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Division of a Country and Its Aftermath: A Sad Story From Bapsi Shidwa's Ice- Candy Man's Disable Character Lenny's Perspective

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Abstract: During partition, Hindus and Muslims were not only affected, division of a country called India put every community in the ocean of troubles. The novelist named Bapsi Sidhwa was a Parsi and she has experienced the pains and agonies of that existed times and periods. The novel *Cracking India/Ice Candy Man* is not a mere novel. According to Houston Chronicle, this novel is “a multifaceted jewel of a novel”. Washington Post and Book World praised this book and said “a mysterious and wonderful novel”. Being a reader one can easily notice a tremendous gaps in relations during pre and post partition. Lenny, the narrator of the novel, is a small character and physically she is polio-stricken. *Ice-Candy-Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa is a straightforward and honest analysis of the shifting sociopolitical complexities of the Indian subcontinent just before division of India. The narrative's central themes are communal disharmony, self identity, geographical statuary, and political viciousness. It displays the Parsi Pakistani viewpoint on separation as well as the Parsi sticking point of maintaining allegiance to political representatives. The novel by Bapsi Sidhwa informs the reader that they should learn and take lesson from past. She is a good-natured Parsi who investigates the effects of partition, diffusion, displacement and polarization. Her imagination creates various scenery. Bapsi Sidhwa is opposed to any communal view point. *Ice-Candy-Man* portrays Ayah's kidnapping, as well as communal acrimony. Lenny, an innocent girl, observed the division and the victimization of people.

Keywords: Regional division, communal unrest, victimization, feminism and socio-cultural depiction.

Introduction

The renowned and prolific novelist Bapsi Sidhwa is not a mere novelist in the South Asian literature. London Times considers

her, “a powerful and dramatic novelist”. New York Times Book Review published by saying, “Pakistani’s finest English Language novelist”. Washington Post commented on her and said, “Pakistani’s leading author”. While opening the novel titled *Cracking India/ Ice Candy Man*, she used an epigraph to make her argument crystal clear. She used Allama Iqbal’s poem *Shikwa (Complaint to God)* as an epigraph. The novel starts title *Cracking India (Ice Candy Man)* with the following lines:

*Shall I hear the lament of the Nightangle,
submissively lending my ear?*

*Am I the rose to suffer its cry in silence year after
year?*

*The fire of verse gives me courage and bids me no
more to be faint.*

*With dust in my mouth, I am object: to God I make
my complaint.*

*Sometimes you favor our rivals then sometimes
with us you are free,*

*I am sorry to say its so boldly. You are no less fickle
than we.*

(Iqbal, Complaint to God)

Before going into the depth of this research topic, first people need to understand the meaning of epigraph. An epigraph is a phrase, quotation, or poetry that appears at the start of a piece of writing, monograph, or section thereof in literature. The epigraph can be used as a preamble or we can say preface to the work, a summary, a counter-example, or a link from the work to a larger literary canon, with the goal of inviting comparison or invoking a traditional context.

Lenny, the lead character, witnesses the conflict of nation-building. Lenny is a member of the minority Zoroastrian

community, which has been devastated by the loss of local helpers, companions, as well as relatives. Inadvertently, the innocent child betrays Ayah. Ayah is kidnapped by a crowd led by the Ice-candy man. Ayah personifies the oppressed woman. The vicious Ice-candy man assaults, rapes, and forces her into sexual exploitation. Ice-candy man, Ayah's partner and backstabber, has given her the name Mumtaz. Santha's abduction and resultant rapes, followed by a lineage into Lahore's red light area, represent a breakdown of her world.

Reason for choosing a lame character

Having read the novel the reader must have noticed that it is, overall differently, the history by an intensively tone-reflexive and observant character. This character, an eight years old polio-tormented child, Lenny, narrates the incidents and introduces characters. The novel's characters and addresses audibly as it were her contemplation on all the subjects included in her history. Thus, the motive of Ice candy man becomes a character's autobiography. The textbook juxtaposes the child's psyche with the spontaneous process of the adult world, while for this child the world around her it is a textbook.

The dividing line between a child as the narrator and a pen speaking through a child's knowledge is adroitly disguised by the use of first-person history in the present tense. Only because of the narrative voice's ambivalence is it disclosed Lenny's acute tone- mindfulness of her recrimination in the rather valuable response she makes to the world around her.

