

CHAPTER- THREE

THE DANCE OF DEATH IN TAMAS

3.1. Introduction

The present novel 'Tamas' has been written by Bhisham Sahani in 1973. It is considered one of the most powerful and passionate fictional accounts of the human tragedy that marked the period. It gained worldwide fame and name for its sensitive depiction of the communal riots that accompanied India's partition. The communal madness was the mentality of all sects like the Muslim, the Hindu, and the Sikh which caused the bloody human tragedy. This was the reality. This reality has been found by Sudhi Rajiv in the following words:

*'In **Tamas** Bhisham Sahni has tried to penetrate through this building darkness and has tried to graphically capture contemporary reality and mentality of the small place which becomes a macrocosm of the subcontinent and exposes the forces in operation at that time in a brave, direct and moving manner'*¹

The partition has stirred more number of writers than any other event in recent political history of India. Even after more than fifty years of the happening of the tragedy of the partition. Its memory has not faded. The partition is an unforgettable historical event in the nation and also an unforgettable tragedy in the life of an individual. The Congress, The Muslim league and the British were responsible for the partition. Therefore these three parties have an important role in the partition literature. There were the community conflicts and movements in the country by the late 19th century. These common conflicts and movements were based on religion. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was the first person who raised demands of a separate Muslim homeland. Bipan Chandra observes:

*'For the same reason, he would not do anything to offend the government and, on the other hand encouraged communalism and separatism. This was, of course, a serious political error, which was to have harmful consequences in later years'*²

Congress also made several mistakes in their politics. As a result further the League convinced that it was impossible to live in an undivided India after freedom. The process of partition took the lives of many people. Many others were raped and

looted by both sides of Hindus and Muslims. The process of partition played a painful game with the life of the common man as Sudhi Rajiv says :

*‘The turbulent times of the heart breaking and painful partition had affected the common in the most telling way’*³

Bhisham Sahni's fictional work is concerned with the pain, and sufferings of the individuals those who were keen, friends and neighbours. Thousands of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs became the victims of the sectarian violence in the tragedy of the partition. Bhisham Sahni has pen-recorded the heart breaking pain and sufferings of human being. There is the sense of the values of universal humanism in the writings of Bhisham Sahni. The common folks are the real victims of all sectarian violence. That common folks bring the human tragedy in the fictional works of Bhisham Sahni. He wrote simply. He did not create any great heroes in his novels and plays. There is the true life in his fictional writings. The life and literature are not two but one. His writing is great one, which is of simple man.

3.2. Bhisham Sahani's Life and Work:

Bhisham Sahani, born on August 08, 1915 at Rawalpindi in present day Pakistan. He born in a devout Arya Samajist family. He was schooled in Rawalpindi. Then he went to Government College, Lahore. He took a Master's degree in English literature there. After College education, he returned back to Rawalpindi to join his father's import business. But he found many difficulties of taxes in that business, so he decided to teach at a local college. These were the days of the freedom struggle against the British rule in India. At the same time he also involved in the activities of the National Congress. In particular, Bhisham Sahani participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942. Because of it, he went in jail time to time in an early age. Then, he became a district secretary of the Congress. In 1947, communal riots were broke out in the whole nation. There also, in Rawalpindi, in March 1947, the communal riots broke out. Bhisham Sahani worked with the relief committee as Congress worker. Further, on 15 August 1947 the India got freedom. The Independence brought the partition of the Indian subcontinent. The partition formed the Union India for Hindus and New Pakistan for Muslims. The partition changed all. The sectarian forces compeled the Hindu Masses to

migrate to India from New Pakistan. After partition, the birth town Rawalpindi of Bhisham Sahani was in Pakistan. Being Arya Samajist Hindu family, Bhisham Sahani's family had to migrate from Rawalpindi to Union India. The partition made Rawalpindi a foreign land to Bhisham Sahani. In those days the masses had not forgot the birth towns where they had brought up and schooled.

After partition in 1947, Bhisham Sahani's family took the last train to India. Bhisham Sahani migrated in India with his whole family. He settled down in Delhi. He took a job of professor to teach at a Delhi University College. Then, thereafter, Bhisham Sahani spent his whole life in the worship of literature and art. He soon joined the Indian theatre thereafter Association in Bombay. There he worked as a performing artist under the guidance of his elder brother, Balraj Sahani. The Government of India selected him as a translator from Russian to Hindi language. The Government sent him to the capital of Russia. Bhisham Sahani lived in Moscow from 1957 to 1963. He worked there as a translator. He has translated 25 books from Russian language into Hindi language. He has also translated Tolstoy's 'Resurrection'. Besides Hindi language, Bhisham Sahani had a very deep command on other important languages like English, Urdu, Sanskrit, Russian, and Punjabi. Bhisham Sahani's cultural work is also a great work in his life time. The net source like Wikipedia the free encyclopedia observes:

'He was general secretary of the Progressive writers Association, and was the founder and chairman of 'SAHMAT', an organization promoting cross-cultural understanding, founded in memory of the murdered artist and activist Safdar Hashmi'.⁴

In the life time Bhisham Sahani did acting in various films in late life period. In particular, he appeared in the films like Sayed Mirza's 'Mohan Joshi Hazir Ho!', 'Tamas' Kumar Sahani's 'Kasba', Bernardo Bertolucci's 'Little Buddha' and Aparna Sen's 'Mr. and Mrs. Iyer'. Bhisham Sahani's literary work is very rich. He was a writer of wide range and variety. He was a multilingual person. His literary works are rich and great which reflect his unflinching commitment to India's pluralist ethos and secular foundations. All the literary works of Bhisham Sahani have a sense of compassion, values of universal humanism and lucid narrative style. He wrote more than hundred short stories in different collections. The most notable

volumes are as: Bhagya Rekha', 'Pahla Path', 'Bhataki Rakha' and Nishachar'. They are considered as the masterpieces of Hindi literature. 'Chief Ki Davat' and Amritsar Gaya Hai' are the volumes of short stories of Bhisham Sahani on partition tragedy. Not only this but he produced a very rich plays. They are: 'Hanusa', 'Kabira Khara Bazar Mein' and 'Mathuri'. Bhisham Sahani's English biography and autobiography writing is also notable. 'Balraj My Brother' is biography written by Bhisham Sahani of his elder brother and well known actor Balraj Sahani in 1981. He published five great novels in Hindi. They are: 'Tamas', 'Basanti', 'Jharokha', 'Kadiyen', and 'Kunti. There is one more novel 'Mayyadas ki Marhi' on his name which won him the 'Best Fiction Award' from Hindi Academy, Delhi. Bhisham Sahani was an eyewitness of the riots in a small town in the North-West Frontier Province (now in Pakistan). The sufferings of common people in the partition riots was also theme of his and short stories. Partition tragedy has attracted to the pens of the talented personalities. Dashrath M. Panchal observes:

'The theme of Partition has attracted major talents'.⁵

Really, Dr. Bhisham Sahani was a very great novelist in Hindi literature as well as Indian English novelist also. He has received a number of awards, such the Shiromani writers Award, in 1979, the Sahitya Akademi Award for 'Tamas', in 1975; Madhya Pradesh Kala Sahitya Parishad Award for his play 'Hanusa', in 1945, the Lotus Award from the Afro-Asian writers Association, in 1981, and the Soviet Land Nehru Award, in 1983. After building such glorious literary carrier this great, the grand novelist of India passed away on July 11, 2003.

Bhisham Sahani identified himself with his soil. He was identified with the dust and the heat of everyday life. So there are emotions and passions of a common life in his literary work. His writings do not escape from reality. Literature captures man's hopes and dreams and his capacity for problem-solving. He wrote simply. He had seen life red in tooth and claw. He did not create any heroes in his novels and plays. Indeed he lived with the emotions of passion rather than the ideology of socialism. He was a first-rate gentleman and remarkable writer. He was honoured by the Padma Vibhushan by the Government for his literary service to the nation in 1998. Bhisham Sahani believed that the purpose of literature is to us share our joys and sorrows. So he never made any contradiction between life and literature. As a

Hindi novelist Bhisham Sahani belongs Premchand's tradition. He walked on the Path of Premchand. It was the path of social realism and anti-imperialist view. He opposed a capitalist worldview and trader's mentality. As a scholar of English literature he was exposure of the world classics of English literature.

3.3. Introduction of 'Tamas':

Bhisham Sahni's 'Tamas' (1973) is considered one of the most powerful and passionate fictional accounts of the wounded humanity that marked the period. There is the sensitive depiction of the communal riots and killings that accompanied partition of 1947. The naked dance of the death was continued for a long period on the eve of the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Thousands of the common and an innocent mass- Muslim and Hindu peoples became victims of the sectarian violence. The present novel is concerned with that pains and sufferings of mankind. Bhisham Sahni highlights the sense of values of an universal humanism. The sectarian violence has wounded the humanity. The sectarian hatred was the origin of the sectarian violence.

