CHAPTER -IV

Chetan Bagat’s

Half Girlfriend

and

2 States: The Story of My Marriage
4.0. Humour as the Heart of Literature in Chetan Bhagat’s *Half Girlfriend*

4.1. Introduction

Humour is the sensitivity of literature which creates light moments in our life. In fact it provokes laughter and gives amusement. As the main component, humour targets to bring pleasure, breaks the tediousness, monotony and makes the audience’s worry unruffled. George Meredith, one of the greatest critics and essayists remarks on the role of humour in literature in his *Essay on Comedy and the Uses of Comic Spirit* (1877). According to Meredith the excellent idea of a civilization is “the flourishing of comic idea and comedy” and it is of the true comedy that “it shall awaken thoughtful laughter” (Meredith 140). People of all around the globe respond to the elements of literature. It is unfortunate that writings on humour and satire are short in supply. The present chapter explores the elements of humour and satire in Chetan Bhagat’s *Half Girlfriend*. Bhagat is a novelist who is deeply concerned about the comic and satiric elements in most his fictions.

Chetan Bhagat has created an unsurpassable place in the history of Indian English novel by his use of humour and satire. Bhagat’s skill of attracting a number of readers is only possible through use of humour and satire and he tries to ease the minds of the readers as well as attacks the shortfalls of the society. Bhagat’s voluminous writings make him eternal in the fictional history of India. Bhagat is celebrated and much-admired in India.

Bhagat’s *Half Girlfriend* is a very funny and heart touching fiction at present.

Bhagat is considered as the biggest selling English language novelist in India’s history. Bhagat writes on the ordinary issues and incorporates a practical move towards his fictions with humorous note taking him to absolute success. According to Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) “Fiction must contain comedy if it attains a realistic portrayal of human life” (Hague 9).

The story of the novel begins with the introduction of Madhav Jha to Bhagat in a room in Chanakya Hotel at Patna. Madhav asks the help from the novelist to help him in printing his girlfriend’s memory in a book. In a distressed frame of mind the disturbed male protagonist describes the story. As a protagonist, he is simple and has passion of love in him. Madhav expresses the kind of love towards his girlfriend which is indeed heart touching. He was much anxious about his girlfriend and wants to describe about her.

Madhav manages to score a seat in St. Stephens College, New Delhi, a prestigious English Medium college. Although he is very poor in English he luckily gets admission in that college. Madhav’s sports quota never stops his indomitable hope for reaching in this type of reputed college where fluent English speaking students get admission. Gradually Madhav falls in love with a high class English speaking rich Delhi girl, Riya Somani. Contrary to Madhav Riya is super fluent in English. Chetan makes humour to bring out the bare actuality of life which catches the interest of youth in the society. Bhagat is skillful to get the reader’s nerves relaxed. Identity crisis is another characterric element in Bhagat’s novels. Bhagat hesitates to spend time for Madhav but is compelled to ask him next morning.

The very outset of the novel provides a great pleasure to the readers when they come across the title. The funny title is ludicrous and entertaining. In Indian
society the relationship between boys and girls are not clear where. The male boy takes a girl as his girlfriend most of times wheather granted or not. A misconception takes place in him regarding the girl of his heart. The boy is less concerned here to take the consent of the girl and before it he gives a place in his heart. Most of times the boy thinks her more than a friend but at the same time the girl is not his girlfriend. Hence, a comic title, *Half Girlfriend* creates a number of light moments for the readers.

The novelist tries to create laughter from very beginning of the novel. Bhagat is not ready to spend time for this Bihari boy at first. On the otherhand Madhav is an eager boy who tries hard to convince Bhagat to go through the multi folded journals in which “many pages had holes, rats having snacked on them” (Bhagat 02).

The inability in Madhav to speak good English takes him into various offensive situations leading to light moments for the readers. Madhav lacks fluency and is facing problems to get admission in St. Stephen’s College, New Delhi. On the Interview day to get admission he enquires about the location of Interview Room to the boys sitting in the corridor. Madhav asks them in strange English that gives the chance to the boys to mock at. Madhav states and admits that his English is not English, rather it is 90% of Bihari Hindi with 10% bad English. Amusingly the protagonist turns to be an alien because of bad English he tries to deliver to know the Interview room. The boys present there mock at him without a sense of empathy. Bhagat satirizes at the behavior of the guys for the innocent boy when the guys ask “…are you interviewing for? peon?’ the long haired boy said and laughed”(08).

