

Youth Sensibility And Social Transformation in Chetan Bhagat's Novel

Abhipsa H. Pandya*

What is social transformation and youth sensibility?

It has increasingly come to be recognized that the terms 'society' and 'culture' refer to different aspects of same basic human actions and relations. Culture and cultural anthropology lay more emphasis on creative achievement, the objects and ideas that are brought into being and transmitted from one generation to another. The basic data for social transformation is usually defined as social relations arising from the necessities of living in society. The term has two different meaning with two different origins and histories.

I. One originating in sociology.

II. The other in literary criticism.

Social transformation can be said to touch on almost every aspect of society and the concept may as a result become rather amorphous or vague. Social transformation shapes and influences numerous other academic discourses.

For eg. Social development, ethics, gender, literary interpretation, peace, conflict and so forth. Social structure is like the anatomy of the society. It provides its major shapes, but the conduct of the individuals varies; some follow the rules laid down and others do not. Not every man abides, by the legal and the moral rules of marriage – nor does every man or woman marry.

Youth sensibility is closely connected to social transformation. There are millions of young boys and girls who are waiting for an opportunity to break free from vicious cycle of problems and hopelessness. This makes and an economic sense in country that seeks to leverage its democratic

**Abhipsa H. Pandya, Visiting Faculty, Arts & com. College, Dehgam,
Gandhinagar**

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

dividend. The world faces many economic, political and environmental uncertainties which make it difficult for young people to plan their future or to understand what kind of world they will be living in when they grow up. And the sensible youth faces the problem of identity, going through everyday life, trying to answer the question “Who am I?” Some fathers make generous provision for the education of their children and try to guide their social development, while others allow them to fend for themselves. In all fields of social action, different arrangements by individuals arise from choices they make between alternatives. Thus all societies make distinctions by sex and age.

Chetan Bhagat, born on April 22, 1974 in New Delhi, is an Indian writer who has written novels which clearly shows problems of modern youth and the transformation to be needed. He studied mechanical engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and then studied at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, where he was awarded as “The best out going student.”

Bhagat’s writing style tends to be simple with linear narratives and vivid story telling. He is a far cry from the typical author image that lies in the mind of the common man. His works are the mirror to society and reflection of the society of our own country. He writes for common people.

Youth sensibility and social transformation in Chetan Bhagat’s novels:

Bhagat’s novels look forward to be a part of any form of change that is refreshing, entertaining and progressing. Bhagat might not be another Vikram Sheth or Arundhati Roy but he has authentic claim to be one of the voices of a generation of middle class Indian youth facing the choices frustrations that come with the prospect of growing. Bhagat’s choice of book allowed him to explore some reflective themes: the pressures, many of them parental, to get into a top school, earn high grades, get a good job and find the right partner and no time to enjoy one’s youth.

Chetan Bhagat’s characterization in ‘Five Point Someone’ fit the character of the present day youth most aptly; the intelligence, indifference, irreverence, irresponsibility, irritating traits. All these could be seen through Ryan, Hari and Alok. Chetan Bhagat deals with these three friends who were below average guys among the crème of

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

knowledge. Through out the novel we see their downfall because of the education system. Many times in the novel, they try their luck to improve their grade in different ways but it ends up every time in a mess.

The novel directly as well as indirectly discusses the grim side of the education system especially the IIT education system, which is loaded by the elite. Even the oration of prof. Cherian at the convocation on how one should lead a student life turns out to be the dream of Hari. So it could only be a dream! Probably symbolism!

It is also moot point that whether enjoyment in student life is related to smoking pot, drinking vodka or listening to Pink Floyd. Thus the novel closes with an open ending, thinking about the transformation in education system. One cannot be sure whether the student life is for 'enjoyment or freedom' or 'labour for academics'.

Chetan has brought a drastic change in the style of writing, as he wants to explore Globalization. Globalization means the development in technology and business. Technology entered into market that is known as B.P.O. In India B.P.O. is flourished because we have man power. It affects youth of India. Due to call centers, every night all the potential is wasted Bhagat has criticized our government and call centers in Vroom's voice in 'One Night at Call Center':

".... Our government doesn't realise this but Americans are using us. We are sacrificing an entire generation to survive their call centers."1

The condition of the youth is very pathetic in this Cosmo culture. Everywhere we find frustration, exploitation and rejection. The theme of 'One Night @ the Call Center' is very apt to show the predicament of the modern youth and their wishes to transform the society. The person who works at call center has to listen to his customers, try to convince them and even if the customer asks silly questions, he/she has to reply with patience. On the other hand, he/she exploited by his/her boss. This novel shows the activity of youngsters and frustrations. Because of this, they keep antisocial hours, neglect their family obligations, Drink excessive cocktails and date each other with the casualness and horrify their parents. Today's youth go by their ideology, but they have forgotten that there is one power above them, that is God, the almighty. Here the writer is very keen to enter God when all the characters are very near to death.

