



**Trauma and Identity in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* in Partition
Literature**

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Abstract:

This study examines themes of trauma and identity in Partition literature, focusing specifically on Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*. It argues that the Partition was not merely a political division but a psychological fracture that reshaped individual identity and gendered experiences. By analysing how violence left deep psychological and emotional wounds, the paper demonstrates how ordinary people, especially women and children, faced fear, confusion, and displacement. Through Lenny's perspective, the novel illustrates how innocence transforms into a painful awareness of cruelty. Rather than interpreting the novel solely from political perspective the study examines trauma as both a lived experience and a delayed realization.

The study also emphasises gendered trauma. During the Partition, women's bodies became sites of honour and revenge. This is evident in the character of Ayah, who is later abducted and loses her identity. By applying trauma theory and feminist perspectives, the paper illustrates how identity is fragmented and becomes performative under disaster.

Keywords: Partition Literature, Gendered Violence, Identity Crisis, Psychological Trauma, Child Narrator.

Introduction:

Before 1947, the Indian subcontinent was under British colonial rule while simultaneously fighting for its independence. However, communal tensions were intensifying among Hindus, Muslims and other religious communities leading to the cracking of India. Partition literature gives a human voice to these historical divisions. It looks at more than just political events. It focuses on the ordinary people, especially women and children, who lived in a constant state of fear and confusion. While most Partition stories focus on trauma, displacement, and loss of identity etc, this study focuses on how trauma is lived and understood later on. Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* stands out because it uses a child narrator, Lenny Sethi, to tell the story through a lens of innocence. Her young mind grasps the violence and betrayal occurring around her much earlier than she should.

Trauma is a “disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person’s attitudes, behaviour, and other aspects of functioning” (“*Trauma*”) The trauma in the Partition left deep psychological and emotional scars. Riots, massacres, and mass killings left deep wounds in survivors. Having witnessed the loss of loved ones and living in constant fear that anything can happen at any time leading to stress and hopelessness.

Psychological trauma, though invisible, is long-lasting. Women were abducted, raped; honour killings were also linked with physical and psychological trauma. Physical trauma occurred when the bodies were directly harmed through abuse or violence. The women were treated as symbols of community honour, and they became easy targets of vengeance. Even after Partition, women who survived were rejected by their families. The trauma in them remained for years. Those who survived often developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the form of nightmares,

flashbacks, and anxiety, and many were even left numb as they could not speak of their experiences.

In *Ice-Candy Man*, we see Lenny also developing nightmares. One such dream is of a Nazi soldier on a motorcycle. Although Lenny was not involved in World War II, it shows how violence travels through stories and adult conversations. Even if children did not comprehend it entirely, but still it entered their minds unconsciously. Nightmares become a way to release what the mind cannot understand.

Violence damages not only homes and families but also one's sense of self. Identity encompasses traits, beliefs, roles, and memories, but when all these collapse, the identity of a person collapses. Characters in the partition literature often feel torn between their old identity and the new, unstable identity. The loss is also shown in friends and communities, where those who they once lived together in harmony turned against one another due to communal and religious hatred. Partition restructured how people were seen and understood. Individuals were reduced to rigid religious labels. Lenny remembers a time when people were known for their nature, habits, and simply being themselves. However, as Partition violence breaks out, people change overnight and begin to be identified as Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian. A person's religion begins to matter more than living together in harmony.

The partition of India in 1947 had long-term consequences that affected millions of people. They had to move from their own homelands, leaving behind their homes, land, and memories etc. It also led to the breakdown of cultures and the shared relationships that the people once had. They no longer trusted each other, and they looked at each other with hatred and suspicion. Neighbourhood and social relationships were permanently broken.

Partition writers such as Khushwant Singh and Amrita Pritam strongly shaped Partition literature. Khushwant Singh's *A Train to Pakistan* presents Mano Majra, a fictional village in Punjab, where the Sikhs and the Muslims live peacefully, but this gets shattered with the arrival of a 'ghost train' which is of corpses which makes the people choose sides. Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* shows how women had to suffer and how their bodies became sites of violence and honour. These works show the partition not just as history but as human suffering and the breakdown of communities.

