

# Emergency –A Self Justifying Ideological Tool in a Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry

Sadia Ashraf (M.Phil. Scholar)

Assistant professor Government College Woman University Madina Town Faisalabad

Email: [sadiagul961@yahoo.com](mailto:sadiagul961@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

During last century theorists of power analysis have been struggling to find the answer to the question as to why the class, economically poor and technically less equipped always accept the relations of power and relations of production in society. The paper suggests that Rohinton Mistry in *A Fine Balance* (1996) writes with Marxists consciousness with acute realization of the exploitation of the marginalized with the increased degree of sophistication of cultural and economic hegemony. This paper investigates the theories of power i-e ideology, hegemony and discourse to help find the root- cause of the issue as to how power structure wins the consentment of the masses to the unequal powers of relation and production in society. How the system works so implicitly that people not only become a willing participants in their own exploitation rather they accept the phenomena as the only existing truth. “The material world around us is built on contradictory, contrived and illusory realities” (Peter & Luckman), 1966, p.46). The theorist of ‘race’ and ‘gender’ regard their compartmentalization as a process of othering and indigenous colonization that certain races and groups are deliberately kept backward, for capitalistic need of labor group to keep the machine running. Post structuralist and post –Marxists reject the idea of economic determinism; these are not material concerns always behind all class wars but lust for power and domination holds some other issues as well. All types of isms, fanatic creeds are harmful for the world’s balance and peace. Fundamentalism, extremism, universalism, and essentialism and nationalism etc. are eating into the vitals of the country and these need to be shunned if world is to run smoothly. This paper explores the intricate working of power structure; how a belief system works to smooth the contradiction to appear a “False consciousness” a “common sense” and thus the absolute and eternal truth. This paper is meant to detach the power of truth from the fabricated phenomena of imposed “Emergency” as “need of hour” (1996, p.113). The paper explores the lived experience of this period by different classes and thus two diverse images of “Emergency” emerge which are contradictory to each other, proving emergency to be a polyphonic discourse. The study aims at to destabilize the proletariat’s instant consent to power relations by unmasking the mystified reality of Emergency which was actually imposed to hide the fraud in elections by the then Prime-Minister Mrs. Ghandhi. State uses all means; all power tools; repressive and ideological to give the reality a false coloring of their own interest. Ideology, hegemony and discourse all the three theories of power are manipulated by the state machinery to make public not only comply with all political decisions instantly but to accept it as only existing reality. Marx writes “As for individual bureaucrat, the purpose of the state becomes his private purpose, a hunt for promotion careerism” (Marx, 1975, p. 111).

**Keywords:** Ideology, Hegemony, Discourse, State apparatuses (Ideological and repressive) False-consciousness, Common sense Euphuism, Polyphony.

## 1. Introduction

Why do we consent to the status quo of the neoliberal hegemony?

“More generally elite ideologies de-emphasize social inequality by semantic strategies that aim to legitimize, justify, naturalize, rationalize, authorize, universalize, or deny injustice, to transfer it to other groups ( as when elite attribute racism to ‘popular resentment’) or to blame the victim (Eagleton.1991.p.35).

Mistry in his novel *A Fine Balance* (1996), constructs an economic discourse to prove the relationship of literature with Marxism. Politics is a consistent theme with Rohinton Mistry for political thought plays a vital role in restructuring institutes and societies and politics is the space where the construction of realities take place. He has chosen a moment of crisis from the history of Indian politics to prove that the politicians use political rhetoric and pathetic phraseology as ideological tools to befool simple minded powerless just for more power. Mistry’s is a dystopic look at India; an India where only rich can survive. The foundation of secular India was religious and cultural tolerance and pluralism was sloganized. Emergency of 1971 becomes a self-justifying ideological tool in the hands of power hungry sycophants; they commit all sorts of atrocities to prove the maxim that absolute power corrupts absolutely. The narrative focuses on National Emergency as a critical event that eventually led to the collapse of Nehruvian secular construct of the state policy, giving rise to an alternative national ideology: Hindutva, which was based on one single Indian National identity to establish its exclusive communal control. Applying ideology, hegemony, and discourse as theories of power and knowledge and thus consequently tools of exploitation in the hands of hegemonic block, Mistry narrates how the decision of an insecure leader disturbs the routine of commoners difficult rather making their struggle for bare survival

impossible for them. He has questioned the totalizing, homogenizing, and monolithic discourse of Emergency putting all political sloganizing and the actual experienced agony of the interpellated subject simultaneously. Mistry here tactfully analyses that Mrs. Gandhi's decision of imposing a "State of internal Emergency" proved fatal with the disruption of that fine balance from the history of the nation and from the lives of common people as well. Mistry succeeds in interweaving national history with the personal lives of the protagonists. Mrs. Gandhi was found guilty of fraud in election and was dismissed by the court from her designation of a Prime-Minister. To save her position she imposed a state of emergency overnight by putting all opposition behind bars and ordering a strict surveillance on the rest of the nation. Through the victimization of four major characters Mistry exposes all drama of deceit, fraud, and betrayal by unmasking and unearthing all historically veiled facts regarding this Emergency. Questioning history and unmasking certain veil truths he lays bare before us the hideous crimes committed at the name of discipline and beautification. "No delay, otherwise, you will be arrested for trespassing on municipal property!" (1996, p.259). Mistry write from peripheral position with subalterns stance and dismantles the idea of single national identity through a minoritarian perspective rejecting Nehru's term of 'Secular India'.

