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NEO-LIBERALISM AND THE VARIETY OF CULTURAL CONCERNS IN THE NOVELS OF CHETAN BHAGAT

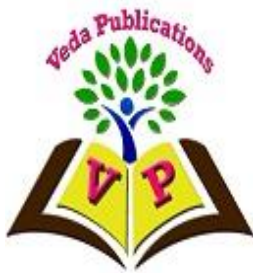
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ABSTRACT



Chetan Bhagat is one of the most well-known modern novelists in Indian English literature. He has depicted neo-liberal ideology as well as young, vibrant, and contemporary Indian youth and their culture. He possesses a remarkable aptitude for dealing with a variety of issues. His appeal as an author is primarily based on his ultimate knowledge of human life. His novels explore a variety of cultural concerns and the stark reality of the lives of contemporary Indian youth. His works convey authentically the spirit of several cultures. The novels by Chetan are extremely captivating and describe the uniqueness of Indian civilization and its culture and customs, which are vastly distinct from those of nations. It is different from the western way of life and embodies the spirit of diverse cultures. This paper looks at how Chetan Bhagat's novels deal with a number of cultural issues and it also focuses on the neo-liberal perspective in his novels.

Keywords: *B.P.O culture, Ethics, Urban culture, Contradictory symbol of culture, Hindu culture, Neo-liberalism.*

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INTRODUCTION

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most well-known novelists in Indian English literature. He has depicted neoliberal ideology as well as young, vibrant, and contemporary Indian youth and their culture. Neo liberalism has become a significant academic topic for discussing the social, political, and cultural evolution of the modern age, particularly in the context of social success and globalization studies. As observed in the world today, neo liberalism is an economic and political ideology that is linked up with the economic liberalization process and the globalization of the capitalist free market. It is visible in Chetan Bhagat's novels that depict the local realities of a new, changing, and globalised India under the process of economic globalization. He possesses a remarkable aptitude for dealing with a variety of issues. His appeal as an author comes from the fact that he knows everything about human life. His novels look at a wide range of cultural issues and the harsh reality of the lives of young Indian people today. He promotes corporate culture, which is a term used to describe a company's beliefs and value system that imparts its distinctive flavor and perspective to friendship in Cosmo culture. In this Cosmo cultural world where everyone has extramarital affairs, the situation of young people is pretty sad. In his novels, *Five Point Someone*, *One Night @ the Call Center*, and in his other novels, he depicts contemporary Indian.

NEO LIBERALISM

Postcolonial historical conjecture in India is reflected in the novels of Chetan Bhagat as representing an epochal change. The significance of which rests in the birth of a new generation of

Indians, whose dreams, aspirations, and wants are vividly depicted and explored. It might be said that literary texts have meticulously dominated the negative political implications. However, contemporary Anglo fiction such as Chetan Bhagat highlights how literary politics is diversifying and shifting away from basic criticism of Indian society's neoliberal progress. The current much of Bhagat's success as a novelist can be attributed to his appealing style of conveying clearly the challenges and hopes of post-liberalization society. In his fiction, neo liberalism operates as ideology in the Marxist sense, as it plays a major part in its power to influence middle class youngsters and transform them into perfect market subjects.

Raymond William defines an ideology as a set of beliefs and the traits of a group or class. It is a way for the most powerful people in society to keep things in order. In this quote, Althusser says that "ideology interpellates individuals as subjects" (174). This means that "ideology changes individuals into obedient subjects." The notion of ideology in the context of neo liberalism is visible in his novels. Neo liberalism is a political and economic philosophy. Nandini Goptu says that neo liberalism focuses on market ethics, competition, and commodification, with the way people act as an underlying mode. It is based on profit- or utility-maximizing rational choice in response to incentives imposed by the market. In this context, Bhagat's novels illustrate the local realities of a new, changing, and globalised India under the influence of economic globalization.

The social environment depicted in the novels by Chetan Bhagat is concerned with the urban middle class society. It becomes an important subject



in his novels that espouse the neoliberal ideology. As India enters the global economy, there is a need for technically trained personnel. According to the National Knowledge Commission Report, to transform Indians into a knowledge economy is very important to focus on creating IT proficiency, innovation, and entrepreneurial excellence. Along with these lines, the novel *Five Points Someone*, through the experiences and lives of three characters- Hari, Alok, and Ryan— reveals the competitive academic climate of IIT colleagues. Bhagat questions the middle class equations of academic achievement. We observe an endorsement of education that encourages the neoliberal spirit of enterprise, independence, innovation, and skill and doubts the ability of prestigious institutions such as IIT's to meet the requirements of the new generation of ambitious youth. Education is an important part of neo-liberalization for economic success. What is criticized in this novel is the lack of skill development and the insufficiency of the method followed by institutions such as the IIT's to give the skills required for the workers in a globalised economy not simply in terms of technical knowledge but also inspires dreams and instills a new form of work ethic, enterprising attitudes, conduct and behavior in keeping with enterprising culture. Ryan, in this novel, appears to be the mouthpiece of the novelist, and we see that he is a blatant critique against IIT's method of educating its students and compares it to being put in jail with limitless classes, assignments and tests.