Sectarian Hatred is the theme of this novel on the eve of the partition of Indian subcontinent, the political persons and the British rulers directly or indirectly fanned the sectarian hatred among Hindus and Muslims. The religious persons also helped to communal elements. Every page of the present novel lights on the sectarian hatred in the Hindu sect against the Muslim sect, and the sectarian hatred in the Muslim sect against the Hindu sect and the Sikh sect. There was also sectarian hatred in the Sikh sect against the Muslim sect. Generally, the true and pious religious leaders of all religions pray for the universal peace and love. But in partition period the true religious leaders also were disturbed. For example in the present novel Vanaparasthi is holy man who was respected by all. But in communal atmosphere of partition this holy respectable person was also disturbed. When there was an insult of the Hindus he gave religious orders to Hindus against Muslims. He calls the Muslims as 'malecchas' in anger. He personally supervises and co-ordinates the Hindu youth wing 'Akara'. His holy residence becomes a center of meetings of Hindus and Sikhs against the threat of the Muslim aggressiveness. He does not want the Hindus to be cowards and lay low. One more example is of 'Master Dev Vrat' in the present novel. Master Dev Vrat belongs to the 'Hindu

Sabha' particularly he supervises youth wing. He equips and trains to Hindu youth for self-defense. He inspires them by telling the stories of 'Rana Pratap' and 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj'. He believes that an 'Arya boys' should develop the courage to fight with the Muslims. Bhisham Sahni describes the communal fury of the Sikh sect against the Muslim sect in Sayadpur village. The communal speeches of the community leaders, the singing of war songs in gurdwara before entire Sikh congregation fan the sectarian spirit against the Muslim sect. Everyone is ready to lay down the lives on the name of heroic past against the Turks. One Sikh leader namely 'Sardar Teja Singh' gave a spiritual address to Khalsa congregation to be ready to shed their blood in the service of 'Guru Maharaj'.

On the other hand there was also the sectarian hatred among the Muslims against the Hindus and the Sikhs. The present novel describes the communal fury of the Muslim sect. The Muslims always call the Hindus as 'Kafar' in anger. They think that the Hindus are their political and religious enemies. So they demand for partition to create 'Pakistan' as their separate nation.

An activities of 'Murad Ali' is one more example of the fanning communal fury of the Muslims against the Hindus. He is one politician in the town. He is supporter of the hardcore Muslims who want the creation of Pakistan. He successfully plans for riot in town by throwing a pig's dead body on the steps of a mosque by hidden way. As a result, the whole town burns in the communal riots and sectarian killings.

In Sayadpur village Sheikh Gulam Rasul gathers all the communal Muslim youths and successfully gives fight against the Sikh congregation. This is one more example of the Muslim hatred against the Sikhs and also the Hindus. This burning sectarian hatred caused to wound the humanity by taking lives of lakhs of an innocent people. A few notable examples which are quoted here. They can prove how humanity was wounded on the eve of partition of Indian subcontinent.

The novel 'Tamas' has been written in Hindi language by Bhisham Sahani in 1973. 'Tamas' is based on his experiences of communal riots of partition days. Bhisham Sahani got the Sahitya Akademi Award for 'Tamas' in 1976. The novel 'Tamas' has been translated from the Hindi into the English by the author himself. It is one of the most thought-providing and powerful novel written about the partition. Govind Nihalani observes:

'Tamas is the reflective response to the partition of India-one of the most tragic events in the recent history of the Indian subcontinent'.⁶

3.4. Theme of 'Tamas':

In one sentence it can be said that the human tragedy as consequence of sectarian violence of partition is one theme of the novel 'Tamas'. The novel refers Hindu-Muslim communal riots of a small-town of frontier province in 1947. Just before partition, Tamas tells the story of a sweeper named Nathu who is bribed and deceived by a local Muslim politician to kill a pig, for veterinary English sahib. The following morning the carcass is discovered on the steps of the mosque. The communal tension between the Hindus, Sikhs against Muslims grew. Hindu, Sikh and Muslim riots started. The shops of Hindus in grain market were fired. Finally, the area's British administrators called out the army to prevent further violence. The killings stopped but nothing can erase the awful memories from the minds of the survivors, nor will the various communities ever trust one another again. The events described in Tamas are based on true accounts of the riots of 1947. Sahani was himself a witness tragedy in Rawalpindi, and this new and sensitive translation had been done by the author himself. N.S. Gundur observes:

'It is a grim reminder of the immense tragedy that results whenever the religious sentiments of communities are manipulated to achieve political objectives'.⁷

The theme of the 'Tamas' is not an imaginary, because Bhisham Sahani was an adult at the time of the turbulence of the period. The people were sacrificing their lives for the freedom of the country. They were fighting and dying to active the freedom of the motherland. At the same time, on the other hand a few elements who were political power thirsty they became active. They infused religious sentiments of different communities for political gain. It caused to out break of the communal riots and sectarian violence. In the communal riots the killings of the common helpless folks of the Hindu, Sikh and the Muslim communities were continuously rising in number. Because of this blood shade the congress leaders and Sikhs leaders helplessly accepted the plan of partition of the viceroy Lord Mountbatten to stop the blood shade. And on the other hand the Muslim league leader Mr. M.A. Jinnah also gave his acceptance to the partition plan. R.C. Majumdar observes:

*‘The Congress Working Committee met on 2 June and accepted the plan. Baldev Singh, on behalf of the Sikhs, accepted the principal of partition as laid down in the plan. The Viceroy saw Jinnah and was verbally assured of the support of the All-India Muslim League Council’.*⁸

‘Tamas’ depicts a picture of involvement of three religious communities who were the victims in different parts of the country, during the partition. The sufferings of the common and innocent people is the true theme of the novel ‘Tamas’.

3.5. The Characters in ‘Tamas’:

There are more than twenty characters in the present novel. They are presented in the following table.

Table No.3.1

Major Characters in Tamas.

Sr.No.	Name of Character	Particular
01.	Nathu	A poor chamber
02.	Murad Ali	Muslim politician
03.	Bakshiji	Congress worker
04.	Mehataji	Congress worker
05.	Shankar Lal	Congress worker
06.	The Jarnail	True Nationalist
07.	Richard	Deputy Commissioner
08.	Liza	Wife of Richard
09.	The Vanaprasthi	Hindu Holyman, but turned to communal activities
10.	Master Dev Vrat	Communist party worker
11.	Lala Lakshmi Narayan	Hindu Businessman
12.	Ranvir	Hindu young boy
13.	Shah Nawaz	Muslim Businessman
14.	Dev Dutt and Sohan Singh	Sikh peacemaker
15.	Mir Dad	A rich Musalman
16.	Harnam Singh	A helpless Sikh tea shop owner

17.	Ehsan Ali	A communal Musalman
18.	Iqbal Singh	Helpless Sikh youth
19.	Jasbir Kaur	A brave Sikh lady

Nathu: He is the hero of the novel. He is a chamar (shoemaker). He lives a simple and insignificant life. He lives his life on the mercy of greedy Muslim local politician Murad Ali. Nathu undertakes to kill a pig for Murad Ali for the experiments of his friend the vet Sahib. But the carcass of the pig is used to throw hiddenly on the steps of mosque which results for communal Hindu-Muslim riots. The poor Nathu thinks that he is the responsible for riots and killings. Nathu is used by politician to infuse communal hatred.

Murad Ali: In the novel Murad Ali is a Muslim politician who is supporter of the creation of Pakistan for the Muslims. He himself successfully plans to throw a dead body of a pig on the steps of the mosque to create Hindu-Muslim riots in the town. As a result the town burns in the sectarian violence.

Bakshiji: He is the Secretary of the District Congress Committee. He is strict to discipline. He arrives at the Congress Committee Office first of all for daily prabhat phery. He is familiar to all members. When Prabhat Pheri is canceled then he leads all the members for social work.

Mehataji: He is president of District Congress Committee. He is also a member of the Prabhat Pheri. He does insurance business. Mehtaji is very careful about his dressing.

Shankar Lal: He is one of the members of the Congress Committee and the Prabhat Pheri. He is not in favour of Mehtaji. He always takes any chance to humiliate Mehtaji. He becomes unfriendly with him.

The Jarnail: He belongs to the Sikh community. He has not own home, not a wife, not a child, not a regular job. He is always in self designed military uniform. His behavior is eccentric. His patriotic zeal is misplaced. He is a member of Prabhat Pheri. He is tragically killed by a Muslim League activist.

Richard: He is the British Deputy Commissioner. He is a scholar and interested in the study of Indian culture. But as an administrator of British rule at beginning he purposely allows the riots to spread. Finally he calls military and controls the situation. Mountbatten position can be imagined through this character. N.S. Gundur observes:

'Suggests a parallel to that of Mountbatten's position during the partition'.⁹

In the busy schedule he cannot give enough time to his young wife which makes her bore and she consumes more wine.

Liza: She is a young and beautiful wife of Richard. Her husband has not enough time for her. She admires the talent of her husband. She does not understand politics. She is simple lady of human sense. So she blames Richard when he does not use power to stop riots.

