

Fictional Works of Chetan Bhagat: A Study on the Representation of Contemporary Society

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Abstract

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most important novelists of present-day Indian English literature. Contemporary issues like youth aspirations, love, sex, marriage, urban middle class sensibilities, and issues related to corruption, politics, education and their impact on the present Indian society are recurrently presented thematic concerns in his fictions. In all his fictions, he has mostly portrayed the contemporary urban social setting of Indian society. Though the fictions of Chetan Bhagat are amorous in nature, present Indian society and its major issues are the prime of the study of all his fictions. He has focused on the contemporary issues of middle class family in his fictions. All of the main characters of his novels are sensitive youth and they do not agree with the prevailing situations of society. Most of the characters are like caricatures that speak for one or the other vice or virtue of the present Indian society. The novelist has the ability to convince the reader about the prevailing condition of society so that one can easily make in mind, a clear cut image of contemporary Indian society.

This article is a real attempt to present the thorough literary analysis of the selected fictions of Chetan Bhagat keeping in mind how the contemporary Indian society has been represented in the fictions.

Key Words: Contemporary, Indian, Society, Fictions, Chetan Bhagat, Literary, Analysis

Date of Submission: 23-01-2021

Date of Acceptance: 07-02-2021

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most important novelists of contemporary Indian English literature. He is the best story teller of the time. Bhagat has drawn a very different line to the conventional Indian novel writing in English. He has written such fictions which are easily comprehended by the average reader in a country like India having English as a second or a third language. Due to this, he has, to his credit, a huge class of readership all over India and abroad especially the youth. Millions of copies of his books are sold. It may be right to say that he has developed the reading habit among the Indian youth in the era of smart phones and tablet technology. Current issues like youth aspirations, love, sex, marriage, urban middle class sensibilities, and issues related to corruption, politics, education and their effect on the present Indian society are recurrently reflected thematic concerns in his novels. In all the novels, he has mostly portrayed the contemporary urban social setting of Indian society. The so called non-serious novels of Chetan Bhagat have restored a very serious sense of worry and responsibility among the youth of India, towards India and its problems. Though the fictions of Chetan Bhagat are amorous in nature, present Indian society and its major issues are the prime of the studies of all his fictions. He has focused on the contemporary issues of middle class family in his fictions. All of the main characters of his fictions are sensitive youth and they do not agree with the prevailing situations of society. Most of the characters are like caricatures that speak for one or the other vice or virtue of the contemporary Indian society. The novelist has a mastery to convince the reader about the prevailing condition of society so that one can easily make in mind, a clear cut picture of contemporary Indian society. This article is a sincere endeavour to present the detailed literary analysis of the selected fictions of Chetan Bhagat keeping in mind how the contemporary Indian society has been replicated in the fictions.

I. PORTRAYAL OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY IN FIVE POINT SOMEONE

It has been an inclination of Chetan Bhagat to present contemporary urban middle class society in his books. He belongs to the same class background. So depiction of the same in his novels reflects the reality of the contemporary Indian urban setting. *Five Point Someone* is his debut novel. He has written this novel with the purpose of the pure entertainment of the reader. However, it portrays glimpses of the contemporary Indian

society and its important issues. Though the issues of education system is one of the main thematic concerns of the novel, the writer also throws light on certain other issues of the present Indian society like dowry, generation gap, challenging Indian family value system and lower middle class difficulties. The portrayal of the Indian society which comes out from the novel is a lower middle class community and its hardships. The major part of the novel deals with the depiction of the educational sector of the contemporary Indian society with its difficulties. Education is an integral part of society and on it depends the progress of society which is also dependent on the education imparted to the people. If education is imparted effectively, it gives positive outcome in society. People become really human with a humanistic perspective to life. In a democratic country like India, the role of education in society becomes significant for fostering democratic and nationalistic values among the people. Such people can become highly responsible citizens of India who can have national interest as their top priority. Such people also practice moral and social values in life and thus, society can have all round progress and social harmony. The education system of the present Indian society which is portrayed in the novel is very discouraging. Students are getting victims of the system. They do not have self-motivation for doing anything in life. They are frustrated or dispirited in their life. Even the hostel environment presented in the novel shows the difficulty experienced by the students of India. The new students at the beginning of the novel face issues of ragging. Even the food given in the hostel mess is of low quality. Hari, the narrator describes

“Several weeks later, we were in the Kumaon mess eating dinner. It was Thursday I guess, for that is when Kumaon had ‘continental dinner’.

