

Tribhuvan University

Sense of Dislocation in Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*

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by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, “Sense of Dislocation in Rohinton Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey*” is my own original work carried out as a Master’s Student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis paper.

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Letter of Approval

This research entitled “Sense of Dislocation in Rohinton Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey*”
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Abstract

The purpose of the present paper is to study Parsi culture and ethos in the light of diaspora in *Such a Long Journey*, first novel by Rohinton Mistry. A close reading of the novel reveals that the protagonist Gustad struggles hard to survive in the majority Hindu society being member of minority Parsi community. He lives in Khodadad building of Bombay with his wife Dilnavaz, two sons Sohrab and Darius and a daughter Roshan. He fails to fulfill his quite modest and ordinary dreams of successful life. His dreams slowly crumble and his hopes die a slow death as he has one frustrating experience after the other. He finds it hard to accept the fact that things are beyond his control. Life for him seems to be endless series of trials and tribulations.

This research paper is guided from post-colonial point of view in the light of diaspora. To prepare this research paper I use the theoretical perspective of Thomas Blom, Hasen Ashcroft, Vijaya Mishra and Robin Cohen. I use the term like dislocation and quest of identity under the perspective of Diaspora.

The present paper is an effort to study the condition of Parsi in contemporary Indian social and political environment. Mistry's graphic description presents a clear picture of insecurity and sense of displacement that is strongly felt by Parsi.

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Sense of Dislocation in Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*

The purpose of the present paper is to study Parsi culture ethos in the light of diaspora literature in *Such a Long Journey*, first novel by Rohinton Mistry. Being diaspora writer he deals with migrant experiences and his works depicts Parsi culture ethos, dilemma of migration and love for the home land and culture and quest for identity. Though it was published sixteen years after Mistry had settled in Toronto, Canada but it has no trace of Canada. Rather it reveals Mistry's deep concern for his Parsi community in India and the development of post-colonial India in general. To prove diasporic ethos in *Such a Long Journey*, I use the theoretical perspective of Thomas Blom, Hasen Ashcroft, Straut Hall, Chris Brooker, William Safran, Vijay Mishra and Robin Cohen. This research is guided from postcolonial point of view by focusing on issue of diaspora. Identity crisis, sense of marginalization, cultural assimilation, issue of minority and nostalgia are the key terms of this research.

The ambiguous and ambivalent lives are the consequence of identity crisis and conflict faced by the diasporic people. Many times when a person adopts a new world s/he is victim of that ignorance due to which s/he becomes a secondary creature in a foreign land. The same thing comes out in the cases of the Parsi and Parsi literature. Parsi people struggle to create their own space in the West as well as in India and the identical conflict of being a Parsi and the member of an exile community comes before their assimilation. As a consequence, they lose their aspirations, hopes and ambitions and become marginalized in India. The thriving popularity of the writings of the margin in diasporic literature emphasizes the fact that identity is the paramount search of an individual. Cultural situation of diaspora is not fixed so the diasporic people endeavor to locate and attach with the place more in which they are in exile. In the novel, *Such a Long Journey* we can see that Gustad feels nostalgic by remembering his past days in India.

Rohinton Mistry is considered to be one of the foremost authors of Indian heritage writing in English. Mistry belongs to the Parsi Zoroastrian religious minority. Mistry's first novel *Such a Long Journey* (1991) brought him national and international recognition. Mistry's subsequent novels have achieved the same level of recognition as his first. His second novel *A Fine Balance* (1995), concerns four people from Bombay who struggle with family and work against the backdrop of the political unrest in India during the mid-1970s. The book *Won Canada's Gillerprize*, the commonwealth writers award and the Los Angeles Times Book award.

Rohinton Mistry's work marks a new kind of writing, resulting from a fragmented, splintered world. As a diasporic Parsi writer very sensitively he has recalled his community's journey through time and history with a sense of loss and nostalgia. The position of Parsi in the postcolonial India gives way to a new kind of psychological and collective trauma, which Mistry figures through an oppositional mode of interrogation, irony, satire and symbolic imagery. In the text *Noble*, the central character remembers his past life in India and compares their recent condition in contemporary India.

Such a Long Journey is a novel which exposes the Parsi life in a narrow context and opens up to a whole question of minority life and its exigencies. This novel is not only the expression of the author's feeling and about his community but moreover it is an endeavor to regain and retrieve the loss of dignity and grace that the Parsis lost in this case.

Such a Long Journey is the novel written by Rohinton Mistry, a writer of Indian diaspora who settled in Canada. It is a unique attempt novel based on truth in Indian fiction in English. Mistry set this novel at a sensitive point in contemporary Indian history, when the Nehruian era had just ended after Nehru's sudden death and soon gave way to degenerate politics of opportunism, nepotism and violence.

