
Rise of Class Distinction: An Analysis of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

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ABSTRACT

India has for a long period before the British rule been a closed society where the people were discriminated on the bases of caste. The English Language education in India provided the natives with a way to the western literature and the western culture which created a class of educated Indians. Unfortunately, the educated Indians were mostly upper caste people who wanted to suppress the lower caste people and eventually during partition when the administration was handed over to the educated Indians they became masters over the uneducated lower caste people. Most of the partition novels has recorded the communal violence that happened during Partition but the rise of class distinction in India was seen predominantly in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. Disclosure analysis of the novel is made for understanding the way of living of both educated and uneducated Indians; the attention given to the educated Indians with respect to that of the uneducated Indians; the division of opinion among the educated Indians and finally the rise of new discrimination based on class from the caste system through the characters Hukum Chand, Iqbal Singh and the villagers. Textual analysis helped in connecting the partition history learnt through historical method with the actual text. The Paper states that the country once divided into different caste has now after partition been divided on the bases of the educational status as educated and uneducated which determined the class of the people. The rise of class distinction in India gave its citizens of lower caste a chance to work hard and attain a dignified position in the society.

Keywords: *Partition, education, class distinction, caste***INTRODUCTION**

Nowhere else in the world has inequality has been elaborately constructed as in the Indian Institution of caste. With the introduction of British educational policy in India, inequality on the bases of caste which has been in India for years became base for another discrimination i.e., class discrimination. The main motto of the British educational policy is to produce native administrators of lower order to aid the colonizers in the local administration and so the educational policy planned by the British was not a country wide system of education, it focus only in educating selected people for the colonizers' aid. Only 9,000 out of 2,47,000,000 people were educated.

The first educational policy in India during British rule was worked out by Macaulay which was entirely aimed at British colonial requirements and for the selection of people who would be educated they followed downward filtration method i.e., from elites to the common masses. This educational policy in India, first of all, resulted in breaking the barrier of closed caste discrimination in India. The English language education provided the natives with another discrimination on the bases of class which made India an open society. Since the educational policy followed downward filtration method the people from the upper caste again became superior as they were educated while the masses remained uneducated and slaves to the educated. A great cultural impact came with the establishment of British Educational policy. The educated people became westernized and they were proud of their western education around the intense uneducated masses. It is this superiority of the educated over the uneducated which resulted in class discrimination. The educated Indians had their own way of living which is different to that of the Indian way of living. They considered the Indian style of living uncivilized and inferior. During Indian Partition the educated Indians discussed with increasing intensity the problems of partition while the uneducated Indians remained ignorant of the happenings around them. This resulted in the mastery of the educated Indians over the uneducated.

My study will focus on the rise of this new discrimination based on educational status where the educated mastered over the uneducated and the uneducated thought educated to be the superior one. The text taken for study, *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh is the first Indo Anglian Partition novel which vividly depicted the communal violence during Indian partition. Unlike other partition novels where only the communal violence were pictured Khushwant Singh in his novel has traced the impact of the British educational policy in India. Singh didn't describe the politics of Partition in detail, his purpose was to describe individual, human element and provide a social understanding. In the author's opinion, the English system of education has added to the confusion of the individuals already under the ill-effects of partition. Partition Literature seems to be almost unending in exploring the range of the madness during partition that led to the killing, rape and arson, these literature also did try to mute the voices of revenge but the rise of discrimination in the name of education which later resulted in class distinction was noted in no other works but in *Train to Pakistan*.

Uneducated marginalized people became slave under the independent educated Indians during Indian Partition. The novel chosen for analysis in this paper along with the description of the communal violence also portrays the ignorance of the uneducated Indians and the changed lifestyle of the educated Indians. The ignorant Indians treated the educated Indians as more civilized which created class distinction in India. Eventually the educated Indians became masters over the uneducated Indians.