In reality, it was just an excuse for mess workers to not give us real food. The menu sounded nice—noodle, French fries, toast and soup. It tasted awful. The cooks made noodle in superglue or something—they stuck to each other as one composite mass in the huge serving pan. The French fries were cold and either extremely undercooked or burnt to taste like coal. The cream of mushroom soup could have been mistaken for muddy water, only it was warmer and saltier (Bhagat Five 155).

The Education system portrayed in the novel is in no way promising. It is rigid and conventional. The grade system is disappointing the creativity and genuineness of the creative minds of the students. The students dare not screw the system as they know it for sure that their life would be screwed if they try to screw the system. The students are made even to think in the traditional direction so there is no scope for a creative idea.

Alok and Hari in the novel remain in constant mental pressure of examination and grades and the future uncertainties subsequent to it. The professors like professor Dubey, professor Vohra and professor Cherian working in the system hardly accept change in their traditional teaching methodology. They are old-fashioned in their approach to students and their profession. There is no affinity created between the students and the professors of the institute. So the students become victims of bad habits like smoking and drinking. They even plan to steal question paper to pass in the examination. Such ways lead them to take wrong ways in life. If the students are not treated with care and kindness, they will never get self-confidence in life to do anything. They involve themselves in non-constructive activities and waste the valuable years of life. When they step to the real world outside the institute, with disturbed or confused mindset, they cannot contribute to themselves, to the employer, to the society or to the nation. Chetan Bhagat has presented the contemporary system of education in Indian society with a realistic overtone. The students are unhappy or discontented with the prevalent atmosphere of the institute. The life in the institute is not hopeful enough to boost in them any values or standards of life. The students are shown disappointed, depressed or afraid of their future uncertainties. They try to turn the system but the system turned them badly. Chetan Bhagat gives a real solution to the problem of rigidity prevalent in the institution by illustrating the character of Professor Veera who is much modern in his way to his profession as a teacher. The students always prefer to be present in his class because of his new and modern approach towards teaching. He shows care, kindness or sympathy towards the students when they are really in need of it. Professor Veera helps them many times in their difficulties. By giving the instance of professor Veera, Chetan Bhagat wants to share the message to the entire community of teachers to refine their mindset and approach to their profession as per the changing need of time. If the students are not treated with care and kindness in student life, they will never instill the values and significance of kindness and humanity in life and the same can be dangerous to themselves, to the society and to the nation as well. Along with the educational system of society, Chetan Bhagat has drawn the eye of the readers towards the lower middle class of contemporary Indian society with its major problems. It is portrayed in the novel how the lower middle class of society confronts the difficulties of life. The chief characters of the novel, Hari, Alok and Ryan are from lower or middle class family background with all the hardships of life. Alok's family represents the lower middle class section of contemporary Indian social set up. Scarcity of money is permanent cause of worry and anxiety for the family. Due to the limited earning resources the family has to do many compromises in life. Alok was interested in painting but he has to choose engineering as he can get a job very soon and help the family to come out of poverty. Marriage of his elder sister is impossible because the family does not have any saving money to give as dowry. His father is a bed-ridden patient. He was a teacher but due to his illness he had to resign from the service. The only earning member in the family is his mother. She is a teacher. Half of her salary goes in his husband's treatment; even he

cannot get proper medical treatment because of the scarcity of money. His mother cannot buy a new saree in six months due to the shortage of money. Due to the growing inflation, the family has to suffer a lot with the small income. The middle class difficulty of the family is depicted in the novel as follows:

One Monday, five times repaired geyser had broken and there was no money for a new one. On Wednesday, the TV antenna took a toss and a new one was too expensive. The family had to live with grainy reception until they could save some money. On Friday, Alok's father fell off the bed, which required a doctor to come home, another hundred bucks. There were other stories too- the ration shop had started double for sugar and the maid had ditched twice that week (Bhagat Five 122).

