The term ‘diaspora’ has been of much debate during the last two decades. The term is related to politics, history, and international migration and also to international community formation based on language, economics, ethnicity, religion, faith etc. The present chapter will deal with Diaspora which is a much talked theory of the contemporary time. This chapter will also make a discourse analysis of Rohinton Mistry’s stand in diasporic writing in his texts. “The Greek noun ‘diaspora’ derives from the composite verb dia-and speirein, adopting meaning of ‘to scatter, spread, disperse, be separated’. The verb which became more widely used in the fifth century BCE among classical philosophers and Hellenist writers had a negative connotation.” (Knott, 20)

However, philosophers and Jewish Greek translators of Hebrew writings adopted the term ‘Diaspora’ in negative sense “as dispersion to various parts of the world, leaving their own mother land ‘without any further relation to each other.’ ”(Knott, 21) The noun “‘Diaspora’ was coined to show the plight of Jewish people, but it was different from the terms ‘exile’, ‘banishment’, ‘deportation’, ‘gola’ and ‘galut’.” (Knott, 21)

The term Exile or banishment can be used for forced or captive people; while the term diaspora can be used for the people living outside their own native land. There are countless examples, Parsis, Tibetan, Cubans etc. Tibetans chose their Prime Minister, and speak of their central administration as a ‘government-in-exile. The Jews took it as God’s
punishment to leave Palestine and Jerusalem but they have faith to return to the ‘Holy Land’ and they did to some extent. They spread throughout the world and some preferred to stay in diaspora rather than to return to their ‘Holy Land’.

Hence, in the first century BC the term diaspora was adopted by the Christians in the sense of community dispersal. They believed the missionaries would travel to various parts of the world in order to disperse the seed of Christianity or the teachings of Jesus. Though the Christians dispersed to various parts of the Earth but Jerusalem remained their ‘Holy Home’ and a place for their pilgrimage a holy, perfect and promising home. Since the sixteenth century, with the colonial movement, the dispersal started but till the nineteenth century it became widespread. “Since 1960s, with increasing transnational and global migrant movement, ‘diaspora’ was employed to denote a national, cultural or religious group, living in a foreign land.” (Knott, 22)

However, globalization and industrialization highly contributed in the increase of international migration. Since “mid-1960s the number of international migration rose from 75 million in 1965 to 120 million in 1990. International migration contributed close to half of the population growth in the developed countries and about 90 percent in Europe.” (Kadekar, 2)

Though the inception of man and migration moved parallel to each other; but in the sixteenth century, the colonialism accentuated the process of migration rapidly. The demand for plantation workers, labour demand, trade, commerce, technological development extended the forced migration. Post-Colonial era too became the witness of demand for labour from the developed and developing countries like USA, Canada,
Russia, England, New Zealand and Australia. Hence, a large number of migrations have created an ambience of confusion regarding cultural, ethnic identity. Generally, diaspora is of two types: First is self-migration in order to achieve wealth and in the search of a wealthy and comfortable life. The second is indentured migration. The first wave of Indian emigration comprises mostly indentured labour to the European colonies to fill the vacuum created by the emancipation of African slaves on the plantations following the ban on the practice of slavery. The indentured labours since 1834 were taken to Mauritius, Uganda, Ceylon and Nigeria. The second step of indentured migration was for the European countries, USA, England etc. In the third wave of emigration Indians moved in a large scale to the oil countries of the west. Asia such as Saudi Arabia, The United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrine, Oman etc.

William Safran has listed six basic characteristics of contemporary Diasporas. They are: (1) dispersal from an original centre to at least two peripheral places; (2) maintenance of a memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland; (3) belief that they cannot be fully accepted by their host country; (4) longing to return to the ancestral home when the time is right; (5) commitment to the maintenance and/or restoration of the homeland; and (6) development/ construction of a consciousness and solidarity as a group defined largely around the continued relationship with the homeland. (Kadekar, 2)

Analysing the contemporary diaspora and its effects, Dr. Sanju Gupta writes that:
Large-scale immigration in the recent years has led to unprecedented anxieties of adjustment and hypersensitive aspects like individual identity has come into conflict with the demands of the immigrants adopted homeland...owing to various reasons, the present diaspora tends to alienate the immigrants from their roots in spite of themselves, compelling them to live between the two worlds: the imaginary and the real, the past and the present and the virtual and the material. (Gupta, 56)

However, diaspora has become a highly celebrated topic for research. It includes nationalism, migration, exile, illegal migration, refugee, hybridity, boundary, ethnicity, multiculturalism, alienation, trauma, adaptation, accommodation, acclimatization, identity crisis, identity formation etc. However, International diaspora, Post-Colonialism and Globalization has become apparent in the field of research in order to study human life.

However, diasporic study also raises the question of home and homelessness. Living in diaspora generally becomes living in marginalised at a periphery where one always needs to compromise with her/his desires and expectations. It further leads to identity crisis and alienation from the old and new cultures and homelands. That’s why most of the diasporic writers discuss the problems they face regarding cultural, mental, physical, economic issues on the alien land.

“As Salman Rushdie has put it in Imaginary Homelands, the position of the ‘exile or immigrant’ is one of the ‘profoundest uncertainties’. The diasporic person is at home
neither in the West nor in India and is thus ‘unhomed’ in the most essential sense of the term.” (Bharucha, 22) Henceforth Homi Bhabha in his much appreciated work *The Location of Culture* (1993) has delineated that “to be ‘unhomed is not to be homeless.” (Bharucha, 22) However, when one realises the trauma of being unhomed, her/his world becomes clustered but suddenly her/his memory transcends the national boundary enormously. Hence this trauma inculcates the quest for home and memory, personal experiences and historical and political experiences. However, emigration may be forced or self-willed migration as in search of livelihood, commerce, trade. They possess the history or detail of the journey but they pine for their past.

Kim Knott writes:

> Every diaspora -whether recent or of long standing, whether caused by exile or movement for trade, whether multi-sited or settled in a single place—has its ‘distinctive spatiality’, informed by actual journeys past and present, the particular forms and distribution of its settlements, its demography, the nature and extents of its social networks (intra, inter and transnational), the characteristic circulations of its members, goods, culture and religion, its local infections (social, linguistic, cultural), and its distinctive imagined, historical and present geography. (Knott, 81)

Hence we find that “diaspora’ beginning from Jewish migration has travelled to the extent that Clifford refers “diaspora’ as ‘a travelling term” (Knott, 83) and James proctor’s claim as “travel’s other, reflects the idea that diaspora is ‘to deposit as well as
‘to sow’” (Knott, 83) Further enunciating the metaphor of ‘travel bag’ he proposes “while such baggage signals movement and migration, it also anticipates arrival, settlement, home... carrying with it the burden of dwelling” (Knott, 83)

However, diaspora circumnavigates around ‘home’. Generally home remains in two senses: physical and mental. In physical sense people dwell in their inbuilt home while the second type of home is a home of memory, emotion, culture, tradition, experiences of lived reality when they are away physically from their home. Therefore, it forces us to think the importance of home in a diaspora and the life of migrated people. Do the diasporic writers portray their past home in a realistic manner or do they portray it with the glass of exaggeration and fancy. In this regard, Femke Stock writes, “... memories of home are no factual reproductions of a fixed past. Rather they are fluid reconstructions set against the backdrop of the remembering subject’s current positioning and conceptualisation of home.” (Knott, 24)

However, There is a great debate in the mind of the newly migrated (first generation) because his left home remains attached to his/her memories, while the new or adopted home remains a challenge or contest at every step, be it social, racial, gender etc. Though for the second generation the new land or ‘new home’ does not remain new but the past home “memories both personal and collective.” (Knott, 24) The second generation annihilates (consumes) both past and present and focuses his attention towards future. The host plays an important role for a migrated community or people. Either they are assimilated in the host culture, tradition, religion or belief or the host plays the role of oppressor in this condition migrated people find themselves at the periphery and contest to preserve their beliefs, memories, traditions etc. Thus in diaspora ‘home’ becomes a
much yearned for place of past, present and future. Commenting on this Mallett writes: “is home, (a) place(s), a space(s), feeling(s), practices and/or an active state of being in the world? Home is variously described as conflated with or related to house, family, haven, self, gender and journeying.” (Knott, 27) In diasporic study quest for home and family becomes the matter of much importance. Home, family and diaspora are interconnected to each another.

The relationship between home and diaspora can be subsumed with the words of Femke Stock, “home is where the heart is and the openness and layeredness of home as an analytical concept which makes it such a powerful idea in the study of diaspora.” (Knott, 27-28) Indeed during the colonial period a number of people were the victim of indentured migration. They were taken to Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Malaysia. After 1960 creative and educated people started migrating to the West in search of a good and comfortable life as the population of India was increasing. M.G.Vassanji, Ondatjee, Bharti Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Vikram Chandra, V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Farukh Dhondy, Hanif Kureshi, Atima Srivastava, Ravinder Randhawa, Sunetra Gupta, Bapsi Sidhwa etc. Rohinton Mistry was one of them. Generally like other immigrated communities, Indian people also try their level best to keep their “tradition and religion alive. As Parekh has pointed out, “Hindus in diaspora kept alive their religion and heritage by inviting holy men and learned speakers from India to speak to them. They also adopted Ramayana as their key religious text.” (Bharucha, 23) However, generally most of the diasporic writers re-create their homeland in their works. Sometimes it is seen as a sense of guilt for having abandoned the motherland. Thus, nostalgia becomes prominent in a migrated writer’s works. In “Squatter”, Mistry expresses his view through
Sarosh as he says “tell them that in Toronto once there lived a Parsi boy as best as he could. Set you down this, and say besides; that for some it was good and for some it was bad, but for me life in the land of milk and honey was just a pain in the posterior.” (TFFB, 204)

Once again in “Lend Me Your Light”, Mistry speaks through his character, ‘Half-jokingly, I saw myself as someone out of Greek tragedy, guilty of the sin of hubris for seeking emigration out of the land of my birth . . . I, Tiresias, blind and throbbing between two lives, the one in Bombay and the one to come in Toronto.” (TFFB, 217) In Family Matters, Nariman says, “an enormous mistake. The biggest anyone make in their life. The loss of home leaves a hole that never fills”. (240) In “Swimming Lessons”, Kersi’s mother says that her son is not happy either he must have written some stories about Canada too, that’s why all his stories are set in Bombay. But through Kersi’s father Mistry sends a resolute message for his readers as Kersi’s father says, “All writers worked in the same way, they used stories out of them, changing some things, adding some, imagining some, all writers were very good at remembering details of their lives”. (243) Jasbir Jain writes “It’s very naïve to assume that you leave a place and you go to a new country and you start a new life and it’s a new chapter—it’s not” (Roy, 77)

When a writer is distanced from his motherland, he recreates home from his memory. The memory becomes a medium for the writer to visit and write about his motherland. Salman Rushdie in his essay Imaginary Homeland writes about immigration and recreation of imaginary home.
Writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by an urge to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost: that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (London Book Review, 2)

Moreover, diasporic writers may be both internal and external in portraying the motherland. In his lecture titled Home and Horizon, Bill Ashcroft says the concept of home is taken beyond the boundaries, the horizon, by the diaspora writers:

When will the traveller reach home? When will the exile reach the Promised Land? Unanswerable questions that reach into the heart of our sense of self, because the self must, above all, be located. But like that sense of self, ‘home’ brings with it the inescapable tyranny of limits, of borders. Whether home is a place, a location, a feeling, a tradition, an ethnicity, it carries with it the sometimes imperceptible, but ever present reality of boundaries. . . . it is into the horizon beyond the boundaries of home that the diasporic writer takes us. (Roy, 94)
Consequently, Mistry creates his own realistic and magical homeland named India. His novels are an amalgamation of Parsis, their culture, tradition and day to day life along with other Hindu, Muslim and Christian neighbours. Generally he depicts the multicultural aspect of India relying on his memory and visits of India. Commenting about the content Mistry explains:

Some people might say it’s arrogant of me not to live there and assume that I know everything from a visit every five or six years. But I am confident that I do know. It’s memory. Well I suppose that when one says memory, it’s memory plus imagination, which creates a new memory. When I don’t have that, I will not write about it. I have promised myself that. (Roy, 78)

Commenting about Mistry’s writing Anjali Gera Roy and Meena T Pillali in their book *Rohinton Mistry: an Anthology of Recent Criticism*, writes that “one can perceive easily a profound sense of migrant.” (9) His writing is intermingling of double vision. One is Canadian or West’s perspective and another one with Indian perspective. Mistry himself realised the importance and benefits of double vision, one outsider another insider. Shashi Tharoor’s words become quote worthy when he says, “. . . Sometimes it is true to say that one advantage of distance is that you can see the wood, and not just the trees. On the other hand, you would probably appreciate the wood if you had a sense of what the trees are and that is where rootlessness or rootedness is important.” (Roy, 95)

Hence, assuming Canada as the land of ‘milk and honey’ when Mistry reached there, he started realising the importance of India. His experience was not as exciting as he was
expecting it to be. Regarding migration experiences Salman Rushdie in his Imaginary Homelands writes, “it reminds me that it’s my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time.” (London Book Review, 2)

In an interview with Nariman Shaikh, Mistry told the importance of distance and the difference between textual and real:

Going to Canada, faced with the reality of earning a living and realising 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.

