



URBAN YOUNGSTERS IN THE FICTION OF CHETAN BHAGAT

Saravanan.M¹, Arjunan.A²

¹Assistant Professor (S.G) in English

Sethu Institute of Technology, Kariapatti 626 115.

²Associate Professor and Head of the Department in English

Mannar Thirumalai Naicker Arts College, Madurai.



INTRODUCTION

The novel is essentially a social form. It explores the condition of the human beings as shown through the mental struggle and body language, quite before they get into action. A literary artist seeks answers to vital three questions in his write-up: "One, what reasons have we to live? Second, what and to what end do we live? Third, is it worthwhile living as we live?" Life is what literature is all about. Chetan Bhagat, as a novelist, also strives to portray these mental stirrings in his blockbusters. The post-modern elements are abundantly present in Bhagat's novels. He is "the biggest selling English Language novelist in Indian history" as asserted by **The New York Times**. Reader is impressed with Bhagat's concerns about globalization, changing urban realities,

Socio-Economical, Political and technological changes in India.

ANALYSIS OF THE CENTRAL IDEA OF THE PAPER.

Bhagat's fictions seem to revolve around real life incidents and they unravel the mind of the contemporary youth. Youths form an integral part of the society who is supposed to build the nation. His novels capture the imagination of the Indian Youth. The secular and broadmindedness of Indian youth is reflected through his characters. Bhagat's focus is on Metro Generation and the changing Scenario of modern India. It is true that IIT, Delhi and IIM, Ahmadabad helped him to construct a comprehensive idiom of the life of youths struggling against the situations that are responsible

for perversions and sickness. Though his works always turn around IIT, friendship and love, various global trends and Indian cultural identity are also embedded within the plot. This paper sheds light on Bhagat's presentation of young Generation in India.

The young generation shown in Bhagat's fictional world possesses a sense of competition, at the same time very ambitious and wants to do everything that is possible to climb up the career ladder as high as possible. Along with being competitive, extra ambitious and techno-savvy, they are trendy as well. It is true that growing awareness of technology and the use of it have definitely exposed India to a new environment. This change has come about due to strong wish of youths to participate in the technological revolution that is sweeping the whole world. In Bhagat's fictions, the attitude of youth towards love, marriage, and sex are very casual and nothing more than a ceremonious ritual. Bhagat through his fictions portray the fast growing cities and urban zones along with all the global factors, affecting the life, experience, dreams, and attitudes of today's youth. Urban milieu is the main concern of Chetan Bhagat.

In his debut novel, **Five Point Someone**, he adopted a breezy, ironic tone to explore the lives of the exam-oppressed

students who cram to get admitted into the Indian Institute of Technology and then rebel against the coercive and stultifying atmosphere of academic competition. Published in 2004, the novel fictionalizes Bhagat's personal IIT experiences with a tinge of love and comedy revolving around the adventures of three Mechanical Engineering students, Harikumar, Ryon Oberoi and Alok Gupta. Alok joins IIT under the trailing conditions of family and personal life. Therefore, he determines to be a 'nine pointer'. Hari finds it difficult to concentrate on his studies. Hari develops his relationship with Neha, the daughter of Professor Cherian. She becomes a consolation in his life. Prof. Cherian, forced his son to become an engineer though he was interested in Law. Due to parental pressure and his own interest, he committed suicide in depression. The novelist has, from his first hand experience, clearly portrayed ragging, hostel life, work pressure from the higher authority, increasing suicide cases, a telling criticism on education system in India following internationally landed IIT system that has stifled students creativity by forcing them to value grades more than anything else; uninspiring teaching and numerous assignments adding to their woes, while still making time to enjoy one's youth. The hard work that involves

in securing admission in an IIT has been described in funny way.

I think half the trees in the world are felled to make up the IIT entrance exam guides_ __. All we would say as advice is, if you can lock yourself in a room with books for two years and throws away the key, you can probably make it here.(18)

The novel very realistically describes the present scenario while revealing the fact that in India young people have far more options than their parents, but their choices remain circumscribed by traditional education system, and overbearingly high expectations. Through this novel, it seems Bhagat tries to convey a message to all the parents to guide their children in career matter and not to force their child to take particular faculty. They should have liberty to take their own decision, regarding choice of career; as a result, they would love their work and be happy in their life. By writing **Five Point Someone**, Chetan Bhagat has undoubtedly, touched a nerve with young Indian readers and acquired almost cult status while detailing what not to do at IIT. The critics may think of his works as literature in making but he has become the voice of the new generation readers.