The Vanaprasthi: He is a holy Hindu man. So he is the religious leader of the Hindus. When there was the communal tension against the Hindus by the Muslims then he infuse the Hindu Mob through religious prayer. His holy residence became center of the secret meetings of Hindus and Sikhs against the Muslims. He makes secret discussion about communal plan against the Muslims. So he suggests the Hindu activists to move some other place with him to fix the plot for self-defense. The text of Tamas describes as:

'This place is not suitable for such deliberations' said the Vanaprasthi, raising his hand. 'Let us move to some other place. It is only proper that the subject is discussed in a more suitable place'.¹⁰

Master Dev Vrat: He is the organizer of the youth wing's Akara of the town. He belongs Hindu Saba and supported by the holy Hindu religious leader Vanaprasthi. He inspires the Hindu youths by telling the stories of Rana Pratap and Shivaji. He gives training of physical fighting to Hindu and Sikh youths against the Muslim community.

Lala Lakshmi Narain: He is a rich Hindu business man. He actively helps to the activities of Vanaprasthi. He donates the money for arms to the youth of Akara.

He is always ready to give financial help to Hindu organizations against the Muslims.

Ranvir: He is a son of Hindu business man Lala Lakshmi Narain. He is very sharp teenaged youth. He becomes a member of the youth wing. He actively participates in Hindu communal activities against the Muslims.

Shah Nawaz: He is a Muslim business man in the town. He has developed friendly terms with many Hindus. In the days of Hindu-Muslim riots he continued his friendly relations with Hindus. He shifts Lalaji and his family to a safe place. No doubt he is above narrow communal and religious feelings, but when he got chance then his hidden communal feelings came out suddenly. That in the communal furry he kicks and kills a weak Raghunath.

Dev Dutt And Sohan Singh: They are the workers of the communist party in the town. They appeal for peace in the town and villeges. In Sayedpur village there was the war between the Sikh and Muslim communities. Sohan Singh appeals for peace to Muslims but the Muslims kill him and throw his body near gurdwara.

Mir Dad: He is also a peace maker Muslim youth. He belongs to the communal of Dev Dutt. He advices to the Muslims against the fighting against the Hindus. But the Muslim of any village do not listen him but they drive him away by blaming as a spy of the Hindus.

Harnam Singh: He is a Sikh teashop owner in the village Dhok Ilahi Baksh. He is a simple person. He lives with his wife Banto. In the days of the great communal riots and killings the tension was spreaded in the nearby villages. So there was the life danger to Harnam Singh and his family in the village. As per kind advice of his Muslim friend Kharim Khan he flees with his wife to save life. He finds a shelter in a village Dhok, Muridpur in a house of Muslim. That Muslim Ehsan Ali was his old familiar. N.S. Gundur observes:

*‘The present part is concerned with the story of a Sikh family Harnam Singh, his wife Banto and their son Iqbal Singh. When the Muslims attack Harnam Singh’s shop, he takes refuge with his wife in Ehsan Ali’s house’.*¹¹

His son Ramjan and he himself had already gone with a group of the Muslim rioters to the village Dhok Ilahi Baksh and set fire the house and teashop of Harnam Singh. Further Harnam Singh and his wife were driven away in helpless condition. This old man and his wife walked here and there for shelter to save life in the days of riots. Finally they got shelter in the Refugee Relief Office.

Ehsan Ali: He is a common Muslim. He lives in the village Dhok Muridpur. He and his son Ramjan became furious in the group of the Muslim rioters and killers. They go to a nearby village Dhok Ilhai Baksh and loot the house and teashop of Harnam Singh. The group of rioters made him more communal. He brings a box of jewell of Banto from the house of Harnam Singh as a loot. When he reached to home then he knows that his wife Rajo had given shelter to Harnam Singh and Banto. Then he and his son spare the lives of the couple but in the evening darkness drive the couple away.

Iqbal Singh: He is a simple Sikh youth and a son of Harnam Singh and Banto. He runs a simple clothshop in the nearby village Nurpur. In the days of the communal riots his life was in danger in that village. He runs away. But unfortunately he is caught by a group of Muslim rioters and killers which was led by Ramjan. They caught him and tourchered physically and forcefully convert him into Muslim faith as Iqbal Ahmad. Before this he was compled to follow the Islam rites.

Jasbir Kaur: She is a young Sikh woman in the village Sayedpur. Actually she is the daughter Harnam Singh and Banto. After marriage she came in Sayedpur village. She is brave. When the Sikh women were in danger in riots then she leads them to jump in a well to save their womenly honour.

The sectarian hatred in the Hindu and Sikh communities against the Muslim community brought the partition closer and closer. On the other hand there was also sectarian hatred in the Muslim community against the Hindu and Sikh communities. The Muslim forcefully demanded 'Pakistan' as their Muslim nation. Finally it brought partition in reality. Bhisham Sahani describes sectarian hatred in 'Tamas' in detail as:

3.6. Sectarian Hatred in the Hindu Sect Against Muslim Sect:

The central focus of 'Tamas' is on partition human tragedy through the sectarian violence. There is the sectarian violence because of long rooted sectarian mentality. The religious hatred is in the root of sectarian mentality. The communal hatred was infused by the long standing British policy of 'Divide and Rule'. And the Muslim Leagues ideology of separateness did the same. These two forces made the Congress helpless to accept the partition of India. B.L.Grover and R.R.Sethi observes:

'The partition of India was the logical culmination of the long standing British policy of Divide and Rule and the Muslim League's ideology of communalism and separateness. The two worked together and forced the Indian National Congress to agree to the partition of India'.¹²

In 'Tamas' there are three religious sects. They are: the Hindu religious sect, the Sikh sect and the Muslim sect. The Muslim sect always heats and fights with the Hindus and Sikhs on the name of religion. On the other hand the Sikhs and the Hindus think that the Muslims are their enemies. They call the Muslims as mleccha. The Muslims also call the Hindus as 'Kafir'. The Vanaparasthi is holy man. He prays for the universal welfare and peace. But when there is the insult of Hindus then this holy man motivates the Hindus against the Muslims. In anger he also calls the Muslims as 'mleccha' He does not want the Muslims to gain over Hindus. He does not like Hindus to be cowards and lay low. So he personally supervises and coordinates the activities of the Youth Wing Akara. The Vanaparasthi also advises the Hindus to stock a can of linseed oil. In case of need they can pour the boiling oil on the head of the enemy. Though the Vanaparasthi is a man of God, he does not want the Hindus to be cowards to let the Muslims exploit them on that score. His holy residence becomes the center of the meetings of the Hindus and the Sikhs against the threat of the Muslims aggressiveness. This way the religious holy leader like the vanaparasthi is leading the Hindu community towards narrow sectarian mentality which is totally based on hatred of the Muslims. The whole Hindu and Sikh community stand against the Muslim sect. Not only this but the Hindus have carefully grown their organizations. Master Dev Vrat who belongs to the Hindu Sabha is the organizer of the youth wing. The Vanaparasthi

supports Master Dev Vrat and the youth wing. The Vanparasthi wants that the youth of the town might become militant by getting the training of the widding of this and equipping themselves. So master Dev Vrat inspires his young wards by telling them stories of endurance and valour of Rana Pratap and Chhatrapati Shivaji . He believes that an Arrya boy should develop the courage to fight the enemies the Muslims. The textual para describes this as:

*‘When he was small, master Dev Vrat used to tell Ranvir stories of valour. There was one of how Rana Pratap, for the first time became conscious of his helpless situation when the only piece of bread left with him was eaten up by a cat. Ranvir would imagine Chetak, Rana Pratap’s horse, galloping away on the hills on the town’s outskirts. He would see Shivaji on horseback, poised on a high rock looking toward the Turkish hordes in the distance, or holding in his iron embrace the mlecccha chief’.*¹³

He has his secret place for initiating the youth by testing their courage. This narrow and hatred based inspiration affected the innocent Hindu boys. They always started the thinking that the Muslims are their enemies. As a result the whole Hindu community grew the feeling of enemyship against the Muslims. Further this purposely grownup sectarian mentality brought a terrible bloody violence in the town and thereafter in the villages of the district. It brought the partition closer and closer.

