CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The observations which have been made in the foregoing chapters reveal the fact that the human elements have been expounded under the light of New Age Realism in the fictional world of Jhumpa Lahiri and Chetan Bhagat. A common human being has been painted while trying hard to establish his identity as a self sufficient economically capable person in the context of India in the novels of Chetan Bhagat. While Jhumpa Lahiri narrates the latent feelings of the people suffering through various traumatizing faces of life under the unexpected, inconsistent patterns of an alien society while living sentimentally hard life on the backdrop of diaspora.

Chetan Bhagat brilliantly shows his understanding of the pain and passion of young lot. Most of his characters are young blood. ‘Five Point Someone’ has three IIT students as the leading male, ‘One Night@ The Call Center’ tells the story of young Call Center Executives; most of them are those who have just left college, ‘Three Mistakes of My Life’ has
young entrepreneurs and ‘Two States of My Marriage Life’ has the post graduate students of IIM as the leading characters.

“Male protagonists- in all these works of fiction –struggle with a world that challenges them to break free of their parents’ expectations: Will they be dutiful sons and find jobs, or will they indulge in idealism and take risk.”

Chetan Bhagat uses his refined Post-Modern Literature as an element to bring positive change in India, to make young generations’ mind both technically as well as mentally strong. He helps the people dream through his easy words and provides inspiration through witty examples. The novelist wants to be the part and parcel of the never-ever-before kind of historic changes taking place as India is awakening to its full potential. The surmounting pressure to succeed is one of the reasons that is making India a vibrant, fast growing and fast changing economy and society. Chetan Bhagat’s entire writing has emerged up as a potential blockbuster delighting the new generation to find reality in his works thereby developing the mindset of the readers for progressive India, where not only the spirit of patriotism but also the standard of living is high.

Contrary, when the elements of Realism are further groped about in the fictional world of Chetan Bhagat, the decreasing moral consideration in young generation comes to the fore. Sex with sensibility has always
been depicted by the novelists since the time immemorial but the casual sex of Chetan Bhagat kind- in a four wheeler in ‘One Night @the Call Center’; does not appeal to the roof top in ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’- does not appeal to the finer sense of romance in a reader. The depiction of sensuality in Chetan Bhagat does not constitute the essential and the most apparent bulk of Realism in traditional sense that in certain sense remains taboo-

“Particularly material of a sexual nature”. ²

The world is a changed place and this is the only reality that everyone must accept that the new generation is all together a different generation in the history of mankind. This point is raised and highlighted by the New Age Realist Chetan Bhagat.

“You may love him or hate him, but Chetan Bhagat’s big contribution to Indian publishing has been to bring out of the woodwork a whole segment of readers that publishers had traditionally believed never existed.”³

Chetan Bhagat’s success has demonstrated that there is a huge market for Indian fiction with everyday Indian characters outing out everyday Indian stories. Publishers may kindly take note that homegrown talents should find a voice and publishing authors like Chetan Bhagat is not only not
risky but could actually be profitable. ‘The greed is good’ is the creed of Chetan Bhagat and he is the realist of the new age because he writes what he sees and it hurts the people with traditional mentality that he promotes and supports immorality, though as a writer; he should talk morality and values that are not to be found around him in the new age society, and Chetan Bhagat is, of course, not T.S Eliot to talk about three Ds of Dan, Daya and Daman the ultimate solution to the moral degradation not only in twentieth century but in all centuries to come. The approach of Chetan Bhagat as a novelist explains his characters’ efforts to obtain sound financial standing in Indian conditions.

Talking about New generation authors including Chetan Bhagat, must always keep in mind that “mere eat, drink and be merry” is not the sole end of life, that a couple need not run away from their children, entrusting them to the supervision of others, just to make love and get involved in sex in a hotel or dormitory.

