

Rohinton Mistry

Family Matters

Ques-1 Write in brief the summary of the Novel 'Family Matters'.

Ans-1 Introduction :-

Rohinton Mistry is an important figure in the Contemporary Commonwealth Literature and he occupies a significant position among the writers of Indian Diaspora. Rohinton Mistry's first novel 'Family Matters' (1991) won Governor General's Award for Fiction in English in Canada in 1991 and the Commonwealth Prize in 1992. It was also short-listed for the Booker Prize in 1991.

Realistic Description of Contemporary Era

In Family Matters, through the fluctuating fortune of the hero, the writer Rohinton Mistry has projected the Socio-political scene in the Sixties and early Seventies in India. The hero is Custard Noble, a Parsi and the setting is 'Khodadad Building', an imaginary Parsi enclave in Bombay. The characters and the background is imaginary yet it is based on the real life experiences of the author Rohinton Mistry. It has the backdrop of Indo-Pakistan war which also helps in making it very realistic.

Gustad Nobel, the protagonist, remembers his childhood days of the time when his father was a rich man and he was very happy. The crisis in his life is a part of the Corrupt dynastic rule that hardly bothered about the well-being of the common people. Some how Gustad comes out of his crisis but his friend Major Bilimoria who has been working for the RAW got trapped and had to face death. The novelist also presents Gustad's personal life in Parsi Community in India.

The Political and Social Milieu

The Inhabitants of Khodadad Building are representatives of a cross-section of middle class Parsis who express the problems of a small community or a minority class in multiracial India. He also shows the age old customs and superstitions of a particular class that have alienated them from the main stream. The title of Family Matters has been taken from T.S. Eliot's poem Journey of the Magi which links up Gustad's journey of life to the spiritual quest of the wise men of the east who witnessed new born Jesus.

In the Influence of Politics On the life of Common Man

The change in political scenario is marked with the reference of B.J.P and Shiv Sena, but the focus in Family Matter is very much personal rather than political. A nine year old boy Jahangir is projected as a witness of family quarrels. The novel shows how the boy tries to understand

the quarrels and how he desperately wants to bring peace and harmony. He realises that the grown-up people always fail to bring peace among them.

Conclusion of

The novel uses flashback method very successfully. During the family get-together politics is introduced as the Indo-Pak Cricket Matches. The characterisation of Rohinton Mistry is as Vijay Mishra says —

"The idea of India exists in the minds of the diaspora".

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