

Delineation of Contemporary Youth in Chetan Bhagat's Novels
The Three Mistakes Of My Life and
Two States: The Story Of My Marriage

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Abstract

Literature views reality critically. The modern novel captures the realities of contemporary life both the pleasant and the unpleasant, regardless of morals or ideological consideration. Recent years have witnessed a good number of Indian English fiction writers who have stunned the literary world with their works. One among them is Chetan Bhagat who is bestselling author. His works have touched millions of hearts through the journey of true love. Bhagat beautifully brings out the different phases of life which makes the readers easily understand about the life. Bhagat through his novel takes us to the journey of friendship, love, marriage through the youth in the modern world. According to Bhagat youth are becoming as the country's power. Youth has the ability to recognize the problem and they can solve it easily. So with the help of youths Bhagat brings out the reality in the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* and *2 States: The Story of Marriage*. Bhagat's novel voice out the sensibility of youth, any Indian can relate with their aspirations, dreams, love, pain, exam fear, pressure of assignments, friendship and so on are more natural. The greater truth is that nothing is impossible in the hands of youth and the youths of today are not simply wasting their time on unnecessary activities but they are fully involved in attaining greater heights in their life.

Keywords: Youth, Passion, Culture, Tradition, Marriage.

Introduction

Literature views reality critically. Literature presents the essence of reality linking things together. The modern novels captures the realities of contemporary life both the pleasant and the unpleasant, regardless of morals or ideological consideration. The most famous modern fiction writers are Chetan Bhagat, Ravinder Singh, PreetiShenoy,

DurjoyDatta, SudeepNagarkar, Nikita Singh etc., whose novels are based on contemporary youth and their society, anxieties, lifestyle, etc. These writers belong to the postmodern world of writing. Postmodern writing is characterized by free, bold, open and frank treatment of all forms of the things like going against the tradition and culture, friendship, pre-marital sex, etc. Among the famous modern fiction writer Chetan Bhagat is one of the most celebrated writer to explore the changes of the youth in the twenty-first century.



Chetan Bhagat

Courtesy: <http://www.chetanbhagat.com/about/pictures/>

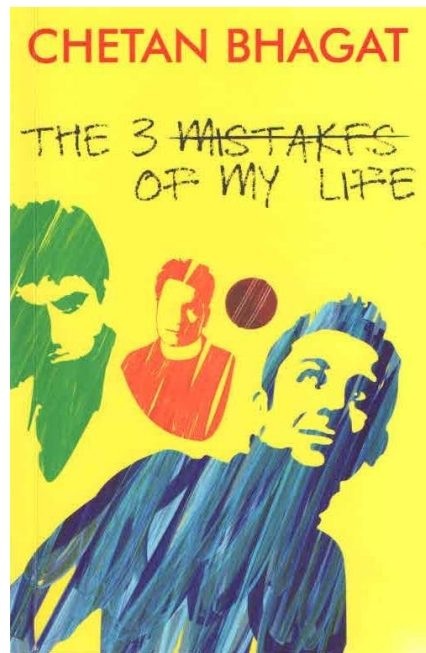
Chetan Bhagat is one of the most celebrated and famous writers of the present era. He was born on April 24, 1974. His novels got the credit of being the “bestsellers” since their release. His writings always projected reality and presented a true picture of life in India. Everyone can connect himself/herself to him the way he expressed himself which is understood easily. He covered variety of subjects from life at call center, secularism, and pressure in today’s education system, inter-community marriages, corruption and many more through his writing. He has huge fan followers. Bhagat’s other famous works like *Five Point Someone*, *One Night @ The Call Center*, *Revolution 2020*, *What Young India Wants*, *Half Girlfriend*, *Making India Awesome* and *One Indian Girl*.

The Plight of Indian Youth in Chetan Bhagat’s *The Three Mistakes Of My Life*

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In the post-modern world there is rift between religions, castes, and conservative mentality of parents. People just wanted to earn and so the passions for anything is put to death. Youth in India are struggling with the circumstances of life, to make their lives livable. Such condition is due to politics, religious, communalism, racism, casteism, and discrimination.

