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ETHNICITY IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S WORKS: A POST-MODERN PERSPECTIVE

Anjan Das, Assistant Professor in English, B. N. Mahavidyalaya, Itachuna, Hooghly, West Bengal

Abstract: This paper is prepared to explore the 'ethnicity' in Mistry's major works, which get huge success in postmodern scenario. The term 'ethnicity', which is related with socio-cultural tradition of a community in the context of another major community, is profoundly discussed from the characterization and the events presented in the novels. The Parsi community, which has a 'hoary past' but declining populace, is undoubtedly a disclaimer of preserving their own ethnic identity not only in southern Asian countries, but also across the world. Being a Parsi-diaspora, Mistry's fictional sensitivity encompasses not only the Parsi ethnicity alone, but even all others who serve a live co-existence since Pre-Independence era to the present time. Mistry's works of monumental repute make a concerted attempt to analyse and validate the ethnic dimensions in multifarious contexts of Indian society, keeping in mind the post modern perspectives.

Key Words: Ethnicity, postmodern, socio-cultural tradition, hoary past, ethnic identity.

Introduction

Postmodernism witnesses infinity of enlightenment in all spheres of life. Since the end of colonial era, a colonized nation feels free to celebrate her liberty with heart's content no bound. An "Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind" (Byron, 1) penetrates the sensitivity of all suffered long under the tyranny of the colonizers. What the modernist Matthew Arnold experiences the low ebb of 'Sea of Faith' in humanity, the postmodernists like T. S. Eliot take further step to feel 'death-in-life' existence all around the Western world, Samuel Beckett basically identifies the 'absurdity' in human life, and what the French author Eugene Ionesco puts forward, is worth mentioning here:

Cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost;
all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless. (Martin Esslin, 23)

In realm of Indian literature in English, the visualization of A. K. Ramanujan making a stark contrast between the ancient and new poets in act of eulogy of the emblematic river, is a fine instance of postmodern outburst, Equally is the voice of Salman Rushdie, who provides his kaleidoscope envision of 'magic realism' in *Midnight's Children* to show the fine blending of fantasy and mundane reality in fictional narrative. With its chief dictum 'cogito, ergo sum' ("I think, therefore I am", Rene Descartes), the postmodern approach, in fact, welcomes the subjectivism as an undercurrent ideology, wherein supremely reigns the concepts of identity and ethnicity as paramount parameters of socio-cultural life in a society. Indeed, ethnic identity, which specifies one's socio-cultural recognition in a certain time and space, is a hallmark of any community, either in multi-communal India, or across the country. Parsi Community is no exception of it, wherein the much acclaimed novelist Rohinton Mistry, along with his major works dubbed in maximum post modern formulations of colonial hangover, hybridism, socio-cultural pastiches, economic disparity, freelance spirit etc. reigns supreme.

Ethnicity in Indo-Parsi Literature in English

As a postcolonial imprint, everything English culture became one and all for Parsi ethnicity. English education, English dress code, English social courtesies and etiquette---all of these caused a huge