CHAPTER-I

Introduction

(Biographical Sketch of Chetan Bhagat, Contemporary Indian Society Defined, Major Issues Discussed, and Research Tool designed)

[The present chapter has been divided into 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 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 is summed up with select issues of contemporary Indian society as the ‘Research Tool’ to be tested on the select fictions of the writer, Chetan Bhagat.]

1.1. Biographical Sketch of Chetan Bhagat

1.1.1. Preamble

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most read fiction writers in Indian writing in English. He has written six novels and one non-fiction in all. His books have been sold in millions. Postmodern subjects are the major thematic concerns of his fictions like youth aspirations, love, sex, marriage, corruption, politics, education and certain other issues related to urban middle class society. Most of his novels are adapted 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 inspired the habit of reading English books among the Indian youth with his simple English, especially, those who were not so good in English. He writes regular columns in leading daily newspapers like Dainik Bhaskar and The Times of India. In columns, he writes about corruption, elections, political parties, economics and social changes and on current affairs of contemporary India. Some of his
Columns have triggered discussions even in the Indian parliament. He is a motivational speaker and delivers speeches in leading educational institutions and corporate houses in India and abroad. He is also a Bollywood film script writer. About the criticism on his works not being in the category of serious literature, Chetan Bhagat argues that his works are intended more for entertainment purpose rather than for making it a serious literature.

1.1.2. Birth, Family Background and School Education

On 22nd April 1974 Chetan Bhagat was born in a Punjabi middle class family in New Delhi (West). His parents were government employees. His father was an army man and his mother worked in the government agriculture sector in New Delhi. He, in his What Young India Wants, admits:

I come from a simple middle-class family. Both my parents worked for the government and I grew up in Delhi. Throughout my childhood, I remember the shortage of money being constant theme in house. We had enough to run the kitchen and pay for utilities but little to build assets on or make major expenses (Bhagat What viii).

It becomes here very clear that Chetan Bhagat has an urban middle class bringing up. He has witnessed the middle class social set-up from very close. He further illustrates his middle class background that it was expensive for his family in those days to even serve coke to the guest and used to serve lemonade instead and they hardly used to go to restaurants. Further, he admits that his family economic situation, whatsoever it might be, was far better than millions of others in India.

He was very naughty in his childhood; he had done some naughty deeds like signing his school report cards and cooking up stories to escape scolding from his parents. This is how he describes his childhood in an interview with Zee News reporter Shivangi Singh on 23rd January 2009 on the occasion of Jaipur Literary Festival. He studied in Army Public School, Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi. He liked science subjects and he was deeply determined to focus on science subjects and prepare for IIT entrance exam. (Bhagat What ix) In an interview with Forbes India Magazine on 23rd December, 2009 taken by Peter Griffin, he discloses that he was a good student in school but not an extraordinary one. His class X score was 76% and class XII score was 85%.
He cultivated the inclination of storytelling from the childhood days as he and his brother Ketan Bhagat had the habit of telling stories to each other. Since childhood his uncles and aunts used to ask him to tell jokes and stories at parties. He used to enjoy the way of entertaining people from the beginning. (Bhagat What ix) All these made him what he is today, the best story teller.

1.1.3. Higher Education, Marriage and Early Career

After high school, he passed the IIT entrance exam and took admission in the Indian Institute of Technology, (IIT) New Delhi where he did his Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering. He admits that he had never been an extraordinary student at IIT; even IIT had created opportunities and had changed him forever. After his graduation, he cleared CAT (Common Entrance Test) and got admission in IIM (India Institute of Management) Ahmadabad in Gujarat. When he was a student of engineering, he was, as he says in his What Young India Wants more interested in people than machines. This motivated him to join MBA and ended his masters with excellent scores. He was an exceptional student in IIM Ahmadabad and he was recognized ‘the outstanding student’ of his batch. It was here that he met Ms. Anusha Suryanarayanan, a south Indian class-mate, whom he married in 1998. After completion of IIM studies, he got a job as an Investment Banker with Peregrine Bank in Hong Kong. He migrated from India with family. It was here, outside India, that he came to know of the comparative economic status of India and the world over. The questions like: why is India so poor in spite of all the resources? Why has she all the social ills? Why are people so divided, so oppressive, so unfair and so corrupt? (Bhagat What xi) These questions shook him from within. In ‘What Young India wants’ he says: “the world was much richer, smarter, fairer and, from what I could tell happier. All our spirituality, diverse cultural identities, policies has brought us nowhere” (Bhagat).

Due to the 1997 Asian Crisis he had to pass some jobless months in Hong Kong. Later, he joined Goldman Sachs one of the leading investment banks of the world. Here, he, along with his seniors, used to guide governments of Thailand, Malaysia, and Philippines. It was here that he learnt a lot about a nation’s economy, (Bhagat What xii) and how money flooded around the world. It was here, he understood the difference between India and some richer countries and how a government can contribute a lot for the development of a country. Despite of all the world class luxuries and comforts of life in Hong Kong, he had a
sense of disappointment and guilt for his motherland. He expresses: “Whenever I heard about bad politics created by Indian politicians, I became depressed. Every time there was news about communal or regional violence, I was in pain (. . .) I don’t know why, just I couldn’t disconnect myself from India.” (Bhagat What xiv)

Having passed about eleven years of lucrative career in Hong Kong, he finally decided to leave his job as an executive director in Goldman Sachs Bank in Hong Kong and came to India, to do what he used to enjoy since his childhood that is telling stories and taking interest in people. Before he reached this decision of resigning his job in 2008, he had written three novels and all the three had earned a very huge response from the reading community. Finally, he decided to devote his full time and energy to writing books, hoping to effect some change in India. He admits that he feared of failure in his hope, but he wanted to take a chance.

1.1.4. Present Life and Career Profile

At present he resides in Mumbai with his wife Anusha and his twin sons Ishaan and Shyam. He loves to live a very simple life. He likes to be the world’s best father for his children. He is very health conscious and practices yoga regularly.

He writes regular columns in the two leading Indian daily newspapers, Dainik Bhaskar and The Times of India of which the readership is calculated in crore. In columns he expresses his views and opinions on corruption, elections, political parties, economics and social changes at regular intervals. As mentioned earlier, some of his columns have set off discussions even in the Indian parliament.

He is a motivational speaker. His speech Spark given at an orientation program for MBA students in Symbiosis, Pune, on 24th July 2008, became a hit on the internet and that opened up a new way of his career as a motivational speaker. He delivers speeches all over India and abroad. He offers talks on leadership, motivation, values, passion, success, innovation, creativity etc. His regular clients include Birla Sun Life, Hp, ICICI, Intel, Dainik Bhaskar, Make My Trip.Com, Mahindra, Eveready, and many more. (Source courtesy: official brochure of Chetan Bhagat)

Chetan Bhagat has also tried out his pen for writing Bollywood film scripts. He has written the film script for the Bollywood film Hello starred by Salman Khan and Kai Po Chhe, starred
by Susant Singh Rajput. He tried his pen on writing Bollywood film script of the movie *Kick*, a Telugu remake, starred by Salman Khan.

### 1.1.5. Achievements and Awards

Chetan Bhagat has a very huge community of fans in India. He has millions of followers on social networking sites. He is the favourite of the youth of India. Millions of copies of his books have been sold out. His fictions are adapted for many Bollywood movies. Being a motivational speaker, he has a firm belief that motivation often matters more in life than intelligence. His columns have a kind of spark in them that invites serious discussions among the intellectual community of India, even in the Indian parliament. He has achieved what he dreamed of when he resigned his job. He wanted to bring some difference in the thinking of the young generation of India. He is considered not merely an author but an icon for the young generation of India. All this has been possible in a few years. He is still in his forties. He has a very long way to go.

He has received awards and recognitions from many reputed agencies. When in his masters at IIM-A, he was awarded ‘Most Outstanding Student’ of his batch. *Time* Magazine listed him among 100 most influential people in the world in the year 2010. *Fast Company* recognized him among 100 most creative people in business in the year 2011. *Forbes India* included in the list of top 100 celebrities of India in the year 2012. *India Today* recognized him in the category of Power List - 2013. His tweets sometimes spark public controversies as he touches some of the very sensitive issues like politics, corruption, social ills etc. Sometimes, he has to face much controversy because of his needless interference in some of the current issues. He is, here, blamed as a publicity hungry man. And it is his habit of keeping his feet in hot water, some or the other way. May it be the issue of his book not being given the promised credit for making films or may it be his controversial comment on a political figure like Arvind Kejriwal as an item girl of Indian politics, he is there to create or face controversy and grab much public attention. Personally, he is a good fan of Mr. Narendra Modi as revealed in his writing columns or articles in newspaper. Due to that, he is considered Chetan (Modi) Bhagat or say, Chetan, a disciple of Modi.
1.1.6. His Books, Film Adaptation and Controversies

Chetan Bhagat has written five fictions and one non-fiction. All of them are best sellers. His first book *Five Point Someone* was published in May 2004. Though it is a fiction in genre, he has depicted some of his personal experiences and observations of student life of his IIT days, which gives an autobiographical tone to the novel. The book was accepted and appreciated by people especially, the youth of India. It was adapted for Bollywood movie *3 Idiots* in the year 2009. However, it created many differences between the writer and the producer Raj Kumar Hirani on the issue of giving proper credit to the original writer. It was settled later, on the basis of inspired creativity of the script writer and the producer.

He continued writing and in the following year (2005) his second book *One Night @ a Call Centre* was published. The book has postmodern sensibilities like the plight and poignancy of the young generation of India working at a call center, at the center of the theme. The postmodern sensibilities of the urban milieu are at the central thematic concern in the present fiction. The book was adapted for the Bollywood movie *Hello* in the year 2008, starred by Salman Khan.

In the year 2008, his third book *The Three Mistakes of my life*, was published. The book has youth aspirations, love, career, cricket and politics as the main theme. The book was liked by an enormous community of readers and it established Chetan Bhagat as a rising star in the galaxy of the contemporary Indian writing in English. This book was also adapted for the Bollywood movie *Kai Po Chhe*, in the year 2013.

He wrote ‘*Two States; The Story of My Marriage*’ in 2009 where the contemporary North and South Indian society with their customs and rituals and the un-concernedness of these two separate communities are depicted with an amusing style of storytelling with some autobiographical overtone. The novel was adapted for the Bollywood movie with the same name in the year 2014.

*Revolution 2020*, soon to be adapted for the Bollywood movie is his fifth fiction, is the story of a love triangle published in 2011. He wrote this book keeping Indian politics, corruption and the decomposing Indian education system and the voice of youth at the center of the subject matter.

*In the year 2012, What Young India Wants* was published. It is his first non-fiction book. It is a compilation of his articles and speeches that touches various issues of contemporary India.
As he writes at the beginning of the book, it is not only about the India of present but the India of his dream. (vii)

Recently, in October, 2014, he published his latest fiction *Half Girlfriend* which is the story of a rural-boy and an urban-girl. Bhagat, for the first time, tries his pen (rather key-board) to depict the village milieu of the contemporary Indian society. The writer has focused on the issue of the growing craze for English and its effect on the life and career of the rural young generation that cannot speak English fluently. The modern youth aspirations and ambitions are realistically depicted in the fiction. Moreover, the writer has also focused on the compromising attitude of the youth of the modern India in fulfilling their high dreams. The writer, in a few days of the publication of the present book, was trapped in the controversy of plagiarism issue of stealing the plot of a book *Englishia Boli* by a Bihari scholar Dr. Birbal Jha. And also the royal family of the village Dumraon sent him a legal notice for spoiling their image by depicting them in a negative manner.

**1.1.7. His Contribution to Indian English Literature**

Chetan Bhagat has written six fictions and one non-fiction in all till date. He has cultivated the genre of realistic popular fiction in contemporary postmodern Indian English Literature. His best contribution to India English literature arguably is that he has inspired the reading habit of the young generation of India. The fear of English as a second language, among the youth, to some extent, disappears after reading his books; such is his simple and lucid style of storytelling. His language is always simple and easy for an average youth of India. Generally, literary texts like the novel etc. are the monopoly of highly literate or intellectual people and an average reader of India dare not even open the pages of some of the so called serious literary texts as they fear of their limitation of understanding the second language. Chetan Bhagat’s technique of writing is so reader-friendly that the readers feel more comfortable as the themes of his stories always cover love, politics, corruption, cricket, plight and pathos of the struggling youth, the urban hardship and social virtues and ills. So it arouses and sustains interest of the young reader. The simplicity of presentation has made many people read books written in English. He has touched the middle class social milieu with all the realities of life. The reader is convinced that what is there inside the book is a reflection of the outside world. No heavy philosophy of life, no gravity or complexity, no
heavy lexicography, just pure entertainment and that is, in the words of R. J. Rees, one of the chief functions of literature.

1.1.8. Summing Up:
Chetan Bhagat at a very young age has established his literary genius wonderfully. He has produced considerable literary output till his forties. He is, to some extent, successful in his aim of spreading awareness among the people, especially the youth of India, to see from close quarters what is happening in the country and how they can do their bit for the solution. He comes from an urban middle class background, so the issues of the urban middle class localities have been effectively represented in his fictions. The picture of contemporary India, with vividness of the problems it faces, is clearly reflected in his books. He has initiated a different line of writing fiction in Indian English literature through his unique sense of creativity and calibre. Criticism and controversy chase him like a cat behind a rat but he enjoys it fully and he, many a time, accepts that he is now used to such things. He is also very active on social-sites like Facebook and Twitter. He keeps on expressing his sentiments and points of views from time to time and millions of his followers like and comment on them. All these and others, give him a lot of intimacy and closeness with his wider community of readers. He keeps on trying out various platforms of entertainments like the reality T.V shows and advertisements that helps him earn both money and fame. To sum up, he is presently enjoying his heyday of success and popularity as a young writer in Indian English literature.
1.2. Exploring Chetan Bhagat’s Position in Contemporary Indian English literature

1.2.1. Preamble

The position of Chetan Bhagat in Indian English Literature is still a debatable issue. Many critics and advocates of serious literature do not consider him as a serious novelist. By many critics he is placed in the group of popular literature or pulp literature writers whose literature is mostly sold at the railway stations, bus-stops and on streets at cheap rates. Chetan Bhagat is very successful as a writer of realistic fiction in the modern time. He writes for the common community of readers. His characters are from the middle class community of contemporary India. The stories of his fictions are based on the life and issues of the middle class people of contemporary India. Due to that, he is more popular among the readers of middle class population of India. He receives favour from large readership especially from the young readers. Chetan Bhagat himself accepts many a times that he writes for the purpose of entertainment. Entertainment is always at a top priority in all his fictions. His style of presenting the content is so easy and straightforward that one can hardly find formal linguistic beauty and subtleness of content in any of his fictions. All these indicators can easily lead one to put him in the category of writers of popular or pulp fiction writers in Indian English literature. An understanding of the concept and characteristics of popular literature may definitely help one, for positioning Chetan Bhagat in Modern Indian English Literature.

1.2.2. Popular Literature Versus Serious Literature: A Glance

At the simplest, what is not serious or artistic literature is all popular literature. However, critics are of the opinion that the word ‘Popular’ here does not necessarily mean opposed to artistic literature or serious literature, rather it synonymously means successful literature, a kind of literature which is widely read for specific purposes. Popular literature does not mean bad literature; rather it is a kind of writing which is written in a lower category of language and other literary elements. Various forms of popular literature include popular fiction or Pulp fiction, action adventures, gothic, fairy tales, dystopia, young adult, autobiography, biography, travelogue and story books. Newspapers, periodicals and magazines, cookery books, books on childcare, literature for children, jokes books, books on
motivation, spiritual knowledge books etc. which are read by a vast community of readers, can be considered in the category of popular literature. Engineering and medical books or science and technological books, or books for specific purposes like books on general knowledge, books for the preparation of competitive exams or entrance exams can be added to the list of popular literature in the modern time. The researcher believes that *Periodical Essays* of Richard Steel and Joseph Addison can also be taken as a form of popular literature as such literature was widely read and discussed by the middle class people in coffee houses during the time. Victor E. Newburg in his book *Popular Literature: A History and Guide* traces the origin and development of popular literature in English to the beginning of the printing press in the year 1897. Popular literature was specifically printed for the people of the lower class community who could not afford expensive books of serious literature. Also their level of language skill was not much advanced. In the modern time, popular literature is also called paperback literature, or yellow page literature, as it is mostly printed on a low quality paper, or recycled paper. It is also called cheap literature as such literature is sold at a comparatively lower price. The wider readership of such a literature consists of low educated or low community of people. Popular literature is generally read for ‘Time Pass’ purpose, mostly during long travels or in leisure time. Such a literature is generally sold at railway station book-stores, bus-stop book-stores, on the busy streets and highways or by the handcart pullers, peddlers and venders at the university or college entrance gates, or some specific trade-expos, book fares or at the corner of shopping malls or online shopping websites in recent times. Even some of the serious literature books are printed in paperback or produced on the pulp papers as cheaper version or say low price version. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica:

“Popular literature today is produced either to be read by a literate audience or to be enacted on television or in the cinema; it is produced by writers who are members, however lowly, of an elite corps of professional literates. Thus, popular literature no longer springs from the people; it is handed to them. Their role is passive. At the best they are permitted a limited selectivity as consumers.”

Generally popular literature differs from artistic literature in the sense that it has very short-lived. It can be considered as ‘Read and Throw’ type of literature. To be brief, such a
literature is not necessarily for the next generation but for the contemporary generation. The prime objective of such a literature is entertainment. It has not necessarily to do with the artistic way of writing a piece of literature. The language or the diction does not necessarily bear high seriousness. It has very low permanent value. It may attract or appeal to the present generation not necessarily to the generations to come. The nobilities of human life may not be found well expressed in the fictional world of popular literature. Popular fictions mostly aim at the middle class community as readers, so the characterization and thematic concerns are always associated with the lower community of society. The prime objectives of popular literature writers are entertainment, grabbing public attention, or earning money. On the contrary, artistic literature is an everlasting sort of literature. In his article on the official website of The London School of Journalism, John Oldcastle (October 2000) has pointed out some of the basic characteristics of literary writing like artistic merits, creative genius, didactic purpose, creative and artistic intent, profundity of language and arty rhetoric and prosody, creative imagination, nobility of theme like life, love, war or death, and description of life as a whole expressing nobilities of mankind. One has to be very aware of the fact that the above exclusive characteristics of serious literature are not necessarily strictly followed in Popular Literature.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica write:

- Popular literature includes those writings intended for the masses and those that find favour with large audiences. It can be distinguished from artistic literature in that it is designed primarily to entertain. Popular literature, unlike high literature, generally does not seek a high degree of formal beauty or subtlety and is not intended to endure. The growth of popular literature has paralleled the spread of literacy through education and has been facilitated by technical developments in printing. With the Industrial Revolution, works of literature which were previously produced for consumption by small, well-educated elites became accessible to large sections and even majorities of the members of a population. The boundary between artistic and popular literature is musky, with traffic between the two categories according to current public preference and later critical
evaluation. While he was alive, Shakespeare could be thought of as a writer of popular literature, but he is now regarded as a creator of artistic literature.

The following document originally produced by Community College of Denver on the web address http://www.ccd.cccoes.edu/-ksmiles/lit/115/sersuprf.html in tabulated form uploaded on http://webs.anokaramsey.edu/stankey/Literat/Other/SerPopLt.pdf makes the difference between Serious versus Popular Literature very clear:

(Please turn over the new Page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serious Writing</th>
<th>Popular Writing</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Definition:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definition:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Writing that requires philosophical thought by both the reader and the writer.</td>
<td>1. Writing that deals with the obvious or with the easily seen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Writing that deals with deep moral problems of life that affect people permanently.</td>
<td>2. Writing that deals with temporary problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. To help us gain insight by expanding our minds and our awareness of life.</td>
<td>1. To provide escape and entertainment for the reader.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. To present a universal truth about life as the author sees it. (Thematic intent)</td>
<td>2. To make the reader's dreams come true.</td>
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<td><strong>Identification Mark:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Identification Mark:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Original plots, realistic characters. At the end, the reader will have to make decisions about the way the author and/or characters solved the problems. Ambivalent endings.</td>
<td>1. Predictable plots often involving a god-like figure who solves everyone's problems. At the end, all the reader has to do is sigh with satisfaction. Happy endings.</td>
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<td>2. Characters are usually individuals and may act in unexpected ways as do real people.</td>
<td>2. Characters are often stereotyped (&quot;good guys wear white hats&quot;) and predictable in their actions or decisions, as real people are not.</td>
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<td>3. Characters make major personality changes slowly and, sometimes, painfully.</td>
<td>3. Characters make major personality changes easily and quickly.</td>
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<td>4. View of life is complex; world and characters are seen in shades of grey, having both good and bad qualities.</td>
<td>4. View of life is simplistic: world and characters are seen in black or white, as good or evil.</td>
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<td><strong>Life Expectancy:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Life Expectancy:</strong></td>
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<td>A well-written serious book has a good chance of being a permanent addition to the literature of a country and/or the world. It can sell immediately after publication or be ignored until many years after the author is dead.</td>
<td>A well-written popular book usually has a temporary, although well-paid, existence. It can be tremendously successful for a short time and the author gets as wealthy as income taxes allow, then is forgotten just as fast.</td>
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1.2.3. Popular Fiction; Pulp Fiction, Paperback Fiction, Commercial Fiction: Various Definitions

Fictions of Chetan Bhagat are roughly put in the category of popular fiction or pulp fiction, paperback fiction or commercial fiction. The study of various definitions of popular fiction, pulp fiction and paperback fiction by various thinkers may bring to the surface, the actual understanding about the genre of popular fiction. Cambridge Dictionary (online) defines the term ‘Popular’ as liked, enjoyed or supported by many people and the term ‘Fiction’ is defined as the type of book or story that is written about imaginary characters and events not based on real people and facts. To merge the above two meanings into one line, the phrase ‘Popular Fiction’ can be understood as a book or a story based on imaginary situations and characters which is liked or supported or read by many people.

Some of the sub-genres of popular fiction are romantic fiction, realistic fiction, fantasy fiction, mystery or detective fiction, crime fiction, spy fiction, horror fiction, sports fiction, thrillers, science fiction etc. Generally popular fiction is supposed to be read for various purposes like time-pass, entertainment, showmanship, or improving the skills of second language. Such a literature is written keeping in mind the masses as target audience whose language level is comparatively low. In this way, it helps the beginners with low language aptitude to build self-confidence to dare to read the second language literature. Such a reading gives temporary escapist entertainment to its readers from the drudgery of everyday reality.

