



## Depiction of Gross Popular Culture Among Today's Youth in India-A Study on Chetan Bhagat's Revolution 2020

### KEYWORDS

culture, trend, prime, popular

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**ABSTRACT** *Youngsters, today, are not attached to any particular culture. Actually, there is zero culture in their world. It is obvious that they are against the past as well as the existing culture. They would like to reframe a new version from the previous one in such a way that the new version favours their desires and their choice of life. They term it as 'trend or fashion' which the elderly generation absolutely rejects yet they are consistent in following their own strategies with no botheration towards anything/anybody that opposes their trends or beliefs. They are affirmative that the age old concepts are obsolete to follow in the current style of living. Chetan Bhagat's novels strongly represent the existing youth culture. Bhagat's youngsters are indifferent to the prescriptions of the prime culture that often insists on: "How to do? What to do? When to do? Should do or Should not do", so on. They don't want to be chained under any circumstances in life. This is their popular culture which is yet to be certified by the prime culture which has been prevalent for ages in the society. This study is an attempt to unfold the mystery in the invention of popular culture by the youth today and its pros and cons.*

### Introduction

It is apparent that India is incredibly rich in culture and heritage. India has always been famous for its traditions and hospitality. Bonded in relations and euphoric celebrations enable India stand out distinctively among the countries in the world. The country's liveliness and generosity attract a number of tourists to its vibrant culture which is an amalgamation of religions, festivals, food, art, crafts, dance, music and many other subtle things. India is the only country in the world which is notable for being tolerant and not resorting to arms or any form of violence. Freedom of worship and practice of religion is the symptom of harmonious relationships amidst diverse cultures in India.

It is viewed that India is a birth place of cultural values. It should be accepted that the country was culturally stronger in the past decades and not now. What is the present status of the country which was once a well known for its cultural hegemony? Culture has got its own meaning now and subjected to many changes. As people are civilized, all the inhuman elements in the culture gradually disappeared and new prescriptions are added. For instance women were not allowed to participate in the public life activities as per the native cultural beliefs. However, now, the native culture has seen several alterations and the current status is obvious to everyone. It has resulted into popular culture.

Popular Culture is defined as 'of people in general, for people in general; well liked by people in general ... usually synonymous with "good" in ordinary conversation'. At another level, Popular Culture is also synonymous with what is gross, vulgar and cheap – unworthy of serious study. Both of these definitions co-exist within Popular Culture, particularly in its early days as a discipline (O'Sullivan et al. (2001: 231)), This study is on the depiction of the gross aspects of the popular culture and strange life style of today's Indian youth with reference to Chetan Bhagat's Revolution 2020

Why Chetan Bhagat?

Chetan Bhagat is an easy choice of all research scholars of literature because of many obvious reasons like: simple language, current themes, real life characterization, humour, social relevance, etc. In his novels he talks about the youth and their troubles, tensions, joys and feelings etc and the commonest thing in his novels is the loss of virginity by his lady characters which give special interest to the readers. However, his writings are not still authorized by some universities as a platform for any post graduate research. He tries to give voices to their unheard feelings and emotions and it is this reason that he is counted among the most preferred authors of the youth. (Jitendra Kumar Mishra) Anyone who would like to practice research writing in literature shall take up Chetan for one's maiden venture.

'Revolution 2020' is a story of three childhood friends Raghav, Gopal and Aarti. One wanted to use his intelligence to make money. One wanted to use his intelligence to start revolution. They struggled to find success, love and happiness. This novel speaks about the corruption in the social, political and education sectors. It throws light on the corrupted leaders of Indian politicians. (Rahul Singh Sundram)

'Revolution 2020' can be seen as an attempt to bring to the fore the inherent corruption rooted in India's education system and to bring out the anomaly of non-profit organizations and commercialization of education. The role of politicians who are not very literate but still holds the courage of opening an insatiate of higher education has been comically depicted by the author. (Joseph Rodrigues)

### Trend of targeting 2020

The title "Revolution 2020" is similar to Dr. Kalam's "India 2020" It is still mysterious to note that why this 2020 has gained such importance and why do leaders and economists fix that as the deadline. India continues to be India even after 100 years. During childhood days it was foretold that the world would collapse in 2000. The year came and went but still the world is functioning. So, fixing 2020 in random is like an innocent promise made by a child.

Everybody wants India to be progressive in all aspects but none works for it. It is obvious that India is progressive economically but that is not the only requirement for a nation to call itself a developed nation. India has been prone to all kinds of injustice since time immemorial and has not been a secure place for a peaceful life. Bombs dismantle us, lethal weapons bleed us, acids disfigure us, corruption ails us, castes collapse us, and religions revenge us. Over all, one doesn't have warranty or guarantee for one's life. Moreover, Indian education system is reservation based and it is fully in the hands of uneducated and business people.

