



PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S "*TRAIN TO PAKISTAN*"

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Abstract:

Train to Pakistan a pre-eminent novel by Khushwant Singh represents the partition situations in Mano majra, a small village in the Indo-Pakistan border. Formerly during Independence, our society is gender biased and besides that partition brings a new dimension to the earlier. This work explores the sexual trauma, pain and tolerations of women during and after partition. Women were not given much significance in the society rather than considering them as creatures doing their menial household chores and they are meant to give pleasure to men in every way possible despite age. Though pure and gracious they were the first to be in pain and guilt in any setting. The man woman relationships are unequal. A women character is expected to give her body to men in barter of external nominal things. Women characters were not given much importance in this novel and it focuses on the male chauvinist view of women.

Keywords: Partition, Trauma, Inequality and Male dominance.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and characteristics of women, men, girls, boys and gender diverse people. Our society had and have certain norms for men and women. Which to some extent have been ensued by us. In 1947, British India divided into India and Pakistan and there starts the communal violence. Throughout the partition, the women were amenable and were after the words of men in all the countenance. Gender inequality is the social phenomenon in which the opposite genders will not be treated equally. It is experienced differently across different cultures and also affects non-binary people.

The *Train to Pakistan* is a historical novel that chronicles the division of India in August 1947. Instead of expressing only political divisions around us, Singh digs into the deep focus of the area, giving a human element that brings the event to mind a realistic, awesome and believable view. Mano Majra, a fictional town on the border between Pakistan and India is the place where the story takes place. It's mostly Muslims and Sikhs. Singh depicts the way they lived, surrounded by Muslim hordes of anti-Sikhs and Sikh hordes of anti-Muslim extremists. Although they lived together peacefully, the villagers were in the dark about the big events outside the village, gaining much of their knowledge through rumors and word of mouth. Khushwant Singh portrays cultural diversity, political ideology, social violence, pain, grief, trauma, humor, bribery, hypocrisy, misconduct, culture, love and sacrifice. The novel portrays the effects of violence as physical abuse and the inner world of the women characters. Women are confused and traumatized throughout the novel.

Women in this novel do menial work, they are abused, less important, quiet, humble and live together. Women had a very bad time. Women for years were hidden in the dusty pit of corruption. They were not allowed to be taught. Home became their sphere. Men were meant to work in fields and women has to work in their home. And they will be busy with their household works which they usually do. This shows the inequality over men and women. Women in Mano Majra works for unpaid.

Women are very cooperative in nature. Which is expressed through rubbing clarified butter into each other's hair. They are discussing about their emotional issues like births, marriages and deaths. The qualities are inculcated right from the childhood. The girls play under the trees at safer side as compare to the boys. The boys feed cattle and plays games that are romp like ride on buffaloes into the pond. Men are not only active, productive and responsible at work but also dacoit and violence. Women within the novel are weak and want protection from someone. They are exploited and depressed by their unequal relationships. Men see it as a livelihood that is fun. They expect the physical features of ladies to be pleasing and satisfying. They consider women to be an object of lust.

Women failed to have the ability and rights in their home. It includes man-woman relationships, way of life, work distribution, sub-conscious mind setup, male dominance, discriminating approach, etc. There are many incidents of violence between men and women in silence. Women are discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion or occupation.

The whole novel focuses on the male imagination. The novel is clearly an attempt at re-imagining the historical reality, the Punjabi experience as a whole and the Sikhs in particular. The women in the novel are portrayed as sex objects. Men use common items such as bangles, earrings, bracelets, etc., to please women. In return women should give their bodies to men through trade.

Men look towards women being the subsistence to fun. They expect women body features to please and satisfy them. The spearman describes the body of the weaver's daughter as, large gazelle eyes and also the little mango breasts. And cooling to their passions, too. Even when women are innocent and shy, men never considered their willingness. They're expected to do what men wants. The women body features are meant to satisfy the men's sexual pleasures.

To some men, women were mere an object of lust. They doesn't see them as a human being like them with all the emotions and feelings they deserve. A female either very young nor old they have the same view point over them. Women for them is to meet their desire and look after their works. Only because that they are male, they speak ill of women whom they consider as weaker sex, which should not be accepted at any cost. Most of the women characters in this novel manage to own some space in the novel. They also are not of much importance in the novel.

Singh points out the various incidents and situations that highlight the abuse of women for revenge. Dacoits walks through the streets and gives open statements to residents that they will rape the women and girls of Mano Majra. Even within the issues among those dominators their family females have been condemned and dishonoured. Women everywhere were being mistreated. They're always submissive to men and men are aggressive to their satisfaction. Indian males are drawn to white women and are compared to silk while black women are compared to buffalo. Men never consider women superior. They consider women inferior and ignore their claims.

Despite the many beauties, the novel reaches out to the following features. First, it is patriarchal in its representation. Second, it shows a biased view of partition violence and lastly remembers the female characters and their ideas of partition. During partition women were killed kidnapped, raped, publicly humiliated and had their genitalia mutilated. But after partition women were killed in the name of honor by their families, and many were forced to die by suicide in an attempt to protect their chastity. And to some extent they were not considered their so called "pure".

The world and the partition might have been much fair to women while they were the victim. It would be far better if women were treated as a victim of violence rather than object of sex. They might have given a good role which I think might be a great inspiration to the new generation. And the depiction of women dissatisfies the expectations of the feminist philosophers and writers.

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