

**Exploring the Social Alienation of Untouchables – A Subaltern
Study in Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance***

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Rohinton Mistry

Courtesy: <http://asia-canada.ca/changing-perspectives/indians/rohinton-mistry>

Abstract

In the gift world analysis situation, subaltern theme has become outstanding that it is often employed in numerous disciplines like history, sociology, science social science and literature. The word ‘subaltern’ is German word which implies ‘inferior rank’ or ‘secondary importance’. The kin study of ‘subaltern’ refers to a few outstanding thinkers. They are: Antonio Gramsci, Ranjit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak. The idea of ‘subaltern’ is additionally

outlined by general Wolfreys, It contains the teams that are marginalized, laden and exploited on the cultural, political, social and spiritual grounds”1. So, Subaltern literature reflects numerous themes like oppression, marginalisation, Gender discrimination, subjugation of lower and dealing categories, unnoticed girls, neglected sections of society, and disadvantaged categories etc. Subaltern literature is one amongst the subdivisions of post victimization.’ Post-colonial’ lays down conjectures in philosophy and literature that wrestles with the gift of colonial rule. Post-colonial literature could be a stem from genre literature involved with the political and cultural autonomy of the people that were subdued in colonial domains.

Suppression and Oppression of Untouchables

The word ‘subaltern’ is drawn from the Late Latin ‘subalternus’. Oxford Advanced Learner’s lexicon denotes that the word, subaltern, as noun means that any officer within the British army who is ‘Lower in rank’ than a captain. Its major form denotes ‘of inferior rank’. However Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci for the primary time used it outside the non-military sense. In Latin ‘sub’ means that ‘under’ and ‘alter’ means that alternative. Thus, virtually it denotes to a person or cluster of inferior in keeping with some thinkers, maybe he used the term as an equivalent word for working class. Literally, he refers to a person or cluster of inferior rank and station, whether or not due to race, class, gender, quality or faith. Gramsci’s rationalization of the oppression of the bucolic class in Southern Italian Republic depicts the persisted oppression of the agricultural class, the socio-economic class, and therefore the untouchables in post-Independent Indian society.

Gramsci stressed the connotation of this expression in terms of Gender, Class, Caste, Race, and culture. Gayatri Spivak includes brand new dimension to the term ‘subaltern’ for the colonised individuals, burdened generations, operating categories, blacks and muted girls. B.K. Das opines that” Gayatri Spivak has enlarged the which means of subaltern who set the strain on gendered subaltern-that girls who square measure doubly burdened by victimization and significantly within the collection countries”.2

It is plausible that G.Spivak has given prominence to the plight of ladies. Ranjit Guha interprets the subaltern studies as “a name for the final attribute of subordination in South Asian Society whether or not this can be expressed in terms of sophistication, caste, age, gender and officer or in the other.”3 so subaltern teams could belong to any gender, caste, class, sex, quality and faith. Antonio Gramsci opines that the subaltern categories advert to any lower status person or cluster of voters during a distinct society suffering underneath the hegemonic domination of governing patrician category that denies them the elemental rights of involvement within the creating of provincial history and culture as active people of a similar country. Perhaps, Gramsci, at that point had in his mind the employees and peasants who were marginalized, burdened and suppressed by the fascist leaders within the opinion of G Spivak, that the term ‘subaltern’ is versatile and it will have area for social identities and struggles like girls and therefore the colonised that don’t plummet underneath the subtractive expressions of stern category analysis. “Like the word subaltern for one reason”. It is really situational. The word was underneath censorship by Gramsci: he known as Marxism ‘monism’, and was obligated to decision the proletarian subaltern: That word, used underneath force, has been reworked into the outline of everything that doesn’t comprise strict category analysis.”(4)

G. Spivak makes attempt to justify limpidly the lives and histories of subaltern teams who square measure exploited economically and burdened politically. Her writings clearly exhibit the expertise of social and political oppression in postcolonial societies like India cuts across distinction at school, region, language, ethnicity, religion, generation, gender and citizenship. She more points out that “The colonised subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous. Mr. Habib claims ‘the term was employed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci to confer with the operating mass that required to be organized by left mistreatment intellectuals into a politically self acutely aware force.’⁵ So as to consolidate it’s which means one will opine that the term subaltern literature covers the themes like regarding the plenty, dalits, and therefore the disadvantaged, oppressed, marginalized and neglected sections of society. Subaltern studies started within the early Eighties as AN intrusion in South-Asian historiography. It gained its quality into an active postcolonial critique. The South Asian students used the term during a wider sense that cantered additional on what happens among the plenty at the bottom level of the society than the elite.

