

Portrayal of immigration in Rohinton Mistry novel

Gouri Shankar Mishra, Ph. D scholar, Utkal University of Culture,
Bhubaneswar.

Paper Received on 10-02-2023, Accepted on 11-04-2023,
Published on 13-04-23; DOI: 10.36993/ RJOE.2023.8.2.43

Abstract

Immigration is derived from the Latin word 'immigrate' which means to remove, to go in. (Longman's Dictionary of contemporary English 2005). Oxford dictionary defines immigration as the "international movement of people to a destination country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship in order to settle as permanent residents or naturalized citizens". It is the process of moving to a different country with an intention of living there. People choose to immigrate to escape a violent conflict, for educational purpose, for poor financial condition and to unite with family living abroad. In this way a citizen of a country becomes the permanent citizen in another country.

Keywords-Immigration, country, alienation, victimization.

Introduction:

Rohinton Mistry is a prolific Indo-Canadian novelist of our contemporary period who is shortlisted for the Man Booker International prize in 2011 and for the Neustadt International Prize for literature in 2012. He is born in Bombay in 1952 and has migrated Canada in 1975. Mistry is renowned for his novels and short stories like "*Family Matters*", "*Such A Long Journey*" and "*A Fine Balance*" and "*Swimming Lessons*". The reader can find a realistic description of the pathos of Parsi migrants in India from his novels. This paper focuses on Mistry's view on immigration and his sympathy towards his race.

Immigration is a complex issue in today's world. It is an important issue in many countries as people seek to move to a new place in search of better life. Immigrants face cultural difference between the host country and the country of their origin. It causes alienation as they struggle to adjust to a new culture. They are treated differently from the natives of the host country. It is difficult for the immigrants to communicate with new people and adopt the new lifestyle.

Mistry faithfully portrays the bitter consequence of immigration through his characters. As a Parsi immigrant he realizes the bitter

experience of immigration. In “*Swimming lessons*” the Parsis detest the immigrants in fear that the sheer number of immigrants would diminish their presence in Bombay city. They call the immigrants ‘*ghatis*’. The Parsi migrants in Canada are called ‘*Pakis*’ by Canadians and treated in the same manner there. Kersi is rebuked by White Canadian boys in his adult swimming class. Mistry criticizes the words ‘*ghatis*’ and ‘*Pakis*’ because it dehumanize people they represent. He condemns the victimization of immigrants not only in India but in all over the world.

Mistry sympathizes with the Parsi immigrants for their wretched existence in India. “*Such A Long Journey*” vividly portrays the suffering of Parsi immigrants in Mumbai city. Dinshwaji says that Parsis are here considered as “Second class citizens” (3!) and they are “minority among the majority of Hindus”. (53)

Poor financial condition and low lifestyle in the native country compels the youth to immigrate to another country to lead a better life. In “*A Fine Balance*” Maneck travels Dubai to get employed because of lack of job in India.

In “*Family Matters*” during a conversation with Yezad, Nariman says, “immigration is a wrong and painful decision”. (p43) I am glad you did not, because I think immigration is an enormous mistake, the biggest anyone can make in their life. The loss of house leaves a hole that never fills”. (p57) Yezad tells his sons about his

unsuccessful experiences with bureaucracy in his adolescent days which compels him to go to the west. Mistry tries to revive the memories of his own country and his community in this novel. According to Clark, Glick and Bures, “Immigrant families may reside with both “kith and kin”.(1)

Nilufer Bhrucha writes, “As an Indian who lives in and writes from Canada, Mistry is a writer of the Indian Diaspora. However, Mistry is also a Persian-Zoroastrian whose ancestors were forced to exile by the Islamic conquerors of Iran, he was in Diaspora even in India. Like other Parsi writing, his writing is informed by the experience of double displacement. (2)

References:

- Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters*
 Mistry, Rohinton. *Such A Long Journey*
 Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance*
 Clark, R.L. Glick, J.E. and Bures R.M. (2009) Immigrant families over the life course, *Journal of Family Issues*. (p861)
 Bharucha, Nilufer. Bharucha, Nilufer E. Rohinton Mistry, *Ethnic Enclosures and Transcultural Spaces: Writers of Indian Diaspora*, Jaipur Rawat Publications, 2003. print.
 Oxford Dictionaries. cum. OUP. Archived from the original, 5 November 2013. Retrieved 4 May 2016.