

Socio –Political Concept In Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance***JOSEPH MAYAKUNTALA**

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Abstract

'Holding this book in your hand, sinking back in your soft arm-chair, you will say to yourself: perhaps it will amuse me and after you have read this story of great misfortunes, you will no doubt dine well, blaming the author for your own insensitivity, accusing him of wild exagger-tragedy is not a fiction all is true'.

Honor's de Balzac, le p'ere Goriot Rohinton Mistry is an important figure in contemporary common wealth literature and he occupies a significant position among the writers of Indian diaspora. Mistry like Rushdie and many other Indian English writer is an "émigré" who left India in 1970's to live in Canada. He is the best-known indo-Canadian novelist, his novels namely such a long journey, a fine balance and family matter have been best sellers and received international awards. Mistry belongs to the burgeoning crop of Indian novelist writing in English to place him rightly among the great Indian English writers in the words of the santwana haldar. "A glowing star in the galaxy that contains luminaries such as vs. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth and Bharati Mukherjee to mention a few Rohinton Mistry has drawn the attention of the world as an absorbing writer of human experience." (Santwana, 2006:7)

Rohinton Mistry the socio-political novelist, has emerged as a formidable writer on the literary scene. His novels are closely linked with the social and political background of our country. The relationship between literature and life seems the object of increased attention in his writings he is deeply concerned with Indian history, like Nayantara Sahgal, Salman Rushdie, Kushwant Singh and Shashi Tharoor, he is deeply involved with Indian history. Mistry combines known facts from history with the stories of peoples and community's lives. Fact and fiction come together in his writings the type of episodes that we come across in Mistry's novels are certainly observed day to day social and political issues in Indian for instance corruption, politically motivated schemes political decisions, common man's sufferings caste-problem dominance occupy considerable space in his novels.

Keywords: Social, political, internal emergency, atrocities, caste system.

Introduction:

Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* have helped him in earning a distinct place in the annals of the post. Independence Indian English novel. *A Fine Balance* is an ambitious book. It is skillfully structured with the multiple strands of its complex plot the design of the novels is quite simple. It covers the periods between 1975 and 1984 within its 614 pages lies and account of social and political development of a country. This paper tries to highlight and address all the social and political issues of Indian during emergency. The criminalization of politics during the emergency (1975-77) the autocratic rule of Indira Gandhi and the end of the Nehruvian era is Mistry's chief area of interest and the novel offers a faithful records of the shameful episode in Indian history Mistry is also well versed with all the undercurrents of the Indian politics. The depiction of Indira Gandhi political schemes corruption and the sufferings of the common man is dominant in the novel. The real situation of the Indian political system beneath the high-sounding democracy and federalism

is laid bare. Mistry deals with the social and political situation of the India during his stay in Bombay to put the words of vibhuti wadhawan.

A Fine Balance is an attempt to recreate Mumbai during the emergency when suspension of political rights police brutality eviction of slum dwellers and the infamous sterilization campaign left its mark on the psyche of the Indian people”.(2014: 32)

Mistry attempts to show the vulnerability of the average man's life. The forced labor camps and compulsory acts of sterilization show the sufferings of common man. The novel also unfolds show political changes mercilessly cut through the psycho social fabric of a country where justice is sold to the highest bidder. The novel makes a sharp indictment of the corrupt contemporary Indian society, blending it with a genuine sympathy for the poor and the under privileged.

Mistry portrays a galaxy of characters efficiently and elegantly by portraying a cross-section of Indian society especially who are called riff-raht, the writer draws the real picture of India through his four major protagonists, dinadalal Ishvar, Om Prakash and manic kohlah, Mistry presents the social conditions of people across India. Ishvar and his nephew Om are from the village. They are trying to improve their social position by changing themselves from chammars to tailors. Manic is from a hill station in the north Indian, he comes to the city for higher education so that he can lead a better life the pathetic story of Indians partition, where as Dina lives in the metropolis. Diana's story is one of struggle-struggles to safeguard her independence from her autocratic brother nusswam after the death of her husband. The novel revolves around these four major characters. Mistry succeeds in interweaving national history with the personal lives of the protagonists, in the words of John balls: “the way the intersection of the political and the personal is given such compelling mortal resonance” (1996:85).

Mistry uses imagination to connect the private lives with the outer reality the social and political world outside the individual private existence. The personal lives of Dina, Om, Ishvar and manic are intervened with the external; agencies and political changes. For forcibly taken to a family planning clinic and sterilized. Om in fact is castrated. Ishvar loses his legs due to infection. *A Fine Balance* ironically renders how the marginalized and the powerless are forced to maintain a precarious *A Fine Balance* between life and death in life existence while passing through the impossible ordeals of life. A long side the story of the tailors, the life of rural and urban outcasts is presented. The horrified conditions of the poor and the homeless as well as the beggars are presented in their true colors. Mistry's novels are an incredible achievement and to a large extent it tells some truths about India-truths that need to be told.