Purnachandra Rao from Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh (India) in his Ph.D. thesis uploaded on Sodhganga quotes observations of Michael Blowhard regarding popular fiction in his article Taking Jackie Collins Seriously as:

    Popular fiction is fiction that doesn’t hit you primarily through the intellect or through the finer-centres. It’s more direct than that. It hits you through your funny bone, or it gives via your intellect-in gossip circuits, it travels directly to pelvis.

Amanda Credaro in his Popular Books versus Quality Literature conceptualises popular fiction by using some of the most authentic references as:

    Popular fiction may be considered to be that element of literature which is popular in the sense that it is frequently 'requested or desired' (Roget's
Introduction

Thesaurus, 1980: 865) or it is 'favoured' by the users (Ibid: 897). Materials of this nature are not considered to be popular in the sense of 'celebrated' (Ibid: 873) or 'approved' (Ibid: 931). Indeed, Foster (1995:188) notes that while it appeals to many readers, and may well contain a strong moral message; 'popular' fiction does not extend readers and is often poorly written. Although the pages in-between the covers were a dingy cheap quality, the covers were beautifully decorated, many times with lurid portraits of pretty women in various stages of trouble, and the handsome men attempting to rescue them.

The editors of The Cambridge Companion to Popular Fiction (2012) David Glover and Scott McCracken define popular fiction on the very first page of the same edited book as:

Popular fiction is frequently thought of as those books that everyone reads, usually imagined as a league table of bestsellers whose aggregate figures dramatically illustrate an impressive ability to reach across wide social and cultural divisions with remarkable commercial success.

Matthew Schneider Mayerson in his Popular Fiction Studies: The Advantages of a New Field defines Popular Fiction as:

Popular fiction is defined by what it is not: “literature.” Most critics openly or implicitly adhere to the following claims: Whereas “literature” is indifferent to (if not contemptuous of) the marketplace, original, and complex, popular fiction is simple, sensuous, exaggerated, exciting, and formulaic (for example, Gelder; Radway; Makinen; Warpole). “Real” writers spend decades agonizing over each sentence, while genre hacks produce a new paperback each year, to be “consumed” in airports and quickly discarded.

Popular fiction or pulp fiction is a sub-genre of popular literature. It is also called pulp fiction or genre fiction or quick-read fiction. The Vintage Library traces the origin of Pulp fiction in the magazines of the first half of the 20th century which were printed on cheap "pulp" paper and published fantastic, escapist fiction for the general entertainment of the mass audience. It further explains that the pulp fiction era provided a breeding ground for creative talent which would influence all forms of entertainment for decades to
Dictionary.com defines pulp fiction as: ‘Fiction dealing with lurid or sensational subjects, often printed on rough low-quality paper manufactured from wood pulp’.

P-Carson Newman College, defining various literary terms, explains pulp fiction as:

Mass market novels printed cheaply and intended for general audience. The content is usually melodramatic, titillating or thrilling. Examples includes westerns, Horatio Alger novels, soft science fiction series, murder mysteries in serialized format, and melodramatic crime stories. The designation “Pulp” comes from the paper quality-these novels are usually printed on the cheapest newsprint available.

Recently popular fictions are also recognized as paperback fictions because most of such books are published with a soft or foldable or flexible cover and not traditional hard cover. It gives good transport or carriage convenience as well as the advantage of cost cutting to even common people’s affordability. Paperback fictions should be understood as an offshoot of pulp fiction. Dan Cavallari explains the concept of paperback fiction as:

Paperback fiction is any type of book with a soft cover and glued binding that contains a fictional story. Novels are very often printed as paperback fiction to keep costs to the consumer down, thereby encouraging more sales. Traditionally, a fiction novel would initially be published as a hardcover book with a sewn or stapled binding, and subsequent editions of the book would be published as a paperback. The paperback version would cost less than the hardcover version, though the type was usually the same size. The paper size and quality was often equivalent as well (. . .)

Many people prefer paperback fiction to hardcover fiction for several reasons, the most obvious of which is the smaller size and ease of transport. The books are, in fact, sometimes known as airport books because they are small, easy to tote around, and commonly found in airports for travelers who want a lightweight entertainment during flights.

(Source: http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-paperback-fiction.htm)

To sum up, Dr. Dilip Barad is a Professor of English, in Maharaja Krishnakumarsingji Bhavnagar University, Gujarat (India). He launched an open discussion on 5th January 2014, on his BLOG with the topic title Chetan Bhagat: The Writer. Dr. Barad blogged:
Popular fictions represent contemporary taste. If we deny its study, we will fail to understand it in future. They are cultural artefacts which require serious attention. They have an appeal to the readers/viewers/audiences, which cannot be asked to abstain from. One should make a genuine attempt to understand it. We should not forget that it was Aristotle's study of popular Greek dramatists and it was Dryden's study of popular English dramatists, which they are with us. We have glaring examples of writers like Wordsworth, who was considered as childish and his poem, nursery rhymes by elite critics. Today the critics are dead and Wordsworth is remembered as epoch-maker in the history of Literature. Samuel Beckett's 'absurdity' has an appeal to the people - and after the bashing from elite critics, people started giving serious consideration- and Martin Esslin termed 'theatre of absurd'(. . .) But the important point is to give serious reading with scientific inquiry, objectiveness, systematic analysis, relevant hypothetical question.

(Source Link: [http://dilipbarad.blogspot.in/2014/01/chetan-bhagat-writer-prof-om-juneja.html](http://dilipbarad.blogspot.in/2014/01/chetan-bhagat-writer-prof-om-juneja.html))

1.2.4. Brief History of Pulp Fiction or Popular Fiction

1.2.4.1. Origin of Pulp or Popular Fiction

The origin and gradual rise of pulp fiction or popular fiction or say paperback fiction root back in late 19th century and early 20th century pulp American magazines. The Literature Network Forums holds the view for the origin of the pulp fiction in late 19th century, such as Weird Tales and The Strand, which featured the work of such prolific literary masters as H.G. Wells, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, J.R.R. Tolkien and Edgar Rice Burroughs. By the early and mid-20th century, pulp fiction, with its mix of science fact and speculative fiction, launched a new era and genre of fantasy stories with compelling alternative or parallel realities.

An article on www.goodreads.com rightly traces origin and the gradual rise of pulp fiction as:

The earliest pulp stories were printed in pulp magazines from 1896 through the 1950s. Pulps were the successor to the penny dreadful, dime novels, and
short fiction magazines of the 19th century. The term pulp fiction can also refer to mass market paperbacks since the 1950s by publishers such as Ace, Dell, and Avon. After the year 2000, several small independent publishers released magazines which published short fiction, either short stories or novel-length presentations, in the tradition of the pulp magazines of the early 20th century.

Tabish Khair from Aarhus University, Denmark in his scholarly article *Indian Pulp Fiction in English: A Preliminary Overview from Dutt to De*, published in the Journal of Commonwealth Literature (2008; 43; 59):

Its roots go back to the decline of the Downloaded from circulating library in late nineteenth-century Europe, when the popularity of circulating and serialized novels (like those of Dickens) gradually metamorphosed into shorter single volumes – particularly of such genre fiction as the detective novel and science fiction – meant to be sold to individual buyers. This tendency was reinforced in the early twentieth century by the rise of the mass culture of industrial printing, radio and cinema, as well as the increasing popularity of older revivified genres like the romance and gothic horror.

1.2.4.2. **Rise of Pulp or Popular Fiction in India**

Introduction


More to the above list, there are many authors and their creative works like Anuja Chauhan’s The Zoya Factor (2008), Ashwin Sanghi’s The Rozabel Line (2007), Amish Tripathi’s The Immortals of Mehula (2010), and M.S. Someshwar’s The Long Walk Home (2009).

The beginning of the new trend of such creative writing seems a need of the time as a huge young force of readership is getting more and more interested in reading books. Simon Montalake in his article ‘The Rise of India’s Pulp Fiction’ rightly points out the causes and reasons of rising of the pulp fiction in India as:

Known as quick-read novels, they tap into the aspirations of young Indians between the ages of 16 and 24, a bulging demographic in a country of more than 1 billion people (. . .). The rise in literacy means that India now has the world's largest circulation of daily newspapers, ahead of China. Books are also popular: A recent survey by the National Book Trust estimated that India has 83 million regular readers between the ages of 13 and 35. Seventy-five per cent of those readers read books at least once a week. Their favourite leisure activity, however, was watching TV. (. . .) Most quick-read novels take place in cities like Mumbai or on elite college campuses, far from the downtrodden villagers that fill the imaginations of other Indian writers. International publishers are also tapping India’s youth market. British publisher Penguin sells a range of paperbacks at 150 rupees that promise "fun, feisty, fast reads for the reader on the go." Both HarperCollins and Penguin publish "chick lit," Indian titles for female readers. Indian novelists have joined the canon of modern literature, earning critical acclaim and topping bestseller lists. It’s one of hundreds of similar English-language novels set in the offices, schools, and homes of India’s booming cities. Known
as quick-read novels, they tap into the aspirations of young Indians between the ages of 16 and 24, a bulging demographic in a country of more than 1 billion people.


1.2.5. Realistic Fiction: Various Definitions

Reading all the fictions of Chetan Bhagat, one can easily see that his fictions are realistic representations of contemporary Indian society. In all of his fictions, he has noticeably mirrored the present or modern human society of India with all its actualities of the time. Moreover, each of his fictions represents one or the other issue faced by society. One of the sub-genres of the popular fiction is realistic fiction. Again, a careful study of some of the definitions of realistic fiction by various scholars may help one to understand the sub-genre of realistic fiction. As discussed previously, the apparent meaning of the word ‘Fiction’ in literature is a narration which is not real or which is not true or not based on facts. The word ‘Realistic’ means not exactly real, rather it means representing things in a life-like manner. That is how the Oxford Dictionary (online) defines the word ‘Realistic’. Now, the phrase ‘Realistic Fiction’ can be understood as a fictitious book or a story narrated on the basis of real life situations and real life characters which describes the characters and situations is in a fictitious manner or as it should be or as it could be in a realistic manner.

K. Bucher defines the concept of realistic fiction as:

Mirroring life as people experience it, realistic fiction deals with many complex problems and situations from understanding sexual orientation to dealing with family problems. At its core, a good realistic novel is about people, their problems, and their challenges. The characters in the novel should be believable and their language and actions should be appropriate for setting of the story and reflective of the culture and social class in which they live.

A scholar named Kara Wilson from the University of California; Santa Barbara explains realistic fiction as:
Realistic fiction is a genre consisting of stories that could have actually occurred to people or animals in a believable setting. These stories resemble real life, and fictional characters within these stories react similarly to real people. Stories that are classified as realistic fiction have plots that highlight social or personal events or issues that mirror contemporary life, such as falling in love, marriage, finding a job, divorce, alcoholism, etc. They depict our world and our society.

A document available on the website http://highcroftlibrary.blogspot.in/p/genre-definitions.html defines realistic fiction as;

Imaginative writing that accurately reflects life as it could be lived today. Everything is a realistic fiction story could conceivably happen to real people living in today’s natural physical world. Realistic fiction helps children (readers) move towards fuller understanding of themselves and others.

Nick Kotek in his blog http://kotekchildrensliterature.blogspot.in/p/contemporary-realistic-fiction.html elaborates the concept of realistic fiction as:

Contemporary realistic fiction contains literary works that are believable and set in the modern world. These works of fiction are believable in nature and contain characters who could potentially be real people. When it comes to the story and plot of this type of fiction; the story that has been crafted, while it is made up and false, could potentially take place. Unlike modern fantasy, where magic and fantastical worlds can be found, contemporary realistic fiction is rooted in the realm of reality.

Another scholar named Kyler Giem who originally adapted the source from http://empressbaker.com defines realistic fiction as:

Realistic fiction creates imaginary characters and situations that depict our world and society. It focuses on the themes of growing up and confronting personal and social problems. This genre portrays characters coming to understand themselves and others.

He sums up what K. Bucher and M.L Manning believe about realistic fiction as a good realistic fiction is about people, their problems, and their challenges, often about family life/social problems and dealing with them. It addresses the challenges, hopes, and fears as
well as the problems faced by adolescents, a sense of hope for the future. It indirectly makes the readers question their moral and ethical beliefs. The characters in the novel should be believable and their language and actions should be appropriate for the setting of the story and reflective of the culture and social class in which they live, are engaging and true-to-life. Characters have strong and weak points. They aren’t always perfect, they have flaws and characters reflect their educational status, social class, culture, and the place in which they live. (Source link: https://prezi.com/77jtbxedmy5x/realistic-ficiton/)

1.2.6. **Realistic Popular Fiction: A Concept Devised**

A careful study of the above definitions of popular fiction and realistic fiction may bring to one’s notice, a wide variety of characteristics of the genre of popular fiction and its sub-genre, realistic fiction. Reading all the available resources related to the concept of pulp fiction and realistic fiction carefully and sensibly, the researcher proposes to devise the concept of ‘Realistic Popular Fiction ‘by merging the two separate concepts into one. A realistic popular fiction can be understood as:

A quick ‘read and throw’ type of fictitious writing, based on predictable story sequences and actions of lifelike flat characters, mirroring human life as it should be or it could be with certain contemporary major issues of modern life as people experience in the real physical world which are narrated in the form of a book of moderate size or a novel, mostly printed on low quality paper, or recycled yellow-paper on paperback intended to be liked, enjoyed, supported or read by the mass for entertainment during the leisure time, often written with an exclusive intention of a remarkable commercial success.

From a literary point of view, a fiction should be studied by keeping in mind the various basic elements of it, like theme, plot, setting, characters, diction (Language), narration (Point of view) and purpose. Keeping in mind the above basic elements of a fiction, the researcher proposes to elaborate the concept of ‘Realistic Popular (pulp) Fiction’ as follow:

**Theme:** The theme of the realistic popular fictions may generally be related to the contemporary social or other human-life related issues which are commonly faced by the people of a specific society. It may also contain a kind of message to the readers, how the society or a situation is or how it could be or how it should be. The writers of realistic
popular fictions take due care to select realistic representation of the actualities of the mass as it may directly appeal to the common readers. The theme of popular fictions does not necessarily bear the universality of thematic appeal as the theme of such fiction is based on the local issues and concerns which are not necessarily universally applicable to other parts of the world. The writers of the popular literature select the theme of their writings which are exclusively applicable to their readers which may deal with the common problems of the society and the people living in the society so that they can get maximum advantage of their popularity.

**Plot:** Plot structure of the realistic popular fiction may be kept simple and straightforward as the readers of such fiction are not literary scholars but they are average people who read for fun and not for literary criticism or literary interpretation of any kind. Realistic popular fictions are written not in a bulky size volume but in a moderate size that doesn’t, at the first sight, keep the reader away from it. The story of such fiction is never made complex or confusing by using certain literary technicalities like plots and sub-plots, frequent digressions and manifold flashbacks, rather the plot is kept very simple and straight forward to avoid the monotony of the common readers. The story is plainly told in a first person singular or third person singular by the narrator who is mostly the chief protagonist of the fiction. For the better convenience for the readers, the story of a realistic popular fiction is mostly divided in various chapters and sections and due care is taken that every new advancement or major incident of the story is told in a fresh new chapter. Realistic popular fiction considerably differs from the serious fiction in its art of plot structuring as the simple and sober plot-structuring is one of the most unique exclusivities of such writing.

**Setting:** The setting of the realistic popular fiction may hardly be an imaginary world or a different utopian world with fantasy of locations. There is no space for supernatural or metaphysical world in such writing. The setting of the realistic popular fiction is always the real world around which its general readers live in. The names of the places and locations are given real names as they exist in the physical world so that realistic touch is experienced by the readers. The descriptions of the real settings and locations with their exclusive issues give a realistic touch to a popular fiction. Moreover, the real name and real problems of the particular places also emotionally connect the general readers as they sometimes feel more attached emotionally to the name of their town or city mentioned in a work of literary art.
The real settings help the average readers to easily remember the story sequence and help them to understand the incidents of the fiction very easily. The writers of realistic popular fiction, by using real setting, also take some chances to critically represent the issues and challenges of the local places and locations and bring them to the notice of the wider readership which may spark some tangible change in the society.

**Characterization:** The characters of the realistic popular fiction are not like the super human personalities or like royal characters or high positioned or ranked celebrities of the society having bigger problems and aspirations like coming to power, higher positions or family businesses. Briefly, they are not larger-than-life sort of characters. The characters of popular fiction are simple and ordinary people of the contemporary society with their simple and ordinary problems and aspirations like job, money, marriage, family issues, social prestige, and others like health and hygiene, education and job environment, and certain other social or cultural issues. Moreover, the characters of the popular fictions are mostly drawn as flat characters having one or two major exclusive characteristics which the writers highlight in their writing. Such characters are easy to understand. One can easily predict their further actions as they are considered as strait-line personalities. They are not conspirators of any kind and the readers can easily forecast their further actions in the story. They are hardy drawn as rounded characters as in serious fictions. The art of characterization of realistic popular fiction is kept very simple and the writer does not spare considerable space for the deeper understanding of the character’s inner-self, as the prime focus of the writer is to reveal the issues related to the characters. The writers of realistic popular fiction do not want to create a noble character or ideal or typical personalities with all the better human qualities to be represented as the role-models for the generations to come. The writer of realistic popular fiction focuses on the contemporary issues of the society through a variety of characters. The characters of such fiction are mostly drawn as the mouth pieces of the writer through whom he sometimes conveys his personal sentiments and observations and suggests alternatives to the contemporary situations of the society. The characters of the realistic popular fictions are hardly adventurous, courageous, or risk-takers, rather they are cowards, feeble, delicate and passive. They are mostly victims of the situations. They generally surrender to the situations. They do not dare to challenge or change the situations. They are drawn as dependent human beings.
Diction (Language): The realistic popular fiction apparently differs from the serious fictions notably in the use of language. The language of the serious fictions is always literary and classical with heaviness of sentence structures and use of dictions. The figures of speech and rhetoric and prosody make the language of a serious fiction much classical and literary. Every single sentence, every single word of a serious fiction is used with care and concentration. The writers of the serious work of art sometimes take many days and months to select a single word or sentence. One can easily observe the show of language aptitude or literary scholarship of a writer in a piece of serious literature. The typical literary words and phrases can be used in such a serious fiction which is generally not used by the people to convey the same message. All these and other important lingua-technicalities may get special attention by the class of literary people but such a writer can hardly be widely read or appreciated by the mass. On the contrary, the language of the realistic popular fiction is a language which is generally spoken by the mass. The words and phrases, sentence structures and expressions used in the popular fictions are commonly used by the people of the contemporary society. The characters depicted in such a fiction, speak the simple and strait language as the readers of it speak in their daily life. No considerable heaviness of diction is followed in the writing of realistic popular fiction as such fictions are written for the mass not necessarily for the class. Simple and short sentence structures and commonly used words are all about the linguistic beauty of the popular fictions. It is the simplicity and easiness of language that help the popular fiction reach the wider circulation of readership. The purpose of the popular fiction writer is not to show his/her scholarship or his/her hold on the language he/she is writing, rather the ultimate purpose of literature in the words of R J Rees to entertain and to instruct is more specifically fulfilled by the writers of popular literature. Compared to the writers of serious literature, the realistic popular fiction, due to the easiness and simplicity of language, is read by the mass. The writers of such fictions use the language which is commonly utilized by the readers so there is always scope of dynamism in the use of words and sentence structures. A popular fiction writer can freely use many technical and modern words, slangs and jargons commonly used by the people whereas such a liberty is hardly taken by the writer of serious literature in the hope of giving it a classical touch.
Narration: In comparison with serious literature fictions, the popular literature fictions have simple narrative techniques. The incidents and situations in realistic popular fictions are represented as they are in the actual world. There are no exaggerated or over stated situations and incidents in such fictions. The story sequences are narrated so simply that the common reader hardly experiences any trouble in following it. The stories are told, as mentioned earlier, in first person singular or third person singular, mostly by the chief protagonist of the fiction. The incidents and situations in popular fictions are kept simple and short as the writers know it for sure that is writing for the common community of readers and not the scholastic literary community of readers. Most of the writing draft of the realistic popular fiction is in the descriptive form in simple language, and hardly any dialogue technique is used. The narrative technique of the popular fiction ensures no blockage of any kind in understanding the story sequence of the fiction. Simple and plain narrative technique can be considered one of the unique characteristics of a good realistic popular fiction.

Purpose: Any piece of literature is written or read with a specific purpose or purposes. Some people write literature for fun, some write for earning fame, some for money, some write for academic or professional purposes, some others write for awards and many others write for all the said purposes. In the same way, some people read literature for entertainment, some read for academic or professional purposes, some for getting knowledge, some for earning social prestige, some for ‘time pass’ and many others for all the said purposes. Moreover, the ultimate purpose of literature is to instruct and to entertain. It also reflects the society as it is or as it should be or should not be. The purposes of literature can be understood from two typical aspects. One may be from the writer’s side and another may be from reader’s side. Realistic popular fictions are mostly written for the purpose of entertainment of the general readership. No considerable seriousness of writing literature is observed in such literature. The success of realistic popular fiction writer is measured on the basis of the total number of the copies sold. Such fictions are not intentionally written for achieving literary awards like Booker prize or Bookers of the Booker prize, or the Nobel Prize, rather for wider readership and selling of maximum copies are chiefly intended while publishing such writings. The best-selling writers get good money and social fame. The writers of popular literature generally do not follow set literary norms and
ethics of writing serious literature, so they can easily take chances of compromises to the ethics of literature writing for ultimate purpose of commercial targets. The writers of realistic popular fiction are mostly interested in getting their books best-selling in the market so they do not generally hesitate to serve according to the growing need of the readers. Here, come the chances of describing certain sensuous scenes in the books with a view to catching the attention of the young readership. Many of the realistic popular fiction writers also write their works to be adapted for movies. So, typical Hollywood’s or Bollywood’s style of narration is followed by them. The universality of appeal may be complimentary but the writers of realistic popular fiction generally do not seem to write for any lasting value of their writings.

Realistic popular fictions are read by a lot of people who are not professional readers or who are not forced to read as a part of their profession. Rather they read for entertainment. Serious fictions are specifically read for the purpose of literary criticism or for academic purposes. Such fictions are read by a limited number of people with literary aptitude or literary interest. Popular fictions are generally read for entertainment or ‘time-pass’. Here, instruction or knowledge is a complimentary outcome. The popular fictions in modern times are widely read by different category of people like students, businessmen, housewives etc. with different specific purposes. It is generally stated that popular fictions are read by people who happen to travel much on a regular basis or those who find much leisure time. Students read popular literature for entertainment or for passing time. However, generally popular fictions are not much studied in schools, colleges and universities as a part of course curriculum. The general tendency of teaching literature in Indian schools, colleges and universities is much academic in nature. Considerable importance should be given to the upcoming generation of the new trend of popular literature which reflects the contemporary issues and challenges of society.