His second novel, **One Night @ the Call Center**, is the story of six people:

Radhika, Priyanka, Esha, Military Uncle, Vroom, and Shyam. All these people work at the Connexions Call Center. This novel indicates the anxieties and insecurities in the life of young technocrats working in the call centers. Esha wants to be a model but she takes up call centre job in order to meet her expenditures. Priyanka criticizes her and declares that she will never be able to become a good model. For her passion, she sleeps with a designer who promises her to give modeling contract. The designer betrayed her by telling her she can't become a model due to her height. He consoles her by sending some money. Esha feels terribly betrayed and tries to suppress the mental pain by inflicting herself with physical pain by purposely cutting her skin. It won't be wrong to say that modern generation, especially from film industry and corporate world is ready to do whatever they can for the sake of their passion. There is insecurity and constant pressure on the aspirant of this profession. The book not only brings forth the real life experience of Call Center employees- thanks to the frequent visits of the author to Call Centers to gain firsthand experience of the place – but also gives a vision to people who aspire to become Call Center executives, as Call Centers are becoming a mainstream solution now. While there are several issues related to Call Centers, Chetan Bhagat's main concern through his

Post Modern writing is on one issue that is, 'Is the government creating the right kind of jobs?'- the novelist believes very firmly that if the government really gets its act together on infrastructure the young work force will get better quality jobs that are more fulfilling and will move India ahead. Chetan Bhagat's third novel, **The 3 Mistakes of My life**, is yet again a story of Indian young generation of this modern world countering unexpected loved, thwarted ambitions, absence of family affection, pressure of a patriarchal set up and the work atmosphere of a globalized office. Govind, Ishaan, and Omi are best friends and protagonists of the story. Ahmedabad city is the locale of the story. Govind wants to be a businessman and is also the narrator of the story. The story reveals the condition of aspiring businessmen in India, failing to pursue economic gains, the ups and downs in the middle class to earn bread and butter to keep the body and soul together. Gujarat Earthquake, religious politics and Godhara riots are some of the current issues of the time raised by the novelist depicting how they affect the life of a common man. Bhagat touches a chord not only in the young but at the same time; the act of elderly nature has also been detailed in the light of Realism. Bhagat has presented a good example of secularism, exploring the

lives and passions of youths in an emerging metro.

2 States is Bhagat's fourth novel. In this novel, he portrays two friends, Krish and Ananya with different families and culture. They decide to marry but their parents oppose them. But in the end both the parents give their consent. Emotions and the warmth of personal relationship lead the situation in the direction of settlement. Here it seems that Chetan Bhagat is giving the message to the young generation that thoughtful decisions taken by them regarding their marriage will definitely receive their parental consent and blessings which will make their life happy.

The novel depicts the perfect Indian Mentality of not accepting inter caste marriages and the tradition of still living in age old orthodox and impracticable beliefs. The novel suggests throughout that India is a very religious country and older people have extreme views on religion and young people are quite unable to relate to it. For instance to quote from the novel, in Krish mom's opinion, Tamil people are *arrogant* and *rude* (Bhagat 220). On the other hand, Ananya's parents take North Indian *intellectually, culturally zero* (Bhagat 51). But the difference is not of class, category and caliber but of dietary habits that make

difference between them. Krish family eats parathas, chhole-Bhature and chicken whereas Ananya's family eats sambher, rasam, idli, dosa, etc. *Few things bring out the differences between Punjabis and Tamilians than buffet meal. Tamilians see it like any other meal....For Punjabis, food triggers an emotional response, like say music (Bhagat 222).* Though these things are trivial and insignificant, the relation between Ananya and Krish's relation gets ruined.