Today's youth are privileged subjects of the postmodern because they are the first generation to live intensely in the transformative world where media culture, computers and the other emerging technologies are dramatically transforming all aspects of life. It is a world where multimedia technologies are changing the very nature of work, education and the textures of everyday life.

As we are living in the post-modern world we depend upon the technical world and technical education that promotes technical skill and rational attitude only, which made youths to be happy by living in the gadgets world. Bhagat's novel is like mirror to the world by offering the youth suggestions or showing them directions.

Youth in India are struggling with some burning problems like expensive education, poverty, extreme competition in the entrance exam for college admission and lack of sports education, etc. Bhagat beautifully portrays these problems in his novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* through the life of Govind, Ish, Omi and Vidya (only female character in the novel).

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As we belong to contemporary world youth gives importance to aspiration, dream, love, love lost, exam fear, etc.

Chetan Bhagat brings out the stories which seem to be real life story and it unravels the minds of the contemporary youth especially through this novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life*. This novel brings out the situation of the contemporary India, which is easily relatable and identifiable by the modern youth in their life. Bhagat made an excellent effort to make his readers stick to the book till the end.

The novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is a story of business, cricket and religion. Through the character of Govind, Ish and Omi he showcases the lives of Indian youth which is largely bordered on ambition in making money, love for cricket and spiritual strongholds.

Bhagat as an outstanding writer concentrates on the passion of the people and deals with them from different perspectives. Bhagat brings out that passion is the essence of youth without which life would be without a direction. A person is determined by his passion in different field. The characters in the novel not only live with passion but also they are often obsessed with it. The three friends share a common passion for cricket at the same time they has different passion in various fields.

Govind, Ish and Omi

Bhagat portrays the character as passionate and ambitious person. Govind is more obsessed with business. As a post modern youth he wants to stand on his own leg by doing his own business to wants to have his own identity. Ishaan has passion for cricket. In the post modern youth don't have time to play outside because they are busy with playing temple run and candy crush,etc, but Ish is very different he is very good at cricket than his subjects. Omi is more concerned with religion. Through they had different field of dreams. They all faced difficulties in life and at the end of the novel we can see how they came up in their life.

Govind's Mistakes

The title of the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* has association with the life of the protagonist Govind. The three mistakes are the protagonist mistakes. His first mistake is the investment in the mall which collapses in the earthquake, his second mistake is intimate

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relationship with Vidya and the third mistake is the delay of moment to save the kid Ali. All these three mistakes made him to commit suicide, but through all his mistakes he learned a lesson in his life.

In the modern world youth are of strong outlook, practical, bold and brave enough with passion in their eyes, with the passion and dream the three friends joined together to open up a cricket shop. As they started growing in their business they decided to open up the new cricket shop in the mall, however their fate does not favour them, because the earthquake make the multi storeyed building crumble and it comes as a serious shock to all their efforts. This is the first mistake of Govind in his life.

Fourth Dimension: Vidya and Govind

At the outset of the novel, Bhagat makes reference not only to three dimensions, namely, business, cricket, and religion but also contributes a fourth dimension that is love. Love simultaneously flourishes in relationship of Vidya and Govind.

Vidya searches something new in her life. In the modern world most of the youth are forced to do the courses which they don't like. In the same way Vidya's parents wish her to join in medical college, though she wants to be a fashion designer. Young ones are forced by their kith and kin to go against their passion and aim. Vidya hates maths, but out of her parent's compulsion she is supposed to learn maths.

Vidya is portrayed as a bold young lady representing the woman folk of her age. She is very keen in asserting her own feelings and opinions. She feels that as she is grown up she has all the rights to decide her life as what she wants in her life. Though Govind is her maths tutor their relationship blossoms to friendship and slowly they have been attracted towards each other. Govind and Vidya relationship attains the level of fulfillments in modern terms. It is full of love, romance and sex. This marks the outcome of new stage in Indian society in which pre-marital sex has become frequent. This turns out to be his second mistake.

Omi

In Indian society, Religion has occupied an important place for the development of humanity. It has formulated principles for the guidance of human life and had laid stress on

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some values and standards. But this is accompanied with propagating some set norms and principles and it encouraged some ceremonies and rituals and practices, the impact of which on human life has not discontinued till date, which can be seen in the novel through the life of Omi. Omi is interested in religion because of his family background. The novel brings out how religion based political events can act and affect the lives of common people especially the youth.

