



THEME OF NATIONALISM IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S FICTION

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ABSTRACT

Nationalism is the kind of particular state. It has become an effective term in the context of politics of human relationship. The novel, *Such a Long Journey* is reflected the real events or situation when the war was over between Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1970s. It is nothing but the recreation of actual events of that time which were undergo of ordinary citizen. So, it can be in form of expression through narratives are presenting in the novel both political and individual ethics and it can be also the real moral responsibilities of Mistry. It is nothing but the historical notes of actual political events.

Introduction

The term nationalism can be traced as byproduct of colonialism. It is terms as a postcolonial phenomenon, nation and nationhood which are highly ambivalent and ambiguous in the context of globalization and imagination. The nationalism, transnational's and transmigration these ideas are inevitably linked to geopolitical entities like nation states and nationhood. The formations of nation and subsequent reformations have undermined the nations of stability and fixity.

There was a turning point in the lives of Parsi at the time of colonization of India by British Raj. Many of them associated themselves with the British Raj as well as western Language. And their way of life mode is imprints on the Parsi. So, the identification of Parsi with the colonial ruling class has been well documented by historians and sociologists. The Parsi believed that this acceptance would one day make them "Englishmen". So, such psychological affinity can be traced to both the humiliation and agony of being treated as outsiders during the Hindu and Muslim regimes. And the desire to accept as a part of westernized community who were the ruling power. Many of them were sensitive to the pitfalls of over identification to the westerners and retained strong spirit nationalism. So, it is an evident in Parsi as Dadabhai Nauroji and Pherozshah Mehta. They are spearheaded the Nationalist Movement.

The immigrant writers of Indian origin in Canada, they presented their individual experience in their fiction. Most of the Indian Diaspora writers they have been very intimate with their fictional works because, they thought that literature is only way to presents the reality or experience where they have taken themselves in their life. Most of the time, characters are in the fiction that can represented their personality through such characters, the attitude of writers can be existed. So, as such, Bharati Mukherjee, and Nazneen Sadiq have concentrated the changes in the attitudes and sensibility of the fictional characters.

The Nationalism in Mistry's fiction: The term, nationalism is taking to understand better in Rohinton Mistry's Fiction. We have to take a glimpse of the historical and political transformations taking places in the then Bombay and across the nation of India during 1970's, 1980,s and 1990's. It must be clearly understood that the Mistry's work is informed by deepening anxiety over these socio-political transformations and diaspora subject, outside of definitions of national identity. National historical aspects are especially concerned to the lives of Parsi community in pre-and post-independence India. It can be more appropriate to understand the



characters in the story, "One Sunday" from collection. So the national political aspects are integrates into the main plot of his narrative. Mistry has recreated the national political aspects through his fictional works. It has implicated or reflected by Mistry's point of in the form narration. So, the narrators in the fiction are the personalities, they were presented of that time. It is the central theme of Mistry's fiction.

The novel, *Such a Long Journey* is reflected the real events or situation when the war was over between Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1970s. It is nothing but the recreation of actual events of that time which were undergo of ordinary citizen. So, it can be in form of expression through narratives are presenting in the novel both political and individual ethics and it can be also the real moral responsibilities of Mistry. It is nothing but the historical notes of actual political events.

The dilemma of the characters in fiction also can be the parallel of real life of writers of that time. Rohinton Mistry is one of them. He has tried to represents or recreated social, political aspects. The writers of Indian origin in Canada have projected the real dilemma, Indian immigrant's experience in Canada. Mistry also cleared through his works that the immigrant. Writers are very emotional with their works because in that works they represented their feeling or experience in Canada. His first novel, *Such a Long Journey* is very intimate with the Parsi community. Mistry is belongs to Parsi community due to he tried to represents the emotional life of and personal relationships of the Parsi as an important group of wider human experience. It is real an important issue to discuss at the international level. So, Mistry is a very dashing personality about creative writing especially for experiences in Canada as immigrant characters.

Immigrants are faces different problems on the bases of different cultures for both generation. The first is related to the homeland and the second generation forming an image of culture. It is based on the information transmitted by the information transmitted by the first generation. SunitaAgrawal's research paper deals with such generational differences in diaspora culture. JhumpaLahiri has delineated the poetics of exile very successfully. The exile has dealt with two centers. These two centers are external colonial or modernist and the internal or national filtering into a personal identity. Sok, the chief features of the poetics of the exile is the trial. It deals with as these centers are sometimes rejecting and accepting them. Lahiri has described the struggle of immigrants for their own identity in the host country. The immigrants are giving up the rigid hold of their past and alternate behaviour in the process of alternation in need of situation. Their new place and in interaction with the representative culture that can be modes of thinking of the diaspora also changed and they also intervene in the cultural discourse of the dominant culture.

Rohinton Mistry is a Parsi Gujarati of Indian origin. He migrated to Canada at the age of twenty three. But he returned to India through themes and subject matter in all his works. Mistry's life and writing not only challenge all attempts to categorize but also highlight the futility categorizes. He has been written four novels and a short - stories collection known as *Tales from Firozsha Baag* etc. *Such a long Journey* is one of the four main novels of Mistry. It is about the life and career of the migrant writer belonging to a people who had wandered a long way a long time ago. Mistry's concept of Nationalism is characterized as fragmentation and dissolution. He is acutely conscious of the breaking of walls. There was a fence in a Parsis community from the outside world or political boundaries. It has been drawn between India and Pakistan or India or China. So, the nationalisms are redrawn as is evident in the partition of India and Later the partition of Pakistan into another nation as Bangladesh.

