

Impact of Broken Homes on Children's Psychology in Indian Writing in English

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Abstract

Indian Writing in English has emerged as a significant genre of literature, reflecting the complexities of Indian society and culture. One significant theme explored in this genre is the impact of broken homes on child psychology. Indian Writing in English has been successful in portraying the devastating effects of broken homes on children. This paper will discuss the importance of the portrayal of the impact of broken homes on child psychology in Indian Writing in English. The portrayal provides an insightful view of the psychological and emotional challenges faced by children living in such situations. In contemporary Indian society, divorce and breakups are still considered taboo subjects, and children of such homes are often stigmatized. However, Indian English literature provides a platform for these stories to be told, giving a voice to the silent victims of such circumstances. Its portrayal of the impact of broken homes on child psychology brings forward the notion of resilience and hope in children amid adversity. The books depict the children's struggles to cope with the separation of their parents, to adapt to new family dynamics, and find their identities. The character development and struggles of such children can be particularly inspiring to readers who have faced similar situations.

Keywords: broken homes, child psychology, Indian writing in English, loss of identity, social stigma

Indian English literature has been successful in bridging the gap between cultures, ideologies, and people. These books serve as mediators, helping readers understand and empathize with the complexity of family dynamics in a changing society. They give readers an idea of what it is like to experience such upheavals and how it shapes one's personality. Additionally, the portrayal of the impact of broken homes on child psychology in Indian Writing in English highlights the importance of mental health and counselling for children going through such situations. Literature has the power to inform and educate, and such books play a critical role in raising awareness about the mental health challenges of children living in such circumstances. By discussing the psychological impacts of broken homes in their novels, writers have made it possible to start a meaningful conversation about mental health and counselling for children. These books provide readers with insights into the psychological and emotional challenges children face in such situations, inspire readers, build empathy and educate readers. By shedding light on these critical issues, Indian English literature can help society understand the importance of providing care and support to children in broken homes. Thus, the portrayal of the impact of broken homes on child psychology is essential in Indian Writing in English.

Two States: The Story of My Marriage

Chetan Bhagat's novel, *Two States: The Story of My Marriage*, depicts the tumultuous relationship between Krish, a Punjabi boy and Ananya, a Tamilian girl, who not only face opposition from their respective families due to cultural differences, but also navigate their complex personal histories. Krish is haunted by his parent's acrimonious divorce, which has left a deep scar on him. His estranged mother's absence and his father's animosity towards her and women, in general, have severely impacted Krish's views on relationships and women. He views women as problematic, disloyal, and untrustworthy, leading him to question his relationship with Ananya. The impact of a broken family on Krish's psychology is evident when he is unable to commit fully to Ananya, even though they are deeply in love. Krish's hesitation stems from his fear of repeating his parent's mistakes and being left heartbroken and alone. The fear of abandonment has made him sceptical of long-term relationships and commitment, which further exacerbates his low self-esteem and self-doubt.

Krish's father's views on women are also part of his psychological makeup. His father's views and the way he brings Krish up leave a lasting impact on Krish's psyche. Krish's father often insists on his viewpoint and denigrates Krish's opinion. This leads to a power imbalance and a sense of frustration at Krish's inability to express his own opinion. Moreover, the toxic behavior of Krish's father towards his mother has led Krish to view women in a negative light. The novel portrays the psychological impact of broken homes on children, as seen in Krish's character. The trauma of separation, the absence of a parent, and the negative influence of the remaining parent can leave a profound impact on a child's psychology, leading to fear, self-doubt, and mistrust. *Two States* highlights the extent to which a broken home can impact a child's psychology. The novel portrays Krish's fear of commitment due to his parent's divorce, his father's negative views on women, and his sense of frustration about expressing his own opinion in a male-dominated patriarchal society. Children who go through such upheavals often

struggle to form healthy relationships and maintain healthy self-esteem. Therefore, providing a supportive and nurturing environment is crucial for the psychological development of a child. Parents should strive to minimize conflicts and provide a stable and secure living environment for their children, which can help them navigate their lives with a positive outlook.