Bapsi Sidhwa, a Pakistani Parsi writer, in her works often explores the themes of identity, displacement, and the portrayal of women, particularly those who were kidnapped or raped. Her writing also portrays the trauma of seeing violence without completely understanding what communal hatred is. In *Ice Candy Man*, she combines her personal memory with that of the historical events to create a story that is both personal and political.

Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (also published as *Cracking India*) holds a significant place in Partition narratives. It is set in Lahore. The story is narrated by Lenny, an 8-year-old Parsi girl. She is innocent and confused and does not know the reason for communal tension but is able to feel the impact deeply. The central figure in Lenny's life is Ayah, a beautiful Hindu nanny of Lenny. She is the focus of attention and desire among men. As communal violence spreads, friendships break and people turn against they once cared about. The Ice Candy Man who once adored Ayah becomes the reason for Ayah's abduction.

In *Ice-Candy-Man*, the transformation of the Ice-Candy Man into the "birdman" serves as a symbolic warning of his eventual moral collapse. On cold days, he carries cages "stuffed with sparrows and common green parrots" to sell. The birds are trapped, and this image suggests Ayah's

fate later in Hira Mandi, where she is renamed Mumtaz and reduced to a product. What Ice-Candy Man does to the birds is what he later does with Ayah.

The novel's title symbolizes how identity is lost like the popsicles that change shape when they melt. Similarly, we see this in the changing character of Ice-Candy Man who transforms under political heat. Later, he acts as "Allah's telephone," representing divine communication through the telephone (Sidhwa 89). He brings in faith to hide vengeance. Through the eyes of Lenny, we see how communal tension destroys everything, replacing innocence with guilt, fear, and a painful awareness of human cruelty.

Literature Review:

Early works on the Partition prioritized the historical and political causes and the mass migration that happened. However, the emotional turmoil and fractured identities of ordinary people are often overlooked. The trauma, memory, silence, and fractured identity remain underexplored.

Feminist writers contribute to historical writing by addressing what was absent. *Urvashi Butalia's The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* is one such work. It addresses women, children, and marginalized communities. She talks about individual experiences that people did not hear. Some women were rejected by their families, and many of them chose not to disclose what had happened to them to avoid social stigma.

Butalia states that there were cases of abduction, rape, and honour killings and how their bodies became sites of communal honour and violence. People considered killing oneself a heroic act. Fathers killed their own daughters to shield them from sexual violation, and the large number of women's suicides as a matter of pride.

Butalia also discusses identity loss and displacement. Partition forces people not only to abandon their homes but also the identities they had. Those who survived struggled to define themselves based on the newly formed boundaries. Identity shatters because of the political violence and forced migration.

Butalia also mentions that those who were not directly involved in the Partition also experienced it through stories and silences. Families pass down this trauma, and it eventually shapes the way we look at religion and the nation. Butalia also highlights silence, which is particularly relevant in trauma studies. She says that being silent does not mean people have forgotten what happened; rather, it shows that they cannot fully express the pain. Language fails to capture their lived experiences. Traumatic events are difficult to describe fully and return through fragmented memories and emotional disturbances.

A similar gendered focus appears in *Amrita Pritam's Pinjar* which revolves around gendered trauma and women's experiences of violence. Its narrative is third person and focuses mainly on the heroine Puro, a young Hindu woman from a prosperous Punjabi family. Puro's life takes a tragic turn when Rashid Khan kidnaps her, a Muslim man whose family has been feuding with Puro's. Later when Rashid releases, her family and finance consider her defiled. This rejection becomes a turning point in Puro's life, compelling her to confront the harsh social realities women faced during Partition. However, she learns to live with it and makes space for herself. Therefore, her survival is painful but somewhat adaptive and she continues to live with a sense of inner strength. Sidhwa shows that she does not rebuild her identity and she becomes emotionally numb.

Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's Borders and Boundaries (1998) discusses women's experiences. While most talk about the Partition as a political event, this book talks about the

emotional and bodily trauma that women had to go through during 1947. It shows how women's bodies became sites of honour, conflict and identity.

Attackers abducted many women from their homes during these assaults. They forced them to convert to different religion. Communities pressurized women who got pregnant were asked to abandon their children, warning they would bring shame or face rejection. Such personal tragedies reflect how Partition disrupted the families and communities.

Cathy Caruth: Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History (1996), argues that people cannot fully understand trauma at the moment it occurs; instead, it comes back in fragmented pieces. It can be either through flashbacks, nightmares or reoccurring thoughts. Caruth says that trauma is both known and unknown. People find it difficult to share their experiences because they experience it too quickly for the mind to process. Hence, the survivor's mind later revisits it in broken ways. She calls this as a "double wound." The first wound is the violent event itself and the second is its delayed return. This helps us better understand Lenny's experience. Her guilt over betraying Ayah does not arise at the moment itself; rather, it occurs later when she tries "scouring her tongue" (Sidhwa 161).

Despite these contributions, a research gap still remains. Many writers deal with Partition trauma historically and there is a very limited integration of narrative, psychological theory and gendered analysis within a single framework. The studies do not examine how identity, trauma, gender and narrative voice intersect simultaneously but rather discusses suffering in separation.

Also, there is a less focus on Parsi perspective. They remain neutral but they are deeply traumatized. While in existing studies, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs experiences are talked about in previous studies. Less is known about the emotional toll on the minority community. So, this

present study focuses on Sidhwa's Parsi lens to show that being neutral does not confirm that one will be psychologically safe, however, instead it results in another form of witness trauma.

This research addresses that gap by bringing feminist historiography with trauma theory and narrative analysis, while also focusing on child narration, gendered violence, identity fragmentation, and lived human experience within a single framework.

Methodology:

The study employs a qualitative analysis based on *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa. The research focuses on close reading and a comparative analysis with works such as *Train to Pakistan*, and *Pinjar* are used. This comparison highlights themes of displacement, madness, abduction and loss of identity while also emphasising on Sidhwa's focus on gendered violence and child witnessing. Secondary sources include reading colonial histories and records of British administrative strategies such as *Divide and Rule*.

The study also uses two major theoretical frameworks i.e. Trauma Theory and Feminist Views. Trauma theory says that exposure to violence produces lasting impact. It is not fully understood at the moment, but comes back in fragments. On the other hand, a feminist perspective looks at how Partition violence was deeply gendered and how women's bodies became sites of communal honour and revenge. It also highlights women's agency and resilience despite systemic victimisation. It also highlights the quiet forms of survival of women who try to rebuild their lives, showing that despite suffering, strength still exists. Altogether, these frameworks let the study to view Partition not just as historical event but also as psychological and physical crisis. They help to view both visible acts of violence and the silences that follow.

Chapter 1

The Child's Perspective and Identity Crisis in Ice Candy Man

Ice-Candy Man shows the trauma of Partition through the eyes of a child-narrator, Lenny. She does not comprehend the political reasons leading to Partition. As a young girl, she witnesses betrayal so closely that it reshapes her perception, making her believe that people now cannot be trusted, especially when it comes from Ice-Candy Man (Dilnawaz) who is involved in Ayah's abduction. Choudhary sees Lenny as caught between childhood and adulthood. Her complex trauma makes her constantly alert and overly curious. These traits push her to cross social boundaries, not out of rebellion, but to cope and survive (1). She is consumed by regret for revealing Ayah's hiding place and this guilt haunts her. She cannot understand how someone harmless can turn out to be so cruel and violent. This moment marks the end of her innocence.

Lenny falls silent after the abduction of Ayah. She does not openly admit her guilt, yet it shapes her internally. As mentioned in *Urvashi's The Other Side of Silence*, silence becomes a way of coping with trauma, and this, in turn, begins to shape her identity.

