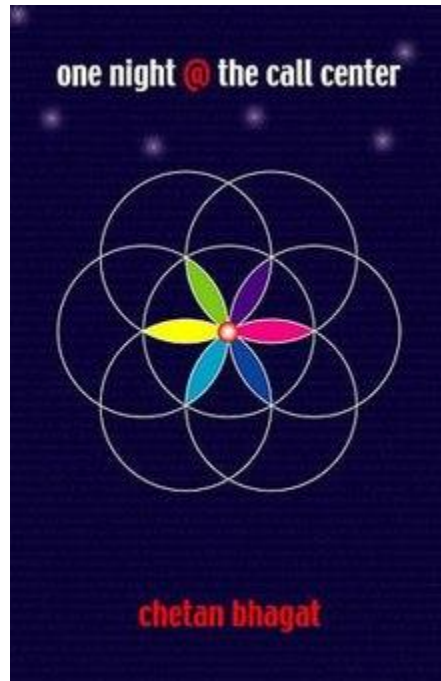


**Social Imbalance in Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020* and
*One Night @ the Call Center***

A. Gayathridevi and Dr. T. Deivasigamani



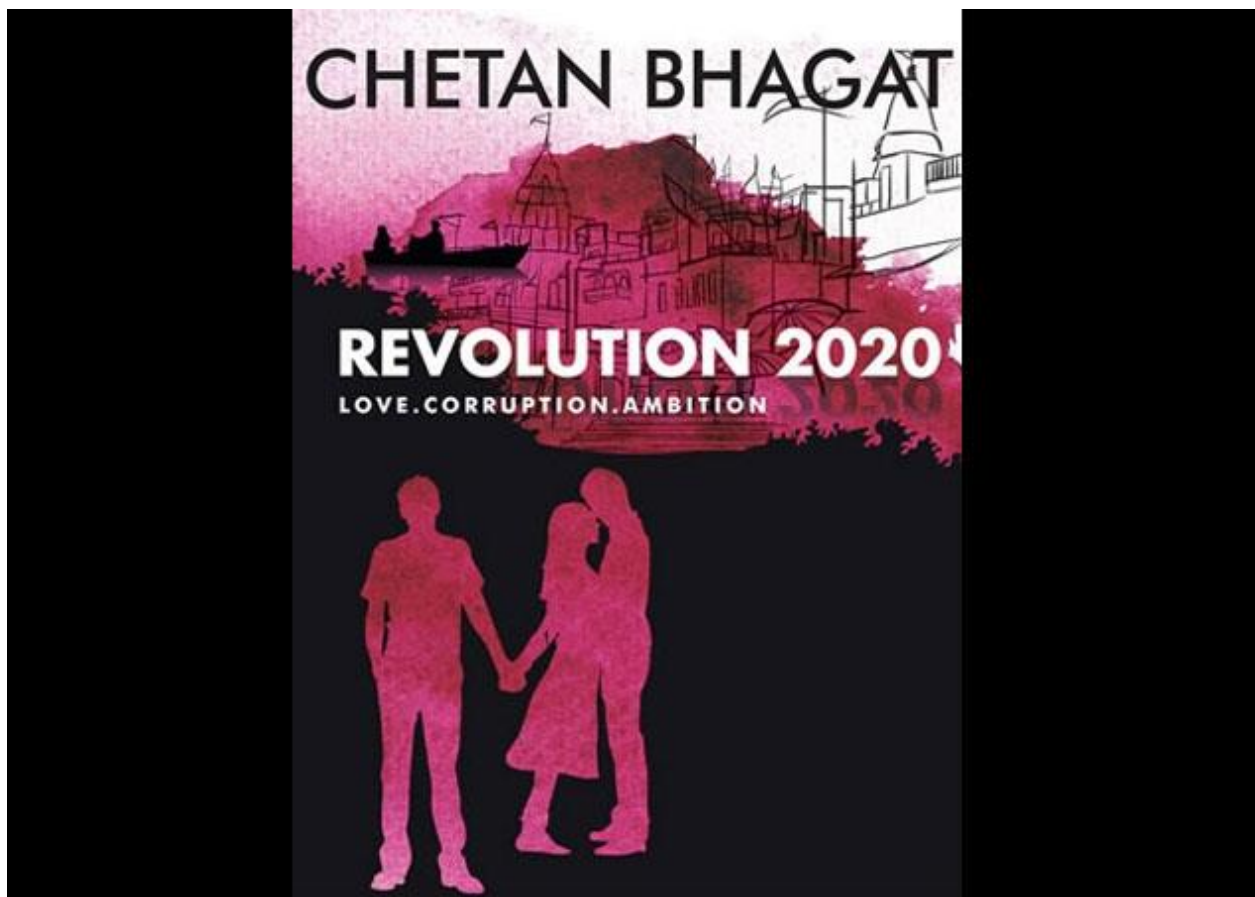
Abstract

The purpose of this article is to bring out the social imbalance in Chetan Bhagat's novels *Revolution 2020* and *One Night @ the Call Center*. Bhagat rocked the Indian sensibility with his thought-provoking ideas of human condition twisted in the web of love, corruption, and ambition. He has always been very careful and aware with most of the issues related to the society. He directly hits at issues like corporate life style, modern education system, misunderstanding, corruption, exploitation, patriarchal setup, and globalization in his novels. He has also given some ideas to solve the problems through his characters in these novels. *Revolution 2020* is a fascinating and a fast-paced story of love, betrayal, and corruption. It is set in the sacred city of Varanasi and it reveals the darker side of India's education system and the uncontrolled corruption it involves. In this novel Gopal, the protagonist of the novel is changing the traditional education system with the support of the MLA Shukla. In *One Night @ the Call Center*, Bhagat tried to explore call center world and its' culture. It is a romantic comedy set in an office where bored young Indians try to resolve the mindless inquiries of Midwestern American Technophobes at the call center. The story revolves around six friends Shyam, Priyanka, Varun, Rathika, Esha, Military uncle who are selling home appliances to the United States from a call center in India.

Keywords: Chetan Bhagat; *Revolution 2020*; *One Night @ the Call Center*; Corporate life style; Imbalance, Indian sensibility, Misunderstanding; Corruption; Exploitation; Patriarchy; Globalization.

Introduction

Chetan Bhagat is one of the of famous Indian novelists of modern English literature was born on 22 April 1974. He began his journey as a writer in 2004 with his first novel *Five Point Someone*. Bhagat is considered as a post-modern writer and he presented the youth of today in their world of luxury. His themes are wide and different. He tries to depict the ordinary normal human experiences like loneliness, strangeness, despair, and anxiety. The protagonist of his novels is suffering at the hands of modern disorganized life of disillusionment, alienation, loneliness, separation, and disorder. They all are broken off from the spiritual and normal life.



Bhagat directly hits on the social evil corruption through the character Gopal in the novel, *Revolution 2020*. It is a triangle love subject story between Gopal, Raghav, and Aarti. But, this paper highlights the corruption given by a lower middle-class family and the problems they face in the novel. He projects the issue of how a private coaching institution exploits the upcoming Engineering students. Education is considered to be the assets of all the middle-class families, by educating their son or daughter, all the parents believe that they have achieved something in their

