

## UNFOLDING THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM THROUGH R.P. JHABVALA'S NOVEL A BACKWARD PLACE

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### **Abstract**

*Ideas about the legal and political accommodation of ethnic diversity called multiculturalism. Multiculturalism characterize as feel good celebration of ethno culture diversity encouraging to acknowledge and panoply of cultures, traditions, music and cuisines that exist in multiethnic society” Multiculturalism takes these familiar cultural markers of ethnic groups-clothing, cuisine, music and treat them as an authentic practices to be presented by their members and safely consumed by others .Literature and culture are closely related and interdependent as literature reflect culture and culture promotes literature .multiculturalism leads the characters to peacefully and contended life .R.P. Jhabvala unfolded the concept of multiculturalism through The characterization in the novel ‘A Backward Place.’*

**Keywords:** Multiculturalism, Ethno culture, Multiethnic, Literature, Diversity.

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### INTRODUCTION:

The term multiculturalism is multidimensional, it opposes cultural imperialism and respect all cultures with their uniqueness. It is keeping one's own culture and accepting the culture of others. "It can be define as "system of beliefs and behavior that recognize the presence of all divorce groups in a organizational society acknowledge and values their socio- cultural diversity and encourages and enables their continue contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empower all within the organization or society." R.P. Jhabvala is multicultural personality as she was born in Germany brought up in England, married an Indian actor and died in America. She is known as the author from nowhere even though she has accepted every nation where she had been still she faced lots of problems in her life. Through the characterization she tries to present all the problems she herself faced. She portrait her characters in unique way that the characters themselves unfold the concept of multiculturalism and that leads them to peaceful life.

In the novel *A Backward Place* the central characters are not Indians but the westerners in India. So the very theme of the novel is multicultural. Westerner in India. There are three main lady characters in India who came to India for various reasons, some of characters accept and promote multiculturalism and lived happily and peacefully. Whereas others violet it and left frustrated and isolated .The main character Judy has come to India because she married with the Indian actor Bal. She has two children now Prithvi and Gita and lives in lower middle class house in Delhi in very small house which she has to share with her brother-in –law and is family.

There was nothing interesting to see... One room was the bed room for Judy, her husband and their two children, the other had been made into a kind of sitting-room, and the store room had become the room for their old Bhau ji. There was also a sort of cooking shed, covered with an asbestos roof and very small

bathroom with only one tap in it, and even smaller WC. Out of the courtyard rose a flight of some steps which leads to upstairs part of the house; here Judy's elder brother-in-law lives with his family.(8)

She seems to be happy living in her home which has not even sofa because she has accepted the Indian culture and adopted Indian attitude and she assumed herself as Indian personality. It is her positive attitude which helps her to accept challenges in life. She is not only cautious, hard working but also to the core. Her readiness to identify herself with the lower-middle class Indian family in which she lives, gives her a sense of belonging. These very qualities brings her closer to the people from her family. She has accepted her husband Bal whole heartedly even though he is out of the work, she has accepted him as he is and happy with him.

Judy has accepted Indian culture like a typical Indian girl who accept the in-laws house as it is, Judy also did the same thing and mould herself as per the situation and atmosphere, she has been wearing sari like a typical Indian house wife. Another incident proves that she is promoting the Indian culture when her husband Bal was planning to go to Mumbai for some work along with the family initially she was against that but later when Bhauji convince her she finally agrees to go thinking that she can always find a job in Mumbai with bit of running around. Etta another character in the novel who is against Indian culture tries to pursue Judy to leave Bal because according to her "Marriages my dear are made to be broken you ought to leave him really you ought" (5) and she tries to convince Judy not to live with Bal. Judy listen to Etta but her Indian perspective didn't allow her to get affected by Etta's canvassing. Judy remains un influence and unaffected, that is the sign of acceptance of multiculturalism. Judy also ready to work for the family against the British idealism where the bread winner of the family is should be the husband but she is ready to be the bread winner for the family. Its only because her acceptance of Indian culture, that's why she loves Bal even though he angry with her in fact she him more when he express his anger.

Clarrisa is another English woman, who fell in love with India of the sage and gurus. She calls herself spiritual seeker, who came to India in search of spirituality after being influence by Romain Rolland's *Life of Vivekananda*. She proclaims her love for the Indian native customs and shows her enthusiasm for all things in India. She even wears Indian clothes Rajasthani peasant skirt and a blouse of thick homespun cloth printed over with scenes from Indian village life, to

show her love for India. Clarrisa's family had had connections with India in the past. She tells Sudhir:

Of course the family had connections with India for ages and ages-one of my great uncle was a Supreme Court Judge in Calcutta and another was a Chief-Commissioner somewhere.(93)

She has accepted India and Indian culture, it can be clearly seen when she said to Etta while showing her peasants sketches:

I loves these simply earthly types.....Every line on their faces tells a story....the Indian peasant has a sort of spiritual quality about him.(23)

Clarrisa has promote multiculturalism Even Indian people also accepted her as one of the member from of India, she herself admitted that" I can't stand the English, but I do get on awfully well with Indians. They feel I am one of them."(155) Even though Indian accepted her whole heartedly she didn't accept Indian and Indian culture from the bottom of heart, but only at superficial level because throughout the novel she has been giving importance to the practical side of living, that's way Etta was right to called her hypocritical. Clarrisa in spite of her Indian clothes and long stay in India fails to keep the beggar boy away, who start pursuing them and actually touches Clarrisa's leg. She loses her civilized control and slap the boy across the face. Thus she violated multiculturalism. She lives in squalor and had constant trouble with her successive landlords. She was in search of permanence home and familiar love, but her attitude towards the bathroom shows her superficial enthusiasm for India again. Having trouble with her landlord she searches for new accommodation and Shanti, Judy's sister-in-law has invited her to stay with them. But Clarrisa's attitude toward the place shows her love for Indian things is only superficial. These acts of Clarrisa proves that in spite her loving Indian spirituality and accepting India and Indian things she is unable to leave her English idealism and accept India and Indian Culture. Thus she promotes multiculturalism but at the same time she violated it and at the end of the novel we can see that she stays in India but not as happy as Judy, She lives in isolation and frustration.

Another Western woman in A Backward Place is Etta She is middle aged Hungarian who lives in an apartment in Delhi and has created little Europe for herself here in the backdrop of an unfriendly Indian expense. She is totally against multiculturalism she is not able to adjust with Indian culture and people from India, Indian things the result is that she get married three

Indians and divorced three times. She is not ready to give up her European idealism, she attracts lots of attention. She has been easily managing to hook rich admirers who meet her demands. But as she is aging and losing her charms and firmness of her flesh which decrease the number of her admirers that make it difficult for her to maintain the life style she had been living for long time. Thus, she becomes so desperate that she is blaming India for everything. Even nature is not spare from critical attitude, “Don’t you know that the Indian Sun has been put specially into the sky to ruin our complexions?”(7) Thus according to her India is ‘a backward place’ and it is a big misfortune for and other European living in India. She longs to return to her county but cannot. Her attitude towards India and Indian People make her frustrated and aggressive. She even tried to break the happy family life of Judy by telling her that it’s simply useless to live with the person like Bal and insist her to leave him: “You must leave him and get out. You are just rotting here.”(5) Thus she is totally against the multiculturalism. She fails follow and to promote it, and that leads her life to isolation and frustration.

**CONCLUSION:**

Thus multiculturalism is much needed is followed promoted by some of the characters like Judy and Clarrisa and it leads them to live to happy and contented life where others strongly opposed it and violated it like, Etta and it makes her life miserable, frustrated and isolated.

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