(Roy, 13)

Even though the term diaspora is ambiguous in nature, several studies on diaspora have tried to formulate its basic nature. One such study by Robin Cohen gives nine basic characteristics of diaspora community:

1- Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions.

2- Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions.
3- A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements.

4- An idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation.

5- The development of a return movement which gains collective approbation.

6- A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate.

7- A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group.

8- A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement.

9- The possibility of a distinctive yet creative and enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism (Cohen, 515)

Like other diasporic writers, Indian diasporic writers too have extreme yearning for their motherland or homeland. Their collective and present pining for the homeland is expressed through their writings. Rohinton Mistry like some other writers migrated by his own will but remains close to his mother country. Mistry’s works are knitted around the Parsi community, their day-to-day life, their struggle among the majority Hindu people. He also traces the history, tradition, culture and politics of Parsis and of India. All his works are set in Bombay. Mistry belongs to Parsi Zoroastrian community whose ancestors were the inhabitants of Iran. The journey of the Parsis began when the Parsi empire was conquered by the Arabs. Parsi religion, culture, tradition, was ravished. Parsis were forced to convert to Islam or they were massacred; Islam became the religion of
Persia. Majority of Zoroastrians compromised with the new political upheaval. But a tiny group of Parsis between 638 A.D. to 641 A.D. fled from their motherland and reached Sanjanpur, Gujarat. “The exact dates of these landings are disputed by historians and dates as far apart as 756 C.E. and 936 C.E. have been suggested by different schools of historians.” (Bharucha, 25) The local king Jadhav Rana didn’t allow them to settle in Sanjanpur. They had to stay on deck for three days. On fourth day the main priest of the Parsis appeared in the court of the king. A representative of the king appeared in front of the priest with a glass of water symbolizing that their country is already over populated. The priest put some sugar in the glass. He explained that as the sugar sweetens the water so will they. They will intermingle with them and will enrich their country. The king allowed them to settle in Sanjanpur on the following conditions:

1. The Parsis high priest would have to explain their religion to the king.
2. The Parsis would have to give up their native Persian language and speak the locale language.
3. The women would exchange their Persian robes for Indian costume.
4. The men would lay down their weapons.
5. The Parsis would hold their wedding processions only in the dark. (Bharucha, 25-26)

However, Parsis left their home in order to save their religion, culture, tradition but they had to compromise because diaspora is always diaspora. They had to give up their language, their weapons, their dress. Forcefully exiled from their motherland [Iran] and settled on conditions in India, Parsis were living peacefully in various parts of Sanjanpur. In the fourteenth century, Sanjan was attacked by Arabs. Parsis supported the local Hindu
king with 1400 men and most of them were killed. The survivors flew and most of them settled in Mumbai. The Mughals were the descendants of the Arabs, gave due importance to Parsi language and culture. Persian language became the official language of the empire. Parsis were given importance in the offices. Indeed, Parsis were placed on important posts. Moreover, during the British colonialism, Parsis learned the English language and became more loyal bankers, administrators and business partners to them. However, their distance from their Hindu brothers and closeness to the British estranged them from the Hindus. Consequently, a great confusion emerged in the minds of the Parsis. They were in dilemma whether the English should reign India or leave it. One sect was willing that English men should reign over India while another wanted India should be freed from the English rule. India got its independence in 1947, but the democracy of India became a delusion as majority Hindus started suppressing and harassing minorities. Therefore, the diaspora of Parsis started from Iran remained unsettled even in India. Once again they started feeling marginalised. Cultural and religious threat due to which they left their mother land still hovered over them.

After 1960s, the Parsis started migrating to the West specially to Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia. Rohinton Mistry was one of them who migrated to Canada in 1974. Moreover, in all the texts of Rohinton Mistry the “Parsibanu/Parsiness is the focus around which the discourse revolves.” (Bharucha, 27) Nilufer Bharucha writes that like most diasporic writers, the Parsis too are obliged to “deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been lost.” (Bharucha, 27) “Thus, unlike the other writers of the Indian Diaspora, Parsis are in diverse Diasporas that often run concurrently. These diasporas could be visually represented as under:
Diaspora Diaspora Diaspora Diaspora as Diaspora from

From Iran → under the → under the → a result of → Postcolonial

Under the Muslims British the Partition India to the

Hindus in India Colonial rule West

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Result of Double- Acquisition of Divided Loss of elite

Muslim edged Elite Status across new social/

Oppression ↓ Alienation borders Economic

↓ from India status

Fear of Some Post-Ayodhya

renewed regain of anxiety of

religious language & Hindu

oppression culture Fundamentalist
The Parsis have proved themselves in every field. Their sweat, blood and has always been with India. The propensity and the struggle of the Parsis can be guessed as Malabari writes, “If my Hindu friends take this line of argument that I am ‘only a Parsi’, I will be forced to reply that I am as good a Hindu as any of them, that India is as much my country as theirs, and if they do not give me a locus standi, in the case, I will take my stand on the higher ground of humanity…” (Bharucha, 37)

Nilufer Bharucha observes:

*Tales from Firozsha Baag* marks a journey back to the beginning. The local of these short stories is a Parsi housing complex in Bombay. They could thus be termed as ‘Nostalgia Writing’.

Mistry however refutes this and has said in an interview that ‘nostalgia is interesting as an emotion, but for a writer to write out of a feeling of nostalgia is deliberating because it makes the writing too sentimental. . . . Craig Tapping has said that in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, Mistry is engaged in identity Construction through the location of the present in the past (Tapping 1992:1993). The seeing of the past as present is common to most diasporic writers, who as Rushdie has put it tend to live in imaginary homelands. (Bharucha, 73)

However, though the Parsis migrated to the Western countries but mentally on the basis of race, culture, religion and tradition, remained uneasy and unsettled. The very
problem for which they left Iran and India was in front of them. Rohinton Mistry’s works are the epitome of diasporic writing. All his texts circumnavigates around Parsi culture, tradition and ethno religious discourse. Homi Bhabha, who is also a Parsi from Bombay, now lives in USA called such writings “the social articulation of differences, from the minority perspective.” Mistry’s *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987) is a collection of eleven stories. All the stories are set in Khodad building except “Swimming Lessons”. The world is made of love and agony. Moreover, the human civilization is divided itself on the basis of caste, class, race, culture civilization, community religion etc. at present the world is fighting for religion and civilization which is very dangerous for this mother planet.

Shashi Tharoor’s words are very realistic about Indian society as he writes, “Four days ago, we celebrated the 54th anniversary of our independence. Yet it is a sobering thought that, in these last five decades, we have become more conscious than ever of what divides us: religion, region, caste, language, and ethnicity.” (Tharoor)

The first story of *Tales from Firozsha Baag* is “Auspicious Occasion”. It opens with Rustomji, the protagonist of the story emerging from the lavatory. Mistry presents the story in diasporic sense as the protagonist Rustomji suffers the sense of marginality. He uses Gujarati language in his day-to-day conversation. Through Rustomji, Mistry highlights the cultural threat against the migrated Parsis by the majority Hindus. Rustomji’s auspicious occasion Behram Roje turns to be inauspicious when he confronts the majority Hindus. The mob doubts his Indian identity as they call him ‘Bawji’. The very word ‘Bawji’ symbolises the ‘other’. Rustomji alighted at the Merines Bus station; suddenly a man spat betel juice on his white ‘dugli’.
However, Rustomji yelled at him, but the mob started making fun of his clothes instead of sympathizing with him. “Heh heh heh! Bawji got paan pichkari right on his white dugli…Bawji bawji, dugli looks very nice now, red and white, just like in technicolours.” (20) He lived in the past (Pre independence) when Parsis were elite but in Postcolonial contemporary times they are mistreated. He retorts in anger, “‘Arre’ you sister fucking ghatis, what are you laughing for? Have you no shame? Saala chootia spat paan on my dugli and you think that is fun?” (20-21) But the majority people cried “‘Bawji, we’ll break all your bones. Maaro saala baw ji ko! Beat up the bloody bawji.’” (21) In this critical situation Rustomji found himself alone, alienated, marginalized and he forgot all his sense of the Parsi elite, as Mistry writes, “All anger forgotten, Rustomji feared for his person. He knew he was in serious trouble. Not one friendly face in this group which was now looking for fun of different sort. . . . He reached his fingers into his mouth, dislodged the dentures, and spat them out onto his palm.” (21) Hence we find that Parsis are treated as the ‘other’ or unhomed in the eyes of the majority of Hindus. They are mocked, humiliated and suppressed and pity at their own existence.

Another point that Mistry raises about his diasporic home and community is the corruption in Parsi Panchayat. He portrays the Parsi Panchayat in Bombay is heavily corrupt or dishonest and works insufficiently. As Rustomji points out that they are sitting on bundles of money but avoid maintaining Parsi buildings. Rustomji’s lavatory leaks and his rooms are in a dilapidated condition but the Panchayat does not notice or take action in order to repair them. Mehroo proposes that it is better that they should undertake the maintenance themselves because the workmen supplied by the Panchayat will do shoddy work. Rustomji says, “‘I will not spend one paisa of my hard earned earnings!
Those scoundrels sitting with piles of trust money hidden under their arses should pay for it!’” (5)

Mistry delineates another important aspect of Parsi diaspora in India through the relationship of Parsis and majority of Hindus. He points out that the Parsis have isolated or clustered themselves in society. Most of the time, they have connection with Hindu co-inhabitants, with domestic servants, *subjiwala, kacharawali* etc. Even the Parsis mischievously named the Hindu women domestic worker as Tanoo, Ganga, Gajra etc. they also keep lustful eyes on them.

Parsi ethnicity, religion, rituals, customs, traditions, families and home are the chief exponents around which his story revolves. The second story in the collection “One Sunday” deals with the Parsis’ sense of aloneness and alienation. Mistry points out the sense of community of the minorities and their encroachment due to the threatening posture of majority people. Najamai lives all alone because both her daughters (Veera and Dolly) have gone to USA for higher studies. She uses fridge as a medium to connect her to her neighbours. Tehmina uses Najamai’s fridge for ice cubes in order to have chilled lemonade, scotch and soda. Sillo Boyce uses Najamai’s fridge to store the beef for a week. In return for the use of fridge, Najamai borrowed the newspaper from the Boyces every evening. Tehmina and Boyce do so in order to avoid the hooting of the Tar-Gully made by the majority people. Hence, we may feel the insecurity trauma and loneliness suffered by the Parsis in diaspora.

“The Ghost of the Firozsha Baag” has a non-Parsi narrator. Through this non-Parsi narrator, Mistry tries to bring out the multiple dimensions of Parsis in diaspora. The
narrator is Jacqueline, a Goan woman. Commenting on Parsis she says “They thought that they were like British only, ruling India side by side.” (53) She does not stop here, she also comments that the Parsis discriminate on the basis of colour. They prefer light skin colour women as their servants and when a Parsi baby is born that is the first and most important thing. If it is fair, they say, O how nice light skin just like parents. But if it its dark, they say, “arre what is this ayah no chokro, ayah’s child.” (52-53) Even the Parsi children call her ‘blackie, blackie’.