Ryan is the son of an NRI couple of middle class background. Ryan has studied in boarding school and hostel in all his life. He never gets parental love and affection because of his parents' staying in the US to earn money in dollars. The family bonding is much impaired. Ryan, though a clever and creative guy, is addicted to smoking and drinking. The family of professor Cherian is presented as much disturbed in the novel. It represents the educated class of Indian society. The family, with all the comforts of life, is so distressed due to ruined ideals of Indian family value system because of modernity. Samir, the only son of professor Cherian, commits suicide owing to parental over expectation to maintain the intellectual heredity of his father. His father wanted him to pass IIT entrance examination to take admission in it and become an engineer. Samir disqualifies frequently. His father stops talking to him and also to his wife as he thinks she is responsible for Samir's failure. Samir commits suicide at the railway track leaving a suicide note to his younger sister Neha. Neha, prefers to keep distance from his father and hardly talks to him. She dates with Hari, one of the three protagonists of the novel. The boy smokes and drinks often. She does not hesitate even to enjoy sexual intercourse with him who is not very serious in his life. The professor thinks as he is very successful in maintaining discipline among the students but he completely fails in maintaining peace and harmony in his own family.

The presentation of the society and the life of the people in the novel *Five Point Someone* is the representation of the ground reality of present Indian society. Chetan Bhagat draws a clear and realistic image of it. Though the novel has fun at the top of its priority, it can be interpreted as the social critique also. The theme of the fiction has many sights of Indian urban middle class setting which reveals the actual picture of the plight and poignant condition of people. The writer here has focused on some of the most prevalent issues of Indian social set up and its effects on the life of the people.

II. REFLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY IN *ONE NIGHT @ THE CALL CENTER*

Chetan Bhagat has portrayed the contemporary middle class urban social condition of India in the novel *One Night @ the Call Center* very clearly and accurately. The society, which is described in the novel, is not utopian in nature. The novel mirrors the image of the present society of Indian urban milieu which is, similar to the actual social set up of the modern time. The reflection of present Indian society can be seen with the three basic constraints of the characters' lives in the novel; their personal life, their professional life and their social life. In each of the constraints of the characters, a complete replica of the contemporary pain and predicament of the middle class people is presented in a realistic manner. The six major characters in the novel each represent a separate issue of the time. From the personal constraints of the characters, one can observe their problems are the consequences of their involvement in the changing scenario of the society. The root of the problem in their life is restlessness. Shyam, Priyanka, Varun, Esha, Radhika and Military Uncle are not satisfied in their life. They have over-aspirations in life. In the blind rush for such things, they have to compromise with the norms and standards of life. Shyam is unhappy with his present situation. He wants more from life. He lacks self-confidence in life. He is not a man of action a man of words. He has all the talents and skills but he never takes any risk in life. His girlfriend Priyanka, many often, reminds him to change the job and do something different but he does not execute it even after their break up. Priyanka is much pragmatic in her action, an individualist in her behaviour. She never compromises her personal interests at any rate, so she cannot maintain a healthy relationship with her mother as well as with her boyfriend. Esha is very ambitious in life and does not hesitate even to compromise with her ethics to achieve her goal. She sleeps with a forty year old designer to get a modelling assignment but he rejects her giving the reason of her short height and she feels that she is cheated. Military Uncle digs his own pit in life by becoming the dominating elder of his family and he has to live away from it. Most of the middle class characters in the fiction have raised problems in their lives by becoming uncompromised somewhere in their lives. This society which consists of such characters in the novel reflects the mirror image of the real society of the contemporary India. Indians, especially the middle class people, have become much individualistic temperament in life to have personal space. They never compromise in their personal lives. Along with it, people feel that their life standard has been elevated. They do not like to be called indigenous. They want to show themselves modern. Modernization and westernization have considerably influenced their lives. They hardly accept their limitations of life. They have higher aspirations of life but not in a position to reach there. Hence they experience restlessness in life. The comparative and competitive environment creates, in

