Abstract

Chetan Bhagat (1974), at present, is not an unknown name in the postmodern popular fiction writing in Indian English Literature. At the very young age, he has earned a lot of popularity through his creative fictional writings in the contemporary Indian English Literature. He has written six fictions in all like Five Point Someone (2004), One Night@ the Call Center (2005), The Three Mistakes of My Life (2008), 2 States: The Story of My Marriage (2009), Revolution 2020 (2011) and Half Girlfriend (2014). What Young India Wants (2012) is his non-fiction which a collection of his news articles and columns, he has written for various leading newspapers and the speeches he has delivered as a motivational speaker. He is the best-selling and the most widely read Indian writer in the present time. His books are sold in millions. Most of his fictions are adopted for various Bollywood movies. He is considered the youth icon of India as the ethos and isolations of youth are noticeably depicted in his fictions. It is believed that he has nurtured the habit of reading English books among the Indian young generation of India with his simple English, especially to those who were not yet so good in English. Postmodern subjects like youth aspirations, love, sex, marriage, urban middle class sensibilities, issues related to corruption, politics, education and their impact on the contemporary Indian society are major thematic concerns of his fictions.

The researcher, while reading various fictions of Chetan Bhagat, has observed that Bhagat has realistically represented a complete replica of contemporary Indian society through his fictional writings. Contemporary Indian society, with its current issues and problems, has been one of the chief thematic concerns of Chetan Bhagat’s fictional works. In all his fictions, he has depicted the contemporary urban social milieu with its major issues and its effects on Indian society. The so called unserious fictional works of Chetan Bhagat have stimulated a very serious sense of worry and accountability among the youth of India, towards India and its problems. Though the fictions of Chetan Bhagat are romantic in nature, the contemporary Indian society and its major issues are chief of the concerns of all his fictions. He has focused on the contemporary issues of middle class family in his fictional works. All of the chief protagonists of his works are sensitive youth and they do not compromise with the prevalent unscrupulous situations of society. The revolutionary voice
against the rigid education system which promotes cramming, the problem of unemployment, the effects of globalization and westernization on middle class society, cultural clash and its effects on national integration, corruption and its effects on society etc. are echoed in his fictions. Most of his characters are like caricatures that represent one or the other virtue or vice of the contemporary Indian society. The public sectors like education, politics, religion, culture, administration, judiciary and many other have been either criticised or satirised in his works. The author has such a mastery to convince the reader about the prevalent condition of Indian society as one can reproduce in mind, a clear cut image of contemporary Indian society with the prevalent issues. From the beginning, the researcher, while reading various fictions of Chetan Bhagat from time of their publications, had been perceiving that it has been a tendency of Bhagat to raise one or more issues of contemporary Indian society in each of his fictions. That observation itself motivated the researcher to do literary research analysis of Bhagat’s fictions with special reference to various issues of contemporary Indian society raised by the writer.

The present research work has been undertaken with the title *Select Issues of Contemporary Indian Society in the Fictional Works of Chetan Bhagat*. First five fictions of Bhagat have been selected for the present study (as the last fiction *Half Girlfriend* was not published at the time of the finalizing the research title). The present research work has been written in various seven chapters. All the seven chapters start with preview, continue with detailed analysis of the select fiction with special reference to the Research Tool and end with summing up of the actual research findings. The first chapter is the introduction chapter which prepares a perfect background for the following five chapters. The last chapter concludes all the research findings. In the first chapter the researcher has designed the Research Tool to be used in the following five chapters. The last chapter testifies the Research Tool with the actual research findings. The first chapter has been divided in six different parts. The first part focuses on the biographical sketch of Chetan Bhagat, his works and his literary contributions to the Indian English literature. The second part explores Chetan Bhagat’s position in Indian English literature and determines the genre of his fictional works. So and also rational gap of the present study has been discussed in this part. The third part focuses on reciprocal relationship between literature and society. The fourth one deals with the concept of contemporary Indian society. The fifth one determines reflection of contemporary Indian society in Chetan Bhagat’s fictions. The sixth part outlines
major issues of contemporary Indian society. The chapter ends with the select issues of contemporary Indian society which becomes ‘Research Tool’ to be tested on the select fictions of the writer Chetan Bhagat. Each of the following five chapters like chapter-II, III, IV, V, VI are written on each select fiction of Bhagat, which literary analyse the same fiction with the special reference to the select issues of contemporary Indian society defined in the Research Tool. In the last chapter i.e. chapter- VII, the defined Research Tool has been tested with the actual research findings of the previous five chapters. The chapter ends with some of the exclusive observations of the researcher himself, related to the detailed discussion of identified genre of Bhagat’s fictions, writer’s art of fiction writing, his language, and general criticism on his works and the researcher’s final comments to the writer suggesting him to be sincerely serious writer.

All in all, the researcher, in the present research work, has endeavoured to explore the heterogeneous issues of contemporary Indian society and revealed how the issues are replicated in various fictions of Chetan Bhagat. The ultimate function of literature is to entertain and instruct. Literature has power and responsibility both to represent the actual portrait of the people and the society in which it is produced. That way, the same comes to the notice of the concerned authorities, directly or indirectly, and necessary modifications and improvements can be undertaken. Bhagat’s fictions have this very aptitude to realistically represent the actual replica of contemporary society with its major issues and that is also in the best possible entertaining and instructive manner. It is hoped that this literary research may do its bit to the sacred vision of social reform of the country.