

**A STUDY OF CROSS-CULTURAL ASPECTS IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S 2 STATES**Mohd Suleman<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pankaj Sharma<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>(Student, R.S.M (P.G) College Dhampur (Bijnor) U.P)<sup>2</sup>(Assistant Professor, R.S.M (P.G) College Dhampur (Bijnor) U.P)

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to concern on Indian English literature especially focuses on the contemporary Indian English writer Chetan Bhagat. He is known as popular cultural icon in India and he is one of best screen writers in the Indian contemporary literature. Most of the works such as- *Five Point Someone*, *One Indian Girl*, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, *2 States*, *One Night @ the Call Center*, which show a lot of theme, such as autobiographical elements, Indian culture, Feminism, youth power, etc. In cultural prospective, he uses many types of cultures including counter culture, cross-culture, multiculturalism, etc. In Chetan Bhagat's novel *2 States*, there are many accidents in it, which show the real depictions of multicultural conflicts. Along with it, Chetan Bhagat presents his view on two diverse cultural marriages between Punjabi and Tamil. Cross-Cultural encounters, multi-Cultural conflict, problems in marriage between two culture and divers in customs are the main theme in this fiction to present the contemporary Indian society.

**Keywords:** diverse cultural marriages, multi-Cultural conflict, multiculturalism, cross-culture

**INTRODUCTION**

Chetan Bhagat is an eminent author in Indian English literature as well as a famous screenwriter in Indian Bollywood, and also considers social media influencer, columnist and motivational speaker. He is as an icon of popular culture in Indian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because a lot of the people follow him on social media platform including Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. In the era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century of Indian English literature, he shows various issues of post-independence such as feminism, socio-poetical issues and various aspects of Indian culture. Chetan Bhagat wrote five bestselling novels, *Five Point Someone*, *2 States*, *What Young India Wants*, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* and *One Night @The Call Centre* which concern the grading system, educational life in the campus, the real picture of life and how to live a good life. In the words of Donald Greenless,

“Chetan Bhagat might not be another Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie or Arundhati Roy, but he authentic claims to being one of the voices of a generation of middle-class Indian youth facing the choices and frustration that come with the prospect of growing wealth”<sup>1</sup>

Culture is a way of life. There are many aspects of cultures including the customs, ideas belief etc and particle is the member of society and country. Most of other aspects such as politics, art, and music all are make-up of culture. Raymond Williams in his book *Keywords: A Vocabulary culture And Society* gives the three interrelated modern usages of culture---

- ✓ “A general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetics developments.
- ✓ A particular way of life, of a people, period or a group.

- ✓ The works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity.”<sup>2</sup>

There are many types of culture like popular culture, mass culture, low culture, high culture, multi-culture and cross- culture (or culture counter) is defined as involving two or more different cultures and their ideas, custom and countries for instance- cross-cultural communication. In Indian English literature, various aspects of culture such as- youth culture, Western culture multiculturalism and cross culture (or culture counter) which are used as the centre points of various authors Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anita Desai who shows the real pictures of Indian culture. Chetan Bhagat is one of them and tries to show the various Indian issues related to religious, tradition values customs and culture in his fiction.

In his first novel *Five Points Someone*, Chetan Bhagat tells campus life, love-hate relationship faulty education system, and philosophy of life is the themes. While optimism and identity search are minor topics. It is a story about three friends Alok, Hari, Rayan who become bad in IT class till first class quiz. When we try to improve things only tend to gets worst. It takes a little time for them to realise. If you try and screw up with IT system then it comes back to your double screw before they know it, they are at the lowest level of society. His second novel *One Night @ Call Centre*, he tells about Shyam Priyanka, vroom, Esha, Radha Military uncle who are the victims of unemployment and they employ in western appliances strategic group at Gurgaon Herry. *The Tree Mistakes of My Life* tells about the incidents in the life of Govind Patel who is protagonist of the novel from Ahmadabad. The present work is a rare combination of different subject like love, hate, friendship betrayal, cricket, passion, religion and business. This shows religious and social displeasure in the state of Gujarat. There are many characters in this, Omi, Bittoo Mama, Parekh-ji and Hasmukh-ji