Difficult Daughters

The novel *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapur poignantly depicts this theme in the character of Virmati who is raised by her mother and grandfather, the only male presence in her household. Due to the absence of her father, Virmati develops a low opinion of herself, feeling that she is not equal to her male peers. Her sense of worthlessness is entrenched even further as her grandfather does not think highly of women and considers them inferior to men. Moreover, Virmati's fear and sense of vulnerability are heightened when she is sent away to an all-girls' college in Amritsar. Due to her lack of male guidance and support, Virmati finds it difficult to adapt to her new environment and develop a sense of belonging. The other girls in the college, who come from wealthy families and have loving fathers, have a different attitude towards life, which Virmati finds difficult to relate to. The theme of low self-esteem and fear due to a broken home is also addressed in Chetan Bhagat's novel which deals with the relationship between Krish, a Punjabi boy, and Ananya, a Tamilian girl, who face opposition from their respective families due to cultural differences. Krish's father, who was abandoned by his wife, harbors a deep-seated hatred towards women which affects Krish's relationship with Ananya. Due to his father's insecurities, Krish develops a fear of commitment, and his self-esteem also takes a hit, as he begins to doubt his ability to form a loving relationship. In both novels, the characters' sense of low self-esteem and fear are directly linked to the breakdown of the family. The absence of a father figure, or a negative male presence, leaves the characters feeling insecure, vulnerable and inadequate. Due to the lack of guidance and support from their male counterparts, they feel like they have to face the world alone, which affects their confidence and self-worth. It underscores the need for parents to provide a nurturing environment where children can receive support, guidance, and positive role models, which can help cultivate a strong sense of self-esteem and eliminate feelings of vulnerability and fear.

The Bachelor of Arts

R.K. Narayan's *The Bachelor of Arts* is a classic work in Indian Writing in English that explores the impact of a broken home on the psychology of a child. The novel tells the story of Chandran, a young college graduate in the 1930s, who lives with his mother and struggles with his relationship with his estranged father. Narayan's portrayal of Chandran vividly illustrates how the breakdown of parental relationships can have a profound effect on a child's psychology and affect their development into adulthood. Throughout the novel, Chandran grapples with anxiety, insecurity, and feelings of inadequacy, which can be traced back to his strained relationship with his father. His father, who left the family and moved to London, is depicted as being indifferent and uninvolved in Chandran's life, causing him to feel a sense of abandonment and rejection that carries over into his adult life. Moreover, the novel also shows

how Chandran's mother's overprotectiveness has led to a sense of dependency in him. Chandran's mother is adamant that her son does not suffer the same fate as his father and encourages him to avoid anything that would distract him from his studies. This lack of exposure to the outside world further exacerbates Chandran's sense of anxiety and insecurity. Furthermore, Chandran's emotional struggles are also reflected in his romantic relationships. He is unable to form a real connection with women due to feeling unworthy and inadequate, which further hampers his emotional growth and development. As the novel progresses, Narayan portrays the complex layers of Chandran's emotional turmoil, depicting how the child's psychology is inextricably linked to the familial landscape of his upbringing. Narayan highlights how the break-up of a family can leave a profound impact on the child, shaping their personality and identity. He underscores the importance of fostering relationships based on love, trust, and empathy, which can help promote healthy emotional development and lead to resilience against the strains of life.

Clear Light of Day

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* explores the tensions, conflicts, and disconnections within a family as they negotiate the post-Partition era. The novel centres on the Das family – two brothers and two sisters – who are forced to come to terms with the painful memories of their childhood and the tumultuous circumstances that forced them apart. The novel examines how these experiences shape the characters' identities, relationships, and individual psychologies. Desai's work shows how the traumatic experiences of childhood can have lingering impacts on a person's development. The novel highlights how the disintegration of the family can set the stage for intense psychological struggles, such as depression, anxiety, and other forms of mental illness. The characters in *Clear Light of Day* struggle to overcome the painful memories of their past and the subsequent fallout of their fractured family. Similarly, R.K. Narayan's novel explores the psychological effects of a broken home on the protagonist, Chandran. The novel follows Chandran as he navigates the struggles of his early adulthood, grappling with academic pressures, romantic entanglements, and familial tensions. Throughout the novel, it is clear that Chandran's fractured relationship with his father has left a lasting impact on his psyche, leading to feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Narayan's portrayal of the psychological toll of a broken home reveals how it can limit a child's emotional growth and make it difficult for them to form healthy relationships later in life. Narayan illustrates how the child's identity can be formed by the parent's reactions, causing an individual to internalize their familial struggles and intensify their emotional turmoil. These various works of literature illustrate the different ways in which familial struggles can leave deep emotional scars on an individual, imprinting their identity and influencing their development until adulthood. Such works underline the importance of stable family structures, nurturing emotional environments, and the resilience required to overcome such unintentional emotional consequences.

