

A TREATISE ON SOCIAL MINDFULNESS IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S SELECT NOVELS

By

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Abstract

India is one of the colonized countries that underwent radical changes during and aftermath of the colonized rule. The cultural imbalances created by the rulers on the people and on the nation had created a numerous changes on the culture and tradition, right from the attire to the attitude everything becomes anglicized. English-speaking Indians were offered important jobs during their reign; the same attitude has been followed still. In India, speaking in English is still a sign of sheer intelligence, and that has become a common requirement for a job. In the writings of Chetan Bhagat, he picks a commoner as his protagonist and presents his sufferings in an omniscient narrative. His narratives went through different thematic contents interwoven within such as love, friendship and difficulties faced by middle class youngsters hailing from both rural and urban.

Keywords: omniscient, interwoven, hailing, social mindfulness.

Introduction

Unlike a drop of water which loses its identity when it joins the ocean, man does not lose his being in the society in which he lives. Man's life is independent. He is born not for the development of the society alone, but for the development of his self.

- B.R. Ambedkar

Upon the advent of Englishmen into India, there's been a great change in the field of Education from its earlier oriental days to a radicalization of thoughts and treatment of today. They introduced English as a language then as a medium, it opened up a myriad of

opportunities to learn the worldly things from other countries as well as within. India is a country of numerous states which has its own language, culture and tradition differ even with their adjacent states. This inclusion of learning English into the educational zone brought knowledge from within; now English has attained the lingua franca of the court and the country. As said above having a mere literacy in English language is considered to be a sheer intelligence and that commands respect among the not so elite section of the native populace. Yet still one of the common difficulties faced by the students of India, especially from the rural students are, they never get

proper education. Education systems in India are fully mark-centered; instead of measuring the intelligence of students on the cognitive aspect they give importance to memory power. The expectation of a teacher from the students is that they should read and reproduce what is in the book without skipping even a punctuation mark. On the basis of the marks the student obtained, he is respected.

The common prevalent theme found in the writings of Chetan is, the struggles faced by middle-class Indian youth and unemployment. They need to sacrifice numerous things for the sake of their family including their dream regarding, love, education and employment. Due to financial incapacity many students need to leave their education half way through, and join any work temporarily just to support the family. One can see many such people who lose their dreams just to fulfill the expectations of their parents. Unlike the people from other countries, Indians cannot marry as per their choice. There might be innumerable problems relating to the suitability of the horoscope, caste, religion, and status of the Groom and the bride, the unanimity of the consents of both sides with regard to several issues, the match making act may be fructified or lost.

Chetan Bhagat vividly depicts in all his novels is the various competitions faced by the commoners of India. The problem

of unemployment is very keen and crushy in this land, of India – to the level of making so many competitors even hailing from even highly rated educational bodies like IIMs and IITs, such being the case, the precision demanding jobs go a begging without attracting sufficiently talented, scientifically sharp minded job seeking individuals. That is the fate of our educational system or some other related inadequacies of the teaching process. The number of graduates in India even for a mean job, very highly qualified candidates does apply.

Such is the height of the predicament of joblessness in our country, so to win the competition in matters of securing a right job, howsoever is the quality of the competing individuals is not that easy. Due to the underemployment, over qualified candidates are working in an ordinary job, it directly shuts the way for a rightful job of a commoner; this leads to a different level of underemployment. Finding a right job is a Herculean task in the modern world due to the overpopulation. The oft-repeated presentation of his, is related to relational differences between the parent and children. Abiding and adhering to the words of the parents is inevitable. Right from the school, college, course, even the bride will be chosen by the family only. Sometimes going against the wishes of the parents is considered to be an uncouth behavior. For a youngster, he has to obey the words of his parents till he gets married and even his son gets

married. The same happens to the successive generations.