The readers take a laughter ride when Madhav considers the board members as English speaking monsters and also considers that they have not smiled “since their hair had turned grey”(09). Madhav practices hard to say good morning to the interviewers. But a ludicrous situation provides a light moment for the readers when
the interviewers ask Madhav to greet them individually as their number is three. Madhav says, “Good morning, sir, sir and sir” (09).

Madhav faces a number of problems in interacting with the interviewers as he is a poor speaker in English. On other hand Madhav suffers a lot even from the interviewers when they mock at him over his bad English. Bhagat satirizes the attitude of these people mocking at an innocent people. In fact English is not everything. They must have the sense of compassion and empathy towards this boy who was eager to get admission. Hence Madhav considers them as English speaking monsters and takes that without the language, “English-speaking monsters would eat me alive” (10).

The protagonist is rather grateful to the persons who show the sense of pity to him. The sports teacher, Piyush Yadav interacts him in Hindi. Here Madhav’s sense of gratitude reaches high when he remarks, I could kiss his feet.”(Bhagat 10)

The readers run through another episode of laughter when Madhav answers the interview board in regard to the selection of subjects. Madhav is bit confused over the questions asked by them. The interviewers utilise their power here and are kindless towards him which is a point of criticism.

Another sense of good humour is created in the novel when the novelist attacks the audience’s attraction towards the girls. Madhav is ready to give triels in the basketball courts inorder to get admission through the sports quota and consumes time in the process. Madhav smells a good gathering near girl’s trial court. Bhagat satirizes the attitudes of general audience for the girls and remarks, “… sports trials always garnered an audience” (14).
Madhav, being an eager boy is deeply motivated and fascinated by the beauty of Ananya and tries to come in contact with her in the trial court. He feels something deep inside his heart and seeks a moment to talk to her. Madhav is more anxious “to talk this girl at least once in your life” (15). With deep interest he observes Riya’s game and is attracted towards her and gets contentment over Riya’s performance in the game. Amusingly Riya’s surprising look compels Madhav to think about his dress code. In the words of the novelist “She surveyed me from top to bottom. I now wished I had worn better clothes. (16).

The novelist takes the readers to another comic aspect of the novel when Madhav doesn’t understand English speaking girl Riya. Madhav passes some suggestion with an objective to improve their game but gets the whistle blows and Riya leaves the court saying to catch her later. The innocent boy gets confused over the word ‘catching later’ and thinks whether she is going to catch actually. Madhav’s lack of communication skill in English creates a number of funny situations in the novel.

Bhagat takes again to a comic satire when he criticizes the attitude of the parents of Riya regarding the real happiness of such girl. When Riya was searching her name in the notice board she comes in contact with Madhav. It was in fact difficult for Madhav to forget Riya even a single moment as he was attracted towards her beauty. Both Madhav and Riya develop certain amount of intimacy and converse each other. Riya expresses her discontent over the attitude of her parents of hankering after money. She expressed her position of less caring attitude of her parents. Now parents are more interested for money and cares less their children. Bhagat observes through the character of Riya and remarks,”… the problem is my family. They are obsessed with money” (32).

Apart from the above observations, the novelist provides another situation in the novel when Madhav comes with an unintentional hit of Riya’s forehead with his chin leading to a kiss. Instead of suffering Madhav enjoys a lot and his pain paled
infront of joy. The novelist remarks, “Still the pain paled in comparison to the joy I felt from landing my first kiss (37). Madhav’s happiness reaches to a climax position over the feeling of Riya’s kiss which was completely unintentional. Madhav considers this happiness comes to second position which replaces the happiness of selection to Bihar State team. The innocent chap considers “after kissing Riya, the selection day became the second happiest” (44). The presence of girls in boy’s hostel usually creates uncomfortable situation. Ashu, Raman and Shailesh, friends of Madhav, feel perturbed as Riya makes her presence in the hostel. Raman was in doubt over the presence of any girl in the hostel and says “he “can steel smell the perfume,’ Raman said and sniffed like a cartoon character, everyone laughed” (45).

