



e-ISSN:2582-7219



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

Volume 6, Issue 7, July 2023



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.54



6381 907 438



6381 907 438



ijmrset@gmail.com



www.ijmrset.com



Tracing the Elements of Social Conflicts in Bhisham Sahni's '*Tamas*'

¹Astha Singh, ²Deepshikha Srivastava

BA(H)-English, Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, India

Assistant Professor, Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, India

ABSTRACT: "Literature is the mirror of society, and the events that have happened in society have better reflected it." One of the remarkable texts of partition literature, "Tamas," graphically depicts the chaos that the country's people experienced on both a social and an individual level as a result of the partition. The title of this study, "Tracing the Elements of Social Conflicts in Bhisham Sahni's Tamas," refers to the tendency to examine the chaos that leads to social conflicts in contemporary society. This paper examines and analyzes social conflicts from a realistic point of view. Overall, it provides a comprehensive examination of the mindset of individuals during the partition and how it has affected society to this day, as well as how it has contributed to or played a significant role in shaping the mindset of people. Thus, the analysis of social conflicts during and after the partition.

KEYWORDS: Tamas, Bhisham Sahni, Social Conflicts, Partition

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are a basic element of human civilization. Social conflicts are thus a constant in social life. It is a core component of human civilization. It has its roots in societal divisions of income, opportunity, and material interests, when finite resources are distributed inequitably.

Tamas by Bhisham Sahni is one of the significant works in Indian literature. The story takes place in 1947, when India was divided into India and Pakistan. It focuses on the social upheaval and conflict that led to the split.

Social conflicts portrayed in Tamas arises from religious and communal tensions between Hindu and Muslim and the power play of politicians during partition. Such religious and political conflicts are part of society but when these conflicts start taking bigger shape or is accompanied by violence, it becomes threat for the society and consequences might be as similar to partition of India which is portrayed in the text '*Tamas*'.

Literary texts such as '*Tamas*', not only make us aware of what has happened in society or past but also of what might happen if such conflicts are not resolved at time or are given space to flower in society and it also enables us to analyse our contemporary situation with reference to past and help us foster in right direction.

Further, In this paper we will explore elements of social conflict which led to partition, from the text and also analyse such elements taking place in present society.

About the author- Bhisham Sahni

The well-known Hindi author, actor, teacher, translator, polyglot, and playwright Bhisham Sahni was born in Rawalpindi to an Arya Samaj family and received an education in English literature. He died in 2003.

The epic novel Tamas, written by Sahni and inspired by the riots that occurred in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, during the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, was first

published in Hindi in 1973 and won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1976. Following this, it was converted into English first by Jai Ratan in 1988 with a presentation by Govind Nihalani, then, at that point, in 2001 by Bhisham Sahni himself and again by Daisy Rockwell in 2016. Sahni was the recipient of a number of honors, including the Sahitya Akademi Award in addition to the Padma Shri Award in 1969 and the Padma Bhushan Award in 1998, which are two of India's highest civilian honors. granted by India's public foundation of letters) for Tamas and India's most elevated abstract honor, the Sahitya Akademi Partnership (2002).

When it comes to interpreting people's feelings and relating them to the bigger picture of the country, particularly in a conflict situation, Sahni is a genius. He has the best record of capturing people's internal conflicts. He excelled at putting individuals directly in the center of a contention and afterward recounting to the story through them. His masterpiece works consolidate Bhagya Rekha a concise story variety, Pali, Amritsar Aa Gaya Hai, Neelu-Neelima- Nilopher, and Tamas. He moreover made an understanding of twenty Russian books into Hindi and has been the editor



of Nayi Kahaniya magazine in 1965 till 1967. Sahni has a remarkable way of introducing a more modest similarity to the circumstance common in the entire country and the relating jobs played by every one of the significant players.

Overview of 'Tamas'

Bhisham Sahni's powerful account of communal violence during India's 1947 partition is titled "Tamas."