A reading of Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* is a Parsis vision of Indian nationalism. It becomes all the more interesting and significant against this background. The novel is not only a fiction of about the life of Parsis in India but also all the major characters Gustad Noble, and his family Dinshwaji and Major Jimmy Billimoria are Parsis. The Parsis Community is created in the perception of writer as a marginal group. It is design within the Indian mindset significantly the novel sets two spatial scales in the first few lines of the novel, as follows.



Gustad's bitterness and cynicism of political scenario run parallel to the personal losses. He suffers in his works. Mistry sees the economic deprivation through the eyes of Gustad. The personal suffering that his community had to undergo in the 1970. The nationalization of banks by Indira Gandhi was received with open hands by the nation. It had tremendous impact on the Parsis community. It is prior to nationalization. They had been the masters of the banking sector, Gustad's works as an assistant in a bank. Nationalization had been the death blow to the Parsis way of life. So, the nationalization had deprived them of their means of livelihood. Dinshwaji put it as follows.

Mistry does not reduce the novel to an expression of a collective experience. It is haunted by feelings of discrimination alone. Mistry draws a coherent picture of the Parsis community through various characters. He seems more concerned with the concept of nationhood and nationality. Gustad's experience throws into relief the rotten state of affairs in Indian, Politics, Society and economy. Nationalism identified the boundaries that demarcate India from Pakistan or China or Bangladesh.

The bloodshed and violence are portrayed in the name of nationalism. It comes under surveillance ultimately one is left with feeling as Mistry's immigrant positioning. He enables him to problematize the concepts of nationhood and nationality in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*. It is not only an immigrant's memoir of the land left behind or a historical record of post-independence India starting from the Indo-China war to the Bangladesh war. It is a journey that tries to come to terms with the notion of nationality and nationhood.

The Parsis were particularly disturbed by increasing radicalism of the national movement strongly influenced by the neo-Hindu renaissance. They felt that they had very limited access to the socio-religious nationalism of congress movement under Tilak and Gandhi. These fears encouraged the Parsis to oppose even the concept of the home rule in India. Parsi was who became especially active in the national movement, where opposed by the majority of the community as traitors to the British and, consequently, to their own community. Mistry's novel, *Such a Long Journey* manages brilliantly to portrayed Indian culture and Parsi family life setting it against the backdrop of India's unstable post-colonial politics. The action takes place in 1971 in Bombay at the moment when war breaks out between India and Pakistan. In this depiction of the political backdrop of troubled of life of Gustad Noble is played out.

Mistry shows India, bursting with corruption as an embedded part of life at all levels. He describe how "from the very top, whence all power flowed, their also dripped pus of putrefaction, inflicting every stratum of society below." (212-13) Mistry makes us recall how goods donated to support the war effort used to turn up for sale at the chor Bazar. He is also very much critical of Indhira Gandhi's handling of Bangladesh war. Against the backdrop of the case of a real life State Bank Cashier Sa hrahNagarwala, the parsi agent from RAW, who was close to Indhira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, portrayed by the character of mojarBillimoria, Gustad Noble and his family live out their life in Bombay. Nagarwalla was involved in a 60 lakhs scam that had rocked the Indhira Gandhi Government at that time in 1971 and later was arrested and died a mysterious death even before he could be brought for trial. Through this real life etching Mistry tried to show the slow erosion of the Nehruvian idealism and the beginning of corruption at the highest level, power politics, the Hindu Muslim riots other vices in the Post colonial India. He blamed Indhira Gandhi for all these things. Mistry, here, is definitely following the rhythm of Post-colonial discourse and is celebrating the Parsi Idiom.

Gustad breaks down saying: "I don't understand this world anymore... what a world of wickedness it has become" (142) the drappled experiences of life help Gustad to come to a conclusion like, 'Luck is the spite of the Gods and Godness' (338). Contrary to Mistry's depiction of the hurried and grotesque India there is the portrayal of a glorious past that is lost. To describe a nationalism and generosity of the past Gustad says, Men tore Shirts and jackets of their backs, yanked shoes of their feet, belt of their waists, and flung them into the Lorries. What a time it was, and it brought tears of joy and pride into the eyes of everyone to see such



solidarity, such generosity.”(10) This indeed is a Parsi interpretation of the past, the colonial period and the present, the decolonized India.

We have seen the social and political scenario in Bombay, India in the IV chapter of this thesis. Rohinton Mistry being a Parsi, in his fear and insecurity about his community reveals almost a distorted and angular vision of his birth land yet his sensitivity of the Impending dangers to his community, expressed by his character’s consciousness of these changes, is definitely understandable.

The long wall of Gustad Noble’s house, The Khodada Building in the city is symbolical and signifies a partition between the two worlds- inside the Parsi world of Gustad and outside the contemporary Indian reality with its corruption hypocrisy fifth and urination “the flies, the mosquitoes, the horrible stink, with bloody shameless people, squatting alongside the wall. Late at night it became like a wholesale public latrine” (16) –the two worlds which are separate and cannot meet, as the blackout paper on the windows too denote the separation of the Parsi world. The Parsi sense of estrangement in post-colonial India is very much obvious here.

Conclusion: The theme of nationalism is recurrent in Rohinton Mistry’s fiction. The historical and political transformations is taking places in taking in the novel as in the Bombay and across the nation during 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Mistry’s work is informed by depending anxiety over these socio – political transformations and diasporic subject, outside of definitions of national identity. Although, the aspects of national history, especially as it related to the fate of the parsi in pre and post – independence India, are implicit relevance to an understanding of the characters of “One Sunday” in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* it is only with his first novel, *Such a Long Journey* that he four grounds aspects national politics and integrates them into the main plot of his narrative with *A Fine Balance* he reproduces his concerns about the imbrications of national politics and the fate of the individual. However, in *Family Matters*, because of the more intimate nature of his fictional terrain, state politics through present affect the main narrative only towards the end.

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