Religious Bitterness and Fight, Third Mistake, Suicidal Tendency

The novel moves to the dramatic moments in the life of all the characters, namely, religious part. India is a land of various religions and this difference of religions brought in hatred and bitterness among the followers of different religions. In the novel the reader can see the complicated religious passions interwoven with the Post-Godhra communal riots in Ahmadabad. As young persons, Govind, Ish and Omi try to get rid of the riot. They believe that as young persons they can bring a positive change in controlling unrest created by the religious bitterness of cultures.

In the riot, Bitoo mama wants to kill Ali because he is a Muslim boy. The three friends want to save Ali from Bitoo mama. But Ali got injured. Govind feels that his cowardice was the cause of Ali's injury and blames himself. Govind feels that if he saved Ali on time he would not have been injured. He feels that this becomes the third mistake of his life.

Govind got frustrated by all this and tends to think that these are going to remain the unresolved question of his life and considers that suicide is the only way out of all this and commits suicide. As we know in life there will be many ups and downs but we should not let our self down. Suicide is not the reason to escape from the problems; we should face life with courage. In Govind's life because of his three mistakes things go horribly wrong and then come back again to the track. Life is a long equation which cannot be fully and finally solved. What one can do is to make best use of it. Bhagat brings out reunion of friends Ish and Govind who got together they become friends once again and they were doing the best to Ali.

Cricket and Life

Ish is another important character in the novel. He is very passionate about cricket. Indian youth's have love and craze for cricket and this can be seen in the eyes of Ish. Ishaan's

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father wants his son to go to the National Defence Academy however he has least interest in it so he runs away from it. Despite the discouraging atmosphere at home he dares to coach the students in the city. Ish supports Ali's talents in cricket in hitting sixes even in the dire situation. He is extremely concerned with Ali's cricket career.

Omi hates the company of Ali in the beginning of the novel because he was Muslim. Gradually he understands the quality of brotherhood. He, like his friend Ishaan, also helps Ali financially and consoles him emotionally. He sacrificed his life to save Ali from his mama. Omi did a lot to save the life and career of Ali.

Govind, Ish and Omi are such young men who are whipped away with political acts like Godhra mishap and communal riots after that. From this it is quite clear that young generation is against religion-based politics and wants to think globally.

Young India

According to Bhagat, through this novel he brings out that young India is learning its lessons and eventually matured. Though it is disconcerted, the young generation has a ray of hope in the novel. When people live with a lot of dreams and desires, they are ready to face any calamity to satisfy their ego and to get more respect in the society. Bhagat beautifully portrayed it in the novel. At the time of saving Ali, all the three friends forgot their life and passion and wanted to save Ali's life and career. The Post-Ghodra riots put all the characters into really perilous situation where Govind and Ishaan lose their friend Omi. But they are successful in saving the life of Ali, which was a major challenge at the time of crisis.

Real Life Events as Part of the Novel

The real life events like Gujarat earthquakes, India-Australia Cricket series and Gujarat riots are cleverly woven into the story which makes it more relevant to our regular life. The portrayal of Govind, Ish and Omi is quite realistic because such characters are visible in our society everywhere; we realize that the characters in the novel discreetly become the part of our own life.

Willing to Change

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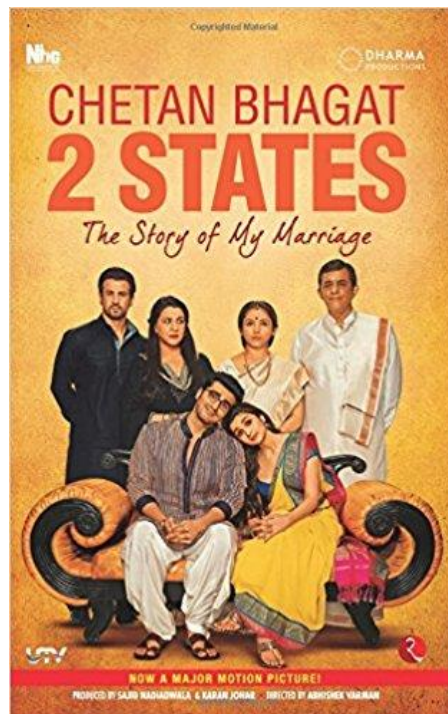
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Despite the tragic turn of events, the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* is a dark and a witty tale which highlights the ethos, aspirations, anxieties, and struggles of an entire generation in contemporary India driven by communal feuds and religious politics. The young ones face ups and downs in their life. They have got the ability to face it.