This incident becomes a traumatic memory that shapes Lenny's identity. Adults express their grief through anger and violence, but Lenny goes silent and more observant. At the time of incident, she does not completely comprehend the significance of what has happened but later it returns as self-blame. This delay in understanding shows how trauma shapes one's identity.

She observes the violence happening around her, but she is a mere observer and cannot intervene. Her role is passive and is helpless which creates her psychological state. Her narration shifts from innocence to awareness. She grows up too quickly and learns the truth in the hard way. Her childhood ends violently.

We see that violence is not born overnight, but it is present in the domestic spaces that we most often neglect or prefer to stay quiet. Lenny notices the bruises on her mother's body. She does not know what domestic abuse is, but she silently registers it. Lenny also hears her parents fighting at night. Hence, authority over women's bodies is not something that only happened during 1947, but it was already there in patriarchal domestic structure. What happens to Ayah is what many women face inside their outwardly loving homes.

At the beginning, Lenny views the world as a safe space. She belongs to a Parsi household and is surrounded by adults, servants and Ayah. Her childhood is shaped by observation and curiosity rather than being afraid. Before the Partition, everyone used to live harmoniously, where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis used to interact freely. Ayah had admirers from various religions including Ice-Candy Man. However, as Partition nears, she sees a shift in the dynamics. Lenny does not clearly understand the politics behind it, but she can feel the emotional shift.

Her disability due to polio further places her in the position of an observer rather than an active participant. Her disability is not just biographical detail but political allegory, which is like the trauma of India's Partition. At Mayo Hospital, Lenny underwent surgery to remove a plaster cast. Col. Bharucha uses a "frightening arm's-length saw" which Lenny thinks "belongs in a woodshed" to remove her plaster cast (Sidhwa 14). Her body foreshadows a map of Partition. Col. Bharucha blames the British for bringing of polio in India. Her illness is a colonial consequence than an individual misfortune. This is the first moment when she becomes politically aware through her own physical suffering. She understands colonial injustice through her body. Through Lenny, Sidhwa shows how children experience trauma differently from adults not through clear understanding, but through emotional shock and confusion.

Lenny can also be understood as a “choreographed child,” as some critics call her. She presents herself before people for emotional and material survival. Her disability makes her constantly looked at with pity and concern. She herself admits that, while other children must try to get love and attention, she does not. She only needs to show her callipers to get candies. Childhood which should be natural and carefree is rather performed with strategies. Her “butter-wouldn’t-melt” expression is a mask which she is performing (Sidhwa 17). She performs weakness because she knows that it will ensure her safety in a world that is going violent. Being weak becomes a way to survive. Adults even lower their shields around her, and they talk freely in front of her about the growing tension and politics assuming that she will not understand. Although Lenny is physically disabled, but she is psychologically aware of the changing environment. She watches when loyalties begin to break. She learns without being formally taught.

This child-centered portrayal of identity crisis can also be compared with other Partition novels that explore trauma through different lenses. Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* is set in a small fictional border village of Mano Majra. Although the narration is not directly from a child, but it contains elements of innocence that resemble a childlike view of the world which makes it even more relevant to identity crisis and trauma.

Before Partition, Mano Majra is a peaceful village where Sikhs and Muslims coexist harmoniously. Religion although, a part of everyone’s identity but it doesn’t define their identity rigidly. This innocence shows a child’s understanding of the world. Meanwhile tensions rise when a refugee train arrives carrying dead bodies. The train acts as a symbol of collective violence and psychological shock. The villagers not able to understand the brutality. Children witness violence and struggle to understand what they see.

The novel shows how politics ruins the lives of ordinary people and turns neighbours into enemies. This shows the Divide-and-Rule policy showing how identities can be reshaped by fear. People who once lived together define themselves solely by religion. This forced identity formation leads to moral dilemmas and confusion.

