

A Conflict between Tradition and Modernity: Analysis of Marital Issues in Chetan Bhagat's Select Works

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Abstract

Traditional values, beliefs, practices, and norms are the target of modernism. Modernism's goal is to eliminate the unfairness, exploitation, and other forms of oppression at the heart of its philosophy. Modern man is eager to learn and grow but also calculating and manipulative. In every aspect of our lives, we have the impact of modernism. Modernism has influenced people's everyday lives, customs, and habits in today's society at the fundamental level. Because of these elements, Chetan Bhagat's fictional tales are traced back to this process of structural transformation. Our society is undergoing fundamental transformation because of these developments. *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* and *Revolution 2020* by Chetan Bhagat are two great examples of this. This paper attempts to analyse the conflict between tradition and modernity in the marital issues through two novels.

Keywords: Marriage, Cultural Changes, Tradition and Modernity

1. Introduction:

Chetan Bhagat has portrayed the cultures and practices that are being followed by the contemporary Indian families through his writing. He has also included elements of his family history in his work. The families described in Bhagat's work are often dissimilar from a traditional Indian family, both in terms of their organisational makeup and their day-to-day activities. According to his works, *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* and *Revolution 2020*, the influence of the socio-political-economic crises that are currently affecting Indian society may be seen in the moulding and ruling of urban families.

2. *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*

In *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, Bhagat has used flashback narrative techniques and summarised the situations of the primary characters' situations. Ananya and Krish are the leading characters in this novel. They fell in love while studying at IIM Ahmadabad. Later, they worked hard to obtain their parents' permission for their marriage. Krish redoubles his efforts to court Ananya's family, but he is ultimately unsuccessful in doing so. This comes as a direct result of the resistance shown by their parents. Even after that, there was some emotional turmoil that took place among their family members. However it was, they had a cheerful ending at the end of the novel. The writer projected the shifting tendencies of both their parents' patriarchal households throughout the plot. Krish hailed from a patriarchal middle-class family. His father is a former military officer, whereas Ananya's father worked in the government sector. These families are the outcome of an industrialised and urbanised environment in which individuals who come from two different generations and have educated their co-exist and send their children to further education, and counsel them when they are in need. The elder has a critical role in choosing a spouse and other family activities.

In the past, parents had all rights to choose their son or daughter's life partner without consulting their children through intermediaries, barbers, and relatives. Similarly, Krish's mother had those stereotypes in her. She has desired to choose her daughter –in-law through conventional methods. She said "I don't want my daughter-in-law to raise her voice or answer me back. She has to be under my thumb (*2 States* -229)." It replicates the pros and cons of conventional methods. Women did not have the rights to voice out their opinion. Krish's mother was looking for a girl who must be a typical Punjabi, should not voice against her wishes. Whereas, this globalised, technologically equipped environment is showcasing the modern young people's awareness. It is empowering them to question the established patterns of traditional society.

In accordance with custom, traditions, and rituals, marriage is regarded as a sacred union. Over the past five or six years, it has been observed that young people obtain employment in various large initiatives and multinational corporations, where they encounter and interact with people of different religions, castes, and states. Sometimes they maintain their relationship as companions or co-workers, and

sometimes, due to their shared interests, routines, and other similarities, they decide to get married. As a consequence of this, Krish shares with his mother about his love affair that he is engaged to a woman who has an education, a job, is gorgeous, nice, and works hard, and that she possesses a high degree of integrity. What exactly is it that's giving you so much trouble? His mother, as a representative of the preceding generation, expresses her desire to maintain the traditional arrangement of the family.