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 18:3 March 2018

Dr. T. Deivasigamani, Editor: *Indian Writing in English: A Subaltern Perspective*

A. Gayathridevi and Dr. T. Deivasigamani

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life. Therefore, they put all their life time earnings and spend them on the children's upcoming. They fully spend all money in these coaching classes so that their children can easily get into the Engineering Admission and they change the standard of the family. In the same way Gopal, the protagonist of the novel after his failure in Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) is forced by his father to join in a coaching centre at Kota. Here, Bhagat describes Kota and its' sitting as place for the preparation of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) entrance test.

Gopal's father says: "In fact, Kota now had small coaching shops to coach you to get into the top coaching classes. From there, you would be coached to get into an engineering college" (59). Gopal's father spends his retirement savings as a capital fees for the coaching centre. In Kota, Gopal tries to do his best to pass the examination but repeatedly fails because of his aimlessness. He was unable to concentrate on his studies because of the love he had for Aarti. Gopal's old father was unable to bear his son's repeated failures, dies without having fulfilled his last and keen desire. Bhagat had pictured the real middle-class family and the misunderstanding system of education through Gopal's father.

Bhagat brings out the life of Gopal after his father's death and he becomes an orphan, the money lenders and creditors pressured him for the money repayment. The debts become two lakhs rupees therefore he signs a deal with a local MLA Shukla, to start a private Engineering College on his family's disputed land. Bhagat puts the irony that an uneducated Gopal becomes the director of a new Engineering college named "Ganga Tech College." This portrays the reality in most of the private Engineering colleges in the country.

Gopal learns how to fulfill his wishes by bribing the government officials for running the college. He wants to eat whole while Raghav says: "Don't take the whole thing. It's not fair... cut it into two. Take one, leave the other" (9-10). Gopal bribes for twisting and relaxing rules; he also bribes for giving sanctions to professors for joining the college as faculty. Gopal with the support of the MLA Shukla, the most corrupt leader of Varanasi fulfills his ambition of a thirty-crore rupees under the name of Ganga Action Plan. In this novel, Bhagat pictures the mind of the pupil that everything can be done or any work can be achieved in the government office by bribes. The world is very fast; people wanted everything done without any stern. They bribe the officers and work is done without any pain or time waste. Gopal becomes skilled at handling the corrupt politicians and completes his works.