The novel is told in twenty two chapters which further contain sub parts to them. The story is not narrated in linear way rather it moves backwards and forwards, with flashback memories going back into time and space.

Gustad Noble is a central character of this novel. He is portrayed as a self-made man who had to shoulder the hardship and humiliation to stand on his own feet after his father had been declared a bankrupt. Gustad suffers at the hands of self-centered politicians and callous officials. Being member of a minority Parsi community he has to ensure the survival of his family. His son Sohrab adds to his misery since he reveals against him and acts against his ambition of joining Indian Institute of Technology. Gustad once was the grandson of a prosperous and highly reputed furniture dealer and a son of famous book seller who meet to his doom because of bankruptcy by an irresponsible brother. Thus Gustad is reduced to poor and cramped existence in the Parsi community living in poor condition with his wife and three children with his dreams of bright future for Sohrab, his eldest son. He expects Sohrab to join Indian Institute of Technology and become successful engineer. But Sohrab refuses to join I.I.T. The refusal to join I.I.T. by Sohrab gives a great shock to Gustad and he experiences the shattering of his dreams which was cherished from the very childhood of his children.

Gustad's dreams and aspirations are shattered not only by his son but also by his friends, Jimmy Bilimoria. Jimmy disappears suddenly without telling a word to anybody. He was a friend, philosopher and guide to him but his disappearance hurts Gustad. It is Jimmy who provides the political context to the novel and through whom Gustad's Parsi world becomes involved with the wider Indian world. Gustad is also acquainted with Tehmul Langra, a lame, physically handicapped and mentally slow man who also lives in Khodadad building. His fall from a tree had injured his hip and also his head resulting in a severe damage. Other people do not like Tehmul but Gustad sympathize with him and helps him.

Later, Gustad comes to know that his friend Jimmy has gone to join RAW, a wing of Indian Intelligence Service. Thus the residents of Khodadad building are representatives of the middle class Parsis and they depict the angularities of declining Parsi community.

Critics on *Such a Long Journey*

Diasporic literature involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and recounts narratives of painful journey which is undertaken on account of economic, social and political compulsions by the diasporic community because of spatial or temporal dislocation. In this regard V.S. Naipaul remarks in *Finding the Centre* where he states that “a writer after a time carries the world with him, his own burden of experience, human experience and literary experience (one deepening the other) - that I would have found equivalent connections with my past wherever I had gone” (2).

In this sense, the situation of a writer necessitates a forging of ethnic identity and a sense of a self which in turn lend the diasporic writing its peculiar qualities of loss and nostalgia. Thus the diasporic writing has the quest for a buried cultural identity. It is the desire of decolonized communities for an identity, and naturally an authentic space for existence and positive re-assertion of their cultural mores.

Mistry's awareness of the ambivalence and instability of his cultural, geographical, and ideological location is evident in the way his text, especially in the novel *Such a Long Journey*. As Manjit Inder Singh says:

Mistry draws a human world of sounds and smells, locations and dislocations, colorful speech and cultural mores for reading as resistance in the post-colonial paradigm. Mistry's writing thus also becomes a kind of 'writing back' to a dominant community's culture and practices that necessitate a writer's

commitment and responsibility. Much in the postmodern vein, Mistry seeks to reinvent buried and alternate meanings hegemony by India's master-narratives, to impose a narrative mode of historical and political re-structuring of experience. (qtd. in Randhawa 215)

Rohinton Mistry is a writer of Indian diaspora. He left India in 1975 and does not often go back; even then he has beautifully portrayed the experience of immigration, the immense pain of not being with his own people. Even as a writer of diaspora, he has carved a niche for himself. About his diaspora status as Nilufer Bharucha says is:

As an Indian who now lives in and writes from Canada, Rohinton Mistry is a writer of the Indian diaspora. However Mistry is also a Parsi Zoroastrian and as a person whose ancestors were forced into exile by the Islamic conquest of Iran, he was in diaspora even in India. Like other Parsi writers, his writing is informed by this experience of double displacement. (Novels, qtd. in Dodiya 3)

Thus, Rohinton Mistry, a Parsi writer, was in diaspora in India as he is now in Canada. India is the adopted land for him and his community for protection because of the religious persecution of their community in Iran. India with its tremendous diversities figures a lot in his fiction. Having lived in Canada since 1975, Mistry preserves the memory of his early days in India alive. In an interview with Veena Gokhale, he tells her how he has kept the memory of India alive and vivid enough to work in the minute details that his novels contain in abundance:

In general, I don't think there is much one can do to keep memory alive, memory lives and dies on its own. Memory is a strange thing: when assumed to be dead, it can surprise one by returning to life. I am speaking of course, not of memory that is concerned with things like street, names, film songs, etc.