“Of White Hairs and Cricket” presents the deplorable condition of Parsis in India. It also presents the germ of migration of Parsis from India to the Western countries. The story opens when Kersi is pulling out white hair from his father’s head with the help of tweezers; while his father is reading The Times of India. Kersi narrates that his father always taught him to be tough and used to go to play cricket with him in the field. Kersi’s mamaji (grandmother) regards the hair pulling activity as an ill omen and it becomes the cause of conflict between her and Kersi’s father. Kerdi narrates, “She spied me with the tweezers.” (131) She is very superstitious and yells at Kersi’s father “Sunday dawns and makes the child do that duleedar thing again. It will only bring her bad luck.” (131) Mistry touches every minor to major things of Parsi rituals. Now he lives in Canada, so his Indian readers generally expect that he should assimilate himself with Canadians and he should write about Canadian people, their living, culture but his diasporic sensibility and quest for static home never lets him to do so as he writes in Family Matters “an enormous mistake. The biggest any one can make in their life. The loss of home leaves a hole that never fills.” (254) Perhaps that’s why He returns simultaneously to India for his novels subject matter. Mistry highlights that all the Parsis are not elite and live in big
buildings as Kersi’s mother prepares tea and toast on kerosene stove; and as a result it smells like kerosene. Kersi’s father hopes that one day when Kersi will be grown up, he will go to America because “No future here.” (136) With this line Mistry attracts our attention that people are expatriating from India to other countries due to the lack of opportunity and future security.

Mistry observes every aspect of India very minutely in his works like Primus Stove, women’s death in the kitchen because of explosions and dowry too. “The Primus stove was fun, too, pumped up hot and roaring . . . many women died in their kitchen because of explosions, and Daddy said that though many of them were not accidents, especially dowry cases.” (137) Tehmina ‘blurry with cataracts’ (138) would say her morning prayer facing the sun but she was too cautious about the kuchrawali. If she happened to pass her, she will recognise her with her blurry eyes “and let loose at her with a stream of curses fouler than any filth in the garbage basket, for committing the unspeakable crime of passing in front of her, thereby polluting her prayers and vitiating their efficacy.” (138) It indicates that Parsis too have been influenced by their fellow Hindus. Mistry brings for the over-crowded Parsi hospital and the worst condition of other hospitals in India. Viraj’s father was ill, according to the doctors he needs “intensive care but Parsi General hospital has no place. Better to stay here than other hospitals, only . . . ” (144)

The theme of loneliness and despair is repeated in “The Paying Guest.” (Bharucha, 95) Ardesar and Khorshedbai have only one son and he had migrated to Canada. This story provides a chance to Mistry to analyse the severe problem of loneliness, pain and suffering, the old people face who are reduced to penury and are bound to live as paying guests in their old age. The old couple Ardesar and Khorshedbai are the paying guests in
the young couple Boman and Kashmira’s flat. Through this story, Mistry also incorporates the renting aspect and pugree system prevailing in Bombay. In Bombay it is the rule that once you give your room on rent, it is very hard to get rid of your tenant. It is up to him when he wants to evacuate (leave). Many times voice is raised by the owners but no politician wants to take risk and make law due to the vote bank policy. However, in this story, we feel sympathy for both young and old couple. The old couple want to stay in the flat while the young one want them to leave because of the birth of their baby Adil. The young couple humbly request to the old couple six months before to vacate the flat but they refused. Boman narrated to Mr. Karani, “If there was a kankhajuro inside your skull. . . . I could say: hold a smelly chunk of mutton beside your ear, that will tempt it to come racing out on its one hundred legs. But what can I tell you about paying guests? . . . there is no remedy except death.” (159) Rustomji says, ‘worst bloody thing you have done taking paying guests’. (159, 160)

The next four stories are more interconnected to each other than discussed stories. “Squatter”, “Lend Me Your Light” and “Swimming Lessons” are presented with diasporic perspective and seen by ‘periscopic vision’, a term coined by Salman Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homelands*.

Hence, “Squatter” is the first story in the connection of Canadian migration and the problems faced by the itinerant people. The story is narrated by Nariman Hansotia. He narrates the story like the *Arabian Knights*’ narrator. His method of narrating the story is very unique. All the listeners are involve in the story:
Nariman starts his story framing the life of valourous Savuksha, a Parsi, a man of multiple talents. He was a competent cricketer and a courageous and mighty hunter. Nariman narrates that Indian cricket team was playing match with England and it lost its five wickets but when Savuksha came to the pitch, he hit the ball all around the maidan (field). He beat all the British bowlers heavily [mercilessly]. One bowler tried to stop one shot of Savuksha with his hand but he started howling as the blood flowed fast from his hand. “As for the ball itself, it lay past the boundary line. Then Nariman narrates about Savuksha’s love for hunting; and in the end he left it too. Then Nariman asked, “what did you learn from Savuksha?” Jehangir replied timidly: “He was a man searching for happiness, by trying all kinds of different things.” Nariman said, “Exactly! And he never found it. He kept looking for new experiences, and though he was very successful at everything he attempted, it did not bring him happiness. Remember this, “success alone does not bring happiness. Nor does failure have to bring unhappiness.” (184)

Then Nariman Hantosia jumps from the tale of Savuksha to Sarosh, who started calling himself Sid after migrating to Canada. Through the character of Sarosh, Mistry wants to focus that for every one the West cannot be a place of happiness. The Savuksha’s story is contrasted with Sarosh. Sid’s story is sarcasm on the immigrant people. People may go abroad and can mimic them but they will never feel at home. The story of Sid begins
when a party was organized by his parents on his birthday. He promises, “My dear family, my dear friends, if I do not become completely Canadian in exactly ten years from the time I land there, then I will come back. I promise.” (187) But his mother was not satisfied with his promise. She took him aside and said, “I want you to place your hand upon the Avesta and swear that you will keep that promise.” (187) Thus carelessly spoken words became a commitment. And when Sid reached Canada he was finding it difficult to use Western toilet to void his bowels. “Poor unhappy Sarosh too could detect something malodorous in the air: the presence of xenophobia and hostility.” (188) So the everyday delay in the washroom aroused new difficulties for Sid. His supervisor called him in: “Here’s your time-sheet for this month. You’ve been late eleven times. What’s the problem?” (189) Through the supervisor’s question, Mistry raises several problems that are faced by an itinerant man. “It’s a different kind of problem. . . . I don’t know how to explain…it’s an immigration related problem.” (190) And the supervisor suggests he should go and contact the Immigrant Aid Society. “No problem. Just contact your Immigrant Aid Society. They should be able to help you. Every ethnic group has one: Vietnamese, Chinese—I’m certain that one exists for Indians.” (190)

Sarosh agreed with the suggestion and took an appointment with Mrs. Maha-Lepate’ at the society’s office. Mrs. Maha-Lepate encouragingly told him several such immigrant cases and one of them who was unable to eat ‘Wonder Bread’. (191) Mrs. Maha-Lepate reminded several cases that were cured by the specialist immigrant Dr. No-Illaz. Like a woman from Sri Lanka who could not drink the water here (191) Then Dr. No-Illaz started her Coca-Cola and after six months she took her first sip of undiluted Canadian water. Then Mrs. Maha-Lapate told about a Pakistani family migrated to Canada and
were unable to swallow. Sarosh reached Dr. No-Illaz told his problems and he listened with full concern and said that a device is developed from the financial assistance from the multicultural department. “A small device, Crappus Non Interruptus, or CNI . . . is planted in the bowel. The device is controlled by an external handheld transmitter similar to the ones used for automatic garage door-openers.” (194) Here Mistry gets a chance to explain the Canadian Multicultural Department, “The Multicultural Department is a Canadian invention. It is supposed to ensure that ethnic cultures are able to flourish, so that Canadian society will consist of a mosaic of cultures—that’s their favourite word, mosaic - instead of one uniform mix, like the American melting pot. If you ask me, mosaic and melting pot are both nonsense and ethnic is a polite way of saying bloody foreigner.” (194) After listening to Dr. No-Illaz, Sarosh asked that if CNI needs maintenance, the doctor told that CNI operates on solar energy. It needs sunlight or it would cease and would cause constipation. Sarosh enquires that is there any hope that the bowels will work its own without the help of CNI? The doctor replied “Once CNI is implanted, you can never pass a motion in the natural way- neither sitting nor squatting.” (195) He further enumerated that he would never be able to lead a normal life with your family and friends. He also told that in CNI he will have to set a ten number digit and if the house of CNI increases and if the code matches to the other one in that case the danger of accident will become greater. “We still don’t know the long term effects of CNI…it could generate a genetic deficiency”. (196)

Sarosh declined the offer of Dr. No-Illaz and went to take a ticket to return to India. He took the totally refundable ticket for the day when he will complete his ten years. And if he could succeed in voiding his bowels he will give up returning to India. Wasting
longer time in washroom during office period annoyed the supervisor and he fired him. All his labours go in vain. On the decided day when he fastened his seat belt he felt “a tiny rumble inside him.” (199) He reached in the washroom and for the first time he succeeded in cleaning his bowels. As a result he decided to stay in Canada but the plane was running. He started arguing to get down but at last he returned to his seat and felt at peace. When he reached India once again he found himself at unease because all the old tracks were lost like “brand names had changed - the labels were different and unfamiliar.” (202) Commenting in this regard, Nilufer E Bharucha writes, “This is the quintessential condition of the immigrant, at home neither in the East nor in the West - like Rushdie’s creations, Mistry’s men and women are also in a sense people who live on the margins and peripheries of their chosen locations.” (Bharucha, 109) However, now we find direct conversation between story narrator Nariman and Sarosh as Nariman asks “Hullo, Sid, what are you doing here on your lonesome?” (203) He dislikes being addressed as Sid because it reminds him of his past. Then he said that if you want to tell the story then tells it specially to those who want to go abroad:

. . . . That the world can be a bewildering place, and dreams and ambitions are often paths to the most pernicious of traps. . . .

“When you shall these unlucky deeds relate, speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice: tell them that in Toronto once there lived a Parsi boy as best as he could. Set you down this; and say, besides that for some, it was good and for some it was bad, but for me life in the land of milk and honey was just a pain in the posterior.”” (203-204)
“Lend Me Your Light,” begins with Rabindranath Tagore’s line “... Your lights are all lit—then where do you go with your lamp? My house is all dark and lonesome, - lend me your light.” (209) The very epigraph itself indicates immigration of the people. According to Nilufer Bharucha, “This is one more story which a la Rushdie offers a ‘Periscopic vision’, of both India and Canada.” (Bharucha, 110) Here once again we find the depiction of alienation, belonging and diasporic context. In this story there are characters like Jamshed, Percy and Kersi. Percy and Jamshed were great friends at school. Jamshed was highly obsessed with western movies, music and at last migrated to U.S. while on the contrary Percy decided to stay in India and to serve the people of the village. For Jamshed, India was a place of ghatis. He says, “‘Absolutely no future in this stupid,’ he said ‘Bloody corruption everywhere. And you can’t buy any of the things you want, don’t even get to see a decent English movie. First chance I get, I’m going abroad. Preferably the US.” (215) Kersi proudly says that “he would not face any difficulty in getting visa for Toronto because of his westernised background.” (217)

Both Kersi and Jamshed wish to migrate to the west. Kersi is praised and wished good luck by his neighbours and parents. The night before Kersi is to take flight for Canada; he feels severe pain in his eyes and feels as if he is suffering the guilt of emigration. ‘I saw myself as someone out of a Greek tragedy, guilty of the sin of hubris for seeking emigration out of the land of my birth, and paying the price in burnt - out eyes: I, Tiresias, blind and throbbing between two lives, the one in Bombay and the one to come in Toronto. . . .” (217) Commenting in this regard, Nilufer Bharucha writes, “The stage is thus set for the conflict between the Indian ‘roots’ and the Canadian space. The introduction of guilt is an intriguing motif here, especially in the context of the Parsi
alienation from India. This also provides for the duality or double vision that critics have commented upon.” (Bharucha, 111) Here Mistry shows three aspects through these characters. Through the character of Persi, he shows his wish to serve India, its people of the villages. Through Jamshed he shows his wish to abandon India due to its population, corruption, dirt. But he cannot totally deny the importance of India, his home, where he was born and which provided shelter to his ancestors so he created Kersi who migrated to Canada but still has a soft corner for India and Indian people and has a wish to return to India.

