

## **MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT**

### **Dynamics of Nation-Community Interface: A Political Reading of Rohinton Mistry's Narratives**

**Sanctioned to Dr E. Victor Vaz, Assistant Professor in English**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The study on 'Dynamics of Nation-Community Interface: A Political Reading of Rohinton Mistry's Narratives' has achieved the objectives of the proposed plan. The first chapter at length dwells on the key positions of culture, nation, nationalism and nation-building process. The study by analysing the creative works of Rohinton Mistry, a Canadian based emigrant writer of Parsi community from India has critically looked into Rohinton Mistry's positions on culture and nation-building process. The study undertaken has improvised on available studies on communities and identity politics to apply it to analysing literary works so that a balanced-healthy attitude towards community-nation building dynamics could be evolved. *Such a Long Journey, A Fine Balance and Family Matters*, three novels of Rohinton Mistry used for the analysis show how a minority community participated or involved in the nation-building processes of India in the post-colonial.

The present study has examined the inter-community relations made possible in the context of the nation-building pressures in India. All the works of Rohinton Mistry mostly concern the Parsi community's experience in the independent India throw light on how community acts or made to react at various crucial segments of the nation-building process. The writing of Mistry gives us a feeling that he has chronicled the experience of the Parsi Community in his writings authentically to understand the pressures that the community experience during the nation-building process. The trials and tribulations the community experienced during the period of Emergency, the fallout of the rule of Shiv Sena in Mumbai, various strengths and the shortcomings of the community such as dwindling number of the community, the reforms initiated, the post-colonial Mumbai, corruption that prevailed in India, the issues relating to migration, the complexities of the father-son relationship, frustration and humiliations experienced by the community were visited. The study has assessed the interplay between the ethno-religious communities particularly the minority and the majority community, between the political forces as envisaged in the works of Rohinton Mistry.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE PROJECT:**

Religious communities are not only vital, crucial and quite sensitive elements in the existence of the modern nation state but they also play a pivotal role in economic and political affairs of a nation. India has cradled many communities; the development of nation is reflected in the attitude of a nation towards different religious communities in the country. The study clearly underlines the importance of understanding the impact of communities and cultures on nationalism and nation-building process and vice versa. Through observing certain stances of the Parsi community in the post-colonial Independent scenario through the reading of Rohinton Mistry's novels the minor project 'Dynamics of Nation-Community Interface: A Political Reading of Rohinton Mistry's Narratives' has analysed the pressures of the nationalism and nation-building process or vice versa.

Studies on community, culture and the nation building-process with reference to the creative writings are not the phenomena peculiar to India. Therefore, the study of the literary works of an émigré and a socio-political novelist like Rohinton Mistry concerning the Parsi community definitely has significance in cultural lines, sociological analysis, political implications and from the perspective of literary theory. It is a very useful source of information to understand the community dynamics in the context of the nation-building process in Independent India since the study seriously interrogates the life of Parsi community in the creative writings of Rohinton Mistry applying different theoretical understandings of Nation, community and nation-building process. All the three novels analysed in the study depict the Parsi community life in particular and the life of India in general in a realistic mode of narration by shedding light on the socio-political conditions of Parsi community in the Post-colonial Indian context. The study undertaken will help to understand the similar communities elsewhere in the country, although the conditions may not be the same. By exploring the internal dynamics that are at work within the community the work has made an attempt to understand the community better. Furthermore, the study on Parsi community through the readings of the novels of Rohinton Mistry is useful to understand the 'community' in particular and the 'nation' in general.

## **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS:**

The twentieth century made a remarkable progress in terms of unprecedented connectivity and globalization. As a result a large numbers of people sought their fortunes in distant foreign lands and countries. It is true that the migration or the movement of people is an essential condition of human experience, but still the large migration and movement of the masses in the twentieth century had a different kind of an experience. The migrated reconnected quite differently with the homeland. The differently reconnected emotional craving of the twentieth century migrants finds a different space in the narrative analogy. These experiences have in a way created ambiguous identities of race, nation and class with a different proposition of value standards in modern times. These ambiguous identities are a historical constructs of modern times.

The unique experiences of Rohinton Mistry, a migrant Parsi writer on his community and about his homeland is very significant. Mistry, being a socio-political novelist has written novels and most short stories about the life of Indian Parsees or about India itself. Hence, different political actions become a part of his thematic concerns. Not only his writings root in the social and political background of the Parsis living in India but strongly figure out the undercurrents of Indian politics. The political reading of Rohinton Mistry's narratives as Mistry has turned the lives of Parsi's in India into a metaphor which stands for human experience-traumatic individual experiences, caused by the multiple demands of community-nation identities, which have great implications and insights for the entire human race.

The study understands the 'national' feeling created or manufactured by works of art and literature is closely connected to the emotive segment of any community. The sentiment built and sustained in the process of nation-building by various communities through various functionalities of communities is an important element in the making of a nation. Language, ethnicity and religion were of paramount importance in the construction of Indian nation state.

The study on Parsi community reveals that however negligible the number of a community, no community could be over looked on account of it because being a miniscule minority community in India the contributions and the strength exhibited by the Parsi community in the process of nation-building in India is immense. The study has assessed the interplay between the ethno-religious communities particularly the minority and the majority community between the political forces as envisaged in the works of Rohinton Mistry. The pressures felt by

the Parsi community during the emergency and the rule of Shiv Sena in Mumbai has brought out the fears and insecurity felt by the community in the democratic political sphere of India. The analysis of Community-nation interface reveals the deep anxiety experienced by the minority community during the nation-building process.

### **CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIETY:**

Since the research work, ‘Dynamics of Nation-Community Interface: A Political Reading of Rohinton Mistry’s Narratives’ analyses the impact of communities and cultures on nationalism and nation-building process and vice versa, it will benefit the society to understand the interplay between these significant players in the making of a nation. The study provides useful source of information to understand the community dynamics in the context of the nation-building and helps to understand the similar communities elsewhere in the country, although the conditions may not be the same. The study, by analysing the socio-political conditions of the minority community, understands the apprehension felt and expressed by the minority community at different levels.

The study undertaken explores the internal dynamics that are at work within the community. The study reveals that every community, including the miniscule minority like the Parsi community has a great deal to contribute in shaping and making of a nation. The study understands the community dynamics in the context of the nation-building. In the nation-building process, the contribution of the minority community could be immense at times unnoticed. The study analyses migration at two levels, at the level of a community and individual level. Therefore, it could be used to understand the nature of migration. The multi-cultural nation like India needs to vibrate differently with different communities. The study carried on could be used to understand the Parsi community in particular and the minority communities in general. The research work has provided an understanding of Parsi community’s stance in the nation-building process by observing community dynamics in the context of the nation-building by looking into Mistry – personal, institutional, and community – that has shaped his sensibility.