

IMMIGRANTS' EXPERIENCE IN THE SHORT STORIES OF SHAUNA SINGH BALDWIN

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The pain and oppression experienced by the immigrants attract more and more researchers and writers to explore their stories and sufferings. Being a diasporic writer, she made collection of short stories explaining the nature, behavior, and experiences while living in a foreign country. Her stories highlight the experiences of displaced people because of partition. She also discussed what immigrants went through and were targeted for their clothing, their skin color and their cultural life. It is really tough for immigrants to acquire the dialect, accent, culture and politics of the country in which they have shifted to. It becomes an identity crisis for these people.

Her stories move revolves around 60's to the modern times. It portrays mostly the struggles of Indian Sikh immigrants after partition. The characters of each story is carved so beautifully that readers can connect themselves and get involved with the story. She writes about immigrants' pains and wounds acquired during after partition. The torture they had gone through physically and mentally all these years are expressed through the characters of these short stories. All these events are magnified through the eyes of female perspective. The stories discovers their courage, valor, and adaptability required to adjust in an alien society.

She explains that how her own family suffered during the partition time. Her father had to lose everything, property, identity, and wealth and had to settle down in an alien country. It was a nightmare for her father which he could not forget all his life.

One of her stories, named Devika, shows a woman's fight to adjust and adapt in the foreign country, Canada, leaving her simple life in India. To cope up with her loneliness in the alien country, she created an imaginative friend, Asha. Asha, the imaginative character has adapted the foreign culture and lifestyle. She is presented as a strong and modern style character. She is bold and wears modern short clothes, which Devika could not acquire, neither mentally nor physically. Whereas her imaginary friend, Asha, is happy and fun loving. Devika is in dilemma and could not decide which type of woman is good or bad.

In another story, Simran, mother of the protagonist also feels culturally displaced and alienated. She could not leave and forget her actual roots. She is also in dilemma if her daughter has chosen the wrong path when she found a copy of Koran in her bag.

All these stories make us to feel that how badly it (partition) has affected our minds. The cruelty and bloodshed happened in the riots at the time of partition has totally occupied our minds. Those memories still haunts the people who have seen it.

Ms. Sakshi explains everything was good in undivided India. People and neighbors used to help each other in bad times. Things changed overnight. Those loving neighbors are now enemies, killing their friends and dear ones. Blood was splattered everywhere. Those sights were frightful. Those displaced immigrants have to adapt in the new environment, totally in the new country.

According to Ms. Sakshi, *“Baldwin through her character shows how partition led people to redefine, rebuild and recover themselves forcing them against their will to resettle on a foreign land. Before Partition people belonging to different parts of the undivided country used to live as a closely-knit society. However, today the talk of partition brings images of bloodshed, loot, rape, abduction, decapitation of women by family male members in order to save their honour. A reader could grasp and understand the plight of women as to how women become the most sensitive lot during an armed conflict, how women overturn from being victims to activists.”*

CONCLUSION: She seems to be a sensitive person who explored the pain, sufferings, and miseries of Indian migrants who migrated because of partition. She tried to explore different stories of Ms. Baldwin. All the main characters were researched beautifully. Readers can go through the research to understand the mindset of immigrants. How they have to adjust to the new culture and society and still keeping themselves attached to their ancestral roots.

Reference

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