CHAPTER - II

GUSTAD’S JOURNEY WITH HOPE AND DESPAIR IN MISTRY’S

SUCH A LONG JOURNEY

I don’t understand this world any more. First, your son destroys our hopes. Now this rascal. Like a brother I looked upon him. What a world of wickedness it has become. (SLJ, 142)

Rohinton Mistry’s writings are tremendous operations of Indian history which is linked to interrupt everyday life. His characters’ personal affairs with communal concerns situate them the significance of social beings. Mistry conveys his own moral attitudes through his characters without any overt authorial comments. While dealing with the common life of Parsis in post-independent India, the novel also captures the socio-political and cultural disorder in sixties and early seventies.

Such a Long Journey is set in Bombay against the backdrop of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 and the emergence of Bangladesh as a separate independent nation. It includes various issues and disorders in the subcontinent like the partition of Bangladesh and the wars between India and Pakistan and India and China. In the novel, political events also put pressures on a middle-class family already under strain.
Such a Long Journey depicts the life-style of Parsis living in khodadad building in Mumbai and the microcosm of the Indians. The novel is Mistry’s recreation of the life of Gustad Noble in which the story revolves around a Parsi family in Bombay. Mistry describes the uneven fortunes of Gustad Noble who is middle aged man of modest dreams and aspiration. Then, Mistry presents various stories within the central story of Gustad Noble.

The title, Such a Long Journey has taken from T.S. Eliot’s The Journey of the Magi:

A cold coming we had of it,

Just the worst time of the year.

For a journey, and such a long Journey... (Parsi-2 173).

The title refers a symbolic significance of individual’s struggle to survive with dignity. The journey of the three wise men to the birthplace of Jesus Christ is not an ordinary physical journey. It is a symbol of man’s spiritual quest in which he has to undergo numerous hardships. Later, one of the Magi gives an account of his journey for the benefits. He reveals how he is encouraged to precede merely his faith. He succeeds in overcoming all the obstacles that befall in his way. The end of the journey is rewarding and satisfying, for he has reached his destination that the prophecy of the birth of Christ true.
The Journey of the Magi is also symbolic of the re-orientation which is absolutely essential to attain higher and nobler values in the life. Gustad Noble’s journey of life is also close to the journey of the Magi. Gustad is keenly desirous of the fulfilment of his dreams and aspirations. At every stage of Gustad’s life journey, he meets with extraordinary obstacles. It symbolizes Gustad’s struggles and sufferings quite obvious that he is not to keep in control of the events in his life. Although, clear references to the concept of journey are made on quite a few occasions in the novel.

Such a Long Journey illustrates suffering of Gustad Noble who suffers at the hands of self-centred politicians and heartless officials. Gustad Noble is the central character in the novel is a classical tragic hero. He is passing from happiness to misery and is uneven against heavy chances. In the opening of the novel, Gustad Noble is seen as a god fearing man and envy of neighbours and all.

his thick, groomed moustache was just as black and velvety. Tall and broad Shouldered, Gustad was the envy and admiration of friends and relatives whenever health or sickness was being discussed. For a man swimming the tidewater of his fifth decade of life, they said, he looked so solid. (SLJ, 1)

Gustad Noble is a bank employee and a father of three children, two sons, Sohrab and Darius and a daughter, Roshan. His wife Dilnavaz and their children live in a Parsi Residential colony of khodadad Building. Then, Gustad has a few good and understanding friends like Major Jimmy Bilimoria and Dinshawji. They are the representative of middle class Indian family and Parsis.
Gustad is an ordinary man who had to face many trials in life. He has his own dreams about the future but his aspirations crumble down like cards. Indeed, Gustad Noble’s dreams and expectations are modest. But, it is very hard to him that he cannot make things in such a way to fulfil his aspirations. He struggles with memories of a financially secure and emotionally stable past that serves to highlight his family’s current struggles. Additionally, the outside world with its political intrigues and threat of war seeps are into their flat in the Khodadad Building.

As the novel progresses, it finds Gustad’s hopes, dreams, and ambitions being destroyed in a quite manner by his caring and weakness. First is the sudden disappearance of major Bilimoria from khodadad building who is like a brother to Gustad. Second, Sohrab’s refusal his wish to join as an IIT student, whose bad manners spoils the ninth birth day party for Roshan. Third is that the protracted illness of Roshan, a complicated case of Diarrhoea. Fourth, Gustad’s receiving a parcel from Major Bilimoria and the trouble thereafter to hide ten lakhs rupees. Fifth, that is Gustad’s close friend Dinshawji’s illness and his eventual death. Sixth is the death of Tehmul Lungraa, an idiot child of khodadad Building. And the last is the destruction of Gustad’s sacred wall by the municipal authorities. All these events make a shakiness of his courage to balance the lifelong sufferings.

The novel’s every actions start in their usual smoothness way of life. Gustad’s son Sohrab gets admission to IIT, a symbol of pride. So, Gustad plans to celebrate it on the ninth birthday of Roshan, in which his very close friend Dinshawji is too invited. He brings a live chicken into the house that also makes much embarrassment of his wife
Dilnavaz. The initial atmosphere of humour, songs, and jokes are contributed in the party by Dinshawji.

The party comes to an abrupt end when Sohrab turns violent of freakish remarks. Because, he rejects his father’s wish for joining IIT and he wants to join arts programme. Gustad Noble becomes disturbed by his elder son Sohrab’s disobedience. Thus, the father-son hostility continues from this point onward. The sudden refusal of Sohrab not only shatters all hopes of Gustad but also makes a surprising turn in the later course of the novel.

Gustad’s family gets more and more involved with sufferings as Darius falls in love with Mr. Rabadi’s daughter and the sudden illness of Roshan. Besides, his close friend Major Bilimoria suddenly leaves from khodadad building without a word even to Gustad which upsets him. Gustad is already disappointed with the indifferent behaviour of Sohrab and now the disappearance of his close friend makes matters worst.

