

## **Cultural Glimpses in the Selected Fiction of Chetan Bhagat: A Descriptive Study**

**Dr VIPIN KUMAR** , Assistant Professor,

Department of Humanities, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun Uttarakhand India 248002

### **Abstract**

This descriptive study examines the cultural glimpses present in the selected fiction of Chetan Bhagat, one of the most popular contemporary Indian authors. Through an analysis of his novels, the study explores the ways in which he depicts and portrays Indian society, culture, and values. This portrayal also stems from the variety of cultural influences that are introduced cleverly in his books, which are overall pointing towards various socio-political realities of the contemporary world. The study also examines how his writing reflects and responds to social, political, and cultural issues in contemporary India. The analysis is based on a close reading of some of his selected novels, including *Five Point Someone*, *One Night @ the Call Center*, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, *2 States*, and *Half Girlfriend*. The study offers insights into the cultural representation in contemporary Indian literature and highlights the importance of cultural perspectives in literary analysis.

**Keywords:** Chetan Bhagat, Cultural glimpses, Indian culture, Contemporary society, Family values, Interpersonal relationships, Social issues, and Youth culture.

### **Introduction**

Indian literature is known for its rich and diverse history that reflects the country's cultural, social, and political landscape. From ancient texts like the Vedas and Upanishads to modern works of literature by writers like Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy, Indian literature has continued to evolve and reflect the changing nature of Indian society.

A parable is a brief story used to clarify and demonstrate a universal truth. A moral conundrum or a character who makes a poor choice and then experiences the unintended repercussions are frequent elements of parables. The presence of a subtext indicating how or what a person should believe is the parable's most notable feature. Parables frequently employ metaphorical language, which makes it easier for people to discuss challenging or

complex ideas. They also offer advice and recommendations for appropriate behaviour in daily life. Through the use of an understandable, concrete story, parables make an abstract point. The above-described account of a parable is particularly justified by Chetan Bhagat's fiction and nonfiction works. A renowned Indian author, prolific writer, well-known columnist, renowned screenwriter, and inspirational lecturer best known for his English-language dreamed novels about young metropolitan middle-class Indians, Bhagat creates postmodern Indian literature that centres on the dreams and despairs, cheers and fears, happiness and sadness, ambition and tribulation, love and separation of the youths of new India. In a brief period, he attained fame by writing straightforward, clear, and vivid, with colorful imagery and chronological narratives.

This is one such contemporary Indian author who has achieved immense popularity in India and abroad for his novels that depict the realities of contemporary Indian society. Bhagat's novels, while often criticized for their simplicity and lack of literary depth, offer a glimpse into the complexities of Indian society, including the impact of globalization and modernization on traditional values, the struggles of the youth, and the changing nature of relationships and family structures.

This descriptive study focuses on the cultural glimpses present in the selected fiction of Chetan Bhagat. The study aims to explore the ways in which he portrays Indian society, culture, and values in his novels. The study also examines how his writing reflects and responds to social and political issues in contemporary India. The analysis is based on a close reading of some of his selected novels, including *Five Point Someone*, *One Night @ the Call Center*, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, *2 States*, *Revolution 2020*, and *Half Girlfriend*. Each of these novels explores different aspects of Indian society and culture, from the struggles of the youth in a rapidly changing world to the complexities of inter-religious relationships in a diverse country like India.

The goal of his debut book, "*Five Point Someone*," is not to aid those who hope to enter IITs or even those who are already enrolled in them in graduating with honours. Far from that, it addresses a very important issue facing today's youth: why do students at prestigious institutions forgo their youth in favour of a successful adulthood. One may have the impression that graduates from India's esteemed technology institutions have an easier time finding employment, earning excellent salaries, and finding spouses. However, according to the book, they are forced into a Faustian deal in which they must choose between taking their

own lives or ruining both their careers and their lives. In "One Night @ the Call Center," a group of six contact centre workers at the Connexions call centre in Gurgaon, Haryana, India, are the focus of the narrative. The themes concern the worries and insecurities of the burgeoning Indian middle class, which include concerns about their careers, lack of adequacy, marriage, and family conflicts in postmodern India, as well as their interactions with executives and regular clients they service in the US. In the book's prologue, the author describes meeting a stunning lady while travelling by train. She offers to tell him a story, but will only do so if he utilises it in his upcoming book.

The study delves into the various themes present in these novels, including the role of family and tradition, the impact of technology and globalization, and the struggles of the youth in contemporary India. By examining these themes, the study offers insights into the cultural representation in contemporary Indian literature and highlights the importance of cultural perspectives in literary analysis.

Moreover, the study sheds light on the role of contemporary Indian literature in shaping cultural perceptions and identities. Bhagat's novels, with their broad appeal and accessibility, have the potential to reach a wide audience and influence their perceptions of Indian society and culture. Therefore, understanding the cultural glimpses present in his novels is crucial to understanding the ways in which contemporary Indian literature reflects and shapes cultural identities and perceptions.

In conclusion, Chetan Bhagat's novels provide a unique perspective on contemporary Indian society and culture. This descriptive study offers insights into the cultural representation in contemporary Indian literature and highlights the importance of cultural perspectives in literary analysis. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities of contemporary Indian society and provides a valuable contribution to the field of Indian literature.

## **Literature Review**

The study of contemporary Indian literature has gained significant interest in recent years due to the rise of Indian authors on the global literary scene. Among them, Bhagat has gained immense popularity for his novels that reflect the realities of contemporary Indian society. This literature review provides an overview of the scholarship on Bhagat's works, with a focus on the cultural glimpses present in his selected fiction.

