

Multiculturalism in Chetan Bhagat's Novel

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ABSTRACT

Writing dependably fills in as the voice of each person and delineates needs the disadvantages and indecencies in the social frame wrok it give freedom to each tyrannized and over hrurld individual just as to a network to make known thier inward voice through it. The mediated Indian public sphere, despite its linguistic diversity, remains dominated by two dominant languages and their media—the more widespread Hindi, and the more profitable English media. Bhagat see the act of writing as profession rather than vocation, with fiction that is commercial and populist, driven by audience demands, and that invites fans rather than critical readers. Bhagat's fictions have highly realistic style that gives precedence to local details and often an emphasis on regional cities rather than national metropolitan centers.

1. Portrayal of human values and ethics In Chetan Bhagat's Novels :

Chetan Bhagat is one such popular fiction writer whose novels reflect a strong under-tone of morality and ethics. Though his set-up and characters are modern, they function in a modern environment; yet they reflect a strong faith in moral values and ethics which is timeless and relevant in all ages. One such novel is his, 'One Night at the Call Centre' which depicts the struggle of six characters, namely, Shyam, Priyanka, Varun, Esha, Radhika and Military Uncle and deals with the various personal and professional problems they confront and their success in solving them with the help of "Inner Voice". This novel portrays how these characters learn about the importance and relevance of moral values and ethics and how they actually put into practice. Youth in India are struggling with some burning problems like expensive education, poverty, extreme competition in the entrance exam for college admission and lack of sports education, etc. Bhagat beautifully portrays these problems in his novel The Three Mistakes of My Life through the life of Govind, Ish, Omi and Vidya (only female character in the novel).

In the present materialistic world pre-dominated by greed and cut-throat competition, is there any scope to adhere to ethics and human values? Whether these concepts are relevant and adhered to or practiced is a debatable question. Many authors of present time have tried to depict the modern man's dilemma to be ethical or to be successful at any cost. One such novelist is Chetan Bhagat. His prominent works include: Five Point Someone, One Night @ the Call centre, Three Mistakes of my Life etc. His novels are pre-dominantly youth-oriented and discuss the contemporary nuances prevailing in the Indian society. One Night @ the Call Centre, was published in 2005, and has received both popular as well as critical acclaim. Through the novel, Chetan Bhagat paints a realistic and disillusioned picture of modern India. The novel is a saga of the struggle for survival in the urban jungle. Thus, it acts as a suitable and apt background for investigating these values and chalking-out their place in present time. The novel 'One Night at the Call Centre' depicts the struggle of six characters, namely, Shyam, Priyanka, Varun, Esha, Radhika

and Military Uncle and deals with the various personal and professional problems they confront and their success in solving them with the help of "Inner Voice". The life of all the six characters in the novel takes a dramatic turn one night when they receive a call from 'God'. This divine intervention or God's call is the salient feature of the novel. It comes at a very crucial point in the life of all the characters. When they are fed-up of all their problems. As Radhika says, "It is awful. Like what we did wrong? Why is our life in these pits?" This is a universal question and it a plea for providing ethical and righteous solution to one's problems. The author provides the apt and morally correct solution, not just to the characters of the novel but also to the readers in the form of a call from God. This call acts as a ray of hope in the darkness of life. With death staring at the characters, when the Qualis meets with an accident, God calls them. Shyam's cell phone begins to ring, and God introduces himself as, "the little voice inside that wants to talk to you... the voice that tells you what you really want."

In the novel God's call makes them "capable persons" and tells them that there are four qualities required to be successful They are: medium amount of intelligence, a bit of imagination, self- confidence and failure. In this way, God provides an ethical and practical solution to their problems. He makes them realize their mistakes and shows them the path they need to follow. Individuals need not peep here and there to solve their problems as the solution lies within us,

"You see, [I] have a contract with all human beings. You do your best and every now and then I will come behind to give you a push"

God inspires the group to such an extent that they all plan together to teach their boss a lesson, to refine their personal lives and to pursue what they wanted in life. This way of life is in fact nothing but ethical and one which adheres to basic human values of what is right or wrong. The novel not only portrays the ideological crisis of the day but also offers viable and ethical solutions to it with artistic excellence. Through the novel, Bhagat touches the pulse of the younger generation and also delineated the ethical and righteous path of action or the 'nishkam karma' as stated in the Bhagavad Gita. What God says in the novel may be considered as a brave attempt by Bhagat

to restore faith in the fact that traditional ethics and values need not be sacrificed at the altar of success. So Bhagat tries to instill the concept of goodness and righteousness in today's generation through his novel. We can say that through a call from GOD he has actually tried to give voice to our inner voice or conscious that is there inside every human being and which constantly tries to guide us the righteous path. And Bhagat tries to give a positive message to the youth that one can lead an ethical and truthful life and still be successful by listening to the "inner voice"