After few days, Gustad receives a letter from Bilimoria, who wants Gustad to receive a parcel from him. Gustad is ready to do the task in the name of friendship. However, he finds himself entrapped in complicated difficulties on opening the parcel. The parcel contains ten lakhs rupees to be deposited in the bank in the name of a non-existent woman, Mira Obili.

Thus, both Gustad and Dilnavaz, they do not know how to hide and protect such a huge amount. But, even before the amount is deposited the secret of amount is out. Gustad feels unwell at ease when Tehmul tells the inspector that the former has a
mountain of money in his flat. Another woman also makes a reference to the money that gives to him utter shock. Thus, the prohibited package collapses Gustad’s mind, happiness and he feels betrayed.

Fear and restlessness with two following days, Gustad finds a headless bandicoot at the base of his Vinca and again a headless cat in the compound. Then, a folded paper which is written a nursery rhyme in pencil that is also found inserted between two branches of his Vinca plant. Finally, Gustad deposits the whole amount in the bank with the help of Dinshawji. As soon as the work is done but Bilimoria wants the money back which is another risky task.

Major Bilimoria’s sub-plot is based on a true-life of financial humiliation. The theme against reality is played out in the propaganda and doublespeak of the government. Then, Bilimoria is almost everywhere in Gustad’s memories. His physical absence does not stop his presence in this narration. The character of Bilimoria is closely connected to Gustad’s desire for a better past. But, Bilimoria’s absence allows Gustad to project all manner of sinister motivations onto him.

Jimmy Bilimoria had been more than just a neighbour. At the very least, he had been like a loving brother. Almost one of the family, a second father to the children. Gustad had even considered appointing him as their guardian in his will, should something untimely happen to himself and Dilnavaz. A year after the disappearance, he still could not think of Jimmy without the old hurt returning. (SLJ, 14)
Mistry especially stresses the personal implications of his version of the Nagarwala affair. Thus, when Gustad thinks about politically humiliated Bilimoria, the stress leads on feelings of betrayal. Gustad’s friendship to Bilimoria, who is stressed, “Jimmy, another kind of Cain. Killed trust, love, respect, everything” (SLJ, 178). Gustad feels,

an incomprehensible betrayal, feeling that some vital part of him had been crushed to nothingness. Years of friendship swam before his eyes and filled the piece of paper; it taunted him, mocked him, turned him into a gigantic canvas of lies and deceit. What kind of world is this, and what kind of men, who can behave in such a fashion?... Jimmy Bilimoria had trapped him, robbed him of volition. If I could let the rotten world go by, spend the rest of life in this chair. (SLJ, 141)

In Gustad’s opinion, Bilimoria has violated a universal code of behaviour that faces Gustad with decomposition of moral values. Thus, betrayal hurts Gustad severely because it creates an inner meaning of reality and solace. As a result, Major Bilimoria is arrested on charges of corruption that news is published in the paper. The shocking news makes worries to Gustad and his perspective is completely darkened with fear and uncertainty. His responsibility may be semi-threatening tone to return the whole amount in one month’s time to save Bilimoria’s life.

Gustad makes a journey to Delhi to meet major Bilimoria who wants to tell him all they had happened. There, Bilimoria asks to him that he got the money from the SBI
director on an emergency basis to finance the Guerrilla training by the prime minister’s voice on telephone. But, the prime minister directly involved with a big fraud of sixty lakhs rupees. As a Parsi in Indira Gandhi’s government, Gustad finds himself along with his friend Bilimoria used as part of a clear plan emerged by the Prime Minister to misuse money.

Indeed, Bilimoria has sent on a secret mission in the interests of national security. Eventually, he is involved in the activity of RAW that is the Research and Analysis Wing of India’s secret service. In the novel, a notable concern is the RAW deal with Bilimoria. It seems that he is engaged to provide funds for the cross-border guerrilla groups.

After that, the major Bilimoria is asked to write a confession which he does without any second thought. But, the money is received by prime minister’s office that intercepts the money before it is used for the original purpose. Bilimoria knows the trick and keeps ten lakhs rupees for distribution to his friends. Long before he is arrested and is kept under the custody and tortured cruelly until the money is returned. However, Bilimoria has become deeply involved in gloomy event of the misuse of large sums of money.

Mistry gives critical references of Indira Gandhi’s handling of the Bangladesh war. The novel explains the turbulent year of struggles between East and West Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. There is also an opinion that is Indira Gandhi’s government supports the deployment of Indian troops in defence of the Bengalis. But,
Indira Gandhi initially rejects such a move. She plans instead to train guerrilla bands based in India but they are operated across the border. Of course, this is the point of intersection with the political sub-plot of Such a Long Journey.

Bilimoria’s sub-plot is based on a parallel historical figure as a Parsi and by an agent of RAW named Captain Sohrab Rustom Nagarwala who is a Parsi, a victim of the hegemony of the State. The episode of Nagarwala describes the cheating of several lakhs rupees from State Bank of India in Delhi by mimicking the Prime Minister’s voice on the phone. Mistry focuses the actual event that is known in India as the Nagarwala case.

The chief cashier of the State Bank of India received a telephone call from the Prime Minister. She instructed him to withdraw six million rupees and hand them over to a person. That person was himself simply from Bangladesh on the street Road. The cashier did these instructions and then went to the Prime Minister’s residence to collect for a receipt. Indeed, he shocked that he came to know the fake activity through the Prime Minister’s private secretary that Indira Gandhi had made no such telephone call. Then, the cashier was advised to inform the police and he registered a case.

Few days later, Captain Nagarwala was arrested by police and confessed. He had mimicked Indira Gandhi’s voice to obtain money to support guerrilla activities in Bangladesh. It is the highly irregular manner in which Captain Nagarwala’s trial is conducted. Three different judges supervised over the case in with three days and he was sentenced to four years imprisonment. Few months later, Nagarwala was admitted into hospital with cause of chest pains where unfortunately he died.
Mistry uses Gustad to plug the holes in the Nagarwala case. The Nagarwala’s substitute Jimmy Bilimoria tells Gustad that he has used as a scapegoat by Mrs. Gandhi and her family. “it is beyond the common man’s imagination, the things being done by those in power” (SLJ, 280). The Prime Minister’s voice is denial of involvement in a plan that bears her supreme power. So, Gustad involves in the shady deal to get back Bilimoria with the help of Dinshawji. Unfortunately, Bilimoria gets four years imprisonment, meanwhile, he dies of heart attack and his funeral takes place at the tower of silence.