The character of Juggut Singh (Jugga) represents moral innocence and humanity. Though labelled a budmash, Jugga acts with emotional sincerity rather than hatred. Jugga is motivated by love for his Muslim sweetheart, Nooran, secretly boards the targeted train to prevent its destruction. He sacrifices himself so that his lover and the passengers can flee. His death saves the train of Muslim refugees, restoring moral clarity in a world corrupted by hatred. While Juggut Singh ends his life with a sacrifice, Sidhwa offers no moral purification.

Nooran's suffering shows the gendered trauma, which is like Ayah in *Ice-Candy Man*. Ayah is displaced and silenced beyond her control. *Train to Pakistan* does not highlight the inner life of Nooran but her fate shows how women struggle quietly. In contrast, Sidhwa puts violated woman at the centre. The village is forced to grow up through violence and destruction, just like *Ice-Candy Man*. *Train to Pakistan* shows that individual moral choices matter more than political ideology.

Similarly, in Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* it deals with abduction, gendered violence, identity loss, and trauma. It focuses on the suffering of an abducted woman during the Partition. The novel revolves around the life of Puro, a young Hindu woman from a prosperous Punjabi family, whose life is disturbed when Rashid, a Muslim man abducts her, seeking revenge for an old family feud. This incident is not isolated, but it is a larger pattern of gendered violence during Partition. It shows how women's bodies become sites of communal revenge.

When Puro returns home, her family refuses to accept her because of the shame. The rejection which she must face is the first stage of identity loss. She is no longer seen as a daughter, a woman, or a member of her own community. She is renamed Hamida after marrying Rashid which shows that her identity is redefined. Pinjar gives direct voice to an abducted woman and shows how trauma reshapes identity through endurance and ethical choice. Amrita Pritam explores abducted womanhood from within, and Sidhwa intertwines child witness, bodily trauma, performative masculinity, and minority neutrality.

Chapter 2

Displacement and Ethnic Wear of Culture

Before Partition, Indians lived side by side, sharing language, food, festivals and daily habits. Communities met each other freely at homes and neighbourhoods, and women played a crucial role in preserving this cultural harmony in households through caregiving and social rituals. However, as conflict rose, men were often killed in riots, women's bodies became sites where communal hatred, revenge and honour were performed.

In Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*, this gendered nature is shown through the character of Ayah. Her abduction shows how women lose power over their bodies and identities during such times. Recent research suggests that Dilnawaz's shifting transformation shows the hidden desires and tensions of the Partition period. His changing identity shows how trauma can force people to alter their paths and reshape who they are just to survive. (Katariya and Chaudhary 2959). Before Partition, men from different religious communities admired Ayah for her beauty. She symbolised a shared cultural space where people coexisted peacefully; the gaze at her is sensual but not initially violent. Although they have a desire towards her, but it is still governed by social codes.

Communal divisions began to happen not only through violence but also through everyday interactions. A significant example happens when Lenny's shadow unknowingly touches a Brahman Pandit while he is eating. "He looks at his food as if it is infected with maggots" (Sidhwa 104). Lenny is left in shock, and until this moment, she used to move freely outside. She was not just seen as a child now but as a source of religious pollution. She feels like a "diseased maggot" herself and, concluding that "one man's religion is another man's poison" (Sidhwa 104).

Partition Violence also enters private lives. Another incident occurs during a dinner party, often referred to as the "Fork Incident." It highlights how political anger begins to enter households as well. The dinner party had members of Lenny's social circle, including British officials and Indian neighbours, discussing independence. Slowly, the atmosphere seemed to be changing. A political argument broke out between Mr Singh, the Sikh neighbour, and Inspector General Rogers, the British official.

Mr. Singh's anger is not personal; rather, it has been built over time in response, to historical events. It is his frustration over the policies of British, and anger over communal divisions. In a moment of uncontrollable anger, Mr Singh takes a fork and attempts to stab the General. The use of weapon is significant. A fork, meant for eating, becomes a weapon of violence to attack. Eyes symbolise power, and blinding them would mean an attempt to end colonial rule. For Lenny, witnessing this moment is psychologically shattering.

