

## Construction of Ethnic Religious Borders, Cognitive Disruption and Resultant Suffering of People in Indian and Nepali Texts

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doi:10.56397/SSSH.2024.07.08

### Abstract

Religious-ethnic diversity makes human society beautiful; however, the sensitive area can also be the site of potential conflict and violence. Researcher is interested in observing the politics how ethnic religious borders are constructed among harmoniously settled races, how due to cognitive disruption they turn into each others' enemies, and as a result, the divisive strategy results in the suffering of people. The portrayal of politics staged on the ground of religious diversity in Indian partition literature and the utilization of ethnic diversity for the political benefits after 1990 political change followed by Maoist insurgency in Nepal have been explored for this study. Indian-Pakistani partition novels like Khushwant Singh's *The Train to Pakistan*, Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*, Abdullah Hussein's *The Weary Generations*, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, and some secondary texts about ethno-politics that emerged after 1990 political change and accelerated during Maoist insurgency followed by promulgation of constitution through constituent assembly in Nepal, have been analyzed in detail. Textual data from primary literary texts have been exhaustively discussed and analyzed. Relevant critics have been quoted for justification of the argument. Affect theory and the theories of ethnic conflict provide the theoretical light for the analysis. The celebration of the nationalist historiography of India and Nepali unity in diversity, the aura of ethnic religious harmony and nation building, get replaced by ethnic politics resulting in internal political struggle comparable to colonial divisive strategy.

**Keywords:** affective politics, class-based politics, cognitive disruption, ethnic conflict, ethno-politics

Rana regime in Nepal introduced the civil code, *Muluki Ain*, a discriminatory code for Nepali society. Panchayat regime under the leadership of the king wished to continue it by granting controlled democracy opportunity to people. The king banned political parties, declared Nepal a peaceful zone, the garden comprised of four castes and thirty-six colors — *char jat chhattis varnako fulbari* — ethnic-religious diversity co-existed in mutual harmony. Political parties who fought against the Ranas continued their struggle against the monarch who deceived them. The political change in 1990 guaranteed free exercise of democracy under constitutional monarchy, however, due to unstable politics and slow process in addressing people's issues, CPN Maoist further staged its armed struggle in 1996-2006. They used castes and ethnicities as their fighting arms, as ethno-politics and ethno-development staged after 1990 had turned ethnicity into powerful force. Seven political parties and CPN Maoist staged a joint movement in 2007; overthrew the monarchy, promulgated interim constitution guaranteeing secularism, federalism, reservation benefits for backward peoples, castes and ethnicities. Ethno-religious diversity in India during and before independence movement co-existed in harmony. Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Parsee all fought against the foreign imperial power together during independence struggle. Despite their religious diversity, they shared language, culture, tradition, and way of life. As they were about to defeat the foreign rulers, harmoniously settled communities suddenly turned against each other. This sudden development of the phenomenon led them to communal violence and partition of the country.

There are nationalist historiography and alternative historiography versions about Indian and Nepali

ethno-religious conflict. Mainstream Indian nationalist historiography celebrates independence and heroism of elite leaders in partition literature. Post independent India witnessed multiple alternative versions like subaltern historiography, feminist perspective, and Pakistani perspective side by side (Roy, 2010). Indian mainstream nationalist line is worried about partition while Pakistani alternative perspective valorizes partition. The former blames imperialism for the cause of partition that planted seeds of rivalry among communities, with the intention of divide and rule. The latter justifies partition to be inevitable. Gilmartin (1998) has seen partition to be the result of “high politics”, that is, “the negotiation between the British, the Congress, and the Muslim League” since it was “uninfluenced by everyday politics of local life” (p. 1069). Pandey (1992) is worried about partition writing since it was “reopening the old wounds” (p. 33) by writing about the criminal elements of both communities “filling the minds of the people with poisonous insanity” (38). He compares the strife in Sahni’s *Tamas* with the Jabalpur incident in 1961, Bhiwandi strife in 1970, Bhagulpur riot in 1989 and many other such riots. National historiography line has mentioned every such riot as criminalization of politics and communalization of national public life. Even the petty issues are given communal color by different interest groups.

