



CHETAN BHAGAT'S VISION OF CAREER OF THE MODERN URBAN YOUTH IN HALF GIRLFRIEND

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ABSTRACT

Careerism plays a significant role in Chetan Bhagat's novels. Almost all his novels deal with an issue of job and its problems in it. It focuses on the career of Riya Somani and Madhav, a Bihari boy who belong to different states and their status too differs. The boy is from a village whereas the girl is from a very wealthy family. It may be questioned why *Half Girlfriend* is chosen to address such a subject. The fact that this is the sole work in which the author downgrades the corporate career in favour of a service-oriented village educational profession provides the answer to the question. Even though the latter one is a non-profit job, Madhav accepts it and takes the necessary steps. No other novel of Chetan Bhagat is similar to this one as far as career perspective is concerned. Every word of Chetan Bhagat is connected to nation's improvement.

KEYWORDS : Careerism, Status, Corporate Career, Improvement.

INTRODUCTION

In India, careerism is a relatively new concept that emerged along with the advent of capitalism and consumption. As India has opened its doors to international industrial powerhouses, new job possibilities and competition becomes part of the age-old stagnating Indian society. While there are numerous books about globalisation and liberalisation that have made their way onto library shelves, there are only a handful pieces of literature that specifically address these topics. Chetan Bhagat's desire to make his characters succeed in their careers is primarily due to the fact that he wished them to act as the role model for the readers.

Chetan Bhagat's Vision Of Life About Employment In *Half Girlfriend*

Writers like Chetan Bhagat who have emerged in the post-1990s era to entice youthful readers are keen to enjoy the literature of their choice. In spite of the obvious parallels in the works, majority of his novels go on the parallel tracks of jobs and love without tiring the readers. *Half Girlfriend* is one such book wherein the author stresses upon the significance of job. The opening line of the novel describes an enthusiastic applicant who is marching around in pursuit of the room where the interview is scheduled to take place. The line proceeds in the following manner. The protagonist says,

"Where? I gasped, trying to catch my breath" (8)

The reason "Careerism" is chosen as a theme, however, raises another query, the solution to which can be found in the mind of modern Indians. In the mindset of the middle class, careers have taken on the highest priority in India. They push their kids to achieve academic success since it will help them find good jobs around the world. The main reason Chetan Bhagat has picked engineering as a major is because he has been really concerned about making money. Yet after making a reasonable amount of money, his spirit has yearned to be creative, and as a result, he has concocted tales that catapulted him to fame. His writings are therefore flavoured with characters that are focused on their careers, and *Half Girlfriend* is one such story with uniqueness.

Here is an illustration of a young man who is enthusiastic and anxious to succeed in the interview and enrol in college. The significance he affixes on his career is reflected in his behaviour patterns. He has been showing signs of nervousness with shivering. English has become a passport to high-paying jobs, and students compete against each other to enhance their skills. Even this protagonist named Madhav candidly admits that his English is impaired when he has entered college as he has been from a developing country called Bihar. Despite his poor communication skills in English, his sole advantage is his Sports background. "Career" is a

general term and it cannot be limited to a specific age or job. School, sports, college, and work are all important factors contributing to shape one's career. A career is truly a journey, not a goal. At no point of time can anyone be stagnant in his or her career as it requires constant updation and powerful competence.

Madhav, a Bihari boy, comes to Delhi for higher education and gets entry into the prestigious St. Stephen's college through the game of basketball. He is an exceptional player who can make the game his career. This may not only have fetched him the essential government job, but also laurels and easy money. But sadly, he has lost this glorious opportunity and falls in love with a Delhi girl named Riya Somani. His marriage has left him disillusioned and he looks for a job and finally gets in a bank. He tries to do something for the students in the village. But unfortunately, very few children are admitted to the school. In addition to this, he has wished to do something for the infrastructure and luckily Bill Gates arrives to India and by presenting his case, he is able to win a grant to develop his school. It is not only the career of the protagonist, but also his lady love that is under focus. Riya Somani has aspired to become a musician and after many twists and turns, ends up in becoming a musician. Career in general is a difficult and uncertain term and no one can fix his or her career so easily. In India, about 80% of people are forced to choose their occupations according to the situations they are in. Only 20% of people fix their careers in their own way. A non-statistical study may help future generation to make their own career choices. Madhav is a prime example of how, despite being pushed into the corporate wheel, he can still choose a career according to his wishes and aspirations.