These things can be found in Maps and books. I refer to those moments which at the time of actual occurrence may have seemed banal, but which given the gift of remembrance become moments of revelation. My novels are not 'researched' in the formal sense of the word. Newspapers, Magazines, chats with visitors from India, chats with people on my infrequent visits to India- these are the things I rely on. Having said that I will add that, all these would be worthless without the two main ingredients: memory and imagination.

(Novels, qtd. in Dodiya 4)

Rohinton Mistry talks about his memory of past life. He exposes memory and imagination are the compulsory aspect of diasporic literature.

Such a Long Journey is a squarely diasporic discourse in which Mistry has openly tried to deconstruct and repossess his Indian past. Here in this novel there is greater engagement with India than there was in the Tales from *Firozshah Baag*. Here the Parsi world interacts at the highest level with the post-colonial Indian world. Mistry prefers to write about India, which engages his imagination Rohinton Mistry's work raises a whole lot of other question specifically related to the homeland and political memory. Neither nostalgia nor memory nor memory in itself can account for this rootedness and preoccupation with the homeland and the environment precincts of the city of birth. It is also not merely the fact of being more at home or having a more intimate relationship with space back there. It is more than these a projection of the individual character and a gesture of expanding the memory to include both the specific and the universal.

In Mistry's hand the form of the novel itself expands and it ends up making us realize of his journey filled with wonder at the beauty and spaciousness of this world. As history and politics from a major part of the theme of *Such a Long Journey* M Mari Meitei observes:

Rohinton Mistry's work raises a whole lot of other questions specifically related to the homeland and political memory. Neither nostalgia nor memory in itself can account for this rootedness and pre occupation with the homeland and the environment precincts of the city of the birth. It is also not merely the fact of being more at home or having a more intimate relationship with space back there. It is more than all these, a projection of the individual character a gesture of expanding the memory is to include both the specific and universal. (qtd. in Bharucha 11)

Diasporic literature is the collection of memory of past, the love for homeland and quest of identity. Theme of diasporic literature revolves around relation with place of origin and nostalgic feeling.

Though Mistry is highly imbued with an original writers imagination in the development of a flawless story in *Such a Long Journey* his awareness of the contemporary social and political situation of India particularly the period of the 1971 Indo Pak war is extremely exciting. As a realist "he wields the weapon of satire which makes him a ruthless artist a strong political satirist and a devout critic of the war. His attack on Nehru and Indira Gandhi is unprecedented". (Novels, qtd.in Dodiya 82)

Mistry has learnt about socio-political background of India during his story in Mumbai. His novels focus on current political issues. Rohinton Mistry is sensitive to the various anxieties felt by his own Parsi community. He represents his community and also to the country in general through different narratives of his characters who invariably express their concern for their community and the charges that affect them in their life.

As a writer of diaspora, Rohinton Mistry always portrays the identity quest. He has written on the identical struggle of the Parsi. The cultural baggage that the diaspora carry is

characteristic of the region that they come from Jhumpa Lahri, another diaspora writer, will describe the vermilion applied in the parting of hair in a way that no other Non-Bengali writer can.

Parsi in India feel insecure and experience identity crisis. The Parsi people immigrated to other countries thinking that the new country would be more favorable to them, but this sudden immigration to alien head their former identity nor do they have a new one. Rohinton Mistry's main focus is on the identify crisis faced by the Parsi people as they feel threatened in the land to which they have immigrated. As a Parsi and then as an immigrant in Canada Mistry sees himself as a symbol of double displacement and this sense is a recurrent theme in his literary works.

Such a Long Journey is a novel which explores the life of Parsi minority people in the dominant Hindu culture. Many other researchers have completed their task on contemporary state of the Parsi community, portrayal of Parsi culture and religion issue of nationalism. Parsi people are marginalized and feel dominated in India. I feel issue of dislocation will also be topic for research. In this research I am going to find out issue of dislocation in the light of diaspora.

Diaspora: Definition and History

Mainly, diaspora starts from human civilization itself. It is the phenomena of scattering or as we called shifting. Basically, diaspora can occur under the basis of four regular circumstances, where dispersal to two or more locations in which there is collective mythology of homeland, alienation from host land, idealization of return to homeland and finally there can be created an ongoing relationship with homeland. Diaspora can cause difference in superior/inferior by treating as mercy and sympathy. The notion of diaspora in particular has been productive in its attention to the real life movement of peoples throughout

the world. But when applied to human diaspora, it signifies a collective trauma, displacement and feeling of exile.

