

A Fine Balance as An Indian Politic Background Representation

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a fine representation of " a fine balance a novel written by Rohinton Mistry a major Indian writer, written in 1995, that described the Indian people in the period between 1970 to 1984 and all the side effects of the bad political system carried in that era.

The project has been divided into an introduction containing a summary of the novel and a statement of the politics and the corruption of the government.

One chapter that divided into two topics, the first one concerned the novel and the second concerned with corruption and weak politics in a wide scope.

A conclusion that summarized the whole project in one paper that stated the idea of the writer.

Keywords- A Fine Balance, Politics, India, Corruption, Novel.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Plot Summary:

The novel tells the story of a parsi woman from the upper middle class; she is the daughter of Dr. Shroff who died when she was only ten years old. At that period India was in a transitional statue of government. Many of the novel's events related to the terror of the bad politic condition in the country when Mrs. Indira Gandhi announced the emergency state to open the space to goondas and corrupted rich people to control the streets of many cities like Mumbai and do whatever they will not under the surveillance of the police and security in charge persons.

During that era, the only victims of that emergency state were poor and middle-class people who were looking only for their living the story of the novel does not concern with a specific person, but it represented the whole poor strata that suffered the most.

The main character was Dina Dalal the only daughter of Dr. Shroff who left his daughter and died when she was 10-12 years old, Dina represented the female gender class in India. Like any other girl Dina wanted to fulfill her father's dream of being a doctor after her brother Nusswan refused to do so. But unfortunately, she was unable to do it because of the death of her father .

Then she got married from Rostum Dalal who left her also after three years of marriage and died in a lorry accident to leave her in front of a tough time of life alone. No body there to stand beside her, there was even no child to make her feel good .

Dina stands for the worker woman who helped herself to get her living from the tailoring job that she started after her husband's death. She had many obstacles that stand as a falling stone in her small and limited career that obstacles represented in the characters of the landlords of her flat and their goondas, she was threatened and warned many times to stop her

commercial work in the flat and once the goondas came and destroy her flat because of that .

Those landlords like Thakur Dharamsi were untouchable and had their own bodyguards whom the goondas that controlled the streets of India at that time, nobody can do anything towards that guys and they can do whatever they want to do without any questionnaire from the government which have police officers to represent it everywhere.

The novel is the struggle of this Parsi widow, and her two tailors trying to survive in a world of segregation, corruption, and oppression in which honest work was denied and punished by a totalitarian system. For the beautification of the city, the Government deployed officials in the guise of Safety Inspectors to check the colony. The bulldozers went in, and the illegal slums were removed, making the poor people homeless. During the 'Emergency' the Family Planning Programme was allegedly used to eliminate the enemies of the establishment. This incident had become a nightmare in the life of Om. As a result, both Ishvar and Om have become people with disabilities and turn to begging only to fall into the nightmare anonymity of the city – a "world of sudden police swoops, forced labor, goonda gangs, protection money, and casual street murders." The new rules of Emergency made it obligatory for every officer to encourage people to get sterilized to complete his quota; otherwise, there would be no promotion for him. Thus, the Family Planning Programme was pressed into service allegedly to eliminate one's enemies by confusing sterilization with castration. Deaths during the 'Emergency' were called 'accidental.' The death of Ashraf Cha-cha at the market square is described as an accident, by the police.

1.2 Politics:

In 1947 India separated to become Pakistan and independent India, violence was between Muslims and Hindus, Hindus after that moved from Pakistan to independent India and the opposite happened when Muslims moved from India to Pakistan.

The period between 1970 to 1984 witnessed the rule of two prime ministers before Mrs. Indira Gandhi got the Indian government rule, she received her position between 1972, in 1975 Mrs. Gandhi announced the emergency state in India, depending on the fact that she had been defeated once in the parliament elections and that she may be defeated again the next election.

Political misjudgment of the Indian people results in the Indira Gandhi's decision of the early elections in 1977 where she defeated again, in 1984 she was elected again as a prime minister, but she was assassinated by her own bodyguards because of her military attack on the golden temple that killed more than four hundred Sikhs.

As a conclusion, as a political novel "a fine balance" deals with the criminalization of the politics of India, and deals with the people, climate, cities, social classes, and regional identities. It focuses on gender class and the power oppression.

A fine balance discussed all the previous topics in the period between 1970-1984 when Mrs. Indira Gandhi announces the emergency state in India. A period of corruption, violence and bloodsheds, the novel embodied the political background of the post independent India, politics can be considered as a subtext of the main action of Mistry novel.

II. A FINE BALANCE THE NOVEL

A Fine Balance is set in India in the mid-1970s. It tells how the lives of four ordinary people are overturned by the Emergency, a period of political turmoil and violence.

