

**Reflections of Indian Culture and its Renaissance in Chetan Bhagath's
*Two States: The Story of My Marriage***

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Abstract

Chetan Bhagat is the author of the biggest selling English novels which have been adapted into major Bollywood movies. His novel *Two States: The Story of My Marriage* was published in 2009. This work is a Semi-autobiography relating to his youth. It is a story about Krish and Ananya who are hailed from Punjab and Tamilnadu respectively. They are in love deeply and decide to get married through convincing their families. Eventually, they succeed in convincing their families and get married. The serious part of the novel reflects the regional disparities, sub cultural conflict of North India and South India. Author also depicts the patriarchy in Indian Society through the character of Krish's Father. In the novel, the discrimination towards South Indian by North Indians, colour and community discrimination, corruption has been depicted. The novel mirrors the pitfalls of Indian traditional system and middle class. It emphasizes indirectly social reform or cultural renaissance. The novel also depicts the problems of Indian youth through the genre of Social Realism.

Keywords: Krish, Ananya, Regional Disparities, sub cultural conflict, North India, South India, Patriarchy, colour discrimination, cultural renaissance, social realism.

Chetan Bhagat is a great novelist who wrote *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ Call Center* (2005) and *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008) that he emerged as successful writer. He studied his engineering graduation at IIT, Delhi and Master Management Studies at IIT, Bombay. He inspired common readers in large numbers and his novels remained best sellers. Chetan's novels also inspired Bollywood films. Chetan worked and quit his job in 2009 devoting his entire time for writing. He lives in Mumbai.

The novel, *Two States* follows his own love story at IIM, Delhi. The novel shows how young lovers struggle against traditional system based on patriarchy and caste system. The novel also depicts regional cultural disparities reflecting Indian Unity in Diversity. The Family System, in India, depicted by the author in brilliant manner. Both lovers plan to appear their families for the success of their love into marriage. The Novel follows the elements of Indian cultural renaissance breaking the barriers of Caste, region, and patriarchy. Author reflects the conditions of Indian in the first phase of globalization in India.

TimesofIndia.com says, “with the pace of an autobiographical account, the characters are simple people with whom one can identify with almost instantaneously. Needless to say this pocket friendly time is a lucid and clear account of a young word smith who succeeded in making this book a must read for the fun of it” (61). In fact, Chetan Bhagath bought a revolution in Indian English popular fiction through social realism which emphasized on accelerating Indian social reform or Indian cultural renaissance which also justifies young India.

Some of the names of characters were changed by the author and narrated from a first – person. The story has the starting point at the mess hall of IIM, Ahmedabad where Krish and Ananya quarrelling with the mess worker Krish, hails from Punjab, and Ananya, hails from Chennai, are classmates at IIM, Ahmedabad. They became lovers and planned to marry through convincing their families. Both Ananya and Krish got the jobs and started convincing their parents for their marriage. Krish teaches IIT Section for Manju who's the brother of Ananya and arranges a Powerpoint presentation for the Ananya's father Swaminathan. Also Krish arranges a music concert which is sponsored by Krish's employer City Bank. Ananya help to one of Krish's cousins get married. Therefore, both families accept for the marriage of Ananya and Krish. Now as they have convinced both their parents, they decided to make a trip to Mumbai to allow their parents to know each other. But this gathering again leads to failure that Ananya's parents differ with Krish's mother. Krish returns home and becomes a stressed alcoholic. But eventually, Krish's goes to Chennai and apologize their parents. He convinces them for the ananya and Krish's marriage. The marriage celebrated at Chennai. Ananya gives birth to two boys. Krish says that the babies among to a state called “India” with a thought to end inequality. Ethical frame work of Cultural Renaissance of India: Despite the endeavours of social reformers in modern times and Indian constitution, social evils such as casteism, gender inequality, dowry system, corruption etc., are prevalent in Indian society in various forms. In recent times, Khap Panchayath in the states like Haryana and U.P. involved in the violence against inter caste

marriages and gender violence following protecting stereotypes. At this junction, Chetan Bhagat's work *Two States* gained significance in the process of social change in Indian Society as part of progressive literature through its literary genre-social realism. The serious part of the novel reflects the conflict of communities and regional disparities and their cultures. Author also depicts regressive trends of Indian middle class as the obstacle of Indian enlighten the characters, Krish and Ananya endure difficult situations for the success of their love because they hailed from different communities and regions. The story takes many turns creates interest among general readers. Author depicts Krish's father asks Krish's mother in demanding way, "Are you seeing girls?" Further he says, "In this house, I make the decisions". Then he broke the crystal glass and prepared to apply violence against his wife – Krish's Mother.