So, we have to address several issues when we analyse the narrative voice of this novel. Originally, why is an equivocal narrative voice employed by Shidwa for this story? Secondly, why does she use a child's perspective to contextualize the events of a political battle in India's history? Incipiently, why is this child a character marginalized from several locales of her social identity? What purpose is served by Lenny's being a

hindered Parsi girl child narrator? The possible answers to these questions would give precious perceptives into the political sympathies of the novel itself.

Themes of the novel *Ice Candy Man*

The novel is about a pivotal and powerful period in Indian history. Bapsi Sidhwa has taken the religious, emotional, and very tangible ramifications of India's division to life with *Ice-Candy-Man*. She has so "split" India's enigma and unveiled to us the cultural problems that afflicted South Asia before, during, and after its independence from the British and the establishment of Pakistan. The novel *Ice-Candy-Man* revives the historical and contemporary Indo-Pak political tensions underlying spiritual, ethnic, societal, as well as commercial conflicts. *Ice-Candy-Man* is both a story about rising nations and a story about single characters in which men as individuals and their coterie cultures are inextricably linked. Not just Lenny, but everybody in this story undergoes significant change over time of the partition.

Theme of Partition

The story of the partition is depicted through the perspective of Lenny, an absolute crippled child. Her handicap also represents the difficulties that a female author encounters when expressing her opinions. The main character of the story, Lenny, is an under-teen girl. She is naive, oblivious to the deep divisions that exist between various societies. This can be determined by her strong attachment to Hindu Shanta Devi. However, as the story progresses, her naivety and simplicity fade and are replaced by the brutal reality of the partition. She eventually comes to terms with life's harsh facts. Lahore is engulfed in flames, and she sees it. She also notices acts of

ferocity, outrage, and cruelty. Females are molested and males are slaughtered.

Such acts of violence irritate Lenny at first, but she grows accustomed to them as the narrative progresses. Flaming embers, brawls, slogans, watchwords, rants, rapes, genocides, and other daily occurrences have become the norm. Leaders such as Master Tara Singh, J.L. Nehru, Jinnah, and Gandhi are portrayed as champions in most stories about partition. However, in Lenny's opinion of the novel *Ice-Candy Man*, they are depicted as the perpetrators of this atrocity. This is among the novel's most notable characteristics.

The most alarming aspect is that even youngsters are forbidden from interacting with each other. When Lenny starts to play with a group of Sikh kids, Masseur pursues her and snatches her away, the Sikh women inquire about her faith, and when she claims that she is Parsi, they are astonished at the announcement of a new faith. These episodes are only a small sample of what occurred on a wide scale in Lahore and other parts of India prior to the partition. Instead of being clearer, the air becomes more suffocating and oxidized/tainted. There is speculation that India would be shattered very soon.

Feminism in Ice Candy Man

Bapsi Sidhwa is a staunch feminist. She fights for women's rights, particularly those of females who are unwilling to confront society and are trapped in the web of patriarchal idealism. Women feel weak and fearful of confronting men's vices, but Sidhwa has completely disproved this notion and established a new path for women. Discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, oppression, and patriarchy are all themes discussed in feminism. Through the various male and female personalities, *Ice-Candy-Man* is a vital testament of a genuine picture of society. She has just shown the actuality of how a fascinating female lead associated males with females

and generated a great deal of harm among the fellows due to the feminine character's sexual form. Lenny's attitude regarding herself is influenced by the comments she hears from others. Lenny recounts a time when she was having tea with Godmother and she said: "Drinking tea, I am told, makes one darker. I'm dark enough. Everyone says, "It's a pity Adi's fair and Lenny so dark. He's a boy. Anyone will marry him".

This episode also underscores the issue of gender inequality in this literature, indicating that a woman must be attractive to be wanted whereas a male is exempt from such conditioning.

She is not supposed to be pitied because she is the protagonist of Bapsi Sidhwa's text. Her women characters are self-assured and aware of their uniqueness, and they are not readily overpowered. Women should not curse, lie, or steal, while men are allowed to do so. All of these regulations are irrational in a patriarchal society that only sees men. Lenny is irritated by all of the constraints and expresses his dissatisfaction by simply stating: "It's okay if cousin swears - but if I curse or lie I am told it does not suit the shape of my mouth. Or my personality. Or something."

Bapsi Sidhwa exposes patriarchal society in this line of the novel, in which women suffer the brunt of their men's harsh comments.