3.7. Sectarian Hatred in the Sikh Sect Against Muslims:

The text of ‘Tamas’ describes the war like situation of Sayadpur village. The Sikh sect was totally drowned in narrow and hatred based sectarian mentality. They think the Muslims are their enemies. Therefore they have to prepare themselves ready to fight with the Muslims. They taught that there would be the possibility of attack by the Muslims. The sectarian feelings brought all the Sikhs in guradwara. They gathered there. The leaders of the community gave inspiring but narrow and communal speeches. The sectarian passion was poured by the singing of the war songs in the gurdwara. The entire Sikh congregation is swaying in an ecstasy to the songs sung by the Sikh singers, The concluding words of one of the songs of Sikhs were as:

*'The khalsa shall rule Name shall remain in subjugation!'*¹⁴

There was only hatred against the Muslims. Everyone was thinking in the hate of the Muslims that the time has come again to cross words with the Turks. Everyone in the congregation feels that he or she is a link in the long chain of Sikh history at that movement of crisis. Here and there a woman has a Kirpan hanging by her side. It is nothing but sectarian hatred which results into the human tragedy. The Khalsa is in the mood of their ancestors in fighting with their enemies, the Turks. In the old times the Khalsa used to wear yellow robes while going for battle. To them, yellow colour is the colour of selfless. In the present situation a yellow handkerchief, a yellow scarf or a yellow duppatta which will link him or her emotionally with their heroic past. Everyone is ready to lay down their lives on the name of their Sikh religion against the Turks. This blind and dark sectarian mentality of the mass congregation was not leashed and cleaned by their leaders. But the defense of the Khalsa organized on the base of sectarian hatred by the defense leader Jathedar Kishen Singh. The other influential leader of the Sikh Sardar Teja gave the spirited address to Khalsa to be ready to shed their blood in the service of their Guru Maharaj. That is described in the text as:

*'For most of them this was no time to bother about dress, since the heart was a fire with the spirit of do or die'.*¹⁵

Teja Singh is the chief of the congregation. He made his entry piously and solemn respects to it. That time a young Sikh busted into a full throated slogan 'Jo boley so Nihal' to which the entire congregation answered in one voice, 'Sat sri Akal'. Then he hold his hands and kissed it with his eyes. All this made one kind of emotional influence on the congregation. After this Teja Singh choked his voice with intense and addressed that on again, that day, the Khalsa Panth needs the blood of Guru. The time has come when their faith will be put to test. Guru Maharaj has only one behest for this time; sacrifice! Sacrifice!! Sacrifice!!! This way the leader of Sikh lead towards sectarian emotions, which finally resulted in the bloody sectarian violence which brought unforgettable human tragedy. Then, it brought the partition of the subcontinent.

3.8. Sactarian Hatred in the Muslim Sect against the Hindu and Sikh Sects:

On the other hand in the Muslim sect is also in blind and bloody sectarian mentality. Before partition the Muslim community and leaders thought that democratic rule means majority rule, which is Hindu rule. This, and in religious course the Muslims call the Hindus as 'Kafar'. This hatred is expressed all the time by the Muslim leaders and common communal Muslims. To prove their communal spirit they always give following communal slogans. The text describes as:

'Pakistan Zindabnad !' "Quaid

*- e- Azam -Zindabad!"*¹⁶

With the above political and communal slogan the Muslim leaders also put religious slogans before the common Muslims. The text describes as:

"Allah-o- Akar!"

*"Nara – e- Taqbir – Allah – o- Akbar".*¹⁷

Such kind of dark sectarian mentality is in the mind of Murad Ali .Murad Ali is an influential Muslim politician of the town. He is supporter of the hardcore Muslims who want the creation of Pakistan out of the undivided India. He plans to ferment riot in the town to fan the anger of the Muslims against the Hindus. So he decoys Nathu who is an innocent Chamar to kill a pig telling him that the vet sahib wants it for his experiment. But he cunningly makes the scavenger deposit it on the steps of the mosque of the town early in the morning. This activity of Murad Ali inspires the Muslim sectarian feelings against the Hindus. And finally it causes to start sectarian violence. This sectarian violence brings the human tragedy in the town and in the whole district thereafter. There are other activities by the Muslims which brought sectarian violence. Because of this the communities who are friendly with one another become enemies. It brought the communal divide between the Hindus and Muslims. The communal divide made the partition necessary to save humanity. In those days Prabhat Pheries are frequent in the town by the Congress activists. That day the group of the Congress activists is out a on Prabhat Pheri. When they raised the slogan, 'bande mataram' then in communal answer soon

group of persons come from the side of Muslims by raising the slogans, 'Pakistan Zindabd' and 'Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad'. One of them from the Muslim group came forward and challengingly stated that Congress is the body of the Hindus. The Musalmans have nothing to do with it. The Hindus are throwing dust on the eyes of the Muslims by making them believe that it is part of the Muslims too. Actually the Congress cannot speak for the Muslims. The Muslim League alone can speak for the Muslims. A Muslim gentleman forcibly argues that freedom of Hindustan will be before the Hindus. It is in sovereign Pakistan alone that Muslims will be really free. This feeling of separateness brought partition closer. It made to feel the Muslim that the Hindus are their enemies. It brought the fall of big communal divide.

There is the such kind of sectarian hatred by Hindus against the Muslims and there is also same the such kind of sectarian hatred by Sikhs against the Muslims and there is the such kind of sectarian hatred by the Muslims against the Hindus and the Sikhs. This sectarian hatred resulted in the partition of the Indian subcontinent as the Union Hindu India and New Pakistan for the Muslims.

3.9. The Dance of Death in 'Tamas':

On the every page on the present novel there is the dance of death. It was in the form of sectarian hatred, violence, tragedy and deaths. The horrors of human suffering in partition violence is there. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh observe:

'There are numerous eyewitness accounts of the maiming and mutilation of victims. The catalogue of horrors includes the disemboweling of pregnant women, the slamming of babies' heads against brick walls, the cutting off of victims' limbs and genitalia and the display of heads and corpses'.¹⁸

The whole country was taking the bath of blood of human being. The text of the present novel gives a few examples of the dance of death. They are as:

Innocent Nathu's Tragedy And Sectarian Violence in the Town:

The story of 'Tamas' is set in a small frontier town in 1947. It is a story of a sweeper named Nathu. Nathu and his wife live a happy life in the colony of Chamars. He is the hero of the novel. His profession of Chamar is at the mercy of

self-interested politicians Murad Ali. He undertakes to kill a pig for Murad Ali who says that he wants its carcass for the experiments of his friend the vet sahib. But the carcass of the pig is thrown on the steps of the mosque in the town as per the secret instructions of Murad Ali. As a result a communal tension erupts. Nathu feels terrible upset that he will be caught and punished. And here Nathu's mental tragedy begins. He has been spending sleepless nights without telling his wife. Finally he tells his wife what he has done, under the instruction of Murad Ali. His wife tries to console him. But the whole town is torn by sectarian violence. The riots brought the killings and the migration of the natives. Two things are important for the suffering of Nathu. One is innocentness of the simple minded and hard worker Nathu. The villainous minded influential Muslims politician of the town Murad Ali who is the supporter of the hardcore Muslims wants the creation of Pakistan. Nathu is bribed and deceived this local Muslims politician to kill a Pig. This is the root of the tragedy. That the novel begins with the killing of a pig and shedding blood. The pig symbolizes the dark forces in human nature. The blood shedding is symbolized by the bloody riots leading to the killing of the Hindus and Sikhs by the Muslims and to the killing of the Muslims by the Hindus and the Sikhs. The battle between Nathu and the Pig is a metaphor for the clashes between the various religious communities of India.

The first human tragedy in 'Tamas' is that Murad Ali represents a self-seeking politician. He exploits the poor and the humble common man for his own ambitions. The activation of the evil element in Murad Ali against Nathu for the creation of violence is the dance of death. Here we have to remember the observation of Sudhi Rajiv on Tamas:

'Tamas narrates the story of the blind actions of groups or multitudes of people a few days before the partition. The dehumanizing process of partition shadowed beliefs, goodness, brotherhood and all other good values and the collective consciousness of people went blank. Human beings were driven by animal instincts. The harrowing experiences of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike were such that there was a severe destruction of human values'.¹⁹

By the walking movement Nathu is very nervous and confused. He cannot talk about his pig killing to anyone. But it becomes clear Murad Ali has tricked him. Murad Ali has got the pig killed by Nathu, and Murad Ali has got it thrown outside

the mosque by some hidden hand. All know the group psychology that the easily arise religious fanaticism in both communities. Then the death starts dancing in the minds of mass people. Sudhi Rajiv's remark is very important here:

*'From the time the Mughals came in the India there was mistrust between the Hindus and the Muslims. The slaughtering of the cow and pig and using them to arouse religious fanaticism in both communities was and is the most effective way to rose the sentiments of the groups'.*²⁰

Then, Nathu's tragedy does not stop here. During the night there is the loud noise outside and Nathu and his wife wake up. They hear the sound of the alarm bell from the Shivalya temple ringing continually. It was warning bell to Hindus against the Muslim danger. Then in the meanwhile the Muslims started shouting 'Alla-o-Akbar' and the Hindus started shouting 'Har....Har...Har.... Mahadev'. It was heard by Nathu and his wife. Nathu feels guilty. This sense of guilty brings one kind of mental agony. It makes him to think that he is the cause for all the killing in the town. This senses of uneasiness disturbed him greatly. Basically he has not known for what purpose he is being asked to kill the pig. But again he loses his peace of mind when he hears about some other horrible incident. Since the morning he tries to go and join his friends for chatting but each time he tries, and his throat goes dry and his legs tremble and he return home. He frightens by the thought. He may be arrested by the police. Nathu has a thought to go and ask the scavenger where exactly he has delivered the pig, he may go to Murad Ali but Murad Ali will push him out at his house and hold him guilt and get him arrested. Helpless Nathu recalls his father's advice in the tragic situation of the mind. His father's advice is very pious that bread with dignity and self respect.