Bhagat has tried his best to create a number of light moments for the readers. For instance Madhav answers his friend’s question over his love with Riya. Rather Madhav ridicules them for asking stupid questions as he remarks “Did I love her? Did the earth go round the sun? Did night follow day?’ (46) Madhav finds difficulties to adjust with high class people when Riya invites him to her house. The protagonist feels uncomfortable to face the high class people security layer. In a comic and a satiric way Bhagat attacks the gap between high and low class people in India.

In course of events Rohan comes to the scene coming from a rich background with fancy accent and fluent in English from London. Rohan takes the position of Madhav. And Madhav feels jealous of him. In an amusing way Madhav doubts lest his boyfriend’s seat be snatched by the well established boy from London. Madhav gets hardest time to handle in his life. He becomes aggressive and thinks to “drink his blood” (57).

Madhav is impatient to make Riya his girlfriend. On the other hand Riya rejects his proposal. At last she admits and confesses to be his half girlfriend. Madhav gets bolt from the blue at first to listen the term ‘hal girlfriend’ and necessitated his
expert panel over this critical juncture. He feels sorrow over his failed attempt to kiss Riya and calls his expert panel’s urgent meeting to take their advice. Interestingly his expert panel advises him that half is not bad. They advise that “Half is not bad. Depends on how you look at it; Ashu said’. Half- empty or half -full” (69).

Shailesh, another member to the expert panel makes him alert that making a girlfriend from high class society is risky and leads to cheating. The novelist tries to relax the burdened minds of the readers when Raman also supports Sailesh’s remarks. Bhagat’s language is quite interesting as he remarks “Hell, it’s more than a warning signs,’ Sailesh said. It’s a fire brigade siren on maximum volume using thousand-watt amplifiers. Don’t you get it, Mr. Dumraon? She is playing with you” (69).

No unanimous decision was taken by the expert panel. Rather they come to advise Madhav to bring Riya to their hostel room to change Riya’s ‘half girlfriend’ status to ‘full’. All the members encourage Madhav to to make “Bihar proud…” (70). In fact Riya doesn’t agree to be girlfriend rather she exposes her marriage proposal is fixed with Rohan. Madhav is in desperate mood after the invitation card from Riya.

Madhav’s heart broke down over the incident and it was hard to digest and considers it as “Game Over sign flashing in a video game” (88-89). Madhav considers the biscuit pocket inside the invitation card was a consolation prize for him. In a comic way the novelist satirizes the condition of educational system in India where fates are shaped in the interest of the nation. Madhav’s mother confronts various issues in her school related to financial problems as she remarks ‘every one eats my head’ (95). Madhav tries hard to help his mother in running the school. The school gets a chance of welcoming Bill Gates, the richest person in the world. They consider it as a bright chance to whitewash the pale looking walls of the school. In the words of the novelist ‘Because of this white guy, my school will get a white wash’ (119). Madhav was afraid of giving welcome speech in English but at last accepts the offer from the US Delgation. Madhav goes for regular practice to give an impressive speech as “I Madhav welcoming yo u all to the Bihar. My school doing excellent coaching of
childrens, farmers children, poor children, small children…” I couldn’t think of what to say next so as I referred to various kinds of children. I continued, ‘‘boy children, girl children, and many, many children” (125).

Madhav discovers Riya Somani fortunately in a restaurant at Patna. As he discovers her accidentally there but he was afraid of following lest she might run away. Riya comes in touch with Madhav and gives her consent to help in delivering speech in English. Everything goes on but suddenly, to utter surprise, Riya disappears from that occasion leaving a letter to Madhav that she is caught with lung cancer and death is inevitable.

Bhagat tries his best to ease the minds of the readers through various situations in the novel. Both comic and satiric elements get prominence in the novel and the intention of the author is to relax the burdened minds. Now Madhav is in New York and gets information about an Indian singer’s performance at the night bar. To the heart breaking surprise of the readers Madhav discovers Riya Somani there. Two hearts are united happily. The novel comes to an end with a rosy picture of their conjugal life at Dumraon.

