Abstract:

Rohinton Mistry has emerged as a formidable writer on the world literary scene. He is a very popular member of Indian diaspora. He occupies a significant position as an Indian diasporic writer. In almost all the works of Rohinton Mistry we find an Indian setting. They brilliantly capture India and its environment. They deal with images of Indian culture and they are closely linked with the social and political background of our country. They deal with the streets of Bombay, the Parsi way of life and the people of the city. In his fiction he not only portrays the picture of his contemporary social and political life but also offers commentary on the historical situations and raises a national debate. They depict the diverse facets of Indian socio-economic life and culture as well as the life, customs, and religion of the Parsis.

Key Words: Diaspora, Parsi, Bombay, Noslalgia, Culture.
Mistry’s writings are markedly nostalgic. It is Mistry’s unmistakable yearning to go back to his roots nostalgically that finds its multiple expressions in his fictional world. During the course of narration he imagines India in its multifaceted complexities and realities. Jagdish Batra is of the view that:

While choosing the time-tested method of conventional story-telling, Mistry could very effectively communicate his point of view on the intractable complexities of life in India.¹

Although Rohinton Mistry is cited almost everywhere as a Canadian writer, Canada hardly features in his writing. He chooses to revisit his original home, city and culture rather than detail the immigrant experience. In an interview; he discusses why he writes about Bombay, the middle class Parasi in Bombay, the world he has left behind:

Going to Canada, faced with the reality of earning a living and realizing that although I had, up to that point in my life, read books and listened to music that came from the west, there was a lot more involved in living in the west. I felt very comfortable with the books and the music, but actually living in the west made that same music seem much less relevant. It suddenly brought home to me very clearly the fact that I was imitating something that was not mine, that made no sense in terms of my own life, my own reality.²

Mistry’s fictional writing includes *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, *Such a Long Journey*, *A Fine Balance* and *Family Matters*. *Tales from Firozsha Baag* is Mistry’s first collection of eleven interrelated short stories. All the stories of *Tales from Firozsha Baag* are set within one apartment complex in Bombay. Here is a wonderful introduction to the residents of Firozsha Baag. The tales detail the day to day lives of the residents of the above mentioned apartment complex. They deal with middle class life among the Parsi community and the problems of their everyday life. Like other middle class persons in Bombay the residents of Firozsha Baag have to engage in daily battle with intermittent water-supply, dilapidated homes, peeling paint, falling plaster and leaking roof. These fantastic tales gives us an opportunity to enter into the daily routine and rhythm of their lives, and by the time we reach the final story we are as familiar with the people of Firozsha Baag as we are with our own neighbours. The crowded, throbbing life of India is brilliantly captured in this series of stories. Here ‘Mistry uses the narrative technique of memory and remembering.’³

Silvia Albertazzi is of the view:

A born story teller, in his tales Mistry depicts middle class life among the Parsi community, as he recalls it from abroad. All his eleven intersecting stories are set in an apartment block in Bombay where a number of Parsi
families live: all the people who live there are, in turn, the protagonists of one or more short stories. The author himself tells the last one, thus revealing that he comes from Forozsha Baag, too.⁴

Rohinton Mistry's debut novel, *Such a Long Journey*, is loosely based upon a series of real events that took place during the Indira Gandhi administration. Bombay is the setting of *Such a Long Journey*. Haldar Santwana is of the view:

> Such a long Journey is the first novel written by Rohinton Mistry, a writer of Indian Diaspora, who settled in Canada. Though the novel was published sixteen years after Rohinton Mistry had settled in Toronto, it has no trace of Canada. Rather, it reveals the author’s deep concern for the Parsi’s in India in particular, and for the development of post colonial India in general.⁵

*Such a Long Journey* is an intricate tale of the triumphs and disasters of a kind hearted bank clerk’s friends and family set in India in 1971, a time of domestic turbulence and war with Pakistan. Set during that year's conflict with Pakistan, the novel concerns a Parsi man, Gustad Noble, who works at a bank. Silvia Albertazzi puts the plot of this novel as such:

> In Bombay, in 1971, Gustad Noble is a Parsi bank clerk and a family man. He has two children, Sohrab, a university student, and Roshan, nine years old, and a loving wife. His life is shattered when he receives a letter from an old friend, Major Jimmy Billimoria, requesting him to receive a package for him. This letter does not only plunge Gustad at the core of a complicated political situation, but is itself harbinger of disaster. His son leaves home after quarrelling with him over the young man’s refusal to go to the Indian Institute of Technology. His daughter falls ill. The municipal government requisitions the land where his apartment stands in order to widen the road. And last but not least, the contents of Billimoria’s package put at risk Gustad’s job at the bank. During the chaotic times of the Bangladesh war, family order is disrupted and Gustad has to find a new way to look at reality and cope with the outside world.⁶

The novel begins at the dawn of a typical day with all its familiar sounds and smells: The first light of morning barely illumined the sky as Gustad Noble faced eastward to offer his orisons to Ahura Mazda. The hour was approaching six, and up in the compound’s solitary tree the sparrows began to call.⁷

The milkman is selling diluted milk to women in the early hours, perhaps the first indication of contamination and corruption that is to take on greater intimations in the story. The next is the limited water supply – another perennial Bombay problem.
Gustad Noble, the protagonist, suffers throughout the novel. First, Gustad’s son refuses to get admitted in IIT; secondly he receives a letter and a parcel from his old friend Jimmy that ultimately leads a lot of complication. Thirdly, some mysterious disease affects his beloved daughter Roshan; finally he loses his friend Dinshawji. All these sufferings lead to Gustad’s pilgrimage. Here, we find a typical kind of Indianess. The protagonist visits many places like Mount St. Mary’s Christian church, Haji Baba Mosque, a Muslim pilgrim place. It is found in India that whenever a person suffers, he assumes religious tolerance in order to get rid of the problem. Holy places of other religions are also visited by him. The novelist gives a clear account of how people in India follow many superstitions.

Mistry produced Gustad’s character as a typical Indian father. Indian fathers have dreams about their children but when they fail to fulfill their dreams, they feel frustrated. In this novel, Gustad’s dream is to submit Sohrab in IIT but when Sohrab refuses to get admitted, Gustad thinks that the whole world has turned against him:

All I wanted for him to have a chance at a good career. T chance wrenched away from me. Now what I left? What is left in life? Tell me, Dada Ormuzd, What? 8

This is the first trouble that Gustad faces in the novel. Mistry has brought out the conflict between father and son. This is very common in Indian families. It presents a picture of Indian youths who rebel against their parents’ will.

Gustad Noble had decided to celebrate the birthday of Roshan who is a dashing member of the family. He has made nice provisions for the party with chicken, basmati rice and xxx Rum to be served. After the pleasant gossip and Dinshawji’s jokes, the discussion starts on Indian politics. In the course of discussion Dinshawji condemns Indira Gandhi. He calls her a shrewd woman who encouraged the demand for a separate Maharashtra which caused a lot of rioting and bloodshed. The result is that today there is the Shiv Sena.. This condemnation of Indira Gandhi continues at the party. The atmosphere gets charged with Gustad joining the anti-Shiv-Sena tirade. He recalls how they had indulged in violence against the Parsis. After that when they begin to have food, the light goes out and an argument between Gustad and Sohrab about his IIT admission begins.

The place from where the mysterious parcel sent by Billimoria is to be collected enables Mistry to bring in yet another Bombay institution, the Chor Bazar. As Gushad gathers strength to start settling Billimoria’s murky deal, the famous Bombay monsoon breaks up, something Mistry recalls with nostalgia and irritation. Mistry does not miss anything while talking about incessant rains. Taking Roshan to Dr. Paymaster’s clinic also gives Mistry the opportunity to portray his busy routine in a busy place. At the end Mistry gets a chance to
describe the fabled Indian train journey, all its comedies, absurdities and inconveniences – bribing of coolies to get seats, the fleeing of passengers for buying eatables, the bad toilets, the heat, etc.