1.2.7. Post-Modern Indian English Fiction: A Glance

The year 1980, is roughly considered as the starting point of postmodernism in Indian English literature. Indian English literature, from 1930’s to end of the 20th century, can be well understood in two different time-segments; modernist period (1930-1980) and postmodernist period (1980-till the date). Every literary forms like poetry, short story, fiction, drama, and biography, was noticeably cultivated in the following years of 1930s but
the genre novel celebrated an unprecedented period of creativity during the modernist period. One should obviously remember the great trio-MRR i.e. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Raja Rao for their excellence in fiction writings from 1930 onwards. Other novelists like Ruskin Bond, Ruth Prawar Jabwala, Kamala Markandaya, Khuswant Singh, and later on Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and many others nurtured the genre, novel, with their excellent creativity and literary calibre. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) is roughly considered as a starting of a new literary trend which one can name as the postmodernist period. However, Rushdie’s name cannot strictly be included in the list of Indian English novelists as he is not an Indian writer in the strict sense of the term. Certain typical characteristics of postmodern Indian English fiction centre round the different trends in thematic concerns. Bijay Kumar Das in his *Postmodern Indian English Literature* (2003) rightly points out as:

There is a shift in emphasis- we have moved away from the Gandhian era of village centrism to the city centrism of the post-emergency era. The ‘locale has shifted from the village to the metropolis of our country and then abroad. East-west encounter which is explained in terms of hybridity in relationship by post-colonial critics, takes ‘a space’ in postmodern Indian English fiction. When the world has become ‘a global village’, no culture, or society is pure or insular today. That is why Indian English fiction now takes characters, situations, both from the inside the country and abroad into its orbit and develops them.

According to him, in the postmodern era, love, sex and marriage or the failure of it, are some of the leading themes in Indian English novel. In his opinion, the other prominent themes of the postmodern Indian English fiction include lack of faith in religion, decline in moral standards and behaviour, corruption in public and private lives, feminist aspects and contemporary realities of the human society. M. Subha and Dr T. Jayasadhu have pointed out different modes of narrative techniques of the postmodern English fiction like social realism, mythical realism, historical romance, magical realism, bildungsroman etc. Some of the most celebrated postmodern fictions are Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *Shadow Lines* (1988), and *The Glass Palace* (2000), Shashi Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), Vikram Seth’s *The Golden Gate* (1986), and *A Suitable Boy* (1993), and Arun Joshi’s

Bijay Kumar Das holds his stronger view that post-1980 Indian English fiction is postmodern and post-colonial fiction with a new exuberance of language resulting in the creation of an Indian English idioms, and its emphasis on history and myths of the land, and above all, sexual frankness. (. . .) love, sex and life in the present context are depicted with objectivity and, as a result, the texts become ‘worldly’. (. . .) in fact, postmodern novels are written keeping in mind the elite audience both at home and abroad. (. . .) Indian English fiction has brought revolution in the whole range of Indian English literature in the choice of subjects and language of expression.

M. Subha and T. Jayasudha hold the view that;

Postmodern Indian novels in English explore Indian life in India and abroad, handle magic realism and historical romance very well and the most successful themes turn out to be social reality and Indian Mythology. They carry the universal theme, social issues and concerns and the individual’s reaction to it that are much relevant to a contemporary reader, who is perplexed with new issues every day. These novels are readable, enjoyable, and appreciable.

The new generation writers of postmodern fictions in Indian English literature have generally written in a simple and straightforward style of narration. The effects of advancement of science and technology can be clearly witnessed in such fictions when the story sequences are observed to be highly influenced by scientific and technological advancement in the words and deeds of the major leading characters. The chief thematic concerns include metropolitan realities like economic crisis, pseudo-modernity, socio-psycho-economic effects of the liberalization, privatization and globalization on the lives of the people of modern society and others like self-identity crisis and social identity-crisis.
Along with these, love, sex, marriage and issues related to them all, can also be observed as the some of the thematic concerns of postmodern fiction in Indian English Literature.

1.2.8. Post-Modern Indian English Realistic Popular Fiction: Genre Identified to Chetan Bhagat’s Novels

Chetan Bhagat is a celebrated name in the brigade of new generation writers of postmodern fiction in Indian English literature. Till date, he has written six different fictions, all of them are best sellers. All the books have been sold in millions and all of them are adapted for Bollywood movies. Presently, he is enjoying his heyday of success as a writer. All his six fictions realistically represent the contemporary Indian society and some of the very acute issues faced by the people. Reading all the fictions critically, one can undoubtedly apply the “Post-Modern Indian English Realistic Popular Fiction” as most appropriate tag to his fictions. Love, sex, marriage, metropolitan life and its typical social, economic, and psychological issues, youth isolation, youth unrest, and many other issues are the leading postmodern thematic concerns represented in the fictional world of Chetan Bhagat in a realistic manner. Detailed discussion on ‘Chetan Bhagat’s novels as Postmodern Indian English Realistic Popular Fiction’ will be done in the latter part of the last chapter (Conclusion) of the present thesis.

1.2.9. Research Gap for the Present Study

The researcher is strongly in the opinion that fiction is top-most favourite genre for literary research studies in the recent time in India. Very few genres are as cultivated as fiction during the present time. To his limited senses, the researcher observes two different types of fiction writings in literature. One may be called a serious fiction and another may be called a popular fiction or pulp fiction. The present trend is that even the upcoming literary research scholars conventionally choose serious fictions for their literary research project. Few scholars go for what is exactly called popular or pulp fiction though it also has deeper and wider possibilities for research investigations.

One should rethink on what Dilip Barad believes:

Popular fictions represent contemporary taste. If we deny its study, we will fail to understand it in future. They are cultural artefacts which require serious attention. They have an appeal to the readers/viewers/audiences, which cannot be asked to abstain from. One should make a genuine attempt
to understand it. (. . .) But the important point is to give serious reading with scientific inquiry, objectiveness, systematic analysis, relevant hypothetical question.

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More to the above list, there are many authors and their creative works like Anuja Chauhan’s The Zoya Factor (2008), Ashwin Sanghi’s The Rozabel Line (2007), Amish Tripathi’s The Immortals of Mehula (2010), and M.S. Someshwar’s The Long Walk Home (2009).

Having understood this, the researcher happened to excess the official website of INFLIBNET- a reservoir of Indian thesis, also called SODHGANGA which is an absolute source of uploaded research titles of various Indian universities. To the researcher’s surprise, a very few Indian literary researchers have worked on popular literature in the domain of Indian English literature. The researcher could find hardly two to three titles of research projects which are related to the popular literature in English. The coloured photo copy of the screenshot of the search results on INFLIBNET with the key-word ‘Popular Literature’ has been attached here with as a document in support of the present argument. That way, the researcher could see a considerable research gap in the field of popular literature for the
literary research in India. In the words of Dilip Barad, this domain requires much serious attention with serious reading with scientific inquiry and systematic literary research analysis. All this led the researcher to work on popular fiction or pulp fiction; one may call it still a virgin area of literary research in Indian English literature.

Chetan Bhagat, 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 is the bestselling 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 happened to search on INFLIBNET for the purpose of exploring the literary research work which has been undertaken on the fictions of Chetan Bhagat. Equally to the surprise of the researcher, he could find only one thesis on Bhagat’s fictions. The coloured photo copy of the screenshot of the search results on INFLIBNET with the key-word ‘Chetan Bhagat’ has been attached here with as a document in support of the present argument. That itself shows that India’s best-selling and most widely read writer of popular literature needs serious reading with scientific inquiry and systematic literary research analysis.

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 perceived 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 literature review which the researcher has done shows there seems quite considerable literary research possibility in the fictional works of Chetan Bhagat with special reference to the current issues of contemporary Indian society. The only Ph.D. thesis available on the fictional works of Chetan Bhagat on INFLIBNET includes the new generation realism in contemporary fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri and Chetan Bhagat. Even the latest research thesis uploaded on INFLIBNET on the fictional works of Chetan Bhagat (at the time of submitting the present thesis) has been titled as ‘Multidimensional Study of Chetan Bhagat as a Novelist’. All these and other observations of the researcher motivated him to work on sociological perspectives of Chetan Bhagat’s novels with the title ‘Select Issues of Contemporary Indian Society in the Fictional Works of Chetan Bhagat’.
1.2.10. **Summing up**

Before summing up, one should closely pay attention to certain words of appreciation by world famous national and international publishing media-houses on Chetan Bhagat’s art of fiction writing or his success as a writer.

- Bhagat has touched a nerve with young Indian readers and acquired almost cult status.
  - International Herald Tribune

- Bhagat is a symbol of new India. A torch-bearer for an unafraid generation...
  - India Today

- The biggest-selling English-language novelist in India’s history
  - The New York Times

- India’s paperback king.
  - The Guardian

- A rock star of Indian Publishing
  - The Times of India

(Source courtesy: *All six Fictional works of Chetan Bhagat*)

In spite of all the above strong opinions regarding Chetan Bhagat’s writings, there is no singularity in voice in calling Chetan Bhagat an established writer in the contemporary Indian English literature and his novels as good fictions. There is still an endless debate possible on such and other issues related to Chetan Bhagat. The authenticity and genuineness of opinion and perspectives of the critics can be a different issue for endless debate. One has to keep in mind that it is Chetan Bhagat who is read and accepted widely in India, perhaps much more than the booker prize winners of the present time. He has many limitations as a writer. On the other hand, he has many exclusive strong points that make him more popular as a writer. There is a point in the allegation on Chetan Bhagat that he is a pornography writer. In all his six novels, he seems to have taken a deliberate chance to describe sense arousing kissing scenes or love making scenes in the recent typical Bollywood’s style. Many young readers may like to read him because of such sensuous writing. Even this fact can also represent the growing demand of the people for what is still not socially accepted or still considered immoral even to talk on sex in a fast progressing country like India. It also represents the changing mind-set of the people who do not/cannot
publically accept but privately like it. And it can also be taken as the naked reality of contemporary India to demand such books or Bollywood movies that serve them such spicy content. The fact cannot be completely denied that it may be one of the marketing strategies but one has to take it for granted that Chetan Bhagat conveys it for sure what he wants to convey. It a different issue if the fact is conveyed like a lollypop in a beautiful or fancy cover but the fact has to come to the surface. In response to the on-going debate mentioned earlier, launched by Dr Dilip Barad, on *Chetan Bhagat; The Writer*, the opinion of one of the participants in the discussion Dr Raj Kumar Sharma, seems very appropriate in quoting here. He has rightly pointed out as:

> Keeping in view his books and their contents, we can easily observe the elements of literature i.e. fictive background, ironical temper; imaginative impulse, comical vein, reformatory zeal, etc. that largely constitute the corpus of any literary piece. From all these angles, he stands as a literary figure. What we can question is- Is his language literary? That is also an important part of any powerful literature. From this angle, he doesn't have a literary pen at his command. A literary language is identified with a brilliant use of figure of speech, its narrative details, unconventional syntax intending to widen the horizon of literary expressions, unusual range of vocabulary, etc. Actually, it is the language of literature that induces irresistible reading of any literary writing. The force of language interwoven with thematic strings constitutes a powerful literary creation. But Bhagat miserably fails in stuffing his works with this remarkable feature. ( . . .) This linguistic weakness of Bhagat will always make the sensitive readers of literature doubt his literary potential to be reckoned in terms of universal and eternal values a literary piece truly inculcates.

To the above opinion of Dr. Sharma on blog, at that time, the researcher himself happened to participate in the online discussion and he replied to Dr. Sharma’s opinion as:

> As per the discussion of Dr. Raj Kr Sharma, CB fits in all the parameters of being a literary figure except for his language aptitude. Sir, a writer writes for the mass and not for the class. So also the language of any piece of literature should be easy enough to be well understood by an average reader so that
literature can reach to optimum class of readership. What was written in Ramayana by Valmikiji in Sanskrit was not that easy for an average class of the society and so the ideals of the Ramayana were limited to the elite scholarship. The gap was filled by Tulsidasji by recreating the same content in the language which was easy for average people to understand. The point is, the heaviness of figures of speech; heavy lexicography and many other linguistic features can confuse an average reader and will force him to leave aside the book, if not understood in the beginning. The purpose of literature should be, as it is, to instruct and entertain and not always to showcase the linguistic aptitude of a writer.

To sum up, keeping all the views and opinions aside, one has to take it for granted that the writer Chetan Bhagat possesses an unbeatable position in contemporary Indian English literature precisely in the category of realistic popular fiction writing in the postmodern era. He has paved a different way of writing fiction in Indian English Literature. He has developed his exclusive method and style of writing fiction which is different from the earlier methods and style of writing fiction. That way, he has been successful in creating a complete new brigade of young readers which now has started reading Indian English literature by overcoming the fear of English as a second language. Through his writings, he has put on the world map, a different concept of India that has no more filled with baggers, jugglers and snake-charmers. The theme, plot and narrative techniques in all his fictions are typically his own. Realistic representation of contemporary India in convincing manner is an exclusive identity of all of his fictions written till date. Moreover, he has a spark of revolutionary zest in all his fictions. Due to that he, along with being a successful fiction writer, has become an ideal for the present generation of India.
1.3 Literature and Society: A Reciprocal Kinship

1.3.1 Preamble

Society is comprised of human beings. Literature is composed by human beings. ‘Human’ is at the center of both society and literature. Both literature and society are inter-related. Both have mutual relationship like cause and effect. What occurs in society is echoed in literature. Society is a constant source of content for literature. A literary piece always takes up its ingredients from the social surrounding in which it is produced. Literature has the power and the responsibility to express the realities of contemporary society. Social realities that include good and evil are reflected in literature. One of the chief functions of literature is to promote the good qualities of society and to discourage the evils of it. Virtues are rewarded and vices are punished in literature as Aristotle defines what he calls Poetic Justice. Even literature affects society also. The Reader sometimes takes literature as real and not fictitious. A reader tries to follow the great heroes and their virtues in their real life. Through reading, he comes to know the difference between the good and the evil in life. Poetic Justice affects deeply in the mind and heart of a reader so it can be understood that the society is shaped according to the imaginary ideals. Finally, literature and society are interdependent and both have reciprocal kinship. Both literature and society have individual roles and responsibility for the reciprocal progress as discussed below.

1.3.2 Society Affects Literature

Literature is a medium of expression for the human experiences, sentiments, emotions and imagination. Pleasures, pangs and predicaments of human life are expressed in literature. Along with the social realities, the mental and emotional realities of human mind and heart, which are experienced in the social environment, are given full expression in a piece of literature. So the relation between literature and society becomes very complex and multifaceted. Literature is not a mere expression of social realities; rather it is something more than that. Though literature reflects society, it sometimes does not reflect what it actually is. Along with how it is, it also reflects how it should be or how it can be. So, literature is not always a social history rather it is a social utopia. So it can be understood that literature represents society but does not fully reflect it. It showcases something about society and not everything about society. The author lives in society. He is highly influenced by what he witnesses or experiences in society. When he creates a piece of literature, he
may add to literary creation, his own experiences and impressions of life. Such experiences
and expressions do not necessarily reflect the contemporary society in which he lives. It is a
well observed fact that world is how one sees it. As an individual, he can have certain
preconceptions and biases towards the society he lives in. Such experiences may become
catalysts for the creation of literature. Moreover, his family background, his educational and
intellectual background and the political, religious, economical background of the society,
can affect his creation of literature. So the individualistic impressions can play a critical role
for the production of literature. As for illustration, Jonathan Swift says: ‘I heartily hate and
detest an animal called man’. Now under such personal impressions and experiences of life,
how can his political and social satires be evaluated as a reflection or representation of
contemporary English society? Here, the concept that literature mirrors society is proved
half true. Literature may reflect society partly and not fully. The contemporary social
situations can stimulate the feelings and sentiments of an author to write, but a piece of
literature, as a final output, is always a unique one, which does not necessarily become a
mere a copy of any contemporary situation. Geoffrey Chaucer’s work, The Canterbury Tales,
helps us to know the 14th century English society with its social and political and religious
conditions, condition of women, trade and commerce, about the lower class community,
with their manners and much more but one should not forget that it is a piece of literature.
The society in Canterbury Tales is not necessarily the actual society of the time. Chaucer
would have written the work with his personal observations and experiences. Finally,
contemporary society can be a base or a canvas for the creation of a piece of literature but
society cannot necessarily be as it is in literature and literature cannot necessarily be as the
contemporary society is in which it is produced.
Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in Theory of Literature have very ingeniously written on the
relation between literature and society as,

The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting
with the phrase, derived from De Bonald, that ‘literature is an expression of
society. But what does this axiom mean? If it assumes that literature at any
given time, mirrors the current social situation ‘correctly’ it is false; It is
commonplace, trite, and vogue if it means only that literature depicts some
aspects of social reality. To say that literature mirrors or expresses life is
even more ambiguous. A writer inevitably expresses his experiences and total conception of life; but would be manifestly untrue to say that an author should express the life of his own time fully, that he should be ‘representative’ of his age and society. Besides, of course, the terms ‘fully’ and ‘representative’ require much interpretation: in most social criticism they seem to mean that an author should be aware of specific social situations, e.g. of the plight of the proletariat, or even that he should share a specific attitude and ideology of the critic (Welleck & Warren 95).

A sociological study of literature can bring to the surface, some of the realistic elements of the contemporary society. Such an investigation may inform something about the society of the time in which the author lived but it would not be error free to take it as a real picture of society. It can be understood as a realistic picture of society. The terms ‘Real’ and ‘Realistic’ have to be interpreted correctly like the other two words ‘History’ and ‘Historical’. ‘Real’ means how it is actually whereas realistic means alike real but not necessarily real as ‘history’ means how it was actually in the past, whereas ‘historical’ means based on history not necessarily history itself. A piece of literature is a work of art and it should be read and understood as a work of art and not more than that. It is a creation of the creator’s mind. One can collect some of the realistic outlines of the time, while reading even Mahabharata but the entire Mahabharata is not a history sequence of the ancient Indian society of the time. The imaginations and exaggerations make it very grand as the world’s biggest epic poetry. It reflects certain glimpses of the time but it cannot be taken as a historical document. The objective of literary creation can be different from time to time and person to person and situation to situation. Shakespeare wrote most of his plays to be performed on the stage. The statement would not be overruled if one considers Shakespeare as a professional play writer. What he created was a part of his profession. He might not have the intention in his mind to make his dramas master pieces to the world literature. He might not have the intention in his mind to make his dramas master pieces to the world literature. He might not have a sense in his mind that his creations would be studied in most of the universities of the world in coming centuries. And he might not have created them with that intention. His creation might have been the demand of the time. His writing would be highly influenced by the taste and demand of the audience from Royal Box to Groundlings. He wrote most of the plays based on historical events. Resources reflect that he was very much
near and dear to the royal family. So the literature produced by him depicts the upper class or aristocratic class of the Elizabethan society. On the contrary, his contemporary Ben Jonson mostly touched the common people of the society. His plays like *Everyman in his Humour, Everyman out of his Humour, Volpone or The Fox, The Silent Woman* and *The Alchemist* are best examples of it. He has depicted the common people of the Elizabethan middle class in his plays. So a literary creation is highly influenced by the individualistic impressions of the contemporary situations of the times.

To sum up, while understanding the relation between literature and society, it can never be underestimated that a creator of literature creates an assumed picture of society with his observations, experiences and imagination. Some kind of outline social realism can be extracted out from the deeper study of a piece of literature. Welleck and Warren observe:

> The Prologue to Canterbury Tales was early seen to offer an almost complete survey of social types. Shakespeare’s *Marry Wives of Windsor*, Ben Johnson in several of his plays, and Thomas Deloney seem to tell something about the Elizabethan middle class. Addison, Fielding, and Smollett depict the new bourgeoisie of the eighteen century; Jane Austen, the country gentry and country persons early in nineteen century; and Trollope, Thackeray, and Dickens, the Victorian world. At the turn of the century, Galsworthy shows us the English upper middle classes; Wells, the lower middle classes; Bennett, the provincial towns. A similar series of social pictures could be assembled for American life from the novels of H. B. Stowe and Howells to those of Farrell and Steinbeck (103).

### 1.3.3 Literature Affects Society

As society affects literature so does literature to society. The effects can be constructive or damaging also. The life picture which is created in literature is not always real. It may not be what it is, but it may be what it should be. It can be ideal also. A writer does not sometimes agree to what is going on in society, so he criticizes, satirizes or parodies it in a literary work of art. A reader reads it and shapes his understanding about what is good and what is bad in life. He can shape his thinking that the social set up which is satirized in a literary work is not to be practiced or promoted in life. The virtues are rewarded and vices are punished in literature. So poetic justice shapes a kind of understanding of a reader, what to do and not
to do in life. Reading *Othello*, one should understand that jealousy or faithlessness as one of the chief causes for the devastation of one’s conjugal life. Though the words and actions of Iago of *Othello*, Satan of *Paradise Lost* or Faustus of *Doctor Faustus* may be tempting or appealing, one must not practice it in life and that can be the real message of literature. One should understand the significance of optimism in life reading *The Old man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemmingway. The aristocratic dogmas satirized in *The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope and in *Way of the World* by William Congreve are not to be practiced in society. Here the ultimate function of literature *to instruct* and *to entertain* is justified. Literature has a power and responsibility for the improvement of contemporary unhealthy situations of society.

Some damaging effects of literature are also possible in society. It depends on the reader’s perspectives. What he takes and what he omits is of much significance. Reading literature, one can learn how to make love and also can learn how to seduce or deceive. Reading literature, one can understand the value of life and also learn some anti-social crimes like robbery, rapes and suicide. Welleck and Warren rightly observe:

> The writer is not only influenced by society; he influences it. Art not merely reproduces life but also shapes it. People may model their lives upon the patterns of fictional heroes and heroines. They have made love, committed crimes and suicide according to the book, be it Goethe’s Sorrow of Werther or Dumas’s Musketeers...we can hypothesize-plausibly, no doubt, that the young are more directly and powerfully influenced by their reading than the old, that inexperienced readers take literature more naively as transcript rather than interpretation of life, that those whose books are few take them in more utter seriousness than do wide and professional readers (102).