In the process of arguments between son and father, Krish's father says with anger, "He can't be my son. Nobody talks to their father like this". Bhagath depicts the scenes of Krish's father anger that Krish's mother and son suffered from it. Hence, Krish says to his mother, "You have to leave him". She says, "It's not that simple". Then Krish says, "I will earn now". Krish protects his father and fights with him. Author depicts the Indian patriarchal system that it suppressed women and the youth in India. In the case of choosing bride for Krish, his father says, "You will not choose a girl for marriage. I will choose for you". Then Krish says, "You want to sell me. And while you are not out there negotiating me, what's my going rate?" Thus author unearths Indian arranged marriage system based on dowry. In the novel, the discriminations towards south Indians by north Indians disclosed. Krish's mother asks, "Madrasi Girl?" Krish says "Ananya". Then his mother says, "Stay away from her. They brainwash these people". See I told you, they trap you". Further his mother says, "North Indians are fairer. The Tamilians have a complex." Krish says, "Mom she went to IIM, Ahmedabad, she is one of the smartest girls in India. What are you talking about? and not that it matters, but you have seen her, she is fairer than me". Then mother says, "The fair ones are the most dangerous, Sridevi and Hema Malini". Hence, how North Indians shows discrimination against South Indian that they call Madrasis. This discrimination also includes Colour discrimination that South Indians have dark complexion. In many incidents when Ananya is with Krish family and relatives, she was humiliated as a South Indian girl in subtle ways.

The character Kavitha, Krish's mother, reveals traditional women and victim of her husband (Krish's father) for his dominance and domestic violence. When she did not say

about Krish's First Love, her husband says, "And you hid it from me, bitch". Then Krish reacts and says to him, "don't talk to mom like that" (165).

Further Author says, "Slap..... slap.....my father interrupted my mother. I banged the door open as I heard a few more slaps. I saw my mother's hand covering her face. A piece of glass had cut her forearm" (166). Thus the domestic violence against women expressed by author, so that it could bring tears in the eyes of readers. Hence, novel emphasis gender equality and women empowerment in Indian society in subtle way. Author also emphasizes the significance of mother love. In the story following Ratna stores incident, Ananya's mother says, "you are my daughter, do you understand? Your spoiling our name in the community, do you understand? I brought you up, educated you, made sacrifices for you, do you understand? (151). It all reflects the conservative Trend and partial modernity of Indian society. Unfortunately, in Indians, there was no movement like a strong youth moment, like hippie movement in western countries in 1960s and early 70's towards the social change and youth liberation. In the Act 3: Chennai, in the novel, Krrish says Ananya, "National anthem, national currency, National teams - still we won't marriage children outside our state. How can intolerance be good for our country? When Ananya asks about the future of their kids, then Krish says, "Not that, think about this - they won't be Tamil or Punjabi, they will be Indian. They will be above all this nonsense. If all young people marry outside their community, it is good for the country. That is the greatest purpose" (104).

Planned to marry with rich Punjabi girl. Hence, she sends him with dolly, pummy aunty's daughter from a rich Punjabi family. But Krish was committed to his lover Ananya. Krish sacrifices wealthy relationships for Ananya's love. It all shows his authenticity in his love. Generally in India, lover boys have to sacrifice. Wealth provided through arranged marriage of same community and religion and the support of relatives. Both Ananya and Krish struggled to convince their parents. It is more struggling than eloping strategy. Despite both are employees in their respective private firms having good earnings, they did not elope that recognized the value of Indian family system. But, it is unfortunate that Indian youngsters have not liberty for achieving their aspiration except in some families. But both families of Ananya and Krish are moderate traditional families that they did not prioritize communities. In the final phase, both families agree to their marriage, celebrated at Chennai following tamil culture part of Indian culture.

Novel also depicts domestic violence following Krish's father arrogance and dominance. Krish's first love became a disaster also his father did not co-operate. Krish beats his father when he watches his father torturing his mother. Krish says, "My father went into

a state of shock, he could not fight back. He did not accept this, all my childhood I'd merely suffered his dominance. Today, it wasn't just about the broken glass. It wasn't only that girl would be gone. It was a reaction to two decades of abuse. Or that's how defended it to myself. For how else do you justify hitting your own father? At that moment I couldn't stop. I punched his head until he collapsed on the floor. I could not remember the last time I revelled in violence like this. I was studious child who stayed with his books all his life. Today, I was luck there wasn't a gun at Home" (167). After this event, krish attended a spiritual guru to get advise. He says to spiritual guru, "Because what he did was so wrong. He has ruined my mother's life. He has never loved me" (168). Then the guru says, "For you, forgiving doesn't make the person, who hurt you feel better, it makes you feel better". Hence, author expresses that Indian culture includes spiritual aspects. But in the second love affair of Krish with Ananya, he determined to succeed through the strategy of convincing elders of both sides for which Ananya also cooperate. But in the final act, Krish's father realizes and connects both families accepting Ananya as his daughter in law. And he says to krish, "And even though you feel have let you down in the past, I felt I should do my bit this time. A life partner is important. Ananya is a nice girl. You shouldn't lose her" (174).

The novel depicted the conflict of sub cultures of India, discrimination towards southern Indian by north Indian, in authentic way that acts as an obstacle for national unity of India. Both Ananya and Krish did not belive in the superstitions such as following horoscopes following their strong and authentic to each other. The story of novel belongs to the decade of the 1990's when the process of globalization began and going on. The changes such as high salaries for young employees in a MNC's, and other Indian companies, Rapid development of Technology led to utility of cell phones, laptops, ATM cards, computers, etc., were reflected in this novel. At the sometime exploitation of employees by MNCs and corruption at all levels have been reflected in the novel.

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