The Shadow Lines

Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is a novel that magnifies the far-reaching effects of broken homes on child psychology. The novel follows the life of an Indian boy named Tridib, who

grows up with a strong connection to his family and community in Calcutta. But Tridib's world is upended when he is sent away to London due to political upheaval, causing him to question his identity and struggle with psychological trauma. The novel explores the theme of the impact of broken homes on child psychology, highlighting how it shapes the development of children and affects their sense of self. In the novel, Tridib is exposed to the political turmoil that is gripping India, which leads to his displacement from the country. His exile from his native land leaves him feeling disconnected from his roots and struggling with his identity. He is forced to confront his own sense of belonging and what it means to be Indian. Tridib's journey is marked by feelings of loneliness and isolation, and he finds himself searching for a sense of meaning in his life. The psychological impact of Tridib's displacement is explored in the novel, which reveals how a broken home can affect a child's sense of self. Tridib's experience of trauma due to his displacement is manifested in his ability to perceive and process stimuli around him. He finds himself constantly in a state of psychological unrest, leading him to try to make sense of his own inner turmoil. Ghosh uses Tridib's psyche to portray the long-term ramifications of broken homes on child psychology. In one scene, Tridib tells the narrator about his habit of hiding little objects, such as pebbles, in his pockets. Ghosh uses this behavior to illustrate Tridib's inability to let go of his past and the traumatic experiences he has endured. Tridib is trying to hold on to something that he can anchor himself to, something from his past that gives him a sense of stability in the midst of chaos. The novel also sheds light on the physical and emotional toll that a broken home can have on a child's mental and physical health. It shows how broken homes can lead to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders. Tridib's journey is marked by instances of anxiety, depression, and an overall sense of disorientation, which is evident in the way he perceives his environment. It highlights the importance of stability and security in shaping a child's development, as well as the need for a strong sense of identity to cope with the challenges of life.

The Namesake and The God of Small Things

One of the most poignant works that explores the loss of cultural identity among children due to broken homes is *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. The novel tells the story of a boy named Gogol who is born to Bengali immigrant parents in America. Growing up in a house that reflects both American and Indian culture, Gogol struggles to reconcile these two identities. When his father dies, Gogol is forced to confront his cultural identity and the loss of his father's wisdom and guidance. A similar theme is explored in *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. The novel tells the story of two twins, Estha and Rahel, who grow up in a broken home. As children, they experience great loss and trauma, and as a result, they struggle to find a sense of cultural identity. Their mother is Anglo-Indian, their father is Syrian Christian, and their family background is a mix of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian traditions. This complex heritage is difficult for the twins to understand and embrace, and they feel lost in a world of conflicting cultural identities. The works of these authors illustrate the challenges faced by children who grow up in broken homes, especially in terms of cultural identity. They show how the loss of stable family structures can lead to a confused sense of identity, as children are forced to reconcile their heritage with the fractured nature of their upbringing. This theme is particularly relevant in the Indian context, where cultural identity is often tightly bound to familial and

societal structures. These authors highlight the importance of stability and a sense of rootedness in maintaining a strong sense of cultural identity.

Midnight's Children

Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* explores the theme of the impact of broken homes on child psychology. The novel follows the life of Saleem Sinai, who is born on the same night as India gains independence. Saleem grows up in a family that is fractured by secrets and lies, which affects his mental state and personality. Saleem's parents, Aadam Aziz and Naseem Ghani, have a dysfunctional relationship that is marked by a lack of communication and emotional intimacy. Saleem's father is a doctor who is distant from his family, focusing more on his work than his relationships. His mother, on the other hand, is a strong-willed woman who is fiercely independent and determined to make her own way in the world. The combination of these factors creates a family environment that is fraught with tension and conflict. Saleem's experience of growing up in a broken home has a significant impact on his psychological development. One of the most prominent effects is his sense of isolation and alienation. Saleem feels disconnected from his family and culture, and this leads to feelings of loneliness and detachment. He is unable to connect with those around him and often feels like an outsider in his own country. In addition to his sense of alienation, Saleem's experience of a broken home also leads to feelings of resentment and anger. He feels that his parents have failed him and that their inability to communicate effectively has caused his problems. This bitterness drives his actions and colours his relationships with those around him, including his own wife and children. Furthermore, Saleem's experience of a broken home also leads to issues around his cultural identity. His parents hide their Muslim roots in an attempt to fit into the upper-class society of India. Saleem feels disconnected from his cultural heritage and struggles to find a sense of belonging in a society that is defined by religion and social status. His experience of isolation, anger, and disconnection underscores the importance of a stable and supportive family environment in supporting a child's emotional health and wellbeing.