Many incidents and story sequences in the fictions of the selected writer Chetan Bhagat are so sense arousing that provoke the emotions and sentiments of an average reader especially the sexual intercourses and taking Vodka frequently. An average reader would take it for granted that such is or should be the way of life. So he finds these are the easy ways to escape from the stress and pressures of life. Here, the writer cannot have any ill-intention of spreading nuisance in society to take it as a way of life. Rather the intention can
be ironical, satirical or parody of what is going on in society. But it is up to the reader’s perspectives, how it is taken.

1.3.4 Summing up

To sum up, literature and society have a sort of reciprocal relationship. Both have considerable influence on each other. Even one should not forget that literature is not a history of society and society is not necessarily like how it is depicted in literature. A good literary piece has power and possibility to impress the human life for centuries together. The religious books like *The Gita, The Bible, The Quran*, and the ancient books like *the Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and many other books of world literature have relevance in the contemporary human society. Such books help people to learn how to live life. Such books are like manuals for living life. They shape the human society for centuries together. Along with that, many of such books still help us to know an estimated picture of the people with their customs, ethics, behavior patterns, their traditions and their ways of life even after centuries together.


1.4 Contemporary Indian Society; Various Definitions and Elaborations

1.4.1 Contemporary

The word Contemporary is understood in the general sense of the term as occurring at the same time or happening at the same time. The Oxford English online Dictionary finds the origin of the word ‘Contemporary’ in Medieval Latin Contemporarius from Con- means to gather with and tempus, tempor- time, meaning living or occurring at the same time, or belonging to or occurring in the present. The online Cambridge Dictionary defines the term contemporary as existing or happening now. So the word contemporary with the reference to the above two most authentic sources of lexicography can be understood as the condition or situation which is happening at the present time or the recent time.

1.4.2 Indian

India, officially the Republic of India, located North of the Equator between 8° 4 and 37° 6 North Latitude and 68° 7 and 97° 25 East Longitude, is the seventh the largest by area, second most populous and the world’s biggest democratic country, which is in the Southern part of the Asian sub-continent.

Indian is what is from or belongs to or relating to India, this is how the Online Cambridge Dictionary defines the word Indian as an adjective of the noun ‘India’.

The Oxford English online Dictionary explains the meaning of Indian as a native or inhabitant of India or a person of Indian descent that belongs to India. It also defines it as relating to the indigenous peoples of America.

1.4.3 Society

The Oxford English online Dictionary finds the roots of the word society in mid-16th century from French societe, Latin societas from socius. It means companionship, friendly association with others. It defines the term Society as the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community. It also gives another meaning as community of people living in a particular country or region and having shared customs, laws, and organizations.

The Online Cambridge Dictionary defines the word Society as a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about, how things and sharing the work
that need to be done. All the people in a country or in several countries can be referred to as a society.

The *Online Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines it as a people in general thought of as living together in organized communities with shared laws, traditions and values.

The *Online Collins English Dictionary* explains the word *society* as a system of human organizations generating distinctive cultural patterns and institutions and usually providing protection, security, continuity and a national identity for its members.

As per Karl Marx’s opinion *society* is a group of people with different groups, ethnicities, cultures, languages, life styles but though they are bounded with each other.

The *Oxford online Dictionaries* also define the word *society* as an organization or a club formed for a particular purpose or activity.

### 1.4.4 Contemporary Indian Society: Concept Defined

The word *contemporary* has the meaning of the present time or happening at the recent time. Here, in this study the concept of *contemporary Indian society* is very broad and cannot be delimited to the present time or now. So the word *contemporary* has to be understood by extending its limitations up to at least the last one decade for the study of the Indian society.

The word *Indian* has two meanings; one is from or what belongs to or relating to India and the other is relating to the indigenous people of America. In this study the first mentioned meaning shall be adopted, that is all that belongs to or related to the country, India.

The definitions of *Society* have various shades of meaning. The detailed study of them may bring to a common understanding of the concept as:

- Society is a group of people living together physically, or emotionally in organized or unorganized cluster and share common customs, traditions, ethnicity, language, past, life style etc. that give them a unique identity, which they maintain by doing some compromises or negotiations in life with a view to getting group security in life.

Indian society enjoys its well established exclusive identity as unity in diversity. Thousands of years’ history has shaped and nurtured its present structure. Presently, Indian society has heterogeneous diversity in language, food, dress, festivals, traditions, customs, and ways of life or even in their gods. Before independence from the colonial rules in 1947, India or
Indian had a scattered identity that was an outcome of an unorganized almost spontaneous structuring. It happened to be formed out of the need of the time, but with the effect of constitution of India in 1950, the legal identity ‘we the people of India...’ has given them, what is called security in the real sense of the term. Till date, time of more than six decades has passed since independence, and many changes have occurred to the traditional structure of the Indian human society. The spread of education and technology has brought various renovations and innovations and reshaped the traditional structure of Indian society. The contemporary Indian society appears much different from the earlier traditional Indian society. The time has changed, generations have changed, belief system has changed, people have changed and so has the civilization. Some common features of traditional Indian society are still prolonged that provide its identity as exclusive Indian society. Many elements of Indian society have remained the same and many new elements have been added or renovated or revised to the contemporary Indian social structure and a detailed study of it may bring to the surface very exceptional outcome.

1.4.5 Understanding Contemporary Indian Society: Exclusive Parameters

1.4.5.1 Preamble

The study of some of the most exclusive constituents of Indian society in the present context may bring to surface the very actual picture of contemporary Indian society. There are certain elite features of the Indian social set up, very unique in nature, which provide it a distinguishing position in the history of human evolution for centuries. Indian social system has a very rich and prosperous history in the world civilization. Indian civilization is considered one of the world’s oldest civilizations. The Indian social system is dynamic in nature. It has influenced many other civilizations and it is affected by many other civilizations also. The contemporary picture of Indian society seems highly influenced by the western culture and civilization, so considerable damages are witnessed to the original exclusive set up of India society. The following are some of the most exclusive features of traditional Indian society. However, the influence of modernization and westernization had caused many damages to its originality and uniqueness.
1.4.5.2 Unity in Diversity

Unity in diversity is the unique identity of India. One can find much variety in people, with their customs, traditions, belief patterns and ways of life. It is a saying for India that, even language changes every twelve miles of distance. This is not only true with language but also, much difference can be observed in people’s customs, traditions and ways of life at the distance of every twelve miles.

J.P. Singh, a university professor of Sociology from Patna University, is of the opinion that;

The Indian society exhibits considerable variations between religions, between rural and urban areas, between classes and finally between different religious, ethnic and caste groups. The Indian society is, in fact, a congeries of micro-regions and sub-cultures and differences between which are quite crucial from sociological angles. Furthermore, the differences are also discernible with respect to the level of female literacy, sex ratio, age at marriage of girls, incidence of dissolution of marriage, household size, female workforce participation rate, marital practices, gender relations, authority structure within the family. Diversities inherent in Indian society are also reflected in the plurality of family types.

A former professor of Sociology at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Ram Ahuja, in his book *Indian Social System*, published in 1993, is of the opinion that the diversity in India runs through various races, religions, castes, cultures, tribes, languages, social customs, cultural beliefs, political philosophies and ideologies. In India, the human society is consisted of a number of castes and communities, races and religions. Each caste has its own customs and belief system starting from birth to a person’s death. The diversity is clearly observed in languages spoken in India. The constitution of India, as per the opinion of Ram Ahuja, has recognized eighteen major languages but as many as 1,652 languages are spoken in India. Hindi is the official language and English is the associate official language of India. India is a secular democratic nation where there is no state religion. The constitution of India has given ‘Right to Religion’ that gives to every person freedom to follow and practice any religion of his choice. Major religions, practiced in India, are Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Further, caste system is one of the chief identities of contemporary Indian society. There are some upper castes like Brahmins,
Select Issues of Contemporary Indian Society in the Fictional Works of Chetan Bhagat

Kshatriyas etc, middle castes like Baniya, Patidar, Ahir, etc, and lower caste like Harijans, Bhangi, Chamar etc. The caste system in Indian society is an outcome of Aryan civilization. The entire Aryan Civilization was divided into two major races i.e. Aryan, the migrated race and the Dravidian, the native of Indian Territory. The caste system in India is based on the occupation, a particular group of people adopted. As time passed, such a system became a part of society. Time has changed, occupations have changed but the nomenclature is still the mark of identity for those particular groups of people. Along with caste, the Indian society has a large number of tribal populations in various parts of the country. The tribal community itself consists of various sub tribes. The tribal community of India is like a different India having special variety in customs and traditions of their own. Diversity in Indian society, is found not only in the social set up but also in the body structure, dress sense, food habits, dialects, occupations, rituals, traditions, standards of living, ways of life and belief system. All in all, Indian society is sum total of thousands of varieties and diversities. Even the constitution of India, as mentioned earlier, has given a common identity i.e. we the people of India. This brings to all the variety one identity of being ‘Indian’. Though the people of India are different and divided within India, they are united and considered as one and equal in the world. So the unity in diversity is a unique identity of contemporary Indian society. There may be many differences in opinions, there may be many tensions among themselves but the people of India are united and they show their unity when the country really needs them to be united, at the time of freedom struggle, trans-border wars or social movements against corruption.

1.4.5.3 Contemporary Indian Family System

Family system in India is another exclusive feature of Indian society. The concept of joint family is a unique identity of the Indian social system. Family bonding in Indian social set up is an illustrative trait even for European countries. It has been a very long tradition of joint family system in India where many people live together under one roof; share food of the same kitchen, hold common property, share income, exchange protection, care, love and respect among themselves. The traditional concept of Indian joint family is based on residence, property, protection, and functioning. The idea of joint family is an outcome of the need of social security on the basis of economic point of view also. The equilibrium of economy is possible in a joint family and a weaker individual does not suffer, though the
stronger or capable individual has to sacrifice for that. The joint family is mostly patriarchal in nature where all male members perform duties like earning, outdoor activities and decision making for the rest of the family. The role of women in a joint family is not dominating. They are expected to take care of the kitchen and the kids. The ideals of joint family are good. Even though a joint family has many advantages, the family system in India is undergoing vast changes because of the spread of education, urban migration, modernization, industrialization, job opportunities due to globalization and many other socio-psycho-economic reasons. The ideals of joint family are becoming obsolete in the contemporary Indian society and more and more nuclear families are coming into existence. Reena Sonawat, from SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai, in her article titled, *Understanding Families in India: A reflection of Social Changes*, notes:

Families in India are undergoing vast changes like increasing divorce and separation rates, domestic violence, inter-generation conflicts, social problems of drug abuse, juvenile delinquency etc. These changes indicate the inability to cope up with the pressure of modern life.

In the opinion of Ram Ahuja, it is not possible to specify when Indian family system began to undergo changes. He believes that the system was not completely static and the changes proceeded slowly from traditional to transitional throughout the twentieth century. From his deeper investigations and detailed studies of the books of renowned sociologists, he has derived some conclusions regarding the emerging trends of change in family structure of Indian society. He notes that the number of fissional families is increasing, that is, sons prefer to live separately from their parents but at the same time continue to fulfil their traditional obligations towards them. He observes that there is more jointness in traditional communities and more nuclearity in communities exposed to outside influences. He also observes that the size of the traditional family has become smaller.

Indian family pattern now is a modified one. Sonawat terms it as ‘Alternative family pattern’ She observes that an alternative family pattern results from personal circumstances outside one’s control or from certain socio-economic conditions such as male migration and work participation of women. She says that in such circumstances, people are forced to adopt family patterns that suits to their conditions. In the Indian context, as per her view
point, most family variations that are prevalent today are a result of such personal or socio-economic circumstances.

1.4.5.4 Contemporary Indian Political, Social and Cultural Set up

India of the present was never a one country, with a common constitution and a central political power structure before independence. When India became free from colonial rules in 1947, the country was segmented in hundreds of princely states. The visionary leaders like Sardar Patel took special interest to merge all the princely states into one nation. With all possible means, the princely sates were merged and the country ‘India’ came into existence in the real sense of the term. The country was declared a parliamentary democratic republic nation on 26 January, 1950 with the effect of the constitution of India. With effect of the constitution, the people became free from all direct or indirect slavery and a democratic social republic nation came into existence. The hold of communalism and castiesm started weakening as the democratic nation promised all people equal rights as democratic civilians. The political power structure was decentralized with the implementation of parliamentary and Panchayati Raj. The nation provided all that is needed for the all-round development of an individual. All the democratic rights are given. All kinds of freedom is given, a sensible Indian should not forget that every right comes with a responsibility. It is a bitter truth that India was not mature for freedom or democracy at the time of freedom, but it is still a big question if India, has become mature or the people of India have grown up for democracy after more than sixty five years of independence. The answer is not in complete affirmation. May be the people are united against external agitations, but national integration is not achieved yet. The communal powers are still holding people and society tightly. The caste system is still prevailing in the society. The economic inequality is not yet redressed. The non-secular forces are still active in the Indian society. They keep in disturbing the social integrity and peace. Still, capitalism is starching its winds. Still poverty is preventing the progress of the poor people. Why is this happening in society? What are the reasons behind it? Why has India not achieved growth similar to that of Germany, Russia, and Japan, after the World War-II, having a fresh start at the same time? Why are the people of India still divided? Why is the national integration not achieved yet? The reason behind all these is the people of India themselves. Education has spread, science and technology have spread. Modernization and globalization are knocking at the
doors of India; still some people of India have not come out of the traditional caste and non-secular beliefs. India has experienced hundreds of communal riots and thousands of people have lost their lives till date. People have taken education, accepted science and technology, adopted modernization in dress and food habits but their minds are still stuck to traditional non-secular belief systems, superstitions and ways of life. The people are identified as united but they are still divided in many ways. Take for illustration, an election of any kind. When there is a question of democratic rights, they are Indian but when there is a question of national responsibilities they are regionalists, communal, opportunists, or narrow minded. They claim their democratic rights as Indian, but they vote as Gujarati or Marathi, as Hindu or Muslim, as Patidar or Kshatriya, and not as Indians.

All this is not very healthy for creating a healthy social system. It directly or indirectly affects the developmental programs by the central and the state governments. When the society is divided and no one is ready to sacrifice his selfishness, none of the developmental programs can be effective. Fuel to fire is the cunning politics in India. The Indian society is still divided, because of the contemporary cunning politics. None of the present politicians of India is devoid of communal thinking of any kind. Most of the elections in India, from parliament to Panchayati raj, are still fought on caste, community or communal basis, so no social integrity is accomplished. It is a shocking tragedy that even educated people are not devoid of such matters. Social integrity is still a big issue of contemporary Indian society. India has a single culture identity but one cannot observe deep cultural integrity between the Northern Aryan culture and the Southern Dravidian civilization. Even the North Eastern states have still not developed integration into the rest of India. And the people of the rest part of India hardly take interest to know about the North Eastern people and their problems. The bonding of merged princely states seems disturbed from within. The dream of martyrs and revolutionary people for a united India seems breaking down. The formation of states on the basis of language has not been very effective. The issue of declaring official language of India had divided India into two clear separate parts. The issue of Khalistan had challenged much the national integration of India in the past. The issue of Kashmir is still a burning problem for the national integration of India. Naxalism is a big impediment to the peace and progress of tribal territories. The Naxalitiests are not ready for any compromises with governments. Thousands of military and police jawans get martyrdom every year. The issue
of Simandhra and Telangana states, created much tension in the near past. The application for separate Telugudesham is pending. In the state of Maharastra, the application for Mumbai to give separate status of state is pending. The same is the case with Gujarat for Saurastra and Kachch as separate status of states, the application are pending. In Rajasthan, the dissatisfaction of the Gurjar community is not unknown to the nation. Moreover, the country faces many conflicts on communal issues from time to time; Still, the caste system is a dominating factor for Indian society. According to Ram Ahuja, “A Brahmin in one state say, Utter Pradesh, may not share values with a local Dalit, but he shares some cultural values with Brahmins everywhere in India, from north to south and east to west (20).

Till date, the residential colonies and apartments are booked on the basis of castes and communities. Still it is taken care who is the next door neighbor? It is considered best if he is from the same community. Inter caste marriages are not yet given social approval. The traditional segregation of society has taken a new from in the society now a day. The rich people prefer to keep distance from the poor people. The professional status, economic status, knowledge status, and some other modern form of social segregation challenge the national integration of all kind. So the so called unity in diversity is merely a created or crafted imaginary picture, which looks beautiful but the reality is different. One can observe more diversity in unity.

Education and understanding can play pivotal roles for the unity in diversity in the real sense of the term. India is a country of diversity for more than a thousand many years, and it will take many more years to create the perfect shape of unity in diversity. People still feel insecure to come out of the traditional bonds of society. As time passes, people will feel safe and secure with the help of education, secure economic back up and liberty of mind and heart and united Indian society will take its perfect shape. The baseless religious and social bondages will vanish soon, cunning politics has no more future in India and unity in diversity, in the real sense of the term, is there in the near future. It is a good sign that people want peace and progress and not tension of any kind in society.
1.4.5.5 Secular set up of Contemporary Indian Society

Officially, in the preamble of the constitution, India is a sovereign secular democratic republic nation, which ensures liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. The word secular indicates that there is no state religion in India. Rather the state guarantees the freedom of following or practicing all the religious faiths. India is a secular state. This doesn’t mean that it is an unreligious or atheist country. Here, the state does not patronage any religion. The citizens are free to follow and preach the religion of their choice. All the citizens in Indian, irrespective of their religious faith are treated equal. The secular society here does not mean irreligious society, rather the two important ingredients of a secular society are; complete separation of state affairs and religion and full liberty to follow any religious faith of one’s choice or to remain atheist or agnostic. This is how Ram Ahuja explains the term secular in his book Social Problems in India published in 1997.

There are many religions practiced in India. The chief among them are Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. The oldest religion practiced in the Indian society ever since the Vedic civilization is the Hinduism. The major population 80% in India, practices Hinduism. Hinduism advocates the philosophy of Karma and its effects in the next birth. The concept of Paap, means wrong doings, and Punya, means right doings, have lasting effects on contemporary Indian Hindu society. The ardent Hindus are always afraid of doing wrong needs as they fear of Hell. They consciously practice right doings for getting Heaven and Moksha or salvation; it means getting rid of the cycle of rebirth. The Hindu doctrine is so nicely crafted that it promises a healthy, peaceful and progressive human society.

About 12% people in India, practice the Islam religion. Islam came to India with the Muslim invasions. The succession of Qutubdin as the first sultan of Delhi and the growing Mughal Empire deepened the roots of Islam in the Indian society. The Islam is a religious doctrine that believes in the existence of one God. The chief preachings of Islam are justice, fraternity, equality and religious living. The five recommended primary duties in the Islam religion are; Imaan, that is complete faith in islam, Namaz, that is five times prayer a day, Rojjaor fasting in the month of Ramzan, Jakat, or tenth portion of the total income for donation or alms, and Hajj, that is, pilgrimage to Macca the origin of Islam at least once in life.
Jainism and Buddhism are offshoots of Hinduism. The rigid social discrimination, orthodox religious dogmas, rites, rituals, beliefs and the highly philosophical mantras in Sanskrit, expensive sacrifices (or say Yagnas) and many other practices confused the common people and a strong demand for a better option paved the way to a new and intelligible religious path in the post Vedic time. The most successful religious sects that emerged in the post Vedic time, in India, were Jainism and Buddhism, by Mahavir and Buddha. The three principles of Jainism are prevalent in society; right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. The doctrine of Ahimsa is strictly followed in Jain society. Buddhism believes in the philosophy of Nirvanor Moksha, which takes away from the pains and miseries of life. The noble eightfold path which is taught in Buddhism are: right view, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right efforts, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The Buddhist doctrine strictly believes that following the eightfold path is like gardening. Here one can cultivate one’s wisdom and reap real and lasting happiness.

Around 2% people follow Sikhism in India. It has emerged in 15th century in the Indian society from the prevalent religious hypocrisy and the over dominance of foreign invaders.

The three fundamental principles of Sikhism are; Naam Japna or remembering God, Kirat karo means earning an honest living and Vand chakko means selflessly serving others, sharing income and resources. The Sikhs are expected to take control over five Thieves; Kaam (lust), Krodh (anger), Lobh (greed), Moh (attachment), Hankaar (ego) The five virtues that Sikhism teaches are Satya (truth) Santosh, (contentment) Daya, (compassion) Namrata (humility) and Pyaar (love). By following all the suggested virtues with complete faith in Vaheguru (God), a person becomes Nihaal (Pure or pious). The five external symbols of a Sikh follower are Kesh (hair), Kirpan, (sword), Kada (bracelet), Kangha (comb) and Kacchera, (under garments).

Christianity entered in India, with the the succession of Diu, Daman and Goa by Portuguese people in around 16th century. With the arrival of the Britishers, it got full bloom in many parts of India in 17th century. The caste discrimination, untouchability and economic imbalance and some other evils of Indian social system helped much in the establishment of Christianity in India. Christianity preaches to love all humankind, as one loves oneself, because as per belief, it is equal to loving God Himself- the supreme power.
Zoroastrianism has thousands of years’ history and culture in India. Though the community is very small in size in India, it has contributed a lot for the freedom struggle, economic, industrial, and scientific development of modern India. The community is a very peace loving community and it has really mingled with Indian society like sugar in milk. Meena Iyer notes: “Zoroastrianism is a message about spirituality that progresses towards self-realization, fulfillment and completeness (. . .) God in Zoroastrianism does not care about what you wear, what you eat, where and when you worship. God instead cares how righteous, progressive, true to principles of teaching and good you are (77).

The people of Zoroastrianism are known as the Parsees. The population of this religion dwells in south of Gujarat and Mumbai of Maharashtra. They consider fire and water as most pious agents of ritual purity. Good thoughts, good words and good deeds are the fundamental basics of Zoroastrianism.

Though India is a secular nation, and there is complete freedom of practicing any religion of choice, the contemporary Indian society is not free from religious tensions and communal riots. Ever since the independence, the society has faced hundreds of communal riots. Millions of people have lost their lives; much public or private property has been destroyed. Much tension is still prevailing in society like fire covered under ash. The post partition riots of 1947, the Sikh riots of 1984, the Babri Mosque demolition riots in 1992, the post Godhra incident riots of 2002 and many other riots have disturbed the peace and progress of Indian society. The cunningness of politicians plays the role of fuel to fire in such incidents in Indian society. No religion practiced in India or in the world around teaches violence of any kind in society. Communal politics has given rise to much tension in India. During the time of elections, the society is segmented on communal basis. The politicians, from the beginning or at the end, appeal or please the voters on communal basis. The shallow knowledge of the common people regarding religion and philosophy plays a pivotal role in communal tension in society. The prevailing illiteracy, lack of scientific understanding, manipulated teachings and blind faith in religious preachers are some of the most crucial causes of communal differences in the contemporary Indian society. The majority- minority game plans of politicians will never allow the people to live peacefully. Appeasement of particular communities, for vote bank politics, will keep the tension between the communities simmering. The special advantages to minority, widens the differences in society. Some of
the social discriminations are also responsible for the continuous communal atmosphere in society. People in India, still have not come out of the traditional mind set. They are still communal in social life like, selection of dwellings, dress sense, food habits, and visiting religious places, communicating with people, and even getting education. Sometimes, such discrimination is observed in professional environment also.