Meanwhile, his daughter Roshan’s suffering of Diarrhoea worries also jolted his mind severely. Roshan’s illness continues to make matters worse. So Gustad visits Dr. Paymaster to report Roshan’s continuous illness but he is insulted. Because, the doctor suspects him that Gustad has modified the prescription at will so that the illness assumes an unexpected proportion. These situations contribute Gustad mind that makes him a feeling of restlessness and landing him in the dark land of suspicion.

On the other hand, the most disturbing is Dinshawji’s disclosure to Laurie Coutino, a typist in the bank. His own behaviour flirts with Laurie, is an example of the sexual violence involved in language and naming. He calls Laurie with the name as ‘little Lorri’ that ‘Lorri’ is Parsi slang word for penis. When she finds out the meaning of her name, Laurie feels uneasy and gloomy by Dinshawji’s behaviour.
Laurie tells Gustad,

You know how I feel when I think of those men laughing every time he said it? It’s so difficult to come to work, I want to resign and tell Mr Madon why.’ Her tone, even and controlled so far, grew emotional. ‘If someone speaks my name now … I feel bad. It reminds me of the dirty meaning. Mr Dinshawji has ruined my own name for me. (SLJ, 176)

Gustad observes imminent danger in Dinshawji’s frisky ways. He is suddenly changing his character from a public entertainer to a reserved person. Indeed, as a minority community, Parsis have their modest fears and anxieties. Thus, Dinshawji’s voices concern about the rising communal forces:

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 beggars. (SLJ, 39)

In the novel, various characters belong to the minority community. They express their anguish at the changing pattern of communal relationship in society. Gustad views Sohrab’s rebellious gesture as a symptom of the loss of respect for tradition and values. Mistry highlights the generation gap which seems to threaten existence of life of Parsi family.

Gustad feeds his identity and he has awareness of holding it throughout the novel. His friend Dinshawji is also seeking his own identity. The renaming of Bombay
streets by the Shiv Sena that leads to sensitive anxieties in Dinshawji. He shows his objection on the changing names of the roads. Dinshawji does not accept with the change of names of some roads which he has been seeing from his childhood. Lamington Road is changed to Dadasaheb Bhadkamkar marg Road and Carnac road is changed to Lokmanya Tilak marg Road. Dinshawji feels that the change of old names is like changing one’s own heritage. Gustad replies him that there is nothing in the names. But Dinshawji is very serious.

No, Gustad.’... ‘You are wrong. Names are so important. I grew upon lamington Road. But it has disappeared, in its place is Dadasaheb Bhadkamkar marg. My school was on Carnac road. Now suddenly it’s on Lokmanya Tilak Marg. I live at sweater 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? (SLJ, 74)

Dinshawji thinks that he has lost this connection with his fellow men, society and even with the world. Dinshawji mourns for the loss of his social identity and his personal history. As Williams observes,

What Dinshawji laments in the loss of the old names is the loss of the old logocentric security, that metaphysical reassurance via language “of the meaning
of being in general as presence”... Ultimately, he experiences the rewriting of the map of his neighbourhood as an interruption in his self-presence. (Williams, 57)

Unfortunately, Dinshawji fails to take the lesson about names and power. According to Dinshawji, people want to lead their life with the seal of self-identity. The changes of names in several places symbolize certain loss of old identity. Therefore, the author’s social and moral consciousness is shown through Dinshawji’s character.

Such moments are often display that is the formal consequence of the thematic concern with memory and identity. Of course, the most powerful memories are to be found in the caring details of family life. Gustad has really lost his happiest childhood during the course of his long journey of life. He recalls his childhood peaceful days when the family had servants, but now they cannot even afford to buy milk from Parsi dairy.

Therefore, Gustad invests his hopes for the future of Sohrab’s better life. But, Sohrab refuses his father’s expectation of joining into the IIT. His son Sohrab does not give any respects to him and always fights against his opinions. This attitude of Sohrab seems to disturb the traditional values of Gustad. The generation gap results in a series of bitter arguments. At last, Gustad scolds and renounces Sohrab, “He will have to come to me. When he learns respect. Till then, he is not my son. My son is dead” (SLJ, 52). This inability comes to terms with time that changes the fundamentals of human life. Still he remembers the wonderful moments with his mother. Even under mosquito net, Gustad was given protection by his mother. Gustad recalls,
That picture of my mother-locked away forever in my mind: My mother through the white, diaphanous mosquito net, saying goodnight- Godblessyou, smiling, soft and evanescent, floating before my sleepy eyes, floating for ever with her eyes so gentle and kind. (SLJ, 242)

Gustad, whenever finds a pen in between his fingers, thinks of his school days. Immediately he goes back to his childhood. He cannot easily forget his childhood memories that are a great loss to him. Gustad separates himself from the world by putting imaginary screens around him.

Again, Gustad has a critical moment that Dinshawji is hospitalized. He prays for both Roshan and Dinshawji at the mount Mary. The first great blow in Gustad’s life comes in the form of the death of Dinshawji. Gustad feels quite lonely because as his friends leave from this world one by one. Gustad Noble modifies his dreams and reduces his expectations through his beloved friends’ death.

Gustad’s friends do not belong to the socio-cultural majority of Bombay. Most of his friends belong to Parsi community, the only exception being Malcolm Saldanha. Like Jaakaylee in Mistry’s story “The Ghost from Firozsha Baag,” Malcolm is a Catholic. Malcolm and his family helped Gustad after his father’s bankruptcy but in the course of time they separated apart. After a long time, Gustad and Malcolm again meet and Gustad seems to find hope in their renewed friendship.