The mode of the production of the material life conditions the social, the political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their beings, but, other hand their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx and Engels, 1973, p.85). Mistry is Marxist through and through obsessed with the miserable plight of suffering powerless individuals who are being played and utilized like commodities by the power hungry politicians, bureaucrats, officials and capitalists.

Mistry regards historiography to be an elite agenda, a political stance that history too is a fabricated tale of powerful as to how they gained power and then how did they manage to perpetuate this domination; questioning history he unmask lots of political scandals to make commoners awake from their common sense and their 'False consciousness'.

The significance of ideology is that it suppresses its own contradictions and differences by creating a "common sense" in Gramsci's terms. Gramsci has investigated the issue as to how state and civil society produce and maintain the consent to the hierarchical structure of capitalistic society by believing in the right to private property ownership. But an even more significant thing about ideology is that it is fragile by nature and can sustain only till the contradictions come to the surface; it exists in the situation of contestation and confrontation, it has to face counter ideologies.

"Ideologies are nothing but arbitrary; they are the result of historical facts which must be combated and their nature as instruments of domination revealed, not for the reason of morality etc.; but for reason of political struggle: in order to make the governed intellectually independent of the governing, in order to destroy one hegemony and create another one." (Gramsci, 1999, p.196).

This is what we see here in *A Fine Balance* that an atmosphere of contestation and confrontation is on the move; state has imposed an ideology and now introducing certain schemes and programs to smooth the contradiction and to snub the conflict. Emergency is called the period of accidents; 'yet another body found by the railway tracks' who so ever dare question the imposed ideologies were prisoned and incarcerated, " Why everybody choose the railway tracks for dying" (1996,p.5). Again one of the person asks what this Emergency is. And the reply comes "Another Tamasha by the government" (1996.p.5). The proletariat are no more oblivious of the big game of politics being played with them and they are ready to fight it back by counter discourse. "The card game had gradually become boisterous" (1996, p.265).

Taking ideology, hegemony and discourse, a road- map to investigate the role of institutions, constructed rhetoric, political policies, mystification of distorted ideological truths, by juxtaposing all political claims and the actual lived social experience of the multiple subject in a multicultural society, here in this paper I have tried to dissect the heart of the issue how we act in the belief system of power politics. Foucault demarcates the notion of ideology for it contains several problems, (Foucault, 2000). According to Foucault our subjectivity is constructed through our engagement with a multitudes of discourses. We think and blindly believe that the ideas are universally good but actually these serve in the best interest of the ruling classes.

Ideology is more imposing and unidirectional in its nature as compared with hegemony; hegemony leaves the room for negotiation and dialogue, it's more flexible than ideology. Gramsci (1996) describes how the interplay of our cultural and material surroundings constructs hegemony as follows:

"The press is the most dynamic part of the ideological structure, but not the only one. Everything that directly or indirectly influence public opinion belongs to it: Libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds. Even architecture, layout of the streets and their names (p.57). This is what we see in the work selected and the issues raised that the power holders construct a discourse to make their desired ideology a "common sense" to befool people through the ideologically constructed discourse they involve whole of official machinery to help aggravate the situation towards their desired end.

Turning to the question of why the subjects of unequal power relations submit to their subject position, we may infer from Foucault that this subjectivity is the result of all Discourses which we take from social

structure and then incorporate these with our subjectivity. For Foucault the production and circulation of discourses are relational and discourses of truth reinforce larger scale patterns of social inequality. For Foucault those who want to exercise power must produce and use discourse. “If we speak of the power of laws, institutions and ideologies, if we speak of structure or mechanism of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others. The term power ‘power’ designates relationships between ‘partners’”(Foucault,2000,p.337).

Discourse theory provides scope for debate; “This becomes a site for contradictions” (Belsey, 2000, p.60) Conflicts philosophical and material in society serves as “ideological forms in which men become conscious of their conflict and fight it out” (Marx, 1859, p.183).

Earnest Laclau and Mouffe (1985), while analyzing the relations of power and domination in capitalistic system present a post-Marxist model of discourse; they talk about the ways in which social power and resistance function through discourse. They present even a more fluid conception of hegemony than Gramsci; they highlight the ways in which political subjectivity is created and maintained other than around economic class. They reject the Marxist idea of class war and talk about the discrimination based on gender, race, class and caste. So we observe in *A Fine Balance* that state uses all power tools to contest the counter hegemonic block and kill all doubts.

The capitalistic mode of production and the scientific rationality has even more aggravated the situation; these again serving the best interest of the hegemonic elite. Technology with its rampant products, which are in easy access of all and sundry giving the false impression of equality actually make the capitalist rich. All governmental policies are designed to support the all business and capitalistic class; political system works at different levels to strength the privilege few. Capitalistic class creates a mayhem of false needs in the proletariat for all technological inventions through certain political policies; the marginalized class is trapped into this web of false needs through a system of knowledge/power. The use of all these technological devices makes the masses feel the sense of equality in society; but the actual truth is the other way round. Culture, Religion, Art Media, judiciary, law, bureaucracy all play the role of ideology to further the exploitation of the dispossessed. The ideas of heteroglosia and polyphony has also been explored to help prove the matter more succinctly; as multiple voices and different versions of same story help tear the veiled, masked truths in this repressive regime.