Diaspora not only led to the crossing of borders. It denotes the journey across the less visible boundaries of time, space, ethnicity, traditional values; a language etc. The diasporic subject relocates into a new landscape and creates something afresh. They cannot simply abandon their old lifestyles and traditions and gradually get shifted to the host land also the interplay between the good and bad should be acknowledged in the diasporic space.

Diaspora has its complexities in terms of its types and degrees of displacements. William Safran in “Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return” identifies six features of the diaspora namely “dispersal, collective memory, alienation, respect and longing for the homeland, a belief in its re-establishment, and a self-definition with this homeland” (83-99). These six features thoroughly point towards the difficulties encountered in dealing with the subject of diaspora. Diaspora is not a classified subject, singular in nature. There are all kinds of dissimilarities inherent in this experience in terms of its ethnic, regional and linguistic composition that result in a helpless state of the diasporic individual hanging in between a space characterized by an conflicting gap between the desired and acquired.

Similarly, the elaboration of diaspora is framed on the basis of 18th December, The International Migrant Day. It is critical because, it holds the awareness of these social phenomena, which have increasingly been affecting the world’s population. In this regards, John Durham constructs the diaspora which undertakes the exiled, one that is considered to be at the foundation of the long feelings. Exiles experience a strong feeling of nostalgia of one’s true home. And he further illustrates that:

This true home can at its worst iconoclastically smash whatever does not measure up, this works with the fantasy feeling that comes to replace reality and the notions of well- being wherever one is located. The diaspora

academics believe that nostalgia of the exile is just like the quest for an earthly home. It is possible to transcend this discussion onto a philosophical question that which is the eternal quest for the completion of the human self, which for displaced people usually gets interpreted to be completed by the circumstances and the assets found in the new place of residence. (175)

Likewise, Vijay Mishra establishes a major cultural texts and study of Indian Diaspora. He highlights that full understanding of the Indian Diaspora can only be achieved if attention is paid to the particular locations of both the 'old' and the 'new' in nation states. Furthermore, in the beginning of his introduction of his book, he mentions the diaspora imaginary where he brings the lines of *Hamlet I* (131-2); There needs no ghost come from the grave, to tell us this. He depicts it by saying "All diaspora are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy in its own way. Diasporas refer to people who do not feel comfortable with their passport" (1).

On the considerable context of Diaspora, Mishra further brings the reference of a line of a poem by Sri-Lankan Canadian poet Rienzi Cruz in his memorable poem 'The Sun-Man Takes a Tattoo.' "Don't ask for answers, ask for history: the pain of my wounding, the diaspora that runs through my life like an alphabet." (47). Similarly, in the diaspora and the multicultural state, Mishra have forwards his view by examining that:

The umbrella term 'multicultural (state)' has the power to subsume everything from diasporas to ethnic minorities and first-nation peoples; it makes, at least when co-opted by the establishment, non-generalist theories (confined, delimiting and specific as these latter are) irrelevant. Against this presumption I want to show that generalist multicultural theory may be made more meaningful when it is thought through particularistic theories of diaspora, race, and ethnicity and so on. (133)

Robin Cohen brings the source of Jews where the loneliness and sadness of the diasporic experiences of the Jews is emotionally reminded. The idea that diaspora implied powerful and discarded the good paths and uncontrolled the old behaviors. He argues:

If you do not observe and fulfill all the law. . . . The Lord will scatter you among peoples from one end of the earth to the other. . . . Among these nations you will find no peace, no rest for the sole of your foot. The Lord will give you an unquiet mind, dim eyes and a failing appetite. Your life will hang continually in suspense; fear will beset you night and day. And you will find no security all your lifelong .Every morning you will say 'Would God it were evening! 'And every evening, 'Would God it were morning!' for the fear that lives your heart. (1-2)

Cohen has established an idea of Diaspora in the cultural context of Caribbean and finds out the subject matter attacked by a mass of postmodernist, novelist and scholars of cultural studies. He has taken an example of the editor of the US journal *Diaspora* ,Khacha Tololyan professor of English at Wesleyan University, announced its birth to be (1991) with the following mentioned statement:

The conviction underpinning this manifesto disguised as a 'Preface' is that Diaspora must pursue, in texts literary and visual, canonical and vernacular, indeed in all cultural productions and throughout history, the traces of struggle over and contradiction within ideas and practices of collective identity, of homeland and nation. Diaspora is concerned with the way in which nations, real yet imagined communities are faveolated, brought into being, made and unmade, in culture and politics, both on the land people call their own and in exile. (127)

Indian Diaspora

Although significant phase in Indian diaspora is associated with British Colonialism, we can trace its root in the medieval period too. During this period Indians migrated to Ceylon and South-East Asia as Buddhist Missionaries. But after British Colonialism, during 19th century, a large number of Indians were taken to various British colonies as indentured labors to work on sugar, tea and rubber plantations.

