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Generic Conundrum in Familial Relationship As Portrayed In the Novels Of Chetan Bhagat

Chetan Bhagat represents a new breed of writers, who are an amalgam of all the foreign influence in the society today and yet very much Indian, a new Indian. Thus one can see in all his novels, the birth of a new Indian identity of the generation next who are proud to be what they are and yet ready to take on the world with their own might. Indian literature of recent decade projects upon the problems faced by the youth due to industrialisation, social mobility, democratic change, modernization, globalization, capital production, consumerism and extent of urbanisation. And the writers who focus on these issues are considered to be non-serious writers. Chetan being one enjoys a prominent role among his contemporaries. 'Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts

that our lives have already become' says C.S.Lewis. The reason for Chetan Bhagat's popularity is his portrayal of reality, natural incidences and evidences which a common Indian can relate to and experiences in his daily life. And a huge percentage of Indian readers of the 21st century strongly believe that he has brought a new wave of literature in India.

Chetan Bhagat through his novels reflects the mindset of Indian society in terms of employment, lifestyle, problem facing, and relationship with other people. The social and psychological reality of contemporary Indian society is represented by the characters who are considered to be the actual representations of the people of modern Indian society dominated by the west. Westernization has brought comprehensive intimidation to the present structure of the society besides certain modern prospects. All the key characters in the novel have some sort of ill-fated incidents in life. They are not able to cope up with the stream of life. They are not satisfied with their present condition of life. In the contemporary society, most of the youngsters aspire for great positions in their life. The young generation in their hunt for good life, good job, and the freedom to choose the career and the girl they like many a time ends up in constrained relationship proving that in their search for the best things in life, they have lost the real precious things to own- ie human relationship.

Chetan has explored different aspects of familial relationships. It is natural for a writer like him to make family the centre of his novels. Family is where we all belong to and from where our identity comes from. A person is valued based on his family and upbringing. We all belong to a family and it is our family that keeps us together through thick and thin. Without having a family, no person is complete and the completeness comes with good family bonding. Family is not just an institution of many people living together under one roof; but the union of similar minded or mutually loving people bound with certain duties and responsibilities. The gender role structure was deliberately designed by the initial social setups to help the people accept and realize the specific duties each gender bound to. But

today, both the parents work and earn for the family and both father and mother enjoys equal social statues and financial independence. At this point, the role of homemaker becomes no one's responsibility and both the partners may insist the other one to be the homemaker. Adjustments, understanding and empathy are the advised aspects that may help a smooth running family. Clinging to the century old concepts and lifestyles may help only to worsen the situation. In most of the societies the family systems are based on the gender roles and it is the pre-designed gender roles that help members of the family to run the family with bound responsibilities. Any disturbance in the gender role aspect may affect the smooth functioning of the easy-going of any family. In literature which is a reflection of life man-woman relationship forms the core. Right from the ancient epics and legends, literary endeavour has been to portray this relationship along with its concomitants, and to bring out the tragedy or otherwise resulting from it. Fiction, the most characteristic and powerful form of literary expression in modern times, also hinges on it.

While talking about the relationship between a husband and wife, Chetan Bhagat, in *One Night @ the Call Center*, has narrated the life of Radhika and Anuj. Radhika represents the married woman from India in Chetan Bhagat's . Her husband is far away from her in Kolkata. Though the couple is moderately young, they live as the circumstances force, as forced bachelors. It is just because of the economical stress, the couple live in different places to earn money. Chetan Bhagat's own father was an army man, who did not give his mother any freedom. In spite of Chetan's mother doing a lot for his father and his grandparents, she was not allowed the simple joys of visiting her friends and family.

"May be, it was a result of his own inner frustration, but he would never give her freedom and I had to write 2 States," explained Bhagat in the interview.

In *2 States*, the protagonist's mother does every possible thing to make her husband happy, and his family united, but she gets nothing in lieu of her sacrifices. Instead, she gets abused if

she tries to connect with her family. These characters were a direct outcome of Bhagat's real life experiences. The same condition prevails with Ananya's mother in '2- States'. She is portrayed basically as a woman who is interested in karnatic music. After marriage she is not allowed to practice it at home. Even the temporary arrangement of her getting home tutored in music is being spoiled due to her commitment at home. It was only Krish who creates the platform to exhibit her talents. In '3 Mistakes Of My Life', Govind's father ditched his mother and the mother had to do all kinds of odd jobs to meet the family needs. Govind did take tuitions to supplement the financial needs of the family.