## **2. Emergency a Self-Justifying Ideological Tool.**

“The victim obtained the illusion of justice; the wrongdoer was free to continue in his old ways; and Pundit Lalluram, for his trouble, received gifts of cloth, grain, fruit, and sweets from both sides”(Mistry,1996,p.111).

Ideology obscures the real conditions of existence by presenting partial truth. It is a set of omissions, gaps rather than lies, smoothing over contradictions, appearing to provide over answers to the questions which in reality it evades, and masquerading as coherence in the interest of the social relations generated by and necessary to the reproduction of the existing mode of production (Belsey, 2002,pp57-58).

Through his scathing picture of dystopia during Indira Ghandi’s Raj in India, Mistry has challenged the monolithic discourse of the state of Emergency which was imposed by the then Prime –Minister Mrs. Indira Ghandi. Questioning the institution of history, unmasking and dissecting the constructed discourses of class, caste creed and the myth of elitism, Mistry has laid bare the articulated subjectivity. Using the techniques of polyphony and heteroglosia, he has presented the different version of the same story by presenting the actual lived social experience of all the marginalized characters during this fascist regime of India. Mistry’s stance is socio-political and he is a humanitarian through and through. He writes with Marxists perspective and socialist concern. For Mistry ordinary is the proper domain of heroism. The sensational deeds of great heroic giants is not his concern. A classless society based on the rules of equality, justice and fair play is his plea and aim, where there is the poor can dream.

“With the Emergency everything is upside-down. Black can be made white, day turned into night. With the right influence and a little cash, sending people to jail is easy. There is even a new law called MISA to simplify the whole procedure.” (19996,p. 299)

The concept of ideology as is used by Marx and Frankfurt school theorist is productive insofar as it shows the working of power in the socio-political and cultural realm of society as unidirectional and make the public feel the exploitation that is being done to the poor.

Marx takes modern capitalistic state to be machine working in a unidirectional way crushing the innocent without discrimination. IT is not working for the benefit of the poor marginalized class rather it is designed to create economic disparities in the hierarchical structure of society. The institutions of the civil society such as Church, schools, the mass media, or the family are responsible for producing and disseminating this hegemonic power and perpetuating the consentment to the relations of production.

“As for individual bureaucrat the purpose of the state becomes his own personal interest, a hunt for the promotion careerism” (Marx, 1975, p.11). So all motivators, facilitators, supervisors and managers all are working for the government schemes to get successful and to make public comply with the orders.

Ideology of Emergency was imposed with the pretext to make the nation regular and to punish the corrupt and the criminal, to speed up the progress of the nation and to fight the internal and external forces of evil which meant to destabilize the country's solidarity and its economy. To justify the decision of Emergency and to legitimize all atrocities, state uses all repressive and ideological tools; all state machinery departments and institutes and diffuse the discourse of Emergency in all social circle. It is not only destroying human capacity to survive rather giving rise to fundamentalism, extremism, materialism, essentialism ignoring all differences which are the recognition of India as a democracy. Different ethnic minorities are feeling it difficult to maintain their original identity and are fighting with all essentialism and universalism. Parse are fearful of the impending cultural erosion which is designed to merge their identity with the main stream culture. Wars, curfews, blackouts, war sirens, communal riots, and above all this internal strife of Emergency is making the situation even more badly. Future seems uncertain, anarchy and chaos has been loosened upon the earth and things have lost their center. Oblivious of this game of politics the common individuals are grouping in the dark for something tangible, something solid and permanent; a yearning for permanence, for roots, for something he could call his own. They are left with no other option except to accept the circumstances and go on, "The secret of survival is to embrace change, and to adapt. To quote: "All things are built again, and those that build them again are gay." (Mistry, 1996, p.230). This is the era of forceful eviction, forceful sterilization, forceful labor and the use of force in everything.

Mistry's work characteristically exposes a contradiction and the false and fragile nature of ideologies by exposing promises and commitments of the hegemonic block, and the tensions and disillusionment of the dominated. In *A Fine Balance* the characters articulate the writer's concerns. The problem of caste, creed, class, untouchability, economic disparities, political slogans, partition, globalization and technological advancement with its focus on rapacious profit are discussed more vocally than ever before.

"Under the pretext of Emergency, fundamental rights have been suspended, most of the opposition is under arrest, union leaders are in jail, and even some student leaders. (1996, p. 245).

This is the era of the criminalization of politics and the politicization of the crime; crime is being patronized by the politicians. The intellectual class is aware of the political propaganda than the average poor and uneducated people. Mistry steers the narration towards a desired end by telling the different versions of the same story through different characters. Emergency of 1975 becomes a visible mentor and symbolic vehicle to expose Government's collusion and participation in this cruelty to displace and dispossess these depressed groups. The power holders are exercising this power at all levels in villages and towns equally.

The novel *A Fine Balance* contains a scathing satire on the governmental policies and ideologies to perpetuate the power relations, how it ignores all rules of humanism and decides all whatever suits it. "At once she started demanding a separate Maharashtra. How much bloodshed, how much rioting she caused. And today we have that bloody Shive Sena, wanting to make the rest of us a second class citizens" (1990s, p.39). And all this is encouraged by the head of the state for purely selfish purposes just to show opposition parties its popularity and control on the public.