Hamida is a character in this literature who represents repressed and victimised women throughout wartime. Women's abduction and sexual assault are utilised as weapons of war in this country. Lenny was told that she was dubbed "the fallen woman" because she was kidnapped and taken to Amritsar by some Sikhs. "Hamida was kidnapped by the Sikhs...she was taken away to Amritsar. Once that happens, sometimes, the husband – or his family won't take her back".

Another facet of Feminism that Bapsi Sidhwa describes is: "Muslim community like to keep their girls in the family; so marriages between first cousins are common."

Outline of Love in the novel Ice Candy Man

The novel Ice Candy Man tells us about the various hues of love. The Ayah and ice candy man relationship exemplify nasty, merciless, and extreme love. After realizing that Ayah has no place in his heart for him, Ice Candy Man kidnapped her with the support of some germ cells, duping Lenny. He sullied her to the point where no one would marry her and then forced her into an asphyxiating marriage, which she rescued with the intervention of Godmother. When Ayah was brought back to her relatives in Amritsar, the ice candy man became a wandering woe-begone lover yearning for her love. Ice candy man followed her across the Wagah border. The Godmother and her aunt transported oil to aid Hindus and Sikhs from mobs and kidnappings, demonstrating humanistic compassion.

Lenny and Ayah's love and loyalty is the finest expression of love. Lenny understood the ramifications of speaking the truth. After learning that she had deceived Ayah by trusting Ice Candy Man, she felt a tremendous sense of guilt and regret. She was so repentant that she even sought to suffocate her tongue for telling the truth. Ayah, Lenny's cousin, discovered the way to Lenny's heart. He looked for Ayah in Lahore. Affection for ancestral homelands and the land on which one was born and raised is shown through the hamlet of Pir Pindo, who cannot imagine leaving their predecessors' lands to relocate to an unknown land for the sake of religious faith.

The restrained thoughts of disadvantaged minorities in any culture are frequently expressed through verse or art. Bapshi Sidhwa uses the eight-year-old Lenny as the narrator of her work to express the fears of the disadvantaged during India's

partition. In the narrative, Lenny is ostracized not only as a youngster, but also as a girl, a Parsi, and a physically disabled member of society. This distinguishes her as a powerful and evocative narrative voice in both the Partition novel and bildungsroman genres.

'He [Gandhi] is a man who loves women,' Lenny says, speaking from the periphery of dominant discourses on patriarchy, patriotism, religion, and aesthetics and also he loves children who are physically challenged. And the untouchable sweeper - so he'll be the best friend of the untouchable sweeper's constipated girl-child's (87). As a result, Lenny avoids, even resents, any outpouring of Gandhi-like pathos as the expected response to her story.

Instead, the story takes readers on a delightful journey through irony and off-the-beaten-path observation into some of the most heartbreaking aspects of human experience. Our young narrator, like most eight-year-olds, is a never-ending adventurer. Her curiosity to fathom the apparent and unseen facets of life around her is characteristic of developing children, who are always asking questions, watching, and listening. And she has a keener sense of intuition than others. As a result, a collage-like narrative emerges. It is unpredictable in its juxtaposition of events, persons, and ruminations, and as a result, the author's numerous concerns are conveyed in an ungraspable style. The child-narrator is portrayed encountering post-colonial politics, gender divisions, minority community persecution and challenges, child abuse, and so on, and she relates her experience as such. Bapshi Shidwa stressed the relevance of a writer's locality when writing in an interview for *The Hindustan Times* in 1998. 'I had a desire to see Pakistan or India.' As a result, Lenny's experience and articulation of it strike a unique chord with the audience. Lenny's perspective defamiliarizes the commonplaces of adult experience, at times innocently wide-eyed and at other times staggeringly precocious. *Ice-Candy-Man*, on the other hand, isn't just a

children's book. In reality, the author is keeping a careful eye on this mini-narrator. We mentioned in the start that there is a cleverly hidden dividing line between the kid-narrator and the writer speaking via the awareness of a child.

Conclusion

From the above analysis we come to conclude that the insights which are being drawn by the illustration of the narrative voice. USA Today praised this novel and said "A historical tragedy comes to alive, yielding insight into both the past and the subcontinent's turbulent present". This particular novel lead the reader to believe that it is ambiguous rather than uni-dimensional. Here in this novel the novelist Bapshi Sidhwa tried to create a certain kind of narrative voice which has an age, a gender, and a political point of view to contribute. Its approach, however, is neither pompous nor complacent, but rather acutely self-reflective. This type of storytelling encourages readers to respond to many points of view and opens the text up for discussion on the various topics raised by Lenny's autobiography.

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