Relationships between women are also explored in these connections, sometimes in remembrance between women of different generations, also presented is a realistic range of the difficulties between mothers and daughters, and particularly between mother-in-laws and daughters-in-law, that is a central theme in Indian popular culture. Almost all of the stories reflect on the conflict. Radhika in *One Night @The CallCenter* lives, rather survives, with her mother-in law. The latter is one who orders former quite frequently an evergreen scenario in Indians life. The individuals may be good for their cast. However, when it comes to relations, especially, daughter-in law or mother-in law, or sister-in law, or father-in law, they become rivals, often ardent rivals for no reason. This is also clearly replicated by Chetan Bhagat in his novels. Anuj's mother in 'One Night@ The CallCenter' kindles the fight between her daughter- in law and her son because of her affection towards her son.

The same remains with the military uncle. Due to his love for his son, he keeps interfering in the private life of his son and daughter-in law. As a result they ditch him alone and move away from the house. In '2-States' Ananya's mother is taxed by her in-laws, and she is not even considered during the discussions of her daughter's marriage. In 'Half Girl Friend', Riya quits her family just because of the tortures imposed on her by her mother-in law and her husband. She even quits Madhav, her real love because of his mother. Thus Chetan

Bhagat portrays the relationship between the mother and son in the contemporary society through Anuj and his mother, Govind, Krish, Madhav Jha, keshav, and their mothers respectively.

Chetan Bhagat also brings forth the problem of the Military Uncle who becomes the sufferer of the decision made by his son. Military Uncle, who is in his 60s, is ill-treated by his own son and daughter-in law. This is another common scenario in India for age-old ones whatever positions they had had. The septuagenarian, despite his position in the army, is at the clutches of his daughter-in law, at whose behest the former's son sends military uncle out of the house. As time passes, he realizes his mistake of interfering in the individual life of his son and daughter-in-law. He wants to settle the matter with his son and wants to live with him again. He is in touch with his grandson who is a school boy. He sends some e-mails containing various pictures of animals and birds. The son, whose anger against his father has not settled, comes to know about the emails sent by him to his son. He writes a mail to his father as: 'Dad you have cluttered my life enough, now stop cluttering my mail box. I do not know what came over me that I allowed communication between you and my son. I don't want your shadow on him. Please stay away and do not send him any more emails. For literally or otherwise, we don't want your attachments. (160)'. Bhagat brings out the problem of old people who earn for their living even after their great service to their family.

The constrained relationship that exists among the parents leaves a bigger impact in the children as either to spoil the life style or their personality or their hatred toward their parents or on their love affair. Priyanka in *One Night @ The CallCenter* is not able to hold on to his love and his aspirations due to the situation that surrounds her. Priyanka, a female character in Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center*, has broken her love up with Shyam, one of her colleagues at the call center. When she is demanded a reason for leaving Shyam, her answer is "she said she has never liked you. Because you are not settled, and because since

the day I started dating you I have changed and become an unaffectionate and cold person”. (130) Here, one can confront that economical status is attached importance than the feelings or emotions. She breaks her relationship with Shyam stating the reason of her mother, as he is not settled in his life and less aspiring Indian youth. Krish and Ananya in ‘2-States was ready to sacrifice their love for the sake of their parents. In ‘One Indian Girl’ Radhika, a girl who freaks out , was ready for an arranged marriage to satisfy her mother.

“2 States helped me forgive my father”, said Chetan Bhagat, while giving an interview to a leading English news daily, ahead of the release of the film adaptation of his book ‘2 States’. It is been two years now that Bhagat has met his father. He says that things are at a neutral state, and that he has not forgiven his father completely, and yet there is no “anger” in him. It seems like it will take some more time to get things perfect between this father-son duo. His parent's separation induced insecurity in him and gradually pushed him into obesity. However, in spite of that, deep inside he was disturbed by his parents' separation and it eventually got reflected in his personality. Chetan Bhagat has portrayed the shallowness in the relationship among the young generation of the society in the novel.

