



SOCIAL REALISM: REPRESENTATION OF PROBLEMS OF YOUTH AND FRAUDULENT SOCIETY IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S REVOLUTION 2020

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an honest attempt to understand the concept of social realism in literature. Realism, broadly speaking, is the faithful or truthful representation of the events in a matter of fact way avoiding any kind of embellishment or glorification. In literature, the term 'realism' is associated with a number of prefixes that varies its trends of presentation. There may be philosophical realism, magic realism, surrealism, hallucinatory realism, social realism and many more. Social realism is a literary technique that presents a true picture of society. It also mirrors the life as it is and offers social commentary. The novelists who use the technique of social realism often present the social evils, social injustice and social issues that affect the life of middle class particularly. Chetan Bhagat is the well known author of six novels and all these novels are about the youth, their aspirations and problems, their struggle, success and failures. According to Chetan Bhagat, the young generation of India is on the verge of destruction. They are indulged in drinking, smoking, sex and illegal business. Gopal, the narrator-cum-protagonist of Bhagat's fifth novel Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition (2010) symbolically stands for the young generation of India who are walking on the wrong path. Aarti, the only female character in the novel enjoys Gopal's company for drinking and develops sexual relations with him though she loves Raghav. Thus, by introducing these two characters, Chetan Bhagat succeeds in presenting degradation of moral and ethical values in Indian society. Gopal, Aarti and Raghav are three young aspirants in the novel who aspire for being successful person in their life. Gopal, because of his father's wish wants to be an engineer but couldn't make it. Aarti wants to be an air-hostess but fails and Raghav has great ambition of eradicating corruption. These three characters have faced severe problems while achieving their target. Through these characters, the novelists tried to depict the problems of youth such as unemployability, poverty and failure and malpractices in the society, etc.

Key Words: Realism, Social Realism, Problems of Youth and Fraudulent Society.



Introduction

Like the famous Indian English novelists, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan, Chetan Bhagat is very much interested in depicting social issues and evils in his literary works. The author has painted the picture of the young generation of India and the malpractices in the society in his all novels. *Five Point Someone* (2004) criticizes the Indian education system which is based on the bookish knowledge only. His second novel *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005) depicts the Indian youth fighting against some odds for career in commercial sector. The third novel *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008) throws light on the sport, commerce and communal carnage on the name of religion. Bhagat's fourth novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* (2009) discusses the issue of cultural conflict. His fifth novel *Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition* (2011) delineates the hot topic of corruption in education. Recently, Chetan Bhagat has published his sixth novel *Half Girlfriend* (2015) centering the youth. Thus, almost all of his novels are overloaded with social realism and the youth shading light on their ambitions, struggle, love affairs, marriage institutes, corrupt politics and media culture.

Brief Outline of *Revolution 2020*

Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition (2011) is a story of success and failure of three youngsters - Gopal Mishra, Raghav Kashyap and Aarti Pradhan who live in a small and traditional town called Varanasi. The subtitle of the novel runs as *Love, Corruption, Ambition* and each word in the subtitle sticks to the particular character. Aarti is a sensitive girl and very much cared about her love. When she comes to know that Raghav has no time to spare with her, she comes to Gopal who happens to be her childhood friend. Gopal Mishra indulges in corruption as he joins his hands with MLA Shuklaji. Though he fails to be an engineer, he becomes the owner of engineering institute. Raghav Kashyap is a brilliant boy who succeeds in entrance examination and secures a degree in engineering. However, he leaves the job offered by Infosys and starts to work as journalist to eradicate corruption in the society.

The novel begins with the author's visit to Ganga Tech College in Varanasi. The author was invited for the pep talk in this college and after delivering the lecture he went to Gopal Mishra's home for drink. Due to heavy drink, Gopal Mishra, the young director of Ganga Tech College got severely affected and was admitted in the hospital. When the author visited the hospital to enquire his health, he started to narrate his story of broken love affair, failure in IIT entrance exams, age old land dispute, his father's ambition and struggle, school day experience, his boat riding with Aarti, etc. He was sent to Kota for preparing IIT entrance examination by his father. There he proved nothing worth and came back to home without success. His father died and after that Gopal was introduced before the MLA Shuklaji who was a corrupted political leader. With the support of Shuklaji, Gopal closed the land dispute



and constructed a huge building and named it Ganga Tech College. Thus, the first narrative line tells the story of Gopal Mishra's struggle and ambition, failure and success.

Raghav Kashyap is one more important character in the novel and he indulges himself in the heroic deed of eradicating corruption from the society. He graduated as an engineer from Banaras Hindu University. He left the job offered by Infosys and started to work as journalist. He was the man whose article on Ganga scam compelled Shuklaji to resign. Being an overambitious, Raghav neglected his girlfriend Aarti and that made her to go to Gopal. Aarti is the only female character who aspired to be an air hostess. She failed to be an air hostess and preferred to work as customer service manager in the big hotel. It was here she met Gopal and had drinks and sex to with him. In short the novels represents the youth who have come from the every part of social stratification. Gopal belongs to the middle class family in which parent's ambitions are dominant. His father is a teacher who couldn't afford the fees of private tuition and therefore, sells his land and sends his son to Kota to clear the IIT entrance examination. Raghav and Aarti come from rich and well to do family. Raghav's father is an engineer and he supports his son very strongly for his career. Aarti's grandfather was a politician and her father is an IAS officer. Because of his being an IAS, the private tuition centres never charge her tuition fees. There is love triangle in the novel and beneath this love story; there is a story of eradicating corruption from Indian society. In short, the plot of the novel revolves around the three youngsters- one wants to be a rich man irrespective of moral, ethical values. Another wants to be a champion of the social revolution and the third loses moral values for physical satisfaction.