<sup>1</sup>Greenless, Donald. “An Investment Banker Finds Fame Off the Books”, New York Times. 26 March, 2008. Print.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London: Fontana/Croom Helm, 1976



stands for Hindu community and another group and Ali and his family tells about the Muslim community. *What young India Wants* is a non-fiction book which compilation of his speeches and essays centred on the youth of Indian society, Politics? This book revolves around Bhagat's ideas and innovations as to now the Indian economy should be improved through issues such as feminism culture, upper class, middle class race, pollution, population, urbanism etc.

As same, Chetan Bhagat has used various themes on culture, campus life, education life, Indian culture and cross culture in *2 States*, he uses the cross culture and portrayal the realistic pictures of contemporary Indian society through the conflict between two different cultures and civilization. It presents the diversity between two different culture including food habits, dress design, language and dialect, rituals, social customs and way of life. Chetan Bhagat says—

"I saw the city. It had the usual Indian elements like autos, packed public buses, hassled traffic cops and tiny shops that sold groceries, fruits, utensils, clothes or novelty. However, it did feel different. First, the sign in every shop was in Tamil. The Tamil font resembles those optical illusion puzzles that give you a headache if you stare at them long enough. Tamil women, all of them, wear flowers in their hair. Tamil men don't believe in pants and wear lunges even in shopping districts. The city is filled with film posters. The heroes' pictures make you feel even your uncle can be movie stars. The heroes are fat, balding, have thick moustaches and the heroine next to them is a ravishing beauty. Maybe my mother has a point in saying that Tamil women have a thing for North Indian men".<sup>3</sup>

Chetan Bhagat represents a realistic picture of contemporary Indian society and concerns on

cross-cultural marriage. The author skilfully portrays the real picture of contemporary Indian society, drawing on some typical middle-class sensibilities of the present day, multi-cultural conflicts between two different civilizations, and the difficulties of modern generations faced with modern generations. He established with a mind-set of modern sensibilities and belief systems. The author has pointed out some corporate and public evils in current fiction that echo the realistic representation of contemporary society overall. In the novel *2 States*, Krish and Ananya who are the protagonist belongs to two different states of the North-Indian and the South-Indian families. Krish is a Panjabi boy from Delhi and Ananya is a beautiful Tamil lady from Chennai. Krish and Ananya face many cultural conflicts due to different culture and custom. They do deeply love to each other and try to convert their love into love marriage and decide to impress their in-law and convince their parents to accept their marriage proposal. The first meeting between them ably portrayed.

"She stood two places ahead of me in the lunch line at the IIMA mess. I checked her out from the corner of my eye, wondering what the big fuss about this South Indian girl was."<sup>4</sup>

In the relationship of Krish and Ananya, the obscurities and complexities begin on the occasion of their convocation Day, they plan to know intention of their parents to marry each other on this occasion. Chetan Bhagat depicts mind set of Indian parents and gives a very funny example, when Krish's mother mocks of Ananya's families by calling 'Madrasis.' Krish's mother says that south-Indian parents do not control their daughters and hates "Non-vegetarian" south-Indian actress such as Hama Malini and Sridevi because according to her, they have trapped the North Indians. He says –

"These South Indians don't know how to control their daughters. From Hema Malini

<sup>3</sup>Bhagat, Chetan. *2 States the Story of My Marriage*. New Delhi: Rupa. co., 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid



to Shridevi, all of them trying to catch Punjabi me.”<sup>5</sup>

Chetan Bhagat represents different stance of Krish and his mother and cultural diversities of Panjabi and Tamilian families. After completing his IIM, Krish gets a honorary job at the City Bank of Chennai and lives in touch with Ananya's parents and compares all manners with her parents as well as, he feels himself trapped in resistance like language, custom, ritual and the general practise of culture. The following depiction represents basic elements of the South Indian culture –However, it feels different. First, the sign in every