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

Here the voice of God is none other than our inner voice, our inner self, and our own thoughts. But in today's fast life nobody has time to talk to his/her inner self. We can see the drastic change in every one's life after listening to their inner voice. There is a transformation in their thoughts we can see.

Chetan Braga does not just entertain his readers but also illuminates on some social issues. Here Chetan Bhagat once again brings a piece of crumbled bread for youngsters. It seems as he writes for the youth. The story is mixed up with some serious incidences which provoke the youngsters to transform the society. 'The Three Mistakes of my Life', it is the story of three friends who are representatives of modern youth and the story talks about the exploitation of the youth. The youth gather in restaurants and coffee houses to have discussion for planning their future and the agony is that they make the options to get insurance job or call centre job that would give them enough money to survive and fulfil their odd wishes.

For eg: - Ishaan, the best cricket player of his town, talking about having an NIIT course or insurance job.

Another issue is the parent's imposing on their children. They wish their children to do what they want. The following lines by Ish in the novel, are really touching as their parents emphasises on their children to study more and more.

"In two years time they will reach class X. Their bats will be replaced with physics books and then the spark will begin to die. Soon they will turn into depressed adults."2

The political parties use young people to mobilise. They take part in the publicity of the party and organise rallies. They just target young people. The society never feels comfortable on looking at a young boy and a girl together. As the shopkeeper asks Govind about Vidhya. That is his curiosity. He satisfied his curiosity when Govind informs him,

"She is a student, I take tuitions."3

This is the transformation still to take place. Society has to change its mentality. That is the urge of the youth. A satirical comment made by Govind in the novel, represents the modern youth.

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

“Why do these old people poke their nose in our affairs so much? Like, would we care if he hung out with three grandmas?”⁴

Thus here Chetan has connected social transformation and youth sensibility together. The modern youth has to take the initiative to remind the sixties and eighties generation that this is the age of nineties and the zeroes.

His recent book “Two States” is purely based on social transformation. The book has made a positive impact in the minds of people that really matter in our society. Bhagat has become the modern day hero with his novels. Two states talks about the social evils in our society rather than just being funny. This book is about the disconnect in our country when it comes to form relations with people across the country. The present book has really become a helping hand in changing the attitude of people across ages, regions and sex.

The book ‘Two states’ is very close to reality. It is about the love saga of two individuals from different geographical states in India. As the name suggests, it is not about two states in India – Tamilnadu and Delhi, but about the diverse state of mind of people hailing of two states also. The story follows a series of endeavours from both Krish and Ananya in bridging the gap of differences, mainly cultural, between their families to make their relationship gain acceptance. In the process, Chetan Bhagat brings our subtleties that exist in the life style and out look towards life of people from different states. The effect is accentuated further when the reader views these idiosyncrasies from the eyes of the character of another state.

Conclusion:

The youth of India wants the society to be transformed according to the fast modern world. The individuals of Chetan Bhagat’s novels are young achievers and can serve as icons for the youth of our country. They are the persons who are struggling to achieve success, will find valuable advise insights and encouragement from ‘never give up’. As being youth of an India I feel the same, suffering from lots of problems. And the books of Bhagat have touched a nerve with Indian readers. Even there are a lot of social comments in his books. That is the reason for choosing such a

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

new topic, which could be refreshing, entertaining, progressing as well as presenting harsh realities of life.

Thus Chetan Bhagat's novels are a platform to identify an honour young Indians who can be emulated for their varied contribution and exemplary merit across various fields having need positive imprint on our society. The individuals of his novels are the leaders and motivators of today. They are full of determination, courage and aspiration. The pressures to succeed are part of what is making India a vibrant fast changing economy and society. Chetan Bhagat here, has become a part of the historical changes taking place as India awakens to its potential.

References:

1. One Night @ the call center (2005), p199
2. The Three Mistakes of My Life (2008), p30
3. The Three Mistakes of My Life (2008), p85
4. The Three Mistakes of My Life (2008), p85

Bibliography:

1. Five Point Someone – What not to do at IIT (2004)
2. One Night @ the call center (2005)
3. The Three Mistakes of My Life (2008)
4. 2 States – The Story of My Marriage (2009)
5. Chetan Bhagat at nytimes.com
6. Chetan Bhagat at rediff.com
7. Chetan Bhagat at Hindu.com
8. 'My next novel is a love story : Chetan Bhagat'
9. 'Hindustan Times search Page:' Chetan Bhagat