Vroom is one such character presented in the novel *One Night @ the Call Center*, who wants to do some pleasant things which would help the society. In the beginning of the novel, one could see him as a typical youth of the society who is interested in automobiles. The prospect changes in him when the society needs his part to do. Though he wants to change the world in the positive side, his parent's separation acts as a stress for him to move for his aspirations. Shyam has lost his self-confidence and self-esteem in life. His girlfriend Priyanka has ended their relationship because of his future job insecurity. The blame for his complex and failures is bestowed on his relatives and family members who do not respect him and taunt him on frequent occasions on his low profile job and limited salary. He remains

mentally so disturbed that he prefers to avoid attending family celebrations. He has lost all his hope of becoming successful in life.

Alok Gupta in 'Five Point Somebody' joins IIT under the trailing conditions of family and personal life. Therefore, he determines to be a 'nine pointer'. Hari develops his relationship with Neha, the daughter of Professor Cherian. She accepts his relationship and becomes a consolation in his life just to take revenge on her father. Prof. Cherian, forced his son to become an engineer though he was interested in Law. Due to parental pressure and his own interest, he committed suicide in depression.

Krish in '2-States' brings before us an incident that happen three years ago. He says when he was in IIT Delhi; he had an affair with his professor's daughter. The girl's father was against their love relationship and he was sending his daughter abroad. Krish wanted his father to go to the professor and set the situation right but instead of taking his side he started to scold his mother and also hit her in front of him, which he often did with her. Here Krish lost his temper and fought with his father. Krish says, 'I slapped his face once, twice, then I rolled my hand into a fist and punched his face. My father went into a state of shock, he couldn't fight back. He didn't expect this; all my childhood I'd merely suffered his dominance ...It was a reaction to two decades of ... I punched his head until he collapsed on the floor... my mother sat on the bed, fighting back her emotions . we looked at each other. We were a family, but pretty much as screwed up as they come ... I looked up my father and vowed never to speak to him again'. (2 states 167)

Siblings-they are our best friends as well as our worst enemies. If you have elder sibling(s), you would have already gotten a sneak-peek on how your future would be; from bullying to dating, from fashion to football, they give us tips on everything. Though most of the major characters of Chetan are single child, yet there are few novels which talk to us about the constraints that the sibling would create. In 'One Indian Girl', for Radhika

Metha, it was her elder sister, the darling of all eye, who acted as the source of inspiration in a negative way. With her extra-ordinary beauty, less intelligence she was able to settle in life so quickly. She always enjoyed priority with her mother. All these acts had an negative impact on Radhika, who was a bit less beautiful, yet intellectually strong. This urged her to prove her solidarity. Yes .she did rock and she owes this to her sibling.

The struggles of a woman to choose between her chastity and her love for her brother is poignantly described in the novel 'The Girl In Room No 105', the heroine Zara is trapped in the hands of a military officer Faiz in her attempt to protect her brother and becomes a scape goat. The brother too commits suicide when quired about the murder of his sister. In his last letter he quotes that he loves his sister so much and she was a second mother to him. Even the very thought of murdering her nauseates him. In '3 Mistakes of My Life', the first mistake is all about a brother being betrayed by his sister through her love affair towards his friend. But towards the end the brother willing gives the hand of his sister to his friend. These novels, in one way or the other, make us realize that having siblings may not always be a pleasure, but at the end of the day, you feel protected, loved, and safe because you will always have someone who has your back, no matter what.

The fictional works of Bhagat . . . reflects the changing urban realities in globalizing India. Through these works Bhagat subtly portrays the fast growing cities and urban zones along with all the global factors, affecting the life, experience, dreams, and attitudes of today's youth. Bhagat very comfortably depicts women empowerment as one of the positive effects of globalization, at the same time, consumerism, eroding values, and rising fears and anxieties of urban Indians as some of the negative offshoots that cannot escape his piercing observations. He has thrown light on the contemporary society where the youngsters live a life without self confidence, the family people live an unfaithful life and old people live

disowned life. Their struggle to come out of the clutches and establish a smooth relationship is the main focus of the novels

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