However, multiple ironies weaken Gustad’s expectations that Malcolm turns out the order of government to demolish the compound wall. While Malcolm takes in charge
to break down the wall, he is eventually not responsible for the implementation of the road-widening scheme. Malcolm Saldanha only carries out the order of municipality in which he is as a victim of the impulses of life as Gustad. Gustad blames Malcolm for destroying their friendship and the wall. It seems to him that the individual is thrown back onto himself and he has to manage with loss and loneliness alone.

Another character, Tehmul-Lungraa is even easier to project interpretation onto Gustad. He becomes particularly attached to Gustad with a childlike loyalty and faith. In the novel, Tehmul functions as a kind of divine idiot or fool figure. His innocence is debased with a disturbingly adult sexuality. His drooling and crotch-rubbing behaviour fright Dilnavaz. Particularly, he appears to set his sights on the attractive pink plaster doll, Roshan has won in a school raffle.

Gustad and Dilnavaz take advantage on Tehmul and project their anxieties onto him in their different ways. Gustad scares him with the threat of violence when he finds out about the money. Dilnavaz also plans with Miss Kutpitia to displace onto him the ‘evil spirits’ of Roshan’s ill. Indeed, the novel maintains the possibility that Tehmul has some extraordinary qualities and powers to compensate for his other disabilities. “ability to ferret out information ahead of others with whole minds and bodies” (SLJ, 112). There is an evidence of his urgent desire to touch Roshan’s doll as more than simply an urge to sexual self-gratification. Tehmul is an incoherent victim of the intrigues of those around him. He becomes a redemptive figure and sacrificial lamb through his death at the end of the novel that results a reunion between Gustad and Sohrab.
While the friendship between Gustad and Malcolm has been damaged by alienation, Gustad’s friendship to Dinshawji and Tehmul is eventually ended by death. Responsible for a loss of meaning in this circumstance is not only the failure of friendship but also death of them. Gustad realises that death is disordered and it cannot eventually be guarded off:

Hearses can be impeded by cars and barricades, he thought. But death. Death gets through every time. Death can choose to be prompt or fashionably late.

(SLJ, 243)

Dinshawji and Tehmul are allegorical figures and represent ideas rather than complex psychological dispositions. Dinshawji’s death comes to indicate the end of comic relief and then the death of the childlike Tehmul symbolises as the death of innocence. Their death is not only a shock but a permanent ruin of Gustad’s life. Dinshawji risks his job for Gustad by opening and closing a bank account with illegal money. Tehmul provides meaning to Gustad’s life as an alternate son after Sohrab has moved out. In fact, Gustad’s long journey still seems to us some great loss of his dearest friends and lovable persons.

Then, Sohrab’s decision to study arts course is taken as a personal offence by Gustad. His reaction towards his son’s plan is reflected by an intertextual reference to King Lear, a play which Sohrab had staged as a child. Mistry describes the enveloping theme of problematic relationship between a father and his child. Gustad is disappointed that the plan for his son’s career will not be realised.
How many years have I watched over Sohrab and waited. And now I wish I was back at the beginning, without knowledge of the end. At the beginning, at least there was hope. Now there is nothing. Nothing but sorrow. (SLJ, 55)

Sohrab’s departure from Gustad’s expectations seems to make life meaningless.

How to make him realize what he was doing to his father, who had made the success of his son’s life the purpose of his own? Sohrab had snatched away that purpose, like a crutch from a cripple. (SLJ, 55)

Gustad wants Sohrab to join IIT because he has dreamt of such a career himself. Therefore, Gustad Noble betrays uncertain motives when he reasons,

All I wanted was for him to have a chance at a good career. The chance wrenched away from me. Now what is left? What is left in life? Tell me, Dada Ormuzd, what? (SLJ, 178)

Gustad Noble does not unselfishly complain that Sohrab is deprived of a unique chance in life. He feels betrayed because he is deprived of a source of meaning.

Usually, Sohrab comes to visit his mother during the office hours of his father. Mrs. Dilnavaz informs him about the death of Dinshawji, all about Ghulam Mohammad and tragic death of Major Bilimoria. She requests Sohrab to stay and talk to his father in a pleasant manner. Sohrab predicts a fight between him and his father because he knows he is responsible for the latter’s unhappiness. Sohrab reacts: “It’s no use. I spoilt all his
dreams, he is not interested in me anymore” (SLJ, 321). But the mother convinces him and explains his father’s affection towards Sohrab and his changes.

she said, shaking her head. ‘Don’t be stubborn.’ She took his hand. ‘So much has happened since you left. Daddy has changed, it will be different now’. (SLJ, 321)

At that time, Gustad returns home when the outer wall of khodadad building converted in to a holy wall.

Mistry describes that happiness and misery are interlinked and woven tightly in everyone’s life through the novel. Many situations and characters are mysterious and there is always a disconnection between appearance and reality and intention and result. Similarly, the destruction of the wall is suggestive of Gustad’s shattered dream and the blackout paper on the ventilators is another symbolic gesture. The blackout paper symbolizes Gustad’s initial desire to hold the outside world at a safe distance. Gustad has put up the blackout paper at the time of the Indo-Chinese War and he has refused to remove it forever. Dilnavaz remarks,

Weeks went by, then months, with paper restricting the ingress of all forms of light, early and celestial. In this house, the morning never seems to come. (SLJ, 11)

The blackout answers a psychological need in Gustad in that it keeps out the frightening historical events as the nation war. He keeps always it over his windows
even in peace time that engaged in the fight against evil. Therefore, Mistry’s works are
the symbolic storytelling figures but this time it is given a dark and political edge too.

Gustad aims to keep his family, friendships, environment and everything. Most
of the minority’s mindset is the physical space of the Khodadad Building itself. At one
point, the apartment is likened to a museum and there is no coincidence in which many
domestic items seem to be in a state of waste thing. Otherwise, the khodadad building is
protected from the outside world by a high black wall. The wall is an important symbol
in the text and it has actually a group of symbols. The beginning of the narrative, it
represents protection and reduction of the wall. It shuts out the outside world and thus
provides security but at the same time, it reduces contact with the Indian reality. In this
respect, he seems to reveal an opinion shared by his own community.

