



*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. VII, Issue No. XIV,
April-2014, ISSN 2230-7540*

**SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL INDIA IN
THE NOVELS OF ROHINTON MISTRY**

AN
INTERNATIONALLY
INDEXED PEER
REVIEWED &
REFEREED JOURNAL

Social, Cultural and Political India in the Novels of Rohinton Mistry

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Abstract – Rohinton Mistry's works seeks to evolve a vision that involves both the community-centred existence of the Parsis and their involvement with the wider national framework. This paper mainly focuses about social, cultural and political facts in the novels of Rohinton mistry in India. His novels are concerned with the experience of the Parsi in India.

Keywords: Community, Novel, Social, Cultural, Political, Story

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INTRODUCTION

Rohinton Mistry is the only Indian writer in English who has the privilege of his all novels short listed for 'The Man Booker Prize'. Rohinton was born and brought up in India and he belongs to the Parsi community. Rohinton Mistry migrated to Canada in 1975.

Rohinton Mistry embarked his journey as a writer with short stories which brought him two Hart House literary Prizes. Later on, his 11 short stories were published under the title Swimming Lessons and Other Stories from Firoza Baag (1987). His second novel, Such a Long Journey, was published in 1991. It won the Governor General's Award, the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for Best Book, and the W.H. Smith/Books in Canada First Novel Award. It was also shortlisted for the renowned Booker Prize and for Trillium Award. His third novel, A Fine Balance, published in 1995, won the second Annual Giller Prize in 1995 and in 1996, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction. Selected for Oprah's Book Club it won the 1996 Commonwealth Writers Prize and was shortlisted for the 1996 Booker Prize.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Rohinton Mistry depicts the Indian socio-economic and political life as well as Parsi Zoroastrian life, customs beliefs and religion. His character develops gradually from particular to general, depicting their idiosyncrasies, follies and foibles, from individual to family and gradually widening into the social, cultural and political world. His novels have a leisurely pace without ever losing the reader's interest and attention. The characters change and develop subtly and totally engrossed the reader.

Mistry's characters and background revolve round the multistory of Mumbai. His stories mostly concerned themselves with the tribulations and the idiosyncrasy of Bombay Parsis. In his book Tales from Firog Baag, a collection of short stories, he describes the daily life of Parsi residents in an apartment in Bombay. Mistry explores the relationship of Parsis in their community, their cultural identity and uniqueness of their living. Simultaneously he throws light as well as embraces the attempt to reconcile or unite different or opposing principles, practices, or parties of dispersed Parsi experience. Rohinton Mistry is a member of the Zoroastrian Parsi community whose ancestors were exiled by the Islamic rulers from Northeastern Iran. Rohinton frequently uses Parsi culture, Parsi names, Parsi Characters and Parsi language in his novels.

Rao (Chapple & Tucker, 2000) [1] ends his treatise on Hindu ecology and the Five Great Elements of space, air, fire, water, and earth by saying that "we must retrace our steps, decentralize and develop small-scale industries, as well as nonpolluting technologies, such as solar energy, nuclear fusion, wind power, wave power, and geothermal energy. The sources of these powers are the five great elements; and they are beneficial and benevolent". This view justifies modern technology by taking a broader view of how these technologies are related to natural powers and makes holistic Hindu religious beliefs quite akin to ecological ones. Historical facts are much needed to understand Mistry's A Fine Balance. In the novel, we find the Hindu Muslim conflict taking unimaginable proportions. Indira Gandhi also increased the use of military force in the nation and she fostered a culture of nepotism (Campu) [3].

MAIN PREMISES IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S NOVELS:

Rohinton's novels focus on themes relating to age difference between life-partners (married couples), domestic violence, women exploitation, superstitions, political influence in social life of people especially that which affect Parsi community, sex crimes, parental influence on child's love relationship and married life. Through his novel *Such a Long Journey*, Mistry criticizes Jawaharlal Nehru's temperament, his alleged political deceitfulness, his influence on his daughter Indira that, according to some people, spoiled her marriage life and her relationship with her husband Feroze Gandhi, who was a Parsi.

Again a story of spoiled filial relationship dealt with in the short story "The Exercisers" from the collection entitled 'Tales From Firoz Baag' where a begrudged mother, Mrs. Bulsara, destroys and ruins the nascent love between her son Jehangir and his girlfriend Behroze. She fulfilled her treacherous motive through emotional blackmailing, bickering and by hiring services of a guru to persuade Jehangir that Behroze is trying to snare him through seduction and will ruin his life.

CONCLUSION:

Rohinton Mistry has not just written about India, but at the same time he has also revised and recalled the memories of his Parsi community also, as most of the characters of his novels are Parsi by religion. In all his novels the Parsi community is also shown as an outsider. Rohinton Mistry has very keenly dealt with Indian culture and his own parsis culture in India.

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