

## Political Novels: An Alternative Print Media With Reference To Selected Modern Indian Novelists.

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### Abstract:

*This paper aims to study the literary genre political novel as an alternative media with reference to selected works. The objective of this paper is to explore how the political fictions unpack the political affairs which are muffled. Any art form reflects the social life in it. The form fiction is one of them and especially the political fiction portrays the scenes which might be shown a blind eye by the so-called fourth pillar of democracy that is media.*

**Keywords:** Political fiction, need & origin, reflection, Scope & Limitations.

### Introduction:

Media is said to be the fourth pillar of the democracy. All the years from the time before independence till date, media underwent many changes. Print media played an imminent role in the struggle of freedom fight. History of Indian freedom fight reveals that many of the newspapers were banned by the British knowing its worth and strength to enlighten the whole country. Even after Independence till the present scenario, the ban and censorship on print media is observed under many ruling parties in India. In such case, the creative and sensitive minds rigorously try to project the suppressed elements in the mainstream of politics and we get the fruitful outcome that is political fiction. There are ample political fictions written all over the world out of the urge to put light on the political issues left unfocused. The political actions are represented either more clearly or they might be affected with the subjectivity of the writer, irrespective of this flaw of subjectivity the advantage is to bring out the hidden episodes in the politics.

### Political fiction:

History of any country includes political events. Like many other terms politics term is taken from the Greek word 'polis' means city state. Political novel can be a piece of writing which presents political ideas, action, setting & characters related or based on politics. Irving Howe defined political novel as "a novel in which political ideas play a dominant role or in which the political milieu is the dominant setting." It can be said that political

novel covers major area in Indian Writing in English. Indian English Fiction took birth in pre-independence period; freedom fights have boosted its development.

Even after independence, India witnessed wars with Pakistan (1965 & 1971) China (1962). All these things got reflected in the Indian English Political Novels. The novels came after immediate independence could be said as a natural outcome of the writers or an urge to write the drastic changes happening in the country through the genre novel as it was the most prominent form of expression along with the print media. While discussing the freedom of expression in the current times and looking at the very matter of intolerance in the country, there are writers who revived the political novels as a medium of expression in spite of all modern available mediums.

### Need & Origin:

A very famous proverb "Necessity is the mother of invention" is very much applicable to the genre political fiction. In the past time as fiction was the only prominent channel of expressing the human life the obvious outcome was the origin of different types of novels. In the course of time ample mediums have been added for the expression of human life and politics in it which is indivisible part of life. The novel form took rebirth as the so called modern mediums became professional and commercial. The commercial approach of these mediums and monopoly in it is the major reason for the comeback of the form novel especially the political fiction.

**Reflection:**

Since the beginning of the literary genre fiction there are many Indian writers who have focused the politics in their writings but considering the limitation of the study of the researcher the below mentioned works are selected for the study.

Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich like Us*, *The Fate of Butterflies*, M.C.Chagla's *Roses In December*. Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, Sanjaya Baru's, *The Accidental Prime Minister*, Shashi Tharoor's *The Paradoxical Prime Minister*,

**Nayantara Sahgal's**

'*Rich Like Us*' is a novel which has many angles as social, historical and political. Considering its political projection it has an important place in the Indian English Literature. It is an appreciable work as the writer herself belongs to the family of the ruling party. New Delhi is the plot of the novel and time presented is the period just after declaration of the Emergency. It's an irony on the particular time. The experience in the time of Emergency was unique of each individual, which was beneficial for few and imprisonment to many. It is raveled through the characters like Rose and Sonali. Sonali an unmarried and honored of her position in civil services goes through the frustration in certain experiences like corruption in the system, while characters like Dev finds an opportunity in it to become a leader. Ravi Kachru who is Sonali's colleague is of Marxist ideology basically, gets transformed to the elite. Kishori Lal has to live behind the bars for the crime which doesn't exist, so this novel is a wagon through which many voices from many socio-political levels travel together. All the issues characters that are shown by the writer are hard to find in the contemporary print media, she is absolutely successful in using the novel form as a media.

**The Fate of Butterflies** is her recent novel in which she has beautifully elaborated some issues in the current government. The story is opened through the character Prabhakar and further told through his eyes. He learns an incident of a gang rape in a village which hardly have projected in the media. Next surprising element is he is stunned to see his favourite Dhaba is no longer as it used to be who gave him delicious Rumali roti & gular kebabs, the next shocking thing to him and us, as a reader is that

a gay couple who run an hotel has got trashed by hooligans. Mirajkar is another important character who is a political theorist who wants to eliminate the things from the country which were never be the part of its culture. The next two leading characters are Prabhakar & Katrina an half-Russian beautiful woman both shows the ideology of being happy even in the bad times as being a professor of political science, he notices all the happenings in the name of caste, religion with deep well consciousness, and she has also faced ferocious incident. All these characters and incident show the current situation in India. The title itself is suggestive as the way butterflies are squeezed into the nets. Same is happening with the humans as many incidents took place in the country in few last years. It is rather a dystopian fiction, where there are episodes of political actions, which reminds us Hitler & Germany. Gang-rape and ban on meat till it's proved not a beef. The actions which are shown are hard to imagine as an Indian, as a country of many religions is focused on one and others as outsiders. People are beaten, killed for carrying beef etc is narrated with her excellent language skill. All these things in the novel are hardly printed in media so apart from its too dystopian shade it's a worth reading and documenting current India.