The violent division between Hindus and Muslims is portrayed in Tamas as the result of deep religious and political tensions. By breaking down such causes, we can sort out comparative examples in present-day clashes and address the center issues to forestall their development. The novel opens with the character named Nathu who is trying to kill a pig for veterinary surgeon, for which he is commissioned five rupees by an influential but unscrupulous politician.

Further, we are presented with the central locale congress board of trustees individuals who have accumulated promptly toward the beginning of the day for Prabhat Pheri and through them Sahni has attempted to depict the inside debates of the party. In the meantime, they are alerted to an approaching storm by an enigmatic occurrence. Within a few hours, a cow was slaughtered and its parts were placed inside the Hindu temple grounds after the news of the pig being thrown in front of the Masjid spread like wildfire. On both sides, fundamentalists scream for retaliation. A designation of pioneers from all the party chose to meet the Delegate Locale Magistrate Richard. They advised him to impose a curfew to preserve community harmony. Richard promised the Indians that the government would intervene if the situation got out of hand, despite his refusal to interfere with their religious beliefs and practices. In point of fact, the British policy of "Divide and Rule" was a part of the riots that broke out.

Parallely, Bhisham Sahni has tried to show how Hindus and Muslims are one through Richard's wife Liza who is unable to discriminate between Hindus & Muslims. Riots break out and continued for five to six days with loot arson and murder on both sides. Later on, Narrative is centred on teashop owner Harnam Singh and his family who lives on the outskirts of the village with his wife Banto, is warned of the impending flare up by a Muslim friend, and as they left soon their shop-cum residence was looted and burnt by the rioters. They moved to the countryside to save their lives and eventually Ehsan Ali's wife Rajo gives them shelter in her house but when the situation becomes precarious for her family, she leads them to safety. Eventually they seek refuge in refugee camp.

Their son Iqbal Singh who lives in Muridpur, beaten up and humiliated by the rioters agrees to be converted to Islam in order to save his life whereas their daughter Jasbir Kaur leads women of Syedpur and they all jumped into the well to escape humiliation and dishonour at the hands of marauding Muslim mob.

A refugee camp was set up in a local school after the riots were over, and information about deaths and property damage was gathered there. The harrowing tales of the refugees' misery, however, have not been documented. After much contention, a peace committee was established at a meeting of all political party leaders held at the local Christian College. Murad Ali raised slogans such as "Long Live Hindu Muslim Unity!" during the Peace Bus' Peace Mission, "Zindabad Peace Committee!" and "Muslims and Hindus are one!" Richard talks to Liza at the end of the book about his old plan to write a book, the usual government move after a disturbance, and his possible relocation.

Overall, Throughout the novel through various characters Sahni has tried to provide us smaller analogy of what was happening at larger scale.

Religious Strife

Religious intolerance exists on a worldwide scale so in India as well. India has more ethnic and religious groups than the majority of other nations in the world, But this unique trait of diversity isn't immune to the problems it brings. For example, clashes between these groups are often obvious, and when they get worse, the result could be as horrible as the partition that Bhisham Sahni depicts in his novel "Tamas."

Muslims retaliated by killing a cow in response to the dead pig found on the mosque's steps, which eventually escalated into threatening communal violence in the name of religion. The savagery completed assuming some pretense of religion had no limits and was executed as per Scriptural equilibrium: " an eye for an eye, a rape for a rape, a murder for a murder, and a massacre for a massacre are some examples. The Hindu and Muslim communities' boundaries suddenly become distinct. Muslims were afraid to enter Hindu and Sikh lanes, and Hindus and Sikhs were afraid to enter Muslim Mohalla. In the neighborhood and even in the hearts of individuals, there were miniature Pakistanis. Pakistan or no Pakistan, It was completely clear that every local area will live in a climate liberated from water.