The solution for such a social tension can be attained by the spread of secular education, modern and scientific thinking, and practicing global perspectives of interdependence for the all-round progress of human society. Elimination of communal differences is an urgent need in Indian society for peace and progress of every citizen, which the constitution of India has promised every citizen and it is a birth right of every individual.

1.4.5.6 Economic set up of Contemporary Indian Society

India is an agriculture dominated country from the beginning. About eighty per cent people are dependent on farming and subsequently our economy is based on farming. The traditional caste system has much influence on the economic structure of Indian society. Indian economy was dependent on local small scale industries, cottage industries and home industries, but the cyclone of European industrialization in colonial India, swept away all with it. It left the local self-dependent society in the deeper ditch of poverty, unemployment and starvation. The economic development after independence, in the opinion of Ram Ahuja, can truly be described as a revolutionary change. He says: “After independence, the task for the new government was two-fold: dismantling the colonial economy and erecting in its place the base for a modern, independent, and self-reliant economic order” (443).

After more than sixty five years of independence, India has achieved much economic progress. The traditional agriculture activity has now, been modernized by introducing science and technology. With the spread of education and understanding, research and experiments here proved a boon to the people. Earlier, agricultural activity was much dependent on rain and it was a very hard time for the farmers. The irrigation projects in various parts of India, has made the agricultural activity free of rain dependency, and now the agricultural production has increased hundred folds. India has become self-sufficient on food and certain items of daily consumption due to the green revolution, and the white revolution. The modernization, industrialization, liberalization, free trade policies and
globalization have shown results and the per-capita income has considerably increased and the standard of living of Indian society has improved considerably.

Ahuja observes that, India has hundreds of modern industrial enterprises whereas there was once only a handful. India has a huge reservoir of technical and entrepreneurial skills; India has big public projects like Bhilai and Rourkela and big dams like Hirakud; India has the highest rate of savings in the developing world; India has a growth rate of 5 per cent per annum (in 1990-91); sustained growth in exports of 17 per cent per annum in dollar terms; a twenty fold increase in the deposit of NRI’s, unparalleled credibility in the international money market; and considerable drop in the percentage of population below poverty line. In spite of this development, it is also a fact that India is faced with the problem of inflation and high debt. The balance of trade deficit is upwards in millions and the budget deficit is in trillions (1993, 443).

To quote A. K. Tripathy, from a book edited by Neera Chnadhoke and Praveen Priyadarshi with the title ‘Contemporary India’ published in 2009:

The economy of contemporary India is a great paradox. It is a strange combination of outstanding achievements as well as grave failures. Since independence, India has achieved remarkable progress in overcoming its economical backwardness. From being a poor country in 1950s and a ‘basket case’ in mid 1960s, it has emerged as the fourth largest economy in the world. Our economy has become one of the leading players in world knowledge, economy with vast intellectual capital and booming software and information technology services. These factors together, have made India one of the greatest destinations for foreign investment. In spite of these historic achievements, the country has pervasive poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, and a huge unemployment problem (16).

He further writes:

Although we are the world’s largest democracy, our country has an overwhelming majority of poor voters. While our country has joined the league of the world’s top five fastest growing economics, we are in the bottom 20 among all countries in terms of the Human Development Index. While the country is celebrating its growth rate and technological wonders,
it is witnessing social contradictions and the paradoxes and ironies of development. Thus, there are ‘two Indias’ in contemporary India. There is India of burgeoning growth and the India of widespread want and Misery (16).

Here, the question arises regarding the imbalance of economic development of contemporary Indian society. The population explosion can be considered one of the chief reasons for the same. The world’s seventh largest county is world’s second most populated country so better human development index is very hard to achieve. The overpopulation of India and still prevailing illiteracy has challenged some of the developmental measures of society. The urbanization of Indian society is a second big problem. The economic growth of Indian society is still, highly concentrated in urban areas. The rural areas are still to be developed with sufficient infrastructure for industrial development. The migration of rural people towards urban areas creates social and economic imbalance in society. The contemporary Indian rural society is still waiting for the Midas’ touch. The urban society has been divided in different social class discriminations like upper class, middle class and poor class. The imbalance of economy has created much tension, frustration, depression and disturbance in the contemporary Indian society. One can find world’s largest slum areas and also world’s richest residential houses in the country. Capitalism is taking new incarnation in Indian society. The rich are becoming richer and the poor the poorer. Those who are smarter are gaining maximum returns and those who are hard workers are still devoid of the basic necessities of life. The predicament is like the survival of the fittest.

The economic disparity has resulted in many sociological problems in contemporary India. Ahuja, observes that industrialization, commercialization and modernization have brought about a shift in power and authority. He believes that not the farmers and producers but the land and the industry owners and administrators have become the ruling agents. The economy has broken the back of the farmers, and the middle class people of society. The manufacturers and producers of finished products purchase the raw material at a very low rate from the farmers. They process it, manufacture it and sell the product at a very high rate. Even the cooperative federations of India are not free from it. For example, milk production. The cooperative dairies purchase milk at a very lower price from the farmers and within twenty four hours, they sell it at double the price. The same is the case with
vegetable markets and grain markets. The middle class community has to suffer a lot in the culture of ‘money economy’.

The contemporary economic structure of India does not fully promise the growth and development of society in general. It rather, promotes the development of those who have money or resources already with them. Considerable corrective steps are a need of the time, or the dream of making India a socialist nation will never be fulfilled. The economy that promotes social inequity has no meaning at all.

1.4.6 Summing up

Indian society has experienced many ups and downs during its long history. Much traditional rigidity has been eliminated by now and many modern pragmatic changes have been achieved. The present picture of Indian society is a mixture of tradition and modernity. Along with some of the most significant alternatives to rigidity of traditionalistic features, the modernized version of Indian society has grabbed many ills and unhealthy features of western or modern society. The same have caused much damage to some of indispensable traditional values that conferred the exclusiveness of Indian society. The hybridized version of the contemporary Indian society has many issues and problems in the present scenario which challenge the peace and harmony of the society.
1.5 Reflection of Contemporary Indian Society in Chetan Bhagat’s Fictional Works: A Glance

1.5.1 Preamble

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most influential fiction writers of contemporary Indian English literature. He is the best storyteller. Bhagat has taken a very different line to the traditional Indian fiction writing in English. He has produced such literature as is easily digested by an average reader in a country like India having English as a second or a third language. Because of this, he has, to his credit, a huge class of readership all over India and abroad especially the youth. Millions of copies of his books are sold. It may not be wrong to say that he has nurtured the reading habit among the Indian youth in the era of smart phones and tablet technology.

1.5.2 Chetan Bhagat’s Position in Contemporary Social Standpoints

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 non-serious 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, contemporary Indian society and its major issues are the 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 situations of society. The revolutionary voice against the rigid education system promoting 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 are echoed in his fictions. Most of the characters are like caricatures that represent one or the other vices or virtues of the contemporary Indian society. The institutions like education, politics, religion, culture, administration, judiciary and many others have been either criticised or satirised in his works. The author has a mastery to convince the reader about the prevalent condition of society so that one can reproduce in mind, a clear cut image of contemporary Indian society.
1.5.3 Reflection of Contemporary Indian Society in Bhagat’s Fictions

*Five Point Someone* is the debut novel of Chetan Bhagat. It is a story of three engineering college friends Hari, Alok and Ryan. Hari is a leading character in the novel. He represents the voice of the author Chetan Bhagat. There is a female character by name Neeha. She is the daughter of a professor. Both Neeha and Hari are good friends. Both of them are not much satisfied with the contemporary education system and the damages it does to society.

Bhagat has touched on the education sector which is considered the most significant sector of society. Education sector has all the power and responsibility to form a cultured society. The future of the new generation is determined by the standard of education which is imparted in schools and colleges. It also nurtures qualities of good citizenship among the youth. Chetan in *Five Point someone* has very ingeniously depicted the realistic picture of the country’s most prestigious institution IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) which is supposed to produce top standard engineers for the country. The hardships the students experienced to get admission to IIT and the standard of working at the IIT they experience are completely different. The education system of the nationally prestigious institute is exposed as very rigid and traditional. It does not encourage the students’ creativity and genius. On the contrary, it raises the students’ unrest, fear, insecurities, and controlled stress. The flaws of education system have been exposed in the novel. The government spends millions of rupees for the education sector, especially in IITs, IIMs and others, but if the end result is not satisfactory, it is a waste of time, money and energy. The novelist has also pointed out the frustration and depression of the students that lead to suicide or some other drastic actions. The middle class community spares a major part of the family budget for the education of children. But the education sector drastically fails to nurture employability or entrepreneurial skills among most of the pass-outs. Mere certification is not enough. It has to increase the confidence level of the students to survive and succeed in life. Bhagat has very cleverly depicted all these problems of contemporary Indian education system of India in the novel.

Chetan Bhagat in his second novel *One Night @ the Call Centre* has portrayed the contemporary urban metropolitan milieu of the middle class Indian society. The youth in the novel feel anxieties and insecurities in their life. The modern metropolitan social set up is highly affected by globalization and westernization. Such a middle class milieu has different
problems like inadequacy, unemployment, family and marriage in modernized India. The European culture has challenged many of the set traditional values of Indian culture. The contemporary society which is depicted in the novel is not the ideal one; rather it is a hybrid society which has adopted much from the western civilization. The novel is the story of six people working in a call centre named Shyam, the chief protagonist, Esha, Vroom, Priyanka, Radhika, and Military Uncle. The five characters are young who represent different aspects of social issues. Military Uncle who is a retired army man represents the problem of middle age generation. Each character represents one or the other aspect of contemporary society. They have high aspirations in life which is an outcome of globalization and modernization of Indian society. The society which is reflected in the novel One Night @ the Call Centre reflects a contemporary form of society which represents the middle class hardship for career opportunity, job security, and job pressure, modern life style, family budget, generation gap and many more. The novel clearly depicts the changing standards of ideal Indian culture and society. The writer has very skilfully depicted the contemporary modern middle class society which is highly affected by globalized and westernized standards of European civilization which have caused much damage to the exclusiveness of ideal Indian social set up.

Three Mistakes of my Life is Chetan Bhagat’s third novel. The story is about three friends Govind, Ishaan and Omi. Govind is the central character in the novel around whose life the story revolves. The three friends represent the aspirations of the middle class youth. The struggle they do for earning money clearly reflects the insecurities, frustration and worries and tensions of the contemporary youth of Indian society. Contemporary urban middle class society and the hardship of life is one of the chief concerns of the theme of the novel. The writer has focused on various issues of Indian society like racial discrimination, inter-religious infightings, extremism and cunning politics. He has also focused on the effects of natural calamities like earthquake on society and its people especially the middle class people. People like Bittoo Mama represent non-secular forces challenging the peace and harmony of society. The society which is depicted in the novel is a society coloured with different shades of tradition and modernity. One can apparently observe in the novel that the old generation is still stuck to conventional standards of life whereas the new generation feels suffocated and cannot cope up with the traditional structure of society. The
new generation believes in liberal thinking where there is no scope of communalism, racism and religious extremism. The youth are also impressed by the scientific temper and liberal thinking of modernization. However, the compromises to the set traditional value system of Indian cultural lead to suicide. Chetan Bhagat in this novel has very diplomatically portrayed the current social situation which represents the realistic picture of the present Indian society.

*Two States: The Story of My Marriage* is Chetan Bhagat’s fourth novel which is based on the autobiographical happenings of his life especially his marriage to a Tamil girl. In the novel Krish and Ananya are college friends. Krish is from Punjabi family and Ananya is from Tamil family. The cultural conflict plays a villainous role in the love story between the two. The couple tries to resolve the issue of cultural preoccupations and finally get married. This seems a very simple outline of love story. Chetan Bhagat has treated the subject very skillfully by representing one of the very big issues of contemporary Indian society. The issue is about cultural conflicts. Unity in diversity is an exclusive identity of Indian society and it is a matter of pride also. But the fact cannot be denied that the national integration is still an issue of the time. Apparently, one can observe two different Indias; the south India and the North India. Both of them have a long history of civilization. Both have completely different traditions, customs, thinking patterns, clothing, food habits and language. Neither of them bothers to know each other. Both remain like separate poles. After more than six decades of independence by now, the two different cultures are not merged into one. Still there are many issues and problems like the official language which keep the wounds bleeding and national integration is challenged over and over again. The writer has pointed out the contemporary social issues like inter-community marriage, multi-culture conflicts and prevalent racism. The writer focuses on the prevailing contradiction of society where people do not bother to know the native culture but they blindly adopt and execute the western culture by humiliating the fellow country people as indigenous or uncultured. Chetan Bhagat in this novel has exposed the inner realities of contemporary Indian society by raising the cultural issues and contradictions. Here, through the happy end of the love story of the young generation, he showed the resolution to such issue by promoting culture of cooperation or culture of co-existence.
The fifth novel of Chetan Bhagat is *Revolution 2020*. Love, corruption, ambition, cunning politics and growing capitalism in contemporary Indian society are some of the major themes of the novel. Chetan has exposed the very bitter realities of Indian society in this novel. Gopal, Raghav and Aarti are the three chief characters in the novel. Gopal is very ambitious, Raghav, an idealist and Aarti, a fanciful girl. The contemporary middle class realities are depicted in the novel. The novel reflects that the all-round prevailing corruption and ‘money economy’ in India have raised many problems in society. The novel clearly exposes how the middle class society is affected by the growing money economy and cunning and opportunist politics. The writer also focuses on the commercialization of education and the coaching class culture of the present time. The commercialization of education has broken the backbone of the middle class economy. The youth are depicted directionless and yet highly ambitious in the novel. The writer has focused on the fact that youth in search of good fortune do not hesitate to compromise with the basic value system of Indian society. The power misuse by cunning politicians and the administrators has left the society nowhere. Now, the writer finds a ray of hope in the eye of the youth having high standards of national values. The fact is nicely illustrated with the character of Raghav, who in spite of all the adverse situations does not compromise with the corrupt situations and fights against the corrupt forces alone very bravely. All in all, the novel is an excellent illustration of the writer’s strong protest against the ills of contemporary Indian society like vicious corruption, cunning politics and growing capitalism.

The latest novel of Chetan Bhagat (till date) is *Half Girlfriend*. It is about a Bihari village boy Madhav and a modern Delhi girl Riya. Both of them meet at the Delhi university college for sports admission quota. Madhav falls in love with Riya but she just wants to remain his friend. Riya marries her childhood friend Rohan and settles down in London but she gets divorced in same few years. Later she meets Madhav and they marry. This very simple love story represents the very urban and rural realities of the contemporary Indian society. The writer has ingeniously interwoven some of the very crucial urban as well as the rural hardships of contemporary middle class society. The writer has depicted the complete contrast of urban life and rural life in a clear manner. The high profile life style of the rich upper class in metropolitan cities and the lower poor class hardships of interior rural class clearly represent the economic imbalance in the contemporary Indian society.
importance given to the second language English in India is embarrassing to the rural youth of India. The writer, through the character of Madhav has pointed out the contemporary reality of present India. The condition of the school in the village touches readers’ mind and heart when the schools are devoid of some of the basic facilities. All in all, the writer has tried to reveal the rural milieu along with the urban realities of contemporary Indian society.

1.5.4 Summing up

The literary creation of Chetan Bhagat has contemporary urban middle class society and its major issues as chief subject matter. He, along with entertaining the wide readership all over India, has uncovered the contemporary urban realities of contemporary society. Most of the postmodern thematic concerns like love, sex, marriage and issues related to it, middle class hardships, feminist sensibilities and others issues are clearly reflected in the various novels of Chetan Bhagat. The study of the common people and their problems has been the prime focus of his literary creations. He has touched upon many issue of contemporary society in his fictions like the prevalent corruption, cunning politics, communal riots, national disintegration, crony capitalism, and others like failure of the education system, privatization of education and its effects on common people, globalization and modernization, problems of family relations and generation gap etc. All in all, one can clearly have an overview of contemporary Indian society reflected in his fictions.
1.6 Major Issues of Contemporary Indian Society

The contemporary Indian society is a heterogeneous society in nature. India is the second most populated country in the world. Poverty and illiteracy are in the legacy for centuries. Though India possesses world’s richest and most prosperous cultural heritage, the general intellectual level of the people can still be considered an average one. From centuries together, there is a strong hold of religion on Indian society. The people are from various backgrounds, castes, classes, races and religions. So caste and communalism are in the blood and bone of people. The diversity is also found in customs, traditions, rituals belief systems and the ways of life. The social and economic imbalance is an ever burning issue of Indian society. After in-dependence the Indian society has achieved much progress, however such a large polluted society cannot be devoid of problems and issues. The modernization, westernization, industrialization, commercialization and globalization have accelerated the all-round development of the society; however the same have raised certain social, economic, psychological and moral issues in the human society. The use of science and technology has softened the hardship of life, but the same have also created new problems in the society. The competitive atmosphere has been created by the money centered economy, and the survival of the fittest is becoming the identity of contemporary Indian society. The following are observed as certain burning issues of contemporary Indian society, which cause much of the tension, frustration, depression among the people of India. For a better understanding of the wider variety of issues, the researcher plans to discuss the major issues of contemporary Indian society in two different categories: Major social issues of contemporary Indian society and major national issues of contemporary Indian society.

1.6.1 Major Social Issues of Contemporary Indian Society

1.6.1.1 Preamble

The contemporary Indian society along with its fast social and economic growth in last few decades had to face some of the very crucial problems and issues due to conflicts between the traditional social set up and the introduction of modernity in to it. Modern or western value system had considerably affected the traditional Indian social set up and has brought about a conspicuous dynamism to the traditional set up of Indian society. The socio-cultural model of any society is never a static one; rather it is always dynamic in process. Utter
rigidity to its form may definitely prevent the progress of that particular society. Dynamism to it may eliminate rigidity of any kind in its form and it may bring a constructive change. However, the possibility of damage to the originality of that set-up cannot be avoided. If dynamism brings some constructive changes, it is good, but if it brings negative alteration, it proves fatal to the exclusiveness of that particular social set up. Indian society, at the present time, has been experiencing many changes in its traditional form due to modernization or westernization. The history of Indian social system reflects on the fact that Indian society has never been rigid in its form, as it has been impressed or affected by the many other social and cultural systems of the world from Aryan civilization to modern European impressions. The contemporary form of the Indian society has received many positive and negative alterations in its typical traditional form, and so it has raised certain issues in it as follow:

1.6.1.2 Changing Family Value System

Due to the westernized modern life style, the growing standard of living and economic independence, the traditional family pattern of Indian society has undergone many changes. The interpersonal relationship in modern life-style has played a crucial role for changing the traditional family pattern of Indian society. Earlier, the parents-children relationship was based more on respect and fear. It was considered bad manners for the youngsters even to argue with or talk to the senior family members (Ahuja 2013 52). This is hardly possible now a day. Even the parents have to take the opinions of their sons and daughters for any decision related to their life. Take an example of marriage. Earlier, the sons and daughters were not permitted to interfere with the selection of their life partners. Presently, such a system is completely vanished from the society. Even an earning son, after the first few years of marriage, prefers to live separately for privacy purposes. The educated or so called modern daughter-in-law does not prefer any interference from traditional parents-in-law. The rural parents mostly prefer urban in-laws for their daughters. The skewed sex ratio plays the role of fuel to fire in this regard. The short tempered mentality of modern life style breaks down the much happy joint family into a nuclear one.

The typical concept of Indian marriage system is also much affected in the modern Indian society. Love marriages, inter-caste marriages or elopements have taken the place of the typical arranged marriages. It is good to have love marriages or inter-caste marriages in the
society but in most of the cases, absence of maturity in decision is observed in such marriages. Most of the young couple while eloping or doing love marriage are observed under the spell of physical attraction or emotional overflow which later on proves a fiasco and the same gives birth to many other social and family problems. Even arranged marriages are also not devoid of problems. A kind of unrest is prevalent in the marriage system of the contemporary Indian families. The husband-wife relationship hardly experiences any sort of divinity as expected to have from centuries together. The limited income resources and the increase in expenditure in the modern time, creates a kind of unhappiness and constant stress and depression in the relation between husband and wife. It further, gives birth to other problems like education of children and many more social and psychological issues. Even the working couples have their different problems like childcare and housekeeping. It is observed in many of the conjugal lives, that ego and pride has taken the place of love and affection, so there is no space for let go attitude or compromising attitude which again creates so many other issues in contemporary Indian society.

The modernization and westernization of Indian society has demolished much of the set values and norms of family pattern of Indian society. The modernized ways of life, along with bringing some very noticeable advancement in life, has, at the same time, brought some of the evils of modernity like stress, depression and anxieties among the people. Due to the changing standards and ways of life, people seem to have developed a sort of anxiety and insecurity in life because of the fear of not being accepted. The inter-personal relationships in many of the Indian families are observed to be much disturbed in the contemporary Indian middle class scenario. The traditional family values are becoming out dated in the modernized society. The personal and family relationships are becoming self-centric. The social and financial independence has developed a kind of individualism in the minds of people. Along with that, the growing uncertainties in financial resources bring a kind of stress and anxiety in life. The strong family bonding in interpersonal relationships seems broken from within. Presently, it is generally observed that the family relationships like husband-wife, parents-children and other social relationships are mostly becoming self-centric where there is very little scope for strong emotional bonding. The present family and other social relationships are some or the other kind of dependency like financial, social, or
for personal needs or generally people in the modern world hardly tolerate any outer interference of any kind in their personal life.

The concluding remarks of J. P. Singh in his article *Problems of India’s changing Family and State Intervention* are very relevant here. He fears that:

The rise in the number of single member household, break-down of traditional joint family system, increase in cases of divorce, individual male migration to cities for work, erosion of authority of patriarch, the attrition of traditional family values, increase in the number of working mothers in cities and single parents, rise in domestic violence, and practice of dowry, neglect of children and elderly, and poor regards for family laws are enough indicators of danger that the family and ultimately society are progressively facing in India. To combat the continuing erosion of values and the institution of family, there is a need of a set of strong, consistent policies to strengthen the Indian family system, otherwise India, would be left with no choice, but to face the same problems which are generally faced by many families of developed countries now.

