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Research Review

Faction and Contemporary Indian Reality in Novel “Revolution 2020”

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Abstract-

Revolution 2020, a fictional work of Chetan Bhagat, is a blending of fiction and socio-political realities of contemporary India. It reflects several burning issues such as poor education system, corruption, youth anxieties, middle-class aspirations, challenges in balancing personal, professional & social expectations as well as choices. It also mirrors the internal conflicts such as fear of failure, frustrations, morality etc. This research review examines the concept of faction – merging fiction with facts – in the novel Revolution 2020. Lead characters such as Gopal, Raghav, Aarti represent the youngsters of Indian middle-class. The review argues that Revolution 2020 mirrors the 21st century Indian society specifically the middle-class.

Keywords

Fiction, Contemporary India, Education system, Youngsters, Middle-class, Chetan Bhagat, Corruption, Liberalization

Introduction

Post liberalization and during the era of advancement of technologies & enhanced AI, people of contemporary world are more interested in reading something about themselves and the crucial issues that need to be resolved soon so that they can feel connected and live a better life. Earlier, authors often wrote on the themes of colonial period of India, including identity issues, & nationalism, but now, middle-class Indian readers like themes based on contemporary issues

and personal challenges. Besides this, today's readers, interested in English literature, don't like a writing with typical literary language. They

want simple & easy language. Hence, authors have started writing in common language & simple style so that readers can connect themselves with the plots and also, they chose themes of day-to-day life & burning issues of present generation.

When Chetan Bhagat began to write he understood the need of youth and used simple colloquial language so that readers can easily relate themselves with the theme, he shared his real-life experiences so that the story seems true and believable. He writes on education, corruption, social-cultural issues, political-economic issues, youth aspirations, anxieties & challenges etc. He often writes on current burning issues which need to be addressed by public; therefore, he blends real facts with imaginary settings to clear his view and make his claims too strong. This blending of Fiction with Facts or Non-Fictional elements, makes his writing a Faction i.e. Facts with Fiction.

Revolution 2020 is based on the themes of love, ambition, corruption in education system. The story picks the characters from Varanasi. It describes how corruption has spread in education system, compromised morality of Indian society and commercialization of Indian education in form of coaching centers, poor political system etc. These topics make the novel a faction.

Concept of Faction

The blending of fiction and non-fiction is given various names by literary experts such as "Creative non-fiction (CNF)", "Semi-Fiction", "Hybrid Fiction", "Cross Fiction", "Novel with a key", "Faction", "Cross Genre Fiction" etc. The merging of facts chosen from current issues such as corruption, lack of quality in our education system, unemployment etc. with the imaginary settings, creates hybrid writings. It enables the writer to describe the contemporary issues effectively and inspire the youth to take necessary action for their resolutions. The realistic situations are set with innovative narration which helps readers to imagine themselves as victims of existing issues. The portrayal of real facts of the society or nation make the writing reliable. In *Revolution 2020*, Bhagat has tried to divert the focus of youngsters towards persisting corruption in Indian education system through the story of protagonist Gopal. As it is correctly said that acceptance of problem is the first step of its resolution, Bhagat's writings work on contemporary issues as that first step.

Contemporary issues in *Revolution 2020*

Gopal is the main character who suffers from failures in academic & personal life. To achieve some success, he chooses the path of wrong-doings, compromises his morality; but at last his materialistic success leaves him nowhere. The crucial issues highlighted in the novel are:

➤ Corrupted Education System

The dominating theme of the novel is our corrupted education system. Chetan Bhagat has criticized the commercialization of the education system. He has reflected, how private colleges work like a profit-making company instead of a learning institution, to a great extent. Statements such as: **"Education is a business."** And **"Money opens doors."** clearly disclose how money plays an important role to open an education institute in very short period of time. Gopal establishes GangaTech

through bribery, political nexus etc. Chetan Bhagat establishes the fact that financial status is more important than the intellectual status to open any college or university. Gopal's struggle in coaching centers mirrors the commercialization of higher education in India. Also, the obsession with engineering and medical degrees reveals how these degrees decide the status in Indian society.