### **3. The Manipulation of Nationalistic Ideology to Justify Emergency**

"There is nothing to worry about just because the Emergency is declared. It is a necessary measure to fight the forces of evil. It will make things better for ordinary people. Only the crooks, the smugglers, the black marketers" (Mistry, 1996, p.34)

Indira is India and India is India was the slogan raised by power hungry sycophant of congress in their campaign to justify this decision of emergency on behalf of the prime-minister. A personality cult was developed deliberately and encouraged systematically with the alliance of all ideological tools. The idea was imbedded into the thoughts of the people to this extent simple minded shop-keepers started pasting Indira Gandhi's posters at the place of worship in their shops to start the day with her worship too as a sign of good luck. Om picture of the Prime-Minister in Vishram vegetarian hotel.

Reality of India is not singular and monolithic, rather plural; it is the home of different races and divergent ethnic minorities having their strong ethical beliefs and identity. These people with glaring differences in their respective beliefs can't be welded into one single identity. But during this era of political conflict people were forced to follow homogenizing look as a nation; the world is becoming a global village, people can't be befooled for a long time about their subjective position or their minds can't be colonized and conditioned according to the desired ideology.

Irony is there in every sentence of the novel, "Why is patriotism a sacred duty?' laughed Om.' They need to frighten people to be patriotic? (Mistry, 1996, p.281). Novel becomes a space of resistance where power is being exerting to resist power. There are multiple voices, from different directions, of people, facing and experiencing the agony of 'emergency'. This gives the mayhem of "Emergency" a polyphonic look. Where we find the different versions of truth about same reality.

Ideologies are fragile and exist in a state of contestation and confrontation; the ideas are always at war

because of their illusory nature. Ideology is always smoothing the inherent contradiction which it produces under the guise of ‘common sense’. Now when an idea is introduced and imposed on the people the state uses its repressive state apparatuses along with the ideological apparatuses to make sure that people should not only believe the desired ideology rather it should be the part of their daily practice. Patriotic songs are being played at the market place, where sterilization camps are working, to make people feel it’s their national duty to get them voluntarily sterilized as Nation needs it.

Here we observe in the “*A Fine Balance*”, that at public places and the entertainment places most unsuitable for political propaganda, the hegemonic block is at work in making people observe all the rules to show national unity. Om Parkash and Ishvar were about to leave the cinema after the films ended, but they are forced by the agents of Shive Sena to keep stay there and respect the National anthem to show national unity and solidarity with the state in these moments of crisis.

“Respect the National anthem! Patriotism is a sacred duty! Your motherland needs you during the emergency! Patriotism is a sacred duty”(1996,p.281).

Patriotic ideology is exploited with the call of sacrifice for the nation in crisis toying with their emotions that a foreign hand is involved in all the internal and external strife the country is going through.

#### **4. The Manipulation of the Religion Ideology to Justify the act of Emergency**

Ideological myths are naturalized deliberately to make it a common sense in a society. “Thought is nothing other than the power to construct representations of the things and to operate on these representations It is in essence symbolic” (Emily, 1971,p.25)

Religion and morality are the strongest ideological weapons to control the public and masses and keep them under control and strict surveillance by conditioning their thoughts in a capitalistic mood of production.

The hypocrisy of symbolic elite is also exposed through a scathing satire by Mistry; the newspapers were publishing spicy news for Prime Minister being found guilty according the judiciary inquiry committee, and everywhere there were demands for her resignation. But as soon as she is re-elected again in next elections the very newspapers changed their stance diplomatically and started using political rhetoric and flowery language to appreciate the Prime-Minister for her latent and dormant powers to lead the nation in times of need. Not only this but these newspapers done this propaganda at the cost of religion they portrayed her as a goddess who possess secret powers, “One groveling scribe had written: ‘Can the Prime –Minister have incarnated at least some of the gods in herself? Beyond doubt she possesses a dormant power, lying coiled at the base of her spine, the Kundalini Shakti which is now awakening and carrying her into transcendence”. (Mistry, 1996, p.593). This is the way political loyalties are changed in the changing political scenario; the very newspapers were declaring her to be a terrible woman, “Wicked as Cleopatra”, (Mistry, 1996, p.593). And that she must be punished for that. Art and media were also portraying her as a religious figure promoting her image as Mother India and Durga Mata toiling hard and suffering all for her children of the Nation. Many movies were released presenting the head of the state as “Mother India”. There were reports of peasants’ woman from interior and remote areas of country coming with gold bangles and other assets to offer her as a donation to their beloved leader. The only objection on behalf of the opposition was that of on the Coca cola industry for not sharing their formula with locals and; “with a little twisting and turning, the action suited all ideologies in the coalition brew”. (Mistry, 1996, p.593).

#### **5. The ideology of Emergency and politically motivated schemes.**

To veil the ideology of “Emergency” and to divert the attention of the people from the actual propaganda of the government a twenty point program is introduced. This twenty point program includes city beautification programs and sterilization programs to limitize the size of the population; all these plans prove havoc for all the poor destitute by adding to their miseries. These programs were initiated by Sanjay Gandhi to facilitate and oblige his bureaucratic friends and land mafia. They demolished all city slums claiming these to be a bad spot on the beauty of the city and demolishing these they claimed to restore the city to its formal glory.