The immediate joint-care by the individual, communities, government and NGO’s is the need of the time. The typical family system is a central pillar of Indian social system. The entire social system is based on this pillar so it has to be stronger and capable of bearing the burden of all the responsibility of family equilibrium. Gradually, the pillar is losing its hold and the society is experiencing its consequences. The pillar of the exclusive feature of the Indian family system if not timely strengthened; would cause more catastrophic consequences in coming future and the entire social system or life-system may be demolished.

1.6.1.3 Middle Class Hardships

Contemporary Indian society is roughly divided in three social layers like the upper class, the middle class and the lower class. For centuries, there are three prominent divisions of society based on the economic standard of the people, like the rich people, the middle class people and the poor people. Since then, the major portion of the Indian population comes in the category of middle class. Various definitions of these different classes of society have been worked out by various governments from time to time for proposing various
developmental policies. In spite of it all, the exact line between the two divisions, is not possibly drawn for clearly separating one from the other. Middle class can be roughly understood as the educated class of people, or working class of people. Even this statement does not fully justify the exact definition of the middle class. The most authentic difference between the two different classes is based on the economic standard of the two different classes. To simply define middle class, one can say the class of people between the rich people and the poor people. Even every typical division of middle class can be further classified into two other sub-divisions. For example, middle class can be understood as upper middle class and lower middle class like the poor class is segmented between the above poverty line (APL) and the below poverty line (BPL). The government policies are mostly for the last category of people but the middle class group of people is much marginalized knowingly or unknowingly. During the time of globalization and modernization, the development of urban areas of the country has been much promising for the people. Compared to the rural community, because of the promising urban development, the urban middle class community gets considerable benefits of the development like good facilities of health, education, sanitation, transport, employment opportunities, and many others. Along with that, the middle class has to face various kinds of hardships also. The sources of income are limited for them and the inflation, or price rise in simple words, for all the daily necessities like food items, health, education, transportation, communication and others is disturbing the family budget of the middle class people. Common minimum facilities like medication and education are still restricted to the cities and towns of the country. So the rural people are migrating to urban locations for the same. As a result of it, the urban areas are overflowing with population. Most of such people fall into the category of middle class people or the upper layer of the poor class category. The urban areas of the country are overcrowded with population, so the problems of slum areas, pollution, traffic, shortage of residences, job insecurity, inflation and many others are rising. The middle class is mostly a working class community of people or they run small scale business like daily consumer-shops and manufacturing workshops. Most of them rely on the service government and non-government sectors like educational institutions, hospitals, banks, mills, factories, malls, call centers and others. Their life is highly dependent on every single movement in the economy of the country. The life of the middle class becomes full of hardships of one or the
other kind because of the economic change of any kind in the country. The middle class is not some times in a position to cope with the modernity of the fast changing society. The craze of showmanship prevailing among the middle class people for showing themselves with more comfortable life style breaks the backbone of the family budget of the middle class people. Many socio-psycho-economic issues occurs in the life of middle class people like unrest, stress, depression and tension which affects their personal and professional life. People of the middle class are sometimes observed to be trying some alternative option to temporarily get relaxation from the deeper stress and tension by taking drugs, alcohol, prostitution, gambling, and other anti-social activities. All these add more to the hardships of the middle class people as addiction to any of such activities brings many other problems in their lives like social rejection and isolation.

1.6.1.4 Modernity Mania

As defined by Oxford Dictionaries (on line) modernity very simply means a modern way of thinking and behaving. Any kind of scientific, or creative or constructive thinking and behavior can be understood as modern. What is obsolete in society must be eliminated and what is applicable should be sustained, however it must be kept in mind that what is traditional is not always bad and what is modern is not necessarily always good. Moreover, what is good for one society (or a group of people) is not necessarily good for another society (or a group of people) and vice versa with what is bad. Western ways of thinking or behavior pattern is generally considered modern by the people of a colonized country like India. Ever since the Indian renaissance, the obsolete social and cultural values have been replaced by the values and norms of modern or western society. It is a welcome step if obsolete values are replaced by modern values in any society, but in the name of modernity if the really practical values and norms of a society is practiced or replaced, it damages the exclusive identity of those particular social values. The same thing has happened with the contemporary Indian social set up. Modernity mania among the people of India has considerably damaged the great Indian traditional social and culture scenario of contemporary India.

Along with many physical changes, Modernization or Westernization has elevated the thinking level of the middle class people of the contemporary Indian society. It is generally observed that most of the people in India want themselves to be recognized as modern. The
effects of modernity have been considerably observed among the people of the middle class strata of society. No one likes to be called indigenous. The traditional Indian food habits, dress sense, education, language, and ways of thinking and behaving have considerably been affected by the modernization or westernization. Presently, it is a prevalent mentality in the contemporary Indian society that what is from the West is the best. People do not hesitate to blindly practice modernity in their daily routine. They, in the name of modernity, do not hesitate to wear western clothes which look really odd. They prefer to eat fast food which is generally not suitable for their climate. Eating, drinking and marrying is becoming the present scenario of the contemporary Indian society. The elevations of houses, interior designing, and home decorating items like wall pieces, wall papers, and use of utensils, kitchenware, and many other household items are affected by westernized culture. Birthday parties, marriage ceremonies and some other social functions, even religious ceremonies are observed considerably to be affected by the westernized or say modernized effects. The modernity mania has been apparently observed among the middle class people of contemporary Indian society. On the one side, the sources of income are very limited for them and on the other side, the middle class people, even for showmanship; keep on practicing modernity of all possible kind. The middle class people generally try to copy the life-style of the rich people who, they believe, practice modern life-styles. The reel life of film and television impresses them a lot. In the blind rush for modernity, many socially unaccepted values have started trooping into the contemporary Indian society like the cross-gender friendship culture, live-in relationships, nuclear families, pre-marital and extra marital relationships and many more. The modernization of Indian society has brought some of the promising changes in the society; however the growing modernity mania is creating many challenges to the exclusive set-up of the Indian society.

1.6.1.5 Inter-generational Conflicts

The Inter-generational conflicts between the old generation and the young generation in contemporary Indian society can be considered as an outcome of the fast changing belief system of the young generation in modern India. Due to the wider spread of modernization, the new generation has developed individualistic outlook on how to live. The new generation prefers considerable space in individual life. The idea of free will or privacy appeals to them a lot. The global educational opportunities or worldwide job or business
opportunities have elevated the mind-set of the new generation to be more global than local. The young generation has much technological exposure at hand. The use of internet, computer, and smart phones and various social networking sites have virtualized the life of the modern generation.

Dr H. B. Mahantesh, an assistant professor of Sociology in his article *Intergenerational Conflicts Regarding the Personal Habits of Adolescents* published in The Journal of Sociology (Vol.2/No:3/March 2014/ISSN No. 2347-8241) very clearly opines:

> The phenomenon of inter-generational conflict has been known from time immemorial. As far as India is concerned, the problem is of recent and urban origin. An analysis of the inter-generational conflict in India involves a study of the crisis in youth values. The decline of parental authority and of parental influence in the value orientation of children is certainly an important factor of inter-generational conflict. The intergenerational conflict is the product of interaction between the two generations — young and old. Each generation, guided by definite set of values and attitudes, has a behavioral pattern and sometimes the two may not coincide and may possibly be in conflict one with the other. A change in the socio-cultural process affects the conflict. Therefore in any non-static society the values, mores and modes of behavior of younger generation are systematically different from those of the elder age group. Hence the stress of the younger generation has resulted in open intergenerational conflict more among urban educated section.

Wide spread of westernization and globalization have given the young generation considerable opportunities to accomplish their bigger dreams. As for illustration, mega events of talents shows, game shows and reality shows have established their believe system that if one has talent and hard work, he can overcome any impossibility in life. The last generation was not provided with such opportunities in life due to the limited exposure of science and technology in those days. The older generation had to do lifelong efforts to achieve what the young generation can achieve in months or same few years. The older generation had certain set opinions and belief system which have come out of the past sweet and bitter experiences of life. Gradually such experiences become permanent behaviour pattern and it converts into tradition for that generation. Following a set
behaviour pattern claims lower risk and provides security, so older generation prefers to follow the established conventional behaviour pattern. For example, the older generation still prefers government jobs for their young boys and girls as there is lower risk of losing jobs and better security of income till the retirement and till death, though one may not achieve considerable progress in life. The same is the case with marriage. The last generation still believes in arranged marriages within the community or caste for their young boys and girls with better economic and social stability. There is again lower risk of marriage break up due to social pressure and higher security of lifelong sustainability due to many such reasons. The new generation hardly prefers it. The young boys and girls prefer to marry a partner of their choice whom they know well in advance for maintaining better understanding throughout life. In such and many other issues, the ideology of the two generation clashes. Here one cannot prove either of them wrong, but the differences of opinions sometimes affect their interpersonal relationship and the same can considerably affect their personal, professional and social life in the long run. The points of interest with special reference to contemporary Indian society is that the young generation has grown higher aspirations in life and the chances of becoming successful are rare due to over-population and limited scope of opportunities. For example, one can find a very thin gap of aspiration and expectations from life between the rural young generation and urban young generation due to wider exposure to mass media. Even in the urban generation the middle class young generation has to do a lot of struggle in comparison to the upper or richer class generation. To clarify this argument, both the segments of young generation likes to use smart phone or high speed bike or go for expensive parties or enjoy other luxuries of life but the middle class young generation is not in a position to do so. That leads to much stress and anxiety in their lives and needless envy of the fortunate generation.

1.6.1.6 Growing Social-crime Ratio in Society

In spite of all round spread of modernity in life-style, spread of science and technology and all the modern amenities in contemporary Indian society, certain social crimes like female foeticide, gender bias, dowry, domestic violence, honour killing, gang rapes, suicides, murders and exploitation of the oppressed, absence of civic sense, and many other ills are still prevailing in full measure in the contemporary Indian society. It is generally observed in the present modern Indian society that people are still having gender bias towards a female
child. In many families the birth of a female child is not celebrated with equal enthusiasm to the birth of a male child. The traditional mentality that a male child is a must in life for taking their lineage and legacy ahead is prevalent in the minds of the people in society and the so called modern or educated families are not free from it. A girl-child is still considered as a burden in many families. In spite of the law against the pre-birth sex-determination of a child, such a business is probably run by many money minded gynaecologists in the country. This apparently suggests that till there is no shortage of such people who want to determine the sex of a child before birth. Government and NGO’s have done very appreciable work in recent years by launching various public programmes in this direction to spread awareness among the people to prevent such pre-birth sex-determination and gender bias in the society. The same has helped much in uplifting the equilibrium of the male-female gender-ratio in society. Still much work is to be done in the direction of public awareness for the reaching to the success level in this direction.

The issue of dowry is one of the most crucial issues of contemporary Indian society. Dowry means giving something to bridegroom’s family from the family of bride like cash, jewelry, vehicles, household gadgets or furniture items at the time of marriage or sometimes after the marriage, at regular intervals. There are various purposes of giving or asking for dowry. Such things are sometimes given willingly as gifts to a girl from her family as a help to set up her new home. Dowry, to rich people in India, is a kind of status symbol or a chance for showing their richness in their society. Sometimes dowry is given to get the girls married to higher or richer families. Sometimes dowry is demanded from bridegroom’s family to get returns of what parents have invested to educate their sons. The more educated a bridegroom is, the higher is the demand for dowry. Gradually, such a system becomes a social nuisance in Indian society. Dowry started becoming a compulsion as the right of the bridegroom’s family. The poor or middle class people who were not in a position to give anything to their daughters had to face much hardship. They had to sell everything they had, to pay dowry or their daughters would be driven out of the house. The bride who did not bring anything or below expectations from her family was tortured, humiliated or insulted. The matter did not stop there. Cases started increasing and such brides were physically harassed or driven out of home. Cases were registered in the police records that the brides were killed by spraying kerosene or some other means of cold blood murder like
strangling or poisoning. Many brides committed suicide as the torturing from the bridegroom’s family were unbearable for not bringing dowry from their parental home. Finally, giving, asking or demanding dowry was prohibited in India under ‘The 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act’ in the Indian civil law and subsequently by IPC (Indian Penal Code) section 304B and 498A. There is a provision for punishment of imprisonment for not less than seven years and penalty of not less than ten thousand rupees for demanding dowry. In case of dowry death, the punishment of imprisonment of not less than seven years that may extend up to life-imprisonment.

More than half a century has passed since the legal protection against giving asking or demanding dowry in India is granted still the condition of the past has not improved much. Still giving, asking or forcefully demanding dowry is in practice in some or the other way in the contemporary Indian society. Such a practice may vary in different parts of the country. It has various shades of existence in various class, caste or community. Dowry is still given to the bridegroom’s family under the pretext of expensive gifts like gold chain, branded watch, smart phones etc. to the bridegroom or his close family members to make them happy. Sometimes the honeymoon expenses in a foreign country are born by the bride family to make the bridegroom happy. People give cash money in the name of help to purchase a new house or renovation of the old house of their daughters. Sometimes, expensive gifts are given to them on some other occasions like birthdays or wedding anniversaries, birth of a baby etc. Anything which is given such a way is indirectly promoting the evil of dowry in society.

After a few years of marriage, the bridegroom is sometimes told the stories of giving of such gifts by the nearby relatives. Indirectly the intention of asking for the same is shown. The bridegroom is emotionally exploited for this modified form of dowry. Still the bride is expected to keep bringing something from her parental home on various occasions. In some cases it has been a tradition to give a gift to the in-law’s family members of a girl on certain social functions. Whenever any shortage of money is experienced, or any new financial planning is thought of, immediately it is expected from a daughter in law to ask for help from her parental family. Even forcefully borrowing money from daughter-in-law’s family is an indirect means of dowry. It may be alright to the rich and prosperous families but it is a matter of great trouble for the poor or middle class family. So it is understood that dowry
has not been completely eliminated from the contemporary Indian society. It has changed its form but it is still prevalent in the society. The educated new generation should come forward to eliminate such an evil system of dowry from the society or it would continue to spoil the life of many people in the coming days. It is also a matter of serious concern that sometimes the legal protection against the dowry system is misused or manipulated by some people. The bridegroom’s family is sometimes put into trouble by the bride’s family by misusing such legal provisions.

The problem of dowry and certain others like extra-marital affairs, limited resources of income, uncertainties of income due to job-uncertainties and fall in economy etc. provokes all kinds of domestic violence in the society. Married women are badly beaten or attempted to be murdered for the not bringing dowry to their in-law’s family, many people live a tensed and stressful life due to uncertainties of income sources which sometimes takes the more dangerous for form of domestic violence which includes the physical and mental torture and harassment of all kind.

The cases of honor killing, gang rapes, suicides and murders have become very common in the contemporary Indian society. Every day one opens a newspaper or on the TV, and there is one or another kind of the above mentioned crime is reported in the society. A young love-couple is murdered cold bloodedly due to their elopement and inter-caste marriage, a wife is killed and buried by her husband as he suspected her extra-marital affair, a young couple jumped into the canal, for they were not allowed to marry, a young girl was raped in the street by the gangsters and many such other crime stories have been common talk of the country. On the one side, the country is fast progressing and on the other side such criminal cases undermines the promise of human rights in the society.

The growing rate of social crimes of all kind is one of the very critical issues in contemporary Indian society. Due to that, the society is drowning into the deep sea of uncivilized disorder. Such social-crimes noticeably spoil the image of Indian society in the world as a developing country, the country is stepping on to the Mars and dreaming to be a super-power by the year 2020 and its human society is still in the mud of such uncivilized social set-up. Fast economic, scientific and technological progress, if it fails to promise social security of any kind to all the citizens of the state, such a progress has no meaning in the real sense of the term in a country like India which boasts of being world’s largest democracy.
1.6.1.7 Ruin of Indian Social Value System

Indian social value system is exclusive and incredible in the history of the cultural evolution of mankind in the world. The social values like, religiousness and spirituality, strong family bonding and interpersonal relationship, institution of marriage, hospitality and the World as one Family are considered strong pillars of Indian social value system. Although many of the set values and traditions of Indian social system have great significance and relevance, they are not given the required importance in the modern era. The ruin in the social value system is one of the major burning issues of contemporary Indian society.

Indian society is religious by nature for centuries. Religion is at the center for all social interactions. The social values and traditions have a base of spiritual teaching and preaching. The social values are powered by the knowledge and rituals of spirituality. Many religious sects and paths are doing a wonderful job of social welfare and charitable work. Millions of people are connected with one or the other religious sect in India. It helps a lot to promote and nurture harmony, equality and justice in society. No religion promotes discrimination of any kind. Religious knowledge keeps an individual connected with humanity. So many problems related to social relationships are automatically solved. In the contemporary secular Indian society religion is not a dominating factor. With the spread of science and technology, industrialization, modernization and westernization the people have grown to be more pragmatic and rational. They do not accept religious preaching which has no logic. And there is a reason in it also. Recently in India, many religious gurus have broken the trust of the people by committing some anti-social activities like, rape, sexual exploitation, black money, and corruption. Many of the spiritual gurus have connections with cunning political leaders. They have used religion as a business to earn money or to whiten the black money of the corrupt people. One can find millionaire baba in India, living high class life style preaching the importance of simple living. Sex scandals and black money in religion is not a matter of surprise in the contemporary Indian society. So the common people mostly prefer not to join any religion sects. At the result, some of the really genuine religious gurus who are devoted to social welfare have to face many problems.

Inter personal relationships like parents-children, husband-wife, elder-younger and some other social relationships are not bounded by mutual love, respect, and trust. The family bonding is not so strong in contemporary Indian society. Generation gap is clearly visible
between parents and children in food habits, dress sense, manners and behavior, likes and dislikes, and many more aspects of modern social set up. The traditional thinking of parents sometimes suffocates the new generation. The new generation likes to be connected more with the virtual world rather than the real world. They do not want much interference of parents or elders in their private choices of career, life partners and many more. The concept of nuclear family is an off-shoot of the growing modernity and individualism. The late night parties, vodka and liquor, fast food, cross gender friendship, pre-marital physical relationships, live-in relationship, etc., have nothing to do with the Indian social value system. This is not true with the metropolitan cities only. The small towns and villages are also not free from such a ruin in social value system.

The institution of marriage is one of the most unique systems of Indian social system. Marriage is considered as a pious bond for many births. Monogamy is a unique characteristic of Indian marriage. The husband and wife are supposed to be mutually trustworthy. This sacred bond bears many common responsibilities towards the family and society. In recent times, the institution of marriage is losing its values and importance. Presently, divorce cases are increasing. Dowry is still prevailing in the contemporary Indian modern society. Domestic violence is at its peak in husband-wife relationship. Extra marital affairs are very common in the present time. The mismatching couples pass their life in quarreling, tension, depression and mental stress. Modernity has offered much liberty for the choice of life partners but there are some issues which disturb even happy conjugal lives. The growing short temperedness in young couples can be considered one of the chief reasons of marriage break ups. They hardly believe in compromises and negotiations. In the absence of proper communication or mediators, many couples having one or even two children take divorce. Such hasty decisions invite more social problems.

1.6.1.8 Summing up

The researcher is strongly of the opinion that the list of the above social issues of contemporary Indian society is not a complete one. There are many more issues to be added in the list like the rigid caste discrimination, illogical social traditions, child labour, prostitution, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and shortage of brides due to gender imbalance which are also burning issues of the contemporary Indian society. The researcher honestly accepts it as the limitation of the present research for being unable to include and
elaborate on all the issues listed above. All such issues also create equal tension in society. Immediate actions should be taken to reach the solution of such issues or the society shall have to suffer very cruel consequences in coming time.

1.6.2 Major National Issues of Contemporary Indian Society

1.6.2.1 Preamble

Along with certain social issues, there are certain typical issues which may fall in the category of national level issues that also affect the life of the people of contemporary India a great deal. Such issues are corruption, black money, terrorism, poverty, unemployment, inflation, uncontrolled urbanization, mindless westernization, education related issues, youth unrest, youth brain drain etc. and other environment related issues like pollution, natural calamities and their effects that affect the life of the people. Compared to the social issues listed in the previous discussion, the effect or intensity of the national level issues is considered more serious and hazardous to the people of contemporary Indian society. The deep reading of the select reference books (the secondary resources) and mindful analysis of the same lead the researcher to enlist the following major national level issues of contemporary Indian society.

1.6.2.2 Corruption

Corruption is the biggest burning issue which affects the social, economic, educational and moral development of Indian society. On the damaging effects of corruption in civilized society, Sunil Sondhi, Reader, Political Science, University of Delhi, in his paper *Combating Corruption in India: role of Civil Society* quotes the comments of the Supreme Court of India as:

> Corruption in a civilized society is like cancer, which if not detected in time, is sure to malignise the polity of the country leading to disastrous consequences. It is termed as plague which is not only contagious but if not controlled spreads like a fire in jungle. Its virus is compared with HIV leading to AIDS, being incurable (14).

India is not free from it. The issue of corruption and its effect on Indian society is not new. It has been affecting the development of Indian society for years together. In the present time, corruption has spread so widely and wildly in India that it has become a way of life. People have taken it for granted that corruption will never be terminated from the country.
It has very badly affected the social and economic growth of India. Ever since the independence from the colonial rules, India is struggling to progress but no considerable results have been achieved. The other countries like Japan, Russia, and Germany having a fresh start after the world war-II, have achieved very fast progress and they are much in advance whereas India with a simultaneous fresh start is still far behind. The reason for it is not that India has no natural and human resources and opportunities for progress but the problem is with the social and political system which is very complex and confusing. It is believed that corruption is at the root of the entire present predicament in India. Corruption in India is blamed, is a product of the English people, but much water has flowed since the freedom from colonial rules and corruption has not been reduced but multiplied thousand times till date. How come this? Has the government not tried to remove corruption? The answers may be in the affirmative but no sustainable results are achieved. The reason behind it is that there is a lack of willingness for that. The central and states governments of all the tenures have not yet cleared their stand on the removal of corruption. Most of the political parties whether the ruling party or the opposition party, have either delayed or manipulated the issue of corruption for their personal advantages.

Even people, when in crowd, are against any kind of corruption but individually they resort to corrupt practices of all kinds to reach their short term objectives. The result is a big zero. People either fear or do not want to step into the issue. The set mentality of the people does not change the general tendency and so corruption is nurtured in such a condition.

Corruption has affected all stages of Indian society. The effect of corruption to Indian society is like that of cancer to human body. All the sections of contemporary Indian society like administration, legal, political and even religious are affected by corruption. According to Sunil Sondhi, the political patronage and public disinterestedness are some of the chief causes of widespread corruption in India. He says: “The biggest cause of corruption in today’s India is undoubtedly political leadership at the helm of affairs in the country. From this fountainhead of corruption flow various streams of corrupt practices which plague the political, economic and social activities in the country (7).

