

# Dialectics of culture in contemporary Indian Prose – Fiction in English : A study of selected works of Chetan Bhagat

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**Abstract -** This thesis tries to discuss the concept of cultural dialectics of India and its portrayal through the delineation of the various characters, with reference to his four novels namely “2 States: The Story of My Marriage” and “Revolution 2020”. One Night @Call Center, Half-Girl Friend and some of his prose lectures. The thesis is divided into six chapters.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter a brief introduction is made about the history and growth of Indian English Fiction from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Rajmohan's Wife to Chetan Bhagat's Half-Girl Friend in a bird's eye view and the place of Chetan Bhagat in the realm of Indian English Fiction and his views and concerns for the development of India. In the subsequent chapters his novels have been analyzed and presented in individual chapters.

## II. TWO STATES

A Tale of Two States is about the prejudices and cultural differences between the north and south Indian families with reference to the novel 2 States: The Story of My Marriage. The novel is humorous and brings out how the young couples have to fight to get married. In this chapter an in-depth analysis of the novel 2 States: The Story of My Marriage is presented with reference to the basic cultural differences between South India and North India. The title indicates it is the story of Punjab and Tamil Nadu, two states of India but they represent two poles and two cultures and dialects of India. Chetan Bhagat tries to narrow down his scope from his expanded themes of —Three Mistakes of My Life to concentrate on social issues of marriage in 2 States: The Story of My Marriage his fourth novel published in 2009. The novel opens with a prologue and ends up with an epilogue.

The most popular novel *Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition* is taken up for analysis. *Revolution 2020*, is Chetan Bhagat's fifth novel a saga of Love, Corruption, Ambition and has got the credit of being the biggest selling English language novel in India's history. (*The New York Times*). The title of the novel has some commercial thinking in the back drop. One can remember the title very easily as 20-20 format of cricket which is very popular and Ex-President of India,

Honorable A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has used and coined the term “The vision of 2020” to indicate that by 2020 India must become a developed country. So, in order to sell something, the popular and common brand name may be of great help. This novel deals with some major issues of contemporary India— corruption, rotten education system and love conflicts among the youth. The tagline- Love, Corruption, Ambition are the key themes of the book. These are the burning issues of India which Chetan Bhagat portrays in the present novel which shows his revolutionary spirit. Corruption particularly in the education sector forms the back drop of the story. All the three characters have their own strong ambitions in life, and how they go about fulfilling their forms a big part of the story. Bhagat projects a complete picture of the society with the hidden agenda of maintaining balance to escape the impending disaster. He anticipates that the prevailing corruption and misuse of power would lead to numerous agitations by people like of Anna Hazare, a Gandhian social worker who led mass anti-corruption movement in India. He also highlights that education should enrich the one's knowledge and skills, rather than destroy one's inbuilt capacity and creativity.

He cautions the mentors not to stick on to the bookish knowledge rather advises them to follow application oriented method. He conveys the message to the youth to beware of the impending problems before selecting the crooked way and never to be deluded in imagination without taking up the necessary steps to bring it to reality.

## III. INTERROGATING IRRATIONALITY

In the novel “Interrogating Irrationality”, the researcher presented before the readers the impact of globalization and modernization on the off campus young people with reference to his novel *One Night @ The Call Center*. The writer had made an attempt to show the condition of the middle class people who work under pressure in dogmatic conditions to

earn for their bread and butter. Captivated by money trapped by multinational companies working as bonded laborers tolerating the impertinent situations is prevalent in today's Indian society. Chetan Bhagat has picked up six characters from different parts of North India, isolated in life either by their own relations or by their own unfulfilled desires who work at a call center. They never behave like colleagues, but like friends share their happiness and sorrow which they couldn't do it with their relatives. It is a story of almost lost love, thwarted ambitions, absence of family affection, pressures of a patriarchal set up, an insight on the lifestyle of youth of this country and the work environment of a globalized office.

#### IV. ILLUMINATING THE WORLD OF LOVE

In the novel "Illuminating the World of Love", the researcher discusses the relationship between a boy and a girl in this modern society with reference to the novel *Half Girl Friend* and how the western culture had eradicated the traditional values taking the society into hidden darkness where sufferings and pains rule the realms. Marriage and Sexuality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a ground-breaking look at the sexual revolution that is beginning to sweep through urban and rural India. The novel '*Half Girl Friend*' explores the sexual proclivities and mating habits of young Indians on college campuses and in offices and examines the changing face of Indian pornography and prostitution, especially the world of high class hookers. He goes deep into one of the most enduring institutions of Indian society—marriage and investigates how it is faring in modern times. He presents the facts that while arranged marriage is still the preferred form of finding a partner for the majority of urban Indians, love marriages are increasing at a tremendous rate. Also on the rise are divorce, extra-marital affairs, open marriages, live-in relationships and the like. In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze human relations under the perspective of sex, love and marriage along with other social concerns of the main protagonist of the novel Madhav. In fact, in almost all his novels, Bhagat elucidates the importance of sexual inclination and eroticism in the lives of young Indians. When we read his works, we do understand that he regards sex as a spiritual bond to serve the purpose of the life force and vitality. It is not merely a physical reunion between man and woman, but the only way to bless the society with the world citizen. Bhagat has the modest aim of analyzing the specificities of the sexual relations and intimacy between their character portrayals in an ardent manner.

This is the Concluding chapter which brings out the writer's attempt to educate the Indians to wash away the cultural prejudices and corruption in India through his novels. In his works, the researcher finds many intensive and extensive expositions and discourses on the themes of discontent,

loneliness, alienation, apprehensions, identity crisis and insecurity which are the key features of fragmentation in the postmodern societies.

Bhagat inculcates in the readers the need for change in the present system of education. With reference to his two novels and the theory of Existentialism and the elements of Existentialism in the works of Chetan Bhagat.

For Bhagat, generational divide is the one that India desperately needs to bridge. According to the feel of his works; the older generation grew up in a time of scarcity and prized a suffocating 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. The author's own story is a reflection of the hunger that drives the young India of his novels. By his mid-twenties the author had become the embodiment of the Indian dream: an investment banker in Hong Kong. As Chetan Bhagat worked as an investment banker with Goldman Sachs, Hong Kong, the writer felt that a model society is China, not because of its economic success but because of its social upheaval. According to his novels, India needs a cultural revolution to change people's mindsets. In China it was bloody but India needs to learn that the old ways are not always the best ways.

#### V. CONCLUSION

This thesis show how Chetan Bhagat has become a Youth Icon and the way India has to develop and prosper. The present study has confined only to examine his four novels with reference to different cultural dialectics of India and further study can be taken to analyse his talks, prose writings along with his fictional world to study multitude cultures of India and religious bigotries in the recent times.

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