
A Permissive Stance of Chetan Bhagat

Dr. Ashvini Joshi

Associate Professor, Department of English, RKDF University

ABSTRACT:

*Indian writing in English which has commented generous admiration in both home and abroad is now in its full swing. It has covered out a new track, a new vision, a vision that is replete with an unswerving faith and hope, myths and traditions, customs and rites, our great country has enshrined in her bosom from the time immemorial. If we drive deep into the works of the Indian stalwarts of English fictions, it is revealed that their works are not imitation of English literary pattern but highly original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit they have given a new shape and colour to English literature in the same way as the frustration and Americans have evolved their own literature in their respective countries. Indian English fiction is now a world literature. It has struggled, endured indifferences of the west and now finally emerged as a clear winner among the recent fiction writers. Amongst the new young writers the most talented, is perhaps Chetan Bhagat. With five back to back selling novels, **Five Point Someone-What Not to Do at IIT, One Night @ the Call Center, The 3 Mistakes of My Life, 2 States-The Story of My Marriage, Revolution 2020-Love, Corruption, Ambition**. Chetan Bhagat has single handedly reshaped the Indian English novels. The influence of Bhagat's writings has been so impactful, that even Hindi films are adapting his novels on the big screens.*

Bhagat's themes are mirror image of the various facets of Indian society. Through these themes Bhagat has dissected some aspects of human life from various angles and his themes are not imaginary and false. He has taken themes from his own observation, perceptions and analysis of the Indian society. His novels may be epitomized in terms of elaborations of his themes.

INTRODUCTION:

Chetan Bhagat's love for liberty and freedom can be seen in the actions his characters make, in the scenes he realistically paints, in the word-pictures he genuinely draws and even in his blood. In his first novel, **Five Point Someone: What not to do at IIT**, the trio –Hari, Alok and Ryan are true icons of liberty. They enjoy their life to the fullest. They enjoy even being called five pointers that is insulting for any student of IIT Delhi, but such are trivialities to them. Their concern lies specifically in the innovation of education system and the society as a whole. They believe in success comes to those who crave for practicability not for mugginess in life. According to them, bookish knowledge is of no use if it is not practice based.

Chetan Bhagat's men and women both are undaunted; they are ready to take any risk for the sake of thrill and sensation in life. Hari doesn't bother his rustication from the college and risks daresome stealthy entry into the bedchamber of his HOD's daughter, Neha in the night. Radhika of **One Night @ the Call Centre** employs her free-instinct and instantly breaks

live-and-die together relationship with her husband when she comes to know that he is infidel. Shyam and Vroom abandon their jobs for saving the jobs of hundreds of their colleagues and that is what a libertarian ever loves to do. In **The 3 Mistakes of My Life**, Omi fights against his own maternal uncle and his men to save the life of a Muslim boy Ali, the talent of the nation during the Godhra riots and dies for the great cause. Ananya advocates anti-dowry case in **2 States: The Story of My Marriage**. She wins the support of the youngsters from both sides: the bride's and the groom's and succeeds to persuade the groom to accept the bride on whatever dowry is gifted. In **Revolution 2020- Love, Corruption, Ambition** it strikes an entirely different theme and conclusion of the story from Chetan Bhagat. At one level, it is a parable of the times; at another, it deals with how men or woman, in essence entirely free to choose, create by their choice the circumstances in which they must live.

Freedom is birth right of everyone. Some don't know it's meaning in actual and some know but don't know how to use it; but some limit it to their personal benefits. It is Chetan Bhagat who has not only advocated the spirit of liberty but also employed it for the innovation of the society in his novels. An attempt has been made here to present Chetan Bhagat, as a true permissive who loves freedom for its sake and enjoys it in his all senses. In his novels, Chetan Bhagat exhibits uncurbed spirits of the young people of his nation. His approach is youth calling that calls up only youths and also helps to realize their innovative vision.

In his first novel, **Five Point Someone**, his replicas Ryan, Alok and Hari fight against the patriarchal education system run by the old and obsolete rules made by the century old educationists. The education system of IIT Delhi depicted in his book is adhered to the same patriarchal norms and codes of education. The students are so much overloaded with assignments, class tests, surprise quizzes and majors exams that they forget what the real meaning of the life is. Their hostel rooms appear to be like prison-cells wherein they are captivated and their only crime is that they chose to carry IIT tag. Ryan, the real mouth organ of Chetan Bhagat is the student of IIT Delhi. He criticizes the education system and calls up the spirits of the youths: "This system of relative grading and overburdening the students. I mean it kills the best fun years of your life. But it kills something else. Where is the room for original thought? Where is the time for creativity? It is not fair" (Five Point Someone, p. 35) That is why that IIT, "the best technology institute for a country of a billion...ever invented anything? Or made any technical contribution to India" (Five Point Someone, p. 34)? The writer proposes to spare sometime for the recharge of the mind and the body. Sport recharges the body and entertainment feeds the mind and the heart as well.