People do hardly use the laws against corruption of all kind which are already in practice. The reason behind it is that the legal system so lengthy and costly that a common man cannot afford it. The short way of bribing or corrupting is a better option at the time of cut-
throat competition for most of the people and that has become a way of life. If we go to any
government office for even a small work and you will be expected to pay extra money for
timely completion of the work. This affects the entire system of decision and the policy
making for mass development adversely. Those who are honest or not rich are harassed.
The scams of millions of rupees have disturbed the economic system of India. The rich are
becoming richer and the poor remain poor. Capitalism is taking strangulating society and
the Antyodaya or growth of the last section of society advocated by Gandhi is becoming a
non-starter. Sondhi observes:

In present India, corruption has found an acceptance in the social psyche and
behaviour. Social evils like bribery, nepotism and favouritism have come to
be accepted in the society. People often approach someone known to them
for favours which they know are not legally due them. Jumping traffic lights
or a queue or getting the benefits not due to one, has become part of social
ethos. A person who has acquired wealth through unfair means is often
accorded the same, if not higher, status in Indian society as that given to
persons of excellence (13).

Controlling or reducing corruption of every kind in India is a need of the day. Ram Ahuja has
suggested some methods for reducing corruption as follow:

1. For controlling corruption, we have to focus on law, procedure and administration. If
law/rule is too harsh, complicated and ambiguous, it leads to corruption.
2. Artificial shortage and scarcities which facilitate illegal gratification have to be
controlled.
3. Vigilance should be increased.
4. Liberalization policy should be introduced very cautiously.
5. Expenses in elections have to be strictly controlled.
6. Cooperation of people has to be obtained for successfully containing corruption.

(1997 P.471)
1.6.2.3 Black Money

Corruption has raised another big issue of black money in contemporary Indian society. Ram Ahuja believes that black money is; unaccounted money, tax-evaded, concealed income and undisclosed wealth, collected by various professionals and businessmen who do not reveal it as total income for tax purposes. He further says that many ingenious ways are employed by industrialists, export houses, the film industry, businessmen, and the corporate sectors to hoodwink the taxman in the on-going game of hide and seek. This money is usually spent on conspicuous consumption and corrupt practices to further generate income and wealth. (2013, P.67) He also gives common illustrations of black money in society as:

- Government doctors earning money by private practice even when they get non-practice allowance,
- teachers earning money through tuitions, examinations and book royalty and not including it in income tax returns,
- advocates charging much higher fee than shown in their account books. Its illegitimate source is bribe, smuggling, black marketing, selling commodities at prices higher than controlled prices, selling house at a high premium price but showing it at a much lower price in the account books and so forth (488).

The major reasons for black money in India are the complex and confusing tax patterns, inflation, real estate transactions, political funding etc. So also the big business tycoons and the leading political leaders have collected and deposited black money in foreign countries. The estimated figure of total black money from India in foreign banks crosses millions and trillions. On the one side there is poverty of the worst kind in society and on the other side black money is in millions and trillions. Along with affecting economic development adversely, black money has many social effects also. Ahuja believes that it increases social inequality, creates frustration among honest people, increases crimes like smuggling and bribery and adversely affects social service programmes for the uplift of the poor and the weaker section of society. It also distorts, as per what Ahuja believes, growth rate, inflation rate, unemployment rate, poverty, etc. which in turn affects the government policies for containing these problems (495).
Rajni Arora, Assistant Professor at Department of Management Studies, Government Mohindra College, Patiyala, Punjab, reflects on the effects on Black Money on Society as follow:

1. It leads to increase in inequalities of income which widen the gap between the rich and the poor people of our country.
2. It leads to wasteful consumption in our economy i.e. money which should be used for investment but wasted at consumption.
3. It leads to decrease in working efficiency of people as they get used to earn black money by easy means and they start preferring leisure to work.
4. It nurtures many illegal activities and crimes in society like counterfeit currency, drug trafficking etc.

Black money in India is collected and used in much quantity by various political parties and religious institutions. The rich people donate a little of the much they have amassed to party fund. The political parties use black money to come to power and they secure the donors from all the political or state intervention against the black money. The use of black money in Lok Sabha election of 2014 is a very appropriate example of it. Millions of rupees have been used in advertising and wide propaganda of some of the favourite leaders of the rich people of India. The high tech political road-shows and rallies are not possible with white money only. Even after elections, the political leaders invest black money in share market, commodity market, constructions and many other businesses. The same businesses are run with corrupt practices and earn more black money. The religious institutions also have transactions of millions of rupees which sometimes do not have any accounting or record. It is taken as divine donation or gift to god. The money which can be used for the welfare of the nation and the society is stored in religious institutions. Even some of the spiritual leaders have been found in scams of money laundering.
1.6.2.4 Contemporary Indian Politics

In a democratic nation like India, the role and responsibility politics become decisive for the socio-economic progress of society. It is a matter of great regret that politics in India after many decades of independence, has hardly taken any decisive or progressive measures that promise the expected socio-economic development of Indian society. The post independent politics of India has drastically failed to reach the objectives of getting freedom and establishment of democracy; determined by visionary martyrs and revolutionary leaders. The objective of national building does not seem to be a priority of any present day political party rather they waste their energy in the leg pulling of one another. Cunningness and opportunism have become the only identity of recent Indian politics. There is no space left for honest politics or statesmanship in the present Indian politics. Considering it a dirty game, even the educated or intellectual people keep a safe distance from active politics in India. The ruling parties are busy ensuring in power at any rate and the opposition parties are busy to attempting demolishes the ruling parties at any rate. Corruption, black money, crony capitalism, communal riots and manipulation of laws under the shelter of constitutional provision have become the priorities of the contemporary Indian politics. The world’s largest democracy has given equal political rights to all but what about the social and economic inequalities? What about the abject condition in which the majority of Indians live? What about the basic amenities, and opportunities to them? What about the communal violence and caste and gender oppression? These questions reflect the paradoxes of the Indian political system and society (Priyadarshi 247).

The contemporary Indian cunning politics has caused many problems in society. The vote bank politics has never allowed the different communities to merge and integrate. The frequent communal riots and tension due to it, has snatched away the peace of society. Such politics has nurtured corruption, black money, crony capitalism, nepotism and favouritism in society. The basic problems like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, urbanization, health and hygiene, education, child labour and many such issues are not concentrated on much. The crime ratio is increasing in society because of the current political delay tactics. Rape cases, acid throwing, kidnapping, money extortion, house robbery and highway crimes, and drug and liquor addiction, have become common
problems of contemporary Indian society. The cunning or opportunist politics shelters such anti-social elements for personal interests. It is becoming very tough for a common man to live peacefully in such a society. At the time of elections, wonderful dreams are shown as if the problems will be sorted out soon but in the end, the voters feel deceived.

1.6.2.5 Terrorism

India has been facing the serious problem of terrorism for many decades. The communal and regional forces run terrorist activities in many parts of India and challenge the internal peace of the society. India has been facing two major terrorist activities for many years; militants’ terrorism in Kashmir and Naxalite terrorism in Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Kerala. The issue of Khalistan terrorism has almost been sorted out by now. Even the operation Blue Star, assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the communal riots after those incidents has caused much tension in the northern states of India. Thousands of innocent people lost their lives and private and public property worth millions was destroyed. From time to time this issue is kept alive by cunning politicians or interest groups. But it is declared that the situation is under control.

Kashmir oriented issue of terrorism has been disturbing India ever since Independence. The militant forces pressurise the native Hindus to vacate the territory of Kashmir, as they believe it a separate state. The forceful migration of Kashmiri native people, from the valley leaving behind all the property there, has created many socio-economic and psychological problems among the affected people. The native people have almost migrated empty handed due to the fear of death. They live the Hellish life of refugees in the outskirts parts of Delhi. It is said that Pakistan and some other gulf countries promote and sponsor terrorism in the valley of Kashmir. This terrorism has become a headache for the entire country. The communal forces keep on supporting such civil war like situation within India. Cunning politics adds fuel to the fire. In the last decade, many terrorist activities have disturbed the peace of society. The terrorist attack on Akshardham in Gujarat in 2007 the Taj hotel terrorist attack in 2008 in Mumbai, Assam bomb blasts in 2008, etc. are chief among the biggest terrorist attacks which have disturbed the peace and harmony of society. Such terrorist activities are run on the basis of religion. The religious feelings of people are inflamed under the manipulation of religious preaching. Especially, the unemployed teenagers are targeted for training in terrorism under the temptation of much money in this
life and Heaven after death. The poison of communal hatred is so deeply ingrained in the minds and hearts of these people that they do not hesitate even to die. Such anti human activities are done for the political motives but it is given the name of jihad or religious war. Terrorism has no religion or has nothing to do with religion. The only aim is to spread fear or terror in society for the selfish political or economic motives.

The Naxalism in the North Eastern states, which stated in West Bengal, is becoming uncontrolled in recent times. The Naxalite activity is spreading so widely and wildly in the other states of India like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Kerala. The tribal landless labourers have raised arms against the government. The Naxalite man and woman are mostly uneducated and they are from the lower economic background. China is supposed to be helping such people with arms and ammunitions, money and training for running such activities in India with a view to weakening the country internally. The Naxalites do not hesitate to kill the Indian Military jawans, police jawans, the media reporters, the local politicians, foreign tourists and the rich people on refusing to comply with their demands. They run a kind of parallel government system in the areas of their control.

Terrorism of any kind prevents the development of society. People live under fear and tension. It steals away the internal peace of society. This is true in the case of India. India has to suffer a lot due to the terrorist activities. Many people have lost their lives for no fault of themselves. Much time, money and energy is wasted to control it. The same resources can be utilised for the public welfare in society. Such an indirect war like situation has hollowed the country from within.

1.6.2.6 Poverty

Poverty is one of the earliest problems of Indian society. It was intensive before independence and it is still rigorous after independence. India is still considered one of the poor countries in the world. Having achieved rapid growth in economy, great advancement in science and technology, the sprawling markets and malls, the most expensive skyscraper residential dwellings and business buildings, world class road transportation, world class giant industries and much more modern advancement, India has been still struggling with the problem of poverty. Many planning commissions and Five-Year Plans have been appointed and executed with the prime mission of removing it, but the problem of poverty
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has not been completely solved. Poverty is still there, causing social discrimination, starvation, malnutrition, illiteracy, problems of health and hygiene, unemployment and anti-social crimes in contemporary Indian society. The poor people in contemporary India are still devoid of some basic provisions of life like enough nutritious food, clean drinking water, enough clothing to cover the body, hygienic dwellings, unavoidable health facilities, and life securities.

What can be the reasons of the failure of many ambitious programmes by various government tenures to remove poverty? The chief among them is population explosion. About thirty crore of Indian population at the time of independence has crossed one hundred and thirty crore within sixty five years and it is still increasing. So the developmental plans and policies are showing any positive effects on poverty alienation. Moreover, in the opinion of Ram Ahuja, colonial legacy, miserable and unjust social conditions, low educational attainment, lack of employable skills, long term unemployment, war and threats of war, cause and perpetuate poverty (37).

Ahuja quotes B.N. Ganguly’s opinion for the causes of poverty in India as:

Foreign rule and exploitation of a class society, overpopulation, lack of capital, high illiteracy, lack of ambition and economic motivation, poor health and lack of stamina in hot climate, lack of committed and honest administrators, outmoded social system with lack of social and economic mobility, and an exploitative land system that keeps the cultivators in a state of utter stagnation.

The problem of poverty is there in both the urban and the rural areas of the country. It is estimated that about seventy percent population in rural India is poor. Agriculture is the main source of income in rural India. Agriculture is much dependent on rain, climate and other natural phenomenon. The agricultural activity in villages is still based on the traditional methods and skills. No scientific or modern approach is adopted by many people. So agriculture production is affected. The people are illiterate or semi-literate. They are lacking employability skills. They live in big families most of the members of whom are non-earning or dependent people. They rather waste much of the earned money for some traditional social ceremonies, under the wrong notion of social prestige. Many of the rural people indulge in drinking, gambling and other drug addictions. It claims much of their
limited income resources. Lack of willingness for hard work, wrong notion of social prestige for work, much dependency on fortune and destiny, can be considered some or the other reasons for poverty in rural society.

In contemporary urban India, the problem of poverty is very serious. Many of the urban areas are full of poor people living a life of total indignity. They are devoid of some of the basic needs of life like food, clothes and dwellings. The people live on daily wages work in small scale or home industries, work on demand like plumbing and drainage repairing, street cleaning, vending, rag-picking, and even begging. The migration of rural population in search of work, adds to the overflowing poor population of the urban areas. The poor but unemployed people sometimes do not hesitate to adopt the unsocial means like, house breaking, chain snatching, looting, kidnapping, money extortion, prostitution; bootlegging, etc. which is a great threat to the peace and happiness of society. The education level in such people is very low. So the problems like child labor, juvenile crimes, child prostitution, drinking liquor, gambling, internal disputes, domestic violence and gang wars are very common in the slum areas of cities.

1.6.2.7 Unemployment

Unemployment is also a burning problem of contemporary Indian society and so is under employment. A large number of engineers, doctors, technocrats, teachers, management graduates, are passing out every year but an equal number of job opportunities is not created in the country. That way unemployment ratio is increasing. The under-employed is a person who is not given work as per his/her qualifications and calibre, that does not ensure a reasonable remuneration or wages. One can easily find even science graduates, post-graduate or Ph.D. holders working as clerks, accountants or as primary school teachers. Presently, unemployment is observed among the educated or trained people, especially the youth in both the rural and urban area. There are many types of unemployment. Ram Ahuja classifies as; seasonal unemployment which is based on the cycle of seasons, cyclical unemployment which is caused due to the ups and downs of trade and business, industrial unemployment, which occurs because of international competition, defective industrial policies, and labour laws. He further classifies it as technological unemployment which is caused due to introduction of automation in production and the last is the educational unemployment which is caused due to system failure to relate education with life.
Population explosion, lack of skill based aptitude; imbalanced industrial growth, (mostly in urban areas or surrounded to urban areas and in remote rural areas), failure of education system, social status consciousness, etc. can be considered as the chief causes of the growing problem of unemployment in contemporary Indian society. The proportion of population growth and employment opportunity establishment do not match. The business and industrial growth is not anyway matching with the growing population of India. The faulty education system still runs traditional course curricula. The traditional course content highly promotes mugging and it is not need based. So the skill based aptitude is not developed as per the need of the time. So it does not promise employment. Use of more efficient technology and automation has replaced the human resources with giant and over producing machinery. Where a hundred people are required, only one machine operator is enough. It leads to unemployment. The traditional labour laws and industrial policies do not motivate bigger investments. So the problem of unemployment is not lessened. Liberalisation, globalization and free trade policies have also considerably contributed to the problem of unemployment or under employment in contemporary Indian society. The psychological problems like depression, frustration, and insecurities, especially among the youth can be considered the worst effects of unemployment or under employment in contemporary Indian society. Empty mind is a devil’s workshop. Such unemployed or under employed young people sometimes join hands with anti-social elements and prove fatal to peace and prosperity of society. Such people are on the top priority of the non-secular forces, the terrorist activists and some other anti-social forces. They, by giving allurements of all kinds, divert the potential of such people towards their anti-social motives. Ram Ahuja notes: “Unemployment among the educated youth, on the other hand, poses another set of problems. It makes the youth so angry and frustrated that they become militants, rebels, and a threat to the unity of country” (…).

1.6.2.8 Inflation

Presently, people are facing the problem of inflation or price rise in India. The prices of the provisions of daily consumption have noticeably risen. It is becoming impossible for poor and lower middle class to cope with the rising prices of the some of the basic necessities of life. The food items, clothing, medication, education, fuel, electricity, transport, residences, and other basic necessities of life are becoming expensive day by day. The poor and middle
class family budget is becoming tighter. Inflation has taken a tight hold of market. The artificial shortage of daily provisions is created in market to earn black money. Instead of ample production of daily consumption provisions, inflation is at its peak. All the government action plans and policies have drastically failed to control the price rise. The impact of it on society is very severe. Much of the income of a common people is used in daily consumption. The profit making forces become more powerful and so the problems of black money and corruption are nurtured in society. The economic exploitation of the poor and the middle class becomes possible and it creates many socio-psychological problems.

1.6.2.9 Urbanization

The other major issue of contemporary Indian society is urbanization. Growing industrialization and modernization have considerably promoted urbanization in contemporary India. The imbalance in the development of city and village areas has caused the bigger issue of urbanization in society. The rural people migrate to the urban area in search of better employment, better life style, better education, or better health facilities. The cities are becoming overcrowded and the villages are becoming empty. People prefer to live in cities because of many reasons. Ram Ahuja explains:

Urbanization was an off-shoot of the industrial revolution which created a demand for a large number of workers at centralized locations. The growth of cities depends not only on birth and death rates and migration but also on political, religious, historical and economic factors. Political centres can be capital of states (Bhopal, Jaipur, Bombay, Calcutta) or the areas of political activities (Delhi) or the training centres for the military (Kharagvasla), or centres for defence production (Jodhpur); economic centres are areas which predominates in trade or commerce (Ahmedabad, surat); industrial towns are places with factories (Bhilai, Singrauli. Kota, Ludhiana); the religious cities are those where people go on pilgrimage (Hardwar,Varanasi, Allahabad); and educational centres have educational institutions (Pilani) (289-90).

Uncontrolled urbanization creates many sociological problems in contemporary India. Ahuja further points out the problems of urbanization. He says: “Urban Problems are endless. Drug addiction, pollution, crime, Juvenile delinquency, begging, alcoholism, corruption and unemployment are a few of them. The incidence and prevalence crucial problems (are)
housing and slums, crowding and depersonalization, water supply and drainage, transportation and traffic, power shortage, sanitation and pollution” (295-96).

Urbanization has both positive and negative impacts on contemporary Indian society. It has made possible fast transportation and quick communication facilities. It has created many employment opportunities and sources of income. It has elevated the standard of living. Along with the said positive impacts there are some negative impacts of urbanization in society. The problem of housing and price rise in real estate market is a direct impact of urbanization of society. Puja Mondal considers certain negative impacts of urbanization as disturbed family system, rise of crimes, unemployment, poverty, prostitution, gambling, begging and internal conflicts among the people. Urbanization has changed the role of women in society. Spread of education and developed employability among the woman has changed the role of women. Earlier women used to stay at home, taking care of children and family. Now more and more women prefer to take jobs so the child rearing and other family responsibilities are performed by paid maids. It creates many socio-psycho-emotional issues. Working couple in the urban area live under the burden and stress of professional and family responsibilities. It causes many problems in their conjugal life also. The children are brought up in cradle houses, nurseries, hostels or boarding schools, so the same causes challenge their physical, mental and emotional development.

Urbanization has increased the standard of living. People can enjoy all the luxuries of life but it has also made life utterly mechanical. From early in the morning to late at night people run after money as a dog runs for bread. Family cannot have lunch or dinner together. Even the next door neighbours are unknown to one another. Nobody is permitted to interfere in any personal matters in urban society. People live an isolated and monotonous life.

1.6.2.10 Rising Crimes and Crime Rate

With modernization, industrialization and money oriented economy, crimes and criminal cases have also considerably increased in contemporary Indian society. Crimes and criminal cases like gang rape, kidnapping, house breaking, highway robbery, vehicle stealing, chain snatching, pick pocketing, bootlegging, liquoring, drug addiction, prostitutions (also high profile prostitution), hit and run, are common features recently. The criminal forces are becoming out of control now a days. The police forces are not able to control criminals. It is also blamed that the police and politicians are linked to such and other civil crimes in
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The life of common people is very much disturbed. Women are not much safe in such an atmosphere of society. They are physically exploited or sexually harassed. The growing criminal mind set in society has even made people apathetic or depersonalized. In most of the cases, they prefer to keep silence rather than protesting or complaining against such anti-social forces.

Domestic violence is another kind of crime in contemporary Indian society. The physical torturing, beating, black mailing, honor killing, neglecting, are becoming chief issues in contemporary Indian social set up. This is not only applicable to the poor or middle class society but also to the rich and celebrity class of society.

Because of widespread corruption, apathy of the police and administration, delaying and expensive judiciary system, and fear of social defaming, people generally prefer to tolerate crime and the criminals rather than protesting against them. Here the criminal forces get double the power for committing crimes.

1.6.2.11 Modernization and Westernization and Impacts that Follow

Modernization of traditional Indian society is a welcome step for the establishment of social equality, social mobility, social liberty, and social justice. In India, modernization has promised many opportunities to an individual for the social and economic progress. The traditional social barriers like, caste system, domination of religion, traditional princely political structure, education system, etc. prevented much progress of an individual in particular and the society in general. The introduction of modern concepts like classless society, secularism, free will or individualism, establishment of democratic values, human dignity, use of science and technology, etc. unchained an individual and society from the long-established system which did not promise any considerable progress of Indian society.

Modern value system flows mostly from the western countries. So, modernization of Indian society can also be considered as westernization of Indian society. All the concepts of western countries are not necessarily modern and all the concepts of India are not necessarily obsolete. It is also a point of great attention here, that entire the Indian traditional system is not faulty. There are some noble values also that even the western countries are tempted to follow. A concept or value system which is applicable to western counties may not be applicable to eastern countries like India. So the blind chase after modernization or westernization proves fatal for some of the deep rooted noble value
system of any country. Any traditional social set up which prevents the progress of an individual must be replaced anyhow and any modern or western set up that perturbs the righteousness of society must be avoided at any rate.

Modernization was introduced in India by the Britishers during the 19th century. M. N. Shrinivas, gives his opinion as:

> During the nineteenth century the British slowly laid the foundations of a modern state by surveying land, setting the revenue, creating a modern bureaucracy and police, instituting law courts, codifying the law, developing communications-railways, post and telegraph, roads and canals-establishing schools and colleges, and so on” (49).

During the colonial rules and also after independence, modern amenities have ensured the comfort level of people for living life. Almost all sections of society have been modernized. The traditional system that blocked the advancement of society is almost obsolete in recent times. Science and technology, industrial advancement, modern means of communication and transport, the global mobility for trade and commerce, secular education that nurture rationality and global thinking have modernized the traditional Indian society in a great deal. The agriculture sector, industrial sector, business and commerce, administrative sector, education sector, human development sector, or even political sector are benefited by modernization and westernization. However it has also introduced some newer problems in contemporary Indian society.