No matter what circumstances prevails in the present era; the senior members of the community always try to prove their power to prevent the progression of modernity. It is obviously demonstrated by the character of Shipra Masi. "How can we marry Madrasis? Tomorrow your cousins will want to marry a Gujarati.' Or Assamese? However, she has retorted, "aren't they all Indian? Can't they be good human beings?"(2 States-69)

Chetan Bhagat is well-known for his portrayal of reality in modern society, and his work is frequently cited as an example. *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* by Chetan Bhagat gives readers a taste of the social realities in which they live. Chetan Bhagat uses this work to reflect on the taboo subject of interracial and interstate marriages. The work is based on the author's real-life experiences. The novel's vivid depiction of its characters and events paints an accurate picture of modern India's rich cultural diversity. *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, the writer has made an effort to show how contemporary Indian culture really is. Marriage across communities and borders is shown as problematic in this novel. Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is a sociological record of the problems facing modern youth. The story depicts the difficulties that arise in a marriage between two people from different countries due to cultural differences. They're actively working to change our society's conservative norms and traditions. In addition, the tale shows the bleak truth of the Indian marriage system. The novel's flip side depicts an accurate picture of love weddings in modern India.

Education is absolutely necessary for both the expansion of people's mental horizons and the transformation of traditional family structures. Parents of educated children in today's society have begun to acclimatise to the passage of time as they readjust to the altering viewpoints of their own children. They have greater patience and pay more attention to the people in their care. When Krish's mother finds out about his girlfriend, she offers to allow to him keep her away from the home as long as he could. Her choice reflects the psychological makeup of a semi-traditional woman. Krish likes Ananya and reveals his intention to his parents after becoming financially dependent: "Mom, she is not just a friend. I want to marry her" (2 States-158). This progression brings the narrative to a climax when his mother responds as such "a girlfriend is fine, do whatever you want in Chennai. But why are you forcing her on us?"(2 States-158). Ananya's confession to her parents exemplifies how our conventional family system is changing. In India, parents have habituated to emphasise the importance of emotional connectedness. They wish to dominate through some form of social control. They do not consider eloping, even after falling in love. Krish's viewpoint is reflected in his reaction to Ananya: "I don't want to elope, 'it's too easy. And that doesn't serve the greater purpose" (2 States-102). This justification demonstrates his emotional attachment towards his family and his social awareness.

Bhagat has skillfully presented the youngster's opinion by illuminating the transition. It has been mirrored in societal structures. Every aspect of modern society has undergone certain shifts and transformations in the twenty-first century, and these shifts are having an effect on the perspectives of today's parents. They are now aware of the significance of having reciprocal connections, which results in increased joy and contentment within the family. They hope that their children will have a good life.

Modern parents are becoming conscious of their culture and religion. They are so confide in their children before selecting their partner. Their preferences and dislikes are also taken into account whenever they are taking some vital decision. Bhagat argues for a responsible urban nuclear family structure in which parents have a closer relationship with their parents than the rural India's conventional joint family. Both Ananya and Krish are from metropolitan areas. However, the protagonist does not have a solid connection with his father, and his father does not go away from his sole obligations, suggesting: "you will not marry a girl. "I will make the selection for you". However, Krish's response is always the same: 'you want to sell me. And while you are negotiating me, what's my going rate?' (2 States-198)."

This difference between older and younger people in terms of how people interact with one another is an indication that the traditional social order is falling apart. This development leads to a watering down of our entire pre-existing value system, and it alters the ways in which we interact with one another as a result of changes in interpersonal relationships. Chetan Bhagat has expressed his enthusiastic support for the current shifts in how the times have altered. Our children are the ones who make the decisions, and we as a whole have to adapt to the changes that are reflected in their annoyance at being disobeyed, lied to, and frustrated:

You know kids of today, they do what they want to do . . . it is a fact your daughter has found a boy for herself. We, as parents, feel disobeyed, left out and disappointed. All our frustration comes out in anger. We bring our children up from babies to adults; how can they ignore us like this? How much do we hate love marriages, isn't it? (2 States-265).

