Introduction to the Author:

A Rajina Banu is a Ph.D research scholar at Department of English & Foreign Languages, Alagappa University, Karaikudi. She has written many other papers on modern literature in the wake of today's literature.

“Prospect of Globalisation and Its Impact on India:”

A Critique of Chetan Bhagat's Novels

“Globalization has many meanings depending on the context and on the person who is talking about (Malik).” In Indian context, this implies removing constraints and obstacles to the entry of MNCs; providing facilities to FDIs to invest in different fields of economic activity in India, allowing Indian companies to enter into foreign collaborations.

Great literature has the ability to transform and sow the seeds of courage and build knowledge...The new millennium is fraught with challenges and we can ill-afford to live in our own comfort zones. The world has been facing problems of insurgency and terrorism, and is seeing to an unprecedented extent the impact of terrorist violence (Hindu).

Flowing with globalisation, India is shining in nearly every prospect. But besides opportunities certain challenging issues regarding culture, tradition, and ethnicity are also rising in the recent decades of the 21st century due to globalisation. Hence, the modern Indian English Literature considers the trends that have emerged in Indian society by thematically focusing on the challenges faced by the Internationalised Indian lives.

One of the dominant thinkers of the new millennium, Chetan Bhagat's writings has created a new philosophy for a modernised young India. This paper through examining the novels of the young writer Chetan Bhagat aims at evaluating what comes next for Indian writing—the new beginnings—the new trends which are emerging from the intertwining of the current global, cultural, economic, and political scene with writing technologies. Donald Greenless has claimed that, “Chetan Bhagat might not be another Vikram Seth, Salman...
Rushdie or Arudhanti Roy, but he has authentic claims to being one of the voices of a generation of middle class Indian (New York Times)."


His *Five Point Someone - What Not to Do at IIT*, the first novel to win the hearts of the young, deals with the lives of – Hari, Ryan and Alok – exam-oppressed students who compete to get into the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and then rebel against the stultifying ambience of academic procedures of “continuous mugging, testing and assignments. Where is the time to try out new ideas (FPS 25).” He questions, the Indian educational system, “of relative grading and overburdening the students... where is the room for original thought? Where is the time for creativity? It is not fair (Ibid 35)... And this IIT system is nothing but a mice race. It is not a rat race, mind you, as rats sound somewhat shrewd and clever. So it is not about that. It is about mindlessly running a race for four years, in every class, every assignment and every test. It is a race where profs judge you every ten steps, with a GPA stamped on you every semester... what have IITs given to this country? Name one invention in the last three decades (Ibid, 100).

This novel is both an attack on the darker sides of the emergence of Technology in India and the problems of young generation, also sternly criticises the mechanical life style of Indians in the globalised nation.

Another aspect of globalisation is call centre culture. Call center jobs are hot picks for India’s youth brigade at present as it seems to be a non-risky job and requires minimum educational qualification. The story of *One Night @ the Call Center* which is regarded as
romantic comedy revolves around a six bored young Indians who are working for Ashwani Rana Call Centre in India to resolve the mindless inquiries of Midwestern American Technophobes to sell home appliances to US. It pictures how the modern youngsters choose to work for different reasons mechanically through the characters - Shyam, Sam, Esha, Vroom, Radhika, Priyanka; Bad-boss, the employer and Military Uncle. For betterment, satisfaction, contentment and settlement they are striving. But their efforts, struggle and hard work for survival go in vain as there is panic and chaos everywhere. The night shift of their job also implies bewilderment, restlessness and timeless in their life.

The inclusion of the spiritual interlude in the novel is noteworthy. During that particular night the God’s call surprises the receivers. The phone call encourages the survivors to settle account with their boss, to risk their job for the welfare of the thousands of the employees. Here, Bhagat by using a new twist that God speaking in English over phone to advise his devotees symbolically refers to the call from the within their will to do or live. The divine voice advises the survivors to ponder over two things - one, “Think about what you really want” and two, “what you need to change in your life to get it”. It motivates the six to such an extent that they get ready to face their problems with utmost determination and motivation.