Bhisham Sahni made Nathu more heart touching tragic by describing his simplicity and honesty. Nathu is not a villain like Murad Ali. He honestly feels that he has been the reason behind all those killings and lootings in the town. He cannot tell openly the truth. The ending chapter of the novel simply narrates that Nathu is not alive. There is the mystic death of Nathu. One major possibility is that Nathu might be killed hiddenly by Murad Ali because Nathu alone knows that it is Murad Ali who has got the pig killed and thrown it on the steps at the mosque. If Nathu is left alive, it will be a danger to the security of Murad Ali. It is the dance of death in

the tragedy of Nathu. It met the innocent Nathu to death finally. The following para of the text is notable here:

‘Peace committee Zindabad!’ ‘Hindus and Muslims are one!’

The bystanders peered into the bus to see who it was that was raising the slogans. On the seat next to that of the driver sat a man, holding microphone in his hand. Many did not recognize him, but some did. Nathu was dead or he would have recognized him at once. It was Murad Ali, the dark-complexioned Murad Ali, with bristling moustaches, his thin cane lying between his legs, peering to the right and left with his small ferretty eyes and raising slogans with all the passion at his command.’²¹

Violence in the Town

In the novel ‘Tamas’ Murad Ali is an influential politician of the city and a supporter of the Muslim League. He tries to whip up the religious sentiments of the Muslims against the Hindus. He hires an innocent Nathu to kill a pig making him to believe that it is to be sent to the veterinary surgeon. But hiddenly, Murad Ali seems to it that the carcass of the pig is thrown on the steps of the mosque. The Muslims become infuriated. They think it, is to be the deliberate posture of offence towards them. In retaliation, some Muslim youths kill cow and throw it in front the temple. This evil of darkness has been loosed on the city. ‘Tamas’ means darkness, sectarian hatred and the communal passions. This Tamas envelops the minds of people and the city like a fall. Normally the pious and holy persons belonging to different religions serve as the angles of religious tolerance and communal piece. But this troubled time in the city makes ‘Tamas’ envelop their minds and pollute them too. The Vanaprasthi in the novel who advocates universal peace and welfare of the universe. He becomes affected by the ‘Tamas’ and after his congregation holds a secret meeting Meeting of the Hindu militant attitude youths. He calls Muslims as mleccchas. He thinks that the Muslims are evil incarnate polluting the God’s world. The following para of the text clears the teaching of the vanprasthi for universal happiness:

‘After years of persuasion , the Vanaprasthi had succeeded in making the members of the congregation memorize them. Sitting cross-legged on the

platform, his eyes closed and head bowed, with folded hands resting in his lap, he began chanting the holy verses:

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina ... (May every living being in the world be happy and live a contented life....)'.²²

This holy man one who is spending the life for peace and happiness of all and never made difference and Hindus and Muslim, but now a days of communal hatred that is spiritual blindness which is called as 'tamas' made effect on such great holy man and started teaching to Hindus against the Muslims in his religious and also started taking active part. The flowing para is an important here:

*'Vanaprasthiji himself is taking keen, personal interest in the activities. Besides the study of scriptures and performance of rites and rituals, Vanaprasthiji is devoting heart and soul to the sacred task of Hindu unity.'*²³

3.10. The Test of the Second Objective of the Research:

'To study the theme of the dance of death in the form of sectarian violence in the selected Indian Partition novel in English' is the second objective of our research work. It has been tested as:

The 10th chapter of 'Tamas' describes the situation in the town. It links with previous sectarian happening. That the atmosphere was more tense and full of hatred against each other by the finding of the carcass of pig on the steps of the mosque. The Muslims were in angry mood against the Hindus. The cow is killed to pollute Hindu's temple by Muslims. Such type of happenings took place in the whole day. The sectarian hatred made the Muslims mad against the Hindus. In following darkness of the night they set fire the grain market which was in the heart of the city where the Hindu's business establishments were thickly located. The Grain Market burnt It brought one kind of grave some silence on the whole town. That is described in the flowing para of the text:

'As the day dawned, the town, as though stung by a cobra, bore half-dead, half-alive appearance. The Grain Market was still burning; the fire- brigades of the

municipality had long since given up fighting the fire. The smoke billowing from it continued to darken the sky, although during the night the sky had looked glowing red. Seventeen shops had been reduced to ashes'.²⁴

In the earlier riot too, the Grain Market had been the target of the hooligans who had set fire to it. But there was no killing then. This time the atmosphere has become more tense and full of hatred. The fire is spreading sending flames like the tongues of monstrous snakes towards the sky. The scene recalls to our mind the Dussera festival when Lanka was in flames and the fire enveloped the effigy of Ravan. Shops all over the town are closed but for a shop here and a shop there selling milk. Outside the shops people stand in small groups and talk about the killings that have taken place in the previous night.

The Grain Market fire brought sectarian violence, which divided the Hindus and Muslims and then the basically great and admirable human nature persons like the Vanaprasthi, Shah Nawaz became mad, that they also cannot control themselves. This is the great human tragedy in which a pious heart turned to communal heart. There in Naya Mohala, lies the dead body of a man. In the town. In one case, an elderly Hindu who has come to buy clothes for some wedding is found to be killed. A shoe shop on the college Road and a tailoring shop nearby have been looted. This heart-breaking violence brought a deep divide among the residential localities. This is one kind of human tragedy. No Muslims now dare to go into neither a Hindu locality nor a Hindu into a Muslims locality. Everyone is filled with fear. The atmosphere has become very heavy. At the entrance to the lanes and at road crossings, small group of people sit hidden from view, their faces were half covered, and knives were in their hands. Inwardly everyone knows that the crisis is not over. Doors of the houses are all shut tight. All schools, colleges, offices are closed. People have shut themselves.

Tragedy in 'Tamas': Harnam Singh's Tragedy

The riots of the Hindus and Muslims spreaded in the villages also. In the town the riots were between the Hindus and the Muslims, but in the villages the riots were between the Sikhs and the Muslims. In the village area the sectarian violence made the common people homeless. Sudhi Rajiv comments as:

‘The scene, then, shifts to another locality in the district where Sikhs were being massacred. The author shows the helpless Sikhs left at the mercy of the murdering Muslim mobs.’²⁵

Here is a village namely Dhok Ilahi Baksh. Harnam Singh lives there. He runs a tea-shop in the village. In these days the regular buses from the city or Khanpur do not arrive at all. The regular customers of tea also not to turn. A dark cover of silence lies over everything. His wife Banto tells him that they shall get away from the village and go to the Khanpur city where they have their relatives. In the present village, they are the only Sikh couple, all others are Muslims. But Harnam Singh refuses. Their son lives in the village Nurpur. He is alone there. He is not able to protect own self in difficult time. So they cannot think to go to their son. They cannot go to the city, because the riots has already flamed there. Finally, Harnam Singh advises his wife to surrender to the will of their Guru Maharaja and stick on where they are. Harnam Singh thinks that they do not owe anything to anyone. They have never harmed anyone in the village. So he does not find any reason to flee away, But his wife Banto is worried about their safety. Harnam Singh reminds her that the most respected person Karim Khan has assured them that they shall continue to live there with an easy mind, which no one will dare cast an evil eye on them.

One day no bus has arrived and not a single customer has come to his tea shop. On the other hand, two or three strangers while going towards the village have eyed him and his shop very closely. Harnam Singh thinks that if any unwanted thing would happen. He and his wife think to take shelter in Karim Khans house. But Karim Khan who tells by passing Harnam Singh that things have been taken bad turn. His welfare lies in leaving the place. He can protect Harman Singh and his wife from the locals but he cannot be sure when murders strike from outside. After a few minites Kharim Khan while climbing up the slope near Harnam Singh’s tea-shop warns him not to delay leaving the village as there is fear of murders attacking the village. Karim Khan’s long instruction is warning him to leave the village at once it made him disappointed. His faith in god and neighbors becomes badly shaken for the first time. To shake the faith in God and neighbors of the person like Harnam Singh who is of sixty years. He is matured and of God believer in the whole life. This gentleman also disturbed. His faith on humanity and God is disturbed. It

brought tragedy in the life of Harnam Singh only because of his different sect. After this terrible shock he drowns in mental tragedy. This old man does not know where to go. It is the evening time, and thereafter there will be the darkness of nightfall. He does not know what to do. He does not know how far they can go in the darkness of the night. He is not sure which place is safe. The fire of hatred is spreading like forest fire. This helpless situation is not less than any kind of bloody tragedy. All this stood before old Harnam Singh only because of sectarian madness. Finally the situation compelled them to leave their village towards an unknown destination. Even as they become ready to move, they hear the slogans 'Ya Ali' and 'Allah-o-Akbar:' raised by the local Muslims on the one hand and the sound of drums was coming from far away in devastating that the Muslims murderers are coming into the village. The sound of the beating drums continues to fleet through the village. The hum of sounds from the village too has grown louder. Banto and Harnam Singh lock their shop. They have with a little cash, gun and the clothes on their back. The moment they step out of their house, the entire place became unfamiliar to them.