Economic causes of rivalries are described in the novels Sahni’s *Tamas*, Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, Hussein’s *Weary Generations*, and Sidhwa’s *Cracking India*, which are briefly analyzed in this paper. Aitzaz Ahsan as cited in Roy (2010) has argued: “Indian subcontinent is made up of two civilizations, Indus and Indic, and Indus has been one large, independent, politico-economic zone... rich and glorious cultural heritage of its own” (p. 14). Roy (2010) has also cited a Pakistani historian Ayesha Jalal: “The actual reason behind the partition was not the scheme of the British but the constitutional tussle for greater representation of power in the government that had gone on for close to four decades, between the Congress and the Muslim League” (p. 14). Joshi (2022) has evaluated partition literature to be “evading moral responsibility, rather working with narrow ethical mindset... spreading hatred rather than optimism and hope” (p. 29). According to him, this ideologically biased orientation is seen to be “demonization and denunciation” (p. 23) of the other. Pandey (2012) evaluates partition literature to have suffered from cultural trauma and hence not good trauma literature. The goal of such literature should have been to heal up the wound and reconcile society. Joshi (2020) has observed affective politics and the play of emotions in partition literature written during 1960s and later. Rather than expressing shame and regret for what happened during partition violence, the authors blame the other from their “affective circumstances” (Reiser, 2009), in the manner of “sensational journalism” (Crane, 2005).

During nation building period in Nepal, Panchayat era (1960-90), king Prithivi, the founder father of Nepal, was deified. National Unity Day, king Tribhuvan’s day, Panchayat day, ruling king’s day, Bhanubhakta’s day, and Motiram’s day were the public celebrations, all valorizing unification of Nepal, eradication of Rana regime followed by guided democracy, Panchayat regime and Nepali language. Significant celebratory slogan in all public programs had been our king, our country, our language, and our dress/ dearer than life — *hamro raja, hamro desh/ hamro bhasha hamro bhash- pran bhanda pyaro chha*. Gelner (2016) has observed Nepal to be “small scale” “empire” “confined to Himalaya” (p. 14), that followed the western imperial principle of “linguistic monism” (p. 19). Nepali language had been the key part of nation building agenda. Gelner further cited Education Planning Commission Report 1956, “local dialects and tongues other than Nepali should be vanished from the school and playground as early as possible in the life of a child” (p. 17). The disappearance of other languages had been taken as greater national strength and unity during nation building period. This has been taken as the influence of the imperial policy on the ruler, the product of the west.

After 1990 political change, Nepal entered into new era of freedom and public openness. Panchayat regime had suppressed political parties thinking that they were divisive and communal. Panchayat ideology focused on monarchical leadership, suppression of political parties, Hindu religion, nationalism, and developmentalism. They considered Nepal to be “small empire”, “Shah King’s possession comprised of many different people and countries” (Gelner, 2016, p.14). Open policy adopted after 1990 witnessed the time of ethnicity building alternative to nation building process. Previous holidays and celebrations were replaced by ethnic based public holidays. Teaching and learning in mother tongue at primary level of education was ensured. Neologisms like *Janajati, Madhesi, Dalit, Khas-arya* were publicly established. Gelner (2016) has observed the government declaration in 2003, on reservation quota for various backward strata of population — “45% of civil service post should be reserved, of which 33% for women, 27% for indigenous nationalities, 22% for Madhesis, 9% for Dalits, 5% for disables, and 4% for backward regions” (p. 29). Interim constitution declared Nepal a secular state in 2007. In the same year, government declared public holiday for festivals related to different religions and ethnic groups — three different Buddhist New Year days (Sonam Losar, Tamu Losar, and Gyalpo Losar), Christmas, Eid, Nepal sambat, Sakela, Maghi, Chhat, Gaura.