Bhagat had always been very careful and aware with most of issue related to the society, therefore he writes in his article in *The Times of India* that: "Many of us unfortunate enough to be educated and emotionally invested in our country are in pain these days. We see our nation being plundered and mismanaged by the politician in power" (3). Bhagat wanted this type of corrupt society to be changed; he therefore presented his second character Raghav who is the childhood friend of the protagonist Gopal at Varanasi. In *Revolution 2020* Gopal, Raghav, and Aarti belong to Sunbeam school in Varanasi. Raghav's aim was to create awareness in the society free from corruption. He joined Indian Institute of Technology – Banaras Hindu University (IIT- BHU), Engineering not only to earn a degree but to fulfill his ambition as a journalist. After his studies, he joins a newspaper Daily as a trainee-reporter. Bhagat answers to the question by Diksha Sahni about *Revolution 2020* that:

Revolution 2020 is foremost a love story, in fact a love triangle, as both Gopal and Raghav love the same girl. Corruption particularly in the education sector is the backdrop of the story. Like all his novels the best-selling writer tries to show the problems of the young generation and finally he also suggests the best ways to solve it. The writer tries to show the present condition of the three friends. In this novel both the characters Gopal and Raghav strive to achieve love, fame and success. (3)

Revolution 2020

Raghav begins his life as an idealist believing that everything can be changed, and he tried to achieve his aim through the power of his pen. He started a newspaper entitled *Revolution 2020* and tried to clarify the people against corruption. *Revolution 2020* suggests that the revolution is possible only by people's efforts and their inner urge. Firm determination, honesty towards themselves, dedication for work, and persuasion in the right direction can lead to desired destination and all impossible can be possible. Gopal narrating about the novel: "Revolution 2020, That's his goal. That India must have a full-blown revolution by 2020. Power will be with the youth. We will dismantle the old corrupt system and replace a new one in place" (197). Raghav intended to develop the attitude of the reincarnation in the society where the next generation can live without any social imbalance in the society.

Raghav entered a mission to root out the corruption and wants to help the poor and bring a change to rebuild the society. Through his writing, Bhagat proved Shukla MLA to be the most corrupt man; thereby Shukla had to resign his post of MLA. Aarti was behind Raghav as a moral support to his plan. Aarti is a different character who surrenders herself to Gopal for momentary pleasures and collects all the information from him and revealed it to Raghav and finally Raghav gets married to Aarti. Gopal wants to prove himself to be the most successful man in life by achieving lot of money, power, and even the love of Aarti. The innocent Raghav's words in the newspaper change the mind of Gopal and he realized that Raghav is a better human being than himself. His notion brings out a change and eye opener not only to Gopal and most of corrupt people in the society. Arvind in his article "Representing Metropolitan Youth Culture: An Assessment of Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone* and *One Night @ the Call Center*" says: "Corruption is the burning problem of the world. All the countries of the world are facing the problem of corruption in some way or the other way, but today's youths are opposing the corruption in all walks of life" (3).

Raghav's newspaper created a fear in the corrupt leader and therefore they started to change. It was just a start, by the end of the novel, he succeeded in his ambition of corruption free society. At the Gopal whole-heartedly gives Aarti to Raghav, with change of heart Gopal wins the massive sympathy of the reader. He turns all the negative things into positive for the welfare of society.

One Night @ the Call Center

Bhagat's themes of socio-political as well as literary factors dominate in his works. He makes a serious attempt to expose the state of India's lucrative private education business which is the only hope for millions of people from all around the villages who are unable to pass the

entrance examination for Engineering Colleges. His novel *One Night @ the Call Center* describes the advantages and disadvantages of the society. Through this novel Bhagat portrays the life of the middle-class family in the major cities of the country. It is a story of emotion, love, sorrow, and pity.

Chetan Bhagat's *One Night@ the Call Center* moves around six people who are all working in the call center and is also describes that their problems and a call from God on one good night at their work place. Human expectations are unlimited and when it is not fulfilled they get frustrated and start to blame on God. Three male and three females working as a group in a call centre. Each character has their own problems at their background and they are fed up with their lives. Shyam is the narrator of the story, he is the main character of this novel. He is in love with Priyanka who has got engaged with Ganesh an NRI boy. Varun the friend of Shyam is not interested in the job because he and Shyam think that their boss Mr. Bakshi had cheated them. Varun stays in the job only for status. Priyanka gets engaged to Ganesh because of her mother's pressure, even though she has love for Shyam. Esha Singh runs out of her family to achieve her aim as a model. Radhika is married, even though she had a lot of love towards her husband she returns from her family life because of her mother-in-law. She finds her husband having an affair with another girl therefore she is fed up. And the final character is the military uncle the oldest person in the call centre is also upset because his grandson had stopped contacting him and he is upset in his loneliness.