2. Portrayal Of Cultural Contexts And Multiculturalism In India:

Contemporary social scientists have defined the phenomenon of the coexistence of different cultures in the same geographical space as 'Multiculturalism'. The Indian culture has long history, diverse demography and unique geography. India is the secular country rich in varied cultures and traditions. No doubt India has numerous languages, cultures, traditions and customs but they have some commonality with each other. Chetan Bhagat novels' depicts the cultural richness and variety of India. The variation of cultures makes India a multicultural society and this diversity of cultures is sometimes responsible for political skirmishes. As a result the multicultural society of India comes across many social and cultural problems. Bhagat through his writings has portrayed such problems thoroughly.

Bhagat's *2 States* concentrates on matters of culture and society. The novel portrays cross cultural encounters and experiences imbibing from them. The title of novel reflects stories of characters from two states. Through these characters the novelist has given detailed information of life in Northern and Southern India. There is vast difference among the people of both regions and the novel presents a real picture of that. The main characters of the novels want to come out of this umbilical cord to lead their lives with freedom and ease. They don't want these variations to be hurdles in their lives. They live their lives as per their dreams and aspirations and strive hard to overcome such restraints.

2 States is the novel with numerous examples that show dogmas and idiosyncrasies followed in the different states of India. Through this novel Chetan Bhagat exposes the narrow mindedness of Indian parents who are very rigid and are reluctant to allow their kids to follow life as per their aspirations.

Inter-caste marriage is still considered as social stigma. Indian love marriages are so complex that it needs a tremendous effort to make it happen. In most of the countries, if a boy loves a girl and girl loves the boy they don't need any one's permission to marry but the situation in India is completely different as depicted in the novel. The socio-cultural problems of multicultural India have been portrayed by Chetan Bhagat in this novel. He makes the reader to laugh at the follies and prejudices of orthodox Indians. Bhagat through his writings wants to break all the boundaries to create a global and universal culture that will absorb all the differences by spreading the fruits of love and brotherhood.

The novel *2 states*– the story of my marriage deals with the culture issues. Different characters and incidents portrayed in the novel give us a vibrant picture about the different culture and tradition prevailing in India. The novel *2 States* deals with the cross-cultural encounters and deals with different

experiences. A simple but realistic novel, brilliantly explores the encounter of two couples of two Indian States, Punjab and Tamil Nadu. *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is partly an autobiographical novel. The story is about a couple, Krish and Ananya, who hail from two different states of India, Punjab and Tamil Nadu respectively, are deeply in love and want to get married. The novelist while talking about marriage also explores the social issues like dowry in traditional marriages and the shifting paradigms of matrimonial alliances in multicultural and multinational societies. Chetan Bhagat also expresses the cultural diversities.

Chetan Bhagat has touched some of the sensitive issues of cultural differences. He is of the view that love knows no boundaries whether it be of caste, creed, religion, state or country. Culture comprises of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, work of art, rituals, ceremonies. Multiculturalism is a study of two or more cultures This offers abundant opportunity to study on multiculturalism. *2 States* is a love story of a Punjabi guy Krish Malhotra and a Tamil Brahmin girl Ananya. Several families go through this situation in India. The novel deals with cultural contradictions. It depicts how hailing from different cultures can create problem in the matrimonial alliances and how hard the couple has to fight against the destiny for the union. Krish and Ananya also have to work hard to make their dreams true. Through this we can find how love shines amidst darkness and despair. The main emphasis is about cultural contradictions. The story is not only about the young couple who is trying to convince their parents to make them agree for the wed-lock but also mirrors on the issue of inter-racial, inter-state marriages. Chetan Bhagat's novel is a social document of contemporary youth's issues. They fight against the customs of a traditional and conservative society. The novel also indicates the grim reality of Indian marriage system. The back side of the novel covers the realistic image of contemporary Indian society concerning the love marriages. "Cultural representation and signifying practices" is another strategy used to construct multiculturalism in the novel. Punjabi culture is not a culture of language, as many non-Hindi states are. It is based on attitude that has made certain actions its identity. Punjabi the language bears close similarity with Hindi and thus not much of difference can be noticed. Difference can be noticed from the perception that Punjabis have developed on the basis of their culture. As shown in the novel basic characteristics of Punjabi culture can be sum up as: foodie, loud, carefree, and emotional. It is important to note here that these characteristics are enjoyed to the extreme by Punjabis. Being braggers is another quality that is taken up with pride by Punjabis as shown in the novel. Following examples from the novel supports it further. Similar kind of representation is done for Tamil culture. The basic nature of the Tamil culture is exhibited through their life-style, their rigidity and strictness for cultural rituals and a sense of intellectual superiority.