“They said it’s a new law Emergency law. If shacks are illegal they can remove them. The new law says that city must be made beautiful” (mistry.1996, p.295). Ideology creates a “False Consciousness” and hegemony wins the consentment of the masses using all repressive state-apparatuses thus making it a “Common Sense” in Gramscian terms; making the dictated ideological truth the only existing reality. Art, media and culture are exploited and all capitalistic devices are consumed to make this joint venture of power and lust successful. “It’s our assignment and –slum prevention and city beautification” said the constable,(1995,p.303) Use of police to make the poor comply with the state ideology is the glaring example of repressive apparatuses being exhausted by the power structure. “A vigorous lathi charge had finally cleared the area near the front of the colony. Slippers and sandals lost by the fleeting crowd littered the ground, strewn like the flotsam of a limbless human tide” (Mistry, 1995, p.296).

“What we want to do is provide houses for the people. Enough food, so no one goes hungry. Cloth at

controlled prices We promise that we will eliminate poverty from our cities and towns and villeges”

“The controller of the slums was giving instructions to his workers. Levelled smooth—that’s how I want this field. Empty and clean, the way it was before all these illegal structure were built” (Mistry, 1996, p.298).

Mistry is dissecting emergency like living organism; both chunk of text unveil the fabricated fantasy and the suffered dilemma. Mistry is tearing the empty sloganizing, and the pathetic phraseology of the politicians who are fishing in the troubled waters and making maximum money. Government even deployed its officials in the guise of safety inspectors to check the colony.

An ideology is not simply a set of beliefs and ideas; it’s a socio-cognitive force that controls the formation, transformation, and application of other cognitions, such as knowledge, opinions, and attitudes and social representations, including social prejudices and the social construction of reality.

Through the episode of slum fiction, Mistry has made fun of Indira’s miscalculations by depicting the magnitude of the disaster that took place because of her wrong decisions. The ideology of Emergency is so internalized through all institutions that all departments become instruments in the hands of the power holders to exercise their power and influence on all the poor, weak people. Under this very Emergency a twenty point program me was introduced to speed up the progress of the country and to make the nation more regular. City beautification program me was also one of the point of this twenty point program me; this city beautification plan includes the abolishing of all jhopadpatties. These slum areas are very common near all big cities as a home to thousands of poor homeless workers who are here in these big cities in search of jobs; industrialization in its wake encourages urbanization which needs slums to flourish. Mistry tells the whole experience through his disillusioned and disenfranchised people; In the guise of the city ‘ Beautification’ a process of slum clearance was initiated and like a mock drama the poor people were cleared away from the area and deported to the construction sites outside the city for free labor. The slices of real estate were then allotted to the elite friends of Sanjay Gandhi to erect sky scrapers. These poor people from all these jopadpatties were tricked and forcefully collected to go and attend a public meeting called by the Prime-Minister and then these city slums were demolished.

Sergent kasar an agent of government machinery works with machines and destroys the whole of the slum area with the pretext of city beautification plans. He rampaged the slums, tearing into the structure of plywood, corrugated metal, and plastic. These people have paid the month’s rent and now they have nowhere to go.

Similarly the episode of sterilization or population control programs which were initiated during this obnoxious period of Emergency is also replete with hair raising horrifying details. The novel is a running commentary on the Marxist theory and philosophy proving money and impulse of power, lust and domination behind all eccentric decisions of power structure. Family planning programs were also the part of this satanic game of power where power structure is playing with the commoners. Mrs, Gandhi raised the slogan to make the nation more disciplined and to accelerate the speed of progress.

You see government employees have to produce two or three cases for sterilization. If they don’t fill their quota their salary is held back for that month by the government” (Mistry, 1996, p.345).

The forced sterilization program leads the nation towards a DE gendered balance a more crippled state by amputating the one person and castrating the other. “Testicular tumor,’ he felt obliged to explain to them. Thakerji has authorized removal, as a special favor to the boy’. The quiver in the voice betrayed the lie”. (Mistry, 1996, p.536). Corruption becomes a necessary evil; Om Parkash and Ishvar find it hard to get their rashan card even they are asked to bring either their certificates that they both got sterilized or provide money for that

There is an ideological propaganda in each thread of the narration and to change the mind of the people a discourse has been constructed throughout. There are certain symbolic elite who control the style and content of Media and educational discourse are those people who have a partial control of the mode of influence so they can transform and change the views of people

## **6. Emergency an Institutional Discourse:**

### **6.1 law Department and Emergency**

The ‘police’ the ‘judiciary’, and the ‘administration’ are not the representative of civil society which administers its own universal interest in them and through them ; they are the representative of the state and their task is to administer the state against civil society ( Marx,1859, p.56.

Arguments in some shake were settled when police used its lathies to emphasize the importance of complying” (p.259).The role of state is thought to be neutral arbiter ; it uses ideological and repressive state apparatuses to keep, those under control, who refuse to participate in capitalistic relations of production. Beliefs ideas, values and norms are embedded into the web of social circle through mundane interactions to make it a part of the inherently exploitative system.

The irony of the situation is even more intensified when all judiciary, law all institution which are

meant to serve the people and to maintain law and order in the society become a tool in the hands of powerful elite and serve their purposes directly. Nusswan the spokesman of the symbolic elites counts the benefits of emergency in the following words “Now a days he can call the police in just one second, to take away the union troublemakers. A few good salting at the police station and they are soft as butter”. (Mistry, 1996.p.373).

This Emergency proved very fruitful business for the village Thaker, he flourished a lot; made money through family planning and forced sterilization programs. Ashraf chacha told Om that Thaker has become a demon during this emergency, and that people like him are becoming very strong because they have a full support of government behind them. Besides these all use the rhetoric of the politicians to put their schemes into action.

