



*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. VIII, Issue No. XVI,
Oct-2014, ISSN 2230-7540*

**ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN ROHINTON
MISTRY'S A FINE BALANCE**

AN
INTERNATIONALLY
INDEXED PEER
REVIEWED &
REFEREED JOURNAL

Analysis of Social Issues in Rohinton Mistry's a Fine Balance

Anu Shruti

Research Scholar

Abstract – This paper is intended to work on the social, political and cultural issues in the Fiction of Rohinton Mistry. India is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country, and it is one of the main strains of post colonialist that transcription work should be carried on for the sake of literary development, national incorporation and international co-operation.

Keywords: Social, Cultural, Political, Novel

-----X-----

INTRODUCTION

Rohinton Mistry is an Indian born Canadian author who is famous for his short stories and novels. Born in a Parsee community, his writings are heavily influenced by his religious, social and cultural views. Even though he is settled in Canada, it is his upbringing in Mumbai that reflects in all his writings. The distinct Mumbai culture, particularly the Parsee way of life, the people of the city and even the politics of India are major themes in his novels. His novels, such as 'Family Matters', 'A Fine Balance' and 'Such a Long Journey', were shortlisted for the prestigious Booker Prize. His novels and short stories have been widely appreciated and were also bestowed with numerous awards and recognition. For instance, he has received the Annual Contributors' Prize from the Canadian Fiction Magazine, the Common Wealth Writers Prize for his novel 'Such a Long Journey', and the Giller Prize for his work 'A Fine Balance'. Mistry is the elder brother of Cyrus, a writer and playwright.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A Fine Balance is the second novel by Rohinton Mistry. Set in Bombay, India between 1975 and 1984 during the turmoil of The Emergency, a period of expanded government power and crackdowns on civil liberties, the book concerns four characters from varied backgrounds – Dina Dalal, Ishvar Darji, his nephew Omprakash Darji and the young student Maneck Kohlah – who come together and develop a bond.

A Fine Balance, published in 1995 is a story about a widow Dinabhai who manages her livelihood by sewing garments and letting of a room in her apartment. The other characters of the novels are her husband Late Rustumji, her mother Mrs. Shroff, her

brother Nuswaan, the priest Dustoor Framji and her tenants Ishvar, Omprakash and Maneck Kohlah. Dina is a shrewd lady in contrast to her brother Nuswaan, who is ambitionless and jealous of his sister. He hates his sister because she is beautiful and sexually attractive. He punishes her by pinching her nipples and threatens her to cut off her tongue as well as breast when she teases him. He observed her secretly after bath when she stands naked before the mirror. Political misjudgment of the people resulted in Mrs. Indira Gandhi calling for general elections in the year 1977. She was defeated. Again in 1984, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was elected back to Prime Ministership and during this tenure; she was assassinated by her own Sikh bodyguards who revenged her for her grotesque military attack on the Sikh Holy Shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar that killed more than 400 Sikhs. Besides the abusive measures during the Emergency, Mrs. Indira Gandhi also increased the use of military force in the nation and she fostered a culture of nepotism (Campu) [3]. These historical facts are much needed to understand Mistry's A Fine Balance. In the novel, we find the Hindu Muslim conflict taking unimaginable proportions. "Communal slaughter at the brand new border ignited riots everywhere, and sporting a fez in a Hindu neighborhood was as fatal as possessing a foreskin in a Muslim one. In certain areas it was wiser to go bareheaded, for choosing incorrectly among the fez, white cap and turban could mean losing one's head."

SOCIAL ISSUES IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S A FINE BALANCE:

A Fine Balance depicts the struggle of the four main protagonists beyond the plethora of numerous other socio-economically challenged characters. The fate of the marginalized and the evicted who find themselves at the mercy of the Brahminical and

pseudo-secular elites shaping India is explored through the traumatic experience of the chamaars - turned-tailors, Ishvar and Omprakash. Dukhi, the father of Ishvar and Narayan sends them to be apprenticed as tailors under his friend, Ashraf -a Muslim tailor. Dukhi's daring to divert his sons to a different job becomes the talk of the town and he in turn earns the wrath of the so called chaste Hindus, "indeed was courageous, considering that the prime of his own life has been spent in obedient compliance with the traditions of caste system. Like his forefathers before him, he had accepted from childhood.

The occupation preordained for his present incarnation."(Mistry) [1]. Through the healthy relationship between Dukhi and Ashraf and the unhealthy bondage between the subaltern chamaars represented by Dukhi and the high caste chaste Hindu, Thakur Dharamsi, Mistry drives home the fact that "ideal human relationship should be above all the concept of caste, creed and colour. " (Kumar) [2] When Narayan returned to the village to cast his vote, Thakur Dharamsi, the Zamindar felt infuriated. Thakur's men beat Narayan and his friends to death and in due course the entire family was burnt alive. The subalterns succumb to the arrogance of Thakur Dharamsi who strongly believed that crossing the line of caste was a serious offence and that such people should be stringently punished. Even police donot file an F.I.R calling Ishvar and Om, filthy achhoot castes. (Kaushlesh Biyani) [4].

CONCLUSION:

In this paper we found that Mistry has always been appreciated for his ability to paint all his characters with the colors of joy and sorrows. Mistry has chosen Bombay as a background for all his novels and short stories. Mistry has described India and its social, political and cultural life in his novel. The fiction is the best genre to present society and the aspects and issues in society. Rohinton Mistry has very keenly dealt with Indian culture and his own parsi culture in India.

REFERENCES:

1. A Fine Balance'. By Rohinton Mistry
2. Reenu Kumar "Depiction of Social, Cultural and Political India in the Novels of Rohinton Mistry" Volume 12 : 2 February 2012 ISSN 1930-2940
3. Adina Campu. (2009) History as a marker of otherness in Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance, Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov Vol 2 (51) Series IV Philology and Cultural Studies, (pp 47-54)
4. Kaushlesh Biyani. A Fine Balance, A Fine Balance ANS - 372. (pp 1-9)
5. https://archive.org/stream/4.SocialAndPoliticalIssues/4.%20Social%20and%20political%20issues_djvu.txt