They have a culture of passing on the training in art forms like music and dance to their children. And this is something taken up very seriously by them.

The novel portrays beautifully the typical Indian mentality of not accepting inter-caste marriages. It also reflects people with traditional and impractical beliefs. They believe themselves to be the caretakers of their culture from cultural perspective. The rigidity of people doesn't allow people them

to go for marriages between different cultures, castes, religion or geographies. The couple in the novel faces a lot of problems in convincing their parents. The follies and prejudices of people against the people of other cultures can be fully witnessed throughout the novel. Through this novel the writer tries to make them realize their faults and provides them a chance to rectify their mistakes in their real life.

3. Cinematic representation of the novels of Chetan Bhagat:

Adaptation has gained tremendous popularity in contemporary times. When a literary text is adapted as a film, it has to undergo several processes. Adaptation is not regarded as a secondary work as postmodernism believes in revisiting the past with different outlook. Selecting a text for adaptation and foregrounding a particular idea from it has become a common practice now. Adaptation studies are often comparative studies. This is not to say that adaptations don't have their autonomous status; they are a separate identity. They being adaptations, have different mode of expression that is 'form'. This is the reason why adaptation has its own aura, its own presence in Time and Space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. If seen at it as formal entity or product of an adaptation it is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works. The act of adaptation always involves both re-interpretation and then re-creation depending on your perspective.

The theory of adaptation talks about the adaptation is normally done with the popular novels considering the financial risk. The film makers of 3 Idiots have selected the already popular five point someone because of its popularity. The novel was already popular with the readers and the film makers capitalized on that though made many changes that has been already mentioned.

Films in general, are often said to be the reflection of the society. It is true in the case of 3 Idiots and Nanban.. The language used in the movies are regional and can be viewed as a verbal expression of culture.

In Indian film industry the copyrights of Chetan Bhagat's best sellers are readily sold and adapted into films viz. One Night at the Call Centre adapted as "Hello", Three Mistakes of My Life as "Kaay Po Che", Five Point Someone as "Three Idiots" and 2 States as 2 States

Novel Five Point Someone v/s Movie 3 Idiots Similarities Broadly speaking, the plot of the film is the same as the book. Both stories are about three students of an engineering college who form an inseparable friendship over incidents that take place in the college. The three characters in the book are very similar to those of the movie. While one of them - Ryan (Aamir as Rancho) is radical and thinks differently from the rest, the second boy Hari (Madhavan as Farhaan) is a confused character. The book's third character Alok (Sharman as Raju) is facing severe financial and domestic pressures. Some dialogues in the movie like the examiner looked at me as if I had asked for his kidneys and define machine seems to be a straight taken from the book. In the book, Neha (Kareena as Pia) tells her dad Cherian (Professor Viru played by Boman Irani) why her brother committed suicide due to the latter's demanding and dominating behaviour. Similar episode takes place in the film as well. However, the book talks about this incident in much more detail than the movie which covers this

in a single scene. Though the narrators are the same, the narrator of the book Hari romances the professor's daughter, the filmmakers give the romantic mileage to Rancho. The paper stealing episode is the turning point of the book. It causes Alok to jump out of the window to commit suicide. This scene however, is twisted in the movie as Raju jumps out of the window because Boman decides to rusticate him because of hooliganism. The biggest difference comes in the second half of the movie. While the book finishes at graduation, the film goes beyond it and builds on the future of the characters till 10 years later. It talks about how their careers have shaped and how their mediocrity in college played into the future.

Hello: The film is based on Chetan Bhagat's novel, 'One Night @ the Call Center' directed by Atul Agnihotri.

3 Idiots: Directed by Raju Hirani, 3 Idiots in Hindi and Nanban in Tamil was adapted from Chetan Bhagat's bestselling novel 'Five Point Someone'.