*A Fine Balance* is Mistry's masterpiece. It is his second novel. It was published in 1995. It won the second annual Giller Prize and Commonwealth Writers Prize. The subject-matter of this work of art is India. Set against the Emergency Measures imposed by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the mid-1970s, the novel is a powerful and painful examination of a humanity beset by social and political repression. It is a record of this shameful episode that is rendered with remarkable poignancy and honesty. Here Mistry concentrates his attention on the criminalization of politics as it began with the Emergency in 1975. Suspension of basic fundamental rights granted by the constitution led to widespread resentment by the opposition parties, spearheaded by the late Jayprakash Narayan. They branded it as the darkest hour in the Indian politics. The short story of the novel is:

Set in India in 1975, in an unnamed city by the sea, during Indira Gandhi’s State of Emergency, the novel is the story of four people: a young widow called Dina, two tailors who help her in her sewing shop and a student renting a room in her apartment. In the first 250 pages, we learn about the previous lives of the four characters. In Dina’s family a tyrannical brother dominated the household after the death of her father and consequently her mother suffered mental illness. A widow after only three years of marriage, Dina strives to be independent, in order not to go back to her brother’s house, where she is treated like a servant. The two tailors, Ishwar and Omprakash, had their dwellings burned down by the government because of their attempt to rise out of their caste; the student Maneck, comes from a difficult family situation. Starting from reciprocal diffidence, the four characters learn friendship and compassion among every possible hardship. They will keep on going despite the tragedies happening in their lives and in the lives of their friends. Forced vasectomies, amputations, loss of work and dwelling are among the misfortunes which befall them, while around them their acquaintances are tortured by the police, commit suicide out of sheer hoplessness, and are hanged to the branches of the tree and so on. Mistry follows the destinies of all these outcasts and underdogs until the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984.9

There is a portrayal of India in *A Fine Balance* from various directions. It is about the sufferings of the four characters due to political interference especially during emergency period. Dina Dalal, a Parsi widow, Om and Ishvar, two untouchables and Maneck a youth
from border of India are the major characters. The novel is set against the background of 1975 but it also speaks about the history of India for the 75 years. Om and Ishvar are the untouchables depicted in the novel. While narrating these characters the novelist has taken events before the Independence of India. Mahatma Gandhi’s ideas about untouchables, their sufferings and the upper class society are vividly depicted in the novel. The novelist says that the atrocities towards the untouchables continued even after Independence. It was at its peak during the emergency. Mistry has tried his best to present the pitiable condition of dwellers of the slum areas of Dharavi and Kurla.

_A Fine Balance_ deals with the sufferings and difficulties faced by common man in India. It tells how four characters – Dina Dalal, Om, Ishvar Darji and Maneck Kolah – come together to live in the madness of Bombay. The narrative describes their backgrounds with their loads of woes and miseries. Mistry has chosen characters from minority and suppressed communities. In each character India may be found. Togetherness of all these characters shows how the people in India manage to live in such a crucial and wretched condition. Maneck represents youth of India who shares how youths in India were suppressed during emergency. Avinash, a friend of Maneck, a student leader, is killed in a suspicious way. Maneck’s life is disturbed by the death of Avinash. Maneck goes to the train station, his world shattered. He walks out on the tracks as an express train approaches the station and commits suicide by letting the train run over him. Suicide on a railway track is common phenomena in India.

Indian family affinity and hospitality is revealed in _A Fine Balance_. Maneck comes to Dina’s house as a paying guest and behaves as if he is her son. Maneck is rebellions against his father because he does not want to help his father in business. But Maneck’s father does not want maneck to continue the family business. In the same way Ishvar wants Om to get married but Om refuses. But at least he agrees to marry. Dina first refuses to live with her brother Nusswan but later, she is reconciled to him. One can find a kind of Indian family affinity amongst the minor characters. The character of Ashraf reveals the Hindu – Muslim brotherhood. Narayan and Ishvar save Ashraf’s family from rioting Hindus.

The Emergency has a direct impact on the lives of the four main characters of the novel. Nearly all the major characters are affected due to emergency.

Dina and the tailors’ business runs fairly smoothly for almost a year, but effects of the Emergency bother them often. The shantytown where the tailors live is knocked down in a government’s beautification programme and the residents are uncompensated and forced to move into the streets. Later Ishvar and Om are rounded up by a police beggar raid and are sold to a labor camp. After two months in the camp they bribe their way out with the help of
the Beggarmaster. Ishvar and Om are lucky and Dina decides to let them stay with her. The tailors and Dina find trouble from the landlord because she is not supposed to be running a business from her flat. She pretends that Ishvar is her husband and Om their son and also get protection from the Beggarmaster.