Now the scenario is changed. Youth has taken the front of this difference and try to minimize and solve these problems. Youth may awaken the nation so that every person becomes a true nation of our country. Our country should identify the causes of unrest among youth and take enormous efforts to dispel the problems of the society.

In Bhagat's fictional world metro generation is in no mood to change themselves and the world. They are in a hurry to become rich by finding various shortcuts. Bhagat expresses his concern for the depression and sickness growing fast in the minds of young ambitious technocrats. Modern young generation and its reactions to the political, social, personal issues are the main concern of the novelist. Youth is the important section of the society who is supposed to build the nation.

The Youth Culture and Tradition in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The Story Of My Marriage*



Focus on Issues of Contemporary Society

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Modern Indian English writers mainly focus on the burning issues of contemporary society and changing scenario of the modern age. Novels in Indian English writing have provided new scope, new dimensions and new life because of the diversity of themes related to different aspects of human life as perceived by the emerging novelists.

Two States: The Story of My Marriage

Bhagat's novel *Two States: The Story of My Marriage* concentrates on how a particular phenomenon, the concept of love related to matters of culture and society with its customs. The novel deals with culture, tradition and cultural conflicts which give different experience and imbibing them meaningfully.

The novel *Two States* is, by Bhagat's own admission, a thinly veiled account of his own love affair and marriage. As rose symbolizes beauty and love, the soldier symbolizes nation, the title of any work should symbolize its theme. Bhagat's *Two States*, as the title suggests, does not deal with any political conflict or propaganda between two states, but it shows the axis of people from 2States coming into convergence. A simple but realistic novel, brilliantly explores the encounter of two states, Punjab and Tamil Nadu.

There is a blending of two cultures, religion, languages, tradition and practices. Chetan Bhagat in *Two States: The Story of My Marriage* deals with a very serious theme of cross-culture, tradition and multi-culture in a lighter vein. Bhagat has touched some of the sensitive issues of cultural differences, father-son relationship and two different cultures. He is of the view that love knows no boundaries whether it be caste, creed, religion, state or country. *Two States* is a story of interstate marriage in India.

A Love Story

It is the successful love story of two beautiful love birds which brings out their education, their meetings, their love, their family, their respect for cultural values, the role of parents, and their struggle they faced before their marriage. Even the direction of wind is getting changed in this modern world. Younger generation believes in love and marriage and they want to take their own decision in their life. In the twenty-first century, young people in love have no time to believe in horoscopes or tradition.

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Two States: The Story of My Marriage is a love story of a Punjab guy Krish Malhotra and a Tamil Brahmin girl Ananya Swaminathan. The love story begins in IIM-A (Indian Institute of Management- Ahmadabad). The novel deals with complex human relationship. It portrays how the cultural difference can create problems in the matrimonial alliance and how hard the couple has to fight against to be part of the destiny to be in wed-lock. Krish and Ananya have to make an extra effort to turn their dreams into reality.

As both Krish and Ananya belong to post-modern world, they are very young and intelligent and they try not to carry any baggage of their linguistic culture and traditional background. But both of their parents carry their culture and traditional baggage behind them. They both belong to upper caste families. In India the marriage is not between boy and girl but between two different communities and families. Inter-caste marriages are still considered as taboo for the orthodox Indian families.

The youth in the post-modern world will elope if their parents do not accept their love relationship. Contrary to this usual practice, the lovers do not elope, instead choose to seek the consent of their families.