Migration is the common problem faced by the students who either emigrate or immigrate to other city. City-dwellers will not face much problem as they are already accustomed to the city culture. Those who emigrate from the rural into urban will undergo a drastic change in their lifestyles. Right from the food, attire, attitude and way of living are alien to them. They cannot assimilate themselves to the new ambience at once. If they overcome the situation without much difficulty - they can live anywhere. Those who fail to do so will be a victim of the modernization and globalization considered to be a failure in the modern world. Education is a dynamic process. The prime aim of education should be imparting a need based education that can inculcate in students, the skills of employability and professional ethics. It should also teach certain requisite life skills that help them to live a life happily and respectfully. The prime vision of education to bring up better citizens. The vision of making better citizens with democratic values can help to build up a nation as a super power in the real sense. Education has to be so dynamic that it can accept changes as per the need of the time. The course curriculum, pedagogy and the evaluation patterns have to be modified to meet the latest need of the time. Government encourages and sponsors many researches to investigate the

latest innovative techniques to impart education in various institutions and arranges training programs for the people working in various institutions. Much time, money and energy is invested in it, but the net result is not satisfactory. The reason behind it is that people do not want to come out of their comfort zone. They hardly accept the change. There may be a quite small percentage of working people who are dynamic in their attitude towards work, but most of the working people are rigid in what they do. In the field of education, where there is a possibility of dynamism every new day, rigidity or inflexibility has no space at all. If such a rigidity of any kind is encouraged, it gives to raise many issues and problems which can affect the entire system very badly. And this is very true to the educational institutions where the future generation of the country is moulded. The standards of administration and classroom instruction should be flexible to different kinds of learners.

Chetan Bhagat, in the novel *Five Point Someone* has echoed the problems and issues of contemporary Indian education system due to the prevailing rigidity and dogmas in the system. He has also focused on the effects of the same on the students' future in particular and entire society in general. Bhagat has taken the base of the story of the three average students of IIT, with different mindsets towards the system.

The simple and linear flow of the story also exposes certain very serious issues of the contemporary Indian education system as follow.

Indian colleges and higher education institutes have the common problem of ragging the weaker students, especially the freshers by the seniors. Physical, financial or emotional harassment or exploitation of the fresher has become a very serious issue in the contemporary education system of India. Ragging is sometimes taken as rights of senior students over the juniors, in some of the reputed educational institutions especially in professional colleges. Even girl students are found involved in such menacing activity. Many students are humiliated, harassed or exploited physically, emotionally, financially or some other way, by the senior students of the institutes. And the results are dreadful to the extent that some students commit suicide. Ragging has caused many deaths of innocents and spoiled the careers of the innocent students in previous years.

Ragging is an act of words spoken or written or by an act which has the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness to others. Indisciplined activities might cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension.

Therefore a junior student faces a sense of shame or embarrassment which affects the psyche of a junior student.

Conclusion

Growing notorious behavior of the students in higher educational institutions is another big challenging issue of contemporary education system in India. The level of discipline is comparatively very low and disappointing in the present time. College life is more for enjoyment and less for career building to many students. The student-teacher relationship is no more traditional while Guru-Shishya relationship with whole hearted commitment to each other. In the modern times, the relationship is like that of a customer-vender where there is giving money and getting degree and nothing more than that. The class rooms are mostly found empty and canteens are always crowded. The teachers who teach sincerely try to bring them up. But they want enjoyment rather than acquiring knowledge. In such a contradictory situation the role of colleges and universities is very challenging. Except for some of the really disciplined institutions, the modern campus culture is not promising in most of the colleges and universities. The teachers are free in their staff rooms due to the absence of students. The use of mobile phone with internet connection is not used for educational purposes by many of the students. The togetherness of girls and boys has mix up of the two genders in public places especially in educational institutions has become a common phenomenon. One can

frequently observe a group of some notorious students teasing or playing pranks or passing sarcastic comments on the girl-students passing by or staring at them with mal-intention. The friendship culture of the recent times in the college generation creates many issues like seduction, elopement, exploitation and black mailing. Smoking has become a fashion for most of the college students. Now such students hardly feel guilty of smoking if a professor is passing by. Even some professors are observed to be chain smokers. The sexual affairs between girl students and teachers have much spoiled the pious Guru-shishya relationship. Many cases are registered in the police records regarding the physical exploitation of girl students by luring them with marks. The language and behavior of most of the students is not moderate. There is no fear

about punishment in the mind of students, so there is a least possibility for a constructive change in their behavior. For an ostentatious display, they purchase rich clothes and expensive mobile phones, pay heavy bills for food and drinks. Many police cases are registered that college students are involved with anti – social crimes such as stealing the mobiles and bikes. Such things happen because students spend more for unfair activities. What is more shocking is that some girl students are found, working as call-girls to meet such needless expenses. Drinking is becoming very common in most of the hostel surroundings. Watching pornography movies, sharing nude photographs through email or social sites or talking filthy matters among themselves are not a matter of disgrace in the present campus culture.

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