Neo liberalism promotes the growth of capital through global trade. It is the result of mercantile economic exploitation. It is known as a

new form of colonialism, termed "neocolonialism." As Tyson explains, "This new colonialism, as it is called, exploits the cheap labour available in developing countries." It is visible in one of his novels, *One Night @ the Call Center*, through the six call centre agents in a call centre job, which is governed by the U.S.A. It exploits the workers' low wages.

In this market-driven economy, Bhagat's protagonists reflect one of the most fundamental attributes demanded of the neoliberal subject: a sense of personal accountability. Ryan (*Five Point Someone*), Gopal and Raghav (*Revolution 2020*), Govind (*The 3 Mistakes of My Life*), Shyam and Vroom (*One Night @ The Call Center*), Krish (*Two States*) and Madhav (*Half Girlfriend*), regardless of their particular distinctions, they are all self-made guys also known as "thinking men" and "entrepreneurs" (*The Birth of Biopolitics*, p.3), who assume responsibility for their own life. Self-responsibility is fundamental to the concept of the ideal "economic man." Foucault says that neoliberal philosophy treats the body as "human capital" (*The Birth of Biopolitics*, p.221), which is invested wisely in order to participate in the growth of capital.

CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Since ancient times, the culture of contemporary India has changed drastically. The history of India has had a profound impact on the development of Indian culture. India has repeatedly conquered throughout its history, resulting in a cultural melting pot. Other things that have helped shape Indian culture are its unique geography and its many different religions. Ancient cultures in India



have evolved into the modern culture of India, as well as contemporary Indian culture has been significantly influenced by western civilization. Post Independence marked the beginning of India's cultural transformation into what is now known as "contemporary Indian culture" or "modern Indian culture." It is visible in its architecture, arts, music, cuisine, dress, festivals, literature, etc. It is the way of living in a particular society. It is the achievement of that society. It works as a trade mark of that society. In his first novel, *Five Point Someone*, Chetan Bhagat depicts youth, specifically youth-oriented views, youth problems, and their inner struggles while coping with the current educational system as well as the picture of contemporary youth culture such as ragging, friendship, love, sex, employment, protesting voice, and study pressure through the characters of Ryan, Hari, Alok, and Neha. Chetan Bhagat's next novel, *One Night @ the Call Center*, is about six people who work at a call centre in Gurgaon. It takes place over the course of a single night, during which all of the characters confront a part of themselves or their lives that they wish to change. When God calls the character, the story takes a dramatic and conclusive turn through the literal dues ex-machine.

Chetan Bhagat introduces contemporary culture to India. The theme includes the fears and insecurities of the rising Indian middle class, such as questions about career, marriage, and family conflicts, as well as the relationship of the young Indian middle class with both the nation and the rest of the world. *One Night @ the Call Center* is the story of six call centre agents. All of them have personal problems, yet they are all friends rather than co-

workers. Their call centre is threatened with a shutdown due to the economic slowdown and other factors. They are all the symbol of our nation's western culture. The same holds true in the context of Bhagat's novel. Even after the collapse of the British Empire, the White Man continues to dominate, most notably through the dominance of American call centers in India. As depicted in *One Night @ the Call Center*, Indians in call centers work throughout the night for their white masters. Bill Gate's Microsoft has given products to the third world, particularly India. Now these computers have colonized an Indian people. The same holds true in the context of Bhagat's novel. Chetan Bhagat narrates the episode of "God" in which all of the characters Chetan Bhagat introduces corporate culture, which is a phrase used to express beliefs and a value system that provide its distinctive flavor and attitude of friendship in Cosmo-culture, where the state of young people is pitiful. In this Cosmo cultural world, everyone participates in extramarital affairs and so forth. The novel *One Night @ the Call* portrayed this type of culture. Parents are horrified by the fact that today's Indian youth may stay immoral hours, abandon their family responsibilities, drink excessively, consume cocktails, and date casually. Everyone desires a high income and a trendy lifestyle. The call centre is merely emblematic of contemporary Indian culture. The youth are enticed by modern culture and amenities. Chetan Bhagat incorporates interreligious marriage into his novel, *2 States*. India is renowned for the diversity of its cultural legacy as well as for its vibrant and traditional culture. In his novel "2 States: The Story of My Marriage," he describes a number of different



marriages. It gives emphasis to India's cultural diversity with its realistic modern.