Sahni has projected heart-wrenching stories of this religious conflict throughout the text through the various characters like Harnam Singh and Banto who were rendered homeless as well as in utter depravity, as their house was set on fire and looted by the rioters, their son Iqbal Singh was brutally humiliated and forced to convert to Islam, and Ranvir and his friends who were the member of the youth wing of Hindu Sabha killed an innocent perfume seller.

Whether it's Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh, the conflict between these communities extends back to the pre-partition era, and the mistrust and hatred are deeply seated in the minds that it becomes the revenge of historical grievances as Bhisham "The Turks had come, but they were from the villages that were nearby," Sahni claims. The Sikhs acknowledged that



they were exacting punishment against their traditional foes, the Turks, who had previously engaged in combat with the Khalsas. It was yet another battle line in a long and illustrious series.

During partition, communal violence between these communities reached its zenith, before reverting to sporadic episodes with regularity up until the present day. Such struggle has gone on through the final part of the 20th hundred years, representing more than 7,000 passings between 1950-2000 like Babri Masjid episode which happened on sixth December 1992 when a huge horde of Hindu activists and allies accumulated at the site and the crowd effectively destroyed the mosque. The destruction of Babri Masjid triggered communal violence across India followed by the Bombay riots which were particularly brutal and it left lasting impacts on the people. Again, in the 21st century, the wide range of Hindu-Muslim violence that was unleashed in the state of Gujarat in India in 2002, which is also known as Godhra Kand.

The episode took its shape when a train conveying Hindu pioneers getting back from Ayodhya was gone after close to the Godhra rail route station prompting the emission of huge scope brutality. Since, for instance, the 2020 Delhi riots were a series of communal riots that began on February 23, 2020, and lasted for four days, during which 53 people died and over 400 were injured, there are indications that the situation may not have changed significantly. The Hindus and Muslims who lived in the area were primarily to blame for the clashes. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which provided non-Muslim migrants from neighboring nations with a path to citizenship, is said to have sparked the violence, according to reports.

Such recurrent episodes of religious conflicts are still visible in India mostly they emerge from encounters with members of different religious groups or any subject involving religious elements and are triggered by the politics of dirty minds. The way we observe sudden uprisings of Hindu-Muslim conflict in present society, it has not grown out of somewhere else but it's the reflection of what has been rooted in minds of people over the period of time and if such uprisings continue to foster then we are not far away from one more partition which might have more drastic effect on our society.

Political Rivalries

Politics was one of the main causes of the communal violence that occurred during the partition. Political conflict is often seen at different levels, whether it is between different communities or between individuals trying to hold power, and Sahni shows these political conflicts at different levels in his book "Tamas."

Sahni has highlighted that the conflicts between the groups are the result of Britishers political game to divide Indians and make them, to fight against each other in the name of religion under their policy of Divide & Rule and Fragment & Quit, it is justified through Liza's statement as she says: "You are making them fight among themselves over religion, and these people are fighting you for their country." Additionally, different political gatherings keep individuals separated for their political plans. Prior, it was the legislative issues of English rulers however leisurely it entered in the traditions of Indian organization and turned out to be essential for it.

We can observe in our daily life how politicians cleverly bring up various topics based on caste and religion to pursue their political agenda. The Babri masjid incident of 1992 followed by Bombay riots was the result of the mind play of selfish politicians. Politicians are still using ways to make people fight against each other as we can see recurrent episodes of such uprisings.

As we can see from the text, Murad Ali was a Muslim and knew that killing a pig would cause a lot of tension between the communities. However, he was the only one who started the riot by telling Nathu to kill a pig, and he was also the one who led the peace program with leaders from Congress and the Muslim League at the end.

In the course of life, India occasionally has to deal with such crafty politician, conscientious leader, or fanatical zealot who attempts to stoke discord among its citizens. The Murad Alis of Tamas raise their heads on numerous occasions, and the country needs to bear the outcomes of their plans. Furthermore, that is the point at which the significance of Tamas arrives at its pinnacle and cautions us to generally know about such governmental issues in contemporary societ.