Ishvar and Om return to their village to find a wife for Omprakash who is now eighteen. Maneck also returns home. He takes a lucrative job in Middle Eastern Dubai. Dina, being alone now, and her protector the Beggarmaster having been murdered, has no protection from the landlord who wants to break her apartment's rent control and charge more rent, so she is evicted. Dina is forced to again live with her brother, Nusswan.

Omprakash and Ishvar return to their old town Ashraf Chacha gives them a place to stay while they search for marriage prospects for Om. Ishvar and Om become the victims of forced sterilization. The vasectomy takes place. After vasectomy they suffer from infection.

Eight years later, Maneck returns home for the first time from Dubai for his father's funeral. Maneck is repulsed by the violence that follows after the Prime Minister's assassination, for which Sikhs are killed. He returns home and attends the funeral. While at home he reads old newspapers and learns that Avinash's three sisters have hanged themselves, unable to bear their parents' humiliation at not being able to provide dowries for their marriages. Shocked and shaken, he decides to visit Dina in Mumbai for better news. He learns from Dina the horrific lives that Ishvar and Om – one disabled and the other castrated – have led as beggars after their village visit. As Maneck leaves, he encounters Om and Ishvar on the street. The two former tailors are nearly unrecognizable because of their filth, and don't appear to recall him. They say ‘Salaam’ to him, but he doesn't know what to say and walks on. After sometime he commits suicide.

How social and political conditions affect the middle class and the marginalized community is highlighted in this novel. The lives of four main characters namely, Dina, Ishvar, Om and Maneck, are interwoven. They try to overcome their hurdles but fail to maintain a fine balance. It is a conscious effort to embrace more of the social reality of India. It is crucial to realise that Mistry’s portrayal of Hindu culture is not an impartial ethnographic account of Indian society. He suggests that stark injustices are inherent in the practice of caste. The inhumanity of untouchability is severely criticised as a contributing to an erosion of meaning in the lives of Dukhi, Narayan, Ishvar and Om. An example for the cruelty and arbitrariness that characterises their treatment by their betters is illustrated in the following way:

The news was the same type that dukhi had heard evening after evening during his childhood; only the names were different. For walking on the
upper-caste side of the street, Sita was stoned, though not to death— the stones had ceased at first blood. Gambhir was less fortunate; he had molten lead poured into his ears because he ventured within hearing range of the temple while prayers were in progress. Dayaram, reneging on an agreement to plough a landlord’s field, had been forced to eat the landlord’s excrement in the village square. Dhiraj tried to negotiate in advance with Pandit Ghanshyam the wages for chopping wood, instead of settling for the few sticks he could expect at the end of the day; the Pandit got upset, accused dhiraj of poisoning his cows, and had him hanged.10

In 2002, Mistry published his third novel *Family Matters* which was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize. It is based in Bombay once more. Where his first two novels were set in the 1970’s and were essentially historical fictions however, *Family Matters* depicts contemporary Bombay and is set in the 1990s. It can be called a retreat into the Bombay Parsi world. It has been rightly called Mistry’s most compassionate book. The Shiv Sena is still around the novel. But the time of the novel is post Babri Masjid Bombay. The following is the plot summary of Family Matters according to Silvia Albertazzi:

Set in Bombay in recent years, the story deals with the problems concerning the caring of an elderly father in two branches of Parasi family. 79 nine year old Nariman Vakeel, who suffers from Parkinson’s disease, lives with his stepson and stepdaughter, both single and in their forties. Living together is very difficult, because the young people cannot forget how Nariman neglected their mother for the sake of a former lover. Actually, Nariman’s marriage was an arranged one: compelled by his parents to break his long lasting affair with a Christian woman, he had accepted to marry a Parsi widow with two children. Of the marriage a baby daughter, Roxana, was born. After his wife’s death in tragic circumstances which will be revealed only at the end of the book, and his daughter’s marriage, he had been left alone with the two step children. When Nariman breaks his ankle accidentally, he is moved to Roxana’s. Here he has to share a two room flat with her, her husband Yezad and two children. Yezad’s meager salary is not enough to satisfy the demands of a bedridden old man, and Roxana’s physical and mental health is badly affected by the hard work. Yet Nariman’s stepdaughter refuses to her stepfather back, taking this situation as an opportunity to take revenge for how her mother was treated. Only after her accidental death, can Nariman go back to his own large apartment, this time together with Roxana’s family. But it is already too late:
Yezad, who looked for comfort in religion, had become a Parsi fundamentalist. His children resent the change of environment, and Nariman dies soon afterwards.\textsuperscript{11}