My research will focus on the following: The way of living of both educated and uneducated Indians; the attention given to the educated Indians with respect to that of the uneducated Indians; the division of opinion among the educated Indians and finally the rise of new discrimination based on class from the caste system. The main aim of the paper is to focus on the independent educated Indians who became masters over the uneducated Indians namely, Hukum Chand, Iqbal Singh and a young man from city.

The introduction of western education in India brought with it two major problems 1) Majority of the population was not educated 2) the educated class was ignorant of civic consciousness. Thus, the wealthy educated Indians holding the local administration, due to western knowledge treated the uneducated people as slave. This treatment of the uneducated Indians by the educated people created a class system in India. The elites were given power, rank and richness while the marginalized people were deprived of their own property which was the means of their income. Communal violence happened both in India and Pakistan, marginalized people were forced to leave their livelihood and move to unknown land without prior information. Most of the villagers were ignorant of the happenings outside their village, they lived together with other religion brothers and sisters happily and it is the Indian officials who triggered the displacement of the people of the village. The ignorant villagers are the uneducated masses who were deprived of education and the officials are the ones who were trained in western education. These officials influenced by the colonial spirit treated the ignorant people as slaves instead of enlightening them from ignorance. Thus a division as educated Indians as masters and uneducated Indians as slaves were created.

The division of people with respect to caste, religion etc. after partition and the violence related to partition was discussed by Pande in his article [1] "The Great Migration" as the reason for the present day alienation of the marginalized lower caste people. With the caste and religious division, division of people as educated and uneducated also came into existence. The concept of educated people being the decision makers and masters over uneducated dates back to partition period when the educated officials manipulated the ignorant illiterate to indulge in communal violence and break the brotherhood with other community. Communal violence broke out in India and Pakistan because each side feared that the other is going to attack them and therefore sees a strategic benefit in striking first. Horowitz et al. in the article "The Limits to Partition" puts forth that communal violence was a rough business and that it will give rise to new reality that to go back to the previous situation or pretend as though nothing has changed. So communal violence gave rise to new society based on educational status where the educated ill-treated the uneducated. Even though a lot of research has been conducted on partition and also on this particular text, the researchers have focused more on the madness of partition and the communal violence. Only a limited number of researchers have mentioned about the rise of class system during partition and the mastery of the educated Indians over the uneducated Indians. A more detailed research on the educated Indians has never been conducted. Khushwant Singh in his novel *Train to Pakistan*, has portrayed three kinds of educated Indians with one common desire but each had different ways of approaching the uneducated. My research will focus on this gap. In *Train to Pakistan*, the educated officials manipulated the ignorant uneducated Indians to indulge in communal violence and it gave rise to new society based on educational status where the educated treated the uneducated as slaves.

RESEARCH METHODS

Historical method is used to understand why only a selected people were educated and with the help of textual analysis the incidents from the history has been connected with the text. Discourse analysis helped in analyzing the varied ideologies of the educated Indians and their approach toward the uneducated Indians.

DISCUSSION

The uneducated people were ignorant of the happenings of the world. They lived happily together with the Muslims as brothers and sisters completely unaware of the communal violence going on outside the village. Khushwant Singh depicts Mano Majra as a tiny place with Sikh land owners and Muslim tenants which suggests that the inhabitants of Mano Majra are the lower caste villagers. These villagers lived peacefully without any knowledge about the partition and Independence. It is only after the arrival of Iqbal Singh, an England returned communist in the village the partition of Hindustan and Pakistan was known to the villagers. These villagers are described as people who know little or nothing about partition. They were also ignorant of their achievement and their duty to take the next step and turn the political freedom into economic one. Butalia in "Migration/Dislocation: A Gendered Perspective" says that due to communal violence in India and Pakistan, common marginalized people were forced to leave their livelihood and move to unknown land without any prior information. She further adds that most of the villagers were ignorant of the happening outside their village, they lived together with other religion brothers and sisters happily. The ignorant villagers are the uneducated masses who were deprived of education. Contra to the uneducated Indians were the educated Indians who discussed with the other educated ones regarding the effects of independence and partition but they lacked civic consciousness and therefore they manipulated the educated Indians to indulge in communal violence. Since the British educational policy followed the downward filtration theory in selecting the people for western education and so eventually only the urban upper caste people were educated while the rural lower caste people remained ignorant.