Humour is the important aspect of everyday life. The point is that this tool can be used to face the hardest times in our life and at the same time we can appreciate some of the most outstanding times. With a pinch of humour we can change our life to a different direction however we are over shadowed by the shadows of sadness. In fact it is true that without humour hard times seem harder to handle. Jane Austen in her Pride and Prejudice, Mark Taiwan in his The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Harper Lee in her novel To kill a Mockingbird and Charles Dicken in his Great expectations have wide impact and lasting impressions on the readers. Throughout the novel Chetan Bhagat has been successful in using tremendous skill of humour and satire. Indianness in his themes makes his novels more interesting who invented the genre of contemporary Indian writing. Before this average Indian readers were fed a diet of Sydney Sheldon, Jeffrey Archer, and John Grisham etc. all of whom wrote about
American system. Indian authors Sobha De, R.K.Narayan, Amitav Ghosh and others choice of setting were in a long bygone era or just too outside the scope of common man’s dreams. But Chetan Bhagat’s novels are directed to the common man’s dreams. He beautifully presents a common tale of common man of India. In fact he takes up issues which reverberate with the masses. The novel is entertaining. Bhagat ensures reader’s engagement for the most part of the book and there is simple humour peppered throughout the story with ample entertainment and that holds mass appeals. After all it’s a charming love story that provides a lot of humour and satire to the readers. By means of good humour we can have opportunity to step back and see what is most important in life. To cut the long story short it is true that Chetan Bhagat has shaped the many Indian’s reading habits creating light moments for readers. Because of the funny elements his novels are not for the elite and limited readership but for the masses.

4.2. Sharp Reflection of Maladies that Afflict Indian Society at Various Levels: An Analysis of Chetan Bhagat’s 2 States: The Story of My Marriage

The world of fiction in contemporary Indian English literature is incomplete without the contribution of Chetan Bhagat. Being an immortal name in this field; he has acclaimed a wide reputation among the youth and has enriched the Indian literature with appropriate use of humour and satire through his fictions. It is rightly observed that he is on the rise among the younger generation and has reserved space in the core of their hearts. As he is considered the biggest selling Indian novelist in India’s history, some extent of criticism is obviously expected. In his novels every aspect related to life and society i.e. Problems, hopes and aspirations of the youth, love, sex and marriage have been reflected through appropriate use of humour and satire. In ‘2 States: The Story of my Marriage’, a fictional version of love story, Bhagat has tried his best level to raise his voice against so called traditional and orthodox views on marriage. It’s an awesome journey from a rusgulla friendship to a buffet dinner. In true sense Bhagat has revolutionized the ideas against the malady lingering and deep seated in the Indian
society and that afflict the society at various levels of life and living in terms of comic mode of burlesque and satire.

Bhagat’s 2 States-The Story of My marriage is an autobiographical love story of the writer in which two love birds from two states of India, namely Ananya Swaminathan (his wife Anusha) a Tamil girl and Krish Malhotra (Chetan Bhagat) a Punjabi boy. The fiction is a lovely, heart-touching and attractive literary masterpiece in contemporary Indian literature. The story starts from IIT Ahmedabad where the two love birds come in contact with each other. Being the prettiest and attractive girl in the campus Ananya remains in the hearts of most of the IITians. Eventually both Krish and vivacious Ananya come in close contact and spend many evenings together for study and fell in deep love although they are from two opposite cultural communities. The life of these two protagonists appears great for them until their family meet each other. In spite of their romantic attachment and seer longing to lead a conjugal life things do not happen to their expectation. In fact the readers are entertained by the incredible humour ingrained in this part of the novel. Both of them had to convince their orthodox family. Krish, a determined boy to get his love finally got it. The story is in perfect humorous tone that intends at easing pain and creates laughter among the readers with an appropriate use of satire.

The major portion of the fiction is depicted about The Punjabi and Tamil culture and the pride and prejudices for each other. Parson in his claims that “culture… consists in those patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that passed on from one generation to generation independently of the biological genes”(8). Again according to Hofstede “culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members from one category of people from the other”(51). The story is based on the cultural clashes that tries to stick to own identity.
The author needs appreciation for the dominating humour throughout the fiction. The novel is a romantic journey of a culturally opposite cultures. Both of them meet each other over the quarrel of Ananya with the adamant mess worker on the issues of disgusting breakfast. Eventually the matter is interfered by Krish when he realizes to lessen the intensity of quarrel by offering his own rasgulla to the prettiest girl and feels that sacrificing own rasgulla may go to be useless and brings no fruit to him. Young Krish languishes and repents over losing his own for nothing. A good sense of humour provides laughter ride to the readers. “Give mine to her ‘(...)’she’ll never date you, it is a rasgulla down the drain. I scolded myself” (05).