Another domestic event is finding "double-barrel gun" in a "black wooden box" in the bathroom of Lenny's household (Sidhwa 135). This indicates that even private spaces were vulnerable and they could be attacked at any time. This marks the end of Lenny's innocence and even the homes have no way to protect its members from the violence.

The landscape of Lahore changes as riots erupt. The novel also explores a deep crisis of masculinity. The Ice-Candy Man, once playful turns aggressive after seeing the train from Gurdaspur filled with dead bodies of Muslims. The trains arrive filled with corpses especially the violence that was shown on the female bodies triggered him the most. The sight of "two gunny-bags full of women's breasts" depicts the horrors of Partition (Sidhwa 131). Breasts, which symbolize motherhood and nurturing, are destroyed. He begins crying publicly, beating his chest, and crying out for revenge. Anger replaces his grief. "I lose my senses when I think of the mutilated bodies on that train from Gurdaspur ... that night I went mad, I tell you!" (Sidhwa 137). This becomes the moral turning point where the violence that is witnessed becomes violence enacted. Violence becomes an act of wounded masculinity. The portrayal of Ice-Candy Man as either a villain or a victim is questioned, as his actions are shaped because of the trauma.

There is also a scene where Lenny and her cousin Adi tear "life-like doll" until its "cloth skin is ripped... spilling chunks of greyish cotton" (Sidhwa 121-122). The doll represents bodily abuse. Lenny and Adi are responding to what they are seeing happening outside. Violence has entered their thoughts. It also shows that they have no reason for their actions; they are simply doing it because they can. Although they do not accomplish anything after tearing it apart. It also shows how violence can become performative because it is being done everywhere. Dolls, traditionally meant for children, helps them understand emotions, develop their motor skills, and explore imaginative play. It plays a key role in child's understanding of self. However, here the doll is destroyed. It shows the weathering of childhood innocence. Lenny is changing internally as she is enacting what she is seeing in her surroundings. It shows how violence destroys childhood itself.

As communal tensions rise, men who once admired and claimed friendship begin to see Ayah through communal lens. According to Feminist Partition scholars like Ritu Menon and Kamla

Bhasin, during Partition, women's bodies were treated as carriers of community honour. Violence against women was used to shame the opposite community.

The scene where Ayah is abducted is one of the most terrifying scenes in *Ice-Candy Man*. Men who once admired and laughed with her are now predators. No single individual takes full responsibility but instead is carried out by a group and acts are committed which might have never been happened if they were alone. This aligns with Urvashi Butalia's observation that Partition violence involved collective nature of violence. It also shows that how women lose the freedom of one's own body without any consent and she is rather seen as having a Hindu female body and as someone who needs to be possessed.

Even though *Ice-Candy Man* is set during Partition, but gendered violence continues today like honour killings, rape etc. But at the same time contemporary feminist movements have begun to emphasize about the lived experiences of women. Unlike the silence that was there during the time of Partition where they feared discussing about their traumatic experience. Today women speak openly about justice, and they want autonomy for themselves. Women are getting educated, they stand equal to men economically and are legally aware also so that they can resist if someone tries to oppress them in any way. Though the challenges remain in many rural and conservative areas.

Chapter 3

Silence: The Ultimate Trauma

One of the primary ways to express trauma in Partition literature is through silence. After experiencing violence, many survivors choose to remain silent as a coping mechanism. It is a psychological response to overwhelming pain. The inability of language to express trauma is seen through Ayah's quietness after her abduction. Psychologically, trauma makes people turn into a state

of isolation. The shock that they go through pushes them into protective shells as they struggle to speak about their experiences. According to trauma theorists, silence is the first response to extreme violence because memories become fragmented and painful to process.

However, this silence does not remain permanent; with time, it changes into voice. Contemporary writers and activists have turned these silent experiences into powerful narratives of Partition trauma. Works by writers like Urvashi Butalia, Amrita Pritam and Bapsi Sidhwa show that these works are not dead texts but show the consequences of hatred and division.