For Bhagat, generational divide is one that India desperately needs to bridge. The older generation grew up in a time of scarcity and prized a suffocation social conformity where everyone lived separate but equal lives. The young are almost a race apart with a liberal attitude that is inimical to the Indian hierarchies of caste and creed. Indeed, in the end, the novelist expresses his thoughts of optimism for inter-state marriage as the means of national integration that will significantly increase greater understanding between cultures resulting in much needed ultimate unity.

Revolution 2020 is Bhagat's fifth novel. Its story is concerned with a love triangle, corruption and a journey of self discovery. *Revolution 2020* is the exploration of the life and consciousness of two friends; Raghav and Gopal who

have a common girl friend Aarti. Gopal, mediocre in studies hails from a middle class family. He believes himself a big looser in the competitive world. Now he wants to earn a lot of money at any rate. It makes a little difference which way money comes. The failure of education system and the commercialization of education kill the inner self of Gopal and now he is ready to do any negotiation to be rich. Through his friend Sunil, he comes in to contact with the Mr. Shukla, a sitting MLA of his town. Gopal has a highway touch land piece. An idea comes to his mind to start an Engineering college. Now he starts believing what his friend Sunil says,

"Stupid people go to college, smart people own them" (120)

Raghav of the story is endowed with rare intelligence and is dedicated to his dreams and studies. Raghav secures higher rank and is confident of getting admission in any one of the top NIT. Aarti and Raghav become close when Gopal is in kota, which causes much strain to Gopal and Aarti's friendship. Gopal becomes distraught and the novel explores the unrequited love between Gopal and Aarti. Bhagat dealt with issues of corruption in this novel. Raghav realizes that corruption will not continue for long and one day there will be a revolution for eradicating the present corrupt practices in society.

Bhagat's recent edition **Half Girl Friend** begins with the dramatic opening of the central character Madhav Jha, who comes to meet the author Chetan Bhagat and leaves behind a few journals from his half-girlfriend who he thinks to have died. When the author calls him back the following morning to narrate his story, he begins with his struggles to deal with English speaking students in St. Stephen's College and his endeavors to add funds for his school in Dumaroon with the help of his ladylove Riya Somani. His hard earned love life glitters in the end of the novel making it amorous depicting even modern youngsters can be steadfast once they fall in true love.

CONCLUSION

This paper seeks to present how Chetan Bhagat through his fictional works depicts the changing youngsters in India in this globalized world. Due to free incoming of values, costumes, dresses, and the living habits of western world, the basis of Indian culture has been greatly influenced. Bhagat subtly portrays the fast growing cities and urban zones along with all the global factors, affecting the life, experience, dreams, and attitudes of today's youth. He very comfortably depicts women empowerment as one of the positive effects of globalization where men and women are no more seen through the

old spectacle which marked men as superior and women as inferior. Even in case of marriages, now girls assert their own opinions and choices. They earn their own living and make career choices. Steps towards women empowerment can be seen to be speeding up. At the same time, consumerism, eroding values, and rising fears and anxieties of urban Indians are some of the negative offshoots of it which also cannot escape his piercing observations.

In Chetan Bhagat's fictional world, metro generation is in mood to change themselves and the world. They are in hurry to become rich by finding various shortcuts. Bhagat expresses his concern for the depression and sickness growing fast in the minds of young ambitious technocrats. Also, Bhagat exposes the clash of ideologies in cross cultural marriages. Bhagat asserts that corruption has weakened our system, which is very dangerous for our nation. Finally, the fictional art of Chetan Bhagat has become a class in itself and it has given a new direction to the stream of Indian English fiction.

WORKS CITED

- Bhagat, Chetan. *Five Points Someone*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2004. 189th impression 2011.

- Bhagat, Chetan. *One Night @ the Call Center*, New Delhi : Rupa and Co., 2005. 115th impression 2011.
- Bhagat, Chetan. *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2009. 83rd impression 2011.
- Bhagat, Chetan. *The 3 mistakes of my life*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2008. 107th impression 2011.
- Bhagat, Chetan. *Revolution 2020*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2011.
- Bhagat, Chetan. *Half Girlfriend*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2014.
- Singh, Anita. *Indian English Novel in The Nineties and After A Study of The Text and Its Context*. Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers and Distributers, 2004.