In the 1840's labors started coming to Trinidad in the Caribbean; Guyana in South America; in 1860's to the British colony of Natal in South Africa; in 1870s' to the Dutch colony of Surinam; in the 1880s' to Fiji. Although in 1920 the indentured system was abolished but immigration still continued. In the 20th century most of immigrants went out for new destinations, in the United States, United Kingdom and other European countries in search of better life and to save their original religion.

The first significant immigration of Indians in United States can be traced some 100 years ago. Peasants from Punjab began migrating on the west coast, seeking work in Washington's lumber mills and California's vast agricultural field. The Panjabi migration was followed by Indian students. Indians slowly developed their presence as successful professionals in different fields.

These people live in between the old world from where they have come from and the new world where they were trying to create their own identity. These Indian immigrants (diaspora) have an inherent will to preserve and celebrate their culture. It is at this juncture the struggle takes place where they try to replace a traditional way of life with a modern one in a country, which is not theirs. Due to this awareness of being in a new culture and the consciousness of cultural roots creates a "diasporic experience" in an immigrant.

Once the colonial settlers arrive in alien land they feel the necessity of establishing new identity since they are displaced from their point of origin. In a colonial society there emerged a binary relationship between the peoples of two cultures. It is the 'in-between' space that carries the burden and meaning of cultures, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity and its importance. Recently within the domain of cultural studies the term has also been associated with the analysis of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

Dislocation is the outcome of unwilling movement from known to unknown location. As quoted by Hall, Ernesto Lac Lau defines dislocation as a structure that is characterized by a never-ending process. He says: "A dislocated structure is one whose center is place and replaced by another "(278). The phenomenon of dislocation in modern society is the result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement. Agreeing with this idea there are some critics who define dissolution as structure which is characterized by a never ending process.

Dislocation in postcolonial discourse is the result of transformation from one country to another. The term is defined in *Key Concept in Postcolonial Studies* as:

A term for both the occasion of displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event. . . . The term is used to describe the experience of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'home' to the colonial margin, but it affect all those who, as a result to colonialism have been placed in a location that, because of colonial 'hegemonic' practice, needs, to be 'reinvented' in language, in narrative, and in myth.(73)

Dislocation can also be extending further to include the psychological and personal dislocation resulting from cultural denigration as well as voluntarily chosen status.

Dislocation in many cases exists within the country. Defining the term from this perspective Ashcroft, Gareth and Tiffin say: "dislocation is a feature of all invaded colonies where indigenous or original cultures are if not annihilated, often literally dislocated i.e. moved off what was their territory"(75).

Race concentrates on distinct biological grouping of people with common physical characteristics. Such characteristics often have been attributed to cultural or personal identity of the people sharing them. Race is a form of cultural identity which are unstable cultural creations. They are not stable and universal as defined within the sociological parameters. Darwinian biological discourses are the sources of race where it refers to biological and physical characteristics. These attributes are frequently linked to create a hierarchy of social and material superiority and subordination. The race formation process of 'racialization' is based on the grounds that race is a social construction and not universal or essential category of biology or culture. Stuart Hall argues that races do not exist outside representation but are formed in any by it in a process of social and political power struggle. Thus race is a culture as Billington quotes Cohen, "an ideological constructs, not an empirical social category; as such it signifies a set of imaginary properties of inheritance which fix and legitimate real completely useless from a scholarly point of view" (180).

Impact of Parsi Culture and Religion in Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*

Mistry's books portray diverse facets of Indian socio-economic life as well as Parsi Zoroastrian life, customs and religion. Many of his writings are marked as "Indo – nostalgic". His works purpose to look at Parsi ethnicity with the essence of Parsi spirit. Parsi people were persecuted in their home land in Persia because of their distinct religious identity. They were provided with refuge in India many centuries ago. They had contributed much to the economy, politics and society of India.

Being the miniscule minority in India, the Parsi do experience ethnic anxiety, they feel insecure, experience identity crisis and feel threatened by possible submersion in the dominant Hindu culture, a nightmarish prospect which they do not ever want to come true. Along with these, there are other distributing features namely: declining population, late marriages, low birth rate, high rate of divorce, attitudes to the girl child, urbanization, alienation etc.

Mistry is well-versed with all the under currents of Indian politics. As his novels are closely linked with the social and the political background, there has been a wide spread growth in his writings. If we read his novel from political point of view, we can realize that his knowledge on Indian politics is not at all far though he had left India 30 years back and settled in Canada. Mistry being a Parsi writer is very sensitive to the anxieties felt by the community. He proves this by giving the response to the existing threats of Parsi community.