*'Banto and Harnam Singh locked the shop and came out. They left with a little cash, a gun and clothes on their back. No sooner had they stepped out of the house that the entire place became alien to them.'*²⁶

They decide to go towards the river. The murderers have already reached the outskirts of the village and seemed to be advancing in that very direction. The atmosphere resounds with the sounds of drums and slogans. Only a bird, their pet mayna and the stray dog from their whole village came down the bed of the stream to wishing them 'good -bye' and not a single human being. This is the heart breaking sectarian madness and human tragedy. The communal, political leaders uprooted the humanity by sowing the seeds of communal suspicion, which finally achieved the bloody partition. K.R. Srinivas Iyengar observes:

*'The 'leaders' had sowed the wind of communal suspicion, and partition was the result; like whirlwind, the mad act of partition was uprooting masses of humanity, mangling them'.*²⁷

It is the dark night time. Harnam Singh and Banto are going on and on. When they reach a mound, the moonlight reveals the sight of their shop being burnt by the

murderers. The village they have lived for twenty years has disowned them within the twinkling of an eye. They had become homeless wanderers. Harnam Singh's hands have become cold. Boanto is speechless. This pall of the tragedy covered the lives of the old couple only because of sectarian madness. They have spent the night praying, brooding and dragging their feet. At daybreak they sit beside a brook and wash themselves. There is a small village on the other side. It is Dhok Muridpure by name. Soon they enter the village and Harnam Singh at the door of the first house makes knocking with mixture of feelings. This way the sectarian tragedy made a pious and God fearing couple stranger and helpless. Bhisham Sahni penned the human tragedy, violence, and disintegration as the theme of the novel with the help of the tragedy of sixty years old Harnam Singh and his wife Banto. This couple is on the open stage of the life. That, their past has disowned them and the future is uncertain to them. Under such a situation, they stand before the doors of a stranger.

In Dhok Muridpur a Muslim woman namely Rajo kindly gave them shelter. Rajo offers them a bowl of buttermilk. Taking the bowl in his hand, Harnam Singh bursts out crying. He feels sad the sudden turn of things in his life making him stretch his hand before someone which he has never done in his life so far as a well-to-do shopkeeper. Even now also he has money in his pocket. Here is the tragic state of the mind of the old Harnam Singh which made the dance of death everywhere. Helpless couple sheltered in the loft at first and then in the godown till the nightfall. At nightfall, Harnam Singh and Banto leave the house of that Musalman Rajo the Ehsan Ali. They thanked Rajo and started their night journey. They think about the safety of their son Iqbal Singh and daughter Jashir. This is the time of communal tension which is causing a big divide between the Sikhs and the Muslims. Harnam Singh and Banto are tragic victims of it. The dark clouds of religious and communal hatred are leading violence all around. At the end we again meet the couple in miserable condition in the office of the statistic Babu. They have swallowed the tragic shock of the death of their daughter Jasbir, and want to know about son. They do not know the tragedy of Iqbal.

Sikh-Muslim War:

There was the communal riots in a small town in the North –West Frontier province (now in Pakistan) and also in the nearby villages to which Bhisham Sahni

was an eyewitness. Tamas is based on that bloody experience. The common people were worst affected in the sectarian disturbances. The communal riots in the early months of 1947 in Punjab were of sectarian violence which had brought human tragedy. No doubt the Muslim political leaders were behind this human tragedy, but at the same time the Britishers were equally responsible for it. Dashrath M. Panchal observes:

'British, for obvious strategic reasons, initiated and furthered the communal hatred between the Hindus and the Muslims. It resulted into two-way exodus, desire for revenge, massacre, looting, arson and rape on a very large scale'.²⁸

The novel describes the war preparations of the Sikh of Sayedpur in the gurdwara and of the Muslims in the double storeyed house of Sheikh Gulam Rasul. The singing of the war songs in the gurdwara develops spiritual atmosphere in the minds of Sikhs against the Muslims. The defense of Khalsas was organized by Jathedar Kishen Singh. Seven members of the congregation are around with double barreled guns, with five boxes of cartridges. The Khalsa is getting into the mood of their ancestors in fighting with their Muslim enemies. Sardar Teja Singh, the chief of the congregation enters very Piously and solemnly.

There the Muslim sect became alrat. All the Muslims gathered in the double storeyed house of Sheik Gulam Rasul. There is an atmosphere of a holy Jihad. All the Muslims of the village – farmers, bakers, butchers- have assumed the role of Mujahids. Their preparations are going on to launch a Jihad against the Kafirs. The eyes of the inmates are bloodshed and hearts afire with spirit of sacrifice. The Muslims of the village feel that it is their holy religious duty to convert the 'Kafirs' (Hindus) to their faith.

Tamas brings a clear picture of the mutual hatred. It brought a divide between the communities. Bhisham Sahni describes the war preparation in epic manner. The village Sayadpur is under full sectarian tension.

Tragic Conversation:

The conversation of Sardar Iqbal Singh as Sheikh Iqbal Ahemd is the in the novel. It took place only because of the communal lust of the Ramzan and his gang of looters. The event takes place as: When Harnam Singh and his wife Banto leave

the house of Eshan Ali of Dhok Muridpur and move in dark to search a shelter somewhere at that time Ramzan and his fellow freebooters were returning from their exploits in Dhok Ilahi. Baksh on the returning way they played a communal tragic drama. In the rugged countryside of this rural district. As they were chatting and laughing in the way they suddenly noticed a young Sikh near a mound at some distance. They become greatly excited. The text of our present novel Tamas describes it as:

*‘When they set their eyes on him, they were greatly excited as through they had found a sport’.*²⁹

Ramzan and his friends numbering to twenty or thirty run after him. The ground is uneven. It has many small mounds, ravines, and hollows and deep recesses like tunnels inside the mounds. The Sardar is running towards some village. But he has avoided the road and chosen his untrodden route to avoid the notice of people going by the main cart road. The Sardar is soon lost from the view of Ramzan and his gang. After sometime, they get a glimpse of him, but again he has lost from their view. They all go and stand on top of a mound. They begin to throw stones into the holes and in the mounds. They think that when the Sardar gets hurt, he will come out. He has entered a deep, dark recess in one of the mounds. There are many tunnels and recesses all around. It becomes difficult for Ramzan and his friends to find out where he has hidden. Then many of them pickup stones hurl them into the cave. Ramzan flicks open his knife, and enter the cave with two of his friends and ask the kafir to come out. But the Sardar is not there. Suddenly, one of them notices the Sardar is moving into a hole. All they run in that direction. They begin to hurl stones. In one cave the Sardar is hiding, a stone hits him on his right knee. It gives him pain. Though he does not mourn and cry out. He crouches closer to the wall of the cave. The attackers begin to hurl a volley of stones into the cave.

Some of the stones hit the Sardar on his knees, shoulders or forehead. Though he tries to suppress his cry. But lastly he begins to mourn and sob in a low tone. This makes his cave to locate. Then they increase the volley of stones at once. Someone in the gang asks them to stop the stoning, and orders the Sardar to come out. The Sardar does not come out. This is very miserable condition of the Sikh. The

true tragedy of the Sardar is further. On the warning there is no reply by the side of the Sardar. They again begin throwing the stones into the cave. The blood begins to ooze from the wounds of the body of the helpless Sardar. This helplessness of such kind is nothing but the human tragedy in the novel 'Tamas'. Ramzan gives a final warning to Sardar to come out lest otherwise he will stone him to death with the big stone in his head. Soon the Sardar comes out crawling on all fours. His turban is hanging loose and his clothes torn to pieces with blood all over. He is not even able to stand. Ramzan offers to spare the life. He gives an alternative to the Sardar if he would accept the Muslims faith and recite the Kalma, and if he is not willing to accept their faith, they will kill him mercilessly. It is one example in the novel but in the days of the riots of partition there were a large number of forceful conversion and abduction of women of Hindus where the Hindus were in minority. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh observe:

'The minority Hindu populations living in inaccessible villages were the victims. There were a large number of cases of abduction of women, forced conversion'.³⁰

Sardarhe unwillingly agrees to accept their faith and recite the Kalma. One of the friend of Ramzan from the gang is able to identify the young Sardar as the son of Harman Singh, the tea-shop owner of Dhok Ilahi Baksh namely Iqbal Singh who runs a cloth shop at Nurpur at a Tahsil place, and is on the way to Dhok Ilahi Baksh to join his parents. Here is such a terrible tragedy in the riots of partition that the old parents are already became homeless and knocking the unknown door for shelter and bread and on one hand the song is in the hands of communal Muslim gang at the door of death religiously. That, at the next step Iqbal has to accept their faith to save the life. This whole tragedy is only the product of the dance of death. Further it is better to know how Ramzan forces Iqbal to accept the faith and how helplessly Iqbal recites the Kalma. It is in the following paragraph of the text 'Tamas.'