The wall becomes gloomy within the apartment on account of the blackout paper.
The wall is used as a public latrine by outside people of Khodadad Building. Gustad
feels uncomfortable and he wants the place to be saved from pollution, horrid smell of
urine, and the flies and mosquitoes. He calls a street artist to decorate the wall with
figures of saints and gods from various religions. A street artist paints the wall with
gods and goddesses from all religion by the request of Gustad. As a result, in a short
time, passing people starts to pray, donate offerings, and leave flowers in front of wall.
Therefore, the natural stench changed as a natural smell of perfume. As the novel
progresses, Gustad Noble turns the offensively stinking wall into the wall of all
religions.
Although, the inmates do not like the religious pictures on the wall that start to criticize a saint facing the mosque and so on. However, this consciousness does not clash with the national interests, because, they basically involves with communal and national identities. In this atmosphere, municipal proposes to demolish the compound wall as part of a road-widening plan. In shortly, the wall is broken down by a team of municipal workers under the command of Malcolm Saldanha. However, Charmers, Paanwallas and people try to stop the destruction of the holy wall. Riots argue and quarrel with municipal workers to save and keep the holy wall. The municipal workers proceed with a go-ahead signal from the authority to demolish the wall.

Finally, the excited argument ends in fight and stone throwing. At the sight of the flying missiles, Tehmul Lungraa goes out and tries to catch the stones. But he is stroked and falls with a broken forehead with severe injury and then dies. In front of Tehmul’s dead body, Gustad prays the yatha ahu varyo five times and Ashem vazhoo three times with tears down from his eyes. He prays and cries for Tehmul, Bilimoria, Dinshawji, his family and all. “all who had had to wait for so long…” (SLJ, 337).

Tehmul’s death brings out Gustad’s realization of life and reality. Ironically, it is true that Tehmul’s tragic death brings back together Gustad and Sohrab. Gustad’s prayer at the body of Tehmul is suggestive of a fresh beginning. Though, Tehmul is a minor character in the novel who plays a significant role in the transformation of Gustad’s consciousness. Tehmul is a significant character whose presence is a painful reminder of the inequalities in the existing system.
The novel, *Such a Long Journey* attains the great creation of the central character. Gustad Noble’s life and sufferings are a large rhythm of universal pattern. In spite of everything, it is destiny that Gustad finds at the helm of affairs. Gustad bows to the will of providence and he finds in compassion and endurance a dignity for surviving.

Mistry also presents some social, political and religious aspects of particular historical period. The politicians make use of religion and caste to divide the people and set them up against each other. Mistry himself agrees that the politicians all over the world are always willing to exploit irrational feelings and fear to the people. The political backdrop of the 1971 India-Pakistan war in Bangladesh emerges behind in this fiction. The little girl Roshan asks her father, “why is west Pakistan killing the people in East Pakistan?” (SLJ, 81) and Gustad replays:

Because it is wicked and selfish. East Pakistan is poor, they said to west, we are always hungry, please give us a fair share. But West said no. Then East said, in that case we don’t want to work with you. So, as punishment, West Pakistan is killing and burning East Pakistan. (SLJ, 81)

The other description in the text which captures the atrocities committed in East Pakistan.

Reign of terror in East Pakistan... ‘It says that the Republic of Bangladesh has been proclaimed by the Awami League’… They were saying that General Yahya would allow Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to from the government. My right hand I will cut off and give you, I said, if those fanatics and dictators respect the
election results’… what will happen now?’ He ignored her question and read silently, about Bengali streaming over the border with tales of terror and bestiality, of torture and killings and mutilations; of women in ditches with their breasts sliced off, babies impaled on bayonets, charred bodies everywhere, whole villages razed. (SLJ, 12)

After the partition, the Pakistan wanted to a part of Kashmir in India. Already during the partition of Pakistan from India, Muslims and Hindus were killed. Pakistan continues to stimulate troubles in Kashmir and Hindus who are subjected and tortured on both side of the Kashmir border. Though, Mistry did not spell out questions of religious supremacy, they remain largely unanswered in Such a Long Journey.

But three years later, the Pakistanis attacked to try to get a piece of Kashmir as they had done right after partition, and blackout was declared once again. Then Gustad triumphantly pointed out to her the wisdom of his decision. (SLJ, 12)

The last sentence of the above quote suggests that problem is endless between Hindus and Muslims. So, Gustad does not like to remove the blackout paper which pasted on the widow of his house during the partition of Indian and Pakistan. Three years after the partition, Pakistan claimed a part of Kashmir from India, but still problem continues. Even after Mistry’s publication of Such a Long Journey, problematic journey of the enmity has not come to end between Hindu and Muslim.

Rohinton Mistry recollects the unforgettable and bloody Indo-China war in the terrible year of 1962. He just hints at the riots which broke out between Hindus and
Chinese because of the Indo-China war. Though, Jawaharlal Nehru tried to solve problem in a peaceful manner. Here, Mistry puts out the shacked reaction of the people of India about Nehru’s useless attempt.

riots in the city - curfew and lathi charges and burning buses everywhere. What a dreadful year 1962 had been. And such a humiliating defeat, everywhere people talking of nothing but the way the Chinese had advanced, as though the Indian Army consisted of tin soldiers. To think that till the very end both sides had been proclaiming peace and brotherhood... Chinese came pouring over the mountains, every – one said it confirmed the treacherous nature of the yellow race. Chinese restaurants and Chinese hair salons lost their clientele, and the Chinaman quickly became the number one bogeyman. Dilnavaz used to caution Darius, ‘The wicked chino will carry you off it you don’t finish your food’… he would get his Diwali cap pistol, put a roll of toati in it and bang-bang, kill the Chino if he ever dared come near their flat. (SLJ, 9-10)

In Such A Long Journey and in Tales From Firozsha Baag, Rohinton Mistry’s journey has strived to spell Parsi potions in varied shades. His works exhibit consciousness of his community in such a way. Parsis migrated from Iran to the west coast to escape religious persecution. They were allowed by the local rulers to stay and practice their faith. Rohinton Mistry responds with passion to the slow death of Parsi family and community. He narrates his community’s woes through the mouths of his characters. The individuals’ fate is bound up with the fate of their community.
The novel achieves significance through its discourse on political issues that builds around questions of identity, religion, culture, community, and society. On the surface, the novelist seems to have merged various narrations along with the central character of the Gustad. But the novel centralizes his community as a protagonist. Mistry informs the past of his community, comments on its present, and anticipates the flows of events to follow through his characters.