The protagonists of the novel- Krish and Ananya are highly educated, independent and living according to the new set of norms while the parents are still rooted in traditions. They both believe that as they belong to the post-modern world they have got the rights to take their own decision. But their luck does not favour them and they have to face a lot obstacles to convert their love story into love marriage. Their battle becomes almost tough since they belong to the opposite poles of a great cultural divide: North and South India, Aryan and Dravidian civilization.

Most societies have had strong opposition towards marriage across ethnic, religious, class, caste and racial lines, and India is no exception. The Indo-Aryan north forms marriage alliances with people to whom it is not already linked by ties of blood, while Dravidian south seeks to strengthen family ties through marriage preferably with blood relatives. In the arrangements of marriage it is the general norm that shared features, such as same religion, same caste, same culture, same creed and same status are strictly adhered to.

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To make it clear, in Indian psyche the majority of the parents still are not in favour of love marriages. The thinking and feeling of the parents are same everywhere. They want to arrange the marriages of their sons and daughters according to their own likes and dislikes. But the post-modern youth want the marriage to be of their choice. Krish's mother wants to select bride for her son according to her choice since she doesn't like Ananya.

Nowadays post-modern Indian women are quite different from those of traditional and shy women of ancient India. Reasons laid behind these changes are their freedom for education, less social boundaries, and liberty from their families.

Ananya belongs to the contemporary world whereas Krish's mother represents the traditional world. Ananya, the representative of second generation, is ready to adopt all modern styles of living and also is agreeable to hold traditional customs. The members of first group are rather stern to follow this new version of life.

As Ananya represents contemporary woman, her attitude is different from that of traditional woman. This made Krish's mother not show any sense of appreciation towards Ananya and her parents. This shows the generation gap between the contemporary and traditional women. Krish tries his best to utilize this opportunity, but his mother does not allow him to do so.

Actually in India women are assumed as a sign of prestige. To maintain the reputation of family the women are forced to follow many rules and regulations. Chain of customs and traditions wrapped within traditional women. They get rid of new ideas and changes take place in the society, whereas in the present scenario is getting changed.

This brings out that on those days traditional women are commented as shy, loving, caring moral and religious is now in the post-modern world it is transformed as bold, beautiful, intelligent, and smart woman. As Chetan Bhagat describes Ananya, she represents the modern woman. She is energetic and impressive. She is enough emotional to risk her reputation without carrying social rules. Krish's mother compares Ananya with Hema Malini and Sridevi who, according to her, fell in love with north Indian boys and finally married them. She warns her son.

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Though the protagonists belong to the post-modern world, they do not want to run away or get estranged from their families. They choose the more difficult path-to convince their respective parents for their marriage and get their approval. They take turns to win each other's family and then make both families like and accept each other. This provided Krish with an opportunity to explore the cultural difference between Tamilians and Punjabis, expose their ingrained bias, prejudice and target their idiosyncrasies.

There are cultural difference between Tamilians and Punjabis. There are differences in food habits, dress materials, language, and in customary practices. Salwar Kameez is widely preferred by the Punjabi women. Sari is favoured by Tamilians. While kurta, a long straight-cut, loose shirt teamed with pyjamas, the loose baggy salwar or a kind of sarong called *lungi* make up traditional dress for men, Tamilaian prefer dhotis. There are differences in food preferences too. While South Indian food is spicier adding tamarind and coconut in all their preparation,. Punjabis prefer dairy products. When talking about the culture there is a vast difference between North and South Indian music and dance. Bhagat brings out Krish's travel from North to South. The novel is full of thrills and sensations. In order to get the hands of Ananya, Krish's efforts have touched the culminating point. He wins the favour of Ananya's parents but a tough task is ahead because of his mother's stubbornness. Ananya is advanced, she thinks with new approaches and she is ready to take risks. She is confident enough about her thinking. Ananya made a visit to Krish's family and helps him in his mission to change the attitude of his mother gradually.

Krish encourages Ananya to get through all the struggles in his house. He encourages her to make more and more efforts to participate in his family ceremonies. It is perhaps the first time Ananya attends the north-Indian wedding ceremony. They make several strategies to make their marriage a success. In India, there is a marriage not only between human beings, but there is marriage between two families, reputation and wealth. Rajji Mama has given everything to Duke's parents. But dowry is dowry. The more anyone gives, less it seems. Duke's parents seem emotionless and they do not want to leave an opportunity to grab dowry at right time. All the females are ready to remove their jewelry and give to Rajji Mama. Ananya watches all these with surprise.