Lawoti (2010) makes an assessment of Maoist insurgency and their guerilla recruitment backed up by indigenous groups. Maoists formed various ethnic fronts, declared autonomous regions, and supported indigenous groups’ rights (p. 142). This ethnic participation in the insurgency has impacted the nature of

communist movement “going beyond the sole focus on class inequality” (p. 151). Bhattachan (2013) has argued that king Prithivi established “Gorkha imperialism” among ethnic diversity; the mainstream intellectuals and political thinkers [since then] were directed towards manufacturing ethnic harmony and composite Nepali culture through the coercive process. The campaign plotted in the eighteenth century suppressed indigenous languages, cultures, ethnicity, and regions. Ruler’s language, culture, and religion formed the basis for nation building. Both Lawoti and Bhattachan see this as hegemonic practice.

Various historiography lines and arguments for or against ethno-religious development are all affective, staged with vested interest behind them. The issues brought in societies with ethno-religious diversity, to fulfill such interest of the forces involved, and the way political actors sought to resolve them, lack some basic premises. In the age of globalization and internationalism, division of harmoniously settled societies for some petty interest cannot be considered as farsightedness of political actors. Ethno-politico-religious entanglement in Nepal and India has only generated alienation and fragmentation. The culture of biasness and blatant blaming on other rather than seeking systematic and scholarly solution of an issue at hand only causes sensational politics like wildfire. Isn’t it the continuation of imperial divide and rule policy adapted by political actors who themselves fought against such forces? It seems that the issues were brought without even thinking about the idea of solution how to settle them down. Is it because of the leaders’ lack of knowledge, incompetency, or some third party used them as puppet who wishes to take advantage of the prolonged chaos? If the entanglement is the outcome of the imperial policy, can’t the third world country leaders develop strategy, vision, or competency enough to come out of the whirlwind of western magic? Whatever there may be the reason behind such divisive issues and prolonged chaos, civil society, political actors, and academia should work together to find out the solution of their own. There is strong need that academic community in the third world must contribute to this area. In order to investigate the issue properly, some primary and secondary texts dealing with the idea of partition violence and ethnic-religious conflict in India and Nepal have been analyzed. Affect theory and the theories of ethnic conflict provide theoretical light for the study. Theoretical tenets of affect theory, critical pedagogy for the training of emotions, turn to affect for the investigation of problem literature, and theorization on negative emotions like disgust, anger and shame are used. In the same way, the notions about ethno-religious diversity, ethnic conflict, and ways to bring about reconciliation have been used.

King Prithivi’s unification campaign to Nepal was not merely the extension of territorial boundary but also integration of civilizations. Nepali nation was the amalgamation of four castes and multiple civilizations. Kirat, Mithila, Bahun-chhetri, Magar, Newar and so on were the civilizations with typical religion, culture, language, rites and rituals. Yub Raj Sangraula (2023) in an interview states that King Prithivi was Thakuri by caste but Magar by civilization; Magar living in Jumla or Rolpa was Sinjali by civilization; Mithila was well developed civilization in the south which was typical Nepali development. But Nepali communist movement in the recent years gets diverted from class based to ethnic based politics and pulled all the civilizations to castes. Bhattachan (2013), on the other hand, seems to clarify, “ethno-politics in Nepal shifted from social cultural sphere to political sphere in 1998 when CPN Maoist took up the ethnic cause” (p. 49), which was its strategic turn from class-based Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology while launching the people’s war in 1996, merely to attract the vital ethnic force and use it for the movement. Maoist poured anger against unification process and nation building campaign of the mainstream nationalists in the past, on order to accumulate sympathy of the suppressed groups, a sort of emotional politics. For Grasso (2002), anger is “generative” and “resourceful” for the “imaginative response to justice” (p. 11), but for Nussbaum (2016) it is “impediment to the generosity and empathy that help to construct a future of justice” (p. 8). So, Nussbaum suggests Gandhi’s “non-anger” method of confrontation as immediate task for responding to injustice, and further, responding to cruelties, bloodshot, and disgust with calm and clear eyes rather than anger (p. 247). Structural problems related to cruelties and disgust can be solved through alternative narratives of changing consciousness.