*Riddhi Siddhi Technical college. The owners have a saree business in the same name. (R2020: 106)*

*"Six hundred students now...each paying one lakh a year. We already have a sixteen crore turn over and you inaugurated the MBA. That's another new business." (Prologue R2020: 3)*

*"Not just the youngest, but also the most uneducated director you have met" (Prologue R2020: 3)*

Whichever may be the target fixed for emerging as fully grown nation, it is impossible as long as the above said ailments prevail in the country. Revolution has to begin from now not in 2020. However, there is a small hope for the nation but the question in the revolution is "who will lead? Who will follow?" India has already got so many 'leads' and 'follows' only to worsen the worst. It is not a pessimistic view but a practical view. If India is to be revolutionized, let it start from today onwards.

### **Fickle minded youth**

The other important feature of popular culture among Indian youth is their fickle mindedness. They don't have serious aims in life. They study one thing and choose a career that is totally disconnected with their academics. It is obvious that Mechanical engineers are in the software sectors and software engineers are working as bank officers today. Cracking government jobs is easily possible with the help of engineering courses. This is the finest trend of youth culture at present. Raghav wants to reform the nation but does engineering which is not meant for publishing magazines or writing articles. A person who fights for public cause may not be successful in family relations. He devotes most of his time for his crusade than for his fiancée.

*"It is not a hobby, journalism is my passion. Why are you doing engineering then?"*

*Dad! Why else? (R2020: 40)*

If he believes his career to be the foremost choice then he should not have allured and captivated his girl. Aarti depicts her pain:

*"I am lonely too. Raghav has no time". (R2020:23) The point is what sort of a time can a man give a woman? Can he give her a damn good time or can't he? If he can't he's no right to the woman" (R2020:47).*

She feels uncomfortable with the revolutionist. Turmoil in Aarti's mind equals the misery of the lady Chatterley (Ram Avtar, Dr. Pradeep Kumar Talan). Only this made her to be the prey for the lust of Gopal. Gopal is an average performer in school and does not have apt potential to crack AIEEE rank or IIT. He wants to do some engineering course

or an arts degree. Even he is not clear enough with his choice of career. He simply wants to be a rich man and enjoy life.

*"Life is to be enjoyed. Look at me. I will make four crores this year. What is the point if I don't enjoy it" (R2020: 03)*

He knows that Aarti is in love with Raghav but he persuades her and successfully makes her fall in his trap.

*" She belongs to someone else now, even your limited brain should know that. My head knew this, but my heart didn't. (R2020: 122)*

Finally, he enacts a drama and renounces her. Aarti hails from a good and well off family but aims to be an airhostess which people in general don't consider as an honorable job. At last, she works as a caretaker in a five star hotel. Since the beginning, she doesn't want get into affair with Gopal but she moves freely with him as a girlfriend does. She is in affair with Raghav but shares bed with Gopal.

*"It's not that you don't deserve me. You are a great guy Gopal. And we click so well. (R2020:185)*

Characterization of Chetan in the novel is puzzling. However, it deliberates the fickle mindedness of the youth on the whole.

### **Women in Popular culture**

The story is of the residents of Varanasi where the ephemeral river Ganga resurrects people from their sins. The place is engulfed with faith and rituals where as the people of the region are out of the box in thinking and action. Faith, belief and rituals may be dangerous sometimes however they possess moral values for a disciplined life: particularly, in the aspect of role of women in the society. Conventional thoughts emphasize that women are supposed to be modest and to be available at home by taking care of the daily chores. This command was mainly to channelize them from going astray.

It is a societal dogma that only women have to protect their virginity/chastity and men need not to. It is a biological problem which naturally discriminates women from men. If at all to blame someone for this, the science of birth has to be blamed. Being biased in creation of sex is not a human mistake. It is the mistake of nature or the power of creation. But, Chetan believes that women have equal right to demand for sex and perhaps she is the most bonafide candidate who deserves to initiate the talk regarding it. (Jitendra Kumar Mishra) However, understanding one's biological limitation is a required school of thought in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Women forget their limitation and try to outsmart men subsequently put themselves in the trap of men. Feministic arguments in this aspect will harm the entire womanhood. Women should function as women.

*"So, let me come with you. I don't want to be bored at home"*

*"She grabbed my wrist..... I wanted to tell her not to hold my hand anymore. It's fine at twelve not at seventeen. Even though, I liked it more at seventeen than at twelve. (R2020:22)*

*" Why do girls send confusing signals? She had rebuffed*

me on the boat the other day.. she comes to shop with me for boring clothes.. doesn't allow me to pay... she calls three times a day to check if I have had meals.. does she care for me or not? (R2020:44)

She held my elbow tightly... I shook my elbow free. What? She said. Don't it is not good. Why? Because you are a girl" (R2020:45)

"If you were here, I would pull your cheeks" (R2020:86)

" See..Raghav has ditched me for Chak de India all week. If you were here, I could have seen it with you. ( R2020: 47)

The above mentioned lines reveal the limitation of being a girl. A girl is not supposed to touch a boy or accompany a boy at the age of seventeen which is very common in villages even now. Childhood playmates are not encouraged to be seen together at their major ages anticipating the problem of the age. Today, touch is defended as a friendly touch. However, girls fail to understand that it would kindle the masculinity of the boy.

