



DINA DALAL'S PATHETIC CONDITIONS IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S *A FINE BALANCE*

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Abstract: This article's purpose is to examine Indian English literature's fiction, particularly Rohinton Mistry's narrative, which uses a colour scheme to successfully paint a realistic portrait of post-independence India. The Parsi community deals with a variety of challenges, including politics, communal life, urbanism, inequality, the caste system, minorities, etc. Mistry aims to depict the genuine circumstances and social issues of the Parsi community. Mistry moved to Canada before going back to India to research the matter. Indian Parsi family, Indian minority society, and Indian politics are all depicted in his works. In this paper, the researcher has described the pathetic condition of women. Rohinton Mistry presents a pathetic condition of women. Rohinton Mistry. The man says he is the protector of the woman. He makes the most of every chance he gets to take advantage of women. For him, a woman is a soulless, impersonal object. In the form of the low-caste, underprivileged woman Dina Dalal.

Keywords--- Women, Discrimination, Feminism, womanism, Pathetic condition, and Women Insight

INTRODUCTION -

During the 20th century, Rohinton Mistry became well-known as a writer. He is a sociopolitical novelist who has distinguished himself as a powerful author on the international literary stage. He is an Indian writer from the Indian diaspora who writes with an Indian perspective. He was a well-known author for his depictions of Parsi life in India and the corruption of the city during the first three decades of the twentieth century because he was born and reared in Bombay (now Mumbai). On July 3, 1952, Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), India. He completed a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Economics from the University of Bombay. He immigrated to Canada in 1975 and settled in Toronto, where he worked as a banker. Mistry finally went back to school and earned a degree in philosophy and English from the University of Toronto in 1984. He started writing and publishing fiction while he was a student at a Canadian university. His first two published short stories were honoured with the Hart House Literary Prize in 1983 and 1984, while another work earned him the 1985 Contributor of the Year honour from Canadian Fiction Magazine. These three stories and eight others made up *Tales from Firoza Bagh*, his debut book (1987). He is the writer of three novels- *Such A Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995), *Family Matters* (2000) and a novella- *The Scream* (2008).

Men's and women's discrimination has impacted lives in India for decades. Even though men and women in India have equal rights under the Constitution, gender disparity still exists. Discrimination against women violates human rights. Indian law protects women against rape, dowry, and adultery, but these blatantly discriminatory acts continue at a startlingly high rate. Health, educational, economic, and political discrimination against women and men in India is referred to as gender discrimination. Around the world, discrimination against girls based on their gender is pervasive. This is evident at all social

levels. Along with most Indian novelists, Rohinton Mistry has also written most of his novels with an inclination towards women. Even though Rohinton Mistry's literature has won a lot of praise, his "portrayal of women" has drawn criticism. The female characters in Rohinton Mistry's works are perceived as being flat and undeveloped by critics. While their male counterparts travel widely, not just in Bombay but also in cities like Delhi, they are frequently observed confined to homes and hardly ever leave their apartment and complex complexes. Mistry analyses women's places within the cultural framework of Zoroastrianism—their experiences, histories, and obligations as wives, widows, mothers, and single women—by paying attention to the social surroundings of her female characters' lives from a feminist perspective. It would be appropriate to state Gordon Ekelund's views on the subject at the outset:

Mistry clearly casts his women characters as one of two types in a dichotomy that defines women as either pure and silent - suffering, or malevolent - Pativratas or treacherous wenches. This dichotomy transcends cultural boundaries and is strongly entrenched in Indian tradition.¹

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To introduce the Novelist Rohinton Mistry
- To trace the mechanism of women characters who are shattered in the works of Rohinton Mistry.
- To examine Mistry's Parsi women from the point of patriarchy, marginality and haplessness.
- To examine gender differences through a feminist reading.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher will examine the texts through several perspectives such as patriarchy, marginality, haplessness, gender differences through a feminist reading and mechanism of women characters through textual, descriptive, evaluative, interpretive, critical, and analytic methods. This research also focuses on the complete observation of Rohinton Mistry's selected novels through primary sources and secondary sources. This research is based on textual analyses. The sample of the research has been selected from *Such A Long Journey* (1991), and *A Fine Balance* (1995). Different lines and paragraphs have been extracted from the dialogues spoken by the characters of the novels. The M.L.A Style 8th Edition will be followed in the documentation and citation.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