them, a sort of stress and restlessness in life. The writer has focused on such realities of the contemporary middleclass society. The society which is presented in the novel is hybrid in nature; a mixed-outcome of Indian and western ways of life. The Indian society depicted in the novel seems highly affected by modernization and westernization. The conventional ideals of the Indian society are much twisted or smashed up by the influence of the modernization and westernization of the time. The clash of the two value systems has created many unexpected alterations in life-standards of the people of the time. The writer has become more realistic in the novel to present the real image of the contemporary Indian metropolitan society with its people and their problems. The novel presents an accurate picture of the contemporary Indian social set up where common people feel an acute intensity of anxiety, worry or depression or one or the other kind due to the unavoidable compulsions in their lives. The picture of the middle class society in the novel is realistic in nature. One can observe in the novel that the characters are modernized in their likes and dislikes, their attitude and behaviour. They prefer jeans, leather jacket, cigarettes, phones, pizzas, cheese sandwich, milkshake, chips, soda water, bikes, etc. which reflects their westernized life style. They go for late night DJ parties and enjoy cocktails and other western drinks. They visit expensive malls and prefer shopping. Women characters like Esha is fond of foreign perfumes and body spray. They like to wear costly or branded clothes. They prefer to go to expensive restaurants for fast food. The young generation is portrayed as much influenced by the westernized ways of life. Such a scenario which is presented in the novel is the actual scenario of contemporary modern generation of India. One can generally observe the youth's craze for international branded clothes, costly footwear, fast food in restaurants like Mac Donald, Dominos, KFC, Subway, Pizza Hut, US Pizza etc... in contemporary Indian society. The youth have an obsession for all that is foreign and it is a common feeling that by having it they show themselves modernized life style. The common life experiences of the contemporary Indian middle class people are depicted through the variety of characters in the novel. One Night @ the Call Center, the family life and the issues related to it, due to modernization and westernization, are the chief of the themes of the novel. Various families portrayed in the novel represent some or the other kind of social problem of the contemporary Indian middle class society. Priyanka, the chief female protagonist, in her earlier years, was on a healthy term with her mother, when she grew up, could not sustain the same. She becomes a modern and free-willed young girl so she cannot tolerate any interference in her personal life. Radhika has to take care of every small demand of her mother-in-law along with her job responsibilities. She compromises in her personal life. Esha has left her parental home to have a career as a model in a big city. She did not like the parental dominance to make any obstacles in her career. Shyam, the chief protagonist, cannot enjoy family celebrations due to his job responsibilities. Varun's parents are separated, so he has to face many problems in life. Military uncle had to leave the house of his son due to his attachment to the obsolete ideals of life. The characters in the novel are shown modernized in their attitude and behaviour. They are represented as jeans and vodka generation. Their likes and dislikes, their hobbies and habits are much westernized. They want freedom in their life. They hardly accept any outside intervention in their personal plans. They think that they have a right to live as they wish. These are all the realistic presentation of the contemporary Indian metropolitan life of the middle class social set up. This is very much true in the novel with the female characters like Esha and Priyanka. Esha has certain physical limitation of height but she does not accept it and keeps approaching various modelling agencies for assignments. She does not withdraw even when her parents do not agree to her decision. She is so passionate after her modelling career that she leaves her home and starts living at a distance so that she can avoid unnecessary interference from her parents. The scene of dowry, which is depicted in chapter no- 10 with the title My Past Dates with Priyanka-II in the novel, clearly presents the actual mind set and the condition of women due to that issue in contemporary Indian society. Priyanka is the ex-girlfriend of Shyam. Both of them work together and have a break up now. Priyanka is happy with her engagement to an NRI but she does not let her mother interfere much in her decision. She wants to marry him for a safe and comfortable life but she needs time to understand her fiancé before she marries him. She ignores her mother's hastiness for her marriage. Even Radhika a working lady and a housewife misses a lot her past days of free and fearless life. She misses a lot her wearing jeans and T-shirts. She feels herself trapped in family responsibilities as soon as she got married. She openly does not accept it, but her expressions at different times, clearly reflect her inner willingness to live life independently and at the end she does so. The professional culture shown in the novel also reflects the reality of the contemporary Indian society. All the six characters work at a call center. They are not happy with the work they are doing. They do not have any job security. They think that they will lose their job any moment. This all happens in their lives because of their boss Mr. Bakshi. He is not a visionary manager of the call center. He does not have ability to run such a big business enterprise. He has the required educational qualifications from some anonymous university and so he is at the 1st position. Now, he does not worry about the future of the employees working under him. He does not have any vision in his professional life. He engages himself in strengthening his profile and his career. For that, he uses all the time and skills of the call center agents like Shyam and Varun. He has submitted to his head office the web design project on his own name which is prepared by Shyam and Varun with two months'