**Roses in December** by M C Chagla though is an auto biography but the close relationships of the writer with the leading political figures of that time and considering the political narrations it is taken for the study. His close observations of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru makes this autobiography a political work as well. It shows how even a Muslim person holding an authority in India is beyond the religion. The incident of Aligarh University Bill in Parliament shows how he was not ready to postpone the day of Friday as it's a day of prayer for Muslims by clearly stating to the Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri that to fulfil the Muslim sentiments it won't be a good decision to postpone it in a secular country like India. He even mentioned what when other's will ask for same on their festivals. Even to mention this he has not taken any credit in this book. The time of Emergency and how a different Indira Gandhi he understood also shows us the other characteristics of her personality as a politician.



**The White Tiger** by Aravind Adiga a Booker prize winner novel shows the class struggle in so called modern and universally equal world. Balram Halwai is the central character of the novel who, initially works as a driver to an elite landlord. He kills him and goes to Bangalore with the stolen money. On a surface level it seems a common police story or murder, theft or crime but it does open the threads of loyalty, religion, caste, corruption and the unending issue of poverty in India. We see the transformation of Balram from the caste of halvai to a businessperson by making his own taxi business. We find the Characters in the novel which are shaped due to the politics in India and can be seen in real life in India as well. While explaining the dark realities of life Adiga's humorous touch keeps his reader's engaged in reading.

**The Accidental Prime Minister** by Sanjay Baru is a work which has many views by authors and readers. Being Manmohan Singh's media adviser in time of UPA-I, he has very much close connections with Mr Singh. In UPA-II also he was called back but as said politics is a hard game he was no longer with PM in UPA-II. This book can be said as the outcome of the urge of the writer to reveal the personality of Manmohan Singh to the world as a worth person to control the nation. His mastery in the economics reveals his correct decisions for the country.

The book has another title which can be said as it's subtitle *The Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh*, which is very well tried by the author. As he was not belonging to any political party it was hard for people to digest him as a leader. Here author tries hard that every person has certain limitations and except that Mr Manmohan Singh is the man of talent and not worthy to be just ridiculed or called as a puppet in hands of party president. Well his intelligence doesn't shifts the focus from his shyness and the corruption in the UPA-II. But overall it gives a good light to Mr Singh.

**The Paradoxical Prime Minister** is a recent novel by Shashi Tharoor. It can be commonly observed that the Manifesto by the ruling government is questioned by many now though not outspokenly but inwardly most of the citizens are confused with many questions in their minds. Shashi Tharoor put such questions in this book, as for him and for many people perhaps the saying and doing of Mr Modi is

Paradoxical to him. Mr Prime minister at one side shows extreme respect for the book of constitution as a holy one and there are no clear comments on the violence made by some of the gau-rakshaks. Highly ideal speeches and the different ground reality. So it really makes us to think about this paradox and makes us ponder over as a reader that Mr Prime minister is an unselfish and a person of common public spirit or the one who wants to turn the multiple country into a single one, having one religion as a dominant. The book has five major sections and many chapters the separate section throw light on Modi's life. The book flows smoothly ahead with the issues like how the current government has affected the country in terms of economy, foreign policies and the culture of India. As a reader one can say Tharoor takes us into the other side of politics which is hardly seen and shown by the media.

#### **Scope & limitations:**

Political fiction has its scope since the beginning. Many writers all over the globe have used it as a tool to express their views. As mentioned earlier suppression of the print media to hide certain political actions or ban and censorship on it gives scope to political fiction. Even in the time of today's multimedia world, there are readers who read and for them books are still authentic sources of knowledge and information.

#### **Limitations:**

When any writer writes a literary piece, it is written under many influences, social, cultural, political, and geographical & the background from where the writer comes. The personal views, opinions & ideologies of the writer directly or indirectly affect the work. In some cases, work can be biased, one-sided or it only focuses the side which the writer wants to highlight.

#### **Conclusion:**

This is the personal finding of the researcher which leads to the conclusion that though the political fiction may lack in completely authentic political drafting and it is affected by writer's vision but it surely does unpacks the unrevealed political issues in the contemporary times.

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