Hence, nearly after six months from his emigration, Kersi receives a letter from Jamshed. He wrote that he found Bombay more dismal and crowded. He criticises Percy’s effort to improve the lives of farmers in the villages. He claims that all the efforts will go in vain. But Kersi feels a kind of irritation after reading Jamshed’s letter because of his criticism of India. Then he got letter from his brother Percy in which he wrote that with his helps, farmers got free loan for seeds and fertilizers, “and for the first time in years they did not have to borrow from those bloodthirsty money-lenders.” (222) These words aroused a sense of guilt in the heart of Kersi. As he narrates, “There you were, my brother, waging battles against corruption and evil, while I was watching sitcoms on my rented Granada TV.” (223) However, Kersi’s resentment towards Jamshed and sympathy towards India is broken when he reaches India and finds children half-naked begging. To him “Bombay seemed dirtier than ever. I remember what Jamshed had written in his letter, and how it had annoyed me, but now I couldn’t help thinking he was right. Hostility and tension seemed to be perpetually present in buses, shops, trains.” (226) And he assumes a meaning that perhaps Jamshed’s resentment towards India was because he
was “waiting for some epiphany and growing impatient because, without it, life in America was bewildering.” (233) Moreover, all these three characters are the inner projections of Mistry himself. He finds himself close to Jamshed and at the end of the story he is proved to be correct in his View regarding India. Commenting about this story, Nilufer Bharucha writes:

What makes this story very intriguing are the autobiographical echoes and self-mockery in the narrative—the writer who ‘sees’ both the East and the West, feels guilty about leaving India, empathises with Percy but cannot be like him. In spite of the critique of Jamshed, Mistry’s location in the West makes him closer to him, than to the idealistic Percy. This story could thus be the key to the self-hatred and unrelenting darkness of Mistry’s discourse. (Bharucha, 113)

The last story of the Tales from Firozsha Baag is “Swimming Lessons”. It reflects the migration of Parsis and their confrontation to the whites and struggle to create their own identity. The story also propounds racial conflict faced by the immigrants. It is also a critique of Parsi migration to the West specially Canada and USA. The story presents multiple aspects of diaspora confrontation, impact of migration and alienation. The protagonist of the story Kersi seems to be struggling with double migration like Mistry. His migration becomes complicated. Margaret Atwood in her book Survival (1972) has written that “Canada seems a strange land even to Canadians.” (Bharucha, 114) Though the status of elite that was enjoyed by the Parsis during the Colonial period was toppling during the Post-Colonial period as Kersi narrates:
The postman rang the door-bell the way he always did, long and continuous; Mother went to open it, wanting to give him a piece of her mind but thought better of it, she did not want to risk the vengeance of postmen, it was so easy for them to destroy letters; workers now-a-days thought no end of themselves, strutting around like peacocks, ever since all this Shiv Sena agitation about Maharashtra for Maharashtrians’. (277-278)

However, Parsis are not only in minority threat but they are unconsciously suffering the sense of elite during Post-Colonial India. As the mother wants to scold the post man but does not dare to do so. Mistry also discusses the way Kersi used to stand in queue for hours to get rations. Commenting about Swimming Lessons Nilufer Bharucha writes:

The trauma of finding an identity and location in a Western space is linked to sexuality, in a trajectory that is a deliberate or inadvertent mirroring of the manner in which imperialism saw itself in sexual terms—the male West and the female East and also in the way in which current Post-Colonial theorists image colonisation as a rape of the non-west by the West.”

(Bharucha, 115)

Kersi is very excited to watch and feel the half-naked body of the women in sunshine. But his curiosity proves a kind disillusionment as the slender beautiful girls look wrinkled and less attractive as he goes near to them. It can also be related that Mistry’s attraction towards the land of ‘milk and honey’ becomes disappointing. When Kersi goes
for registration for learning swimming the receptionist asks “Are you from India . . . I hope you don’t mind my asking, but I was curious because an Indian couple, husband and wife, also registered a few minutes ago. Is swimming not encouraged in India?” (280)

Here we find that there Kersi is not addressed as a Parsi but as an Indian. It means though he is there but his home does not leave him. And the strong sense of home and family can be found in the answer of Kersi as he defends “Most Indians swim like fish. I’m an exception to the rule.” (280)

Kersi assumes the water of pool to be the symbol of life. It also symbolises amalgamation of all religions caste, creed and still beyond it. However, he recalls his failures in the water of ‘Chaupaty Beach’. He ponders about the festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Dashehra, and Parsi religious ceremonies that the water of ‘Chaupaty Beach’ more dirtier. He also contemplates about the worldly formations like caste and race that pollute the healthy human society.

However, Parsis are continuously facing challenge to acclimatize themselves culturally. They are always seen as ‘others’, be it India or Canada. In India, they are regarded as more Westerners and in Canada or USA they are regarded as Easterners or ‘others’. At every step they are facing identity crisis. As soon as Kersi enters the swimming pool some Canadian boys were present there “One of them holds his nose. The second begins to hum, under his breath: Paki Paki, smell like curry. The third says to the first two: pretty soon all the water’s going to taste of curry. They leave.” (286) The discrimination with Kersi does not stop here. Even the instructor of the swimming pool too is irresponsible and discriminates with non-whites. As Kersi thinks, “May be the
swimming pool is the hangout of some racist group, bent on eliminating all non-white swimmers, to keep their waters pure and their white sisters unogled.” (288)

The present story is highly autobiographical. Mistry expresses his quest for home and family, pain of distance, and diaspora through this story. Mother’s words are noteworthy:

She said he must be so unhappy there, all his stories are about Bombay, he remembers every little thing about his childhood, he is thinking about it all the time even though he is ten thousand miles away, my poor son, I think he misses his home and us and everything he left behind, because if he likes it over there, why would he not write stories about that, there must be so many new ideas that his new life could give him.(293).

But Mistry bewares the readers with the father’s words, “He said it did not mean that he was unhappy, all writers worked in the same way, they used their memories and made stories out of them, changing some things, adding some, imagining some, all writers were very good at remembering details of their lives.” (293)

Father grins that he writes about the middle class Parsis. He must also write about Parsi’s migration from Iran; about great Tata, Sir Dinshaw Petit, Dadabhai Naoroji, Zoroastrianism, Cyrus etc. or people who do not know will think Parsis “full of crancky, and bigoted.” (296) The mother asks that why does he not write about his Canadian experiences then the father answers that “because it is too early. . . . it takes a writer about ten years’ time after an experience before he is able to use it in his writing.” (297) With the last story Mistry also bewares the diasporic writers. He also narrates the limitations of
the writers of diaspora. Perhaps he wants to tell his limitation of not writing about Canada but to write about India. As Kersi’s father comments about Canada in this story, “father said if he continues to write about such things he will become popular because I am sure they are interested there in reading about life through the eyes of an immigrant, it provides a different view point; the only danger is if he changes and becomes so much like them that he will write like one of them and lose the important difference.” (299, 300)

Likewise, Mistry expresses his diasporic idea through Kersi’s father, and true to his words all his novels are set in Bombay. Sometimes it is easy for the writers to write about the place where they grew up. For example Shashi Tharoor’s words are very appropriate in this regard:

I am often asked why, despite my international career, I have set all my books so far in India. The answer is simple. My formative years, from the ages of three to 19, were spent growing up in India. India shaped my mind, anchored my identity, influenced my beliefs, and made me who I am. India matters immensely to me, and in all my writing, I would like to matter to India. Or, at least, to Indian readers.” (Tharoor, National Newspaper)

Moreover, about Mistry’s Canadian stories, Nilufer Bharucha opines:

A rather intriguing aspect to the question of Canadian setting is that ‘Swimming Lessons’ as well as the other Canadian stories provide an unrelentingly dark and gloomy picture of Canada and
even caution readers/listeners against the act of immigration—yet return too becomes impossible. Once the journey to West has been undertaken. . . . there can be no return—this is so not just in the Parsi diaspora but also in other Indian diasporas, where the equivalent cry of ‘Next Year Jerusalem’, which typified the Jewish diaspora, never rings out. (Bharucha, 117)

However, the last story of the Tales from Firozsha Baag was entirely set in Canada. But his second work Such a Long Journey is entirely set in India. In diaspora there is an idealized ancestral home and a collective commitment is made for its maintenance, safety and its prosperity. The novel consists of three epigraphs. And all of them recall both the mighty, memorable and glorious heritage of India along with the Parsis magnificent past. He also feels a strong ethnic group consciousness collected over a long time based on a sense of distinctiveness a common history and the belief in a common fate for India along with the Parsi people. Though he is living in Canada but his collective unconscious mind is always with Indians and Parsis.

The novel opens at dawn amid the prayer of Gustad, we listen to the abuses of Miss Kutputia for the milkman “Mua thief! In the hands of police only we should put you!” (2)

At once the bhaiya (the milkman) replied, ‘As if I make the milk. Cow does that. The malik says go, sell the milk, and that is all I do…What good comes from harassing a poor man like me?’ (2) Mistry recalls the glorious past of India when people were very honest and at present even the milkman accept the corruption openly without any fear. The scarcity of pure milk supply and the lack of proper water supply in Bombay are
highlighted. After collecting the milk Dilnavaz goes to brush her teeth but the “taps went dry.” (7)

Mistry feels empathy for India’s shameful defeat in the Indo-China war of 1962. He criticises Chinese as deceiver yellow race who cheated India under the garb of the slogan ‘Hindi-Chinee bhai-bhai’.

Mistry’s love for his birth country is hurt as he points out that though the country was suffering external threat and defeat in war, but the politicians were busy in enhancing their selfish profit. Nobody was urging for social unity but everyone was busy in dirty politics. He also criticizes some greedy people who were busy in selling the clothes donated for the soldiers. The defeat of India was very shocking and it took even the life Jawahar Lal Nehru.

The diasporic collective myth and memory about the homeland is at work when he laments the incident of Feroz Gandhi. Dinshawji makes Indira Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru responsible for Feroz’s fate.

Memory is the major method to be attached to one’s motherland. Mistry too suffers the blend of past and present memory. His pent up memory finds expression in the form of Gustad’s pining for his friend Billimoria, for his lost days of affluence during his father and grandfather’s days. Gustad’s father handed over the grand shop of furniture in the hands of his brother. He was a drunkard and ruined the shop. Perhaps Mistry wants to comment on the present state of the Parsis through this incident. As the Parsis received a rich, well organized culture, and tradition but due to some external as well as internal hindrances they could not carry the rich tradition ahead with the same competence.
Mistry gives both internal and external perspectives about Bombay. Gustad fetches live chicken from Cranford market. Dilnavaz regards a live chicken in the home as ominous. Gustad becomes nostalgic and remembers his father’s prosperous days when he used to go to Cranford market in a taxi with his father. But now the Cranford market has become very dirty and smelly.

Mistry points out the crowded city of India that leads the competition at in every field. The lack of opportunity creates tremendous pressure and expectations on the students. Sohrab wants to study Arts but under pressure of Gustad he appears in IIT exams and qualifies it. His mental trauma can be guessed easily as he resents:

Ever since the exam results came, you are driving me crazy with your talk of IIT. . . . I’m sick and tired of IIT, IIT, IIT all the time. . . .

why can’t you just accept it? IIT does not interest me. It was never my idea, you made all the plans. I told you I am going to change to the arts programme, I like my college and all my friends here.

(27-48)

Sohrab wants to stay in his college. And staying in India and being in contact with Hindus is not much celebrated among the Parsi community. Perhaps it is ingrained in Mistry’s Parsi community’s attitude towards India. Both IIT and migrating to the West are guaranteed as security, prosperity, better sanitation, medical facility etc.
Perhaps Mistry watches Parsi community’s wish in Gustad. But all the planning, expectations, and discussions that Sohrab will take admission in Pawoi, will see scenery, will visit home weekly and later will go to America is dropped. Too much pressure on Sohrab makes him irritable. Gustad beats him for his behaviour. Sohrab leaves his home. Sohrab’s leaving home also symbolises the discontentment of Parsis in contemporary India. They feel very congested and frustrated. Parsis and India both are suffering. And both want someone to take some responsibilities to take them forward. Sohrab is disappointing his father. And Parsis are disappointing India. Parsis are considered the blend of intelligence and hard work. But instead of staying in India maximum Young Parsis are migrating to the West in search of better life. Sohrab wants to suggest to his father several decisions. But his father does not want to listen to him. This also indicates the marginality of Parsis in majority Hindus and Muslims. At the end of the novel Sohrab chose to return back to his home. His returning home might be assumed to symbolise the dilemma of the Parsis where to settle down.

