

## SOCIO-POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE FICTION OF BAPSI SIDHWA

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### **Abstract:**

*Anglo-Indian as well as sub-continental writing gives birth to set of histories having diverse views on the event. It had created an altogether new space by intertwining the past and the present. Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Sara Suleri, Meena Alexander, Yasmine Gooneratne, Bapsi Sidhwa and many other Anglo-Indian writers re-write history in the form of split analysis and infuse their respective presentness into the past. These writers narrativize the historical material from the third world for fictional purposes. This endeavor to create fiction with historical narrative is nothing but the statement of the self. They conceptualize the historical process and express it through their fiction. In the historical narrative of their fiction pertains to zeal to bring back traditionally a historic and conventionally marginal to the centre-stage. This research paper covers literary area and social sciences. Main theme of my paper is socio-political development in the society. My study relates literature and social sciences and political issues.*

**Keywords:** *Socio-cultural perspective, political view, sub-continental, post-colonial, historical etc.*

### **Introduction:**

Sociology describes effect of politics on people and their writing. Post-colonial theory may be defined as the branch of contemporary theory that investigates and develops propositions about the cultural and political impact of European conquest upon colonized societies and the nature of those societies. Generally, women writers do not look at history as the document of wars and conquest, reigns and rulers but as the treasure-trove of human sensibility and cultural effervescences involving both sexes. They never try to revive the past, but interpret the event and situations therein with an unbiased faculty of observation. Bapsi Sidhwa, in her novels, looks at the history-past and present-and traces out the woman's position in the politico-historical format of the considered period.

**Anita Desai**, an author of global renown says that Bapsi Sidhwa has **“a passion for history and for**

**truth telling.”** Though Sidhwa's novels rest on visibly different layers, they continue to share the elements of historicity. On her part, she deliberates upon the injustices done to the common people, especially, women of the bickering on the socio-political front. These injustices include the outrageous behavior of superpowers as is evident in *'The Crow Eaters'* (1978) and *'Ice Candy Man'* (1988), *'The Pakistani Bride'* (1983) an injustice done to a country, Pakistan, by misrepresenting its view of partition (*Ice Candy Man*) and injustice done to a political leader, Mohammed Ali Jinnah which Sidhwa tries to reality in *'Ice Candy Man'*.

### **Historical perspectives:**

Sidhwa had projected fusion of art and reality in background of chronological and socio-political discussion. It was something new and near to originality. Generally historical fiction has produced esthetic explanation of leading historical and socio-political theme. In *'Ice Candy Man'*, Sidhwa is fare grounding a number of socio-political issues; those are major themes of her novel and partition. It preferences was in favors of Pakistan. So novels of Sidhwa portrays version of Pakistani partition. Gandhiji was renowned all over the world. But in *'Ice Candy Man'*, he is shown as cunning politician. Sidhwa illustrates us with the character of Lenny as an, **“Improbable toss-up between a clown and a demon.”**

The great upheaval in the sub-continent during 1940's leading to the emergence of Pakistan casts its shadow on the creativity of Bapsi Sidhwa. Her Faredoon Jungleewala, the protagonist, in *'The Crow Eaters'* lives in life through the entire tumult and continues his story through the eve of fractured liberation. *'The Bride'*, picks up the thread from the first novel and runs through the historically ---sensitive eventualises pertaining to the communal outrage. Zaitoon, a young Punjabi girl, is adopted by Kohistani tribesman after her parents are brutally murdered by the mob in the riots which erupted as offshoot with the unnatural birth of Pakistan. Both these novels provide documentary evidence for the validation of Sidhwa's passion for history.

In *'The Crow Eaters,'* Sidhwa delineates emergence of new country. Their places, geography are given historical importance through the description of the events that make them vibrant, socially as well as politically. Sidhwa has designed; the history of those turbulent years that culminated in the great split of the Indian subcontinent is nothing but the history of events of various ethnic groups. Sidhwa through Parsi's contact with other ethnic player, she present socio-political portrait as a whole. A similar situation we encounter in Salman Rushdie's *'Midnight Children'* (1981) where Adam Aziz, the protagonist, gathers information about his future bride mercy by viewing through a porous sheet of social events.