restless efforts. Mr. Bakshi does not have any managerial potential to manage the company even though he is soon to be deputed to Boston and those who really have calibre and skill will be soon on the road searching for jobs. This predicament is depicted by the novelists in such a realistic manner that it echoes the real condition of about three lakh people working in the BPO sector of India. The office politics which is shown in the novel also clearly reflects the realistic traits of the contemporary professional environment of India. The fact is well illustrated by the writer that due to globalization and liberalization the job opportunities have increased in India but at the same time, it has deepened the roots of certain issues and problems in the lives of the people of the middle class community especially the youth. With an intensive reading of the novel *One Night@ the Call Center*, keeping in mind the representation of contemporary Indian society, one can explore many facets of the metropolitan Indian society with its positive and negative effects on the society. By means of a simple story of the life and events of some call center agents, Chetan Bhagat has successfully portrayed the actualities of the contemporary Indian society. The story is simple and straightforward. It covers the time span of one night only. The story sequence does not have thrills and eyebrow raising excitement in it; even though the writer has presented the content in such a perceptive manner that the reader is bound to continue his reading till the end. It does not provoke the reader's inner tranquillity for anything happening unusual in the flow of the story. Rather, it convinces the reader's inner self between what is happening in the story of the novel and what is happening outside in the real world. The readers find the life and problems of the characters of the novel, as the happenings around them. The writer seems very intensive in his approach to reveal the actualities of the contemporary issues of modern Indian middle class society which is much influenced by the modernized, westernized and globalized traits of life along with the simple romantic story of the ordinary youth of India struggling hard to achieve something in life that would give them real happiness and self-satisfaction in life.

III. REPRESENTATION OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY IN THE THREE MISTAKES OF MY LIFE

The society which is represented in Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is the lower middle class section of society of India. The setting of the novel is the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat with the lower middle class people, their hopes and issues. The exact setting presented in the novel is Belrampur in which the story takes place. The people depicted in the fiction belong to the lower middle class background. The three chief characters Govind, Omi and Ishaan are friends. They are young men of about twenty five years of age. They belong to poor families. They run a cricket shop where they sell cheap cricket equipment along with school stationery, candies, chocolates and peppermints which the children of lower class people use for playing cricket in the surrounding area. The chief character Govind is the son of a woman who sells homemade Gujarati snacks whose husband left her ten years ago. Omi is the son of the priest of a local temple. Ishaan's father works at a telephone exchange. Several characters in the fiction face regular poverty of life. Both Govind and his mother work to meet the regular expenses of life. Govind's mother, as mentioned earlier, is a Gujarati snacks seller and Govind gives Maths tuitions to earn extra income. His mother has already sold all her jewellery in difficult time till she succeeded in her Gujarati snacks business. Omi's father is also not paid well for his duty as a priest. Even the salary of Ishaan's father is also very limited. The children of the area study in a municipal school which has very limited facilities. The school has very poor standard of education and infrastructural opportunities. The society and the people portrayed in the fiction replicate the actual low class Indian society. The people are seen quarrelling over small matters. They dispose rubbish on the streets. Govind describes the actual situation of his area at the beginning of the novel as: As I entered the by lane, two people fought over garbage disposal around the crammed pol (. . .) there are things about my small town neighbourhood that I want to change. In some ways, it is way behind the rest of Ahmedabad. For, one, the whole old city could be a lot cleaner. The new city across the Sabarmati River has gleaming glass and steel buildings, while the old city finds it difficult to get rubbish cleared on time (Bhagat Three 8). They are habituated to gossips. They keep themselves busy working-out stories from the small incidents of others' life. The narrator of the story Govind gives examples like people believe that Omi became foolish because a cricket ball hit his head. People gossip that Ishaan did not run away but he was thrown out of National Defense Academy. Govind's mother believes as considered by many of the women in the Pol that Govind's father left her and her son and settled with another woman because of the astrological change of position of the planets. She consults various astrologers to know which planet caused her husband to move out and when the position would change that might make her husband's return possible. The people portrayed in the fiction are having mentality. Once, Govind goes to a book stall with Vidya, Ishaan's sister. The shop keeper who is an old man raised his eyebrow and asked Govind about the girl. Govind considered this as the reason why people think Ahmedabad is a small town in spite of the multiplexes. He takes it as the mentality of the people. (Bhagat Three 85)

The parents of the young characters are presented as over expecting guardians of their children. Govind's mother wants him to do engineering but he is interested in business. She does not like Govind spending time in tuitions or watching cricket with friends all the time. Ishaan's father wanted him to join the Indian Army.