The growth of inter-caste or inter-state marriages reflects the modern world's rapid speed. Although the elders are not mixed, they are kept out of such household matters. This projection reflects their altered perspective on authority in the home, public institutions, and the state. In rural places, older generation parents have lost a significant amount of control because of the 'technology-information-management market. The book shows a conflict between the old and new psyches, implying a shift in our conventional family order. Education, globalisation, and increased commercialization are all factors that greatly contribute to the transformation of the traditional structure of our families.

In addition to this, Chetan Bhagat had also emphasises the cultural and linguistic differences between North and South India. The

cultural disagreement has been discussed by Krish whenever he interacts with Ananya from South India. For instance, when Krish arrived in Chennai; he was confronted by a taxi driver who had called his fellow drivers to plot the theft of his money. Sardar ji could calm the situation down enough for Krish to escape with his life.

What? Just give me my luggage and let me go,' I said.

'Illa luggage. Payment . . . make . . . you,' the Shakespeare among them spoke to me.

They started moving around me slowly. I wondered why on earth I didn't choose to work in an air-conditioned office in Delhi when I had the chance.

'Let's go to the police station,' I said, mustering up my Punjabi blood to be defiant.

'Illa police,' screamed my driver, who had shaken hands with me just twenty. (2 States-68)

2 states *The Story of My Marriage* is a typical novel which forecasts the cultural contradictions between two different states of India. This contradiction is found almost in every corner. Bhagat is a strong advocate of national independence and honestly reflects on the problem of racism and argues that it poses a threat to national harmony. Bhagat uses every opportunity to poke fun at the provincialism of the stereotypical Indian.

3. Revolution 2020

In *Revolution 2020*, Chetan Bhagat has expressed his faith that privatising education would be advantageous for society. He doesn't just ask questions; he also comes up with solutions. In the same way, he doesn't just describe how bad education is right now; he also shows how to make it better. Bhagat has narrated the story of three childhood friends named Gopal, Raghav, and Aarti. Gopal and Raghav are childhood friends from nuclear patriarchal homes. In contrast, Aarti is Gopal's friend from a well-to-do patriarchal joint family whose father was a DM, and her grandpa was the most important politician. Gopal hails from a modest family, and his mother's information is never mentioned in the text.

Revolution 2020 is a novel that criticises the corruption in our Indian education system and tuition for competitive examinations in India. The story takes place in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Bhagat had concentrated on the trend of coaching classes to enter India's most prestigious universities. Bhagat has recounted his experiences in diverse regions of India. He has elucidated his experiences through the character of Gopal. There were two characters in Gopal's family. His father has taken care of all of the household and non-household responsibilities in order to provide a successful future for his son. He has enrolled him in a prestigious educational institution, and created an ambience that is favourable for his learning. However, this expensive education system leaves him with substantial debt upon death. In general, there was no friction or disagreement in Gopal's family because they are emotionally close to one another. Whereas, Raghav has come from a traditional nuclear family in which his parents took care of all of his social and moral duties and sent him to a prestigious school. Raghav's family was patriarchal in structure. Because his father is an IITian, he hopes that his son would follow his footsteps and afford him better coaching so that he can get into IIT BHU. This would help him to achieve his goal of attending IIT BHU. Similarly, Raghav's parents are never accused of exerting their will on him, and he never makes a complaint about them to anyone else. This sense of understanding between the family members contributed to the family's success.

Aarti's parents are economically more prosperous than her other two friends. They enrolled her in a highly regarded educational institution and gave coaching to accomplish her goal. However, they had not have time to counsel their sweetheart when she was in need. Due to the fact that Arthi's grandpa had a position as a major politician and that Arthi's father worked as a bureaucrat, Arthi's family has an excellent reputation in the society. Even when their daughter is of the age to get married, they do not have enough time to look for or choose an appropriate partner for her. The absence of parental engagement in the process of partner choice and other marriage-related procedures cast distrust on this family structure.