Ananya, being a well-educated girl, presents her boldness and her interview of Duke compels him to change the attitude of his parents to behave in cordial manner. Ananya plays an important role in compromising the situation during the wedding ceremony of Minti and Duke. This made everyone to like Ananya and her boldness. Through this Ananya wins the heart of Krish family.

Thus the dream of Krish and Ananya is being realized after a long struggle. The struggle is not violent rather it is interesting and made them matured. The story brings out an experience of real things happening in our daily life. Finally the younger generation wins but it has to depend on the approval and help of the older generation. After a lot of commotion, raging emotion and ego clashes, Krish and Ananya bring out that the love in the post-modern world is not just lust or physical attraction but also of true love, and they get married.

Marriages are regarded as the most important social custom and hence viewed as the best means to remove the barriers of caste system. Love knows no boundaries whether it be of caste, creed, religion or region. Successful marriage is not dependent on caste, creed, religion or region; on the other hand, it is built on the aspects of mutual understanding and compatibility. As a youth in the post-modern world, every youth should listen to the voice of the heart.

Narrative Technique

Narrative technique is art of telling story. It is a style and it can be conveyed through pictures, songs, poetry, speech, fiction and non-fiction as well. Narrative techniques are the methods that authors use to tell their stories. Through the narrative techniques serves as a prism through which ideas are transmitted to the readers where narrator detains the past, holds the present and prepares readers for the future. It is considered as an important tool in presentation, interpretation and evaluation of the novel.

In Bhagat's novel the reader can distinguish the narrative techniques into two as major narrative technique and minor narrative technique. Major narrative techniques are Narrative hook, First person narration, Stream of consciousness, Flashbacks, Autobiographical elements, Phases of life, and Prologue. Minor narrative techniques employed in the novels of Bhagat are Plot twist, Leitwortstill, MacGuffin, Interlinking,

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Narrative jump, Epistolary, Linear narrative, Images, Romantic comedy and Breaking the fourth wall. The reader can see all these narrative techniques present in both the novels *The Three Mistakes of My Life* and *Two States: The Story of My Marriage*.

One of the most important aspects of technique is the use of language in a novel. Language defines both the character and atmosphere. The spoken language is the mirror of the speaker and of the moment. Bhagat uses lucid narrative style and simple language. The reader can feel that Bhagat's novels will hook the readers. He has used the technique Narrative hook (in the opening of a story that 'hooks' the reader's attention so that he or she will keep on reading).

Conclusion

This article "Delineation of Contemporary Youths in Chetan Bhagat's Novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* and *Two States: The Story of My Marriage*" has attempted to describe the sensibility of youth, any Indian can relate with their aspirations, dream, love, pain, exam fear, pressure of assignments, friendship and so on. The characters fall in love and lots of mischiefs. He shows that the lives of youngsters are hectic and how they are caught in the materialistic rat race through the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* and *Two Story: The Story of My Marriage*.

In *Three Mistakes of My Life* Bhagat explores the problems of unemployment, religious frenzy, personal adjustment and frustration that are creeping fast among the youths of India. The communal frenzy can be eliminated only after accepting the distinction of communal identities. In *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, Bhagat exposes the emerging scenario of the clash of ideologies in his face of cross-cultural diversities to restore a more amicable bonding of personal relations. It will essentially be a stepping stone to eliminate the evils like female subjugation, obsessive burden of cramped matrimonial traditions, dowry system and all the absence of the understanding in personal relations.

The fictional art of Chetan Bhagat has become a class in itself and it has given a new direction to the stream of Indian English fiction to be more lively, committed and focused at the reorientation of the social system. It is free from the burden of obscure and stark philosophy but it is the reconstruction of the images of life that are thought provoking. It is

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difficult to eliminate the impressions of striking sarcasm at the absurdities of human expectations constructed within the framework of his novels. Thus it furnishes a greater truth that nothing is impossible in the hands of youth and the youth of today are not simply wasting their time on unnecessary activities but they are fully involved in attaining greater heights in their life.

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