He passed the tests and he was getting training but he ran away and came back to home. He does not have good terms with his father. His father does not like him spending time in watching cricket matches all the time. Ishaan's parents want his sister Vidya to get admission to the medical college, so she is preparing the complicated theories of Maths which she does not like. Omi's parents want that he would be a priest sometime, but Omi does not want to do the same. The school boy, Ali's parents want him to study sincerely rather than playing cricket, though he has all the ability to become the best international cricketer. In all these cases the reality of the lower middle class people comes to the surface. Most of the lower middle class people of India hope their children to become successful in life by choosing their career as per their parents' expectations. Engineering and medical are the most chosen branches which most of the parents treasure to opt for their children for years together. This typical contemporary Indian middle class mentality of parents for their children is reflected in the fiction in great details. The other aspect of contemporary middle class reality of the Indian society is represented in novel with a variety of young characters. The young characters like Govind, Ishaan, Omi and Vidya throw light on the typical mentality of lower middle class youth of India. They are the actual depictions of the contemporary Indian directionless youth which has high ambitions in life but life gives them no opportunities to fulfil those aspirations. Govind wants to have business and become a big businessman someday. He faces shortage of money to start his business. He starts a small business of cricket equipment with the partnership of his friends, but when he takes some high risk in business, he is ruined by a natural calamity and all his dreams turn into ashes. Ishaan dreams to be an international cricketer but he could not become so because he did not get proper training or opportunity to perform. He feels that he spent all his valuable years for cricket but the end result is zero. Omi is influenced by the non-secular and opportunist religious and political forces and he is still a directionless young man. He is confused what to do in life. He has no job or work that would help him earn money. He is even not interested to be a priest of his ancestral temple. Vidya is a Bombay type of girl and feels that she is a modern girl. She wants to do a course in PR and become free from the suffocating middle class life and develops physical relationship with her tuition teacher. All the young characters in the present novel represent the reality of the middle class youth mentality. They have higher dreams in life but they cannot fulfil their dreams due to many reasons like money, opportunity, motivation or luck. Due to modernization and globalization, the thinking level of the youth has considerably expanded but they cannot accept the limitations of their life so they face inner emptiness and frustration in life.

The novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* focuses light on such a lower middle class society which is devoid of some of the basic necessities of life. People face many difficulties of life. They have many personal and social issues in life. The hospital, in which Govind was admitted, does not have caring doctors. The municipal school presented in the novel does not have the required facilities. The school, wherein the children of the lower middle class people study, even does not have much of the basic facilities for imparting education. A reference is found in the novel that the teachers in the schools do not perform their duties sincerely. Most of the schools lack the facility for sports education and infra-structure for sport activities. They lack funds or money for the overall development of the children. The older city is dirtier than a newly developed one. Heaps of garbage found on the streets. People quarrel over small matters. They are busy, and gossiping. The houses are very small with one or two rooms with almost no furniture. The people have their personal problems in life. Govind's father had an extra-marital affair and he left Govind's mother. The young boys do not have any job or work at hand. They spend much of their time watching cricket matches on the television. The parents are worried about the future of their children. Ishaan's father wants him to do something rather than wasting time and energy in watching cricket match on the television. Govind and his friends Ishaan and Omi start a small business of cricket equipment and stationery but they have a very tough time running it. They purchase a bigger shop in a newly constructed mall in new city area, but it collapses in the earthquake and they have to face great loss. The corruption of the civil contractors in new construction works in the developing cities is exposed with the incident of the earthquake. On the one side the prices of real estate in fast developing cities like Ahmedabad are touching heights and on the other side the quality of construction is of substandard. This is also a reality of the present Indian society. People purchase their dream houses at very high costs with home loans to be paid lifelong and they get low quality of construction in return. Hundred years old houses in the old city are not damaged in the earthquake whereas the newly constructed shopping centers turn into heaps of debris at the first jerk of the earthquake. The location of the novel is Gujarat so some of the characteristics are of typical Gujarati society and the Gujarati people. Govind's mother runs Gujarati snacks business like Khakhara, Khaman, and Dhokla. She has a very good market in her area so it reflects on the food habit of the contemporary Indian society, especially Gujarati society. The people of the area go to cheap restaurants for tea and snacks. One such restaurant mentioned in the novel is Gopi restaurant. The people of Gujarat are business minded and they prefer business more than jobs with steady salary and stability. One such reference is found that the central character Govind is very good in Maths. He is the topper in the school. He can be considered an engineering material, but he is not interested in further studies of engineering rather in his own business. Here, one can notice the typical mentality of Gujarati people of the contemporary society who prefer to do business more than a job. The writer has pointed out small