Bhagat projects Gopal as a good friend of both Raghav and Arthi. Unfortunately, he lost his friendship with Raghav as well as his love for Arthi to achieve his financial independence. In general, as a caring parent, they act as a matchmaker, and bring them together to form a marital tie. It is an operation that contributes to Bhagat's enduring character. Historically, people were formerly esteemed in their communities because they were the progeny of well-known and respectable families. Since the industrial revolution, the middle-class family's status imparting function has waned; currently, people are judged based on their performance. Gopal and Raghav's relationship exemplifies the modern industrialised world's gift of the nuclear family.

In his novel *Revolution 2020*, Bhagat emphasized the problems that ordinary students face and how they are suffocated by this broken educational structure. He opened the work by drawing attention to a significant issue. He addressed the subject of a conclusion. It demonstrates his sincerity. Through his writings, he inspires followers to bring about imaginative improvements in mundane and man-centered civilization. In contrast to his earlier works, Bhagat's characters are brave, courageous, and prudent. In comparison to previous generations, the kids are more technically perceptive. They are highly ambitious and keen on climbing the success ladder.

Analysis of these works demonstrates that the traditional model of the family is becoming increasingly uncommon in today's culture. Even in works written recently, nuclear families are becoming more common while traditional families are becoming less common. This analysis was carried out in consideration of a number of factors, including the growing trend of urbanisation and urban-centric narratives, the impending elimination of jobs in the public sector held by private sector workers, the cultural transformation that has led to characters

with shattered values and shattered interpersonal relationships, and the growing presence of women in positions of authority within narratives.

4. Conclusion

This research implies that Bhagat's work demonstrates that rural regions have an infinite number of joint families or extended families. The youth travel to cities for better education or subsistence. This new social trend resulted in the establishment of nuclear families. Bhagat was attempting to communicate that the advent of consumerism, globalisation, commercialisation, and education expansion, advancement of the information technology sector, industrialisation, and the introduction of feminism all contribute significantly to forming the minds of the current generation. After getting wealthy, his protagonists attempt to exploit the present world's predicament. The narrative depicts the ebb and flow of this social institution.

Chetan Bhagat's writing explores contemporary Indian families' cultures and practices, incorporating elements of his family history. These families differ from traditional Indian families in their organizational makeup and daily activities. Bhagat's works, such as *2 States: The Story of My Marriage and Revolution 2020*, highlight the influence of socio-political-economic crises on urban families. The novel follows Ananya and Krish, who fall in love and work to obtain their parents' permission for marriage. The characters' families are shaped by industrialized and urban environments, with parents from different generations coexisting and influencing their children's education and decisions.

In the modern era, young people are gaining employment in large organizations and multinational corporations, encountering people of different religions, castes, and states. The novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* by Chetan Bhagat showcases the social realities faced by modern youth, highlighting the difficulties that arise in marriages between people from different countries due to cultural differences. Education is essential for expanding people's mental horizons and transforming traditional family structures. Parents of educated children in today's society have begun to adapt to the changing viewpoints of their children, resulting in greater patience and attention for the people in their care. The novel also portrays the bleak truth of the Indian marriage system.

Modern parents are becoming more conscious of their culture and religion, and they are more confident in their children before selecting their partner. They are more attentive to the people in their care, and they are now aware of the significance of having reciprocal connections, which results in increased joy and contentment within the family. The growth of inter-caste or inter-state marriages reflects the modern world's rapid pace. The older generation's parents have lost a significant amount of control in rural areas due to the technology-information-management market. This conflict between the old and new psyches, implying a shift in the traditional family order, is a result of education, globalization, and increased commercialization.

Chetan Bhagat also emphasises the cultural and linguistic differences between North and South India. Krish's interactions with Ananya from South India reveal the cultural disagreements and contradictions between the two states. The novel is a strong advocate of national independence and reflects on the problem of racism and its threat to national harmony. Bhagat uses every opportunity to poke fun at the provincialism of the stereotypical Indian.

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