The Inheritance of Loss

The theme of bitterness among children due to broken homes is a common thread in Indian Writing in English. Several authors have explored the emotional impact of family breakdowns on children's attitudes and personalities. In *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai, the theme of bitterness among children due to broken homes is present in the story of Biju, the son of a cook. Biju grows up with his father in India while his mother lives and works in America. Biju is sent to study in America, but when he returns, he is disillusioned with the world he has come back to. He feels angry and bitter towards his father, who he sees as weak and unable to help him with his problems. Biju's bitterness leads him to feel like an outsider in both India and America. Indian Writing in English often portrays the theme of bitterness among children caused by broken homes. The works of authors such as Roy, Rushdie, and Desai show how the fracturing of families can lead to feelings of isolation, anger, and bitterness. Their works highlight the emotional turmoil that children often experience in broken homes and the impact that this can have on their personalities and attitudes. Ultimately, these works underscore the

importance of a stable and supportive family environment that can provide a foundation for emotional health and wellbeing.

The Palace of Illusions

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* explores the theme of the impact of broken homes on child psychology. The novel tells the story of Draupadi, also known as Panchaali, who grows up in a dysfunctional family after the death of her father. The novel's protagonist is portrayed as a child who is profoundly affected by the loss of her father and the brokenness of her family, leading to a lifelong struggle with emotional and psychological damage. Panchaali's mother becomes emotionally distant after the death of her husband, resulting in an unhappy and emotionally unsatisfying upbringing for Panchaali. The feeling of abandonment leads to deep-rooted anger and resentment, leading to an inability to connect with others on an emotional level. The novel shows how broken homes can adversely affect children, causing severe damage that can last a lifetime. Panchaali's inability to trust others and form healthy relationships stems from her childhood trauma. Her struggle with depression is attributed to the feeling of abandonment and lack of parental guidance in her childhood. Her bitterness is fueled by a sense of injustice that stems from the loss of her father and her mother's indifference towards her.

Later in the novel, Panchaali's marriage to the five Pandavas serves as a temporary escape from her emotional baggage. However, this marriage can be seen as an extension of her childhood trauma. She subconsciously seeks validation and love from her husband, which is something she was denied as a child. Her relationship with the Pandavas, particularly with Arjuna, serves as a reflection of her childhood trauma and the impact it has had on her psyche. Throughout the novel, the psychological impact of broken homes on children is emphasized. The story illustrates how the lack of love, attention, and parental guidance during their childhoods can be emotionally and psychologically damaging. The difficulties children face in coming to terms with their experiences and their resulting emotional scars can hinder their ability to form healthy relationships and find closure. *The Palace of Illusions* highlights the profound impact that broken homes can have on children's psychology. The novel portrays how children who grow up in dysfunctional homes often carry emotional and psychological scars that affect their adult life. Panchaali's character serves as an example of how childhood trauma can lead to lifelong emotional and psychological struggles. Through the story of Panchaali, Divakaruni emphasizes that nurturing and providing a secure and loving environment for children is crucial to their emotional and psychological well-being.

The White Tiger

The novel *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga explores the theme of the impact of broken homes on child psychology. The story follows Balram Halwai, a poor boy from rural India who works his way up the social ladder as a driver for a wealthy family. The novel highlights how Balram's upbringing in a broken home affects his personality, beliefs, and life choices. Balram's childhood is marked by poverty, abuse, and neglect. His father dies at an early age, leaving his

mother to support the family by working as a maid. Balram is sent to work as a servant in a tea shop, and his mother subsequently dies of illness. The absence of his parents and the harsh reality of poverty left Balram with deep emotional scars. As a result of his upbringing, Balram develops a cynical and manipulative personality. He learns how to survive in an unfair and unjust society by exploiting opportunities and undermining others. Balram's experiences make him believe that the only way to succeed is by breaking free from societal norms and expectations. He becomes rebellious, independent, and resourceful, which helps him secure his job as a driver for a wealthy family. Moreover, Balram's upbringing in a broken home leaves him with a deep sense of mistrust towards authority figures. He loses faith in the institutions that are supposed to protect him, and he learns to rely solely on himself. His distrust extends to his employers and the society at large, which he views as corrupt, exploitative, and insensitive. However, like Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*, Balram's broken home also leaves him struggling with emotional trauma. He struggles with guilt and shame over his past and his actions, as well as a sense of loss that he can never compensate for. The novel portrays the potential dangers that arise when children are deprived of secure and supportive homes. The book highlights how Balram's experiences led him to adopt a cynical, selfish, and distrustful outlook on life, highlighting the importance of nurturing happy, healthy families as a critical step towards creating a better world.