He brings up the fact that interreligious marriage in India is as well-known for its wide cultural heritage as it is for its lively and traditionally diversified marriage, "2 States: The Story of My Marriage," which is as straightforward as it gets, yet so intricate. It is widely known that marriages in India are arranged. They are more of a family affair where the brides and grooms' families are acquainted with and approve of one another prior to the wedding. It is about the effort of an IIM couple to marry despite their cultural differences. They tie the knot. This is about 2 States, Panjabi Krish and Tamil Ananya. They are from two different Indian states, are profoundly in love, and wish to wed. Clearly, their parents disagree. The couple converted their love story into a love marriage. The couple have a difficult battle ahead of them. Despite the fact that the concept is most accurate in terms of contemporary fashion, it attracts one's sensitivity to cultural variations in diversified India.

Chetan Bhagat claims that in India, when a boy and a girl fall in love, a series of events occur before their marriage. The family must approve of each other, and the subsequent occurrences are grist for drama, verbal disputes, etc. Love weddings are common in India; a tough road with arranged marriage being the family's option does matter to the youths and Bhagat is one of those for whom current Indian culture is extremely significant.

In India's contemporary generation, Chetan Bhagat's novels hit an emotional chord. His urban novels show how young people's dreams are mixed

with worry and stained with tears. His boys and girls are restrained from morality, and their only ideology is to eat, drink, and enjoy life. Existential problems concerning their future are concealed and unyielding behind their enjoyment. This blend of humors, sadness, hopes and anxieties, as well as success and failure in India's modern generation, is reflected in his novels. Two generations after India became independent; one of the educated middle classes that used to rule the country is now one of the most important things about the new India. The way English is used in business is looked at from a different cultural angle right now.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ETHICS

India is a society with diverse cultures and religions. Culture covers the various methods in which humans express themselves for the objectives of uniting with others, forming a group, defining their identity, and even differentiating themselves as distinct. Ethics has a moral and regulating role and has a relevance that transcends specific contexts. The Three Mistakes of My Life is a novel by Chetan Bhagat. After the events in Godhra, all of the characters find themselves in a precarious position. Govind and Ishaan lose their dear friend Omi due to a perilous situation. However, Ali's life was saved by them, which was a big task during the turmoil. Indian society is not very large. This is a natural result of the fact that Indian society needs diversity to stay alive. The social structure of Indian society varies from one location to the next. Unity in diversity is best seen in Indian society. The Indian system of caste is followed by all ethnic groups that are part of Hinduism. It is a symbol of social unity. Furthermore, socialism and



fervor contribute to the destruction of India's social and cultural life.

Even today, Indian culture as well as its society are comprised of different castes, tribes, and religious communities. Castes are occupational, endogamy, social class, and political power structures. Individuals' positions in the social hierarchy are established by social factors and cultural heritage. Caste identification has become a political, social, and legal issue.

Communities that are recognized as being entitled to positive discrimination are not, even if their socioeconomic and political situations improve, removed from this list. Sometimes, the legal system is used to determine if a particular individual is entitled to positive discrimination. However, with all of this positive discrimination law, the majority of low- caste groups have been elevated. Despite this, we see that castes at the bottom of the social structure remain at the bottom of the social structure, while castes at the top of the social structure remain at the top.

CONTRADICTIONARY SYMBOL OF CULTURE

People from the Western nations value our diverse cultures within a single nation, but the people of India fail to regard and appreciate their diverse cultures. Most foreign tourists are attracted to our country due to the diversity of cultures and customs that exist within it. Due to the countries' diverse cultures, the contradictory symbols of culture are found. This is clearly visible in the novel of 2 States by Chetan Bhagat. This shows a full meeting of two different cultures from the north and the south. The novel is not biased in any way because there are

contradictory signs of Punjabi and Tamil culture both inside and outside of the communities. Prior to adopting equality, both societies viewed one another in hierarchical terms. The effort to make no effort to dissolve the divide might be interpreted as reflective of a multicultural point of view. In the novel, Krish and Ananya represent a community as well as they are individuals. However, they are well educated and refuse to accept neocolonialism on multiple levels. They depict the current state of affairs, in which a number of similar situations exist. People start to remember their ethnicity without giving up their administrative class status in the modern English West. Postcolonial theory is undoubtedly an extremely intricate philosophy, and several paradigms exist inside it. A paradigm explored in this novel is the assertion of native culture. Krish and Ananya get married after gaining the approval of their respective parents and in-laws. The manner in which their families come forward, despite having diverse cultural backgrounds or respecting cultural variations, is an indication of a progressive culture that is significant, positive, and healthy. Without sentiment, India's youth adhere to this new value system.