Sangraula (2023) blames western imperialism for the cognitive disruption of the communist parties that the extreme left communist party derailed itself from class based political ideology to ethno-politics. It highlighted ethnic variation in Nepali society. It is the recent guise of imperialism, not to use weapon but to divide societies by cognitive disruption so that they stop thinking and fighting against each other. It is also ideological erosion of the communist parties. Sangraula (2023) claims this strategy to be the cause why 68% of the communist representatives in constituent assembly could not draft a socialist constitution in Nepal. They were divided into Bahun-chhetri, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Mithila and many other ethnic groups. Both Sangraula and Bhattachan are pro-communist academic thinkers, one holds the line of ethno-politics and another class based ideological line. Lawoti (2010) has also evaluated that where there is worsening economic problem in society “class-based rebellions” “ignite” but when Maoist people’s war was launched, “economic and development indicators demonstrated positive trends” (p. 4). He points out that the nature of inequality in Nepal to be in the sectors like geographic regions, rural and urban areas, gender, ethnic and caste groups. Mahendra Lawoti is the west based Nepali academician who has edited more than half a dozen books, all about ethnic conflict and ethno-politics,

after the interim constitution was promulgated in 2007. He seeks to establish that nature of Nepali inequality and conflict is not based on class but on ethnicity, caste, and geography. His project seems to be directed to study why a communist party turned to ethno-politics and how the agenda got derailed in implementation. Lawoti (2010) has analyzed the Human Development Index (HDI) according to ethnic/caste categories and showed Bahun-Chhetri to be better off (HDI 135) in comparison to other groups (HDI 90 to 96), Dalits being lowest in HDI of 73.6% (p. 10). This type of representation is not fair. How did UNDP measure HDI of separate ethnic group where the population is so diverse and scattered and where economic class is clearly visible among each group? Lawoti has further shown that from the period of 1995 to 2004, poverty declined by 46% among Bahun-Chhetri, while among indigenous group it declined only by 10% when it is depicted even higher decline among Dalits, that is, 21% (p. 10). Isn't it the systematic cognitive disruption of Nepali intelligentsia, divisive strategy plotted for the acceleration of ethno-politics and continuous unrest?

After the failure of 1990 constitution ethnic based organizations, political parties with regional focus have acquired new relevance. Ethno-politics revisited the myth of harmony among diversity. Demands for regional and ethnic autonomy became loud and wide. Academic debate for or against ethno-politics rose to the full scale. The proponents of ethno-politics opined that even king Prithivi provided internal autonomy to ethnic groups. He was *maharajadhiraj*, the king of the kings, the system giving autonomy to ethnic groups and integrating ethnicities to make a nation among nationalities (Bhattachan, 2013, p. 45). But later, as has been established, during Rana and Panchayat regimes, Bahun-Chhetri high caste groups suppressed the low caste and non-caste ethnic groups. They exercised hegemony on suppressed ethnicities, a sort of "coercive Nepalization" process. Nepal Janajati Mahasangh, a unified front of various ethnicities, was founded in 1990. The movement was so rapid that it accumulated vitality and force demanding even "emancipation through secession" (Bhattachan, 2013, p. 43). The ethno political entanglement created tension.

The proponents of ethno-politics opined that ethnic uprising is "rational choice for political action" and "not against the coexistence of various ethnic groups" (Bhattachan, 2013, p. 36). They are for the paradigm shift of "poly-ethnic polity from mono-ethnic state" (Lawoti, 2013, p. 226), replace exclusionary nationalism by more inclusive versions that recognize multiple languages, religions, cultures, and identities of the peoples. Specifically, they are for secularism and federalism based on ethnicity. However, the opponents of ethno-politics are worried about the disturbances it has brought in the tradition of communal harmony. They believe that ethno-politics is "non rational" and "obstacle to nation building process" (Bhattachan, 2013, p. 36). It may cause communal violence and disintegration. Mainstream nationalist thinkers are worried about the slogans raised in the ethno-political movement, the voice of right to self-determination, autonomy, and even secession. Government recognition of indigenous festivals as public holidays and 45% reservation quota for different suppressed and indigenous groups, as mentioned above, are the evidence of "national shame", using Ahmed's (2010) term, the realization of historical wrongs against the groups in society with ethno-religious diversity.

