

Khushwant Singh's "Train to Pakistan" Depicted Tracks of Multicultural Milieu

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Abstract: *The present paper tried to explore Khushwant Singh's views on effect of partition and role of multicultural set up in India. India is known for its cultural diversity in the world map and maintaining unity. There are hundreds together caste, creed, belief and traditions being observed by the people of India. Many Indian and foreign writers depicted cultural diversity and conflict between two major religions in their writings and Khushwant Singh is also one among them who depicted difference of opinion between Hindu and Muslims in India. Being a multi cultured nation India is literally enjoying a status which is maintaining unity. Gate opines as, "Multiculturalism is concerned with representations, not of differences as such, but of cultural identities." (Gate: 1993) Khushwant Singh had to put multicultural aspects in his novel "Train to Pakistan". It was inevitable to him.*

Key Words: *Multiculturalism, Milieu, Partition, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Mano Majra,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Khushwant Singh's "Train to Pakistan" is an example of multiculturalism in India. Being a keen observer of then contemporary society Singh wrote on partition and its consequences in India. Khushwant Singh's novel Train to Pakistan is packed with clashes emerging out of the segment of 1947. In this novel we will perceive how shared free for all immersed the remote town of Mano Majra where Sikhs and Muslims had lived in peace for quite a long time. Amid the pre-segment days, the town is delineated as a place where assorted religions coincide holding their unmistakable physical personalities. The town is possessed by around seventy families among which there is just a single Hindu family, while the others are Sikhs and tree, protect all without segregation. In this regard V.A. Shahane remarks as "Religious diversities are thus overcome by the center of supernatural and divine power, and forces of division alternate with Life in Mano Majra is regulated by the passing of train across the bridge" (V.A. Shahane).

During British reign in India there was a cold war between two major religious groups and British used their policy to divide country and succeeded in sowing seeds of rivalry. In this context Patel Sujata expressed her view as, "The post -independence India experienced varied identity formation as a consequence of the process of industrialization, urbanization, globalization and expansion of the information technology. The identities that are emerged were based on discrete received categories such as religion, Caste (Jati), Class (Varna), gender and sex." (Patel: 1995) Rao and Rani put their collective opinion that, "Train to Pakistan is the touching tale of a village, Mano Majra, struck down by the hate and the violence that came with the division of the subcontinent when a train-load of massacred men, women and children arrive in the village. It reveals with pitiless precision a picture of the bestial horrors enacted on the Indo-Pakistan border during the days of 1947. The predominant features of the novel are its stark realism, its absolute fidelity to the truth, and above all, its trenchant exposure of the partition horrors." (Rao & Rani, 2004) The train has other contextual relations .It signifies groups of people who are heading for diverse objective. In this regard V.A. Shahane remarks: "Religious diversities are thus overcome by the center of supernatural and divine power and forces of division alternate with Life in Mano Majra is regulated by the passing of train across the bridge." (Shahane: 1972) "Muslim felt that Pakistan would be a haven of refugee where there were no Sikhs and Hindus. The Sikhs in turn were mad and angry and they seemed to agree with people who said Muslims had no loyalties. Mano Majra was now no more a peaceful place but this silence is suddenly disturbed: The arrival of the ghost train, filled with corpses at Mano Majra from Pakistan, created a commotion. Sikhs and Muslims, who have lived together for centuries, are engulfed in fratricidal conflicts." (Shahane).

Khushwant Singh was the main Indian author in English to expound on the loathsomeness and holocaust of a parcel with incredible aesthetic worry in Train to Pakistan. It isn't parceled yet what it gets related with and what it ends up noticeably representative of that draws in the consideration of the author. It has been seen about the guarantees brought by multiculturalism. For those of us on the edges ethnic minorities, people from regular workers foundations, gays and lesbians et cetera who had dependably felt conflicted about our essence in organizations where information has partaken in ways that reinsertion imperialism and mastery, it was exciting to believe that the vision of equity and majority rule government that was at the very heart of the social liberties development would be

acknowledged in the institute. Finally, there was the likelihood of a learning group a place where contrast could be recognized, where we would at last all comprehend, acknowledge and confirm that our methods for knowing are produced in history and connection of energy.