**Depiction of Multi-facted Diasporic Realities in Jhumpa Lahiri’s work**

Jhumpa Lahiri as a realist, talks of much advanced stage, when her characters are financially sound but uprooted from their country. In this regard the approach of Lahiri as a novelist becomes more psychological and less physical because after the fulfillment of physical needs a person
seeks for the satisfaction of psyche and in diasporic fictional world of Jhumpa Lahiri, the uprooted first and second generation immigrants have financial stability but they are devoid of identity in an alien world, thereby the atmosphere of emotional and psychological instability prevails through the pages of her works. ‘The Namesake’ details the perpetual dilemma faced by immigrants as they struggle to maintain their identities while trying to shake them off at the same time. It is about the series of distressing choices they are forced to make every day as they try hard to avoid being misfit in a foreign land.

‘The Namesake’ depicts a very long journey for people like Ashima who encounter difficulties in different spaces and undergo transformation of identities. With such progress in attitude the stranglehold on the children is slackened and Gogol and his sister as individuals in the family space feel much more integrated in the family unit. In the early years of after the immigration the stranglehold on the young members is depicted very strong. The children are acutely aware of their parents’ expectations but are usually rebellious. Some like Moushumi internalize with some element of violence, the duality between the expectation and their unwillingness to give in to the cultural demands. The resultant schizophrenia sometimes disintegrates them physically. Gogol reacts against the parental influence but he seems to be more balanced than
Moushumi whose desperation is evident in her own sexual involvements with a great number of partners in Paris. It was as if she was taking revenge upon herself.

“In retrospect she saw that her sudden lack of inhibition had intoxicated her more than any of the men had”.

She was drugged with a sense of emancipation from all constrictive forces but in the process she also acted self-consciously in a way that almost verged on prostitution:

“With no hesitation, she had allowed men to seduce her in cafes, in parks, while she gazed at paintings in museums. She gave herself openly, completely, not caring about the consequences. She allowed the men to buy her drinks, dinners, later to take her in taxis to their apartments, in neighborhoods she had not yet discovered on her own---There were days she slept with one man after lunch, another after dinner”.

This may be considered as the disintegration of a personality. Previously, her rebellion was mainly academic in nature. In Brown, she majored in Chemistry which was in pursuit of her parents’ insistence but she also double majored in French which was unknown to her parents. She approached French as a way of escape into a neutral third space. Paris
provides her the desired into a neutral third space. Paris provides her the desired distance— a refuge.

“Here Moushumi had reinvented herself without misgivings, without guilt”.6

She does not want to be mistaken for a tourist in Paris because she feels that she belongs there. Robin E.Field considers her as an example of a “global citizen”7

In case of Gogol, like his American friends, he drinks, smokes and has more than one romantic relationship and is able to dissociate himself from the memories of his girlfriends, albeit with great difficulty. What strikes the reader is the monotony of his life even when it is full of ups and downs. Later on a reader can realize that the monotony is not in Gogol’s life but it is very much there in his mind. It is the way Gogol perceives things that make him what he is and shaped the story of his life. As a typical hero, he goes about his life without sense of purpose, going where fate leads him. Gogol never thinks to do otherwise. He takes a few drastic steps in his life, but they are motivated more by his rebellious streak against his upbringing rather than a genuine desire to swim against the current. His unfortunate choice in marriage stems from an instinctive desire to cling to his Indian roots. ‘The Namesake’ is a narrative of how
Gogol Ganguli attains his identity and self realization through his negotiations with different spaces.

“As he realizes, his own family space is very constricted – it in effect stifles his voice and destroys his freedom.”