Initially the book focuses on Dina Shroff, who was raised by her strict brother after her father died. To avoid her brother's rage, Dina spends as much time as wandering in parks, libraries, and markets. She discovers a series of concerts, where she meets Rustom Dalal. The couple fall in love and marry, but on their third wedding anniversary Rustom is killed in a lorry accident, leaving Dina alone.

Rustom's aunt teaches Dina to sew, but her eyesight begins to fail, so she is forced to find another way to make money. Her friend Zenobia introduces her to Mrs. Gupta, who offers her some tailoring piece work. She hires Ishvar Darji and his nephew Omprakash, originally from a small village, to do the work.

Ishvar's father was of a low Hindu caste, doing dirty leather work, and he suffered horrendous caste violence. He wanted a better life for his sons and so sent them to a neighboring town to learn to be tailors. They became the apprentices of Muslim tailor Ashraf. But when Ishvar was seventeen, racial hatred of Muslims reached boiling point and any homes or shops belonging to Muslims were burnt to the ground. Ishvar and his brother Narayan saved Ashraf's shop by claiming it belonged to them, leaving Ashraf forever in their debt.

Narayan returned to the village and set up a successful tailor business for lower caste people, refusing to serve those of higher caste. He married and had a son, Omprakash, and two daughters. His business was remarkably successful, and it gave him enough money to build a proper house. All was going well until Narayan discovered that the elections were being fixed by Thakur Dharamsi, a powerful landowner. Narayan confronted Thakur, who had him tortured. Not satisfied with just killing Narayan, Thakur decided to punish his whole family. Narayan's wife, daughters and parents were tied up and burnt alive in their home. Omprakash and Ishvar were the only ones to escape. Shocked but safe, they continued working in their tailor shop, but were forced out of business when a ready-made clothing shop opened in the town.

The fourth central character is Maneck. He grew up in a mountain village, where his father was the proud owner of the local village store and inventor of a popular drink, Kohlah Cola. Maneck was sent to college

and became good friends with the student president, Avinash. Their living conditions were terrible: the rooms infested with cockroaches and the food almost inedible. Avinash led an uprising against the conditions and became involved in politics. When the Emergency was declared, Avinash had to go into hiding, leaving Maneck alone. His mother then arranged for him to move in with Dina Dalal, bringing the four central characters together.

The four are quite happy for a year, but then the Emergency starts to impact their lives. The tailor's shack is demolished in a government beautification program, forcing them to be homeless. The tailors are then rounded up by the police and sold to a labor camp. After two months they bribe their way out and persuade Dina to let them move in with her.

Ishvar decides it is time for Om to find a wife, so they return to Ashraf's town. There they bump into Thakur, who recognizes the pair. He arranges for them to be rounded up by the Family Planning Centre. Ashraf is beaten to death and Ishvar and Om are given compulsory vasectomies. Thakur visits them as they are recovering from the operation and arranges on a medical pretext to have Om's testicles removed. Ishvar's legs become infected and must be cut.

Maneck finishes his college course and returns home. His father's business is failing due to cheap imports of commercial soda, and Maneck decides to leave, taking a job in Dubai.

Dina finds herself all alone. A Beggar head who had been protecting her from her landlord's is murdered, leaving her vulnerable; she reluctantly returns to live with her brother.

Eight years later, Maneck returns home for his father's funeral. Riots are taking place and Sikhs are being persecuted because the Prime Minister was assassinated by one of her Sikh bodyguards. Maneck reads some old newspapers and discovers that Avinash was found dead by the side of a railway track and Avinash's three teenage sisters hanged themselves because their parents could not afford their wedding dowries.

Distraught, Maneck decides to visit Dina. She explains that Ishvar lost his legs and that the tailors are now beggars. Horrified, Maneck leaves Dina's house, pretending not to recognize the tailors in the street, and heads for the railway station where he steps in front of a train.

The book ends with the tailors having an upbeat conversation with Dina. Despite their problems they are happy.

The novel discussed the terror situation in 1970's India under the disappearance of the rule of law and security. It is the story of a woman who faced exceedingly tricky situations in her life along with most of the Indian people where she had conditions that affected her personal life and career.

The novel stated the political-social situation at that period, where emergency state had been announced

by Indira Gandhi and group of decisions had been taken at that time.

2.1 Corruption and Weak Policie

Much of Indian writers wrote about the emergency state of India under the reign of Indira Gandhi, among these writers Rohinton Mistry fictional work stands out, which took the situation of people as a subject and especially poor strata.

The responsible men were arguing if the emergency state affected poor people or not, what they did not took in consideration is that it is really affected people in a bad way, financially, socially, and even psychologically.