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Krish also face the different attitude of Tamilian in Chennai. Krish's consciousness sifts between the Panjabi and the Tamilian Culture and his consciousness of Panjabi sensibility shows that the cultural identity changes with geography. He find himself confuses among the different culture such as attitude, language, perception of behaviour and calculates of his every words because his opposite reaction that my spoil of his union with Ananya. In the novel, Chetan Bhagat shows cultural conflict with Krish's observation of cultural difference and disparity of two divers' culture.

“The hubbub over Harish had settled down a little. The men opened their newspapers. The women gave each other formal smiles like ballet dancers. The groom took out his latest Motorola Startac mobile phone, checking messages. Ananya's mother served

her standard fossilised snake snacks. No one spoke to each other. In a Punjabi home, if a similar silence occurred, you could assume that something terrible has happened – like someone has died or there is a property dispute or someone forgot to put butter in the black daal. But this is Ananya's home protocol. You meet in an excited manner, you serve bland snacks and you open the newspaper or exchange dead looks.”<sup>7</sup>

In the novel *2 States*, Chetan Bhagat represents the realistic picture and cultural difference of contemporary Indian society by portraying specially the middle class sensitivity of present time, the cultural contest between two different civilization and disagreement of modern generation while follows old tradition, ritual and social set-up with the perspective of modern sensibility. The author also mentions some integrate and public evils, which echo the realistic representation of all over contemporary Indian society. The picture of Indian society is portrayed in the first perspective in the present novel and focuses on the two different cross-cultural, North Indian and south Indian Culture. The story of the novel focuses on these people who live in cultural diversity and there are many reasons such does not accept, does not respect other culture, as well as mind-set of Indian families toward the marriage and love marriage in the inter-community and inter-states. He compares from the North Indian to the South Indian culture on a girl marry such as in the south Indian families for the girls they give the importance of education and success while in Panjabi families for a girl they want to take a big dowry.

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most important novelists in Indian contemporary English fiction. He depicts his contemporary issues such as young dynamic, Indian youth culture and this success in their life. He uses the different post-colonial perspective from cultural issues such as cultural counter cross culture, multiculturalism, youth culture etc. In his novels, Chetan Bhagat presents his views through young generation, youth culture, Cosmo-

<sup>5</sup>Ibid

<sup>6</sup>Bhagat, Chetan. *2 States the Story of My Marriage*. New Delhi: Rupa. co., 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid



culture. To indicate this young generation Vadivelraja says "He is dealing with the harsh realities of life and modern culture life of young generation and problem faced by the young generation in his works etc. 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. In this world of Cosmo-culture, everybody is involved in an extra marital relationship. He selects subject which he reader can associate with modern culture. He has faction with a mix of sentiment, romance, religion relationship, culture ,economic and family relationship and also social message depicted in Chetan Bhagat novels several have objected to the relations an either too simplistic or perpetuating patriarchal value and also he truly captures the essence of modern India culture."<sup>8</sup>

Another aspect of culture in Chetan Bhagat's fiction is multiculturalism. In *2 States*, Chetan Bhagat uses the multiculturalism through two different state's characters. According to Rashmi "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 the multiculturalism 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 do work hard to make their dreams true. Through this we can find how love shines admits darkness and despair. The main emphasis is about cultural contradictions."<sup>9</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In Indian contemporary literature, Chetan Bhagat is one of the leading writers in English literature. He presents views Indian issues though his fiction such as feminism. Culture youth generation, in *2 States*, Chetan Bhagat wants to present the contemporary Indian issues like multiculturalism, cross cultural, trans cultural marriage. Though the characters Krish and Ananya, he shows his

autobiographical elements in this novel. Thus, Chetan Bhagat depicts the real picture of society through *2 States*.

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