A couple of hundred pages, two failed relationships and a marriage later; Gogol finally comes to terms with his name and his roots. The reader is taken on a turbulent journey and then dropped off at the point where things start to look a little less bleak, a little more hopeful. Do all Indian immigrant children face the same predicaments? Do they all go through a similar reckless phase in their lives, sleeping with every random girl they meet just because it is forbidden? Do their American values clash with their Indian culture; so much that they almost end up being zombies like Gogol? Do they all feel the same indifference towards their parents? Are their relationships ill fated just because they have two conflicting cultures deeply embedded in them? Do they all struggle hard to hide their Indian side from their American peers? Does every Indian – American experience an intense desire to be at once loyal to the old world and yet fluent in the new? These are the most realistic questions raised by the novelist as these ever haunting inquiries form the bulk of the New Age Realism in the Modern and Post Modern globalized world. But the feeling of Lahiri is not much unlike that of Gogol as she tends to support
the concept that bicultural upbringing is a rich, albeit imperfect thing. Yet by her own admission a part of her yearns to be completely American. Call it a contradiction of sorts. Just like every other contradiction in Gogol’s life. Otherwise Lahiri shows her dexterity in narrating most of her stories in a gripping style. At places her dialogues become very witty and trenchant. Very often the writer resorts to third person narration; all the stories in first part are written so. But in the second part, the writer takes to the first person; all for the effort to make her stories more real and life like. At the close of this story as well as of the collection, the writer once again experiments with the first person narration. Here she writes thus

“All day I was oblivious. I was out with my mother and two aunts, being fitted for blouses, selecting jewels.”

It is safely said that Jhumpa Lahiri has a penchant for story-telling. Her art of narration and subtle use of dialogues put her among the front-runners of Indian English short story writers. She is outstanding in narrating her stories in powerful language, in creating memorable characters and situations, and experimenting with flashback technique. She displays her remarkable skill in using different modes of narration, especially third- person and first person. She is a consummate short story writer of expatriate or diasporic sensibility, which incorporates multiple worlds and, in postcolonial term, multiple ‘spaces’. Lahiri’s realistic tales
are the by-products of multi nationalism or cultural diversity and this adds to much of tension and conflict found in them. In one of her very insightful articles Meena Alexander the noted Indian English poetess, aptly remarks that Lahiri’s realistic sensibility expresses itself in

“A shifting frame of reference of multiple worlds.”\(^{10}\)

It is largely concerned with, as Edward Said puts it,

“Yes only --- A basic geographical distinction but also a whole sense of interests.”\(^{11}\)

Jhumpa Lahiri’s short stories encompasses ‘ multiple world’ or ‘multiple spaces’ in its texture- India, England, America and Italy – and demonstrates a whole sense of interests in its realistic vision and this results in wonderful tales of New Age Realism born of geographical and cultural multiplicity.

However, fictional and imaginary the works undertaken for the present study- as a piece of art is bound to be – it is in these works by Jhumpa Lahiri and Chetan Bhagat; the true psychology of the present generation has been depicted in the light of New Age Realism. For Chetan Bhagat; the conflict of young generation living in India has to establish itself on sentimental and financial front and for the author the journey from Mr. Nobody to Mr. Somebody forms the bulk of the most realistic takes of the
young generation. On the other hand; Jhumpa Lahiri deals with diasporic reality. She talks about financially established people but emotionally; their condition is most unestablished. The true trauma of the immigrants can very properly be realized and understood in Jhumpa Lahiri’s pages. The selection of these writers and their works were highly purposeful and specific as we have already seen in the relevant chapters. How well, the most realistic ever felt and ever haunting kind of human aspects have been recreated in the works undertaken are sought out to be illustrated and analyzed in the foregoing chapters. It is this very important aspect of human longing and suffering that has been the central core of the study of the present Thesis.

It is emphatically hoped that the present dissertation will bring out and assert the fact that the financial, identity crisis; and financial recognition along with quest for new identity are the most important aspects of the fictional works written while keeping the New Age Realism on the backdrop. It is further hoped that this study will set a trend for many more such studies that are overdue as yet. Thus, the present research is a significant addition towards the understanding of Jhumpa Lahiri and Chetan Bhagat’s works to the teachers, researchers, readers and as well as the students; in depth.
Reference


2. Beginning Realsim-66


4. The Namesake-215

5. The Namesake-215

6. The Namesake-233


8. Lahiri Jhumpa, Interpreter of Maladies, P-59

9. Lahiri Jhumpa, Unaccustomed Earth, Pg. 331