Mistry depicted the struggle of four major characters during that era and what destiny they faced and how they survived then in such conditions.

"Dina, what is the emergency state that we heard about?" it's a question had been asked by Omprakash the little tailor to Dina and her response to it was that ordinary people would not affected by such a thing, she meant by ordinary people the poor and middle classes who were looking only for their living and how can they get the bread of tomorrow.

The character of " a fine balance were looking for living in the broken pieces of the country, the country was unstable and financial state depend on the security of the country and both aspects were lost at that time .If we stopped and gaze on the life of two of the protagonists' characters, we would find that they are affected directly by the wrong politics of India.

Omprakash and Ishvar suffered from moving from a place to another they moved from the village after their family being burnt to death, they moved to the town to find a job to get their living but they failed to do so, because there was a quarrel and fight in the streets then they moved to the slums inside the city and the government also followed them with its bulldozers to destroy the whole slums neighborhood and destroy the life of many poor people with it.

Mistry's *A Fine Balance* presents a portrait of contemporary India during the Emergency era imposed by Indira Gandhi. In India, power-hungry politicians control the strings of administration. Mistry has depicted the humiliating condition of people living, death son railway tracks, demolition of shacks on the pretext of beautification, violence on the campuses in the name of ragging, deaths in police custody, charges, and murders in the pretext of enforcing Family Planning, which are all part of India's nasty politics. Reality of Politics and Life in India as a social critic he is authentic in his portrayal of India. He measures the pros and cons of Indian politics that are engraved in his memory. The novel reflects the reality of India, the politics of corruption, exploitation, violence, and bloodshed. *Dark Sides of Indian Politics as Reflected in Rohinton Mistry's Such a Long Journey* and intimate insight into rural India focusing on the injustice, the cruelty and the

horror of deprivation and exposes the trauma of India's millions along communal, religious, and linguistic lines.

There was also huge corruption in the legal system. The speeches made during the parliamentary elections were crammed with promises of every shape and size: "promises of new schools, clean water, and health care, promises of land for landless peasants through redistribution and stricter enforcement of Land Ceiling Act; promises of powerful laws to punish any discrimination against the harassment of backward castes by upper castes, promises to abolish bonded labor, child labor, sati, dowry system, child marriage. However, these empty promises turned out to be nothing but campaigning antics, assuring lively entertainment for the villagers. Some of these were indeed done!

Elections here were master-minded by the landlords like Thakur Dharamsi. Narayan's attempt at voting to make his mark himself results in the ruin of his family by being burnt alive by the goondas of Thakur Dharamsi. Exploitation of the low castes by upper caste continues unabated. But the Parsi widow Dina, can feel for the untouchables by giving shelter to Ishvar and Om, the two chammaars (sweepers). Freedom remained a cherished yet unattainable goal to Dina because of the social tyranny imposed by her brother and father guarding the patriarchal structure of the Parsi society. Under 'Emergency' she simply could not approach the law courts, because of the powers given to corrupt officials like sergeant Kesar. Hence, she had to live by striking a balance between despair and hope. Mr. Valmiki saw Dina Dalal.

'There is always hope- hope enough to balance our despair or we would be lost.'

Despite new laws regarding untouchability passed by the government, nothing had changed. It was deeply rooted in the village community. The two chammaars, Ishvar and Narayana received terrible beating from the teacher for touching the tools of learning and knowledge. It was a forbidden world for the low caste. However, Dukhi's defiance of the caste system is openly shown by his sending his little sons Ishvar and Narayan to Ashraf, the Muslim tailor who would also sew for an untouchable. So, the curse of untouchability is deeply ingrained in Hinduism.

Mistry who authored the novel is aware of this political change in India. He aptly shows that the callous behavior of the upper caste Landlords like Thakur Dharamsi, led to other backward castes getting united and asserting their political and social rights.

III. CONCLUSION

"A fine balance" is a novel by Rohinton Mistry, which described whole India through four major

characters in the emergency state and the tough times that Indian people went through.

It is the statement of the political, social, religious, psychological, and financial state of the country's citizens in that era. The government was the first responsible about the harsh conditions that the whole country suffered from, the corrupted political system and the misleading of the state led to the corruption of the lower strata of the Indian society.

It was not the people's mistake when the prime minister played with the people like pieces of a chess game, moving whomever it wants a leaving whomever it does not.

Goondas and landlords ruled the country instead of the police officers and ministry of interiors. All these elements affected more than fifty percent of the country and led them to an unknown future and blocked ways.

Finally, the bad politics of the government is the first and the only responsible upon the corruption and the controlling of goondas for an extended period the streets of many cities of India, also it is the first responsible of the loss of many citizens their lives because of the miserable security state in the country.

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