Sovereignty, territorial integrity, federal autonomy, and preservation of cultural identity are the worldwide issues raised in societies with ethnic diversity. Ethno-politics and ethno-development are the concepts developed in the west, just like the principles of unification of nationalities and mono-lingual imperial policy. Nepali ethnic movement has been benefited from the ideas developed in the west, according to Bhattachan (2013), the "localization of global process" (p. 48). Caste and ethnicity have been recognized as significant components of Nepali social structure, the denial of ethno-politics may cause more harm than good, for him. Ethno-religious, literary, and historical sources are matter of pride for the subjugated community and shameful reminder for the perpetrator community. This type of realization can be attained through reconciliation literature. For Wetherell (2012) negative emotions like anger, hatred and disgust are powerful like "gusts of wind, the movement of molecules, the power of the lion, and the shivering of the sea", that generate "emotive", regulatory glue for the "emotional regimes" (p. 67), that may function as seeds for rivalry, conflict, and violence. So, Ahmed (2010) has postulated some ideas for multicultural society: "to make people happier" means "to make society more cohesive" and "to put glue", "to stick people together" (p. 121), and in Miller's (1997) term not applying "disgust machinery for social control" (p. 15). Emotions like disgust, fear, and anger are necessary and not necessary; just we to use them for producing desirable feeling.

Political groups react against traditional order in order to win people in democracy. Sacred symbols still persist but meaning behind them are ever more obscure. Due to freedom and democracy, people are encouraged to express their dissatisfaction enormously. Political groups also formulate contradictions and get benefit from that. People are satisfied when their demands are met, but soon dissatisfaction gets erupted at another issue. Sometimes they are satisfied at their demands fulfilled very lately. Democracy, secularism, and ethno-politics changed the socio-political landscape of Nepal in recent years. Nineteenth century Europe witnessed the decline of religion, and twentieth century, the rise of contemporary democratic theories. Nandy (2007) has seen religion to have "reemerged as postmodern phenomenon seeking a void... twenty first century religion has turned into a Phoenix that has risen from its own ashes in Europe" (p. 1). Single key solution never works in human affairs for

all the time and places. During supremacy of religion, in the name of holy wars, genocide of indigenous peoples, colonial sanction by Christian church, and religion-based terrorism in the Islamic world had continuously been the causes of unrest. South Asian secular states have also witnessed erupting interreligious hatred now and again. Nandy (2007) has observed both religious and secular world as “parallel in the matter of violence, paranoia, and sadomasochism” (p. 2). According to Gelner and Letizia (2019), secularism and ethnic politics are presented as the product of “foreign Christian conspiracy” (p. 286) intended to convert Hindus. Hence ethno-religious nationalists and secular nationalists both are aware of the fact in using religion as a pathway to power. For Visvanathan (2016), Congress idea of secularism in India has been considered as strategy to secure minority votes, but BJP went beyond ethnicity and minoritarianism which resulted in the defeat of the former. For Visvanathan secularism is the western model to separate Church and state, a political device to mediate between the competing sects of Christianity, and it may not fit into societies with ethno-religious diversity.

Democracy requires a set of institutions to deal with peoples’ aspirations. Beteille (2012) states that “modern pluralist democracies” wish to separate religion and politics, and hence in favor of “secular political institutions” (p. 3). He further characterizes “democratic regime” to have an “acknowledged place for an opposition as well as government” (p. 5). In totalitarianism, opposition and dissent are suppressed, often “driven underground” from where it “bursts out in act of violence and destruction” (p. 6). Opposition should be managed and given institutional form, since otherwise it might lead to disorder and chaos. When there is need of stirring or movement religion or ethnicity is driving force, differences are highlighted in society with ethno-religious diversity, as a divisive force. Diversity has been fertile ground for conflict and violence. Hangen (2010) has similar opinion, ethnic identity is used to locate certain group within socio-economic and political paradigm and utilize it at an “opportune juncture of time” (p. 24).