Through the conversation of Dinshawji and Gustad, Mistry throws light on the Parsis ease. Dinshaji’s comment shows the pining for the repressed glorious past and cry for the present pathetic condition of the Parsis. He unknowingly projects his mind that is construct of rule in Iran and life on condition in India. They are relegated to live a life where anyone can raise a finger on them. In this postcolonial world they are unhomed in their own home, “What days those were, yaar. What fun we used to have… Such respect we used to get. Now the whole atmosphere only has been spoiled. Ever since that Indira nationalised the banks.” (38)
Mistry had a great worry for Parsis living throughout the world. He wants to make his works a testimony of Parsi tradition, culture and art of living. He seems very anxious about the decreasing population of the Parsis. The Parsis are bound to compromise at every step. Mistry loves his lived past in India. Though he does not lament openly but his quest for the unity of India is not hidden. He is also worried about the condition of Parsis in India. About the policies adopted and implemented by its politicians. Mistry’s sense of ethnic empathy and camaraderie with Parsis in India is obvious. He becomes very sarcastic towards Indira Gandhi for spoiling the healthy society of India. Through Dinshawji he criticizes her decisions of promoting one group and marginalising the other:

She is a shrewd woman, these are vote getting tactics. Showing the poor she is on their side. . . . ? At once she began encouraging the demands for a separate Maharashtra. How much bloodshed, how much rioting she caused. And today we have that bloody Shiv Sena, wanting to make the rest of us into second-class citizens. Don’t forget, she started it all by supporting the racist buggers. (SALJ, 38-39)

A sect of writers, thinkers, artists and officials believe that in India intolerance is increasing. Another sect believes that there is nothing like intolerance. The country is full of love and communal harmony. However, Mistry seems to rely on the belief that communal intolerance is increasing in India. Dinshawji asserts, “In the banks, we thought our innings were over when those goondas broke the windows. . . . They were shouting “Parsi crow-eaters, we’ll show you who is the boss.” (SALJ,39)
Indeed Mistry is well acquainted with Mumbai and its problems. Gustad invited Dinshawji for dinner. They are just ready to take the morsel, the light is cut. Dilnavaz lights the lamp of kerosene oil. The mosquitos bite them simultaneously. Witnessing the odd occasion and Gustad’s family position Dinshawji says “Do not wait . . . or you’ll be late, just fill your plate”. (SALJ, 47) Gustad praises his poetic quality and announces that he is their poet laureate. But Dinshawji declines the proposal and says, “Laureate baureate nothing, I am a son of Mother India. Call me Kavi Kamal, the Indian Tennyson!” (SALJ, 47)

Past always shapes our present. We cannot ignore our past. Past always remains with us. It plays a role of a storehouse. We can trace countless things that can help us to bring up a healthy present and a promising future. In all religions, faiths and beliefs mother land or home is respected. Mistry seems to be more conscious about his lived life in Bombay as through Dinshawji he exposes his resentment on the matter of renaming the city streets and roads by the Shiv Sena. He also makes ironical comment on the functioning of Shiv Sena:

Wait till the Marathas take over, then we will have real Gandoo Raj. . . . All they know is to have rallies at Shivaji Park, shout slogans, make threats, and change road names. . . . Why change the names? . . . Hutatma chowk!’ . . . What is wrong with Flora Fountain?’ . . . Names are so important. I grew up on Lamington Road. But it has disappeared, in its place is Dadasaheb Bhadkhamkar Marg. My school
was on Carnac road. Now suddenly it’s on Lokmanya Tilak Marg. I live at Sleater Road. Soon that will also disappear. My whole life I have come to work at Flora Fountain. And one fine day the name changes. So what happens to the life I have lived? Was I living the wrong life, with all the wrong names? Will I get a second chance to live it all again? With these new names? Tell me what happens to my life Rubbed out just like that? Tell me!’ (SALJ, 73-74)

However, the above dialogue presents the unquenched quest of Mistry about India. Perhaps through the voice he shows his resentment of changing the names of the city roads, city. He appears to question about his lived life. He appears to be complaining and beseeching for his lived life in India. But he never states openly that he wants to return to India. But he shows his anger at the changes which he thinks irrelevant.

Mistry already has introduced us with Crawford market. He introduces us to another place of Bombay known as ‘Chor Bazaar’. Gustad receives a letter from Major Billimoria. According to the letter, Gustad was to visit Chor Bazaar. Then He would have to find out the complete work of Shakespeare. He was to “open the book to Othello, end of act I, scene iii, where Iago gives advice to Roderigo. The line: ‘Put money in thy purse’ will be underlined in red” (SALJ, 91) If he does so the shop owner will hand him a parcel. When he discusses the matter with his wife she indignantly says, “Why Chor Bazaar? That’s not a nice place.” (SALJ, 92) But Gustad replies back confidently “Don’t be silly. Because the old name is still used doesn’t mean it’s full of thieves. Even foreign
tourists go there nowadays.” (SALJ, 92) Gustad reaches Chor Bazaar. He finds the same man Ghulam Mohammad, who saved his life after his accident. Ghulam Mohammad handed over the parcel to him and suggests that he should act according to the given instructions. He gave his address to Gustad.

Ghulam Mohammad tells that he is a good friend of Major Bilimoria and he too is a RAW agent. Gustad takes the parcel home. And when he opens the parcel, he becomes amazed because the bundle possesses a huge amount of money. Gustad tries to contact Ghulam Mohammad. But he was out of station. To deposit such a large amount of money was dangerous for him. So he hides the money at home. Gustad was instructed to deposit the money in an account named MiraObili. However, before he could anything, the rain arrives in the city. Mistry describes the flooded situation of Mumbai. Commenting in this regard, Nilufer Bharucha writes, “Mistry would definitely have recalled with nostalgia or irritation (for the inconveniences it causes in flooded roads) in Canada.” (Bharucha, 130) The rain also brought back the pain of the broken hip of Gustad. It provides an opportunity to Mistry to narrate the traditional method of Indians to deal with diseases. They even don’t hesitate to deal with the matter of broken bones. Madhiwalla bonesettler is skilled and well known in the area among his patients. Be it Parsi or non-Parsi all visit him and all are entertained equally:

But Madhiwalla was revered like a saint for his miraculous cures.

He had saved shattered limbs, broken backs, cracked skulls-cases which even specialists and foreign-trained doctors (with degrees from famous universities in England and America) who worked in well-equipped hospitals had looked into, seen nothing worth
saving and shaken their heads despairingly. And Madhiwalla Bonesetter redeemed them all, all those hopeless cases, with no more than his two bare hands, his collection of herbs and bark, and, in the case of slipped discs, his right foot, with which he delivered a carefully controlled kick to the lumbar region that promptly restored the wayward disc. (SALJ, 130)

Mistry also hints that Madhiwala was growing old and it was a great worry among the people what would happen if Madhiwala died? And so would die his art with him. But he reveals that “secretly Madhiwalla was training someone.” (SALJ, 131) Mistry here seems to support that such doctors always remain in Indian society and they hand over their services from generation to generation. Mistry had minute observations of his birth country and city.

Where ever we go we can find Gurkha men in India. Gurkha men are considered as a brave battalion of Indian Army. Mistry also introduces a Gurkha in his work. The Gurkha men serve as watch men in Bombay. But this Gurkha man is shown as useless because a cat is beheaded and thrown in the Gustad’s garden. And he is unaware about the incident.

Mistry also picturises the Dubbawallas work in Bombay who supply tiffin in offices from the candidates’ home. He narrates that they never delay. And they always deliver exact tiffin to the right candidate.

Mistry does not forget to highlight the habit of Indians to urinate openly. As we find that the Khodad building is surrounded by a wall. But the wall unfortunately became a
lavatory for the passers and it used to create unease for the inhabitants of the building. However, fortunately Gustad met an artist and asked him to paint the wall from the pictures of many religious gods and goddesses. Though Gustad was a Parsi but his permission to paint the images shows his secular heart as well as the tolerance capacity in this regard, “So the wall of the Religious comes into existence and reaffirms Bombay’s famed tolerance in the face of increased fundamentalism violence…uncertain being the key word for Bombay’s minorities, religions and linguistic in a city in the clutches of a political and criminal mafia.” (SALJ, 285)

The wall painted by the pavement artist consists secular vision: “Nataraja did his cosmic dance, Abraham lifted his ax high above Isaac, Mary cradled the infant Jesus, Laxmi dispensed wealth, Saraswati spread wisdom and learning.” (SALJ, 184)

However, the Parsi community prohibits the Parsis to visit other religious temples or churches. But once again we find the secular bent of mind of Gustad when he travels in the train to Bandra. Here Mistry once again narrates several stations where he has been. Gustad accompanying Malcolm reaches Mother Mary’s church. Malcolm explains to Gustad that how people suffering from any disease in any part of the body offer that suffering part of the body in the form of wax and that part is cured. The readers as well as Gustad are also stricken at the sight of wax parts.

Arranged in neat rows were fingers, thumbs, hands, elbows, arms (inclusive of fingers), kneecaps, feet, thighs and truncated legs. The hands and feet came in left and right, in two sizes: child and adult. Skulls, eyes, nose, ears, and lips were grouped separately
from limbs and digits. Complete male and female wax figures were also available. There they all lay, corresponding to the catalogue the taxi driver had recited, divisions and sub-divisions of limbs and torsos anatomically organised. (SALJ, 226)

Gustad under the supervision of Malcolm offers special prayers for the well-being of his daughter Roshan and friend Dinshawji. After prayers, sits on the stone, remembers the old days. Gustad meets Ghulam Mohammad and comes to know that his friend Billimoria was imprisoned and now severely ill and want to meet Gustad once. Gustad journeys to Delhi in order to meet Billimoria. When he meets Billimoria, all the treachery played by Indira Gandhi against Major Billimoria is exposed to the readers.

His second novel *A Fine Balance* is divided into sixteen chapters, a prologue and an epilogue. The first chapter is “Village by the River”.

In an interview with Gokhale, October 1996, after the publication of this novel, Mistry has said that after completing *Such a Long Journey* which spans ten years 1961 to 1971. “It seemed to me that 1975, the year of the Emergency would be the next important year, if one was preparing a list of important dates in Indian History. And so it was 1975.” (Bharucha, 143)

Commenting about the text, Nilufer Bharuchaz writes, ‘Mistry has made a conscious effort to “embrace more of the social reality of India. . . . As the tragic tales unfold, one gets the impression that Mistry’s text is attempting to articulate the silence of centuries of exploitation, domination and oppression of the poorest of the poor of India. (Bharucha, 143)
As the central theme of *Such a Long Journey* was ‘Journey’, so once again in this novel too, the central motif is journey of the characters. However, the journey of the Parsis from Iran is still incessant. Nilufer Bharucha comments that “In *A Fine Balance*, the journeys are not restricted to the Parsis diasporic peregrinations.” (Bharucha, 147)

The novel opens with Maneck Kohla’s journey in a train from the mountain village to the “City by the Sea” then Narayan and Ishvar’s journey from village to the city, later Ishvar and Om’s journeys from ‘Village by the River’ to the “City by the Sea”. Dina journeys from her brother Nusswan’s home to her husbands’ home. Dukhi, father of Narayan and Ishvar also journeys from his village to the nearby town where he meets Ashraf (a Muslim) and befriends him. In an interview with Saraiya, Mistry has said that he used to visit Dharmshala to meet his uncle who lived there, “they have got a business there for the last five generations—general stores selling everything from blankets to knick-knacks.” (Bharucha, 147) The very first thing that attracts Mistry’s attention is over population of India, the hardships of men, women and children in Indian trains. As the novel opens: “THE MORNING EXPRESS bloated with passengers slowed to a crawl, then lurched forward suddenly, as though to resume full speed. The train’s brief deception jolted its riders. The bulge of humans hanging out of the doorway distended perilously, like a soap bubble at its limit.” (AFB, 3)

Another point that Mistry does not fail to observe about Indian trains is that of vendors. He narrates how the vendors get success in passing through the crowd selling several items jostling and elbowing with people, attracting animosity of the passengers who are not interested in purchasing the items carried by the Vendors.
A comb seller, twanging the plastic teeth of a large comb, pushed his way through the crowded compartment. People grumbled and snarled at him, resenting the bothersome presence . . . ‘Plastic hairband, unbreakable, plastic hairclip, flower shape, butterfly shape, colourful comb, unbreakable’. The comb seller recited in a half-hearted monotone . . . ‘Big comb and small comb, pink, orange, marone, green, blue, yellow, comb- unbreakable.’