From the time of independence in 1947 through the Emergency imposed by the then-prime minister Indira Gandhi, *A Fine Balance* explores the changes in Indian society. In the book, Mistry generally criticises Mrs. Gandhi. However, none of the characters ever use her name; they only refer to her as "the Prime Minister." Economic pressures that are transforming India bring together the protagonists, who come from different origins.

Rohinton Mistry depicts the horrible situations of marginalised women through the eyes of a Parsi woman named Dina Dalal, who lived in India during the onset of the Emergency in 1975. Dina Dalal suffers greatly as a result of the Internal Emergency and is fighting for her life. She gains some independence, but her trip is not without difficulties. She loses her apartment and has moved in with her brother. Her brother treats her as a servant, and their pure relationship comes to an end there. This is how women feel after their spouses pass away. Some women are not allowed to become independent if they so choose. Many women who have no other source of income end up working as slaves for their brother or their family.

In *A Fine Balance*, Rohinton Mistry questions the foundational freedoms guaranteed by the Indian constitution. Even though India's constitution offers women the same rights as males, they are denied their empowered identity in the twenty-first century. India's women experience gender identity

¹ Gordon Ekelund, "Left at the Station: The Portrayal of Women in Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*", p.7 quoted from Chakravorty, Sujata. *Critical Insights into the Novels of Rohinton Mistry*. New Delhi, India: Discovery Pub House, Print, 2014.

issues, and they endure marriage-related humiliation. Numerous innocent women have died as a result of the dowry custom. It is terrible for poor girls whose parents are unable to provide them with a substantial dowry. Many girls are forced to live single lives as a result of this depravity, and occasionally this puts their parents in danger. Three of a poor man's granddaughters flee their house and commit suicide in the novel *A Fine Balance*, which is a masterful depiction of the horrors of the dowry system. The poor man has a vasectomy in order to arrange the dowry for their granddaughters. He, unfortunately, passes away after this procedure. In this way, Rohinton Mistry questions women's rights and draws attention to the detestable scourge of dowry in Indian society.

Rohinton Mistry reveals the fact that women have been placed after men in the field of education. There are several women who leave their studies due to the negative attitude of male members of the family. Education is an important aspect of one's life if one has to succeed in life. In his novel, Rohinton Mistry presents through his famous character Dina. Dina grew up in a wealthy family. Her father was a medical doctor who died when she was twelve. Her mother was withdrawn and unable to take care of Dina after her father's death, so the job fell to Nusswan, Dina's elder brother. Nusswan was rather abusive to Dina, forcing her to do all the cooking, cleaning, and drop out of school, and hitting her when she went against his wishes. Nusswan says

“But the fact remains that your results are hopeless. I'm not going to waste money on school fees for another year.”²

Dina is made to remain silent when she demands her rights. When she reached adulthood, Dina rebelled against Nusswan and his potential suitors for her. Instead, she discovered her own husband, chemist Rustom Dalal, at a concert hall. According to Mistry, the male family members decide what happens to women in the future. Nobody is concerned with a woman's true needs. The decisions made by males are final. Dina Dalal's career is destroyed by her family's anti-feminist views since she aspires to become a well-known doctor like her father.