Women are not forbidden of their rights and freedom however they should forbid themselves and put them in the safest zone. Chetan has not shed light on the serious crimes against women in revolution 2020. Thanks to him, for protecting his heroine free from struggling badly as other heroines do in various works of literature. However, losing virginity before marriage for someone and marrying other one is a great punishment to one's soul. It would prick every time questioning one's loyalty to one's spouse.

#### Wrong definition of love

Youngsters today are fantasized in love and relationship. To love is not a crime; to be in relation before marriage is a challenge to one's credibility. In spite of the unique differences between love and sex, they misconceive it only for sex. Their pop culture is: to love is to have sex. According to them love and sex are the both sides of the same coin. In our coins if we call the lion face head and the value print tail in his novels love is head and sex is the tail. The simulation is very apt as the lion faces or the head are the same in all coins but it is only its tail which determines its value, in Bhagat's novels love remains as head but it is only sex that makes his one story different from the other. (Jitendra Kumar Mishra)

sex is a common factor of popular culture. Developments of technology and medicinal inventions have also added fuel to the fire. Almost all the heroines of Chetan Bhagat have premarital sex

"By the way, do you have condom?" (ON@CC:104).

"Amazing. That is simply amazing, Ms Priyanka." (ON@CC:104).She says,My pleasure, sir" (ON@CC:104).

Wow, I am an adult and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God" (3MOML:201).

This is my first time" (2S:26)

Why so formal? Come here.. and hugged me.. poked one in the chest while scent went to my forehead" ( R 2020: 87)

Who is affected in this adventurous sport? Obviously women since the age old culture that is still existing in

the society strongly propagates virginity is the property of a woman where as men are not connected with that. Being rational here by asking equal rights between men and women will lead to adverse effects. Premarital sex may lead to betrayal when one tries to renounce the other after mating. Aarti is an embodiment selfish and sensuous betrayer. Having Raghav in her mind, sharing bed with Gopal is a sensuous betrayal. When Gopal renounces Aarti, she once again goes back to Raghav. This is selfish betrayal. Her conscience will prick her till she dies for having done a great injustice to Raghav.

True love will never have temptation to touch or force of seduction. In addition, one cannot expect solidarity between fuel and fire while being together. It is nature's prescriptions that opposite sexes attract each other. It is the energy of their chromosomes and the consequence is adultery. It is to be noted that the behavior of the couples after sex is not the same as the behavior of the couples before sex. If the attraction sustains on the both side, then their affair will ripe into family life. But, the reality is different and the result is worse. Gopal attempts fairly to touch Aarti whenever he gets an opportunity to be with her. Aarti also behaves at situations to tempt Gopal. The urge is created in his subconscious mind which makes him restless when Aarti is in relationship with Raghav. His insatiable lust towards Aarti continues and succeeds by bringing her to his bed. The power of mind is immense. Raghav's affair with Aarti also doesn't come under 'Love'. His love and passion is only for revolution. Aarti's relation with Raghav also doesn't satisfy the concept of 'love' and the reason is obvious. Self control is a necessary ethic which the people in love should cultivate so that they could be safer from risks of betrayal, disappointment, dejection, etc.

#### Summing up

Thus all the sufferings of the characters in the novel "Revolution 2020" is mainly because of deviation from the prime culture. Gopal has to understand his weakness for his girl and should have kept her aloof since the beginning. His indecision in renouncing her after being aware of her relation with Raghav is the root cause of his predicaments. He should have accepted the reality of life and proceeded according to the aspirations of his father. Thus by not being one among the mass, he ended up as a lonely bachelor. The same is in the case of Raghav. If his passion is of journalism, he should have convinced his father and should have continued with his passion or he should have successfully become a successful IIT student. He neither did this nor that. He failed to understand that in politically corrupted countries like India, he could not fight as a single soul. Due to lack of clarity in life, he struggled more than rest of the characters in the story. Similarly, Aarti suffered as she went out of common prescriptions of the prime culture for women. She forgot that she is a girl. She moved freely with her classmates forgetting that they are boys. The result of her flimsy behavior is losing her virginity and suffocating because of guilty conscience. Over all, it is observed from the study that wherever possible, it is always safer to be one among the mass by following the prescriptions of one's faith and culture. Bypassing them will result into gross reactions.

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