In *Ice-Candy Man*, Partition violence is not just shown through humans only. Sidhwa also uses nature and the environment to talk about the moral collapse of society. Through this, Sidhwa is trying to demonstrate that trauma is not only limited to human bodies and memories, but it also affects the physical world- the streets, seasons, and the city itself.

At the beginning of the novel, Lahore is presented as vibrant, sensuous and alive. Her perception is shaped by gardens, parks and open spaces shape. In Queen's Garden, Ayah and her admirers gather, and it represents a shared social structure. People of various religions sit together casually. Nature does not differentiate based on religion. It is a space which is open for everyone. The trees provide shade equally to everyone. This shows the culture of pre-Partition Lahore. However, as communal tensions arise, the atmosphere darkens. The public spaces where people used to share love and laughter together turn into anxiety. Lenny senses these changes not through the news but through the changing environment.

Lenny's Parsi identity adds another layer to the trauma she faces. The Parsis were a small Zoroastrian minority, who fled Persia (modern Iran) and they were seeking refugee in India. According to legend, The Indian Prince sent a glass of milk filled till top. It represented that his

kingdom was already full and had no space for newcomers. Sidhwa explains their culture through a narrative often referred to as the “Get absorbed into his country like the sugar in the milk” (Sidhwa 41). By mentioning this, Sidhwa says that Parsis was a community which survived not through domination but by accommodating. They were never a target nor were an active participant during Partition violence. They stayed neutral. In the novel, Lenny’s family has a secure position. They are not forced to migrate or attacked like that of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

Another episode is of Ranna’s visit to his ancestral village, Pir Pindo. It initially has warmth, sense of belongingness, and tradition. Brutality is shown when the violence erupts and Pir Pindo is attacked. Ranna witnesses his father’s head being “shorn clear off his neck” which is the most brutal act of his life (Sidhwa 173). To survive, he hides under a “tangled pile of unrecognisable bodies” (Sidhwa 174). Sidhwa uses one of the most haunting examples of Ranna’s “crescent moon” scar (Sidhwa 169). He receives the scar during the massacre at Pir Pindo. The massacre had also wiped out his family and childhood. What remains with him is not his own identity but an identity collapse and wounds. Despite this, he is ready to forgive and care for others. He does not turn his trauma into vengeance.

In contrast, Lenny holds herself responsible for the abduction of Ayah. She attempts to punish herself by “scouring her tongue” with a toothbrush because she believes that it failed to hide the truth. She believes she needs to purify her tongue (Sidhwa 161). This wound stays with her through memory. It keeps coming back. One carries history in conscience, the other carries it on the skin.

The character of Hamida reflects the burden of gendered violence through Partition. She narrates a tale in a very calm and almost detached tone. The story is about a Prince who encounters a huge painted tiger. The tiger appears to be wild and almost alive. Yet is only an image which is being controlled by an unseen painter. Similarly, human beings even though they appear to be

independent, yet they are controlled by fate. By telling this story, Hamida tells her own personal suffering. Her surrender to fate should not be seen as a sign of weakness but is rather a survival mechanism. She says, "we are khut-putli, puppets, in the hands of fate" (Sidhwa 189). If she were to see her suffering as personal misfortune, then her burden would become intolerable. She accepts her fate as it is. This shows how survivors reinterpret their lives to continue living.

Ayah's suffering in *Ice-Candy-Man* is marked by the complete erasure of her identity. She eventually changes into Mumtaz in *Hira Mandi*; her body is commoditized and loses her own sense of who she was. Ayah was no longer cheerful as she was earlier in the novel. Although she was physically present yet existentially absent. It shows her internal death. Although Ayah is rescued physically but the restoration of self is far too difficult to achieve now. She cannot feel her previous identity just by leaving the brothel. Partition had destroyed not only her safety but also her ability to feel human again. This is also discussed in *Borders and Boundaries*, where many abducted women were forgotten by their own families or sent to government recovery centres, which in turn made them feel even more alone. Being recovered did not mean that they got emotionally healed.