The focus in \textit{Family Matters} is more personal than political, though the political fall out does leave an impact upon the life and profession of all the characters of the novel. Amidst the family chatter, there is gossip of Shiv Sena. Husain, a peon of Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium, is a tragic victim of the Babri Masjid riot. His wife and children were killed in the riot. Shiv Sena involved in looting and burning the poor and innocent people. Hussain describes the incident in the following words:

In those riots the police were behaving like gangsters. In Muslim mohallas, they were shooting their guns at innocent people. Houses were burning; neighbours came out to throw water. And the police? Firing bullets like target practice. These guardians of the law were murdering everybody! And my poor wife and children…. I could not even recognize them.\textsuperscript{12}

Mistry has chosen Bombay as a background for all his novels and short stories. At the same time Bombay is also portrayed as an interesting city and is being loved by his characters especially in \textit{Family Matters}. Here Mistry describes various features of Bombay:

You see how we two are sitting here, sharing? That’s how people lived in Bombay. That’s why Bombay has survived floods, disease, plague, water shortage, bursting drains and sewers, all the population pressures. In her heart there is room for everyone who wants to make a home here.\textsuperscript{13}

Mr. Kapur, the owner of Bombay Sports Emporium and Yezad’s boss is crazy about Bombay. Appreciating Bombay he says:

We had to run. And we came here. But Bombay treated us well. My father started over, with zero, and became prosperous. Only city in the world where this is possible.\textsuperscript{14}

Mistry’s attraction for Bombay is, no doubt, fantastic. It can be seen in the words of Mr. Kapur:

Bombay endures because it gives and receives. Within this warp and weft is woven the special texture of its social fabric, the spirit of tolerance, acceptance, generosity. Anywhere else in the world, in those so called civilized places like England and America, such terrible conditions would lead to revolution.\textsuperscript{15}

The conversation between Nariman and the doctor in the hospital provides Mistry an opportunity to discuss displacement of English from Indian University curriculum. This also
brings up the bane of Indian hospitals – unhygienic condition, lack of staff, and poor care of the patients. In *Family Matters* Mistry exposes the corrupt condition of India in the following lines:

Corruption is in the air we breathe. This nation specializes in turning honest people into crooks.\(^{16}\)

In *Family Matters* we can strongly observe the shadow of Indianness in his various characters. Through these characters Mistry has shown his own attachment with his motherland. The Protagonist of the novel Nariman Vakeel is a very loving person. He was madly in love with a Non Parsi girl Lucy. But in India it is commonly practiced that the children’s have to marry according to the wish of their parents. So the same was his tragedy. He was independent, earning well, mature enough but according to his parents he was not grown up enough to take the most important decision of his life that was Marriage. Nariman complains to Coomy:

In my Youth, my Parents controlled me and destroyed those years. Thanks to them, I married your mother and wrecked my middle years. Now you want to torment my old age. I won’t allow it.\(^{17}\)

Nariman, in his youth, loved a Christian girl called Lucy. But due to restriction in Parsi religion they could not marry. About eleven years Nariman and Lucy had planned to create a world for themselves. Lucy called it Cocoon:

A cocoon was what they needed, she said, into which they could retreat, and after their families had forgotten their existence, they would emerge like two glistering butterflies and fly away together.\(^{18}\)

Coomy schemes to make sure that Roxana is forced to care for her father in her tiny flat while she and Jal live in the relatively enormous family apartment, pretending that it is disintegrating and not fit for their father to live in. Nariman, a former professor, says:

To so many classes I taught Lear, learning nothing myself. What king of teacher is that, as foolish at the end of his life as at the beginning? .. Don’t worry, this Lear will go home again.\(^{19}\)

Roxana is Cordelia to Nariman’s Lear, the most favoured daughter who finds that Coomy, at least, is quite insincere to her father. Indeed, this family has its share of filial ingratitude and betrayal.