Chetan Bhagat believes that the youths are the future of the country. No mind can ever do wonders unless it thinks untraditional. No one has the right to spoil the future of a boy who is not interested in learning the names of rivers and technical know-hows. The writer adds further if a blockage is put on the creativity of the student he cannot innovate. There is a legend in every youth but we kill it in his childhood by suffocating his self. The "decentralization of education" is a must for the comprehensive development of the students. This will help them to be away from the habit of mugging and spare ample time for creative activities. To some extent, the parents are also responsible for making or marring the life of their children. They get prejudiced while taking big decisions of their (children) life. They

impose extra burden of their expectations upon them and this hampers the mental and physical growth. This burden, sometimes forces them to commit suicide.

The teachers want their students to follow them blindly whether their logic is acceptable or not but they cannot tolerate if any student dares to cross-question them. They compel the students to run in the mice race. Almost all students, whether they are IITians or others, believe in what their teachers teach them and that is all correct. There are a few, hardly one out of ten, who dare cross-question their teacher. Such a few ones are those who obey none but the command of the self and are not afraid of the consequence. They raise voice against the wrongs of the system. Ryan is one of such audaciously liberal activists. Prof Dubey defines machine: “Anything that reduces human effort” (Five Point Someone, p.10). Thereupon Ryan retorts: “Sir, what about a gym machine....” Prof. feels down and tries to wring the self of the boy: “Watch it son. In my class, just watch it” (Five Point Someone, p.11). This is totally wrong. Open communication leads to the liberty of thoughts which boosts up the mental growth of the students and adds to the efficiency level of the education system. Such are the innovative and reformative steps which the writer inspires in the youths for the renovation of the social, educational and political system.

In the viewpoint of the novelist, a libertarian is always straightforward in his approach to life. He listens to the voice of his soul which, he strongly believes in, is ever true. But like others they are not bloody muggers, they are freethinkers, true lovers of life, harbingers of innovative ideas, icons of liberty and precursors of the youth calling-approach. They never lose confidence.

In **One Night @ the Call Center** the novelist introduces us with five advocates of individual liberty viz., Shyam, Vroom, Priyanka, Esha and Radhika. Radhika attends duty at the call center for 9 to 10 hours. When she finds out her husband not loyal to her, he loves some other girl she instantly sets herself free from hollow relationships of nuptiality and goes with Esha to Chandigarh forever. This bold step taken by Radhika conveys a message to the youths – pay regards to the elders but simultaneously know the limit of your magnanimity. Varun Malhotra fights against the wrongs of the system and saves the lives of thousands of employees working in the Gurgaon call center, Connexions. He and his friend Shyam sacrifice their jobs for the happiness of other colleagues and are hailed out the true legends of liberty.

Bhagat fairly portray all the things realistically, If we look around we saw the same in our own society. The themes involve the anxieties and insecurities of the rising Indian middle class, including questions about career, inadequacy, marriage, family conflicts in a changing India. There is an aspect of self-help in the book as the author invites readers to identify aspects of themselves and their lives that make them angry and that they would like to change. Bhagat places the interlude to make each realize their actual purpose in life. Bhagat advises the people to attend “the inner call” [p.203] which is more important than many other calls a person attends in a day. This inner call is the call of life ‘God’ – a ruling power of the universe.

Bhagat, with the help of his writing skill, makes the youth aware towards the life and success. With the help of God as a protagonist Bhagat tries to make understand the young generation.

The novel exposes filth of the modeling industry also. Esha was assured with a modeling contract if she sleeps with a designer for a night. She offers herself but she could not get the contract. The man turns out an opportunistic as he betrays her telling that she cannot be a model due to short height. He compensates the in-bed-deed by sending her money.

In the third novel, **The 3 Mistakes of My Life** Chetan Bhagat acquaints us with three libertarians viz., Govind, Ishan and Omi. Ishan strongly believes in the virtues of humanity and loves the people of all community equally. He saves the life of a Muslim boy, Ali because he thinks the boy is nation's pride, a promising future of Indian cricket team. Govind kicks declines the job offer from Indian Armed Forces because he cannot let anyone tame his free will and starts his own business in partnership with his friends. Omi is a Brahmin boy whose father is a temple priest. He is traditionally bound to do the rituals of the temple while he is not at all interested in their hollowness. This does not mean that he is agnostic or atheist but he worships the supreme power in other form perhaps self. He enjoys the dainties of life, takes wine, watches movies and hankers after beautiful girls. He supports Ali against the communal grudge of his Mama. He saves his life at the cost of his own life. Vidya finds herself in the cage of extra parental concerns. Her parents want her to make career in the medical line but she plants her interest in the pursuit of Public Relations Programme. She carries out her will, gets a degree in PRP and wins over parental obsession.

