



## DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF LITERARY DEMOCRACY IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S NOVELS

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### ABSTRACT

*Recently we celebrated the anniversary of the father of nation, Mahathma Gandhi. A female priest from U.P desecrated the effigy of Gandhi .But she is free from the punishment and the same time now a days our mother country India facing many troubles and tribulation in the field of literature as freedom of speech and writings may be crushed by political power or majoritarian politics. Writers like Dabholkar, Pansare and Gouri Lankesh were shoot dead by those sort of conmen and goondas. And a few writers or artist like Grish Karnad Prakash Raj are threatened by write wing groups. Even though they are fostering and strengthening secular idea and harmony among the citizens of India. It will not accepted or digested by a few politicians, who are aware about this chairs in the political arena, have exercised disharmony and venomous speech whereas a spider emits its poison to the purified water. They advertently spread their venomous concept and hate policy to divide the citizen of India in the sect of religion and caste to profit their politics. In this connection, Rohinton Mistry's novels also emanates the Post- Babri issues, fear of minorities, Indhira Ghandhi's emergency which affects ethnic minorities in India. He also portraits his subconscious voice through his work "Such a Long Journey". He expresses his views about the Parsi people in a polite and mild way, because he does not want to suppress and oppress the hands of the political powers, rightwing group R. S. S, and Shiv Sena. After reading his novels, I feel a type of nervousness that is why he left or missed the footnote subject of sufferings of innocent Muslims, Parsees and Daliths in his works.*

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## INTRODUCTION

A man of social activist and protector of secularism and left wing writer is physically no more. Pansare who running an organization which support inter-caste marriages. He had detested the Putrakameshti yajna, (a Hindu ritual that supposed results in a male child). Pansare had acted the members of Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti to continue his work. He is worked an Assistant Professor in Russian language at the Shivaji University, Kolhapur. He is also a cadre of CPI, now holds the post of President in Kolhapur District. He was a rationalist.

He has produced more than twenty books, most of the books are commentaries on social wrongs. *Shivaji Kon Hota?* Marathi for *Who was Shivaji?* is considered to his most notable work. It was based on a speech he gave in May 1987. It was a counter satire to the ideology of Hindutva organisations and right-wing organisation like Shiv Sena for whom the king Shivaji is important Figure. Pansare in his book that Shivaji in reality was a secular leader who appointed Muslims as his generals. He also opined out that Shivaji respected women, abolished slavery. The book has been translated into many languages such as Hindi, English, Kannada, Urdu and Gujarati. Since its first print in 1988 and the book has seen thirty eight editions, with each print run being of 3000 to 5000 copies. It has sold over 1, 45,000 copies. Pansare was returning from his morning walk from his society. Two unidentified person on a motorcycle shot five times at him at a close range outside his house. Pansare was wounded in his neck and chest. He remained in a coma. The modus operandi of the attackers was similar to that used by the criminals and conmen who killed activist Narendra Dabholkar in a separate morning attack in August 2013.

Sharad Pawar, leader of Nationalist Congress Party, said this was an attempt to silence the people who speak against extremists. Manikrao Thakre, an Indian National Congress leader, said that the attacks on Dabholkar and Pansare were a bad sign for the freedom of speech in Maharashtra state. After Pansare's death, the sales of his books increased. According to my point of view that we can wipe out his existence but not his utterances and intelligence. On the other hand, the Additional Director General of Police, K. L. Bishnoi, said that there were no connections between the Dabholkar and Pansara case, except that both of them were wee hours walkers. Hamid Dabholkar criticised the statement pointing out both Dabholkar and Pansare were rationalists and opponents of right-wing extremism, and had been threatened several times.

Dabholkar working as a doctor, social worker and later became involved with movements for social justice, such as Baba Adhav's Ek Gaon Ek Panotha (One village – One well) . Gradually Dabholkar started focusing on abolition of superstition and joined the Akhil



Bharatiya Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (ABANS). In 1989, he founded the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (MANS, "Committee for Eradication of Superstition in Maharashtra" or "Maharashtra Committee for Eradication of Blind Faith" campaigned circulate pamphlets against superstitions, confronting dubious trick and exorcism and claimed holy men who promised 'miracle cures' for ailments. He criticized the country's "godmen", self-styled Hindu ascetics who claim to perform miracles, mysteries and have many followers. He was one of the pioneers of *Parivartan*, a social action centre located in Satara district that seeks to "empower marginalized members of the community to lead lives of security, dignity, and prosperity. He was an active in a movements for the equality of Dalits (untouchables) and oppose India's caste system and caste-related violence. He advocated renaming the Marathwada University after Babasaheb Ambedkar, who is known as the author of India's constitution and fought for the equality of Dalits. Dabholkar wrote books on superstitions and their eradication, and had addressed over three thousand public meetings.

He made several failed attempts to get an anti-superstition law enacted in the state of Maharashtra. Under his supervision, MANS drafted the Anti-Jaadu Tona Bill (Anti-Superstition and Black Magic Ordinance). It was opposed by some political parties and the Warkari sect. Political parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena confronted it claiming it would adversely affect Hindu culture, customs and traditions. Critics accused him of being anti-religion and anti-nation but in an interview with the Agence France-Presse news agency he said, "In the whole of the bill, there's not a single word about God or religion. The Indian constitution allows freedom of worship, speech. Dabholkar had faced several threats and assaults since 1983 but had rejected police protection.