His third creation The 3 Mistakes of My Life: A Story about Business, Cricket and Religion discusses the religious and political discrepancies and other cultural devastations such as celebration of pre-marital sex, marital infidelity, youth’s fickle mindedness that are prevailed in the modernised India. It focuses on the various aspects of young lives – family relationship, friends, sentiment, romance, love, social problems, business life, religious upheavals and of course cricket – at the juncture of globalisation. The story which is presented through govind’s eyes centres on the lives three friends who are struggling to decide their goal - Ish, Omi, and Govind himself. Govind, a brilliant student of mathematics, who brims with high ambitions,
tries to commit suicide for making the three mistakes in his life. However, he is saved and rejoins with his friend at the end.

This novel attempts to unite the individuals of different cultures and religions under the identity of Indian. He has consciously developed the characters as follows, Ish to reflect the secular and broadmindedness of Indian youth; Govind to represent the flavor of the entrepreneurial spirit among the Indian youth; Lastly, Omi to paints the picture of the Indian youths who often get seduced by trivial temptations but are capable of overcoming those bad instincts and of possessing a heart of gold and flings to action without worrying about their own lives or remaining in the territory of selfishness. Although Omi endorses in his Mama’s religious and political sentiments of Hinduism, as a true modern Indian he erased all the trivial inhibitions off his mind and dares to save the life of an innocent Muslim boy sacrificing his own life.

Semi-autobiographical novel of Bhagat 2 States: The Story of My Marriage unfurls multicultural realities that affect the modern generation of the new millennium. It discusses about the importance of inter-caste, inter-religious marriages in reaching unity in diversity. This is the story of Bhagat’s Love and marriage with Anusha. Bhagat found that his own marriage had scope for integrating Indian minds. And he suggests the multiple ways of convincing the parents to accept one’s spouse from different caste, religion, and culture by discussing his own experience in convincing his Panjabi parents to accept his Tamilian wife. So, there are jokes about Punjabis and Tamilians in this book.

The storyline of Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption. Ambition and Half Girlfriend are nearly similar as they deal with triangle love. As correctly regarded by the critics, “Half Girlfriend is old wine in new bottle” Bhagat has used included different aspects of Revolution 2020 in the making of Half Girlfriend. Revolution 2020 is about the lives of three childhood friends - Gopal, Raghav and Aarti. Gopal wants to be a rich man, Raghav aspires to change the
world and Aarti desires to become an air hostess. Here, Bhagat discusses the most prevailing social upheavals such as corruption in education, politics, business, economy etc.

Revolution 2020’ is an attempt to bring to the fore the inherent corruption rooted in India’s education system and to bring out the anomaly of non-profit organizations and commercialization of education. Through the character, Shuklaji, the MLA the author depicts the role of politicians who are not very literate but still holds the courage of opening an insatiable of higher education. And Bhagat’s Half Girlfriend is a rural - urban love story of Madhav, a Bihari boy and Riya a reluctant Delhi girl. Madhav loves Riya but she marries Rohan, her childhood friend neglecting him. After getting divorce from her husband she visits Madhav who tries to help his mother in running the old school in his village.

An opportunity comes when Ojha, the MLA informs him of Bill Gates' visit to some schools in Bihar. Madhav tries his best to convince Gates to fund his schools' development. And Riya helps him in preparing a speech for Bill Gates. The two are successful in their fundraising, but, after the speech, Riya moves to New York to become a singer leaving a letter stating that she has lung. And after three years of separation, Madhav rejuvenates his love with Riya and marries her. Through Madhav’s character Bhagat discusses the importance of English fluency in the urbanised India.

Ultimately, *what young India Wants: Selected Essays and Columns* enumerate the various issues and their impact on the lives of the Indian. Bhagat “analyses some of the complex issues facing modern india, offers solutions and invites discussion on them (Blog)”. He questions the corrupt social set up and encourages the young to change this. Thus he by presenting the problems of modernised multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and pluralistic society, expects to change the attitude of young modern minds and to elevate their lives. “Though India is getting a global recognition and slowly moving towards to become a major economic and political strength, still many basic problems like rural poverty, corruption
and political instability remained unsolved (Chaterjee).” So this is mandatory on our part and predominant duty to work for integrated development of our Nation. The Y and Z generation through destroying the prevailing cultural inhibitions, religious hegemonies and gender bias should pave the way to create united India.
References


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