“When he wants to threaten someone, he doesn’t send his own men, he just tells the police. They pick up the poor fellow, give him a beating, and then release him.”

Thaker Dharmasi was running lots of family planning clinics and camps whenever he visits some center “The policemen and Family Planning workers flocked to bow before him, jostling to touch his feet”. (Mistry, 1995, p.536).

Vamilk Vasantro the true marginalized voice serves Mistry’s purpose and exposes all malpractices of law and order. He talks about the law as a toy in the hands of powerful in following words,

“What are we to think about the state of this nation? When the highest court in the land turns the prime Ministers guilt into innocence.” (Mistry, 1996,p. 562). Mistry is ruthless critic of Prime Ministers act of fraud in the elections and not only this on her behest the required laws are also modified to facilitate her and prove her innocent.

Vasantro, when talking to Dina he explains the rotten situation of the country, “But what else to expect, when judgment has fled to brutish beasts, and the country’s leader have exchanged wisdom and good governance for cowardice and self- aggrandizement? Our society is decaying from the top downwards” (Mistry, 1996, p.561).

“The Prime Minister cheats in the election, and the relevant act is promptly modified. Ergo, she is not guilty”(Mistry,1996,p.334).

“After all, this is a Goonda Raj. So who can blame you for taking that route? Who would want to enter the soiled Temple of justice, wherein lies the corpse of justice, slain by her very guardians”? (Mistry, 1996, p.563).

## 6.2 Education Department and Emergency

According to Gramsci state creates a ‘common sense’ regarding its desired ideology by using all institutes and makes this ideology a discourse to mystify the apparent contradictions. All school, college, hospitals and prisons are forced to follow an ideological language which is what in the direct interest of the hegemonic block, “Exercise of power in modern societies is achieved through ideology and more importantly through the working of language” (Fairclough, 1989,p.22).

“Why does everybody have to choose the railway track only for dying?”(Mistry.1996.p.5)

The very first sentence of the novel tells us about a dead body, found on the railway track which is declared to be a suicide but latter on we come to know the more poisonous details that this is a usual routine during emergency. The foregoing pages of the novel reveal the victimization of the students and union leader under police custody, with the allegation of raising their finger or questioning the authority. Avinash the member of students union was arrested and then killed in police custody for standing for goondas in university campus. Avinash belonged to a poor family, his education was the only ray of hope for the dying father and the growing sisters of marriageable age. He didn’t want to get indulge in students politics but he is pressurized to get involved; resultantly the circumstances lead to his mysterious death in police custody.

“As president of the original student Union, surely he was in grave danger from the new groups on campus” (Mistry, 1996, p.247). Maneck is always advising him to stop all this and pay attention to his studies, he too wants to quit but finds it difficult to withdraw from party politics at campus. Maneck often finds his friend surrounded by a crowd of students talking strange the things he was not least interested, “ their talk was filled with words like democratization, constitution, alienation, degeneration,,decentralization,collectivization,nationalism,capitalism,materialism,feudalism ,imperialism,communalism,socialism,fascism,relivism,determinism,prolitterianism,,,,,ism,,,,,ism,,,ism,,,,,the words flying around him like buzzing insects”( Mistry,1996,p.244). These students are always talking to clean the campus from the evils of nepotism for staff hiring, bribery in admissions, sale of examination papers, special privileges for the politicians’ families, government’s interference in syllabus and many more.

The fascist regime of Emergency has been called as “Kuli-Yuga”, the age of darkness with its imposition of MISA, the maintenance of internal security act: this act actually is a certificate to commit as many atrocities as you want in the name of law. MISA allows police, judiciary law to maintain law and order at all cost. All trouble makers, all opposition leaders, all union leaders are imprisoned. Educational institutes become a

ground, a space to exercise power and to make students and staff members to accept the ideological agenda presented by Emergency. Maneck observes that soon after the declaration of Emergency “a new group, students for democracy, was in ascendant. Its sister organization Students against fascism, maintained the integrity of both groups by silencing those who spoke against them or criticized the Emergency”. (Mistry, 1996, p.246). They mechanically signed the document showing their full alliance with the prime-Ministers decision of imposing Emergency to fight the anti-democratic forces fighting the country from inside.

Police is always present at university campus and physical beating and violence has become a routine matter; threats and assaults seems to be the part of university curriculum, and the professors who refused to follow the new sinister laws were taken away by plain clothes men for anti-governments activities. Everybody is afraid to interfere as MISA allowed imprisonment without trial; everybody was aware of the fact that whosoever questioned MISA, sooner or later answered MISA. They took over the charge of the whole of the university; all freedom of speech and action banned, university paper, which was usually filled with light jokes on governmental policies became a model of instruction about students behavior in university. During this emergency all just took the shape of a ridiculous drama of puppets who are expected to behave and act in the most appropriate way or face denunciation and imprisonment. One day a flag raising ceremony was organized on university campus, attendance was made mandatory under the charge of students for fascism; all the college teaching staff was forced to come over there and show their alliance with the prime-Minister with the slogan of patriotism. The ideology of Emergency is manipulated combining it with that of Nationalism and Patriotism thus to win the consentment of the common individual in the name of the love for country. “ On cue, lectures, associate professors, full professors and department heads approached the dais, en masse , in a feeble show of spontaneity”( Mistry ,1996,p.247).