**Such a Long Journey** traces the history of Parsi community in India through Malcolm Saldana’s proposal to establish historical superiority of his religion over his friend Gustad.

Christianity came to India over nineteen hundred years ago, when Apostle Thomas landed on the Malabar coast amongst fishermen, said Malcolm. ‘Long before you Parsis Came in seventh century from Persia’, he teased, ‘running away from the Muslims. (SLJ, 24)

But Malcolm gives up when Gustad retorts,

That may be’, rejoined Gustad’, but our prophet Zarathustra lived more than fifteen hundred years before your Son of God was even born; a thousand years before the Buddha; two hundred years before Moses. And do you know how much Zoroastrianism influenced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? (SLJ, 24)

As a religious minority, the real identity does not fail to emerge on the occasion of Dinshawji’s funeral in **Such a Long Journey**. Parsis still follow the ancient method of
disposal of dead bodies. There is a wide reference to the conflict and adaptability of Parsis’ demands of modern life like the tower of silence. Parsi’s last act on earth is the donation of his dead body to hungry birds which are nature’s appointed scavengers. Dinshawji’s body carried to the tower of silence where the dead body will be picked and cleaned by vultures. The whole function is described from an angle very close to Gustad that the atmosphere is very calm and peaceful.

The dustoorji prayed beautifully. Each word emerged clear and full-toned, pure, as if shaped for the first time by human lips. And Gustad, lost in his thoughts, began to listen. It sounded so soothing. Such a wonderful voice. Like Nat king Cole’s when he sang, “You Will Never Grow Old”, soft, smooth, rich as velvet. (SLJ, 247)

The traditional Parsi community prefers this system whereas modernists are in favour of burial or cremation. Gustad feels god never appear at the end of his concerns to explain or to justice. Gustad’s life journey is in a malicious world in which happiness and miseries are interwoven with the journey on the edge of life. His long journey is an illustration of the universal truth with the conflict between good and evil. He exhibits the consciousness of his community and demonstrates the existing threats to Parsi family and community.

Throughout the novel, the decoy of the illusion is stronger than that of reality. Thus, Gustad’s long journey is a kind of enlightenment on political reality, personal
affections and mortality. The central image of the journey recalls that paradigmatic journey of Parsis in the novel. As Anjana Desai says,

The journey is the journey of a nation, of a city, of an ethnic minority, and of an individual man of this community and the question it raises is the same one that baffles Eliot’s magi was it for a birth or a death that they travelled? (Anjana, 134)

Mistry’s attitude to human belief systems is a rampart against emergency and disorder. In pre-colonial India, Parsis were allowed to practice their ancient religion. They had to adopt the costumes, traditions, and language of their Hindu hosts. This shows the impressive of the majority will and power over the minority peoples. The Indian politicians became an object as they seem to have hurt and pride Parsis in “Such a Long Journey”.

Mistry’s characters run down politicians like Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi. But Mistry does not deal with this matter in detailed account in his fiction.

His feud with his son-in-law, the thorn in his political side was well known, Nehru never forgave Feroze Gandhi for exposing scandals in the government: he no longer had any use for defenders of the downtrodden and champions of the poor... who had even abandoned her worthless husband in order to be with her father - how to ensure that she would become prime minister after him. (SLJ, 11)
Dinshawji reflects.

What days those were, yaar what fun we used to have... ‘Parsis were the kings of banking in those days. Such respect we used to get. Now the whole atmosphere only has been spoiled. Ever since that Indira nationalized the banks. (SLJ, 38)

Gustad noble too adds to Dinshawji’s view on nationalizing the bank by Indira Gandhi. “Nowhere in the world has nationalization worked. What can you say to idiots?” (SLJ, 38). However, Rohinton Mistry points out that a party like Shiv Sena. The party leaders worship Hitler and Mussolini and their racism borders.

In novel, various minority communities’ characters express their anguish at the changing pattern of communal relationship in society.

What to do with such low class people? No manners, no sense, nothing. And you know who is responsible for this attitude - that bastard Shiv Sena leader who worships Hitler and Mussolini. He and his “Maharashtra for maharastrains” nonsense. They won’t stop till they have completed Maratha Raj’… ‘Wait till the Marathas take over, then we will have real Gandoo Raj,’ said Dinshawji, ‘All they know is to have rallies at Shivaji Park, shout slogans, make threats, and change road names.’ (SLJ, 73)

Dinshawji suffers from real fury and genuine sorrow that the changing names of the roads and chow to appease strong racial sentiments. Racist parties like Shiv Sena treat in ugly propaganda against minorities and ironically use a physically challenged
person like Tehmul Lungraa. Ultimately, the racist and communal forces lead to massive violence.

Probably some rubbish that been foisted on the poor fellows, he assumed, remembering the time the Shiv Sena had recruited him to distribute racist pamphlets aimed against minorities in Bombay. They had promised him a Kwality Choc-O-Bar if he did a good job. Gustad returning from the bank, saw him, on the verge of being beaten up by a group of outraged South Indians who worked in the office building down the road. Gustad tried to explain, but they perceived him as the enemy too, for defending a Shiv Sena agent. (SLJ, 86)

India has spelt disaster for its unitary charters through the serious issue of dividing India into many states.

Living in Canada, Mistry has charged to accuse Shiv Sena for its fascist agenda. He pours his contempt on Indira Gandhi, Shiv Sena, and Bal Thackeray.

