International Conference on Engineering, Science, Social Science, Humanities and Management (ICESSSHM - 2026)
13th June, 2026, West Bengal, India.

CERTIFICATE NO : ICESSSHM /2026/C0626606

Identity, Belonging, And Social Responsibility: A Comparative Study of The Selected Fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri and Rohinton Mistry

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ABSTRACT

Both writers explore the relationship between individual identity and the social, cultural, and historical environments in which people live. Jhumpa Lahiri's fiction primarily examines the experiences of immigrants, cultural displacement, generational conflicts, and the search for belonging in unfamiliar societies. Her characters often struggle to balance their ancestral traditions with the expectations of their adopted cultures. Through works such as The Namesake and Interpreter of Maladies, Lahiri presents the emotional challenges associated with migration, family relationships, and cultural identity. In contrast, Rohinton Mistry's fiction focuses on Indian society, particularly the lives of marginalized individuals, social inequalities, political oppression, and the complexities of community relationships. His novel A Fine Balance illustrates how poverty, caste discrimination, and political circumstances influence individual freedom and social relationships. Similarly, Such a Long Journey explores personal struggles within broader social and political realities. A comparative study of these writers reveals that identity is not formed independently but develops through interactions with family, community, culture, and social institutions. Both authors emphasize empathy, human dignity, and responsibility toward others. Their fiction demonstrates how individuals negotiate personal aspirations while responding to social expectations and collective suffering, thereby highlighting the importance of belonging, social justice, and ethical responsibility in contemporary society.