Like other Parsi writers, Mistry's work is guided by the experience of double displacement. As a Parsi, Mistry finds himself at the margins of Indian Society and hence his writing challenges and resists absorption by dominating Hindu-glorify culture of India. He has experimented with linguistic hybridity and celebrates the use of Parsi language. The post-colonial concern for him is not only to fight for a cultural territory but also to create a distinct identity of their own. The feeling of being left out of the cultural mainstream is unequally reflected in the way Mistry's characters are displaced and search for new identity, through emigration or reinventing themselves through religious enlightenment.

Such a Long Journey is not only the expression of the author's feeling about his community but moreover it is an endeavor to regain and retrieve the loss of dignity and grace that the Parsi lost in this case. Mistry raises the voice of his community and vindicates the repugnance of his community vehemently when he demands the answers of question in the novel: "Assuming that Mr. Billimora has the talent of voice impersonation, is it routine

for our national banks to hand over vast sums of money if the prime minister telephones?

How high up does one have to be in the government or the congress party able to make such a call” (195)?

The exposure of the political corruption at the national level in his narration presents or indicates the ethnic or identical representation of Parsi community. Through the description of this incident, Mistry shows the showing the fundamentalism and lack of political and social dominance he shows his community in his periphery. Illustrating the incident through his art of narrative he displays the clear idea of the Parsi condition in the margin.

The degradation in the condition of the Parsi and their fascination towards West show that there is so much stress Parsi fell in India. In postcolonial period linguistic difference and regionalism have proliferated in India and the regional political parties which capitalized such regional and linguistic differences such regional and linguistic differences have been criticized by Mistry and he blames that such differences have responsible for the degradation of Parsi community. But more significantly he has targeted Indira Gandhi for her encouragement to instigate such mentality of people to have a separate reason for their separate race.

The novel *Such a Long Journey* is deliberations of minority complexes, and quest for identity. At times, Gustad also grows nostalgic feelings about his fore-fathers, their business, their love and affections, and their daily chores characteristics of the Parsi, which are also a kind of attempt at retaining their Parsi identity. The very mention of their typical food, their articles of clothes, and the issue of Gujarati words in the novel suggests assertion of their special identity. Gustad also tries to establish the supremacy of Zoroastrianism as he tells Malcom, his Christian friends in the novel as “. . . Our prophet Zarathustra lived more than fifteen hundred years ago before your son of god was even born a thousand years before the

Buddha; two hundred years before the Moses. And do you know how much Zoroastrianism influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam" (24)? Thus, the novel examines among other issues the questions of Parsi identity and its diaspora.

Rohinton Mistry reflects the dilemma of his minority community and its identity crisis in the story. Parsi community finds extremely difficult to identify with other Indian communities. The plot involves a Parsi, Gustad and his family interwoven with events in the national scene Gustad's suffering is presented at the backdrop of India and Bangladesh war. The war has direct consequences of irrational legislation and becomes the embodiment of the average middle class. The picture of the poor struggling for maintaining the daily expenses Gandhi's government is described realistically by the author.

Mistry depicts the Parsi feeling insecure in the influence of the political power of Bombay. Dinshawji's remarks are suggestive of the insecurity, "wait till the Marathas take over, then we will have the real Gandoo Raj. . . . All they Know is to have rallies at Shivaji Park, shout slogans and make threats and change Rood names" (75) the novels describes Parsi way of life. It captures relationship and Practices at the heart of the community like death, celebrations, ceremonies and festivals. Parsis are presented as preserving their identity within the dominant Hindu culture of India. The dialogue between Gustad and his friend Malcolm, who is a catholic community member, aptly describes their attitude towards Hindus. "We are minorities in a nation of Hindus. Let them eat pulses, grams and beans. . . . But we will get our protein from sacred cow . . . which is healthier because it is holier"(68). The comment expresses antagonism between minorities and the dominant Hindu majority.