These young readers of 2 States by Bhagat are attempting to strike a balance between these opposing perspectives. The story supports the new way of life not by encouraging people to say "to hell with the oldies," but by spreading the idea that every bridge situation needs an extra step. As a result, Bhagat attempts to balance the contradictions of contemporary culture. This is why the novelist should not be criticized for writing in a popular style and



using an easy, almost romantic tone to talk about important cultural issues.

B.P.O. CULTURE

In his second novel, *One Night @ the Call Centre*, Chetan Bhagat aims to depict the lives of a new generation of youngsters that have formed in the country since the establishment of BPOs. The book reveals the reality of call centers in the present era. Customer service or business processes have taken over the country to an extent in the past few years. The call centers primarily serve the UK and the US. They serve as groups for mass recruiting. As a newcomer, one could begin a career in an international call centre as a call centre executive and earn a good salary. The call centers are a good option because companies hire people with basic skills and pay them well. They also offer perks like transportation, free food, and medical care.

The story's narrator, Shyam, is also the group's leader. He breaks up with his girlfriend, Priyanka, and must deal with the ensuing difficulties. He is incapable of asserting himself against his supervisor, Bakshi, who does not comprehend the pressures he is under. His companion, Varun, commonly known as Vroom, has a liking for fast bikes, which explains his nick name. Priyanka, ex-girlfriend of Shyam, cannot decide whether she should be allowed to pursue what she desires to make her mum happy. After the breakup, she has the opportunity to marry a wealthy NRI. Esha is a young woman. She is also an aspiring model from a small rural town. She is very beautiful and independent enough that she comes out of her house without her parents' permission. Radhika is a married woman

who resides with her mother-in-law in Kolkata, where her husband Anuj is employed. The Military Uncle was consistently lonesome and isolated throughout the novel.

Youth today are mostly motivated by a desire for wealth. According to Vroom, "there is activism in chasing money." (*One Night @ the Call Center*, p.47) Every call centre employee struggles night after night to earn enough money to fulfill their needs and their modest aspirations. Priyanka works in the call centre to make enough money to pay for her Bed, which she needs to be a teacher.

Vroom is the embodiment of the fashionable youth of today. He enjoys jeans, pizza, mobile phones, bicycles, and partying with women. His parents are divorced, and the reason he works at the call centre is to maintain his opulent lifestyle with a sufficient income. He states, "It will suck if I lose my fifteen grand a month." If I don't get my pizza thrice a week, I will die "(*One Night @ the Call Centre*, p. 95).)After all, bicycles, pizzas, and mobile phones are not free, but at his heart, he dislikes the call centre job and aspires to be more deserving of doing something helpful than assisting others.

HINDU CULTURE

Chetan Bhagat is from a Punjabi Hindu family. He loves the ancient Hindu religion. It's clear in the names of his characters, though the settings are urban. His characters are typical of those in modern society who have been heavily influenced by westernization. They love to speak English and want to live as western people. It is a matter of time due to liberalization and globalization, but they still stick to their religion and culture. The names of his



characters are based on ancient Indian trends. The characters' names are religious. His main characters' names are based on the name Krishna, who is the Hindu God and Almighty. Chetan Bhagat himself said on the occasion of Krishna Janmashthimi on his social media that his protagonists were named after Lord Krishna Hari(Five Point Someone) Shyam (One Night @ the Call Center) Govind (The 3 Mistakes of My Life) Krish (2 States) Gopal (Revolution2020) Madhav (Half Girlfriend) Radhika/Brijesh(One Indian Girl) (Twitter account 2 sept,2018)

CONCLUSION

In his novels, Chetan Bhagat addresses the hard facts of life, the modern cultural life of young people, and the problems they encounter. Corporate culture is a word used to define an organization's distinctive set of beliefs and a value system that provide its unique taste and attitude to friendship. In the cosmo culture the position of youth is pitiful. In the cosmo cultural society, everyone has an extramarital affair. He chooses subjects that can be associated with various cultures. His faction includes a variety of empathetic, romantic, religious, cultural, economic, and family relationships. A number of critics have objected to the societal message conveyed in Chetan Bhagat's novels to the respect of being either overly simplistic or promoting patriarchal values, but he catches the essence of several Indian cultures. In reintroducing Indian readers to reading, Chetan Bhagat had a significant influence. Although his novels have a high commercial objective, their primary intent is to consider the readers. The reason Bhagat is so successful is that he addresses the concerns of India's middle class youth and their neo

liberalism in a language to which they can relate, while also actively pursuing wide appeal.

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