Impact of Social Conflicts

What cannot be reported can only be narrated, and Sahni has presented this throughout the book by narrating the characters' untold suffering, misery, and inner turmoil.

As shown from the beginning of the book, the poor and helpless are the ones who suffer the most when conflicts like these break out. Murad Ali uses a chamar called Nathu to kill a pig, which is later used to stoke communal resentment, even though he is completely unaware of it. The wealthy and powerful, like Shahnawaz and Raghunath, are the shadows of the neocolonial agents and remain undivided, as economic interests bind them and thus they help each other. However, as we saw in the novel, Shahnawaz does not harm Raghunath, but he pushes Milkhi, his servant, down the stairs out of sheer communal hatred that sparked after viewing a tuft of hair on his head, which is an identity marker of being a hindu.



Ladies are particularly helpless to misery and double-dealing during seasons of social turmoil as we go over a strong occurrence in the novel where a Hindu lady is assaulted by ten Muslim men. She kicks the bucket throughout the wrongdoing yet they keep on assaulting her; another man portrays an account of grasping a low station bagri lady, assaulting her, and afterward killing her. There are various occasions of plunder and assault and men feel free to over their violations and we can in any case see such occurrences as the idea of affection jihad which is many times talked about as the aftereffect of contention between two networks.

The communal hatred created an identity crisis and caused trauma of partition as cities were changed forever; families torn apart and individual's fates are transformed for verse. It affected the psyche of people in such a way that people are unconscious of their own actions, who were brothers yesterday are now thirsty for each other's blood. People's memories of Partition are deeply ingrained in their minds and have left an indelible mark on the Indian psyche.

II. CONCLUSION

Tamas is relevant in the present-day world as it portrays the causes and consequences of social conflicts which still ail contemporary India. By analyzing through the events depicted in "Tamas," one can learn from past mistakes and work toward preventing tragedies like those currently taking place. Tamas carries within it the message that India must defeat every Murad Ali with the power of their togetherness or else all they would ever accomplish is inhumane violence and horrifying bloodshed. Overall, it is a grim warning to humanity.

REFERENCES

1. Full Text of "TAMAS - ENGLISH - BHISHAM SAHNI." archive.org/stream/Tamas-English-BhishamSahni/tamas-english_djvu.txt Ray, Kumkum. Shades of Resilience. Kolkata: Exceller Books: A Global Press, 2022.
2. Ray, Kumkum. Flow Free Breathe Free. Chennai: Notion Press, 2018.
3. Prateek Deswal, "Communalism and the Politics of the Sacred: A Study of Tamas by Bhisham Sahni" <http://www.languageinindia.com/feb2015/prateektamas1.pdf>
4. Sumitra Dahiya 'Seim', "Themes, Symbols and Metaphors of Partition in Indian Literature: A Critical Analysis of Bhisham Sahni's Novel Tamas" <http://www.languageinindia.com/feb2020/sumitrapartitionnoveltamas.pdf>.
5. S. Revathy, Dr. T. Senthamarai, "A Study of Socio-Political Manipulation in Bhisham Sahni's Tamas" https://ijels.com/upload_document/issue_files/11IJELS-106202219-AStudy.pdf
6. S.Stalin1, Dr.S.Ganesan2 "Portrayal Of Communal Issues In Bhisham Sahni's Tamas" <file:///C:/Users/DELL/Downloads/JPSP+-+2022+-+202.pdf>
7. Nihal Fayaz, "Remains of "TAMAS" in present Indian Society" <https://in.docs.wps.com/module/common/loadPlatform/?sid=cIPuUuNJRttnkpAY&v=v2>



INNO SPACE
SJIF Scientific Journal Impact Factor
Impact Factor
7.54

ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

| Mobile No: +91-6381907438 | Whatsapp: +91-6381907438 | ijmrset@gmail.com |

www.ijmrset.com