The educated Indians had developed new westernized style of living very different to that of the uneducated. It is important to know who the author claim as educated and who as literate. According to Khushwant education meant knowing English and the people who learnt native language and literature is said to be literate. Macaulay justifies this concept of education and literate in his minutes by saying that for him 'Literature' means western literature and 'learned natives of India' are the ones who have acquired western education. The educated people thought themselves with the change in the style of living as civilized and treated

the uneducated as uncivilized. Hukum Chand was always with his cigars and ordered his servants to rub his feet and to bring him drinks. The servants did everything as ordered by the magistrate. In the same way, Iqbal's attitude towards Meet Singh and the other villagers who came for his hospitality also shows Iqbal's pride of being educated and civilized and he through his looks and words criticized the uneducated to be uncivilized. The goal of the British educational system in India was actually to train British administrators and civil servants to fit into the culture of the ruled and to assimilate thoroughly into the native way of life says, Gauri Viswanathan in "The Beginning of English Literature Study in British India" [2] but it failed to achieve its goal and so Anglicism which concentrated on western education instead of eastern learning was introduced. Anglicism too was a failure as it alienated most of the natives from themselves says Gauri. Thus as a result of alienation, the educated Indians started to treat the uneducated as uncivilized and eventually the educated used the ignorance of the uneducated to become masters over them.

The desire of the educated Indians were to attain power but not all the educated people are same. Some were corrupted, some wanted to maintain peace and some were violent. Hukum Chand, the magistrate represents the corrupted educated official. Hukum Chand manipulated the ignorant uneducated people of the village to believe that the Muslims are reason behind the murder of Ram Lala Lal, the money leader and turned the mob against the Muslim community creating a tension of communal violence within the village so that the Muslims would leave to the refugee camp without protest. His authority and control over the other policemen and the villagers shows his desire for power. Though Iqbal Singh came to Mano Majra to control the communal violence, he was not willing to sacrifice anything for that cause. When he was arrested for as a suspect for the murder he dreamt about banners announcing his arrest, his release and his successful emergence as a leader. Both Iqbal Singh and a young man who came from the city to agitate people to kill the Muslims as revenge against the Pakistanis were against the government but had the desire of becoming leader. He had the superior air when talking to the villagers. They all cared less about the upliftment of the poor uneducated people. All the educated Indians, officials and the social workers though had different motto had one in common. They all mastered over the uneducated and suppressed them. The uneducated were used as tool or slave to attain power. Sen justifies this condition saying that 'After our independence this elite class took over the administration of the country and having lived and managed a bureaucratic state gave India the same structure'. The people of the village was already confused with the communal violence that was happening in the nearby villages and also by the emergence of the ghost train. At this crucial moment the mastery of the educated Indians over the uneducated added to the confusion as the mastery showed that the marginalized lacked in several aspects when compared with the educated which resulted in the rise of class distinction on the bases of the educational status.