'Rosary in hand the mullah made Iqbal Singh recite the Kalma: 'La Illah Ill all ah! Muhammad ar Rasulallah!'.³¹

The mullah makes Iqbal Singh recite the Kalma thrice. Then everyone in the crowd embraces Iqbal Singh one by one. Before the evening fall the circumcision ceremony is also completed. By the evening all the marks of Sikhism have been

replaced by the marks of the Muslim faith. Now he is no longer an enemy but friend; nor a Kafir but a believer; to whom the doors of the Muslim houses are open. The new name has been given to Iqbal Singh as Sheikh Iqbal Ahmed.

The conversion of Iqbal Singh is human depravity. A Hindu became a victim of the Muslim communal fury. The religious fanaticism blinds the reasoning capacity of people. This blindness makes them victims of emotions and converts them into blood thirsty wild animals. And finally all it results into the heart braking human tragedy.

Jarnail's Tragic Death:

In the case of Jarnail it can be said that the sectarian violence took the life of innocent, selfless, true follower of the principles of tolerance and non-violence activist. So it can be said that his death is a death of an innocent and simple human being.

The Jarnail is a middle aged man of fifty years. He is a weak man. He spent long years of his life prison as a political prisoner. He always wears his self designed military uniform. During his younger days he had attended the Congress session in Lahore as a volunteer. There the famous resolution calling for complete Independence had been proclaimed. The national flag had been flagged on the bank of the Ravi river and Pandit Nehru had danced in joy along with other activities. The Jarnail was one of them. Since then, he had always worn his volunteer's uniform. As a volunteer, Jarnail actively participates in the community work of Congress. The text of Tamas observes as:

'The Jarnail, who had been standing with his long bamboo pole near the trough, moved slowly to where the drain was being cleaned'.³²

This man never did any work. He received a sum of fifteen rupees every month from the Congress Office as propagandists. A passion had gripped his soul, and on the strength of that passion he was able to bear the troubles of the life. He had neither a home, nor a wife or child, neither a regular job, nor a regular roof over his head. Every time there was Lathi-charge by the police, while other activists would manage to get away at safer place, he would bare his narrow shriveled chest and get his ribs broken. His behavior was eccentric and full of patriotic zeal which

was misplaced but true and selfless. When a Tonga goes round the town for the purpose of making an announcement regarding a public meeting to be conducted, he will be the one found. Sitting in the back seat, beating the drum. And when a meeting takes place he will be the first to jump on to the dais to address the gathering in hoarse, husky voice. Jarnail is a Sardar who always refers Gandhiji's particular words to prove his innocent patriotic feelings, that, Gandhiji has said that Pakistan can only be formed over his dead body. He too says the same.

On that day when the Hindu-Muslim riot had been broken because of the carcass was hiddenly thrown on the steps of the mosque by communal and selfish politician Murad Ali, then our Jarnail came out and tried for Hindu-Muslim unity. Jarnail was true follower of Gandhiji. He gave the speeches for Hindu-Muslim unity and for the principles of tolerance non-violence at the corners of the lanes. His last speech for Hindu-Muslim unity which took his life. The text 'Tamas' describes as

*'Sahiban, Gandhiji has said that Hindus and Muslims are brothers, that they should not fight one another. I appeal to all of you, young and old men and women, to stop fighting. It does great harm to the country. India's wealth is swallowed up by that fair-faced monkey who bosses over us.'*³³

Through lanes he went making his appeal for peace. At one corner he was delivering his speech. A few bystanders gathered round him. He did not where he was. He went on in his usual vein. He delivered Gandhiji's message of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood. He also made clear in his speech that the real enemy is Englishman. It was his final speech. Before finishing his last sentence by standing a communal minded some gave a heavy blow on the head of Jarnil in which he died. The text describes as:

Sahiban, Hindus and Musalmans are brothers. There is rioting in the city; fires are raging and there is no one to stop it. The Deputy Commissioner is sitting in his bungalow, with his madam in his arms. I say, our real enemy is the Englishman. Gandhiji says that it is the Englishman. Who makes to fight one another. We should not taken in by what the Englishman says. Gandhiji says,

Pakistan shall be made over his dead body. I also say that Pakistan shall be made over my dead body. We are brothers, we shall live together, we shall live as

on you son of a' shouted someone standing behind him, and with one swing of his lathi, hit the Jarnail on his head and broke his skull into two. Jarnail fell down in a heap, with his cane , his green military uniform, his torn turban and his torn chapals, before he could finish his sentence'.³⁴

Jarnail death is such sorrowful, because he is not normal but a little whimsical and eccentric. He is the true follower of the words of Gandhiji. He has lived as a soldier and dies as soldier. The Jarnail is a martyr . Jarnail s death is an example for how to follow the principle of non-violence and how to die for it. Simple and selfless Jarnail knows to die without questioning Gandhiji`s principle of non-violence. He simply dies with the words for Hindu-Muslim unity on his lips. The sectarian violence of the city tragically kills the person who is the follower of non-violence. A simple and innocent minded Jarnail is killed by the principle of devil violence. Human being is killed by sectarian violence.

Tragic Death of Peacemaker Sohn Singh:

He is a young Sikh belonging to the commune of Dev Datt. He is trying establish peace between the Sikh Muslim communities. As a party worker Sohn Singh was sent to Sayedpur village to make silent the Sikh community. The whole Sikh community of Sayedpur was gathered in the village gurudwara to discuss war plan against the village Muslims under the leadership of Teja Singh. There Sohan Singh tries to give his message of peace. The text describes as:

*'We should not forget that we are being incited against the Muslims, and the Muslims against us. Due to rumors of all kinds tension is mounting and tempers are running high. On our part we should try our best to maintain contact with the Muslims and continue to interact with them, and sea that violence does not break out...'*³⁵

But the Sikh congregation and their chief Teja Singh turned deaf ear to the suggestion of peace of Sohan Singh. As a result they have to pay heavy loss of lives of Sikhs. A large number of Sikhs are killed and a number of houses of Sikhs are burnt in two days war. After this tragedy the war council of the Sikhs sends Sohan Singh to negotiate peace with the Muslims, but the Muslims kill him and throw his body near the lane of the gurdwara as their reply to the peace proposal. The text of

Tamas describes the tragedy of the death of the peacemaker Sohan Singh in the next para, as:

*‘Two dead bodies had no claimants. One of these was of Nihang, who even under the hail of bullets stood on duty on the roof, with his moustaches twirled and his chest sticking out. The other one was that of Sohan Singh, who had come all the way from the city to prevent the riot from breaking out. His dead body was found lying at the end of the lane near the gurdwara. On the second day of the battle he had been sent with a proposal for the cessation of hostilities’ to Ghulam Rasul’s house. His dead body was the adversary answer to that proposal. His dead body would have continued to lie near the wall where he had been killed, had it not been picked up late in the night by some Muslims and left the gurdwara to inform the Sikhs about the fate of their peace proposal’.*³⁶

The sorrowful thing is that the person who comes from outside and tries to save the village from violence. No one listens his words. This is nothing but sectarian madness of the Sikhs and Muslims. The second thing is that when the person who tries to save the peace of the village with a proposal for the cessation of hostilities and gets killed by the Muslims that time not a single Sikh came forward to claim his dead body. This is inhuman behavior which makes us feel more tragic. Communal violence has taken the life of peacemaker, that is true tragedy.

3.11. Deaths in ‘Tamas’:

The clashes between the Hindus and the Muslims in Sayadpur resulted in the loss of many lives on both sides. The religious fanaticism blinded the reasoning capacity of mass people. It made them victims of emotion and converted them into blood thirsty hounds. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh observe:

*‘Of course some of the 1946-1947 violence was retributive, motivated by atrocity tales and the arrival at railway stations of train loads of corpses. Individual rioters may also have been motivated by lust for loot or women, but they were operating in an environment in which such violence was socially sanctioned’.*³⁷

That the Turks consider the attack on the Sikhs as an attack on the fortress of their age old enemy. The Sikhs too consider the Turks as the bygone medieval times whom Khalsa used to confront in battle. The Sikhs suffer a heavy casualty

owing to the exhaustion of their ammunition. Finally bitter fight took place. It went on for two days and two nights. Then the ammunition was exhausted and it became impossible to go on. In gurdwara the seven dead bodies covered with white sheets of cloth lay in a row. Five women sat with the heads of their husbands in their laps. For some time they would leave, when repeatedly persuaded to do so, but again, Sardar Teja Singh had only to turn his back that they would come back. Two dead bodies have no claimants.

