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A Journey of Self-discovery in Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*

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Abstract

Social criticism is the keynote of all Chetan Bhagat's work, and through his writing, he certainly takes pain to reform society. He wants that literature should be used as a means of alleviating the sufferings of fellow human beings. He is also a committed artist because art aims to achieve integration that is to effect the connection between man and man and between the individual and the world. Chetan Bhagat in *Revolution 2020* states the real facts, and he clears everything in a skilful manner. In conventional society, an individual becomes the victim of the corrupt society. The social reformers try their best to remove the social evils like dowry, corruption and other issues. The self-discovery makes individuals realize that reality and their anxiety for the evil thought will vanish through their hard work.

Keywords: *Socialism, corruption, reality, anxiety, self-discovery.*

1. Introduction

Chetan Bhagat is the writer and mouthpiece of the modern young generation. All his novels present the burning issues of the young generation of Indian society. Being a prominent contemporary Indian novelist, he displays various dimensions and potentials of life-related to the youth power of the present world. He has faith in the abilities of the youth, who can play an important role in the overall development of the country in every field. He presents different types of characters to describe various moods and dimensions of life. He provides solutions to the problems of the young generation and makes them aware about their future.

In the novel *Revolution 2020*, Chetan Bhagat has made an effort to describe the faulty education system of the present era and the fault of the present education. He criticises the present education system in which the modern generation does not get moral education. He believes that the real aim of education is to understand life in every aspect instead of getting a job.

Chetan Bhagat says that to cover all kinds of black designs, education as a business has become a safer cover, and in the prologue of the novel, it has declared his mission and vision of life. No doubt in saying that the education system of India is a problematic one as it affects the future of the youths. He presents the weaknesses of the private institutes of India with a broad vision. The passion for getting admission in NITs and IITs has become the main focus in the novel. Everyone is crazy to get admission in IIT & NIT. Gopal's father has the same wish for his son. In the novel, Aarti is the only

one who wishes to be an air hostess, not an engineer. She does not want to get admission in AIEEE. It has become the main cause of tension and frustration in the life of the young generation.

The novelist accepts the futility of education without any question or doubt. Gopal observes ironically, "The waters closed over us, making us irrelevant to the Indian education system. Three weeks and the AIEEE tsunami would arrive" (R 24). The novelist presents the depression of the young technocrats by presenting the image of Gopal who aims at being the top ranker among the taste takers of AIEEE. Gopal always tries to get the best in his life but time and circumstances do not favour him. Raghav, his close friend always secures higher rank in life and study. Gopal feels embarrassed and disappointed and he fails to compromise with the real situation. Gopal wants to fulfil his father's wish but he fails. Aarti always supports him emotionally and consoles him in the novel as, "Nonsense, so people who don't have a top AIEEE rank get nowhere in life?" (R 35).

Gopal clarifies this reality as, "My dad is not in the IAS. My grandfather was not a minister. We are from a simple Indian family" (R 36). He fails in the entrance exam of AIEEE and becomes nervous in life. All the time he thinks about fulfilling his dreams of life. He concludes that the only possible remedy to get admission in a reputed engineering institute is to get coaching classes at Kota.

The novelist presented Kota as a key to success and opportunities in *Revolution 2020*. To get admission in IIT is to climb Mount Everest or be on a space mission for the younger generation. He has to go to Kota for coaching to get through the AIEEE exam. His father's conviction is firm, "And how will you do a repeat attempt without better coaching" (41). Gopal is not given any opportunity to fulfil his desire in Kota Classes. He has to run without any permanent goal in his life. He always remains in doldrums whether he will succeed in getting Aarti's hand or to get admission in IIT. Time and circumstances make man good or bad.

Gopal does hard work but fails to get through the AIEEE entrance exam and he is forced to get admission in a private college namely Riddhi Siddhi Technical College. It is also ironic that the owner of a sari shop is running the Riddhi Siddhi Technical College. In the college an ironic suggestion is also given to the new technocrats to complete engineering and then join a call centre to get money. There is no job security in the present education system. After his father's death, Gopal has only one option to hunt for admission in Sri Ganesh Vinayak College.

These private institutes are not the centers of learning, however they are the centers of minting cash. Every day the owners of these institutes think only about making more and more financial profit. These private institutes have their fee structure without giving any extra educational benefits to the students. The new students are very easily trapped in their web. These institutes are also responsible for increasing unemployment at a high rate. Regarding the fee structure of the Ganesh Vinayak College, Gopal reads out as,

See, tuition fifty thousand, hostel thirty thousand, let's say twenty thousand more for the useless things they will make you buy. So you pay a lakh a year for four years. Average placement is one and a half lakhs. Fuck it. Let's go. Don't fragile, be happy (113)

Gopal fails to complete his degree and he decides to sell his father's disputed property. He decides to open a new engineering college on the disputed land with the help of Mr. Shukla. Gopal gets knowledge about how to open a new college for commercial purposes. Girish Bedi, the assistant of Mr. Shukla is an experienced education consultant speaks, "Well, you take a profit. The trustees can take out cash from the trust, showing it as an expense. Or take some fee in cash, and not account for it" (125).

The modern people should strive to form a society in which neither the students nor the teachers are being exploited in the hands of business class. The present scenario in the education field is very depressing where the teacher has to work for the salary. Higher education has become a business for many and ironically a business for none. The business class of education thinks that 'E' does not stand for education, it stands only for a huge amount. There is no education in colleges instead of offering sweet dreams to the new technocrats.

