

A Critical study of The shattered life and Sufferings of Nariman in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters* .

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Abstract

“ Nothing in the world could make human life happier than to greatly increase the number of strong families”

The above statement by late David R Mace, a pioneer in the field of marriage and family enrichment clearly states the emotional, physical, and emotional support which family provides us with. Such healthy family relationship can foster a feeling of love and security in all family members. Communication, quality time , caring are some essentials in building a strong supportive family unit. Thus family relations can help us to intensify emotional intimacy which in turn can foster feelings of empathy and compassion in kids. Gradually the family structure changed from extended and rurally based to nuclear and city centered . It has been observed that the old values and behavioral patterns of the people have been changing.

The present article is going to focus on the difficulties faced by one sick person Nariman Vakeel . Rohinton Mistry in his *Family Matters*(2002) explored human frailty in old age . *Family Matters* provides an intimate and compelling depictions of matters to families in the universal situation of parents need for care. *Family Matters* is the saga of a Mumbai based Parsi family which talks about a unique subject the world of an ailing Septuagenarian patriarch of Parsi family who is increasingly becoming an unwanted burden on his three children. Looking after ageing family members is something that almost every family has to deal with . This doesn't feel like burden when the caring person absolutely unconditionally loves the patient, and when he or she has a strong sense of duty and service .In this family grudges and strained relationships make the matters more complicated

Keywords : Septuagenarian, patriarch, parsi

Introduction

Life is not a bed of roses , life is full of struggles, challenges faced by people in certain ways. Prosperity in every field of life never comes to you on its own way. You have to struggle hard to get it. Everyday gives us new hope. Sometimes people think that there is no hope of success and finds darkness everywhere. Always keep in mind that for every dark night , there's a brighter day. Life moves like a river and in the end old age hits each and everyone of us. Taking care of the elderly is a responsibility that everyone should take . The elders spend the major part of their lives in building and shaping our life and carrier, and thus it is our responsibility to repay them in their old age.

The novel *Family Matters* opens with the accident happened to Nariman Vakeel as a result of which he is bedridden. He suffers from humiliations due to deterioration in his health and the grudging care of his two step children that is Coomy and Jal. *Family Matters* illustrates universal issues of Impartiality, care taking, and family relationships. The plot of *Family Matters* is very simple and clear based on an ordinary man and his family. Apparently the pressures faced by one Parsi family whose attempts to care for an aged and sick person Nariman Vakeel. Characters are caught in complex Situations and their reactions of dealings with each other in the wider world they live .

Human beings tend to develop emotional attachment especially during old age. It is a period when the younger generation must shower love, care and support to them. Getting old is a natural process . Growing old is mandatory. It completes the life pattern .It is unavoidable. Care giving often leads us into a world of love we possibly didn't know. We all need love no matter , how old we are, who we have become Who we are with, what we do.

Family Matters embodies a compassionate concern for degenerating human values globally .The novel with its deep rooted concern for humanity and optimistic approach of global welfare is certainly much more than a bunch of words it is an appealing mirror of life . Indian society is rapidly changing and this is affecting people's personal lives and life styles. Moreover in India the family continues to be the foundation of society and the novels have the family as their subject. The importance that Rohinton Mistry gives to family and the social, cultural, and political backdrop against which a family lives is remarkable. He tries to portray the varied features of Indian socio economic life and tradition at the same time it is also about family life , traditions , and religious convictions of the Parsis. The novel is a three generational series filled with unrest and sorrow. Until Nariman was the breadwinner and a major source of income, the whole family was happy. They took care of each other . There was no difference between Yasmin's children (Coomy and Jal) and Roxana Nariman's daughter. Problems arises only when Nariman raises the topic of property division. The unending arguments and unfortunate incidents between his step children and Roxana make Nariman's life a miserable one. Nariman was affected with Parkinson's disease and Coomy had to take care of Nariman . The changes in the family came about when Nariman's position changed from being the benevolent head of the family to becoming an unwanted burden in the family in various aspects . Now that Nariman had become dependent on the other family members there was almost immediately a chain of changes in the family. Nariman becomes helpless . The Parkinson disease made him frail.