Dinshawji has one more complaint against Indira Gandhi because she deprived the Parsis, as they feel, of their traditional business of banking. Dinshawji sadly remembers "What were the days were yaar. What fun we used to have Parsis were the king of

banking in those days .Such respect we used to get. Now the whole atmosphere only has been spoiled. Ever since that Indira nationalized the banks."(38)

The notion of displacement is voice through the character of Dinshwaji, when he comments on the change of the street names in Bombay. Dinshwaji is also concerned with disturbing developments in the form of changing names of roads and streets in Bombay. He considers them as symptomatic of bad times ahead for the minority community. He says angrily: "Wait till the Marathas take over, then we will have real Gandoo Raj . . .All they know is to have rallies at Shivaji Park, shout slogans, make threats, and change road names. He surely worked himself into a real rage; there was genuine grief in his soul. Why change the names? Saala, sisterfuckers! HutatmaChowk! He spat out the words disgustedly". (78)

Mistry's focus is more upon the privileged position experienced by his community in the colonial time. He says in postcolonial India his community's status was downgraded and they were marginalized. Such deplorable condition of the Parsis is criticized by Dinshwaji. Shiva Sena party is a big real threat to a distinct Parsi identity and is therefore resented by all the character in the novel. Dinshwaji fears that Shiva Sena "won't stop till they have completed Maratha Raj"(73). Dinshwaji, remembers how the followers of the Shiva Sena abused members of Parsi community as "Parsi crow eaters" there by mocking the community's burial rites. He complains that Shiva Sena wants to make this community "second class citizens". To gain more specific in the power structure, it advocates changing of English road names into Marathi without considering the fact what effects would it bring to the former colonial prominent among the Parsi. Responding to Gustad's remark "What's in a name"? Dinshwaji argues:

"You are wrong. Names are so important. I grew up on Lamington Road. But it has disappeared; in its place is Dada Sahib Bhakhamkar Marg. My school

was on Carnac Road. Now suddenly it's on Lokmaya Tilak Marg. I live at Sleater Road. Soon that will also disappear. My whole life I have come to work at flora Fountain. And one fine day the name changes. So what happens to the life I have live? Was I living the wrong life, with all the wrong names? Will I get a second chance to live it all again, with these new names? (74)

Gustad Noble is central character is in between situation. Sometimes he laments upon his original culture and his past and he tries to accept change at the same time. When Dinshwaji complained about names Gustad consoles him by saying "You shouldn't let it bother you so much, Dinshu. But Dinshwaji feels as the old names are changed, his community will be displaced. Language is significant both for Shiva Sena and the Parsi because it is tied up with issue of identity.

Gustad also laments upon the life style and respect of Parsi in the past. He also complains about the right wing politics of Shiva Sena. In fact, his concern for Sohrab arises out of his fear and anxiety. The rise of fascist Shiva Sena and their demand for Marathi as the only language to be used has increased Gustad's impatience. He believes that if the Shiva Sena manages to achieve its goal and puts its plan into practice, Shorab's future in Bombay will become surely insecure. Thus he complains as:

"What kind of life was Sohrab going to look forward to? No future for minorities, with all these fascist Shiva Sena politics and Marathi language nonsense. It was going to be like the black people in America - twice as good as the white man to get half as much. How to make him realize what he was doing to his father, who had made the success of his son's life the purpose of his own? Shorab had snatched away that purpose, like a crutch from a *cripple*". (55)

Mistry as a diasporic writer in *Such a Long Journey* blends English with dashes of Gujrati, Hindi, and Marathi at times in order to achieve the hybridity. "Toba, Toba! I began to feel something wet on my shirt. And guess what it was. A dubbawalla standing over me, holding the railing. It was falling from his nakearmpit: tapuck tapuck tapuck, his sweat. I said nicely, "please move a little, my shirt is wetting meherbani." But no kothaa, as if I was not there (73). Mistry doesn't keep away from Indian Regional Dialects he feels the objects and emotions those words referred to are necessary enlightening some element of plot.

As a diasporic text *Such a Long Journey* retains many features from the 'Homeland'. In a sense of alienation, Rohinton Mistry has given a detailed description of his community. While history and language play an important part in the construction of community's self-image, the novel also pays close attention to another pillar of Parsi identity i.e. religion. Zoroastrianism is the religion of Parsi community which in the course of novel has been described in detail. The novel starts with Gustad Noble performing 'kusti' prayer - the most important ritual in Zoroastrianism. And later the burial rites of the religion are an important marker of identity that Mistry inscribes into the novel in order to underline a concern with cultural differences.

Rohinton Mistry holds a special place amongst the major Indian English novelists. The main concern of his novels is exploration of Parsi culture and rituals. He brilliantly captures all the social, political events and incidents taking place in contemporary India even if he was not present here at that time. Mistry's works are born out of the pessimism prevalent in the community and the bitterness of the loss of Parsi prominence in Indian social, political and economic life in the post-Independence period.

Mistry realistically represents the present incompetent condition of the Parsi race. In free India, they are gradually losing the idealistic and honored position they once enjoyed. At

present there are various factors which make them feel that their existence is under threat. Mistry feels that the government of India is biased towards them. He feels that the changing social and cultural society and increasing communal violence are responsible for the incompetent condition of the Parsi community. The fundamental political activities suppress the Parsi community to a great extent. The Parsi community is nearing its extinction in India.