Dabholkar was murdered on a wee hours walk and shot down by two unidentified gunmen. The assailants fired four rounds at him from a point blank range and ran on a motorcycle parked nearby. Two bullets pierced Dabholkar in his head and chest and he died on the spot. Dabholkar had originally donated his body to a medical college. But, the postmortem made necessary by his murder left the slain leader's body unfit for education purposes. He was cremated in Satara without any religious rites. Dabholkar's assassination was condemned by many political leaders and social activists.

Gauri Lankesh was a reliable critic of right-wing Hindutva politics. She opposed the Sangh Parivar's alleged attempts to Hinduise the Sufi shrine Guru Dattatreya Baba Budan Dargah located at Baba Budan giri. Later she was participating in a protest demanding a ban on communal groups in Mangalore. She specified that Hinduism was not a religion but a "system of hierarchy in society" in which "women are treated as second-class creatures". She endorsed a minority religion tag for the Lingayat community and headed the Komu Souharda Vedike, a communal harmony platform for the plagued communities. Gauri was known for



advocating freedom of the press. She was opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party. In November 2014, the Congress-led Karnataka government appointed Gauri as a member of a committee setting at convincing the Naxalites to give up violence and surrender. However, some of the BJP leaders accused her of being a Naxalite's defender and necessitated her removal from the committee. The chief minister Siddaramaiah schemed the demand.

She was openly criticise the caste system. At the conference, Gauri remarked that the low-caste author Perumal Murugan was criticized by right-wing Hindu groups for depicting a childless Hindu couple who indulged in consensual sex rituals outside of marriage in order to have children. Also she pointed out that the Brahmin novelist S. L. Bhyrappa had also expressed the similar Niyoga practice in his novel *Parva*, a retelling of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*.

Gauri stated that she was being targeted for her left-leaning political views, as the BJP leaders did not sue other local dailies who had published the same allegations. Gauri specified that the BJP leaders had managed to cover their tracks by reaching a compromise with the jeweler; she refused to disclose her source for the corruption allegations against them. She also described the court verdict as a temporary setback and declared that she would challenge it in the higher court. Gauri considered the activists Jignesh Mevani, Kanhaiya Kumar, Umar Khalid and Shehla Rashid Shora as her "adopted children in 2017, three unidentified men shot Gauri to death at her house in Bangalore. The killers were wearing helmets and escaped on a two-wheeler after the murder.

Karnataka Home Minister Ramalinga Reddy related the murder to that of Narendra Dabholkar and M. M. Kalburgi. Gauri was given a state cremation with a gun salute. The BBC described as the most high-profile journalist murdered in recent years. The Special Investigation Team probing the murder case detained two suspects, whom they also suspected of being involved in the murders of Dabholkar and Kalburgi.

In Rohinton Mistry's first novel *Such a Long Journey* indicates Shiv Sena postures of Maharashtra for Maharastrians. Shiv Sena named a kind of politics that the old non-Maratha residents of city changing names of the roads and localities. Major Billimoria, one of the major characters, states that Gustad the protagonist and Parsi was arrested for deposit a huge amount for a gang which fought against our own country. Being a Parsi he is suffering like a dog and treated like unimportant person in the mainstream of the society.

Mistry's second novel *A Fine Balance*, gives an overview about the Indira Gandhi's Emergency and shiv sena politics in Bombay. Mistry sums up the rise of right-wing political parties in the wake of Emergency period "How much bloodshed, how much rebelling he



caused. And today we have the bloody siva sena wanting to make the rest of us into second class citizens. Don't forget she started it all by supporting the racist buggers"(FB38). Members of the one minority community saving the lives of their friends and neighbors were plenty in during those troubled times. Ishvar and Narayan were only refunding Ashraf and his wife for sheltering them and training them, while the Muslim family owed their lives to these two untouchable boys. This was rare case of the communal bonhomie, Dukhi and his friends said in their village:"The Muslims have performed more like our brothers than the bastard Brahmins and Thakurs" (61).

Mistry mentions here, the presence of son of India at Mother India's rally, without mentioning the names of Sanjay and Indira Gandhi directly. Slum boys Ishvar and Om are difficult to pass that day and monkey man failed to feed his monkey. And other animals also locked in the hut because of political rally which was not only affected the animal like people in the society but even real animals also. In the Internal Emergency declared in 1975, their living and working situations remain the same even today. Nawaz, a tailor was arrested for smuggling gold from the gulf. When questioned how the police can put an innocent man in jail as tea vendor says:

*"With the Emergency, everything is upside-down. Black can be made white, day turned into night. With the right influence and a little case, sending people to jail very easy. There's even a new law called MISA to simplify the whole procedure."(A Fine Balance 88)*

Now a day, without emergency the government use UAPA, POTA and other black laws to entrap minority to put jails and crushed their rights.

Dina owner asks her to quite the job otherwise the goondas may come and try to open the door, if she refuse to open the door, they will bring policemen to break the lock:

*"These Emergency laws are terrible, sister, Money can buy the necessary police order. Justice is sold to the highest bidder"( A Fine Balance 106)*

Rohinton Mistry portrays his inner diasporic feelings and consciousness of Parsi and other ethno religious minorities by his novels. However, Mistry has pictured the Bombay Walla's living condition, rights and privileges. Eventually my opinion about the portrayal of his novels is mild and cowardly on right wings activity in and around Bombay and other places of Maharashtra. His mild approach on writing of these sort of Hinduta conceptual groups is a fear of his life. Because number of determined, intellectual genius, journalist and academicians are assassinated by the goondas who want to differentiate the society for their





political strength. Also aforementioned assassinated writers and journalist murdered for same cause and same method.

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