Remember when her pappy was prime minister and he made her president of congress party? At once she began encouraging the demands from 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... ‘In the bank we thought our innings were over those goondas broke the windows, even the thick glass of the main entrances... they were Shouting “Parsi crow-eaters, we’ll show you who is the Boss”. (SLJ, 39)
But the political parties did not effectively stop people from moving to different parts of the country. The internal migrations’ search of jobs in the government and the private sectors has greatly lowered the tensions. Rohinton Mistry pictures the Muslims as riots and bloodshed in the society. He expresses this character of the Muslims through his protagonist Gustad Noble’s fear for the Goaswalla.

Gustad had been advised by his grandmother during his young age. Gustad’s grandmother warns him:

Never argue with a goaswalla,’ she would caution, ‘if he loses his temper, then bhup! He will stick you with his knife. Won’t stop to even think about it’... ‘Remember, the goaswalla’s whole life, his training, his occupation, is about butchering. Second nature, Bismillah, he says that is all, and the knife descends. (SLJ, 21)

When Malcolm Saldana asked why he did not turn to Crawford market.

He did not reveal his main reason for abandoning Crawford market; it would sound silly, his fear of riots and bloodshed. (SLJ, 220)

The story’s setup emerges little by little, quiet and unclear by the injections. Gustad offers the main example of the fundamental gap between appearance and reality. At one point, when Gustad goes to Chor Bazaar with Ghulam Mohammad, he purchases a copy of Plato’s Dialogues at a bookstall.
Here, Plato’s ‘The Republic’ explains,

most people live like in a darkened cave. We are chained, facing a blank wall, and behind us is a fire. Between the fire and our backs, others move carrying all manner of vessels, statues and figurines of various shapes and materials. All we can see are the flickering shadows of these objects playing on the screen offered by the wall in front of us. It is only by learning to break our shackles and turn away from the wall and its shadows, that we can hope to escape into the true light of day, and view those Archetypal Forms the ideal paradigms, of which all earthly entities are merely imperfect copies. (Plato, 177-8)

Plato talks about general philosophical mysteries of real life. This philosophical explanation is as a tool for Ghulam to apply his ideas to Gustad in Such a Long Journey. Gustad’s celestial light kept out by the blackout paper and his own fear of change. It threatens only Gustad because he cannot face them fully.

Alongside, the main plot has a sub-plot to narrate the story with religious way. It is the text’s treatment of religion and superstition. For example, Dilnavaz’s reaction gestures toward evil with Miss Kuptitia’s magic which offers the chance, “to understand the hidden meaning of mundane events and chance occurrences” (SLJ, 4). Miss Kuptitia’s cosmology talents such as health, strength are stolen from one person by another. The sub-lot of the Miss Kuptitia and Dilnavaz interlinks with total structure of the novel that looks like untied or something mechanical. But at a closer look, its structural function helps to develop thematic concerns and human elements.
Magic religious rites performed by Mrs. Dilnavaz following the advice of Miss Kuptitia for the return of Sohrab and cure the illness of Roshan.

Miss Kuptitia only wanted to offer help and advice on matters unexplainable by the laws of nature. She claimed to know about curses and spells; both to cast and remove: about magic; black curses and spells: both to cast and remove: about magic; black and white; about omens and auguries; about dreams and their interpretation and most important of all, according to Miss Kuptitia, was the ability to understand the hidden meaning of mundane events and chance occurrences; and her fanciful fantastical imagination could be entertaining at times. (SLJ, 4)

In fact, Gustad’s family is interpreted by Miss Kuptitia from her own superstitious point of view. It is culturally accepted and transmitted from generation to generation. The origin of the trouble in Dilnavaz’s family is attributed to the killing of a live bird in the house. The live chicken brought by Gustad to celebrate his son’s selection to IIT on the birth day of Roshan.

According to Miss Kuptitia, killing a bird in the house is very ominous. Dilnavaz’s family dinner party had many things and events. At same day, Miss Kuptitia also had experience in her home the same day. In the morning, Miss Kuptitia killed a lizard on her breakfast table. Its broken tail wriggling and dancing five minutes, she felt a definite bad omen frightening her to go out for the next twenty-four hours.
Therefore, she refused the honour of joining the dinner party. The threatening incident also throws its curse over the dinner party. The initial enjoyment and happiness of the party slow down into much sound and fury. Lights also go off to the displeasure of all in the party. Darkness symbolizes hide of the father-son relationship and then the whole party goes down with gloomy.

The matter is brought to the notice of Miss Kuptitia by worried mother. Dilnavaz is instructed to do some magic rites for few days before the setting of the sun but there is no success. Instead, the situations go to worse that Sohrab leaves from his home and Roshan’s illness becomes a matter of concern. Miss Kuptitia explains that Roshan’s illness is caused by evil eye. She asks Dilnavaz to perform a ritual to protect her from it.

Take your needle and thread, a nice strong thread with a big knot at the end. Select a yellow lime, and seven chillies. Chillies must be green, not turning red. Never red. String them together with the needle lime goes at the bottom. Then hang the whole thing over your door, inside the house’...’It is like a taveej, a protection. Each time Roshan walks under it, the evil eye becomes less and less powerful. Actually, once you hang it, everyone in your family will benefit. (SLJ, 149-50)

But the ritual activities never help to relieve her sickness. Miss Kuptitia argues that evil eye and some dark force are responsible for the continuous illness of Roshan. Ultimately, she suggests to Dilnavaz that Mr Rabadi is the man behind the misfortune. Then, Miss Kuptitia asks Dilnavaz to get some nails of Tehmul to burn in coal fire for
Sohrab’s return. In ritual, the nails are melted with turmeric and Cayemne powders. Even this ritual helps little and the predictions come true. Miss Kuptitia promised her return of Sohrab at the cast of a victim Tehmul.

They would open wide Tehmul’s channels, Miss Kuptitia had explained, through which his spirit would reach and yank the evil out of Sohrab’s brain. (SLJ, 153)

Even though, Dilnavaz and Gustad are try to make Sohrab return to home and then comes to talk with his father. It is ultimately their triumph that brings order in the middle of disorder. Gustad struggles against the indifferent world that has not a profound meaning without the final reconciliation. When Dilnavaz comes out with the caring qualities of a mother, who speaks with him in these words, “He is your father. He will always love you and want the best for you,” (SLJ, 321). The barrier between the father and the son gives way and dissolves problems. Mistry ends the novel with Tehmul’s death and Sohrab’s arrival. But, these incidents do not turn him into a pessimist. He triumphs in a calm manner as he faces each trial of his life and he accepts the harsh realities of the world.