All the characters of the novel deal with the painful family dynamics and difficult social and political circumstances. The main protagonist, Gustad Noble and his wife Dilnavaz live in a congested Khodadad building in Bombay and try to lead good life and inspire their children—Sohrab, Darius and Roshan—during Indira Gandhi's rule in the 1970s. Gustad Noble is well aware of all the political, professional economic, social and cultural upheavals, "My right hand I will cut off and give you, I said, if those fanatics and dictators respect the election results." (12) He says:

Instead, teams of fund-raising politicians toured the neighborhood. Depending on which party they belonged to, they made speeches praising the Congress government's heroic stance or denouncing its incompetency for sending brave Indian Jawans, with outdated weapons and summer clothing, to die in the Himalayas at Chinese hands. Every political party unleashed flag-emblazoned lorries to crisscross the city with banners that were paradigms of ingenuity: weaving together support for the party and support for the soldiers...In some wealthy localities the collective drive turned into a competition with neighbors trying to outdo one another in their attempts to simultaneously seem rich, patriotic and compassionate... . Afterwards, it was said that some of the donated goods had turned up for sale in Chor Bazaar and Nul Bazaar. (10)

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 tries to represent social, and 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.

A reading of Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* as an immigrant's vision of Indian nationalism becomes all the more interesting and about Parsi's life in India, though all the major characters Gustad Noble and family, Dinshawji and Major Jimmy Bilimoria are Parsis. The Parsi community is created in the writer's perception as a marginal group that is shut out/walled in by choice/design within the Indian mindset. Significantly the novel sets two spatial scales in the first few lines of the novel. The protagonist, Gustad of this novel faced the real events to having two different groups of people. He is belonging to separate group of people. It is very poor in development.

Religion as a benchmark ethnic identity and the everyday lives of the inhabitants of the Khodadad building merge in seemingly clam environment, even as the turmoil and strife of the outside world is picked up by the newspaper that Gustad opens and see the headlines about Pakistan. In this newspaper the story was about a mother who is weeping because of the death of her child in her arms. At this time Gustad gets shocked because, such news has been happening from last few weeks. So, it is very touching story of soldiers.

The threat from the outside World, particularly the Shiv Sena and their slogan

“Maharashtra for Maharashtrians”, reduce the Parsi community to Outsiders of the state and the Nation. Gustad get emotional and say that the poor people of Parsi community are oppressed, Shiv Sena wanted to throw them out from their own home. It was happening in Bombay about Parsi community and their families.

The Parsi are particularly disturbed by increasing radicalism of the national movement strongly influenced by the neo-Hindu renaissance. They feel that they had very limited access to the socio-religious nationalism of congress movement under Tilak and Gandhi. These fears encouraged the Parsi to oppose even the concept of the home rule in India. Parsi people 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 portray 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.

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 horrified 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 Parsis interpretation of the past, the colonial period and the present, the decolonized India.

The long wall of Gustad Noble's house, The Khodadad 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, filth 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: Sense of Dislocation in Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*

Such a Long Journey is a novel which gives the clear picture of sense of feeling of displacement. Here in this novel Rohinton Mistry presents the idea that being diaspora means losing own identity in others land so he time and again remembers his native land.

Parsi people face lots of problem in Indian land. They are misbehaved by the government. Being the miniscule minority in India, the Parsi do experience ethnic anxiety they feel insecure, experience identity crisis and feel threatened by possible submersion in the dominant culture.

Such a Long Journey aptly communicates the feelings and apprehensions of minority community and exploited history to explore into broader concerns of Parsi community. Mistry's graphic description presents a clear picture of insecurity and sense of displacement that is strongly felt by the Parsi. In *Such a Long Journey*, the experience of the ancient Parsi displacement is implied given that Parsi community has a long history in India.

Thus, a close reading of the novel reveals that the protagonist Gustad struggles hard to survive in the majority of Hindu society being member of minority Parsi community. He lives in strained circumstances in the Khodadad building of Bombay with his wife Dilnavaz,

two sons Shorab and Darius, and a daughter Roshan. He fails to fulfill his quite modest and ordinary dreams of successful life. His dreams slowly crumble and his hopes die a slow death as he has one frustrating experience after the other. He finds it hard to accept the fact that things are beyond his control. Life from his seems to be endless series of trials and tribulations. Gustad feels dislocated in Indian Hindu majority. The then Indian government also discards the identity of Parsi people so that he remembers his homeland mostly.

Over all sense of dislocation compels the writer to remember his homeland. They lost their identity and culture and even self-respect in Indian land, so the writer becomes nostalgic and memorizes his own native land.

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