It was all so mechanical and artificial that all seems purely constructed and forced. “The organizers tried furtively to slow down, to make it look like genuine outpouring of support. But it was too late to improve the choreography” (Mistry, 1996.p.247).

This is a clear example of fascist influence on individuals and the process through which ideologies are institutionalized to transform the concrete individuals into subjects; so as to make them response spontaneously to the existing social phenomena. The ultimate destiny of all ideologies is the willing subjugation of the individuals towards a fixed and essential identity.

## **7. Two Images of Emergency:**

### **7.1 The version of Emergency experienced by the marginalized class**

Mistry steers the narration towards a desired end by telling the different versions of the same story through different characters. These are mostly the marginalized, poor weak poverty stricken people of India who find themselves at the mercy of the brahminical and pseudo-secular elites of Indian society shaping, defining and designing Indian society during 1970s.

“Three weeks ago the high court found the Prime Minister guilty of cheating in the elections. Which meant she had to step down. But she began stalling. So the opposite parties, student organizations, trade unions—they started mass demonstrations across the country. All calling for her resignation. Then, to hold to power, she claimed that the country’s security was threatened by internal disturbances and declared a State of Emergency”. (Mistry, 1996, p. 245) .

Characters in constructions sites are being treated like commodities; first the city police sweeps these poor from the city pavements like heap of garbage and then they throw them on the construction sites for free labor. They are checked judged and sorted out to separate the able bodied from the crippled bodied; their bodies are assessed as to where theses can be utilized in the best possible way. All able bodied are kept there at the construction site and the rest crippled are sold to the beggar master to be trained and modified as beggars.

“Enough to keep from starving.” She showed him how to hold his head and shoulders to carry the weight, and they raised the load” (Mistry, 1996, p.345).

Monkey man is one more character among lots of others characters who contribute to fulfil Mistry’s purpose of exposing this great political drama and to show how this emergency made it difficult for the commoners to maintain this balance of life. First this emergency took away his monkeys from him with whom he used to perform his tricks to earn money. This very emergency snatches the children of his sister as well; thus destroys the hope of bare survival.

All the pavement dwellers were collected together from the pavements and thrown outside the city skirt on construction sites and are forced to work free for food and shelter only. When they argue that they are not laborers and that they are tailor they are threatened and punished. This is the world of ruthless competition and segregation where honest labor is denied; they are expected to perform in the most desired manner or face the denunciation. “All of you lazy Rascals think you should not be here. The government will not tolerate it .You will work. In return you will get food and a place to live” (Mistry, 1996, p.344).

Dina Dalal the main female character of the novel suffers doubly, being female and then a widow. Her



struggle for survival gets worse with the imposition of emergency. Her flat becomes the symbol of her integrity and solidarity and the tailors come together to form a family and this all balance is disrupted by the imposition of the emergency.

## 7.2 The State Of Emergency Perceived and Benefited By Hegemonic Block

Emergency of 1975 in India becomes a visible mentor to observe the atrocities committed by the people in power and gives them a chance as usual to steer the nations towards a desired end.

The elite class is happy at the imposition of the “Emergency”; they rather hail “Emergency a good and pragmatic step to make the Nation more regular and to remove the stigma of backwardness from the name of the Indian Nation. Nusswan the representative of symbolic elite speaks the language of capitalism where human beings are counted and are estimated according to the value they produce. Marxism explains reality to be material and not spiritual. This is how discourses are constructed and made popularized to shape the opinion of the common public.

“The mode of the production of the material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their beings, but, on the contrary, their social beings that determines their consciousness” Marx and Engels, 1973, p.85). This is always material benefits that the capitalist pursue and construct the whole of the course of action accordingly.

He is of the view that orthodox humanitarian policies have kept the country backward for centuries and is happy with new pragmatic policies of the new visionary leader. He counts human beings as numbers and figures statistically without any consideration of their being human. “At least two hundred million people are surplus to the requirements, they should be eliminated .....got rid of. Counting them years after years gets us nowhere just makes the number looks bad” (Mistry.1996.p.372).

Mistry’s tool is sarcasm in exposing the rapacious profit motif all the business minded elites. Mrs. Gupta one more voice of these capitalists who fish in the troubled waters at the cost of these poor weak people. Emergency proves beneficial for her to earn more profit by paying low wages as there is no labor union to ask her about lower wages. She justifies her own actions of making money by using the logically constructed discourse of emergency; that emergency is meant to make the nation more regular and disciplined. When Dina Dalal tries to raise her silenced voice by saying that Prime-Minister is found guilty of fraud in elections and that the court has declared a verdict against her. She at once refuse the allegation saying, “No, no, no, ‘that is all rubbish, it will be appealed. Now all the trouble makers who accused her falsely have been put in jail” (Mistry, 1996, p.73). This is how discourses are constructed and are made the only existing truth; hegemonic elite reserves the right to define people according to their worth in material terms and decide the terms and conditions of their living even.

Mrs. Gupta the owner of export company hails ‘Emergency’ and regards it a cure for all the diseases of the poverty stricken of lazy bluffers because police is always there to help the capitalists to deal with the union leaders and trouble makers, “I prefer to deal with private contractors. Union leaders want to work less and get more money”. (Mistry, 1996, p.73).