Dreams and passion dominate and hunt the characters. Krish dreams of Ananya and her never ending beauty and repents over losing and wasting time in conversing with her with no advance in love. A just friend deal doesn’t satisfy the indomitable instincts. Krish’s thoughts over the usability and profit of conversation create a sense of humour. The protagonist considers himself as a victim and regrets that “Why would any guy want to be only friends with a girl? It’s like a agreeing to be near a chocolate cake and never eat it. It’s like a sitting in a racing car but not driving it?” (09). Ankur and Aditya, two other characters who had already proposed Ananya never consider the embarrassment over their rejection. They don’t take it seriously adding to another comic description. After being rejected they sit the whole session with the rejecter; careless to their dismissal.

More over through perfect use of satire Bhagat attacks the educational system of the nation when Prof. Chatterjee, a two –decade veteran gives a sinister smile over the answer of an inquisitive girl in the class that doesn’t suit to the ethics of his profession. It’s the clear indication of the deteriorating and faulty educational system of our country. “Notice, class, notice. This is the state of economics education in the country. Top graduates don’t know the basics. And then they ask –why is India backward?”(10-11) With an intention of advancing intimacy or contact with Ananya Krish gives a proposal of studying together but at the same time tries to hide his inner instinct and pretends to be that he never wants to be included in the list of her proposers.
and says, “Hey, I have no interest in being number eleven. This is purely for study reason”(12).

The novel again catches the attention of the readers when Bhagat satirizes the womanly tendency of deep attraction towards jewelry that happened to the members of Ananya. “All old women wore as much gold as their body could carry”(Bhagat14). A comic comparison is made again when Krish compares Ananya’s parents in a strange way that they look scary and wonders that how can these scary looking parents create so cute? Of course Chetan Bhagat with a blend of humour and wit has motivated many young minds. Bhagat’s words and the skill of using them at right time create a lot of light moments for the readers when he remarks in the fiction, “How can such scary looking parents create something so cute?”(14)

When the two love birds want to fly high plenty of remarks pour in on the developing intimacy between Ananya and Krish as a vivid example of Bhagat’s skill of satirizing the Indian youth of giving their valuable time and giving unnecessary remarks on others. Writers, like Bhagat, has tried to touch the real life condition of the youth in hostel where Krish is bit reluctant to maintain aesthetic appeal that represents the carelessness of educated youth. “Unlike her room, there was no aesthetic appeal to mine. I had left the red bricks bare, and they looked like prison walls. My originally white bed sheet had turned grey after being washed in acid in the IIT hostels. My desk had only books, unlike Ananya who always had cut flowers from campus lawns or arty incense holders or other objects that men never put on their shopping lists”(23).

The eager readers again glimpse a taste of humour through the apprecia of moles that are below the lower lip of Ananya. The moles are just fifty percent market share in the mind space of Krish who had appeals to the sensuous beauty of Ananya. Bhagat remarks that the mole may be tiny but “…but it at least has a fifty percent market share in terms of mind space”(24).
At present the Indian youths are on the cross roads of building their career and reaching at their destination. In this context Krish is in search of getting a job that suits to his interests. Bhagat was eager to join in CITI BANK, the most important bank in India who is at the critical juncture and turmoil of life. At the interview Krish answers the interviewers in a comic way. “Finally they asked a big question.” Why Citi bank? “I want Citi Bank because none of the other five banks worked out, I sucked in my breath along with my stupid thoughts. BS time buddy, I thought, the ten seconds that will determine your career start now” (35). In fact, Bhagat has left no stone unturned to express humour and satire throughout the novel related to the issues of the youth. Bhagat’s hero is really bored on ‘just-friend’ deal with Ananya. Krish thinks that “Why should any guy want to be only friends with a girl? It’s like agreeing to be near a chocolate cake and never it. It’s like sitting in a racing car and not driving it?” (09)

The heart breaking story moves on. Both of Krish and Ananya get their job suited to them respectably. To get their dreams materialized they have tried their best and convinced their parents to introduce each other’s parents and set Goa as the destination but reaches at a sour note of relationship between Krish’s mom and Ananya’s parents. Here Bhagat, with a mixture of wit and humour satires at the orthodox and so called traditional views of both parents towards their children. They are in fact more interested on their own happiness rather than the happiness in their children. In the words of Bhagat “From biscuits to brides, if there is anything that their children really want, parents have a problem, I said” (39).