(AFB, 4-5)

He exposes the growing frustration among Indians. The youths committing suicide in front of the trains. As the train halts for a long time some people inform that a dead body is found on the railway track.

. . . The men who had wandered outside came back with news that yet another body had been found by the tracks. . . . ‘Why does everybody have to choose the railway tracks only for dying?’ . . . Murder, suicide, Naxalile—terrorist killing, police-custody death—everything ends up delaying the trains. What is wrong with poison or tall buildings or knives? (AFB, 5-6)

The body is removed from the track and the train moves ahead. Maneck, Om and Ishvar were travelling in the same compartment of the train. They started talking to each other. All the three were going to the house of Dina Dalal. After joining Dina, all the four people make a happy and caring family. However, when all of them alight at the station in Bombay, they confront a beggar whose fingers and thumbs were missing and his legs
were totally amputated near to the buttocks; he was on a small wooden platform and was beseeching. “O babu, ek paisa day-ray!, he sang, shaking a tin can between his bandaged palms. ‘O babu! Hai babu! Aray babu, ek paisa day-ray!’” (AFB, 7) “That’s one of the worst I’ve seen since coming to the city”, said Ishvar and the others agreed. Om Prakash paused to drop a coin in the tin.” (AFB, 7)

However, according to Mistry’s description, even the beggars were not safe in India, during the Emergency period. On the name of city beautification, the beggars and pavement dwellers were picked up and dumped out of the city in an irrigation plant. They are made to work twelve hours without proper water and food. Both tailors-Om and Ishvar- too are dumped in that plant. However, corruption and maltreatment does not stop here only. The situation was so bad that even the beggars were sold. As the Beggar master announces:

> Usually, when I look after a beggar, I charge one hundred rupees per week. That includes begging space, food, clothes and protection. Also, special things like bandages or crutches’. . . .

Anyway your case is different, you don’t need looking after in the same way. Besides, you’ve been good to Worm, just pay me fifty a week per person, for one year. That will be enough. (AFB, 365-366)

It is a general tendency of India that people from village migrate towards towns and cities in search of jobs. Maneck, Ishvar and Omprakash too are among them. As Ishvar says, “‘we have also come for a short time only’ . . . ‘To earn some money, then go back
to our village. What is the use of such a big city? Noise and crowds, no place to live, water scarce, garbage everywhere. Terrible.” (AFB, 7)

Rajaram also intones the same when he expresses his resentment: “Yes, thousands and thousands are coming to the city because of bad times in their native place. I came for the same reason” (AFB, 171) Savita Goel’s statement is very appropriate in this regard:

Depressed and demoralised by the ruthless murder of their entire family, pressured by joblessness and hunger and envisioning a bright future for themselves, Omprakash and Ishvar migrated to Bombay like Rajaram . . . Their lives in Bombay symbolise the anguish, pain, anxiety and restlessness of people cut of from their native village . . . Their incapacity to find a home, despite numerous efforts is touching and pitiable. They are caught in an inescapable dilemma, between two worlds—their native village which they abandoned because it held a bleak chance and Bombay which has failed them despite promises -- they stay on as marginal men, unable to discard the old and to find peace in the new.

(Chakraborty, 73)

Despite all, Mistry’s eyes once again like his first novel *Such a Long Journey* catches the scarcity of water in the city. Ishvar and Om stay in Jhoppadpatti (slum area) in Mumbai. And there is only one tap which provides water in the morning. People stand in long queue and wait for their chance and sometimes they quarrel one another.
He went to the tap . . . fumble with the tap to start the flow.

Nothing happened . . . A long queue had formed at the tap in the morning when the tailors emerged with the toothbrushes and soap to await their turn. From the next shack a man came out smiling, blocking their way. He was bare above the waist . . . ‘Namaskar’. . . ‘But you cannot go like that’. . . ’ If you stand at the tap, brushing your teeth, soaping and scrubbing and washing, you’ll start big fight. People want to fill up before the water goes.’ (AFB.167-168)

Rohinton Mistry highlights the irresponsible behaviour of Indian government as well as the Indians. He points that some influential crooks use their man power to raise money from the poor and even police help them. A crook man may become the master of an area. And he could do whatever he wants. Both tailors reach in the slum area. They are told that the area is under the control of Navalkar a crook of the area. As Nawaz narrates to the tailors:

‘Navalkar’ is a little crook working for a big crook. A slum lord called Thokray, who controls everything in this area - country liquor, hashish, bhung. And when there are riots, he decides who gets burned and who survives’. . . These fellows bribe the municipality, police, water inspector, electricity officer. And they rent to people like you. No harm in it. Empty land sitting useless-if homeless people can live there, what’s wrong. (AFB. 163)
However, Mistry has shown another weak point of Indians that is of going for latrine in the open field. Both tailors spent their night in their hired shack in the slum area. In the morning they want to go for washroom. But there is no construction like that. They make a query about that to a man. He suggests them to take water in their loata and to come with him. He guides them towards the railway track in the open:

‘We have a loata,’ . . . But where should we go? ‘come with me it’s not far . . . walked towards the railway lines beyond the field with their loata . . . ‘Come to the right side. . . . The left side is for ladies only. . . . Women’s voice, mothers coaxing their children, rose from that direction, along with the stench. Further down men were squatting on the track or by the ditch to the side, near the prickly scrub and nettles, their backs to the railroad. The ditch was a continuum of the road side sewer where the hutment colony pitched its garbage. (168)

Dukhi moves to the city and befriends Ashraf, a Muslim. Dukhi feels good in city. Later on, Dukhi decides to sends his children Narayan and Ishvar to learn tailoring at the shop of Ashraf. This change of trend becomes a matter of talk and anger among the upper class people. In this regard, P Selvam writes, “But as history would readily testify, no power group willingly abandons power. The lower castes and classes need radical changes and revolution but not certainly the benevolence and the charity of the upper classes. Dukhi works towards an individual revolution-breathing with life-long traditions.” (Selvam, 62)
Through the portrayal of Rajaram, Mistry achieves success in highlighting various aspects of Indian society. Rajaram comes to the city to earn a livelihood. He has two monkeys and a dog. Through them he earns money. Both his monkeys are killed by his dog [Tikka]. He weeps bitterly for them and kills Tikka. He becomes a hair collector. He also happens to be the neighbour of Ishvar and Omprakash in the slum. He fails to earn enough money from collecting and selling hair. He goes even to murder two beggars in order to get their hair. He shaves his head and moustache to befool the police. When the CID is after him he complains to Ishvar, “Though it has been months, the CID is still looking for me. God knows why my case fascinates them- there are hundreds of other crimes taking place every day.” (485) Later on, he murders the beggar master. After failure in hair collecting job, he becomes a motivator for family planning, which proves a kind of catastrophe for innocent and downtrodden people like Ishvar and Om. In order to escape from the murder allegation, he becomes a sanyasi and becomes as Bal Baba. No wonder they have criminal history behind them. Rajaram says to Ishvar and Omprakash:

I want the simple existence of a sanyasi. I want to meditate for for long hours in a cold, dark Himalayan cave. I will sleep on hard surfaces. . . . Rain and wind, no matter how strong. . . . I will go with bare feet, my soles and heels cracked, torn, bleeding from a dozen lesions and lacerations to which shall be applied no salve or ointment. Snakes wandering across my path in dark jungles will not frighten me. Stray dogs will nip at my ankles as I roam through strange towns and remote villages. I will beg for my food, children and sometimes even adults will mock me and throw
stones at me, scared of my strange countenance and my frenzied inward-gazing eyes. I will stumble will go hungry and naked when necessary. I will stumble across rocky plains and down steep hills. I will never complain. (AFB, 485)

Mistry narrates the terrifying emergency period imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975. On the name of city beautification and family planning, the influential people like Thakur Dharmasi became more powerful. They started collecting more money by imposing atrocities on the poor; like Ishvar and Omprakash. Under the garb of MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) they allocated money from them.

During the emergency the corruption was at its zenith. Everyone was making money. Doctors, politicians, and Banyas etc. Banyas were selling less qualitative materials on double rate. As we find the description in the novel, ‘They sell bad salt-salt without iodine! These fat, greedy banyas are responsible for all our suffering! Blackmarketeers, food-adulterers, poisoners!’ (AFB, 398)

The middlemen of the government were earning heavily through corruption. Getting even a ration card in those days was a tough task. The level of corruption can be guessed with the statement of the Hotel’s facilitator:

My job, my specialty, is to assist people in their dealings with government offices’. . . . Birth certificates- death certificates, marriage licence, any types of permits and clearances- I can arrange it all. You just select what information you want on it, and will have it issued’. . . . Just pick the names you want on the ration
card, up to a maximum of six, and whatever address you like. Cost is only two hundred rupees. Hundred now, and hundred when you get the card.” (AFB, 178)

Home and family are one of the most important topics of Mistry. Most of his characters are always in search of a perfect home. But it often happens that in search of new home, they are distanced from their birth place and find it difficult to acclimatize in a new home and to forget the old home.

Humiliated, repressed, tortured by the upper caste, and the pressure of earning livelihood, Ishvar and Omprakash leave their home and settle in Ashraf Chacha’s home. But the industrialization hampers their work. They don’t have enough work to do. Asharaf Chacha suggests they should go to Mumbai. He gave them address of his relative Nawaz. Both of them reach Mumbai. They were expecting warm welcome from Nawaz. But he disappoints them. First he does not recognize them. However, he allows them to stay under the awning at the back of his home. He does not offer them any tea or food. He scolds his wife repetitively for allowing them to stay there:

Relief began replacing their fears as they neared the home of Ashraf Chacha’s friend. The nightmare of arrival was about to end. To get to the shop they crossed the planks thrown across the open sewer. . . . They knocked at the door. ‘Salaam alaikum’ they greeted. . . . Nawaz barely reciprocated the greeting. He pretended to know nothing about their coming. After numerous denials he conceded. . . . and grudgingly agreed to let them sleep under the
awning behind the kitchen for few days. . . . The thing is, there is hardly room here for my own family. . . . They could smell food cooking, but Nawaz did not invite them to eat. Finding a tap outside the building, they washed their hands and faces. . . . Light from the house spilled out through the kitchen window. They sat below it and finished the chapatis Mumtaz Chachi had packed. (AFB, 153-154)

The roads are for the convenience of people. But the roads of Mumbai are full of danger and hazardous. They have no sign mark. And if there is then it is covered with political posters, banners, flax etc. The vendors sell the things on the pedestrian pavement. So the pedestrians are bound to walk on the road. As he narrates:

They tried to follow the injunction repeated on several billboards:

‘Pedestrians! Walk on Pavement!’ But this was difficult because of vendors who had set up shop on the concrete. So they walked on the road with the rest, terrified by the cars and buses, marveling at the crowds who negotiated the traffic nimbly, with an instinct for skipping out of the way when situation demanded. ‘just takes practice,’ said Om. . . . ‘Practice at what? Killing or getting killed? Don’t act smart, you will get run over.’ (AFB, 155)

Unemployment in the villages is causing migration of people towards metro cities. But it traps them to live a miserable life. We have several characters in this novel that are
trapped in the Big cities. Rajaram also migrated from a village to the city. He too is a victim of the same.