Nusswan and his wife Ruby were happy to allow Dina to wed Rustom and move into his apartment. After three years of blissful marriage, Rustom passed away on their third wedding anniversary after being struck by a car while riding his bicycle. Dina was advised by Rustom's surrogate parents to become a tailor in order to escape living with Nusswan. She chooses to marry an economically unsuccessful Rustom Shroff, whom she had met at a music concert organized by a local music society. Dina's happiness is short-lived as Rustom is killed in an accident. The shock numbs Dina and lets her accept Nusswan's offer to go back to live with him and his family. Dina does so, but with the wisdom of the Bombay-born, where real-estate prices are one of the highest in the world, retains Rustom's flat. Very soon, her numbness and Nusswan's sympathy wear off and the brother and sister indulge in a typical Parsi exchange of invectives and insults:

Do you know how fortunate you are in our community? Among the unenlightened, widows are thrown away like garbage. If you were a Hindu, in the old days you would have had to a good little sati and leap into your husband's funeral pyre, be roasted with him." I can always go to the Towers of Silence and let the vultures eat me up, if that will make you happy. (A F B 52)

The protagonist of Mistry's second book, *A Fine Balance*, is a Parsi widow named Dina Dalal. She is quite anxious about the need to somehow maintain her financial freedom in order to live life on her terms. Either she chooses to do this or continue living as a glorified domestic worker with her brother's family. This notion is strongly emphasised in the prologue.

When Maneck left her flat, she began pacing the room, suddenly restless, as though about to embark on a long voyage. No need now to visit her brother and beg for next month's rent. She took a deep breath. Once again, her fragile independence was preserved. [AFB - 13].

² MISTRY, ROHINTON (1995). *A FINE BALANCE*. NEW YORK: ROSETTABOOKS, LLC, 2004. ONLINE

Her mother, Mrs. Shroff, who had remained stoic during the funeral preparations, all of a sudden withdrew into a cocoon and became cut off from the outside world. Nusswan quickly takes over the management of Dr. Shroff's home and dispensary without batting an eye. The latter is swiftly sold off, leaving the former (home) without personnel on the justification that paying for so many of them was too much for him to handle. When his mother, Mrs. Shroff, raises her concerns about the matter, including who would do all the job, etc. his reply is:

"Don't worry, Mamma, we will all share it. You can do easy things, like dusting the furniture. We can wash our own cups and saucers, surely. And Dina is a young girl, full of energy. It will be good for her, teach her how to look after a home." [AFB - 21].

Dina struggles to accept the new arrangement and is resentful towards Nusswan whenever necessary. Nusswan repeatedly tries to force Dina to comply with his demands, regardless of whether she could get her hair cut or not. In an effort to gain her respect, he resorts to beating her repeatedly. He leads her to the fire temple and instructs her on suitable prayer techniques.

"Now pray properly ask Dadaji to make you a good girl, ask him to make you obedient". [AFB - 24]. –

Dina has other worries besides dealing with Nusswan and waging small battles and either winning them or giving up. Even at the fire temple, she needs to consider how she may avoid DustoorFramji's fingers.

"This reputation for squeezing and fondling had earned him the title of DustoorDaab - Chaab..."

"Dina squirmed in his grasp as he patted her head, rubbed her neck, stroked her back and pressed himself against her He released her just when she had summoned enough courage to tear her trapped body from his arms." [AFB - 23]. ...

By and by, Dina devises ways of escaping the Parsi priest's lusty fingers. She merely extends a polite hand and takes a few steps back.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it is rightly said that Rohinton Mistry presents a pathetic condition for women, RohintonMistry. The man says he is the protector of the woman. He makes the most of every chance he gets to take advantage of women. For him, a woman is a soulless, impersonal object. In the form of the low-caste, underprivileged woman Dina Dalal. Mistry exposes the actual selves of men who pose as the carers of women through the persona of Dina Dalal. Another instance of males exploiting women was when a woman with darker skin was ordered to shave her head and walk around the plaza naked. Because of how ruthlessly and harshly the higher-class people treat them, she feels ashamed. In the book, women's issues are perpetually problematic.

In his second book, *A Fine Balance*, Rohinton Mistry deftly explains the pitiful circumstances of women who belong to the underprivileged segment of Indian society. Mistry claims that women in India are in a pitiful state and are entirely reliant on men. Despite the fact that India is a democratic nation, women have not always been treated equally to men. In addition to being monetarily abused, women are also physically, culturally, and psychologically. Since the moment of their birth, they have had to overcome several obstacles, and only their death will put an end to those difficulties. Men have long believed they are better than women. They have wrought misery and pain into the lives of women.

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