Rohinton Mistry while mentioning the theme of suffering employs inter textual references from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *King Lear* . The bad smell in Nariman's room annoys Coomy and she humorously says to Jal " All the perfumes of Arabia , all your swabbing, scrubbing , and mopping and scouring will not remove it" (FM 104) Mistry seems to equate the life of Nariman to Shakespeare's *king Lear*. Here Nariman Meets the same tragic fate as of Lear. The children he treats so much prove to be cruel and unkind to him in his old age. But he loves both of his daughters and shows his loyalty and decency towards them. Though he feels he made many mistakes he never regrets them. He

keeps his agonies and sorrows within himself. At last he feels as foolish as Lear must have felt when he was badly treated by Regan and Goneril. In fact in a particular situation Nariman retorts:

“ To so many classes, I taught *Lear*, learning nothing myself. What kind of teacher is that , as foolish at the end of his life as at the beginning? Again, “what is Lear? Asked Jehangir .Nariman swallowed the potato “it’s the name of a king who made Many mistakes” (FM 197)

The life of youth in this challenging world must be brought to limelight. Adolescence is a challenging transitional period for many young people. They go through many changes in physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of their life. During these developmental changes young people believe that they are unable to communicate what they want with their parents, teachers and adults and often find themselves in the middle of conflicts and arguments. The youngsters of the Present society are influenced by the Western values. The independent, decision making nature of the western counterparts when exercised by youngsters in this nation is looked Upon as a deviation from the family values and codes. By stressing on personal needs and fulfilling their own choices, they begin to move away from the elders of the family. They find no time to sit with their elders in the family. Sympathy, compassion , suffering and humanity are in fact the keywords to this novel. Young children must cultivate the habit of taking care of elders from childhood onwards so it never emerges to be a herculean task .

Family Matters states that suffering is one of the outstanding universal dimensions about culture . From the beginning to the end the novel deals with the tragic events of life that has been observed minutely. Nariman’s mental, social, cultural, regional, and physical sufferings are clearly displayed in this novel. The family’s attitude towards Nariman make the readers shudder, pause and think. Nariman falls on the street lane and returns home on the evening of his seventy ninth birthday. This fall results in an explosion from Coomy(step child) and also brings up bitterness and unhappy memories. This is the beginning of unhappiness to Nariman and his family. Coomy and Jal believe that Nariman has ruined their life by marrying Yasmin contractor, the mother of Jal and Coomy .

The first part of the novel explains how one evening long years ago , Nariman had finally surrendered to his parents ‘adamant compulsion. That evening at the beach candy beach Nariman told Lucy Braganza that he was ending their relationship and love affairs. Lucy’s family too was against her marrying a non-Catholic. This kind of calamity lays in Indian society’s that being averse to inter religious marriages . Nariman is forced to marry a widow named Yasmin with two children Coomy and Jal . Here Mistry brings out the plight of modern Parsis world and it’s inter communal marriage’s. Through Family Matters Mistry portrays the plight of Parsis and also the difficulties faced by old age people. Nariman in his age struggles to perform even the simplest task adding to this he also suffers from osteoporosis. Family Matters is an ideal work which narrates about Nariman’s shattered life and his sufferings . It can be termed as a family novel. Through the character of Nariman who is the incarnation of Parsi community the theme of suffering is well drawn in fact it also showcase the steady decline of Parsi culture. The title is very much suitable because family

matters for everyone because we begin and end with family. It is a domestic drama and captivating novel.

Conclusion

Rohinton Mistry's writing will be a perennial source of inspiration for the Parsis to preserve their identity. *Family Matters* clearly portrays the anxieties, alienation, and insecurities of a modern day Parsi. Characters are beautifully engraved. They are interesting and varied. *Family Matters* offers impressive examination into the human soul. This is a story of love and hate, sin and faith. The title's obvious double meaning speaks not only of the duties and responsibilities, the matters of a family's workings, but also of how much we finally realize our family does matter to us. The taking care of aging is also discussed wisely that respect is the key component of all pleasure relations. An older person is the one who has retired and does not have enough strength to tackle day to day tasks effortlessly. Thus we must keep in mind that there's something precious about love in old age. Thus *Family Matters* evokes laughter and tears because it spins the great wheel of human life.

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