Yet Sidhwa balances this darkness with figures of ethical virtues who act as moral force of nature like Godmother. She represents order. She is fair, brave and has emotional intelligence and that is why people respect what she says. Her home becomes a safe place amid the chaos happening. In this space, the most powerful confrontation with Ice-Candy Man takes place. He presents himself as a heartbroken lover. He recites verses of great Urdu Poets like Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Mirza Ghalib to show his longing for lost love. He tries to show as if he were the one wronged by fate. But Godmother realizes the artificiality of his performance and calls him "shameless badmash" (Sidhwa 210). Instead, she puts forth the truth that he betrayed the very woman whom he claims to love. He is reciting poetry as a mask to hide his guilt and not as

devotion. Godmother's confrontation is a restoration of moral accountability and delivering ethical justice.

During Partition, women were not allowed to talk about their suffering, and it appeared as long cultural silence. They were expected to hide their experiences to avoid shame. Hence, they withdrew themselves into their protective shells. Today, women are breaking out of their respective roles, demanding justice, and redefining their identities. The change did not happen overnight; it gradually happened through education, awareness, and collective struggle. However, cultural trauma and patriarchy continue to exist in many spaces, and while violence has changed its form but has not completely disappeared.

Conclusion

The consequences of Partition in *Ice-Candy Man* shows that identity is not just lost rather made to forcibly perform. To survive, one needs to imitate what others are doing. Under normal circumstances, one rarely reflects on their identity, but during Partition, their everyday actions became matters of life and death.

One such example is Hari, who becomes Himat Ali to ensure his survival. He sings the Muslim Kalma to show that he is following his new religion with devotion. However, Lenny notices something strange, he recites it with "cadence and intonation of Hindu chants," showing that identity cannot be changed overnight (Sidhwa 158). The body remembers and it keeps breathing deep inside even after a new identity is imposed. We see a similar survival strategy in Moti, later known as David Masih, who converts to Christianity. He does this specifically to escape from caste oppression as he is an untouchable and converting will offer him safety. This becomes a

performance they must enact to survive. Identity is no longer lived naturally; rather, it is performed under harsh circumstances.

Traditional history presents Partition as a political event documented through speeches, borders, dates etc. Instead of showing Partition as neat, Sidhwa shows that it left deep scars on human bodies and minds. Instead of just straight maps and lines, she shows brutality, loss of innocence and how survivors continue to relive violence. While political borders were drawn in ink by the elite leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Muhammad Ali Jinnah Sidhwa shows how bodies bear the true cost of those decisions and becomes a map that records violence in a way that political documents cannot erase.

For example, Ayah, whose voice was once melodious becomes rough marking the destruction of selfhood. Partition also displaces her, sending her to Amritsar, but it cannot restore what has been destroyed internally. Historical narratives might label her as a recovered woman, but recovery is not possible psychologically. As the novel closes, the Ice-Candy Man follows Ayah to India. This is not romantic, but rather haunting. His shadow follows the survivor, into the future. Ayah cannot escape what she has been through, both literally and psychologically. Thus, Sidhwa says that repentance is not possible because it cannot undo the violence committed.

Future research can go beyond identity and trauma to examine how guilt is performed by those who commit crimes, such as the Ice-Candy-Man. He changes into a poetic fakir, prompting us to question whether repentance in Partition narratives is possible or merely a mask to survive the criticism of society. Further study can be conducted on whether religion, supernatural forces, and poetry become ways to soften a violent past. Environmental trauma is another area which can be studied. The novel describes how Lahore burns for months and the environment too is filled with Partition violence. This means that Partition did not just harm the human bodies but also the

physical landscape. An ecocritical reading of Partition literature can be undertaken through the imagery of pollution, fire, abandoned homes, and damaged gardens.

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