Both Ishvar and Om are the victim of unemployment. They have migrated from their village to the nearby town. But once again they are helpless and migrate to Mumbai. They are forced to live a miserable life. They do not had proper place to sleep, food to eat and job to earn. Their dream of earning enough money remains a dream. Ishvar expresses his unease in Bombay: “We have also come for a short time only, said Ishvar. To earn some money, then go back to our village. What is the use of such a big city? Noise and crowds, no place to live, water scarce, garbage everywhere, Terrible. . . . Nothing is as fine as one’s native place.” (AFB, 7)

Mumbai is well known for the film industry. The movies are produced in bulk. There are actors and actresses who are well known in European countries for their works. But Mistry does not talk about the film industry. But he has knowledge about the actors and movies as he writes:

The cinema billboards they had hoped to use as landmarks led them astray because all of a sudden there seemed to be so many of them. Was it right turn or left at the Bobby advertisement? Was it the lane with the poster of Amitabh Bachchan facing a hail of bullets while kicking a machine-gun-wielding villain in the face, or the one with him flashing a hero-type smile at a demure, rustic maiden? (AFB, 156)
Indeed, Bombay for Ishvar, Omprakash, Maneck and Rajaram is a place of anxiety and anguish. They all are there for a short time in order to earn sufficient money so that they can return to their native and happy home. First of all, Ishvar and Omprakash stay at Nawaz’s awning, then in the slum, then on the platform, then at the entrance of a chemist shop from where they are mistaken as beggars and taken to the irrigation plant. From there, they are released by the beggar master, and then they settle in Dina’s home. But Ishvar’s dream of marrying Om remains unfulfilled. As they visit their native village to find a suitable bride for Om, the men of the Thakur caught them. They drag them to perform vasectomy. Later Dharamshi recognizes them and orders the doctor to sterilize Om. Both are left in misery. Ishvar is infected and he develops gangrene.

After Mr. and Mrs. Shroff’s death, despite all her efforts and curiosity, Dina is not allowed to continue her education further. Nusswan wants her to marry according to his own choice but she protests and marries Rustom Dalal whom she loves. After marriage, she shifts to the home of her husband. But destiny had allotted something else for her. On the third wedding anniversary, he dies in an accident. Dina is helpless and returned to her brother’s home. But once again Nusswan imposes his will on her and wants her to make marry again. She is treated like a servant. Dina left her brother’s home and started living with Shirin Aunty—Rustom ji’s relative. But unfortunately they do not survive. Both of them passed away very soon. Once again she is left unsettled and all alone. She chose to stay in Rustom’s home instead of her brother. She had no income for survival. So, she decides to hire two tailors. She started searching for tailors. Fortunately Ishvar and Om contacted her. In starting there was lack of trust. But need and necessity brought them to unite like a family. However, their peace of mind is momentary. The rent collector forces
her to vacate the home. She has to leave the home. She had to return again to take shelter in Nuswan’s house. And both tailors are reduced to vagabonds, mutilated beggars without home, despite their all sincere and genuine efforts.

Maneck Kohlah had a healthy childhood. He loved to help his parents in the cola shop as Mistry narrates, “His days were rich and full- school in the morning and afternoon, the General Store after that, followed by a walk with his father, late in the evening, when he would stride manfully alongside to keep up, or else Daddy would tease him that slow coaches got left behind.” (AFB, 210) But soon his happiness was to end. Mr. Kohlah decided to send him in a boarding school. “The boarding school they selected was eight hours away by bus.” (AFB, 211) he protested but was reprimanded, saying that, “A good education is the most important thing.” (AFB, 211) though Maneck learned to tolerate the boarding school and its manners but could not stop to miss his family, home, shop and the mountains. When he returned his home for the first time his father sat beside him and said, “Remember, Mummy and I miss you more than you miss us. . . . Remember, the slow coach gets left behind. Once you obtained the Secondary School certificate in another six years, nobody is going to send you away. You will take charge of this business.” (AFB, 212) The sale of the cola was diminishing. Maneck suggested several ideas but Aban Kohlah did not accept. A kind of rift and distance started growing between them. They started fighting continuously. When his final semester of Secondary ended he came home. He discovered the truth that his father had decided to send him away to pursue diploma in ‘Refrigeration and air-conditioning’. He did not accept the second betrayal of distancing him from his home easily. It shook him from inside. He resented, “You promised that when I got my S.S.C.I could work with you! You said you
wanted me to take over the family business.” (AFB, 222) But Aban Kohalah did not listen to him and remained firm on his decision.

Maneck went to Mumbai. He took admission in in a diploma college. It has hostel facility for the students. But ragging system was very harsh in those hostels. On the very first day he was ragged very badly:

The raggers were very efficient, taking less than a minute to hold Maneck down and strip him . . . ’The first part of the test is simple. We are refrigerating you for ten minutes. Don’t panic.’ They tumbled him into the freezer . . . The darkness of a coffin closed in around him . . . Maneck was stiff and could not emerge. They pulled him out moulded . . . They offered mock applause. ‘Very good. Full marks for the first test. Bonus marks for the shit. Well done. Now comes the second part.’ His blue lips trembled as he tried to speak. His hands reach stiffy for the payjamas. Someone snatched them away. ‘Not yet. For the second part, you must demonstrate that your thermostat is working. (AFB, 249-250)

Maneck wanted to return at his home. Secretly, both Mr. and Mrs. Kohlah were happy that Maneck wanted to come home. And Mr.Kohlah in the chamber of his heart knew that Maneck was not happy. But Mr.Kohlah was willing to make some effort or finding some other solution- “it would surely be expected by everyone, including their friends. Or he might be accused of being too soft a father.” (AFB, 251) They decided to send him at Dina’s home to live there as paying guest.
He met the tailors at Dina’s home and started sharing their pleasure and sorrow. After completing his diploma he returned home. But his father’s shop has disappeared because of the growing modern competition. Maneck’s father decided to send him to the Gulf countries. He went and returned after few years. His father had passed away. He went to Mumbai to meet Ishvar, Om and Dina Bai. He found unbelievable changes in the status of the three. Dina had lost her home and was living in her brother’s home. Both the tailors had changed into beggars. Riot was on its zenith. He started reminiscing on the past days at mountain:

So what was the point of possessing memory? It didn’t help anything. In the end it was all hopeless. Look at Mummy and Daddy, and the General Store; or Dina Aunty’s life; or the hostel and Avinash; and now poor Ishvar and Om. No amount of remembering happy days, no amount of yearning or nostalgia could change a thing about the misery and suffering.” (AFB, 336)

Mistry once again expresses his view regarding displacement, migration and native place through Dukhi. Dukhi says to Ashraf, “And where would we stay? There, at least we have a hut. Besides, that’s where my ancestors have always lived. How can I leave that earth? It’s not good to go far from your native village. Then you forget who you are. . . . Better to stay where we belong.” (AFB, 107)

However, Mistry, in this novel seems to present India from the external eyes for the external men. M.P. Juneja in his paper *Ontology of the Nonaligned Epistemological Expatriate Writer*: he claims that the ontology of Naipaul and Mistry does not agree with
his portrayal of India. He agrees that Mistry has presented Patriarchal and deplorable aspect of India during a national catastrophe:

Mistry, I would like to argue, has fallen prey to what Anthony Appiah has called The “Naipaul Fallacy”, that is, “his propensity to read Third World Countries by locating them in the matrix of European Culture”. By locating India in this matrix, Mistry has produced a “Fine Imbalance” for the Indian reader and “a fine balance” for the Western reader in this novel. He has therefore abused the privilege of the exotopic vision. (Dodiya, 71)

One of the major discrepancies of the novel is that everything ends with sad and negative role. Critics allege that Mistry has given a false narration of the Emergency of 1975; because now he has to depend upon his memory. However, the worst came when the novel was nominated for the Booker Prize. Reporting this in her interview with Mistry, Linda R. Richards notes:

Speaking on a BBC program, the Australian writer/critic Germaine Greer she’d reported that she’d loathed the book, adding that she didn’t in Mistry’s portrayal, recognise the India she’d come to know in four months spent teaching there. “I hate this book”, she told the viewing audience. I absolutely hate it”. Laughingly she said, “It’s a Canadian book about India. What could be worse? What could be more terrible? (Richards March2003)

However, commenting about the novel, Nilufer Bharucha writes:
That the narrative is unrelentingly dark is indisputable. Mistry provides us with horror scape of poverty and misery and even if we do not penalise him for this, the question is how well do all the pieces in his ‘story quilt’ fit together. . . . His rural, lower-caste characters and his urban beggars and common men come across as cardboard figures- an urban, westernised Indian’s construct of the Dalit classes. Moreover, as already said, the novel itself often appears to have been pieced together from fragments of newspaper reports, with the author rifling through pages of old newspapers from 1977 to 1986. In fact, Mistry himself has said that ‘My novels are not ‘researched’ in the formal sense of the word. Newspapers, magazines, chats with visitors from India—these are things I rely on. Having said that, I will add that all these would be worthless without the two main ingredients: memory and imagination (interview with Gokhale). While the newspaper mode of research is amply evident in the text, memory and imagination have not always sufficiently salvaged it. This is a great pity for the wider canvas on which Mistry has worked in this book and the importance of remembering in a nation’s life could have made A Fine Balance a very significant text. (Bharucha, 166-167)

Rohinton Mistry’s third novel Family Matters was published in 2002. After so much criticism, Mistry in this novel restricted himself to the Parsi family and Parsi world. In this book, Mistry from Canada sees the life of Parsis in Bombay in near about 1990-1993,
around the post Babri masjid and growing fanaticism of Shiv Sena and BJP. He also explains Bombay’s tolerance capacity during rioting and also humanistic approach of the people.

Linda L. Richards comments about the novel: “His most recent novel, Family Matters is brilliant. It manages to be warm and familiar, while for North American readers, at any rate—fragrantly exotic. (Richards, March 2003)

Mistry’s migration, nostalgia about his birth place distance and quest for his left home and Parsi family is expressed continuously in his novels. Sarah Curtis’ view in her review of Family Matters becomes quote worthy:

Tumultuous Bombay, in its new incarnation as Mumbai, is at the centre of Rohinton Mistry’s story as it was in his previous two novels which were both short-listed for the Booker Prize. Ever since Tales from Firozsha Baag, his collection of short stories published in 1987, he has been unraveling threads, theorizing and teaching lessons from the city of his birth. (Curtis, 21)

The growing threat in Mumbai is expressed through Coomy, who narrates that people are not secure. Nariman tells that a Parsi couple was burnt by the rioting Hindu mobs under the confusion and suspect that the fleeing Muslims had been given shelter in that building. She is scared and says, “How often does a mosque in Ayodhya turn people into savages in Bombay? Once in a blue moon.” (FM, 4-5)

In Mistry’s view, the people of Bombay are not only becoming harsh but also aggressive and ill-mannered. When Yezad was waiting for a bus with Roxana and his two
sons, two drunkards lurked towards Roxana and started singing “Choli Kay Peechhaye Kya Hai” He sang it with an exaggerated leer, and the crude question in the song, directed at Roxana.”(FM, 43) It enraged Yezad and he realised that Jal was right in his view, “Bombay is an uncivilized jungle now.” (FM, 45)

Mistry was related to music. He used to perform concerts in Bombay. He kept his passion alive even in Canada. He participated in band parties. In his short stories and novels there is repetitive discussion or its talk. Though he lived in Mumbai more than twenty years and participated in music concerts. But he does not write enough on Indian film industry. For the first time he used a Hindi song but it is used in a negative sense. Sujata Chakravorty comments in this regard:

This is surprising for the reader since all other aspects of Bombay, namely its landmarks, places of tourists interest, local trains, BEST buses, the monsoon, even the ubiquitous crow and milkman find repeated references. The only reason that could be attributed to this finding is that may be Mistry was not sufficiently influenced by the film industry to make him want to record it in his fiction.