➤ Youth Frustration & Aspirations

The novel represents the youngsters of middle-class society of India. It tells how they choose their career due to the parental & social pressure. Gopal wanted to clear IIT exam because his father (Baba) wants him to become an engineer. This is the poor mindset of the Indian society even in the 21st century. Gopal says- **"He is obsessed with making me an engineer."** This statement highlights the level of parental pressure which compels the youngsters to kill his actual dreams & chase social dreams. This is the main reason behind the youth anxiety, frustration, fear of failure, depression, stress, etc. Sometimes it also pushes them to end his life.

➤ Political & Administrative Corruption-

Another contemporary issue reflected in the novel is corrupted political & failed administrative system of India. How Gopal uses his political approach to get various administrative approvals, required to open GangaTech. Shukla ji, an MLA, represents a politician who uses his power to fulfil his interests. The statement: **"Power protects itself"** reflects the institutionalization of corruption in India. Also, the novel captures the true picture of our administrative system and bureaucracy suffering from red-tapism. It also shows how administrative decisions are influenced by political pressure. Statement

like “**Seventy-two lakhs, twenty-three thousand and four hundred rupees to obtain everything from electricity connections to construction site labour approvals**” depicts the bribery practices within contemporary India. Give-and-take bribery has become a new normal.

➤ **Role of Media**

Chetan Bhagat has portrayed two faces of media in Revolution 2020:

▪ **Corrupted Media**

It supports Gopal to become a successful director of a university. Statement such as: “For a little extra fee, we publish positive articles about your college” reflects the nexus between media and elite corporates.

▪ **True Media-**

Raghav’s newsletter Revolution 2020 reflects the image of genuine media. It gives general citizens, a platform to bring forward their issues. Raghav prints scams, poverty and other issues so that youth get inspired to bring change in system through revolution.

In this way, Bhagat explores the role of ethical journalism in resisting corruption along with journalism dominated by both money and power.

Representation of Varanasi-

In Revolution 2020, the plot is set around Varanasi city. The author has given minute details of colleges, coaching institutes, streets, cuisines, brands & various celebrations so that readers can connect themselves to real-life locations. It seems that all the events of fictionalized world are taking place in the authentic locations. Some excerpts from book- “...I went to the Vishwanath Temple and Dashashwamedh Ghat...“...never ending funeral pyres in the Manikarnika Ghat...” Such factual details make this work of art a true fiction.

The above geographical & local description makes readers to imaginatively consider their

presence in Varanasi, as they go through the story of the book.

Audience Reception-

Various audience responses have also been collected from different digital platforms such as blogs and book reviews available on Amazon & Flipkart etc. They also reveal that readers identify themselves with characters and circumstances. For example, “Very good fiction that makes me feel like in reality” and “It is same as my life”, clearly indicate that an emotional reliability persists between the reader and the author. They consider the academic and social pressure are true and also, they are familiar with corruption practices in their day-to-day life. One blogger has said “The language is pretty easy and everyone can relate to the story”. This is the evidence of availability of facts in the said novel.

Some Auto-fictional Traces-

We can also find elements of Auto-fiction in Revolution 2020. Through Gopal, Chetan Bhagat has shared his academic & career related struggles, and his failures, anxieties, confusions as discussed by him in his interviews, You Tube videos, blogs etc. Statements such as “**Do you think I am a good person, Chetan-ji?**,” shows how the distinction between fiction and author’s real-life experiences blurs. Bhagat’s role as an author as well as listener of narrator gives his personal touch to the imaginary settings.

Narrative Style-

Gopal directly tells his story to author Chetan Bhagat. Statements like “ I turned around. “Am I?” he asked again”, ‘Phoolchand bhai, a boatman at Assi Ghat... I opened the box of laddoos... Why are you going to Sri Ganesh?... ‘Didn’t like the maal?’ Phoolchand asked..., show how conversational tone, that too in Hinglish, create intimacy. Readers connect themselves to the characters and believe the situations set in the novel. Dialogues are short, meaningful and simple- this kind of approach increases middle-class readership of the novel.

Conclusion- It may be concluded that Revolution 2020 is not just a pure fiction; instead, Chetan Bhagat has presented factual realities of

commercialization of education system, institutionalization of bribery practices, youth struggles in modern India. Bhagat has reflected critical issues through imagination and real settings so that the novel can work as both a fiction and critique of existing system.

Simultaneously, Chetan bhagat has merged his real-life experiences with the story which emotionally appeals the readers.

Thus, the Research Review suggests that the Revolution 2020 should not be treated as a mere fiction.

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