The modernization in India has introduced competitive atmosphere in society. The traditional class system of Indian society has been replaced by modern class differences in society like, the developed and undeveloped, the educated and uneducated, the employed and unemployed, the owner and the worker, and many more. The constant unrest is prevalent in society between those who have achieved and those who are struggling to achieve. The money economy can be considered an off-shoot of modernization in India. The rich are becoming richer and poor the poorer. The economic exploitation of people becomes possible because of the blind rush after money. The inflation, crony capitalism, corruption, black money and certain other contemporary problems of Indian society are nurtured under the shelter of modernization. The modern automatic machinery has reduced the need of the human resource, so it creates the problem of unemployment or
under-employment in society. The modern education promotes high sense of rationalism so it creates many cultural and moral problems in society. The modernization claims high magnitude on sense of achievement so the failure of any kind brings frustration, depression and mental unrest.

Contemporary Indian society seems much affected by westernization so far as cultural or social value system is concerned. The food habits, clothing, language, manners, etiquettes, residences, standard of life or way of life have much western impact. The traditional Indian nutritious dishes are replaced by Chinese, Italian or Mexican fast food. The traditional Indian clothing is almost replaced by western suit and tie, half pants and Bermuda culture. The traditional Indian greetings like Ram Ram, Jai Shree Krishna, Salam Valekum, Saat Shri Akaal, jai Jinendra, are now replaced by Hello and Hi. The contemporary Indian houses are constructed as per western life amenities. The use of English words and phrases, proverbs and quotations is a matter of pride and a symbol of status. The English medium education to the children gives social prestige to many Indian parents. They do not understand that English should be taught as a skill and not as a medium. The contemporary social functions and ceremonies like marriages, birthday celebrations, and wedding anniversaries are much influenced by western patterns. The DJ sound system and reception culture have a lot of influence of western society. More birthdays are celebrated in western style. More wedding anniversaries are celebrated on western patterns. The constructive adaptation of western manners is welcome but blind imitation sometimes creates great mockery and ridiculousness.

In the midst of all these, one can find a considerable class of people who have achieved the balanced between tradition and modernity. The negligible but constructive negotiations in social traditions, rituals, principles and values, have brought good results. There are people in Indian society who celebrate birthdays in western style but they still touch the feet of the elders and go to temple for darshan before they cut the cake. Same is the case with wedding anniversaries and other social celebrations.
1.6.2.12 Impacts of Globalization on Contemporary Indian Society

Globalization has proved to be a double edged sword in India. At the beginning of 1990’s, it was a welcome step of the then government to save India from the falling economy. The restricted import-export policies were liberalized for free trade and commerce and that created newer market opportunities in the world. The traditional trade and business started taking global shapes and was linked with international economy. Privatization and liberalization gave high flight to upcoming market of retails also. Many MNCs were established in various parts of the country. The BPO sector and other worldwide on-line market created ample employment opportunities for fresh graduates with handsome amount of pocket money. The traditional mindset of society has become much global which ensures freedom of thinking, critical reasoning and scientific approach to life. Globalization in developing countries like India is sometimes considered as economic colonization or re-colonization of the nation. However, it has many positive impacts for the progress of the nation. Globalization may have many constructive impacts, however there are no two opinions about fact that it has at the same time, created many economical and socio-cultural issues.

Jyoti Jindal in her article *Globalization-Its Socio-Economic Impact in India* says:

Globalization was adopted by Indian Government during 1990-91 when Indian Economy was in a very bad shape. It was however adopted not as a solution to deteriorating Indian economy but to enable itself to get further foreign exchange loans from the World Bank (…) to rectify its ailing financial health, government simultaneously decided to amend its economic policies and go for privatization and liberalization of its economy. These decisions had immense positive effect. However globalization has proved to be double edged weapon. It did help Govt. temporary meet its emergent need of foreign exchange but it has , as a by-product, caused some permanent damage to Indian economic and Indian social structure.

The impacts of globalization in India are witnessed in clothing, food habits, cosmetics, music, entertainment, and many other facets of contemporary Indian society. Giant shopping malls are observed tightly stuffed with international brands of clothes, cosmetics, imitation jewelry and footwear. The international food chains like MacDonald, KFC,
Dominoes, Pizza Hut, US Pizza, Uncle Sam, etc. have almost taken over the fast-food market of India. The soft drinks and beverages industries like Coca Cola, Pepsi, Thumbs Up, and others earn much profit in India. Though all these have created many small employment opportunities in the urban part of India, they have, at the same time, dented and damaged the great Indian social and cultural system. The growing International brand loyalty and brand consciousness of consumers have endangered the local or Indian market very painfully. The cottage industries and home industries are breathing their last. The economic paralysis of many local brands in India is an indirect impact of globalization in the country. The urban and semi urban areas might have been benefited but the remote villages, tribal and other lower class communities hardly have any advantage of it.

The growing interest for global culture has diminished many conventional dogmas of society like castesm, racism, and communalism. Growing acceptance of classless society has nurtured humanism in contemporary Indian society. The new generation is for higher education and global thinking. Ban on inter-caste marriages, dowry, women not to be allowed to study and work, dignity of labor, and many other social issues are becoming obsolete due to modernization and westernization of society in the globalized India. However, it has also introduced some new problems in society. The globalization has improved the social and economic condition of women but at the same time it has introduced many personal and social problems. The working women in MNC’s or BPO sector feel immense mental stress and depression. They could improve the economic condition of women but the social life is challenged to a great deal. The family responsibilities and professional responsibilities claim much of their time and energy and it directly or indirectly shows effects on their physical and mental health.

Globalization has created many small employment opportunities for the people but at the same time, the problem of the economic and physical exploitation has become the major issue of the time. Job-insecurity, job-dissatisfaction and overloaded job responsibilities in the global environment have challenged the mental health of the people. The mental illnesses like depression, frustration, anxieties, and worries lead to many physical illnesses like high blood pressure, low blood pleasure, heart attacks, kidney failure, diabetes and many more. Some cases of suicide have been observed due to the over pressure of the work in today’s cut-throat competition.
The youth of the new generation have grown to be highly individualistic in global thinking. The late night parties, drugs, pubs and club culture, drinking, long drive, bike racing, pre-marital physical relationship, live-in relationship attract them a lot. The great Indian social set up, with noble ideas, is much challenged in the globalized India. Globalization has much of its exposure in the urban India. The life style of the urban people is much affected by globalization. The blind imitation of western societies in their food habits, clothing, social etiquettes, celebrations of various days and festivals have eliminated the essence of the great Indian cultural tradition.

1.6.2.13 Issues Related to Education System

Ever since the Primitive Age, when man first learnt how to start fire by rubbing two stone pieces, education has played a pivotal role for the evolution of human race. Education is the key factor for the all-round development of human society. The socio-economic development of any society is measured through the standard of education a society has achieved. The more educated a society is, the more developed it is. Education is the spinal cord or backbone of society. Indian culture accepts education as dharma or a divine duty. History has witnessed a golden period of education in India from the Vedic period. Compromise in education sector can bring catastrophic consequences in society. These fundamental facts are not unknown to the educational policy makers of India. Ever since the time of Lord Macaulay in mid-19th century, the education sector of India has much been affected by the policy makers and the results are witnessed by all. Presently, the education sector of India is controlled by the wrong hands and the commercial mind set is taking hold of this divine sector of society. Mushrooming of private schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutes affect the quality of education. It directly or indirectly affects the contemporary Indian society.

However, the credit for modernization of Indian education goes to the colonial government. The British government took some very exclusive steps for the development of the education system in India. The prominent among them are Wood’s Dispatch 1854, the Hunter Commission 1882, the Universities Commission 1902 and some other subsequent committees like Hartog Committee 1929, Sapru Committee 1934, Zakir Hussain Committee 1937. The foundation of modernization in Indian education system by colonial rules, promised some constructive results. However, the general intention of the colonial
government was to form a class of people who might be interpreters between them and the millions whom they governed; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinion and in intellect.

After the colonial rules, the damage control in Indian education sector was practiced by appointing various education commissions for the purpose of survey, study, review, recommend and implementation for the grass root level improvement. The chief among the commissions were Dr. Radhakrishnanan Commission 1948, for promoting university education, Dr. Mudalil Commission 1952 for developing secondary education and Dr. Kothari Commission was for advising the government on national pattern and policies of education at all the stages from primary to post graduation. The National Policy of Education 1968 (also 1986) was for execution of Kothari commission which chiefly included free and compulsory education, teachers’ education and development of languages. Acharya Rammurti Committee was formed in 1990 to review NPE-1986 to make recommendations and modifications. It recommended promoting national progress, sense of common citizenship, strengthening national integration, greater attention to science and technology and cultivation of moral values. The constitution of Indian promises free, compulsory and universal education which is greatly promoted by the Right to Education 2009, also called RTE 2009. The above observation is an outcome of deeper reading and analysis of the documents from MHRD website, and an article from the website of IDG (India Development Gateway) titled Educational Commissions and Committees in Introspect.

In spite of all the efforts, the government could not reach the requirements of physical and human resources for promoting the need of hundred per cent education ratio. The rapidly increasing population of India is a chief obstacle for the improvement of the education sector in India. So, purely government educational institutions took the subsidiary shape of Grant-in-aid form, which later on took the shape of pure self-financed one. Though the policy making and implementation are in the hands of the government, the widespread corruption due to commercialization of the education sector, adversely affected the ideals of Indian education sector.

Presently, education sector in India is becoming the one time investment industry for lifelong profit. The mushrooming of self-financed schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutes has been taking hold of the education sector. Under the deceptive
aim of no profit no loss, the education sector of India is becoming the best profit making industry. People investing in this sector sometimes have nothing to do with this noble sector of society. The corporate culture is visible in it in all its bloom. It has the prime objective, which is either to whiten the black money under the shade of social service or to gain optimum profit out of it. Five star facilities which are provided in such institutions have almost eliminated the relevance of government schools and colleges. The student community has been divided into two segments; the private school students who study with all rich facilities and the government school students who study with minimum facilities. The competitive atmosphere in education sector is not healthy for society. The corporate body is shaping education with ultra-modern facilities whereas the government run education institutes are sometimes devoid of some basic facilities. The values promoted by such culture in qualities have started showing its effects in society. The ultimate aim of education; to uplift the soul is not nurtured. The students will not nurture in them the ideals of social responsibility as they are paying for what they gain. The investment in education for qualifying themselves will stimulate them to get maximum returns. It may not be good for the society. Those who pass out are sometimes not quality products and have no market value. Such a culture does not cultivate in them the aptitude for employability, so the passed out population adds to the already burning problem of unemployment in India. Such a culture in education sector stimulates corruption which is again a burning issue of Indian society. The cultural and moral devaluation can also be considered some of the chief outcomes of such a culture. The money making mind-set of the owners of such commercial or corporate factories of education, sometimes do not pay the employees sufficiently. This causes great damage to the development of students as good citizens. The prime objective of education is not only to produce doctors, engineers, managers, professors but also to prepare good professionals, better citizens, and real human beings. The investing agencies cannot have such objectives in consideration. Rather they concentrate on maximum profit from their investment. Such a culture will sweep away the social and national ideals of education and it can be dangerous to the overall growth of Indian society.
1.6.2.14 Youth Unrest

India takes credit to have the world’s highest youth power in the world. There are millions of skilled young boys and girls ready to contribute to the development of the nation. If the youth power is given opportunities, it can bring wonders in the social and economic development of the country. The youth have energy, efficiency and eagerness for making India a super power, but the youth power is not systematically channelized. The young population is used for vote bank purpose only. Many young skilled technocrats are jobless or workless. Widely spread corruption, bribing, cunning politics, reservation system and many other social evils do not allow the youth to perform to the best of their capacity. Mostly youth are not satisfied with the contemporary situations in Indian society. The growing unrest among the youth sometimes takes the wrong direction. The disapproval of the youth for what is going on in the society and the country can take them away from moral values and the ideals of society.

Ram Ahuja wonderfully observes the youth unrest in the contemporary Indian society as:

When there is total disillusionment in society with the existing social structures, and institutions, with the contradictions in the social system, with the politics and politicians, with the decisions and decision-makers, and when everybody is conscious of falling standards in all walks of life, social discrimination, prevailing corruption, and the search for quick monetary gains through illegitimate means, why should youth alone be expected to confirm to traditional moral values and lofty ideals? How can they look up to self-proclaimed political, religious and social leaders for inspiration? (193).

He further notes:

The youth tend to become angry when they notice the widening chasm between what the leaders preach and what they practice; when the leaders call for sacrifice but they themselves loll in luxury; when the leaders talk of morality but they themselves maintain liaison with smugglers, criminals and anti-social elements; when they appeal for peace and harmony but they themselves revel in factional squabbles, when they shed crocodile tears for the poor but always live with and support rich. Disappointed and disillusioned by this, the frustrated youth start some agitation to lodge a
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social protest. Some politicians start taking an interest in these agitations and in some cases; they use the help of anti-social elements to keep alive. When these anti-social elements indulge in loot and arson, it is the youth who come to be blamed for these destructive activities. The frustrated youth, thus, become more frustrated and the unrest among them further increases (193-94).

The unrest creates depression and frustration among the youth. Such disturbed minds easily divert to drinking, gambling, smuggling, and communal or anti-secular activities. They become instrumental for the social disharmony and social tension. If they are unemployed or under-employed they hardly hesitate to compromise with anti-social forces. Initially, they may take bribes, black money and cunning politics as evils of society; later on they may start taking all these as a way of life. Modernization and globalization have increased sense of aspiration and ambition for higher standards of life. In pursuit of it, the youth jump into cut throat competition but many of them do not have enough opportunity or space for exposure. So a kind of stress and unrest breeds in their psyche.

Neha Pansare observes the factors contributing the problem of youth unrest in India as improper socialization, political, social and economic inequalities, defective education system, unemployment, corrupt and discredited authority, misuse of youth power by politicians, administrative failure, communication gap, value differences and conflict of values, lack of opportunities, gap between aspirations and achievement, lack of determination and self-responsibilities and influence of movies on their minds and hearts.

Khushwant S. Ranial observes:

Unfortunately, the youth of today in our nation is quite upset and is at the crossroads and sees no ray of hope in his future. The youth finds her future bleak owing to various factors like unemployment, increasing corruption, unabated perpetuation of reservations on one pretext or the other by the politicians to gain their own political mileage, overlooking of merit, undue favoritism and increasing appeasement policies, lackadaisical approach of the government in addressing the issues of the youth like recruitment, promotion and above all salary status.
1.6.2.15 **Brain Drain**

India has a very powerful force of talents and skills especially the youth force. Due to certain reasons or the conventional system and policies, these talents and skills are not channelized properly. Thousands of new skilled young boys and girls pass out every year, but all of them are not given appropriate employment opportunities. Some of the really talented youth are not paid as per their capacity and caliber. The prevailing corruption and reservation policies discourage many young smart minds to look for better opportunities in some other countries. S. Raveesh complies the views of official website of Kamla Nehru Higher Secondary School as:

Most of the students who go abroad for higher studies do not return to India. After seeing, the affluent life of foreign countries they lose all interest in their own country. Many Indians are teaching at various US universities and other institutions of higher learning. Some of them are placed on quite lucrative and high posts. There is another attraction of leading higher standard of living in foreign countries, because the technical experts and intellectuals are given special facilities there. In foreign countries there is advantage that while learning a person can also earn his own living. The stipends in foreign countries are sufficient enough. A frugal Indian student living there can also save something to send home. There is no doubt that India is having vast natural and man power resources. If both these resources put to the maximum utilization astonishing advancement can be achieved (16).

(Original Source courtesy; http://kamlanehrupublicschool.org/blog.php?show=21)

The falling Indian economy adds fuel to fire. Those who are hardly paid monthly five or ten thousand rupees monthly, can earn lakhs in foreign countries like the U.S.A, the U.K, Australia, Africa and the gulf countries. Every year, thousands of doctors, engineers, technocrats, M.B.A students, IIMs and IIT students, skilled workers and experienced professionals migrate to foreign countries for better employment opportunities. The creamy layer of brain is drained into other countries. India has to work with average brains, so it affects the economic, social, and technological development of the country.

Many social problems occur due to this human capital flight. The family system comes under the direct threat of it. The parents send their children to foreign countries. They settle there
and they cannot perform their duty well, as children, for their parents. The fast life of the foreign countries is not suitable for Indian parents. The children adopt the foreign culture and so it creates some generation clashes between two generations. Sometimes the earning husband is in foreign country and wife and children are in India. Sometimes parents are in foreign countries and children live in India. It creates many psycho-socio problems in society. Certain cases of fraud and cheating have been observed in marriages to NRI due to the craze of foreign bridegroom.

1.6.2.16   Environmental Issues and Contemporary Indian Society

Contemporary Indian society is highly affected by certain environmental problems. The average climate pattern is changing and there are problems of intolerable forty-five and above degree Celsius heat in summer and up to ten to twelve degree Celsius cold in winter on an average. Due to this, the routine life is much disturbed especially in condition of extremity. It creates many health problems among people. Common life is becoming tougher in India. Earthquakes, cyclone, Tsunami, flood, land-slide are very common in one or the other part of India. The impact of global warming is experienced in India too. The rain pattern of India has been much disturbed due to disturbance in the environment. On the one part there is a condition of flood and, on the other; crops are dried due to shortage of rain. Such is the present condition. Natural calamities disturb the life of affected people to a great deal. The natural calamities like earthquake of the year 2001 in Gujarat, Tsunami in 2004, in the southern part of India, Flood and land slide in 2013 in Uttrakhand and many other smaller calamities have shaken severely the human and natural life. Many people became homeless. Many children lost their parents. The influence of natural calamities on society is always serious. People lose their lifelong earnings in such calamities. They have to face many hardships of life. They lose their dear ones, so it creates many socio-psycho-economic problems in society. The life of orphan children becomes very hard. They cannot get proper education. They become victims of malnutrition, beggary, child abuse, child labor, child prostitution, juvenile delinquencies and many other anti-social issues. Industrialization has affected the Indian environment pattern a lot. The problem of pollution of all kinds in urban areas is a bigger issue. The solid, liquid and gas waste of industries is becoming a great hazard for the society. The rivers and sea shores are much polluted. There is a shortage of pure drinking water in many parts of the country. The rivers providing
drinking water for whole year have been polluted by industrial and residential waste and garbage. The use of pesticides and fertilizers used in the agriculture has polluted the fertile land a lot. Grains, fruits and vegetables, and many other agricultural products which are used for daily consumption are now much polluted. It all creates danger to the human health.

India is one of the world’s largest users of pesticides. Ladyfinger, cabbage, tomato, and cauliflower in particular may often contain dangerously high levels and fruits and vegetables are sprayed and tampered with to ripen and make them more colorful. Research by the School of Nature Sciences and Engineering at the National Institution of Advanced Studies in Bangalore reported in 2008 that many crops for export had been rejected internationally due to high pesticide residues (Colin Todhunter, Global Research Feb.07, 2013).

The fishery and poultry farm industries are also affected in India by pollution. The plastic waste scattered all around is a greater danger to environment. In the blind rush for modernity and industrialization, the environment is endangered very severely. Gandhi once said that Nature can reach man’s need but not his greed. In the blind greed of money and comforts of modern life, man has forgotten the importance of Nature. In India, many jungles have been cut. Many natural surroundings are either industrialized or constructed for residences. It has affected the wild life a lot. Frequent cases of wild animals trooping into residential areas are observed in India. This happens because of man’s colonizing or taking over of their natural residences. Nurturing of environment is the need of time in the world and India cannot be kept apart from it. It must not be forgotten that human life has been much dependent on Nature.

Traditions show that Indian society is environment friendly. Here, rivers like the Ganga, The Yamuna, the Godavari, the Narmada and The Kaveri are given the status of mother for centuries. Trees like the Bunyan tree and the Pipal, and plants like the Tulsi are considered sacred and given spiritual protection. People protect and nurture such long living trees. The animals like the cow are worshiped and other creatures like snake, rat, lion, tiger, crocodile, bullock, etc. are taken as vehicles of various gods and goddesses. Even the land is the mother for farmers in India which nurture them from generations. The elders, sages and
saints with foresight, connected all these to spirituality. So the environment got much protection and human life could survive longer. In the modern times, with the rise of reasoning and intellect, people here disconnected themselves from spirituality. So the environment lost spiritual protection. Now, one can see the Ganga, the holiest river of India, is severely polluted. The trees are cut unmindfully. The land is polluted with chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides. Earlier it was a paap or sin to sell land. It was like selling one’s mother. Now such emotional attachment is considered as foolishness and the land selling has become a lucrative business. The rush for modernity has endangered the environment and all the human and non-human living organisms.

1.6.2.17 Summing up
To sum up, the above discussed issues can also be understood as the modern society related issues. Apart from the above list, there are certain other issues like health and hygiene related issues, road-traffic related issues, issues related to the adulteration, growing lack of concern, for national affairs by educated people, absence of ideal nationalism, faithlessness on the public and administrative services and many others also distress much of the public life of the contemporary Indian society. The list can be extended further if certain traditional issues like communalism, caste system, racism, regionalism, pseudo secularism, illiteracy, over population, caste based reservation system, language related issues, and cross-border tension etc. All the above listed issues have been affecting the life of the people of contemporary Indian society for years together. In spite of all the burning issues named above, India has been progressing so fast that even the super developed nations envy her progress. The speed of the current progress of India can possibly be doubled if the immediate solution to all such issues is brought about by reciprocal understanding among the people, which can also help to establish real peace and harmony in the contemporary human society of India.
1.7 Summing up: Research Tool Defined; Select Issues of Contemporary Indian Society

The researcher, in the due course of the intensive study of the concept of contemporary Indian society and its major issues, has identified some of the typical issues of contemporary Indian society. The present research is based on the major issues of contemporary Indian society which are reflected in the fictional works of Chetan Bhagat. While identifying the issues of contemporary Indian society, the researcher finds that most of the identified issues as major issues of the present Indian society and almost all need immediate action to be taken. As the contemporary Indian society is heterogeneous in nature, so are the typical issues related to it. When it has equal heterogeneousness, it seems quite lengthy and the delimitation of the present research also does not permit to enlist all the issues of contemporary Indian society in the Research Tool to be defined for the further research to be applied to the select fictions of Chetan Bhagat. That is why; the researcher proposes to design the Research Tool keeping in mind some select issues out of all the listed major issues of contemporary Indian society for the detailed study of the select fictions of Chetan Bhagat. For the detailed study of the select issues of contemporary Indian society, the researcher designs the research tool as follow, which shall now and onwards be identified as the Research Tool for the further proposed study in due course of the present research work.
### Table 1: Defined Research Tool

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