In every part of the world, families are taking decisions and taking certain degrees of responsibility for their elders. But this story is still utterly Indian and there is no question about whether Mistry is the deserving recipient of the Kiriyama award. While the story of taking care of our aging and dying elders is a world wide issue, the minutia of this family’s
daily life is distinctly Indian. Bombay’s train system, arranged marriages, unending corruption of government, religious discrimination, exploding pressure cookers full of curry, pollution and jewel toned saris, extremists whose goal it is to abolish Valentine’s day and attacks Muslims, children escaping into an Enid Blyton book to fantasize about the sort of British that aren’t even in England… the beauty and agony of India act almost as another character in the story.

Roxana’s husband, Yezad, works for a sporting goods emporium and has, in the past, eloquently written for permission to immigrate his family to Canada. Mistry himself immigrated to Canada some twenty years ago, as part of the nearly subconscious desire in India to find better opportunities in the west.

Mistry is amongst one of the author who belongs to India but settled in some other part of the world long ago but still could not give up the passion for writing about their motherland. For him India is important as a subject matter. India or more specially Bombay is a resource for Mistry that he draws on in every piece of work he has published to the date. So it is essential to evaluate Bombay from the parameter of Indianness.

The center of Such a Long Journey is metropolitan Bombay, the Bombay of dreams and nightmares, of hopes and despair, of joy and suffering, of comedies and tragedies. It is the Bombay Mistry had known as a child and a grown-up, and the way the city undergoes change. But Bombay, as is presented in the novel is also one which had been created and developed by ethno-religious minorities; the buildings, the institutions, the landmarks and the overall character of the city, all stand witness to this multi-cultural character of the place. It is then that one can understand the later monolithic view of the city, which become the capital of Maharashtra, and thus sought to be taken control of by the Shiv Sena. It is this that brings in a confrontationist idea of belonging, a politically charged atmosphere that lies behind the narrative in a significant way. But, despite all his polemical politics about whose identity is threatened or is eroded, Mistry has the compassion and the broad worldview to celebrate each and every aspect of Bombay. Mistry’s Bombay is still the celluloid capital, of the lilt of famous music directors, the Carnival’s queue, crowded Bombay of great variety and possibilities.

At one level, the novel excels in interesting details about Bombay markets, streets, institutions, festivals and other well-known aspects. We find all kinds of mixed-up rituals and practices, cutting across Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Muslims and others finding place in the narrative. Mistry devotes a lot of time and space to describe the English language to send his own purposes. Several styles and dialects, forms of speech taken from Gujarati, Marathi and other languages are spoken, to contaminate the so-called purity of the English language. This
is, as is well-known, a key feature of post-colonial writers too, who have indianised the English language to bring in local colour, regional and ethnic flavour in their works. Mistry does not hesitate to use scatological details to expose the dirt and squalor of Bombay. A glimpse of life of chawls can be seen in Mistry’s *A Fine Balance*:

The tap is out there, in the middle of the lane. Most convenient. You won’t have to go far for water, like they do in other inferior colonies. This is a nice place.’ He swept his arm around to take in the field. ‘Newly developed, not too crowded. The rent is one hundred rupees per month. In advance.’ Nawaz tapped the walls with his fingers like a doctor examining a chest, then stamped his foot on a floor plank, making it wobble. He made an approving face. Well built’, he whispered to the tailors.

Navalkar gave a circular nod. ‘We have even better huts. You want to see? ‘No harm in looking’, said Nawaz. They were led behind the rows of tin-and-plastic jhopadpattis to a set of eight brick-walled huts. The roofs once again were of rusted corrugated metal. These are two hundred and fifty rupees per month. But for that money you get a pukka floor and electric light’. He pointed to the poles that fed wires to the huts, pirated from the street-lighting supply.