Nepal is rich in ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism among various subgroups. Invasion or conquest is ancient phenomenon. According to Pullaiah et al. (2018), “legacy of conquest brought diverse people of the area under the rule of dominant group” (p. 38). Fisher (1978) has characterized the feature to be “ethnographic provincialism”, to use nineteenth century idiom “neither-fish-nor-fowl contact zone”, people and thing not easily categorized (p. 2). Areas with ethnic religious diversity are sensitive border regions. Fisher (1978) states that foreigners are allowed to do research in Nepal Himalayas whereas Indian policy limits the opportunity — “because of the foolishness, arrogance, insensitiveness of the researcher or political leaders of their country” (p. 71). Nepal made the aura of ethno-religious harmony during nation building period of Panchayat regime. Unification of Nepal had been celebrated as harmony among diversity. But the ethno-politics has been accepted as “localization of global process” (Bhattachan, 2013, p. 48), the alternative politics that hits upon the national psyche based on harmony. Realization of historical wrong on particular groups by the state is “national shame” (p. 102), using Ahmed’s (2010) term, which is necessary for nation building and bringing about harmonious reconciliation. Shame helps in moral development, it helps construct “national identity and restoring pride” (p. 109), it is binding force in the process of reconciliation. Shame can help overcome brutal history. ‘Localization’ of western ethno-political divisive strategies cannot solve the problems in the third world countries.

Analysis of Indian partition narratives at this juncture can also be helpful. India witnessed massive violence among religious groups popularly known as partition violence during the penultimate phase of independence movement. But the representation of conflict in the narratives is full of affective biasness. The major affects generated in these novels are those of love, hatred, happiness, unhappiness, and outrage. Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Parsee authors represent the violence differently. They write from their own “affective circumstances”, using Reiser’s (2009) term. One positive affect in favor of one concomitantly invites antonymic affect for the other. Khuswant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, Bhisham Sahni’s *Tamas*, Abdullah Hussein’s *The Weary Generations*, and Bapsi Sidhwa’s *The Cracking India* are briefly analyzed here. They all portray harmonious multicultural society before the eruption of partition violence, then unexpected and sudden outbreak of violence turned them each other’s enemies, which led to partition of the country.

In the fictitious town of Mano Majra, Sikhs and Muslims lived together in harmony before the partition, as described in *Train to Pakistan*. “All Mano Majrans venerate the local deity, the deo” (p. 7), Sikh guru Meet Singh and Muslim Mullah Imam Baksh are respected by both communities. There is mutual understanding among the villagers, which maintain the feeling of friendliness, peace, and non-violence. Criminals and outsiders are blamed for everything that happened to the Muslims. Singh justifies the Sikhs’ counter violence carefully attributing it to criminals and outsiders. In careful observation one can smell affective politics of the writer. Singh portrays Sikh heroism in *Train to Pakistan* through the character of Juggut Singh. The magistrate of the district Hukum Chand is portrayed as been compelled to evacuate the Muslims from the village since “there are mobs of twenty to thirty thousand of armed villagers... I have 50 policemen... and not one of them would fire a shot at a Sikh” (p. 150). Juggut Singh, who has criminal ancestry and who himself is “Jugga Badmas” in police record, the criminal and looter, is given the role of main character in the novel. Jugga is seen a passionate man of action, concerned for the safety of his beloved Nooran, the Mullah’s daughter, when he knows of the conspiracy

on the slaughter of Muslims by entrapping the train going to Pakistan. Jugga prevents the accident by cutting the rope meant for killing the Muslims. He himself is killed in the attempt but succeeds in safeguarding the lives of the Muslims which police department fails to achieve. Thus, even the Sikh with criminal background is portrayed to be the savior of the Muslims. This shows Singh's affective ethical tilt to his community. Images like train full of dead bodies, corpses floating on the river, burial and burning of the corpses, loot and terror, well of death, husband killing wife and children evoke the atmosphere of fear and terror.