Bonavenura Delaware bandmaster metropolis “ uses the term’ subaltern cosmopolitanism’ within the context of counter-hegemonic practices, movements, resistances and struggles against neo-liberal globalisation, significantly against social exclusion He conjointly uses the term interchangeably with cosmopolitan lawfulness because the various normative framework for an “equality of differences”.⁶ The term ‘subaltern’ here it’s wont to indicate burdened and marginalized those who tried to resist hegemonic domination.

Rohinton Mistry

Rohinton Mistry is one among the internationally acknowledged writers since his works have won international accolades. North American country based mostly, Rohinton Mistry is that the author of 3 novels and a brief story assortment set amidst the close and isolated religionist community in metropolis. His writings bear a social purpose.

He is one among the outstanding writers of the post-colonial era. His novels wear down the theme of exploitation basing on the political, economic, and social aspects stressing the requirement of social purpose in fiction. Among the only a few Indian writers in English, he's one among the novelists who restricted plight of untouchables in his novel, *A Fine Balance*. Untouchability Dalitism has been India’s most grave social group evil since yore and continues to be experienced in numerous elements of rural India. The thus known as, downtrodden- or lower castes square measure refuted to pursue education as a result of education could enlighten them to their rights as voters and should claim their rights.

The caste discrimination and repression is generally found to be in applying among the Hindus of our country. Rohinton Mistry tried his best to voice the cruelty and oppression practised by these muted untouchables in his novel *A Fine Balance*. The novel exposes category and caste disparities of Indian society that conjointly mirrors a visible rendering of these who endure its inequities. Rohinron Mistry depicts regarding ‘Chamirs’ who square measure born into a leather-making chamir family.

Fine Balance?

The higher caste individuals have treated them savagely during a distressing manner. The inhumanity of higher castes is obviously proved within the novel. One among the examples is on however untouchables square measure treated cruelly is illustrated within the following lines by Rohinton Mistry. “For walking on the upper-caste aspect of the road, mythical being was drunk, although to not death- the stones had ceased initially blood. Gambir was less fortunate; he had liquified lead poured into his ears as a result of he ventured at intervals hearing vary of the temple whereas prayers were current. Dhiraj tried to barter ahead with Pandit Ghanshyam “ the wages for chopping wood, rather than sinking for the few sticks he might expect at the top of the day; the Pandit got upset, defendant Dhiraj of poisoning his cows, and had him hanged”.⁷

The downtrodden were cruelly treated by the higher castes that is exhibited clearly within their activities such as- lapidation Sita- only for walking in the streets of higher castes until her 1st blood is seen; Into the ears of Gambhir liquified lead was poured only for hearing the prayers of temple who was near and Dayaram was compelled to eat stools of the owner for asking wages then on. Such inhuman actions by the higher castes became routine development. The untouchability may be a reasonably malady, denigrates not solely Hindu culture however it's conjointly a blot on Indian society that is mirrored within the words of Rohinton Mistry:” what's this disease? You will rise. This malady, brothers and sisters, is that the notion of untouchability, ravaging America for hundreds of years, denying dignity to our fellow personalities. This malady should be purged from our society, from our hearts, and from our minds. Nobody is untouchable, for square measure all kinds of a similar god bear in mind what Gandhiji says, that untouchability poisons Hinduism as a drop of arsenic poisons milk”.