Seeing the educated people living a very different style of living the uneducated believed themselves to be ignorant and uncivilized which resulted in class distinction. When Iqbal Singh first came to the village his western appearance and urban accent irritated the station master as he is aware that he is ignorant and uncivilized when compared with the educated Iqbal. This sense of inferiority which has crept in the minds of the uneducated resulted in the indifference in the treatment of the educated and the uneducated. Indifference in the treatment of the educated and uneducated is clearly depicted when both Iqbal Singh, England returned Communist and Jugga, the village Badmash were arrested. Iqbal Singh's handcuffs were removed with apology; a chair, a table and a charpai were put in his cell and he was provided with newspapers and magazines. But in the case of Jugga things were different he was left alone in an empty cell. In the similar way when the sub inspector came to interrogate with Iqbal and Jugga, he used entirely different mannerism. Although he was aware that both Iqbal and Jugga did not commit the murder, with Iqbal he was quiet and respectful whereas with Jugga he used aggressive words. The educated were considered to be the decision makers. For the educated officials were continuously addressed as 'Government' in the novel. Thus with the indifference that was created in the minds of the uneducated, the uneducated themselves became slaves to the educated. George Allen Odgers in his paper titled "Education in British India" [3] analyses the reason for the indifference that was created in the name of education. He says that the two reasons are that 1) Majority of the population was not educated as the British educational policy was not a country wide system of education and 2) the educated people were ignorant of their civic consciousness. Extreme poverty of the masses prevented the growth of desire of education among the people and on the other hand the wealthy class youth who has the responsibility of delivering people from ignorance refused to work in the village as they considered life and customs there are so discouraging. These wealthy educated Indians holding the local administration, due to the western knowledge treated the educated Indians with respect and the uneducated people as slave like the British people who enslaved the Indians. People all believed that for being masters and civilized they should be educated in the sense that they should have English knowledge and not the knowledge of native language and literature. Jugga realizes that education has created a new discrimination in the nation and so he asks Iqbal to teach him basic English for everyday use so that he would become one among the respected people. Thus the due to the ignorance of the uneducated and the change in the life style of the educated a new distinction based on the educational status came into existence.

The class distinction based on the educational status came from the caste discrimination. With the change in the lifestyle of the educated Indians being educated itself was considered as belonging to a different class. This class distinction didn't emerge from nowhere, it is the caste system which became the bases for the emergence of the class system. Iqbal Singh says 'In a country which had accepted caste discrimination for many centuries, inequality had become an inborn mental concept. If caste was abolished by legislation, it came up in other forms of class distinction' (Singh, 75). This shift in distinction of people according to caste to class is predominant during the partition because due to the inferiority created in the minds of the uneducated, the uneducated themselves created a clear distinction between educated and the uneducated. When Iqbal Singh tried to talk about the concept of independence with the residents of the Mano Majra one of the residents of the village made clear the distinction between the educated and uneducated by saying that the freedom is for the educated who fought for it and the uneducated who

remained slaves under the British will now become slaves under the educated Indians. Lal in “approaches to the Identification of Elite” says that India being a caste based country, the upper caste people are considered to be socially high and the lower caste are nowhere to be seen in the social positioning. These upper caste were rich and according to Macaulay’s downward filtration theory these are the people who are eligible for western education and so it is obvious that caste system gave rise to the class system as it to these elite educated class the authority to decide for the society and govern the local administration was given. But due to the western knowledge of industrialization these educated people started to dominate the uneducated masses which resulted in class distinction. Thus India from being a closed society turned to be an open society. People from the poor uneducated class started to be curious about education and the educated people’s style of living. Meet Singh who was ignorant about the way of living of Iqbal during the beginning of the novel became curious about by the end of the novel. He asked Iqbal about how he uses the air pillow, why he takes tablet, what kind of food he eats, etc., Thus, class distinction being emerged from the caste system and also class being open stratification the people of the lower class started to work hard to become one among the upper class.

CONCLUSION

It evident from this study that the country once divided into different caste has now again being divided on the bases of the educational status as educated and uneducated. The educated were considered to be civilized because they adopted the mannerism of the westerners and were proud of their western style of living. Since the lower caste people were not educated and also because the educated upper caste cared little about the uneducated lower caste people they became ignorant about the happening around the country. When the British left the country they transferred the government to the educated Indians. The self- seeking politicians, fanatic religious leaders, corrupt bureaucrats used this opportunity to their own advantage. These politicians and the officials are the silent markers of the violence. The educated high class officials ended the peace of the people who were living together without any trace of communal violence for generation by triggering communal violence during partition. They also considered themselves to be high class and mastered over the common people. Thus, in *Train to Pakistan*, the educated officials manipulated the ignorant uneducated Indians to indulge in communal violence and it gave rise to new society based on educational status where the educated treated the uneducated as slaves.

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