Dilnavaz’s quiet attitude is unambiguous that she requests him to calm. However, it seems that his patience has been tested to the last sequence: “What have we been all these years if not patient? Is this how it will end? Sorrow, nothing but sorrow” (SLJ, 52). Yet all these moments do not discourage Gustad from facing life long-suffering. His greatest moment comes towards the end of the novel, when he forgives Sohrab in a noble gesture of acceptance of his decision to lead his own life.
There are no significant literal journeys in the novel apart from the Dinshawji’s funeral and Gustad’s train journey to Delhi to see the bedridden Major Bilimoria. Gustad realizes the true heroism of Dinshawji from his death. Dinshawji had maintained a mask of obvious disorder in spite of the pain of cancer as well as the acceptance of the reality. In the train, Gustad things,

Would this Long journey be worth it? Was any journey ever worth the trouble?...
And what a long journey for Dinshawji too. But certainly worth it. (SLJ, 259-60)

End of the novel is the beginning of the real journey of a consciousness that the search is without end and entails countless such journeys. Gustad’s friends such as Dinshawji, Bilimoria, and Tehmul have already undertaken Such A Long Journey from sadness to hope with a clam manner. Gustad Noble experiences everyday life from struggles, disappointments, pains and problems. He finds salvation that denies its existence and becomes a universal symbol of human survival and human triumph. He laments; “I don’t understand this world any more... What a world of wickedness it has become” (SLJ, 142).

Mistry’s views about problems of common man are similar to Thomas Hardy who wrote the poem “To life”.

O, life with the sad sacred face I weary, of seeing thee, I know what thou wouldst tell of Death, Time, Destiny - I have known it long, and know, too well, what it all means for me. (Dodiya, 87)
Thomas Hardy says that man is bound to the wheel of destiny. Therefore, he has to continuously struggle against the fate. Shakespeare also confirms the same view in King Lear: “As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods. They kill us for their sport” (Dodiya, 87).

Significantly, Mistry believes that the individual must accept what destiny has in store for every human being. Rohinton Mistry brings out with surprising clarity of the tension between modernity and tradition. However, the novel focuses problematic relationship of father-son as Gustad and Sohrab. In the eyes of Gustad,

This was the bloody problem with modern education. In the name of progress they discarded seemingly unimportant things, without knowing that what they were chucking out of the window of modernity was tradition. And if tradition was lost, then the loss of respect for those who respected and loved tradition always followed. (SLJ, 61)

Then, Political corruption and high power have a vital place and have a sharp criticism in Mistry’s Such a Long Journey. Major Jimmy Bilimoria is trapped by the political power and corruption at higher places. He is arrested on the charge of stealing sixty lakhs rupees from the bank by speaking like the Prime Minister. Here, Bilimoria is none other than the fictional counterpart of Nagarwala who was arrested and killed during Indira Gandhi’s government. As it involved a Parsi, This incident had jolted the image of the whole community.
assuming that Mr. Bilimoria has the talent of voice impersonation, is it routine for our national banks to hand over vast sums of money if the prime-minister telephones? How high up does one have to be in the government or the congress party to be able to make such a call? And was the chief cashier so familiar with Mrs Gandhi’s voice that he accepted the instructions without any verification what-soever? If yes, does that mean that Mrs. Gandhi’s has done this sort of thing frequently? (SLJ, 195)

The political corruption at the universal level exposes Mistry’s typical mode of resistances. He attacks predatory power of USA for their military and economic domination on other nations. Bangladesh was attacked and its people were killed by Pakistan with aids from America to block Russia’s access to Indian Ocean. The news becomes the target for scalding criticism of Dinshawji.

And then America’s two little golaas are in Russian hands... ‘To protect their soft Golaas, they don’t care even if six million Bengalis are murdered, long as Pakistan is kept happy. (SLJ, 76)

As a realist, he uses the weapon of satire that makes him a severe political satirist and a critic of war. Wars between nations and the lack of big powers show the degenerating political scenario in the international politics. Particularly the period of the 1971 Indo-Pak war, Mistry’s keen awareness of the contemporary social and political situation of India is extremely exciting.
Metaphorically, Dr. Paymaster puts the seriousness of the situation in the following terms.

our beloved country is a patient with gangrene at an advanced stage. Dressing the wound or sprinkling rose-water over it to hide the stink of rotting tissue is useless. Fine words and promises will not cure the patient. The decaying part must be excised. You see, the municipal corruption is merely the bad smell, which will disappear as soon as the gangrenous government at the centre is removed. (SLJ, 313)

There are certain elements of documented national events which described by Linda Hutcheon,

...where history and fiction are intertwined, and the boundaries between them blurred to allow a new perspective to emerge... (Hutcheon, 105-23)

Similarly, Ghulam Mohammad tells Gustad at their last meeting that he is waiting for revenge on those political brutalities. He considers responsible for the death of his friend Jimmy, remarking of Indira:

And his mummy herself has many enemies. Makes more and more every day, from Punjab to Tamil Nadu. Any one of them could do it. I am a patient man. Her life is as easy to snuff out as Bili Boy’s, let me tell you. Like that,’ and he snapped his fingers under Gustad’s nose. (SLJ, 323)
The powerful political and casual brutalities come down on the protected private world of sensitive individuals. Mistry shocks at the sight of uncontrolled corruption and pathetic human condition that makes him into a hard hitting realist. At the time, he looks like a naturalist of reporting the human condition that war between nations and reduced political scenario in the international politics.

Such a Long Journey also provides the features of Mistry’s novelistic analysis of constitutional fury of State of Emergency. In a sense, Rohinton Mistry’s first two novels are as a fine art those diagnose the ills of a nation. A Fine Balance pursues further the themes of political decline and personal moral responsibilities.