Khushwant Singh gave an unmistakable picture. Muslims said the Hindus had arranged and begun the murdering. As indicated by the Hindus, the Muslims were to be faulted. As per him, "The truth of the matter is, the two sides slaughtered. Both shot and stabbed and skewered and clubbed. Both tormented. Both assaulted" Khushwant Singh has grasped an objective approach all through the novel; we get looks of checked shock which must be the outcome of his own troublesome experience. He comments as, "I had trusted that we Indians were peace cherishing and peaceful, that we were more worried about issues of the soul, while whatever remains of the world was engaged with the quest for material things. After the experience of the fall of 1947, I could never again buy into these perspectives. I became... a furious moderately aged man, who needed to yell his disappointment with the world."

While reviewing the deplorability of Partition Decrepit old men, exposed ladies, defenceless youthful youngsters, babies in arms, by the thousands were severely done to death by Muslim, Hindu and Sikh fan. Obliteration and plundering of property, capturing and beguiling of ladies, unspeakable barbarities and unbelievable inhumanities were executed for their religion and patriotism. The social blend among Muslim, Hindu and Sikh was the fine blend of solidarity in grouped assortment yet after fragment such congeniality changed into dread and violence works out. The surge of public savagery travelled every which way with every one of its shades of malice; however, it exited a heap of living dead, and heaving cadavers afterwards. It wasn't just that the 69 nation was part of two-bodies and psyches were likewise partitioned.

In a surprising way, an essential circumstance made in India amid partition period. Rituparna Roy opined, "In Train to Pakistan, the savagery that emitted at the season of the segment is spoken to in an exceptionally strange manner. There is no nitty gritty depiction in the novel of the prepare travel attempted by the refugees in terms of neither the useful challenges confronted nor the threats included. All the more essential, we are additionally not demonstrated the viciousness happening: for there isn't even an announced depiction of the episodes in the novel. We are simply educated about the final product of the viciousness: the trainloads of cadavers that land at Mano Majra. What is point by Khushwant Singh is the aftermath of the brutality."

In a way, Partition demolished the whole structure of the country in view of composite culture. Parcel has not 62 simply drawn new regional limits but rather it has broken the regular social legacy, offering an approach to shared rebellion. V. A. Shahane observes in this context: "The use of the word 'train' is significant in other ways too. The train signifies groups or multitudes of people who are on the move. The train implies the movement of the vast communities, torn from their links of nativity, from their places of birth and upbringing and areas of traditional growth in search of a new 'Jerusalem'. It indicates the harrowing process of this change, the awful and ghastly experiences of human beings involved in a historical, objective and almost dehumanized process. The train suggests the fate of the individuals, the destinies of the two newly formed dominions.. .Secondly, the train is also a symbol of the machine age..." Humanity has been washed out in the flood of British policies in India.

Train to Pakistan (1956), Khushwant Singh's presentation novel mirrors the contention of societies and ethnic viciousness. It depends on the injury and disaster of the noteworthy segment of India in August 1947. It is extremely a record of the contention of societies and conflict of viciousness between two races, Muslims and Hindus, caused by an intense feeling of fundamentalism. The fact is highlighted in the following words: Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped. (Singh, 1956)

There were comments on the novel in many of the national newspapers. The Hindu put its comment as, "Partition was a traumatic experience for me. I had gone to Lahore expecting to live there, to become a lawyer or a judge; and then to be brutally torn out and never really being able to go back. That was what put me to writing. I wrote Train to Pakistan." (The Hindu) After this comment confesses Khushwant Singh. The violence of Partition was so horrific that it cannot simply be ignored by anyone writing about that particular period. Gerald James says, "Singh believes that during Partition days religion was grossly abused. He holds it responsible for the violation of the long-cherished 65 human values and savage killings on both the sides of the border in 1947. Gerald James Larson opines "Partition was the defining event of modern independent India and Pakistan, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Partition continues to be the defining event for both sides. It is, indeed, one of the necessary and essential events or conditions for understanding India's current agony over Religion". (Gerald James)

2. CONCLUSION:

Train to Pakistan, a novel written by Khushwant Singh depicted then the contemporary society. During partition time socio cultural milieu as well as conflict among religious groups was clearly stated. It has been seen about the guarantees brought by multiculturalism. For those of us on the edges ethnic minorities, people from regular workers foundations, gays and lesbians et cetera who had dependably felt conflicted about our essence in organizations where information has partaken in ways that reinsertion imperialism and mastery, it was exciting to

believe that the vision of equity and majority rule government that was at the very heart of the social liberties development would be acknowledged in the institute. Khushwant Singh has grasped an objective approach all through the novel; we get looks of checked shock which must be the result of his own troublesome experience.

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