After Bhutto's hanging, Pakistan passes through a phase of great turmoil. Men and women of all faiths and political affiliation rise in protest against injustice. All are aggrieved at the sad and brutal end of a democrat. But processions, as Sidhwa chronicals Pakistani history and a turning phase in the nation's young life, were not visible in streets. Sidhwa while re-writing the history of that chaotic period infers that the tragedy of Bhutto's political murder was not as horrific as the support that Zia had from almost all major political outfits, all government institutions--the arm forces headquarters, bureaucratic set-up and the judicial system. As an articulate political commentator, Sidhwa makes Zareen write to Feroza, *"I realized then that there is no such thing as a spontaneous uprising unless it is sanctioned."*

#### **Socio-Political Perspectives:**

Like the diasporic writings, Sidhwa's novels concentrate on the socio-political situation in her home country, Pakistan. In most of her novels, deliberation rest on the religio-political history of the Indian subcontinent and provides the canvas for the narrative. Sidhwa's most novels are socio-political commentaries on the tears and suffering of an ethnic group drifting on its own under political instability, dictatorship of armed forces and incessant Islamic bigotry. Sidhwa enunciated the impact of political changes on all walks of life. She makes clear that the deteriorating economic situation is in fact, the off-shoot of political herakiri. Moreover, Sidhwa makes the novel concentrate on the politics of religion. In addition, she laments the up-rise of intolerant strain of religion, especially in a sub-continent where a diversity of varied religious groups has been in peaceful inhabitation for ages. Zareen is a faithful zoroastrian, but she does not hesitate in paying obeisance to the Muslim saint Duta Gunj Baksh.

In *'An American Brat'* (1993), we found blending of facts and fiction. The Bhutto family is described as the liberal, human face of greatly wronged country. Zareen and Feroza fell fortunate to see Bhutto's sister at the shrine of Muslim saint where they had gone to pay their obeisance. The democratic face of Pakistani polity, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and his family are the real life political figures often form the subject of narrative in the novel. Such description of political goings on is a revealing comment on the influence of politics and political figures on the everyday life in the subcontinent.

Furthermore, Sidhwa criticizes the common predilection in the Indian subcontinent to mytholize and worship political leaders. By iconizing, the political figures, people indirectly authorizes them contaminate the political system by promoting family rule and sycophancy. A similar critique is found in Meena Alexander's *'Nampalli Road.'* This way, Sidhwa like Alexander, tries to awaken the innocent people vis-à-vis their excessive and inhibited submission to the artifice of political mannerisms. The maddening behavior of crowd at the arrest of Bhutto and his sister's grief is very much indicative of political infusion in the fabric of the sub-continental life. In fact, as Sidhwa revels, the political situation has taken such a turn for the worse that the incarnation of Messiah is desperately solicited. Incidentally, with his political gimmicks and democratic mannerisms, Bhutto positions himself as one who can lift the people out of their miseries in post-partition Pakistan.

It is pleasing to witness that Sidhwa has sense of investigation explanation and appraisal of their social, political, and economic realities and her writing response is mirroring her experiences about partition. Sometimes Sidhwa appears to be a social scientist discovering social discrepancies and suggesting appropriate remedies. However, her discoveries of communal evils and remedies thereon are always third-party observation and of uninvolved prescriptions. Sidhwa's protagonists Zareen, is content to find that idea of reform is being debated at various fora, and she finds herself aliens with the pragmatic liberals. But her happiness does not last long.

#### **Conclusion:**

Like other diasporic writings, Sidhwa's novels concentrate on the socio-political situation in her home country, Pakistan. In most of her novels, deliberation rests on the religio-political history of the Indian subcontinent and provides the canvas for the narrative. While writing on the socio-

political aspects sometimes she throws away a great figure out of skirts and sometimes she praise and make him star to shine. Thus, Sidhwa's most novels are socio-political commentaries on the fears and suffering of an ethnic group drifting on its own under political instability, dictatorship of the arm forces, and incessant Islamic bigotry.

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