Sohan Singh, whose dead body was found lying at the end of the lane near the gurdwara. This war brought unforgettable human tragedy quite a few dead bodies lay scattered here and there in the village. Mai Bhagan's dead body was found lying in the inner yard of her own house, and her house ruined. Saudagar Singh was another old man lay dead whose body due to sight was not carried out to the gurdwara. There were some more dead bodies. These were not only of the Sikhs but also of Muslims. That one dead body lay face downward near a well. The man had been killed who was the water carrier. He was poor Allah Rakha, who had been sent to fetch water. Another dead body was of a Sardar who had come from the city. Two small children, who were working as shop-boys in the baker's shop were also found dead.

Houses of the Sikhs` and the Muslims` had been set on fire. The flames of fire still raised the building of the Khalsa School. All the houses belonging to the Sikhs on the slope had been gutted. Besides, all the three shops of the butchers, and the houses of three or four Muslims` in the Teli Mohalla had been set on fire.

The horror of sectarian violence in the village Sayadpur highlighted the pre - partition madness. The communal divide resulted in to the innocent bloodshed of the common folk. The true human tragedy is this which touches to the heart.

The Mass Suicide of the Sikh women:

The test of fifth objective of our research work. 'To find out human tragedy in selected Indian Partition novel in English' is the fifth objective of our research work. The present novel 'Tamas' is one of the most important partition novel. It describes the human tragedy of partition riots. The description of the Sikh-Muslim war in Sayedpur village is one human tragedy in the novel. This war forced the

brave Sikh women for mass suicide. On the second day of the battle when the Muslim murderers overpowered them in the gurdwara the Sikh women jumped into a well nearby and killed themselves to avoid humiliation and dishonor in the hands of the Muslims. That is the tragedy on the name of humanity only because of sectarian madness. This tragedy has been described in the novel 'Tamas' in the following Para:

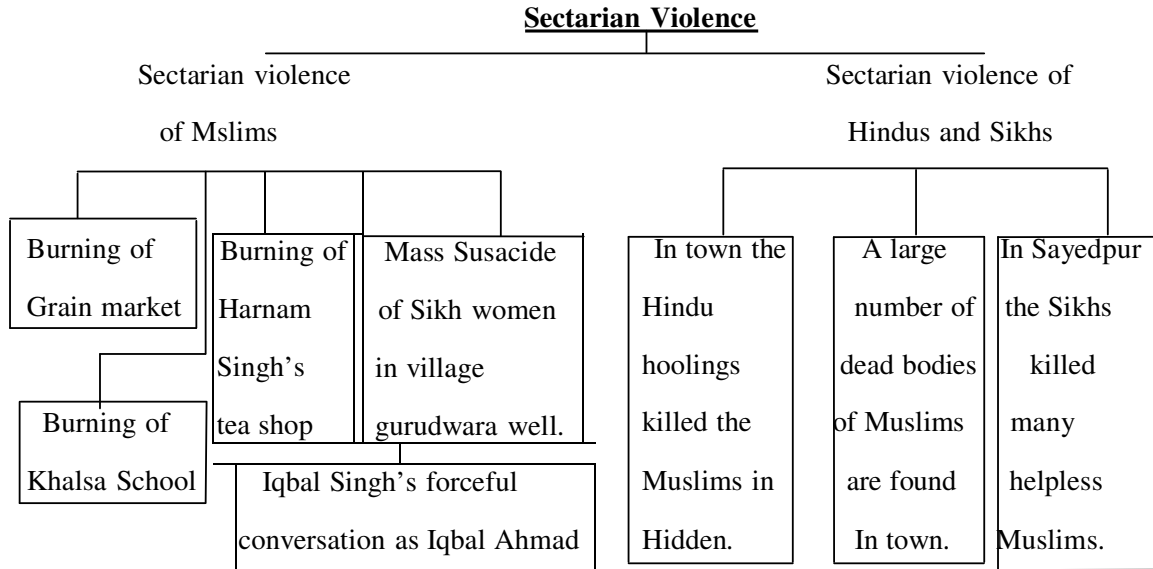
'Jasbir Kaur was the first one to jump into the well. She raised no slogan, nor did she call anyone's name she only uttered Wahe Guru and took the jump. After her one by one, many women climbed up to the low wall of the well. Hari Singh's wife climbed up stood there for a moment, then pulled up her four year old son on to the wall and holding him by the hand, jumped too. Deva Singh's wife held the breast fed child in her arms when she took the plunge. Prem Singh's wife jumped down, but her son was left standing on the wall. The child was pushed into the wall by Gyan Singh's wife, and thus sent back into the arms of his mother. Within a matter of minutes tens of women had gone into their watery grave, some of them along with their children'.³⁸

This mass suicide of the Sikh women in gurdwara in the well proves that they were the victims of the sectarian violence. The suicide of women accompanied with innocent children, who did not know for what they were jumping in well. There in Sayedpur Jasbir and all other women were helpless, they wanted to save their womenly honor. They had not any other alternative. So they found a watery grave by jumping in well. It was the pious, but helpless women's tragedy which touches to human heart. Jasbir and her other companion women of Sayedpur who were ready to die for their faith. All of them jumped into the well to save their honor. In Tamas Bhisham Sahni gave very pious treatment to women. But his pious treatment brings the tears of human tragedy in the eyes of the readers. The death of innocent and helpless women was really one sorrowful event in sectarian violence of the riots of the partition of 1947.

The Dance of Death in Tamas can be represented in the diagram for better understanding in the following way.

Figure No. 3.1

The Dance of Death in ‘Tamas’



3.12. Tragic Stories of Refugees:

After the riots the National Congress set up the Relief Committee Office. It was to collect statistical information about the number of persons dead, wounded and the quantum of loss of property and goods from each and every refugee. A large number of affected persons were visiting to the office to statistic Babu. Bhisham Sahani observes in Tamas as:

*‘The functionary of the relief committee (or the statistics Babu’ as he was called) with the register lying open before him, would get impatient with refugees’.*³⁹

Every refugee begins to unwind the tale of their woes so that their miseries unload from their heart. Their plight is sympathetic. The sectarian violence had made them homeless, broken and helpless.

3.13. The Test of the Third Objective of the Research:

‘To study an impact of human tragedy of the dance of death in form of sectarian violence on the psychology of the common folk’ is the third objective of our research. The refugees the sad tells of friends turning enemies because of hatred,

which has been taken place because of the riots. Kartar Singh tells the Babu how his own friend and playmate Imdad Khan has hit him with his sickle on his forehead and tore one of his eyes. To turn own friends as enemies is the human heart breaking tragedy. Several refugees are found sitting outside of the office. Natha Singh says that he does not want to go to Sayedpur in the bus because the Muslims there will circumcise him. The questions and answers between Natha Singh and other refugees are there. 'Tamas' describes it as:

'But why won't you go? 'There they will circumcise me? And he began laughing as he folded his legs even more tightly and shook his head. All the Sardars burst out laughing'.⁴⁰

The refugees move about like puppets without knowing what kind of future waits them. Their endless tale of suffering will penetrate even rocky hearts. There is the true human tragedy.

The statistic Babu notices a Brahmin Pundit and his wife sitting outside the room of the school peon. They look sad. Their tragedy was that a Tonga driver of Nurpur village has kidnapped their daughter Prkasho. Now they were being the Babu to recover their daughter. Babu tells them that they can go in the bus to Nurapu the day after. But the couple says that let their daughter be where she is. They do not want to have her back with them for she will have become polluted in the Muslim's house by being forced to eat meat which is prohibited for them.

In this way the pathetic stories heard at the Refugee Relief Camp. The statistic Babu has heard a heart breaking experience of refugee as they pour their tales of deprivation betrayal, loss, humiliation and destitution some of them have become physic wrecks. Some do not want to return to their own villages for fear of being converted in the other faith. This is the effect of the riots of partition on the human psychology and human heart. The common man had been torn out by the dance of death. Every individual was mentally disturbed. The whole Indian community was disturbed. Man was fearing to man. The actual correct number of casualties is never known to anyone. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh observe:

'The exact number of those killed in partition violence will never be known. Monsoon floods, mass disposal of bodies and administrative collapse meant that many corpses were never fully recovered, or enumerated'.⁴¹

3.14. Conclusion:

In conclusion it is easy to make a statement that the novel 'Tamas' is a human tragedy as consequence of sectarian violence. On the eve of partition the death danced freely. The whole novel is based on the writers own experiences.

Bhisham Sahni was working in Congress Relief Committee Office. It was set for the rehabilitation of the refugees. His personal experiences and the stories of the refugees that he had heard in the 'Refugee Relief Camp' have helped him to paint human tragedy. Actually 'Tamas' is a novel which touches to our one kind of communal mentality. The human tragedy in 'Tamas' lies in his experiences of death of hundreds of thousands of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs who were slain in the midst of sectarian violence. 15 million common people displaced into refugee state. By all the sides namely by the side of the Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs the physical, emotional, and sexual sectarian violence aroused in the riots and brought human tragedy.