*Tamas*, an anecdotal novel, appears to be the collection of stories of suffering of individual Hindu and Sikh characters, in Muslim majority area, during partition violence. Harmony and love among different people in the beginning of the novel suddenly transforms into hatred and violence. The Congressmen — Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh — jointly take part in Prabhat pheri, sweeping and cleaning the area, a sort of “symbolic act making residents aware of the need for civic sanitation” (p. 222). The rumor about the dead pig at the entrance of the mosque caused a sudden disappearance of love, peace, and harmony, leading to commotion. He portrays Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs living together harmoniously, fighting against the English jointly, and making people aware of the self-rule. Lakshmi Narayan has great faith on Hayat Baksh (p. 253), Karim Khan is sympathetic to Harnam Singh (p. 344), Shah Nawaj is very good friend to Lalaji, Raghunath and other Hindu characters (p. 304). Sahni describes love and harmony among people of different communities. He asserts that the communities fought against British rulers jointly as per the call of the independent leaders Gandhi, Jinnah, and Nehru. But Sahni is silent about why the leaders could not stop the sectarian communal violence. If Gandhi is responsible for independence, he could have stopped sectarian politics as well. How can he escape the issue simply by blaming English rulers? Violence by Muslim side is projected in a detailed, vivid, and outrageous way, whereas the violence by one side excluded or slightly mentioned to make the image of one side clean. In this way, using Ahmed's (2014) term, the author is involved in making “love group” and “hate group” (p. 122). Sahni depicts English officer to have lost his humanity. Sahni puts this English character into the frame of nationalist narrative and makes him speak like inhuman. He has invested much effort in establishing to the reader that English rulers were indifferent to the people and their suffering.

Hussein in *The Weary Generations* depicts a picture of pre partition feudal society backed up by English ruling class aristocrats and native Indian aristocracy. Hussein invents a fictitious village, Roshan Pur, populated by half Muslims, half Sikhs, being Harnam Singh, the chief of the Sikhs, and Ahmed Din, the chief of the Muslims. Roshan Ali was the founder of the village and its feudal lord; the title Roshan Agha was given to him by English aristocracy. The title was passed down to his heirs, generation after generation. Roshan Agha was responsible for collecting share crops and tax from the peasants. So, Roshan Agha was the pillar of the village “on which he governing class of Raj stood” (184). Naim, the hero of the novel was not satisfied with the system in the village, and he is fighting against the slavery and poverty. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs jointly organize against domestic aristocracy and English aristocracy. Hussein supports independence struggle and goes along with nationalist narrative line, but his point of departure from the nationalist narratives is necessary in order to pave the way for the justification of partition. In this way, he highlights Indian feudal society and the inherent antagonism between peasants and feudal lords in it.

Parsee minority community in India has been portrayed as impartial during partition violence, in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*. Herself a Parsee, Sidhwa invests many efforts in establishing impartial role of the community, “how wise and civilized they were when they came to India 1300 years back” (p. 47), to “hunt with the hounds and run with the hare” (p. 26). Ahmed (2010) postulates about multicultural love that the immigrants must learn “sticking to the nation” (p. 134) and embrace language, ethos, and values of the majority. “Love binds multicultural nations together” (Ahmed, 2010, p. 136), and the absence of love or failure to integrate results in “race riots” and “segregation” (p. 137). Colonel Barucha in *Cracking India* tells that the Parsee refugees in India 1300 years back “absorbed into the country like sugar in the milk” (p. 47). Barucha further claims about the Parsee community's indifference to power and politics, “Let whoever wishes rule! Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian! We will abide by the rules of their land!” (p. 48). Lenny's mother in the novel says, “Christmas, Easter, Eid, Divali. We celebrate them all” (p. 78). Independence struggles are seen to be fights for ‘political glory’ and ‘power’, and not for freedom of country from the clutches of English imperialism because the movement was followed by ruthless killing, communal violence, and the partition of country. The serious issue of partition is presented very lightly from the perspective of child narrator and the subaltern character Ayah, the technique what Thapa (2014) calls “parodic subversion” (p. 321). The big leaders' issue is given child's perspective. Breaking a country by digging a canal sounds humorous and satirical. Sidhwa portrays communal harmony in villages and towns. Imam Din's village is depicted to be free from communal trouble. Sikhs and Muslims live together in harmony there. The Sikh granthi of the village says: “our village comes from the same racial stock, Muslim or Sikh, we are basically Jat. We are brothers. How can we fight each other” (p. 64)? Hindu, Muslim, youths, and olds all hover round the Hindu girl, Ayah. She becomes the symbol of unity. Women characters like Ayah, Lenny, Godmother, and Electric Aunt are given roles of holding communities together. Ice Candy Man discloses: “A