or big habits and behaviour patterns of the people of the lower middle class society by describing several real life incidents and situations in the novel. The society of Belrampur, depicted is heterogeneous in nature wherein Hindus and Muslims live with conspicuous religious tension. The Hindus and the Muslims in Belrampur maintain distance from each other because of some religious biases. The Hindus generally do not turn up to the Muslim area and the Muslims avoid turning up to the Hindu area. One reference is observed in the novel that even the Muslim children avoid coming to Govind's cricket shop to purchase balls which is located in the temple premise and they get such things purchased by the Hindu children. The narrator Govind says: we had few Muslim customers. Most of them used other Hindu boys to make their purchases (Bhagat Three 29). The characters like Bittoo Mama and Parekh-ji represent the prevailing non-secular and dirty political forces which keep disturbing the peace and harmony of contemporary Indian society. The society which is depicted does not represent the ideal of unity in diversity. The people do not experience social harmony in the story. The communal differences constantly keep on disturbing the peaceful environment of the society. The extremist political and religious forces like Bittoo mama and Parekh-ji keep on burning the flame of communal tension in the society for their cheap concerns. The society represented in the novel is found divided into the Hindu dominated and the Muslim dominated areas of society. People are fed up with the non-secular thoughts and arguments constantly by the so-called authoritarians. Bittoo mama wants to become a famous politician and he uses religion as an instrument to reach his goal. He wants more and more youth to join his party which is based on Hindu concerns. He keeps poisoning the ears of people against the Muslims. Even Parekh-ji keeps on provoking the sentiments of the common people with anti-secular debates to build up his political agenda. The end results are that the society meets hellish situations like Godhra sabotage and post Godhra communal riots. The people are stabbed to death or burnt alive in public. It hardly makes any difference to millions of Hindu people or even to Lord Ram Himself whether Ram Temple is built on the very birthplace of Ram in Ayodhya, or somewhere else or nowhere but it makes a lot of difference to so many opportunist politicians. The revengeful mindset results into violation of social peace and harmony at regular intervals all around India and the innocent people have to suffer a lot. Chetan Bhagat has presented a realistic picture of contemporary lower middle class Indian society in the present novel. The glimpses of the actualities of the lower middle class sentiments and issues are embodied in the novel. The writer has sincerely worked on portraying the ground reality of the contemporary scenario of the contemporary middle class society in the novel. The writer happened to pass two years in Ahmedabad from the year 1995 to 1997 for his management studies in IIM-A, so he has close association with Gujarat and the people of Gujarat. His observations regarding the contemporary lower middle class people of the city of Ahmedabad are presented in this novel. In spite of the lack of certain literary standards and deficiencies of writing novel and certain silly errors in the story, the novel seems to be the writer's deephearted effort to represent the actual picture of the contemporary lower middle class Indian society.

IV. CONCLUSION:

The literary creation of Chetan Bhagat has contemporary urban middle class society and its major issues as chief subject matter. He, along with entertaining the wide readership all over India, has revealed the contemporary urban realities of contemporary society. The study of the common people and their hardships has been the main focus of his literary creations. This hypothesis can clearly be proved right by an intensive reading of the select novels of Bhagat. All in all, one can clearly have an overview of contemporary Indian society reflected in his fictions.

One can take Bhagat's own words in support of the arguments that his fictions are a complete replica of contemporary Indian society as follows: Indian society discriminates between the good English speakers and the not-so-good ones. English is the new caste system, complete with levels of proficiency translating to various levels to elitism. However, because I write in simple English, my books have managed to be a bridge between Indians who speak English well and Indian who speak little English...

My simple stories are set in contemporary India and reflect society as it is today. And that may be one reason why the west is not so interested in me. I write the actual reality of India, versus the exotic India westerners would rather read about. My characters are looking for jobs while falling in love. They are career oriented, ambitious and have modern values... (Source Courtesy: Bhagat's comments posted on 17/7/2014 @ 12:46 pm on THE WORLDPOST (www. Huffingtonpost.com) with the title I Write About an India That the West is Not Interested, shared on Face book on 17 July, 2014 @ 10:10 pm by Chetan Bhagat viewed on 18 July, 2014 @ 8: 35 am.).

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