Reflection Of Reality In *Half Girlfriend*

Bhagat chronicles the lives of modern urban youth with their personal complexity and professional exploitation. To depict the struggles of Young India's life, he casts the aspiring young people of the city as actors. The protagonist reveals the individual's psychological perception of life and society. In the novel *Half Girlfriend*, Careerism is not just limited to male characters in India. Riya Somani of this novel, the elite of Delhi also has a dream career in mind. After befriending Madhav Jha from Bihar, she has confessed her dream to him. She says,

"I want to play music and sing... in a bar in New York."

"Wow." "What? You think it's stupid, right?"

Yes. That's it. I don't want to be a famous singer or a rock star. I don't want to marry a billionaire. I just want to sing in peace, surrounded by passionate people." (33)

Depiction Of Anxiety And Insecurity

The novel *Half Girlfriend* sheds light on social issues that cause anxiety and insecurity among young people. It also

introduces similarities between Bhagat's character and contemporary Indian urban youth. His deep insight into society reveals an optimistic approach that lifts society's negative shadows. In his novels, Chetan Bhagat seeks to expose problems prevalent in society, especially the concerns of young people. He depicts a fictional world through real people and situations. She shares much of her personal life with Madhav, emphasizing the fact that her uncle tries to amass wealth without caring about others, including himself. She reiterates that her wealth has nothing to do with her own career, as her career is about devoting herself to something and growing with the same purpose. Despite her distractions, she sticks to her own ambitions when buying a guitar to partially realize her dream career. She confesses that in her home it's natural to sit in her house and play the guitar. There are many reasons why she is isolated in her home. The main reason is the behaviour of her elders, who rarely take care of her and show her affection for her. A second reason might be her passion for the guitar. People who are immersed in their careers do not lose focus. Riya Somani is one such girlfriend.

Emergence Of Optimism

"Emergence of Optimism" deals with the characters' aspirations and ambitions. It portrays the protagonist's revival from the depth of their personal sorrow. Riya's inner growth uses life's hardships as triggers for a brighter future, leading to the realization of her dreams and passions. She has introduced herself to him and when he has found out that she speaks Hindi at her house, he asks her whether she can speak Hindi very well. He also admits that his English is not very good and she quickly gets in touch by saying:

"What you say matters, not the language" (22)

The above words are the first building blocks in Madhav's career as they form a strong foundation for his career. It will be the boost he needs to build his chosen career. Not only is he regaining his confidence, but he is also growing as a new personality. He blossoms and falls in love at first sight.

Madhav praises Bill Gates' achievements and his speech receives a big round of applause. Bill Gates asks to speak to delegate Phil, saying the foundation wants to offer his one-time grant of \$50,000 to her along with some computers. It is a great reward for a school that lags so far behind in every aspect. The speech has brought him the necessary resources to help develop the school's infrastructure. Aside from the cash bounty, this is a huge career boost and could be called the first win of his career. He has fought for success for a long time and now his success blossoms due to the determination he has maintained throughout his speech. Her dream of becoming a singer in pubs and restaurants in the United States comes true at the end of the novel as she also pursues her dream career throughout the novel.

Meanwhile, following the departure of Gates and his team, Madhav has received praise from almost all walks of life. This is one's real success. Sarpanch Village says,

"Congratulations, Madhav bhai. What a speech you gave, sarpanch said. ... Hello sir, I am from Dainik Bhaskar. A reporter said we would recommend you for our Sunday magazine" (191).

CONCLUSION

A successful career is not only due to hard work, but also because of one's choices. Most important are the options available. At any time, one can change careers at will. This flexibility can be a negative for some, but in general a person can only be happy if the freedom to choose is given. Riya's case is very interesting and when Rani has asked her about her need to work, she bluntly says, "I want to be independent"

(162) and it shows where she is in her career. Thus, the Careerism in Chetan Bhagat's *Half Girlfriend* has special meaning as the protagonist follows an unusual path that is not only risky but also unprofitable.

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