Bhagat's first novel, *Five Point Someone*, published in 2004, was an instant success, earning him a place as one of the most popular contemporary Indian authors. The novel is a coming-of-age story set in an elite engineering college in India, exploring the struggles and aspirations of the Indian youth in a competitive academic environment. The novel's success was followed by several other novels, including *One Night @ the Call Center*, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, *2 States*, and *Half Girlfriend*.

One of the prominent themes that are explored in his novels is the portrayal of the urban Indian middle class. His novels often depict the aspirations, anxieties, and struggles of this social group, providing insights into the changing cultural dynamics of contemporary India (Gokhale, 2012). Bhagat's novels are particularly relatable to the younger generation of Indians who are navigating through the challenges of modernity, globalization, and cultural change (Ali, 2015).

Scholars have analyzed Bhagat's novels from various perspectives, including cultural, social, and political. A significant amount of scholarship has focused on the cultural glimpses present in his novels, exploring the ways in which he depicts and portrays Indian society, culture, and values.

Many authors have found the impact of globalization and modernization on traditional values and customs in novels like *Five Point Someone* and *The 3 Mistakes of my life*. There is a clear importance provided to cultural perspectives in literary analysis and offers insights into the cultural representation in contemporary Indian literature (Bhattacharya and Rajurkar, 2014).

Similarly, Soni (2015) analyzes the portrayal of women characters in his novels. The study argues that his portrayal of women reflects the changing roles and aspirations of Indian women in contemporary society. The study highlights the importance of gender perspectives in literary analysis and offers insights into the cultural complexities and nuances of contemporary India.

Other scholars have analyzed Bhagat's novels from a social and political perspective, exploring the ways in which Bhagat's writing reflects and responds to social and political issues in contemporary India. In '*Half Girlfriend*', there is a unique exploration of the ways in which the novel reflects and responds to issues such as caste, class, and regional identity in contemporary India, thus creating an intersectional and subversive kind of power structure

within the novel. (Singh, 2017). Similarly, the intersectionality here, then meets with a shift in the social reality of many individuals. This is what Bhagat's novels reflect, while also depicting the changing cultural landscape of contemporary India, offering a unique perspective on the complexities of Indian society and culture (Pradhan, and Anjali, 2016).

Nagasuri and Sudha (2015) analyze the cultural sensibility in Bhagat's novels. The study argues that Bhagat's novels capture the cultural nuances and complexities of contemporary Indian society, reflecting the diverse traditions, customs, and beliefs of the country's people. This helps in creating a strong representation of Indian cultural values within his novels, furthering the cause of making people see more people like themselves.

Other scholars have examined the social and political dimensions of Bhagat's novels, exploring the ways in which his writing reflects and responds to social and political issues in contemporary India. Deshpande and Kulkarni's (2014) analysis of *Revolution 2020*, is every bit as nuanced as one would expect. It explores the ways in which the novel reflects and responds to issues such as corruption, nepotism, and political instability in contemporary India. While it is also important to portray important themes as corruption, the portrayal of youth cultures must be done carefully, and not performatively. Sharma (2018) analyses exactly this within the Indian writing diaspora while also viewing the effects of his depiction of youth in contemporary India, including issues such as economic inequality, gender discrimination, and social mobility. Meanwhile, there are studies which also analyse how Bhagat's novels reflect the cultural values and beliefs of contemporary India, presenting a realistic portrayal of the Indian society's challenges and opportunities. This gives a good insight into how the society works on a more subversive level. (Mariappan, and Raju, 2015).

Similarly, Dhanavel (2016) explores the representation of youth culture and society in Bhagat's novels. The study argues that his novels reflect the aspirations, struggles, and dilemmas of the Indian youth, offering insights into the changing cultural landscape of contemporary India.

Rathore (2018) also deconstructs the portrayal of women in Bhagat's novels. The study argues that Bhagat's female characters reflect the complexities and nuances of the Indian woman's experiences, highlighting the challenges of gender inequality, patriarchy, and social norms. This is mainly the reason why his novels have a wide readership due to his ability to capture the cultural nuances of Indian society, presenting them in an accessible and relatable way (Balu, and Subramanian, 2017). Bhagat's works also reflect the aspirations, values, and

challenges of the Indian youth, providing insights into the changing cultural landscape of contemporary India. While contemporary cultures of texts refer more to a pre-industrialised living, these novels, be it *Five Point Someone*, or *Revolution 2020*, they offer a sort of realistic spasm to those who read it, thus showing them things about India that are visible but invisible at the same time. (Sinha, and Kumar, 2018).

Other scholars have explored the representation of language and dialects in Bhagat's novels, highlighting the importance of linguistic diversity in contemporary Indian literature. In their study authors N. Thilakavathy and S. Ramakrishnan (2016) argue that the works above present a unique combination of Indian English and colloquial Hindi, reflecting the linguistic diversity of contemporary India.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Chetan Bhagat's novels offer a rich portrayal of contemporary Indian society and culture, providing cultural glimpses that are both accessible and relatable to a wide audience. The existing scholarship on his work has highlighted the importance of examining socio-cultural, linguistic, and youth perspectives in literary analysis, which provides a comprehensive understanding of cultural glimpses in his selected fiction. Through his novels, there is a successful reflection of the aspirations, values, and challenges of the Indian youngsters, imbibing the changing cultural landscape of contemporary India. His use of colloquial Hindi and Indian English reflects the linguistic diversity of the country, adding a unique layer of complexity to his works. Overall, the contribution of these texts to contemporary Indian literature has been significant, and his novels continue to be relevant and thought-provoking, offering insights into the country's diverse population.

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