Thematic Analysis of *Revolution 2020*

Chetan Bhagat depicts the social evils, corruption and problems of young generation through his fifth novel *Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition* (2011). He has illustrated the theme of love with different shades and attitudes. While reading about the relationship between Gopal and Aarti, the readers feel that they are good companion. However, due to his academic failure Aarti leaves him and goes with Raghav, a brilliant IIT student. So in the beginning, the author shows the love triangle. In the course of time, Aarti comes to know that Raghav is an overambitious and has no time to spare with her. Being desperate, she comes back to Gopal, her school day friend and has a sex with him. However, Gopal feels very bad and decides to help Raghav in his mission. He also understands that Aarti is the best companion for Raghav only. Therefore, he plays a drama of having prostitutes to show his infidelities to Aarti. Finally, Aarti goes back to Raghav. It is here the author presented the theme of platonic love.

Ambitions or an aspiration of the youth is another important theme that the author has handled in the novel. The novel is basically about the aspirations of the three young IIT students. Gopal wants to become a rich man. Raghav aspires for to be a social reformer and



Aarti wants to be an air hostess. Chetan Bhagat has selected two cities- Varanasi and Kota intentionally. He wants to show that the time has changed and the students from Varanasi also eager to go to Kota for higher/technical education. Gopal Mishra comes from the middle class family background. His father wants to make him an engineer and also struggles a lot. However, Gopal is not interested in being an engineer. Instead of it, he aspires to become a rich and powerful person. To fulfill his ambition, he joins the hands with the MLA Shuklaji and becomes a rich man by implementing unfair practices. Raghav Kashyap, another character in the novel is from well to do family and brilliant too. He clears all examinations and becomes an engineer. But he is not interested to work as an engineer. He leaves the Infosys job and starts to work as a journalist for newspaper. His ambition is to change the world through social movement and reformation. He wants to create a corruption free society. His article on Ganga cleaning scam brings somewhat changes in the system. Aarti is the only female character and the only person who is not able to fulfill her ambition of becoming an air hostess. She struggles a lot and finally changes her dream.

Degradation of moral and ethical values is one more theme of the novel. In *What Young India Wants* Chetan Bhagat retorts that the young generation is indulged in drinking, smoking and illicit affairs. Gopal's heavy drinking and being admitted in the hospital, Aarti's involvement in drinking and sex and MLA Shuklaji's unfair practices show the degradation of moral and ethical values in our society.

Chetan Bhagat has touched upon the theme of corruption in very serious manner in the novel *Revolution 2020*. The novel projects the picture of unfair society in which the Indian youth are struggling to fulfill their ambitions. The novel sheds light on the hot topic- the corruption in education. The author criticizes how the educational institutes become business centres. Gopal's journey from the poor middle class to the young rich person shows the corruption in education system. He has observed unfair practices right from the beginning of the land acquisition to erection of building and fulfilling the admission quota. With the support of MLA Shuklaji, he has kidnapped the four year old grandson of Ghanshyam and demanded to leave the possession of land. Thus, they have acquired the land by force and converted this agricultural land into commercial purpose that is to run educational institute by paying bribe worth twelve and half thousand rupees to the deputy corporator. Gopal offered two lakh rupees to the head of the AICTE approval committee and twenty-five thousand rupees to each members of the committee to get approval. The fake demolition of the illegal construction is the best example of corruption chain. Because of the article of illegal construction by Raghav, the VNN officials have started to demolish the construction with bulldozers. Gopal has rung the phone to Shuklaji and begged for help. The MLA Shuklaji has settled down the matter by paying the bribe of rupees two lakh to the VNN officials and has arranged a fake demolition to deceive the people. After all, the building is erected. Moreover, the management has fixed the School Principals to recommend Ganga Tech College to their students and for this they have given ten thousand rupees per admission as commission. Prof. Shrivastav's way of



evading income tax, missing lectures and getting payment, Ganga Cleaning Scam, etc. are some of the examples that show the various forms of corruption.

Conclusion

Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition (2011) is overloaded with the theme of social realism. It sheds light on social evils and unfair practices. The author has shown the social stratification through the central characters. The novel narrates the ambitions of youth, their struggle, the problem of unemployability, the scenario of private coaching classes and job fairs, etc. Through Gopal's character, the author has succeeded to present two attitudes of the youth. In the beginning, Gopal says "Nothing will happen here. This is India. No revolution will take place in 2020 and no revolution would take place in 2120." This is his negative attitude. However, at the end we learn some bits of positivity through his act of sending Aarti back to Raghav. Chetan Bhagat delivers the message- *if we want to bring revolution, we have to contribute.*

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