(Chakravorty, 83)

Mistry delineates the shortage of water in all his novels. This novel too is not an exception. Yezad’s son Murad and Jehangir take bathe alternatively, only Yezad is allowed to take bathe every day because he is to go to office. ‘It’s your turn today, and that’s final’ said his mother. “If Murad wants a daily bath, he must get out of bed before the tap goes dry. At six, like me.” (FM, 93)
Rain is one of the most noticeable aspects of Mumbai. Mistry does not fail to recall about Bombay’s rain. We find Roxana, Yezad and their children visit the home of Nariman. It was raining heavily. They were wet when they reached his house:

Jal let the family in and ran with their umbrellas and raincoats to the bathroom to prevent a puddle by the door. . . . They were the only ones at the bus stop, where a large puddle had collected on the broken pavement. The wet road was glossy black in the street light, shimmering and hissing under the wheels of passing traffic.

(FM, 19-42)

Mistry once again points out the historical event, the demolishing of Babri Masjid. Nilufer Bharucha write, “It is through Yezad that the reader comes in contact with his office attendant, Hissain, the victim of the post-Babri Bombay riots. . . .” (Bharucha, 169) Hussain, a peon at Vikram Kapur’s shop is a victim of Babri Masjid rioting. Shiv Sena was involved in burning and looting. Hussain’s wife and children were brutally killed. He describes the event very pathetically:

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 couldn’t even
recognise them. . . “Hahn Hussain it was shameful”, said Mr. Kapur writing in his chair. (FM, 155)

In diaspora, the first step is immigration. Parsis migrated from Iran to India and now once again in search of an easy, happy and prosperous life, they are migrating from India to Western countries. V.L.V.N. Narendra Kumar comments, “The Parsis prefer the West since it offers unlimited scope for growth and prosperity. Dislocation is part of the Parsi psyche. Exiled twelve hundred years ago, they came to India. Now they are migrating to West in search of greener pasture. Thus, there is “double migration” in the case of Parsees.” (Kumar, 14)

However, Mistry, as an emigrant to Canada, expresses his quest for home through Sarosh (Sid), Percy, Kersi, Dukhi, Ishvar, Omprakash, Dina Dalal, Rajaram, Maneck and Nariman. Dukhi says, “Better to stay where you belong.” (AFB, 107) Ishvar says, “We have also come for a short time.” (AFM, 7)

Most of the Parsis have words of laurel for the West. Mistry too states the same through Yezad. Though, Mistry shows his anti-Canadian spirit in the novel. Yezad applied for the passport to Canada. And he was making castles in the air. As he narrates:

I have a dream that one day my family will deport this place of disaffection forever, and will live where the values of compassion are paramount, where the creed of selfishness is caged and exterminated, where compromise is preferred to confrontation. . . . Most of all. I have a dream that one day soon my wife, my son, and
I will be able to lift heads towards the Canadian sky and sing ‘O Canada’ with all our hearts (FM, 250)

Jaydipsinh Dodiya opines that through Yezad, Mistry depicts his own dream to migrate to Canada. Yezad is an autobiographical portrayal of Mistry. Yezad makes all efforts to get visa for Canada and to migrate there. Mistry delineates, “His dream for and to this ape-man commute had led him to apply for immigration to Canada. He wanted clean cities, clean air, plenty of water, trains with seats for everyone, where people stood in line at bus stop and said please, after you, thank you. Not just the land of milk and honey, also the land of deodorant and toiletry.” (FM, 137)

Hence, Mistry on the one hand supports and promotes migration of the Parsis but on the other he declines expatriate as Nariman says to Yezad, “I think emigration is an enormous mistake. The biggest anyone can make in their life. The loss of home leaves a hole that never fills.” (FM, 254)

Yezad was obsessed about migrating Canada. But the officers of the Canadian Embassy denied him a passport. His dream of ‘land of honey’ is crushed. His attachment is crushed and turns into frustration. The song oh happiness vanishes. He speaks for the same country in bitterness. All his reverie is shattered. His patriotism is awakened. He has the words of criticism now for Canadians, “You, Sir, are a rude and ignorant man, a disgrace to your office and country. You have sat here abusing us, abusing Indians and India, one of the many countries your government drains of its brainpower. . . . Instead of having the grace to thank us, you spew your prejudices and your bigoted ideas.” (FM, 253)
He started remembering his father-in-law’s love for his birth place. He remembers Mr. Kapur’s love for Mumbai, for its roads, for its buildings, for its parks, for its trains, for its human beings, for its tolerance, for its sympathy:

But his fantasy about that new life in a new land had finished quickly, Canada was done with. And he assuaged his disappointment by keeping track of problems in the land of excess and superfluity, as he now called it: unemployment, violent crime, homelessness, language laws of Quebec. Not much difference between there and here, he would think: we have beggars in Bombay, they have people freezing to death on Toronto streets; instead of high- and low-caste fighting, racism and police shootings; separatists in Kashmir, separatists in Quebec- why migrate from the frying pan into the fire? (FM, 137)

However, commenting in this regard Jaydipsinh Dodiya writes:

If Yezad’s character is autobiographical, Mistry also experiences ‘alienation’ like all emigrant Indians. Through the character of Yezad, Mistry expresses his wish to come back to India. At the same time, Yezad’s wish for emigrating is symbolical of his quest for prosperity, which also indicates the thirst of Parsi community to achieve economic status for ensuring security in life. (Dodiya, 84, 85)
Like “Swimming Lesson” and “Lend Me Your Light”, Mistry critiqued Canada and despite all the shortcomings of Bombay and India, Mistry appreciates it for its tolerance, harmony, adaptability etc.

Nariman’s home and homelessness also symbolises the diaspora of Parsee community. Nariman’s declining health symbolises the declining number of Parsees. Nariman was living in Chateau Felicity. Like Parsee community he suffered mental agony. He was in love with Lucy Braganza, a Christian girl. As Parsees were conquered by the Muslims and had to leave their motherland Iran so Nariman had to leave Lucy because his parents were against his marriage. He had to marry Yasmin Contractor.

Nariman tries his level best to make a compatible relationship with her, but fails. His feeling for Lucy never left him. Lucy also followed him. She used to stand in front of his classroom, then at the window of Nariman. Nariman like King Lear makes his will and renames the Apartment on the name of Jal and Coomy. When he breaks his ankle, he is thrown in Roxana’s tiny two roomed flat by Jal and Coomy. And when Coomy dies, once again he is brought to live in Chateau Felicity. This pathetic hanging between two homes and family is very painful for Nariman. The same is happening with the Parsees. They are never at home. Or we may say that they are never at peace.

Mistry once again points abnormal characters and late marriages in parsi community. Tehmool Lungra, and Miss Kutputia in Such a Long Journey, Jal and Coomy in A Fine Balance remained unmarried. Through these characters, highlights the growing late marriages and abnormality of the Parsis. Nilufer Bharucha writes:
. . . late marriages and/or a rampant individualism that does not brook the adjustments required within marriages, have led to most Parsis not marrying at all. Or if married, either opting not to have children or being forced into a childless state by infertility caused by the advanced age of one or both spouses at the time of the marriages. (Bharucha 171)

Sigmund Freud says that our suppressed desires appear in our dreams and in other ways. Mistry too has a great attachment to Mumbai. In order to express his hidden desires, Mistry created Vikram Kapur. He collects every photograph of Bombay. He celebrates all religions in his shop Bombay Goods Emporium. Furthermore, to know India from close, he journeys in a local train of Bombay as he describes:

A train was leaving, completely packed and the men running alongside gave up. All except one. I kept my eyes on him, because the platform was coming to an end. “Suddenly he raised his arms. And people on the train reached and grabbed0 them. What were they doing, he would be dragged and killed, I thought. A moment later, they had lifted him off the platform. (FM, 159)

Through the narration of Kapur, Mistry highlights the communal harmony of Indian people. As he narrates, “Whose hands were they, and whose hands were they grasping? Hindu, Muslim, Dalit, Parsi, Christia? No one knows and no one cared. Follow passengers, that’s all they were.” (FM, 160)
Mistry narrates Bombay a city which gives shelter to everyone. Parsis, who were forced to flee from Iran, found shelter in India. Kapur’s father in 1947 partition of India was forced to migrate from Punjab to Bombay. Kapur narrates: “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.” (FM, 151)

Mistry’s love once again for his old city shines loud and crystal clear, in the words of Vikram Kapur, “You see, Yezad, Bombay endures because it gives and it receives. Within this warp and weft is woven the special texture of its social fabric, the spirit of tolerance, acceptance, generosity. Anaywhere else in the world, in those so-called civilized places like England and America, such terrible conditions would lead to revolution.” (FM, 159)

Once again, the reader and even Yezad is awestricken at Mistry’s knowledge of Bombay. As he narrates:

This beautiful city of seven islands, this jewel by the Arabian Sea, this reclaimed land, this ocean gift transformed into ground beneath our feet. This enigma of cosmopolitanism where races and religions live side by side and cheek by jowl in peace and harmony, this diamond of diversity, this generous goddess who embraces the poor and the hungry and the huddled masses. (FM, 160)

Mistry delineates the theme of suffering through Nariman Vakeel. The theme of honesty and immigration of the Parsees are represented through Yezad. Commenting
about the novel Linda L. Richards writes, “Though the story takes place in Bombay, many of the challenges the main characters face are universal, the resolutions they come to are sharply and recognizably human: you don’t have to be Parsi or Indian to identify with this characters and the dilemmas they face.” (Richards)

Mistry lives in Canada and writes about India and specially about the Parsee community. But it never meant that he writes only for his Indian readers. Supriya M claims that Mistry does not stick to a title of labels like ‘Immigrant Literature’ or ‘South Asian Canadian Literature’ or ‘Canadian Identity’.

Mistry writes, “There are enough points of experience in common with all peoples around the world . . . The Parsi characters in my stories, and their dreams, ambitions and fears are as accessible to the Western readers as the Indian reader. The universality of the story are sufficient.” (Roy, 85). Expressing his view about Mistry’s novels, V.L.V.N. Narendra Kumar observes:

Mistry, now settled in Canada, writes about ‘politics’ in high places. . . . The ‘local colour’ in the narrative adds to the genuineness of Mistry’s account. Here memory acts chiefly as a device in evoking nostalgia. . . . Here the conflict is not within the Parsi community but between the socially, economically and culturally mobile and enterprising Parsee community and the rest of the world. (Kumar, 151)

However, all the books of Mistry are an epitome of Bombay book. Mistry in all his novels delineates with an external and internal eyes. He watches the things from
numerous angles. His nostalgia for the home left is expressed simultaneously in his works. He watches Indian history and political turmoil since 1948 to 1993 till Post-Babri Masjid. The rise of Shiv Sena, BJP, the game of Matka—all are portrayed in his works. Moreover, he migrated from India to Canada in 1974, but he created Bombay in his novels through his memory as well as from newspaper reports, visits to the city and visiting friends and relatives from Bombay and his own visit every fifth or sixth year, “You know I am always talking about Bombay—how much it means to me, how much it has given to me. . . I just told you because Bombay is everything to me.” (157) Mistry has got success in transcending his self, the Parsi community and became a universal writer. Mistry started narrating Parsi community in Such a Long Journey with a narrow and diasporic perspective but he became nostalgic and universal about his left home and community. Nilufer Bharucha writes, “The immigration story used to have two parts: dream and reality. But over the years, the dream—of prosperity, house, car, CD player, computer, clean air, snow, lakes, mountains, abundance had been renounced since it was not going come true. (240)” “Mistry has been sympathetic towards those who did not have the “luck” he did.” (209)

Mistry, in all his novels, shows his worry about dying Parsi community in India. He also points out the contribution of Parsis and Christians in the development of India. He also highlights “Bombay’s engagement with sordid power politicking, corruption at the highest level and the underworld politician nexus that has since criminalized public life in the city.” (Bharucha, 200)

However, nostalgia is the central point of diaspora. And it is a recurrent theme in the novels of Rohinton Mistry. In diaspora, nostalgia is for ‘left home’ or ‘promised land’. It is shown through the characters pining for their past life. It is also manifested in the idealization of tradition, culture, religion and rituals which preserve the family from the
outer forces. Most of the characters reminisces about their childhood as prosperous, peaceful than the contemporary one. The political, historical changed scenario also helps his characters to strut and fret and to think about a sense of loss in both personal and public world. In a recent interview, Edward Said has said that “Exile is punishing but also rewarding. Once you have lost your homeland, it cannot be recovered as paradise.”

(Bharucha,73)
Works Cited


