were not thought to be fundamental components of Pakistan or India by the violent perpetrators. Furthermore, large kidnappings of women, children, and families were caused by forced migration. Because of the forced conversion and abduction, women's sexuality has been abused. In the service of national honour, the figure of the kidnapped woman comes to represent breaching international boundaries. Because of this, women were forced to bear the weight of the tense relationship between community and religion. So, for the sake of the "honour" of the country, men mercilessly murdered and raped the women, leaving them traumatized. *Borders & Boundaries* covers the history of kidnapping and furthermore tells the brave stories of women who bravely made it through that period, helped other women discover their identities, and served as an example for the women's class. Women had the chance to leave the confines of their homes because of the partition. They had determination, courage, and intelligence, and their disparity gave them the opportunity to come forth for their lives. Women's squalor during the partition and its aftermath has been highlighted by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin.

Contrarily, *Ice Candy Man* tells the grotesque farce of Parsi family life via the subaltern eyes of kid narrator Lenny, who comes from a Parsi family in Colonial Lahore, Pakistan, together with the intense drama and tragedy of communal riots and massacres of partition in 1947. The work has investigated the indisputable logic of partition as a root of fundamentalism fuelled by racial animosity. Through the lens of innocence provided by the book, the horrific occurrence is portrayed. In Peer's narrative, the effects of communal rioting, harsh government policies, and partition on women's classes are clearly shown. For authors who experienced colonialism and British rule in their own countries, the terms "postcolonial" and

"colonisation" have always dominated their writing. Sidhwa chose to share her account of the horrible historical event with a larger audience after having personally experienced it. There is no place for enmity among Hindu Muslims and Sikhs, as is demonstrated at the beginning of the book. All societies coexisted peacefully and harmoniously, but the paradigm shift caused everything to change drastically, turning once-friends into murderers. Everyone wanted to exact revenge on those who had killed their sisters, mothers, wives, and daughters during the sectarian clashes between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. Bapsi Sidhwa portrays both camaraderie and hostility. She also imagines that, prior to partition; Muslims and Hindus may even fall in love with one another despite their differences of cultural and religious norms. Women have historically experienced violence and been viewed as objects. In mosques and Gurudwaras during the partition, women were violently kidnapped and raped in public. For the sake of the allegedly fictitious reputation and honour of the village, thousands of women were set afire by their kinsmen. Lenny's narrative includes a description of how occasionally she is unable to discern the source of the sound of ladies wailing:

“The mystery of women in the Courtyard deepens. At night we hear them Wailing, their cries verging on the inhuman. Sometimes I can't tell where the voices are coming from. From the women or from the house Next Door infiltrated by our own invisible neighbors” (Sidhwa. 1991p., 212)

Ayah and the Ice Candy Man sisters aren't simply characters; they also stand in for the entire victimised class of women and the helpless individuals who were the target of Partition's savagery. Similar to Chinua Achebe's account in *Things Fall Apart*, Sidhwa has used some of the native words along with their English translations to demonstrate her anti-colonial viewpoint. The relevance of feeling and essence that no other language can adequately express is demonstrated by the usage of local terms. Sidhwa speaks in Indian dialects such as Kotha, Granth, Mohalla, Gundaas, and Tamasha, among others. Sidhwa also touches on the subject of child marriage. Even families were biased against women, as evidenced by the forced marriage of one of Lenny's friends to an elderly decrepit man. The story of Ice Candy Man depicts the oppression and marginalisation of women in 1947. It blatantly portrays the mistreatment and struggle of women in a patriarchal society. The story shows how men become powerful and then use violence against women to state their lust. Ice Candy Man, who saw Ayah as his girlfriend and admirer, betrayed her and let the crowd rape her. After she degraded, he sold her to a Lahore brothel. Sidhwa intends to reflect the ethnicity of Indian culture through the use of these phrases. In *Borders and Boundaries*, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin make an effort to highlight feminist historiography while addressing the identity crisis and marginalisation of women who fall prey to a patriarchal culture. Additionally, it depicts the world of women who lived through the partition and survived to tell the tale. In one of the tales of the village head June, Durga Rani recounts her own observation of her kinmen tossing their young daughters, wives, and sisters into wells and burying them alive. For protection against the men of other groups molesting them, several of the women were burned to death. She encountered other ladies who were missing, raped, and deformed. Parents were berating and cursing their daughters, saying that it would have been better if they had never been born and that they were destroyed for being female.....

“Tattooing and branding the body with “Pakistan zindabad!” or “Hindustan Zindabad!” not only mark the

women for life; they never allow her (or her family and community) the possibility of forgetting her humiliation.” (Menon.1998 p., 43)

Split Memory

“Puttar, aurat da ki ai, au tan varti jaandi ai

Hamesha, bhanve apne hon, bhanve paraye.” (Menon.1998 p, 45)

Conclusion:

Women viewed suicide to be a "willing sacrifice" for the sake of reputation since the concepts of "honour" and "shame" was so firmly ingrained and had been effectively attributed to them. Every second lady in the world wore a poison bottle around her neck and waist because they constantly worried that each day would be their last. But for many women, divisions had a different effect; those who had survived were content since they had never left their homes to enter the workforce after the division. Many women were motivated to start working for a living by the necessity to find a place to live, food to eat, and financial security.

Since both are now different but related histories that played out the results of shady politics, no area of the country is able to escape the effects of separation.

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