



ANALYZING SOCIAL CONCEPTUALIZATION IN THE NARRATIVES OF CHETAN BHAGAT

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Article Info:

Article Received 08/10/2015

Revised on: 28/11/2015

Accepted on: 14/12/2015

ABSTRACT

The paper studied the novels of Chetan Bhagat under the parameter social conceptualization. The endeavour is put on the selection of theme, plot analysis and the message delineation in *One Night @ the Call Center*, *Five Point Someone*, *Three Mistakes of My Life*, *Revolution 2020*, *Two States* and *Half Girl Friend*. Most of Chetan Bhagat's themes revolve around love, religion, corruption, ambition etc, through which he tries to discuss about the controversial issues or the burning issues such as changing trend in education, natural calamities, human disaster, religious disparities, depressed state of mind, and suicide attempts which are prevailing in the society. Bhagat reveals the attitude of different characters in the socio-cultural context of the narratives in the early 21st century. He uses simple language dealing with the lives, incidents and psyche of the new generation. The writer belongs to middle class society and writes typicalities of the same which makes them popular among the mass readers.

Keywords: *Social Conceptualization, Post modernism, Social Culture.*

Citation:

APA Nushad, P.M. (2015) Analyzing social conceptualization in the narratives of Chetan Bhagat. *Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature- JOELL*, 2(4), 126-129.

MLA Nushad, P.M "Analyzing social conceptualization in the narratives of Chetan Bhagat" *Veda's journal of English Language and Literature- JOELL* 2.4(2015):126-129.



INTRODUCTION

Literature is said to be a reflection of the society in which it was born. Different periods and styles of literature reflect the changes that took place in that particular society at various points in time. Political and economic changes affect the psychology of the people and since literature is created by human beings, it cannot help being influenced by such changes. As the present era marks shifts in the norms of language, culture and socio-economic fronts, the new generation of writers come with new themes and new ways of depicting the thoughts. This is evident in post colonial writers in using the language and modes of expression. Recent Indian English novels narrate the stories of ordinary people whose voices need to be heard. Irreconcilable with the inner self and the outer world, the characters construct social structures, cultural contexts and language codes. As language cannot be isolated, literature becomes an expression of the social-cultural milieu. While the writers condemn social differences in the postmodernist era, society chooses to marginalize certain social groups and elevate the other. It is a novelist's concern to show them how relationships need to be created and expressed in particular social and cultural contexts to recover the under-represented groups of society. The new learning calls for an exposition of the workings of domestic fiction with a detailed explanation of its socio-conceptual developments. Now, the novelist concentrates on the burning social issues in the society. This has given birth to a new genre novel which includes all the aspects of human life. Novel becomes universal and the novelist turns to be the voice incarnate of people.

Literature deals with the period and its problems, hopes and fears. A novel is not merely a photographic picture of society but a reflection of social facts and conditions of the particular moment in which it is written. The sufferings and problems of people are the sufferings and problems of the characters. The unique features of 21st century writers are mostly related to family, economy, religion, education, and culture, along with the aspects of globalization, consumerism, fragmentation of authority, and the commodification of knowledge.

Deconstruction of the prevalent socio-cultural norms perhaps is the most important aspect of the writers.

Chetan Bhagat is the new emerging writer of this century. He is the most admired writer by the millions of youths, and he has made India to read a lot. He uses simple language, and deals with lives, incidents and psyche of the common men. Bhagat's characters try to converse the contemporary situations by gaining abrupt success. They transmit the middle class and the capitalistic values with a purpose to progress them. In *One Night @ the Call Center* the writer has depicted the aspect of materialistic approach which affects the life of the common people in the present society. The six characters, who work at the connection call centre, try hard to supplement their lives with the income, and accept the sufferings of the life without turning against the hardships of life. It causes disintegration of families, alienation, and frustration, and makes them feel anxious about life. The world of materialistic approach towards life has made *Shyam*, the main protagonist to join in Connexions quitting the job in an ad agency which paid him less.

"In fact, the only reason people somewhat talk to me is I have a job and get a salary at the end of the month. I saved myself by joining Connexions, as with money in your wallet the world gives you some respect and lets you breathe." (15)

"Radhika tied her knot with Anuj three years ago after a whirlwind courtship in college. She lives with Anuj's ultra traditional parents, who burden her with all the household stuff. She works at Connexions to let herself gratis with the troubled milieu. But her poise on Anuj's love was hit hard when she hears her husband recommend her ex girl friends Payal, to be his most loved person on the earth. She feels frustrated when she comes to that her husband had betrayed her.

"No my friend, no payment at all. So are you ready with your special person's name and address?"

"Yes, she is my girlfriend. She lives in Delhi. She is a modern type of girl, so please make the bouquet trendy..." Anuj said (147)



The novel is set against the back ground of the economic scenario of the past two decades.

In the novel *Five Point Someone* the writer has depicted the importance of student-friendly education system against the burdened education. The novel deals with the fears and insecurities of the students especially students in one of the country's top institutions. The narrator takes up the issues of three students who have joined in IIT Delhi- a prestigious engineering college for pursuing their studies. The traumatic condition of the students, their agony against the education system and their psychological conditions of perturbed students is well brought about in his novel. Alok, Hari and Ryan understood that the IIT college atmosphere is filled with strict rules and regulations. They were in the clutches of agony, sorrow and suffering between the seniors and the professors. They felt monotonous and mechanical and sometimes they felt as if they were in the jail. Life in IIT College is not as smooth as we usually imagine or think.