train from Gurdaspur has just come in... Everyone in it is dead. Butchered. They are all Muslims. There are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny-bags full of women's breasts" (p. 159)! Everything changes abruptly. Fire and killing takes place in Lahore. Hindus and Sikhs either leave Lahore or convert themselves into Islam. Hari changes into Himat Ali, shaves off his bodhi, gets his pennies circumcised (p. 172). Lenny becomes aware of religious differences in people around her: "It is sudden. One day everybody is themselves- and the next day they are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian. People shrink, dwindling into symbols. Ayah is no longer just my all- encompassing Ayah- she is also a token. A Hindu (p. 101)."

The roots of ethnic conflict lie deep in human nature. Johnson (2019) mentions, "language, dialect, custom, diet" (p. 19) to be the distinguishing markers of ethnic groups. They have myths of common descent allied together through the "ties of kinship and reciprocity" (p. 20). He further characterizes the group that may not have "identifiable common ancestor" may be "amalgam of different people" (p. 21). Ethnic identity for Johnson constitutes from "complex genetic blueprints" (p. 26). Humans find in-group members to be more trustworthy, they perform empathy for them more than for strangers. They develop hostility against out-group without even knowing the reason. According to Sapolsky (2019), humans share "neurobiological underpinnings of out-group hostility" (p. 47). He further clarifies the "amygdaloid nexus of fear and aggression" with out-groups. Humans have different categorization of out-groups at cognitive and emotional dimensions. They have "unique capacity to belong to and identify with a variety of in-groups based on race, age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political views and so on" (Sapolsky, 2019, p. 49).

Twentieth century exhibited shameful record of human history. According to Martin (2019), it witnessed horrors of war, torture, genocide, display of hopeless and bleak human condition (p. 58). Ethnic uprising in Nepal after 1990 political change and Hindu-Muslim-Sikh conflict in India during partition movement are some of the incidents that resulted conflict, injustice, and traumatic experiences. Martin (2019, p. 59) has raised question on reconciling conflict: "What are the ways forward by which we can transform conflict without compromising our values, identities, and loyalties?" He has suggested that we can enlarge our identities and reconcile with the other, creating unity in diversity rather than alienation and fragmentation, which can be better choice for multicultural society. Rather than blaming on another, it is better to study religion and history in scholarly way. Positive judgment of others is necessary for bringing about harmony and reconciliation.

Cook (2019) has also pointed out the importance of communication in the cases of human conflict. Prejudice fostered through communication may lead to discrimination or hatred to others which may be the cause of conflict (p. 86). Kyendo (2019) has also suggested for the mixing of ethnic groups to ensure contact and harmony. This "contact hypothesis" (p. 122) suggested that peoples with different myth value are prone to conflict. The contact of different ethnic groups may have double effect: in contact conflict may likely to occur, or it may lessen the effect of conflict. Myth values are deeply rooted in human psyche; they are ready to live with or die for the values. Possibility of ethnic religious conflict is always there where people with different myth values come into contact with each other. Harmony can be created in diversity by emphasizing similarity and conflict can be accelerated by emphasizing differences. Ethnic diversity makes society beautiful, but it also creates fertile ground for potential conflict and tension. Dealing with diversity is like handling utensils made of fragile glasses or chinaware. We need to develop binding force or adhesives like education, development, national common tropes, harmonious memories, and literature of reconciliation.

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