To talk about political issues of the novel, *A Fine Balance* is weighed down by the detail of the horrors of internal emergency. Mistry's felt handling of internal emergency during 1975-77 provides a vivid and graphic picture of the turbulent times when most of the parliamentary opposition, along with thousand of trade unionists, students and social workers were put behind the bars to enable Indira Gandhi to retain power. Mistry enables the readers to have an

inside view of the Indian politics where a struggle for power is on. It is a nation torn by internal dissensions. Here power hungry politicians control the strings of administration like puppeteer. Ishtar and Om are surprised to hear the arrest of Nawaz a tailor the impact of emergency is very clear in the word of the stall owner: “with the emergency ,Everything is upside-down, black can be made white, day turned into night with the right influence and a little cash sending people to jail is very easy. These even a new law called MISA to simplify the whole procedure” (Mistry, 1996:299).

The most brutal aspect of emergency was that anyone, young or old married or unmarried was compelled to undergo family planning operation. Ishvar and Om Prakash too becomes victims of emergency by vasectomization, the removal of Om’s testicles just before his wedding and the amputation of Ishtar’s legs.

Mistry has concentrated on the pessimist ion image of the mother India and mentions the atrocities committed on the untouchables during emergency. Buddha’s wife refused to go to the field with the zamindars son, so they shaved off her head and walked her naked through the square and Dukh is wife was raped in the Orchard. The children of the low caste were denied the right of education; Ishvar and Narayana were caned severely when they entered the classroom. When Narayan wanted to assert his right to vote he and his companions were hung naked by their ankles from the branches at a banyan tree and the tankers men:

Uncinated on the three inverted faces Baring coals were held to the three mens genitals then stuffed into their mouths. Their screams were heard through the village until their lips and tongues melted away(Mistry 1996:146)Every atrocity known to have been committed during the emergency occurs to Mistry’s characters and the novel become a templates for a stark and unsparing portraits of that time in India. Even after years Gandhi is dream about ‘Harijans’ remains a dream as one at the village says in the novels as: “Government passes new laws says no more untouchability yet everything is the same the upper caste bastards still treat us worse than animal (Mistry, 1996: 142).

Narayana points to the fact that as a chammars he cannot still drink water at the village well, worship in the temples of the upper castes or walk where he likes. Through this Mistry also chronicles the harassment of backward classes by the upper castes in the villages through the story at duchy the chammars. Even twenty years after independence, Untouchability is still rife in rural India. It is clearly articulated in the word at thank you.

Dharmasti: what the ages had put together, duchy had dares to break a sunder; he had turned cobblers into tailors, distorting society’s timeless balance. Crossing the line at caste had to be punished with the almost severity” (Mistry, 1966:147).

A Fine Balance can be read on several levels of inter-pretention. It is a novel about the oppressors and the oppressed about the colonizers and the colonized: It is about the caste system with its multifarious drawback, it is about the malfunctions of admiration and police functioning during the days of the emergency and its effects on all walks of life various episodes at the novels Mistry’s sympathy for the oppressed during the two period at internal emergency. Mistry’s stresses the fact that in post colonial India, the plight of common people

has not ameliorated and they have to face the same exploitation and injustice as in the rule of the novel says 'of course, for ordinary people nothing has changed' (Mistry, 1996; 158). Indian government has failed to resolve the basic problems of poverty hunger unemployment, untouchability and illiteracy.

Mistry loathes the congress party which has held power in India for forty nine years since independence. He sees the party as the purveyor of empty promises. It is very clear from prime ministers self justifying speech on the emergency, she says:

"There is nothing to worry about just because the emergency is declared It will make things better for ordinary people. Only the crooks the smugglers the black marketers need to worry I began introducing programmes of benefit for the common man and women". (Mistry, 1996: 337).

People lost interest in the prime ministers pontifical speech. The reality was contrary to her claims "for the masses it was a day at the circus" but the major characters in the novel doesn't realize this for Dina the much spoken of emergency is government problems-games played by people, in power. It does not affect ordinary people like as "(1996; 75). For the common man it is nothing but one more government tamasha." Very soon they are proved wrong as their simple dreams are thwarted by the blows at emergency. It is really a world at total anarchy: as Valmiki reiterates, "What are we to say madam what are we to think of the state of this nation? When the highest court in the land turns the prime ministers guilt into innocence (1996:689).

"The emergency unfolds the wretched condition at the poor and the middle class people tortured under the brutal forces of corrupt rule, but cities have different opinion on emergency. Mistry has not established *A Fine Balance* between the contingent Indian reality of Indira Gandhi emergency and India history rule. Mistry has deliberately ignored the role of leader like Morarji Desai and Jai Prakash Narayan who fought emergency heroically. Mistry has portrayed a bleak picture of the India in favor of the western readers. However the famous New Yorker paper such as the Spectator writes a rich. Human work undoubtedly one of the best novels about India in recent years: It is also a realistic novel according to Raymond Williams. It predominantly dramatizes the very ordinary day to day realities of Indian life. It describes the hopes and aspirations the pain and suffering of the average Indian".

Conclusion

A Fine Balance is not merely a political novel. Mistry succeeds in inter meaning national history with the personal lives at major protagonists. Mistry's perception at and reaction to the dark periods at Indian history are never clearly stated but are always implicitly connected. The novel opens with a train journey and concludes with epilogue:1984; It reveals betrayal and suppressed womanhood at Mrs. Dalal on one hand and on the other it reveals lost opportunities at the oppressed like Ishvar Om the monkey man the beggar master and many others. If the novel is about the emergency the epilogue is about the assassination at the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The poetize justice is done.

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