2 States is a story of Krish (A Punjabi) and Ananya (Tamilian) who meet each other at India's best educational institution, IIM-A, became friends, fall in love and eventually plan to get married. They started convincing their parents and their to-be in laws instead of separating from each other. 2 States involved the culture, tradition, mind-set, way of living of Krish and Ananya's parents. Krish and Ananya struggle a lot and finally make it to a big Indian wedding and afterwards blessed with two sons. Differences There were not many differences between the novel and movie. But the second part of the film which was the crux to the whole story, seemed like quite hurriedly taken. As novel is the lengthy version of the story, the limitation of the movie to make it short and timely. A few scenes included in promo were cut off, just not to hurt the sentiments of the South Indians. There were some changes with the Companies where Krish and Ananya got placed. Also, the boring episodes of Krish getting transferred, his boss and his colleagues at Chennai are omitted. There were not many differences between the novel and movie. But the second part of the film which was the crux to the whole story, seemed like quite hurriedly taken. As novel is the lengthy version of the story, the limitation of the movie to make it short and timely.

4. Women Empowerment And Equity Represented In The Novels Of Chetan Bhagat:

The word 'Feminism' seems to refer to an intense awareness of identity as a woman and interest in feminine problems. Women not recognized as individuals or autonomous beings, had to face many obstacles in the academic circuit, that radically restricts the scope of women's intellectual exposure. In the Indian context several feminist have realized that the subject of women's liberalization in India should not be reduced to the contradictions between men & women. The woman in order to literate herself and advance needs to empower herself to confess different institutional structures and cultural practices against patriarchal domination and comfort.

In Chetan Bhagat's novels the place of action is set in the hustle and bustle of Metropolitan Indian cities where his female protagonists earn their own living and make career choices. Like Esha, in One Night @ the Call Centre resides in Delhi leaving her home in order to make her modelling dream come true. The best reference will be Priyanka, in One Night @ the

Call Centre, who makes her own choice in case of marriage quite contrary to her parents' expectations. Also Ananya in 2 States tries to convince her parents till the end in order to marry her lover Krish. Thus, Bhagat's writing is more feminine than masculine. He gives voice and shows his concerns more to his ladies than to his heroes.

Bhagat's added footage of his concern for women characters tells us the fact that steps towards women empowerment can be seen to be speeding up. Bhagat claims women empowerment as one of the positive effects of globalization; at the same time, it is incontrovertible that his novels definitely give us cultural shocks which are an inevitable impact of globalization, modernization, and corporate exploitation. His treatment of love distinguishes Bhagat from others. His men do not chase women. The women are the chaser and the men are the chased in his novels. His female protagonists are clear in mind about their aspirations, careers, and desires and take decisions concerning their life.

In India, where marriage is a sacrament, a man and a woman living together without getting married is a sin. But the majority of Chetan's protagonists enjoy Pre-Marital Sex. No other writer of the past, but Bhagat sanctified sex in his works. They watched the reluctance of the woman in it, whereas Bhagat has installed it in the willingness of the woman. Perfect examples for this stance will be the sexual relationship between Hari and Neha in Five Point Someone, Shyam and Priyanka in One Night @ The Call Center, Govind and Vidya in The 3 Mistakes of My Life, Krish and Ananya in 2 States, Gopal and Aarti in Revolution 2020. In Bhagat's opinion, girls are in no way inferior to boys. They are equal to them in all respects. He is an advocate to the liberation and empowerment of women, but this liberation can raise eyebrows in orthodox society, as premarital sex is still considered a taboo in India. For the current generation lovers, sex is a way of expressing their love for their partner and they do it before the necessary social rituals. They look at sex as an inevitable thing in love. Bhagat's writing matches with the youth mentality, but it fails to stand on the moral expectations of the older generations; he is often criticized as an amoral writer. But what he does is to present the things as it is. The need of an hour is his reader's rationality to understand what he wants to say because even in this technical era, women are treated as sexual objects and men always want to possess and renounce them. Bhagat does not focus on the sufferings and helplessness of his characters in his novels but rather Bhagat manifests the untiring efforts of his characters to come out of the slough of melancholy. He portrays his women as the true revellers of the human life. Adversity does not stay with them for long. It does not subdue their will to enjoy life. They very soon emerge out of it and start delighting in the life. All the women characters of Chetan are intelligent and have the capacity to make their own choices and ready to accept challenges and risk no matter what their decision is. Chetan succeeds to make the young men and women openly accept the truths and realities and deal with it as a mutual need for the betterment of the society nullifying the aspect of hypocrisy.