"In every class we had to look out for instructor's subtle hints about a possible quiz in the next class" (12).

In *Three Mistakes of My Life* the brawny relationship of three friends with three different backgrounds, having diversified views towards their future and their endearment to achieve it are delightfully brought out. The story brings out the struggle, sacrifice and achievement of three friends for the goodwill of the nation. As Aristotle has rightly said, "Happiness consists in achieving, through the course of a whole lifetime, all the goods-health, wealth, knowledge, friends etc. - that lead to the perfection of human nature and to the enrichment of human life. This requires us to make choices, some of which may be very difficult. Often the lesser good promises - immediate pleasure - and is more tempting, while the greater good is painful and requires some sort of sacrifice" (69). The writer has clearly inculcated the words Aristotle and brought out the story with all the elements necessary for enrichment of human life. The story is told through the main protagonist Govind. Bhagat has the usual style of beginning the main plot of the story with the male characters, suffers from psychological problems

due to love failures, friendship breakup or business loss.

Revolution 2020 stands for the revolutionary spirit of Chetan Bhagat. The novel mainly focuses on corruption, ambition and love, a three-tier structure linked with three main characters - Gopal, Raghav and Aarti. Each one on the earth has an ambition in his life, which enhances him to pick up the race along with the others to achieve one's goal. A crucial stage occurs in one's life to decide the next step to pick up the opportunity or leave it. Achievement, success and wealth never make a man successful in life unless it is shared with others. Bhagat has picked up the most crucial point corruption and has shown how it affects the life of a common man in the society. Raghav, the man with new philosophical thoughts about life, makes a new approach in eradicating corruption in the society through his writings. Raghav has started revolution among the youngsters and makes a call to the people of the society to look ahead of it:

"People will realize who is fooling them. It could take ten years. I call it Revolution 2020, the year in which it will happen, the movement that will finally shake the muck off India" (206).

He has raised his voices against it through his novel *Revolution 2020*.

His novel *Two States* is the story about a couple coming from two different states in India, who face hardships in convincing their parents to approve of their marriage. The novel is said to be inspired from the real life story of the author and his wife Anusha Suryanarayanan who are from Delhi and Tamil Nadu respectively. The main themes in this novel are love, friendship, religion, and spirituality. Krishna Malhotra, a Punjabi, meets Ananya Swaminathan, a Tamilan, and falls in love with her and both undergoes a sturdy time to convert it into an arranged marriage with two states united as India. Krish's reason for not to elope is to serve for a greater purpose. In his own words:

"I imagine our kids.....Think about this-they won't be Tamil or Punjabi. They will be Indian. They will be above all this nonsense. If all young people marry outside their community, it is good for the country. That is the greater purpose" (103).



In his latest novel *Half Girl Friend* the main theme of this novel is love, which is the very essence of our livelihood and the main instinct for human bondage in the society. The concept of love has always been one of his themes which could be seen in all Bhagat's novels, through his main protagonists: Shyam-Priyanka, Hari-Neha, Govind-Vidya, Gopal-Aarti, Krishna-Ananya, Madhav- Riya. It brings into memory the famous immortal lovers like Ambika-Amaravathi, Romeo-Juliet, and Shah Jagan-Mumtaz. In this novel he has shown a new angle of love, a unison love story and an instinctual feeling of bondage in the process of human relations. Love has built confidence in the Bihari boy Madhav, and him reminiscent a new life in St.Stephen's College, New Delhi:

"If she had been four inches shorter, my eyes may never have met hers and everything would have been different. If I had not been bored and arrived at the basketball court an hour earlier, it would have been different. If someone had not missed a pass and the ball had not come out of the court and hit me on the head. I would have had a different life. Tiny bumps in time shape our lives, even though we spend hours trying to make long-terms plans. I had not plan to meet the love of my life on a basketball court" (14). And:

"I didn't know if I was a real prince or not, but I had found my princess" (28). Love towards others always bridges a healthy bondage for years of survival. Rani Sahiba, the Queen of Dumraon, a lost empire, without power and wealth, but still has the pride and respect among the people. "Live with dignity. Live for others, that is how one earns respect,' she used to say. She was right. Dumraon's people loved her. Not because she was the Rani Sahiba, but because she was the Rani Sahiba who cared. For the past fifteen years, she had given her all to the Dumaraon Royal School in Nandan village, on the outskirts of Dumraon" (96).

CONCLUSION

Most of Bhagat's themes revolves around love, religion, corruption, and ambition through which he tries to discuss about the controversial

issues or the burning issues such as changing trend in education, natural calamities, human disaster, religious disparities, depressed state of mind and suicide attempts which are prevailing in the society. Bhagat reveals the attitudes of different characters in the social cultural context of the narratives in the early 21st century. He uses simple language, deal with the lives, incidents and psyche of the new generation. The writer belongs to middle class and writes about same which makes them popular among the mass readers. They are read by non-elite groups and consequently make their work an integral part of popular literature. Society and social changes often throws up challenges against the writers since ancient period. Being a dynamic process, with the changing conditions, it further gives rise to many issues of vital sociological concern. Retrospective changes in the human values, attitudes, and the behavioral pattern of individuals and groups against the norms of society is being given a deeper insight by the writer. In the wider sense it includes education, corruption, tradition, religion, technology, marriage and economic development. Bhagat brings out the changing scenario of life of a common man who influenced by western culture, enthralled by modern technology heading a distress life without love, compassion and commitment towards his life.

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