Malady of Untouchability

It is clear that Rohinton Mistry is in favour of untouchable as a result of he feels that untouchability is not solely malady however it's conjointly poisoning the sacred philosophy of Hinduism. There square measure four characters –Dina and Mameck WHO square measure Parsees and 2 tailors Ishvar and his kinsman Omprakash. The lives of the tailors’ forefathers who were indeed ‘Chamars’ or ‘Mochis’ mirror the remorseless cruelty of the caste-system within the rustic India wherever unbelievable oppressions square measure disbursed on the lower-castes by the higher caste Jamindars and Thakurs.

Tradition-imposed Occupation

Tyrannical caste-violence has compelled Dukhi, a Mochi, and therefore the grandparent of Omprakash and father of Ishvar from their ancient occupation of operating with animal skin to be told the dexterities of craft within the city. They migrated to metropolis. The tailors expertise the poignant dislocation of following a completely unique skilled singularity, troubled to induce a secure place during a new town and therefore the physical displacement from their village to the town very often they need to travel back to their village when earning some cash.

Ishwar’s father was doing unclean work, and he needed to examine a higher lifetime of his thusns Ishvar and Narayan so he sent them to a close-by city to be told craft. He leaves his sons along with his Muslim friend Ashraf within the city who takes them as apprentices in his craft business. Dukhi Mochi opines sarcastically that a minimum of his Muslim friend treated

him higher than his Hindu brothers”. Ishvar and Narayan saved Ashrof’s search by claiming that it belonged to them, exploit Ashraf forever in their memory owing. Narayan comes back to his village and began a craft business for the individuals of his village during which he's winning and attained a enough of cash to construct his own house and married WHO is blessed a son and two daughters. Narayan’s business was flourishing well until the until the native elections were declared by a landowner Thakur who burnt each the oldsters of Omprakash by ligature along. Atrocities of higher castes on the lower castes square measure intense. Even the lower caste individuals weren't permissible to continue their education.

Conflicts and Injustice

Ishvar and Narayan are overwhelmed up for coming into the village faculty. Then Dukhi approaches Pandit Lalluram, a Brahmin priest whom he trusts that he will do justice to him: even an untouchable might receive justice in his hands”. Pandit Lalluram is bitterly satirized as an unmannered, greedy inexorable who isn't involved in doing justice for lower castes. Dukhi is annoyed at this perspective of the Lalluram and feels that the life he leads as an untouchable and raises a question regarding his identification with the order of caste: “government passes new laws, says no additional untouchability, nevertheless everything is that the same. The upper-caste bastards still treat America worse than animals... quite twenty years have passed since independence... i need to be ready to drink from the village well, worship within the temple, walk wherever I like” so Dukhi opines his anguish regarding the injustice and oppression obligatory on the untouchables who don't seem to be allowed to drink the water from the village well and proscribed to enter the temple. Even the ladies of village were exploited thanks to the class structure for instance, Dukhi’s partner, Rupa was used and raped by the Zamindar’s gardener for stealing fruits and milk from upper-caste homes so as to feed the kids. Her disgraceful exploitation by the gardener is Mistry’s remorseless observation on the twin standards existing within the modern Indian society within the style of untouchability.

Caste-based Democracy

These subalterns square measure defeated and received heartless treatment at the hands of the higher castes. Even within the native elections, the blank ballots were stuffed in by the landlord’s men. So, the lower caste individuals were proscribed to vote freely and use their franchise during a Democratic country like India. The family of Prakash’s father and his two grandchildren square measure knifed to death. when knowing this, brutal incident Ishwar and Om rush to police headquarters to file an F.I.R. however the Sub Inspector discourteously comments on them: “What reasonably rascality is this? Attempting to extra service the F.I.R. with lies? You filthy achool castes square measure forever dead set build troubles! Get out before we tend to charge you with public mischief”.

At each stage of their lives, the untouchables encounter oppression. throughout emergency, chamars-turned –tailors pay a visit to their village in search of bride for Om, they're used by their previous high-caste enemy, Thakur Dharmasi and square measure beaten and halting underneath the alleged reason of the ‘free extirpation program me’ of the govt.. one among the themes of subaltern literature is oppression besides exploitation of untouchables is touchingly portrayed within the novel, *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry who provides a heart-

rending version of man's barbaric inhumanity to man and conjointly the out of the question deprivation and inequalities practised by the downtrodden and burdened in India.

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