Nuswan regards the imposition of the “Emergency” as the true spirit of the renaissance that radical and magnificent changes are taking place. Mistry’s satire is at the height as renaissance spirit involved humanitarian element and a human consideration of all high and low, rich and the poor but here the visionary leader is sweeping the very poor out of earth through radical changes. These radical changes involved gharibi hatao program me which actually means to sweep away all the poor from the cities, “People sleeping on pavements give industry a bad name” (Mistry, 1996, p. 272). All these gareebi hatao programs were meant to erase all slum area around the cities and poison the weak, disabled poor residing there. And all this city beautification was not without profit based schemes by these city elites.

“The main thing is that now we have pragmatic policies” Mistry is sarcastically ironic here; the text invites the reader to experience the agony of the down trodden by putting parallel all claims of social amelioration and all benefits gained.

Thaker Durmhasi, a representative of all symbolic elites, who flourished a lot during this era of exploitation, called all the school teachers, block development officers , tax collectors, food inspectors to the clinic and asked them to offer a bid on the villagers thus he auctioned all the villagers and the bid is decided for the highest bidder. Here the whole range of government officers as motivators and facilitators are at work to make the ideology of emergency successful at the cost of human beings.

Ratna Shiela Mani while writing about this state of Emergency says “The upper caste leaders connive with the Bureaucracy to preserve their interests during the emergency. Thaker Dharmasi achieves respectability as a political leader because he organizes many sterilization camps” ( 2004,p. 75).

## 8. Conclusion

A humanistic revision of all political ideologies:

“The aim now is to construct a politics which works with and through difference, a politics which does not suppress the real heterogeneity of interests and identities” (Raja, T.1996, P.61).

The world in its existing situation doesn't need to be constructed in a new fashion; it requires only to be balanced hegemonically. This balance demands justice, equality, freedom for all and a fair distribution of all the means of production. It needs pluralism, acceptance, embracing the change and acknowledging the difference. The art of balance demands on behalf of the state to realize its responsibilities in the game of power. World is changing rapidly and you can't keep people oblivious of the game of politics and selfish motifs; people are becoming more aware they are becoming bolder in their resistance and the result is the counter discourses and counter ideologies. Prompt justice and fair play is the need of the hour if world is run smoothly and without collision. In this global village people are not the citizen of one single country and nation these are global citizen so the age old ideas of beliefs and divisions of society need to re-edit. The prime aim of literature is to initiate a dialogue where it does not exist, particularly between the people and the communities that share a certain geo-socio-political and cultural space.” (Singh,1994,p. 109)

Mistry here with the help of story- telling initiates an economic and political discourse by exposing political scandals from Indian history to make politician feel the results of their political decisions. As ideologies represent certain groups and eras so these are fragile and are always in danger of confrontation and contestation; these remain stable only so far the group which motivates it remains in power. These usually try to homogenize hegemonies the existing situation by totalizing gaze which consequently involves the process of suppression and exploitation. But in a world like a global village no totalizing reality is going to stay for long. Power is dispersed in the social network of relations; power is no more a unilateral game flowing from top to down; it is emerging from each side with emerging ideologies and resistance.” The idea of India is based on..multiplicity and tolerance There can be no one way religious, cultural or linguistic Of being an Indian; let difference reign supreme ( Rushdie,1981,p.52).

Marxism aims a classless society; a society where each and every one has equal chances to flourish and the society based on equality and justice. Through the theories of Ideology, Hegemony and Discourse this papers initiates a dialogue between two power blocks; suggesting that discourse in itself is a great force and the proliferate can construct a counter discourse to exert their power on the hegemonic society in capitalistic systems.

“You only have power over people as long as you don't take everything from them. But when you've robbed a man of everything he's no longer in your power---he is free again. (Alexander Solzhenitsyn, The First circle, 1968, p.107)

Mistry presents the solutions in the metaphor of balance and patch quilt which implies respect and consideration for each and every body; it connotes to have a humanistic consideration of all political ideologies. This solution points at the reality of India as a plural space where a single unilateral policy can't work. Ideology functions through discursive practices and make the people a willing participant in the process of their own exploitation, discourse help ideology materializes its purposes practically. But the positive thing about ideology is that it is fragile and it exists in a state of contestation and confrontation; the actual lived social experience of the subject class makes them conscious of their exploitation. Marxism emphasizes social change and a general change in the attitude and behavior towards the destitute of the world.

“You cannot draw lines and compartments, and refuse to budge beyond them.you have to maintain a fine balance between hope and despair.....in the end it's all question of balance( Mistry,1996 p.231).

Different institutional discourses help veil the constructed truths and cloud the contradictions; the proletariat are left with no other option except to believe the institutional authority as the sole existing truth. People adopt themselves to the discourses of class, gender, and race and accept their subject position more readily than coming to terms with ideology which is more imposing and unidirectional in its flow of power. We examined in this paper that state and its machinery uses ideological and repressive apparatuses to run the mechanism smoothly and all state machinery becomes a tool in the hands of hegemonic block.

The general theory of valuation of human activities, as developed by anthropologist research, teaches us a higher tolerance than the one which we now profess” (Boas,1911,pp 208-209).

All types of fixity and essentialism have to be shuned off in order to make the world a fit place for all the diverse type of the communities to live and to thrive according to their norms and values. All the hegemonic blocks will have to share their fund of knowledge and wealth, leaving behind their partialities and prejudices, with the rest of the world if the world is to run smoothly or the world will be limping on one leg. This targeted Balance, which the novel talks about is possible only through the leveling of all hierarchies of class, caste, creed and gender; by accepting all individuals equally important and respectable regardless of the difference of their religious beliefs.

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