The novel *Revolution 2020*, deals with corruption and hypocrisy of the business minded people and he is describing the condition of the innocent young students who are trapped in the web of the so-called people for the sake of their own self interest. Gopal's life changes with time as Shukla ji helps him solve his property dispute with his uncle. Gopal's perception of life also changes. He gets confidence and courage to act according to the situation. Now he starts thinking about money only. Aarti's romantic nature and Raghav's way of living life seem weak and insignificant compared to the value and power of money. Gopal accepts that only money matters in life and that the power of money can ensure success and happiness in life. He feels that it is better to be a business man than to be an engineer. So he is convinced that via opening a private college he can earn a lot without doing hard work like an engineer. He reveals his aim as, "If I want to be a big man, I have to do big things" (130).

Gopal opens a new college in association with Shukla ji and he selects the name of college as Ganga Tech. On the college's opening ceremony, Gopal's whole focus remains on the arrival of Raghav and Aarti. The process of selecting teachers is ironically presented in the novel after opening the college. The mockery of the whole corrupt system in education is also presented while getting approval from UGC and AICTE. It is a challenge for the owner or the management of the college to appoint teachers. They have to work and deal with the students as per the direction of the management. Gopal and other members of the management conduct an interview to appoint teachers.

While selecting the faculty members for the college, it becomes clear that corruption is not only in college but also among the teachers who are providing their services to private institutes to get a huge salary as Mr. Srivastava, the retired faculty member openly demands Rs. two lakh salary per month for his services. Mr. Srivastava wants to save his taxes so he demands that the part be paid in cash. Finally they agreed to pay one lakh in cash and seventy thousand in cheque. The dean dictates the plan of inspection but the teachers and the management of the institute is of no concern. It is also decided that the senior students can teach the students of the first year as it is happening in most colleges. Mr. Bedi is very much content with this decision. Gopal is a part of the entire system.

Gopal is also shocked to learn that the college has to pay bribes even to the Principals of private schools for the recommendation of his college. If the school principals recommend the name of the college to their students only then students will get admission in engineering in his college. It means that the school principals are working as the advertiser of the private institute as their hidden interest is lying in it. No doubt the students prefer to get admission in those colleges which their teachers and Principals recommend. So to get a number of students' admissions in his college Gopal has to pay a heavy amount to the Principals of the private schools as there are other colleges in the area. The novelist criticizes that no field and person is free from the clutches of corruption.

Raghav brings the wrong way of opening the Ganga Tech Engineering College under his scanner and starts finding out the complete matter seriously. He knows that the Ganga Tech College is funded by Mr. Shukla Ji who is a partner of the college. Raghav wants to disclose the reality of the black money which is used to open an institute on a disputed land. Raghav has to face many problems as Mr. Shukla and Gopal force the newspaper's editor to dismiss Raghav's services. They warn the editor that they will discontinue giving their ads to their newspaper if they do not dismiss the job of Raghav. Chetan Bhagat here declares that the press which is considered as the fourth pillar of the government and democracy is not free from corruption.

In the novel Raghav and Gopal present two different dimensions of life as Raghav has an honest way to deal with life and his job whereas the illegal power of Shukla Ji supports Gopal. Raghav is apprehensive of Gopal's over ambitious plan of opening a private college at every step of life. Sometimes things happen when expectation becomes less and it becomes true to the life of Raghav and Gopal. Raghav becomes an engineer maker which is the irony of the time. In the modern time the students get a degree as per the directions of their teachers to secure their future but after completing their degree they have to choose and accept another field of service.

Gopal remains busy acquiring publicity to secure more and more recognition of his college in the area. Raghav as foil to his ambition publishes an article in the newspaper with the headline, "New engineering college opens in city - with corruption money?" (175). As a result of it the Chief Minister cancels his visit and the article becomes a challenge for the reputation of Gopal and Shukla ji. Gopal is surprised and shocked that it has all been manipulated by Raghav who is his close and good friend. Whatever Gopal and Raghav do in their respective fields is not a matter of their principles and existence in life.

Gopal has achieved the heights of success and prosperity but loses the harsh ground reality in his dream of family peace and strong desire for love. Raghav is working for the betterment of society and retains the sublimity and goodness of the human world. Gopal feels that he has sacrificed his childhood love and sensibility and now has no dream and no hope. He feels that he is alone in the mob of the materialistic world. Gopal goes to Raghav's office and learns that he is still innocent and happy but Gopal is fully corrupted without happiness and realizes his loss of self-discovery.

Raghav serves as a mouthpiece of the novelist who directly speaks about the conditions and rights of the oppressed. His press has been destroyed by the corrupt people who always act as an obstacle in the way of those who want to make a change in the society. He chooses the job of a journalist to help the society. Hard work and dedication towards duty pay sweet fruit in the end. Raghav does not give up his job and in the end the exploiters yield to the revolutionary spirit of the journalist. Finally, Gopal surrenders himself against the revolutionary spirit of Raghav

2. Conclusion

Gopal takes a time to discover himself but Raghav is modest in it. Through self-discovery man should try to find out the meaning of life and live life happily. The self-discovery also plays an important role in shaping a man's career. Hard work and the struggle of life may help a man be bold and strong. Chetan Bhagat advises that men should not try to blame others for their failure in life but try to know the reality of their failure. He also advises that men should try to learn and should not complain.

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