Broken Homes

The theme of the impact of broken homes on identity questions in children is a prevalent theme in Indian novels written in English. Indian Writing in English has been instrumental in exploring various themes and issues that are prevalent in contemporary Indian society. The theme of broken homes is a common feature in Indian society, and it has been portrayed effectively in many Indian Writing in English novels. One such novel is *The God of Small Things*. The novel explores the experiences of fraternal twins, Rahel and Estha, who grow up in a broken home as their parents, Ammu and Baba, get divorced. The novel portrays how the experience affects the children and their identities. The novel portrays the twins' struggle to find their place in the society they live in as they are the products of a broken home. They struggle with their sense of belonging as they are not fully accepted by their peers, nor do they feel entirely accepted by their parents or families. This struggle is presented as a constant battle for the twins throughout their lives, as they are haunted by the past and struggle to deal with the emotional scars that the broken home has left behind.

Similarly, the novel *The Namesake* explores the theme of broken homes' impact on identity questions in children. The novel tells the story of Gogol Ganguli, a first-generation American born to Bengali parents who struggle to reconcile their Indian heritage with their American life. Gogol's parents' emotional distance and unresolved conflicts lead him to experience identity confusion and rootlessness, which he tries to resolve by changing his name from Gogol to Nikhil. The novel portrays how the experience of growing up in a broken home influences Gogol's identity formation and how he perceives himself and the world around him. His search for identity is marked with confusion and uncertainty, highlighted by his name change from Gogol to Nikhil, which represents his attempt to distance himself from his Bengali heritage and

assimilate himself into American culture. The novels highlight how broken homes can impact the identity formation of children who grow up in such environments. It portrays how the experience of coming from a broken home can lead to identity confusion, rootlessness, and an inability to form meaningful relationships. It highlights the need for parents to provide a stable and emotionally supportive environment for their children to develop a strong sense of identity and self-worth.

Indian Writing in English has seen a significant transformation in recent years. With the emergence of contemporary themes, authors have begun to explore issues that were once considered taboo by Indian society. One such theme is the portrayal of the impact of broken homes on child psychology. The family is considered the basic unit of society in India. However, in recent years, the Indian family has undergone a transformation. The traditional joint family system has given way to nuclear families, and with the increase in divorce rates, broken homes have become a reality for many children. This has led to several issues related to child psychology, which is reflected in Indian Writing in English. Indian Writing in English has seen a shift from traditional themes related to culture and tradition to contemporary themes related to current issues. The portrayal of the impact of broken homes on child psychology is one such contemporary theme. Authors have attempted to highlight the psychological impact of broken homes on children. The study of child psychology in literature can help society acknowledge the challenges faced by children from broken homes and develop ways to address them.

Conclusion

The present paper has explored the theme of broken homes and child psychology in modern Indian Writing in English. It aims to highlight the importance of the portrayal of this theme in the context of the current societal scenario. A broken home is one where the parents are not together, resulting in a family that is incomplete. The issue of broken homes is a growing concern in contemporary Indian society. The portrayal of this theme in modern Indian Writing in English is significant as it reflects the societal changes experienced by modern India. The focus of this paper has been on the portrayal of the theme of broken homes in modern Indian Writing in English and the impact it has on the psychology of the child. The novels expose the complexities of family relationships, particularly the psychological implications on the child. They highlight how children from broken families struggle to understand and come to terms with their reality. They depict how children from broken homes struggle to balance their identities while navigating through their different familial ties. In conclusion, the theme of broken homes and child psychology is a significant issue, which modern Indian Writing in English has explored extensively. The portrayal of this theme highlights the societal changes that India has undergone in recent times. The impact of broken homes on the child's psychology is a topic that needs to be addressed urgently. The portrayal of this theme in modern Indian Writing in English has brought attention to this matter, raising awareness and stimulating conversations. It is essential to recognize the significance of the portrayal of the theme in modern Indian Writing in English and the impact it has on child psychology.

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