The writer believes: "Humanity wouldn't have progressed if people listened to their parents all the time" (The 3 Mistakes of My Life, p.103) and suggests the youths to act upon the call of their self. The writer criticizes politics @ religion too. He evokes the youths to keep religion far away from politics if they are truly religious. He persuades both Hindus and Muslims to follow the reconciliatory behavior like that of the male chimpanzees who "fight violently with each other – for food, females, whatever. However, after the fight, they go through a strange ritual. They kiss each other, on the lips" (The 3 Mistakes of My Life, p.71). Krish, the protagonist of **2 Sates: The Story of My Marriage** quits the marriage proposal from the very rich Punjabi family and marries Ananya, his batch-mate from IIM Ahmadabad – a South Indian from Chennai. He listens to the command of the self and shatters the age old tradition of Punjabi community – a marriageable boy/girl is bound to wed with the match of their parents' choice. This is their religious duty to repay the debt of parenthood'. But Krish does not leave the biggest decision of his life solely in the hands of the parents. He admits that everyone's opinion should be solicited in life's biggest decision. He could not repay the parental debt but by taking the decision of his own life, he certainly repays the debt of humanity. We are human beings first then we are sects, communities, religions and relations. Chetan Bhagat ignites the virtues of freedom in the youths. He calls them up to prefer human values to all other mundane things. They should develop libertarian out-look to judge values of the human beings. One more thing dug out in the book is how to judge the status of the people. It is the comprehensive education not the riches by which the real status of the person can be evaluated.

Bhagat's fifth novel **Revolution 2020- Love, Corruption, Ambition** was published in 2011, is the story of three childhood friends Gopal, Raghav and Aarti who struggle to find success and love in Varanasi. Gopal and Raghav are schoolmates from the childhood and share the same bench in school. Aarti is also from the same class. Gopal loves Aarti from the school

days. However, it isn't easy to achieve this in an unfair society that rewards the corrupt. As Gopal gives in to the system, and Raghav fights it...the story is about who will win. Raghav is from an almost well to do family, where as Aarti comes from a kind of bureaucratic and political family. Three of them have their own ambitions in life.

This book has many shades. It first showed the chaos that is there throughout India in the name of 'IIT coaching centres'. Then it focused on the corruption in private engineering colleges. Even the pollution problems in Varanasi are raised many times. "Bodies of little children and people bitten by cobras often dumped straight in to the river 'Kasyam maranam mukti'" means dying in Kashi leads to liberation. Hindus believe that, if they die here, there is an automatic upgrade to heaven, no matter what the sin committed on earth. It is amazing how God provides this wild-card entry at death, which, in turn allow Varanasi people to earn a living for the residents. Ease of cremation is one solid advantage of being in Varanasi. The death industry drives the city. The novel ended with a message that "Everyone should sacrifice a bit for the change they want to see." On the other side it shows how the relation among Gopal, Raghav and Aarti changes dramatically as the story precedes. The story is said from reference to Gopal and the highlight of the book is how relation between Gopal and Aarti developed. Just like his other books even this one has lots of Bhagat's trademark love, sex, friendship, and politics.

Bhagat generally begins his novels like plausible piece of reality but soon after exaggerates them to the point of fantasy or introduces a set of flamboyantly irrational associations typical of a powerful fantasy. Owing to this fusion of fantasy and reality, his stories keep the eagerness of the reader on tiptoe and maintain his undivided interest in the novel to the finish. Chetan has also tried to present in his novels solutions to problems arising out of one's awareness of the lack of the purpose or meaning of life.

This is the permissive stance of Chetan Bhagat which flows not only through all his novels but also through his blood vessels. He thinks freely, writes freely and believes in the freedom of self and that of others. He writes against the corrupt system and suggests how to purge its impurities.

WORKS CITED:

- i. Bhagat, Chetan. *Five Point Someone*. New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2004.
- ii. Bhagat, Chetan. *One Night @ the Call Centre*. New Delhi: Rupa co., 2005.
- iii. Bhagat, Chetan. *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. New Delhi: Rupa Co., 2008.
- iv. Bhagat, Chetan. *2 States*. New Delhi: Rupa Co., 2009.
- v. Bhagat, Chetan. *Revolution 2020*. New Delhi: Rupa Co., 2011.