In this way every character of the novel is upset in their life, they wanted something magic to happen in their life and all their problems as to be changed. Bhagat introduces God as a character who makes a call to everyone at one night. He gives idea to everyone to solve their problem through phone: "There are four things a person needs for success: a medium amount of intelligence, a bit of imagination, self-confidence and failure" (134). He motivates everyone to learn and face their problem by themselves with courage and he also say that this world is full of problem therefore everyone must learn to face it. God advised them to put their hundred-percentage effort to it, in order to achieve their aims. God said:

I think you need to understand how my system works. You see I have a contract with all human beings. you do your best, and every now and then, I will come behind to give you a bonus push. But it has to begin with you, For otherwise I can't distinguish who needs my help most. (135)

Bhagat and God

No novelist has presented God using mobile phone to guide his devotee's difficulty. God said:

For once you taste failure, you have no fear. You can take risks more easily. Then You don't want to snuggle in your comfort zone anymore-you are ready to fly. And Success is about flying, not snuggling, God said. God sighed before speaking again. I think you need to understand how my system works. You see I have a contract with all human beings. you do your best, and every now and then, I will come behind to give you a bonus push. But it has to begin with you, For otherwise I can't distinguish who needs my help most. (134)

After receiving the call from God everyone's life gets changed. They start facing their problems by themselves. As the result their problem are solved. All the characters portrayed by Bhagat face the common problem as well as personal problems. They bring out the present situation where the people face their day today problem such as work stress, love problems, night shifts, friendship, and in –laws restrictions. In spite of all problems the middle-class family tries to comfort themselves in a luxurious life, thereby they spent for pride and save less.

In *One night @ call center*, Bhagat brings out the problems of women that they face in the patriarchal society. They face a lot of problems in their work place, they work double shift one at home and the other at the office in order to earn money, status, and enjoy a luxurious life. The people work all time and they are unable to face small problem with courage. They fail to understand other's feeling, they do not watch other's problems. They do not have real friends because, they are not true and share their reality. They just work like machine in office and their only aim was to be luxurious. This results in stress and they fail to face their own problem, they want someone to solve their problems.

Bhagat gives the solution for problem through God. His advice to the modern youngster is to believe in God and have faith on the supreme. Only believing on God can change their life from all type of stress and psychological problem. He motivates the youngster to follow the path of God; that is true to everyone. Bhagat also focus on the problems of the western influence on modern society like misunderstanding between youngster which leads to the increase in divorces, breakups in love, stress, frustration, and finally leads to increase of suicide.

Life at the Call Centre

The present call centre life is portrayed by Bhagat very clearly. The boss Mr. Baxi of the call centre does not wanted to call the character with their own names; he therefore changes the name from Indian to Western. For Radhika is called as Regima Jones, Varun as Vroom and Esha Singh as Eliza throughout the novel. This show how the western culture is influenced in India and how they treat human being as resources. The corporate exploitation is brought out by Bhagat in the treatment of human being at the call center job.

Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center* also deals problems like the use of alcohol and smoking as a style. In spite of educated, they know the side effects of such things although they use it as a style, to enjoy and have fun: "Six irresponsible agents found dead, alcohol in body" would be the headline" (128). When they are questioned, their reply is that they wanted relief from stress. These corporate sectors give holidays to enjoy and they influence the western culture on the Indians. The youngsters work in such corporate sectors think themselves to be western and follow their culture as a fashion. They speak only foreign language; they are addicted to drugs, alcohol, and smoking and even to a higher level of living a social life without getting married. Bhagat portrays all social imbalance in the society and how the Indian tradition and culture are affected.

Conclusion

Chetan Bhagat novels bring out the social imbalance throughout these novels, *Revolution 2020* and *One Night @ the Call Center*. He points out the problems such as corporate life style,

modern education system, misunderstanding among each other, corruption, exploitation, patriarchal setup, globalization, and social as well as personal problems in these novels. Bhagat had tried to solve this problem through his character; in *Revolution 2020* its Raghav's words and *One Night @ the Call Center* its God's words.

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A. Gayathridevi
Ph.D. Research Scholar
Department of English
Annamalai University

Annamalainagar
Tamilnadu
India

gayathrirose1000@gmail.com

Dr. T. Deivasigamai
Assistant Professor of English
Department o English
Annamalai University
drtenglishau@gmail.com