5. Conclusion :

Chetan Bhagat is gifted with an extraordinary ability to deal with various aspects of human life. His popularity as a writer is basically on his intimate understanding of human nature in

different perspectives. His novel deals with different postcolonial perspectives from culture issues. He has raised certain culture issues like communal riots, religion, bias, misguiding the youth by politician etc. He writes on dark topic, still hold modern culture. He brings about corporate culture is a term used to describe beliefs and a value system that provides its unique taste and attitude to a friendship in Cosmo-culture the condition of youth is very pathetic. He selects subject which the reader can associate with in today's modern culture.

Chetan Bhagat in almost all his novels highlights the problems faced by the youth. "The Three Mistakes of my life" is the third novel by Chetan Bhagat. The book was published in May 2008. In the "Three Mistakes of my life" author portrays scores of problems which we comprise been facing in India and which are making the Indian youth heedful and sentient of some biggest problems that pestilence our society. Chetan Bhagat has dealt with such burning problems like expensive education, lack of advancement in less significant town, conventional approach fanaticism in politics, fraudulent, politicians and religious extremism chauvinism towards agnostics and atheists poverty amid the brighter lower-middle course group youth, extreme contest in access exams for college admissions, rift between religions, castes, conservative mentality of parents; hypocrisy among the public politicians and everyone alike lack of awareness, foresight and ideas due to lack of quality education. People just want to earn and the passion for anything is dead prodigies and talented people are mostly unrecognized and all that dies away as unharnessed potential. Due to above mentioned problems that people of India are struggling with their people of India are struggling with their given circumstances to make their lives liveable, such condition of India is due to politics religious communalism, racism, caste - ism fanaticism.

Chetan Bhagat uses contemporary conversational English. The socio-cultural context of the narratives -early twenty first century - provides us an opportunity to view the implied social criticism from the point of view of the young generation characters' responding, reacting and striving to transform the age old social institutions. The transformation occurs not only in the morphology of the social institutions but also, perhaps more importantly, in the contemporary socio-cultural value system. The resolution of the plots in most cases follows the pattern of popular literature, i.e. all the problems of the lead characters/protagonists are solved to their satisfaction. The way different characters and situations are developed by novelists against complex socio-cultural practices offers the readers an opportunity to see people and social institutions in an interactive mode. Whether it is the characters that bring in even a shade of change in the social practices or the social practices which facilitate or thwart the free growth of human personality avenues for social criticism are opened. In the end Chetan Bhagat gives a social message of goodness over corruption. In this novel, social sin, political bankruptcy, malpractices, and crime appear to demonstrate the black picture of the contemporary Indian society. Bhagat writes about the existing education system and projects the impact of materialistic approach which causes disintegration of family, alienation and frustration. He also deals with religious politics, concept of marriage, corruption and commercialization of education. Bhagat projects the changing picture of

contemporary society. Bhagat's characters negotiate the contemporary world by becoming successful.

The writer depicts how the cultural and moral values are changing. The novel highlights different aspects of the new generation. By using simple language, they deal with the lives, incidents and psyche of the new generation. He belongs to the middle class and writes about the same. This has made him popular in the masses. He is read by non-elite groups and consequently makes his work an integral part of Popular Culture.

The depiction of Women characters in the novels of Indian writing in English is remarkably different to that of Chetan Bhagat's female protagonists. Indian writers in English have been depicting in their novels, awful conditions of subjugation, desperate dependence and above all denial of domestic, social and economic freedom by men. But through Chetan's novels there is revolutionary breakthrough, or rather liberation of women of the 21st century where Chetan through his novels advises women to listen to their heart and life is short and has to be enjoyed.

Youth of the contemporary India faces various situations like growing autonomous behaviour of youth, generation, youth

ethos and isolation, suicide, and no motivation for sport activities. In his third novel, *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, Chetan Bhagat portrayed the issues of the lower middle class section of society like political and religious hypocrisy, politicization of religion, communal differences and the effects that follow and some other minor issues like the issues related to education for the lower middle class children, issues related to public health, growing apathy among the educated people for the nation and middle class mentality of the contemporary lower middle class people.

Chetan Bhagat has certain technicality of writing his fictions. They are the simple and straightforward language i.e. no heaviness of lexicography, short and simple sentences, no complexity in the story sequences etc... and above all, the sense arousing scenes of kissing and making love. Along with that, the deeper analysis of the content of the present novel enabled the researcher to explore an exclusive dimension to the thematic approach in the novel. He, in the present novel, has taken help of the historical facts to give a realistic touch to the present fiction.

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