The literary members of Indian diaspora use the names of Indian dresses, cuisines, flowers, pots and many other things deliberately. Through this act they want to affirm their existence and identity. These things exhibit the everyday modes of life. Mistry’s language is a fine specimen of his indianness. When he describes typical Indian scenes, situations and characters, he uses a different kind of language. His fiction is conspicuous for his use of vernacular. The vernacular expressions like bhaiya, chacha, saali, yaar, arre, malik, seth, huzoor, kusti, mua, jhopadpattis, chawl, kholis, dholni, masala, hing, basmati, thaali, chumchas, paan, goaswalla, charbee, murgi, subjo, agarbattiu, loban, rajai, mogra, chamayli, goolbahar, surajmukhi, nargis, champee malis, tayel malis, jaadu-mantar, tamaasha, satta, charkhla, bawa, namaaz, mukaadam, kuchrawalli, kutchoomber, gherao, morcha, bungalee, punchayat, maali, sudra, sabaash, papee, palung tod paan, chamaat, chaalo-chaalo, raakh-bhoosa, dil deke dekho, lorri, arre baap, bhoot, humko kuch nahin maloom, etc. abound in his fiction.

There is also a good example of mix language in which he uses Hindi, Marathi and English. He freely uses vernacular abusive expressions as- goondas, maader chod, hijdaas, golaas, bay-sharam, bahan chod, jungles, bhungees, devdasis, rundees, vaishyas, baywakoof and budtameesz.
Indian slogans like ‘Hindi – Chinee bhai-bhai’ \(^{21}\) ‘Nahi chalaygi! Nahi chalaygi! Municipality ki dadagiri nahi chalaygi’ \(^{22}\) ‘gully gully mey shor hai, Congress party chor hai’ \(^{23}\) Bharat Mata ki Jai, \(^{24}\) etc. have been frequently used. We find the names of Indian films in the text as ‘Jis Deshme Ganga Bahati Hai’ \(^{25}\) Mistry writes the beginning lines of a popular Indian song as it is ‘sausaal pahale, mujay tumsay pyar tha, mujay tumsay pyar tha, ajbhi hai, aur kal bhi rahagya’ \(^{26}\)

Use of Indian jokes is a very important device employed by Rohinton Mistry in his works. In Such A long Journey, the women of the compound gather round the bhaiya, the milk sailor, and old Miss Kupiti shrieks from above for watery milk. After giving the instruction for the next delivery, someone joked with the man: ‘Arre bhaiya, why not sell the milk and water separately? Better for the customer, easier for you also- no mixing to do’. \(^{27}\)

Mr. Dinshawji, Gustad’s friend at the bank, tells an endless number of crude jokes and gives his audience comic anecdotes about his wife, whom he describes as his domestic vulture, even while he is dying of stomachache cancer. He tells jokes everyday in the canteen:

Everyday in canteen, over lunch, their regular group told jokes. They told the perennially popular Sikh jokes. (What did the Sardarji runner say, after finishing first in the Asian Games, when asked: ‘Are you relaxing now? He said: ‘No, no I am still Arjun Singh’). \(^{28}\)

Mistry has included jokes from every group of society or religion. Even he does not spare his own Parsi community with its vast reputation:

The group in the canteen did not spare themselves either, joking about the vast reputation of the Parsi proboscis (What happens when a bawaji with an erection walks into a wall? He hurts his nose). No linguistic or ethnic group was spared; perfect equality prevailed in the canteen when it came to jokes. \(^{29}\)

Besides good jokes we find some erotic jokes in Mistry’s novels. In Such A Long Journey Dinshawji tells an erotic joke to Gustad:

The first man says, ‘Yaar, ever since my wife started driving lessons, new-new things she does in her sleep. Grabs my lorry and says, first gear, second gear, reverse- this way and that way she keeps twisting it.’ Then the second fellow says, ‘Changing gears? That’s nothing. My wife, in the middle of the night, catches my lorry, puts it in, and says, twenty liters petrol, please.’ \(^{30}\)
References


8. Ibid. p. 178.


13. Ibid. p. 152.


15. Ibid. p. 152.


17. Ibid. p. 7.


19. Ibid. p. 287.


22. Ibid. p. 327.

23. Ibid. p. 325.

24. Ibid. p. 308.

25. Ibid. p. 325.

26. Ibid. p. 205.

27. Ibid. p. 5.
28. Ibid. p.70-71.
29. Ibid. p.71.
30. Ibid. p.172.