The novelist tries to attack the conservative traditions of the society through his characters. The readers are better connected with the characters and feel like theirs own life situation is being described. The writer uses perfect satire delivering a message to all. In a pleasant surprise Krish finds a job in Chennai, the home town of Ananya and aims to ease and smooth the relationship with Ananya’s parents. Chetan’s humour dances in full force in the hearts of the readers as he talks about various aspects of Tamilian living; gets puzzling. Krish finds it curious that how every Tamilian wants to
be up at the break of the very early morning and compares of sparse, functional homes of Tamils to ostentatious homes of the Punjabis.

At his workplace Bhagat finds certain element of sycophancy in his boss named Bala; which is even found in the Tamil community. The novelist satirizes at the financial management of corporate bank. In true sense the author’s desire for humour make his books hugely readable.

The novel again comes to the final section when Krish goes through a low morale over motivating his parents for their marriage. After a number of attempts by both Krish and Ananya they have come to be successful with a lot of hurdles and struggling. Krish’s boisterous family come to join the marriage at Chennai and are stunned that that they have to be ready at the dawn contrary to their idea which makes them that the rituals are generally funny. Bhagat writes that “It’s a marriage or torture”(247). Bhagat did a fantastic job of introducing the readers to the both characters are from two different states and two opposing cultures get mingled to indicate the oneness of India. Apart from this the novel is typical in the reality of Indian society that it is how important to get the families approval before marriage. The back cover page gives a glance the readers:

“Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy. They get married.

In India, there are a few more steps:

Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy.

Girl’s family has to love boy’s family. Boys’ family has to love girl’s family.

Girl and boy still love each other. They get married.”

Generally parents look at their own interest. With a good sense of humour and comic vision, Bhagat has brought the audience to see the Punjabis and Tamils get connected. In the words of Bhagat it is an attainment of the greater purpose of uniting
Indians from different parts of our nation and says, “Only for the sake of uniting the nation” (267). “The novel is excellent because it conveys how youngistan fights oldistan to get the approval for marriage”. The story keeps the readers related with characters. The language is subtle, readable, interesting and all hillarious. Bhagat’s technique of binding the young readers is quite lovable. More over the patriotic approach brings the oneness among the Indians.

4.3. Contemporary Indian Youth Caught between Cultures:

Bhagat’s *Two States :The Story of My Marriage* is a sequel to his debut novel *Five Point Someone* in which the protagonist Krish an IIT graduate and Ananaya a graduate in economics are caught between two different cultures. The novel depicts some dark area of the society of cultural differences. The fiction presents more independent and matured youths in the name of Krish and Ananya. Both of them coming from different background and cultures create trouble for their union. Bhagat satirizes the traditional views and opinions of their parents in connection of their children’s happiness. The novel beautifully presents the true picture of Indian cultures, ideologies, complexities and orthodox feelings prevalent in our society. The theme of the novel establishes synthesis between inner life and outer social reality. It tries to reflect that culture of a particular society is always determinant of one’s identification. The novel is a representation of contemporary youth’s changing needs in a first changing society. The present youth no more prefer to the dominance of patriarchal and matriarchal system of the society which has been observed in previous literature. Their dependence on parental guidance or whoever is the boss in the family starts to lose ground in the changing time. The fact can’t be minimized that factors like western culture and rapid advancement of science and technology necessitated the beginning of new system.

In fact the new trend as the impact of modern education changed the outlook of Indian youth. Today’s youth started to redefine their needs on the basis of their compatibility and individual needs. Bhagat deals such issues in his novels where he
wants to invite a new approach to youth of contemporary India. His 2 States is a beautiful depiction of contemporary youth caught between cultures against their individual necessities and choices.

The present fiction is a manifestation of contemporary youth’s changing needs in a changing society. The old concept of ‘youth’ is changed. Previously it was considered as a docile and inhibited which is replaced by self dependence and freedom in this 21st century. His aspirations are distinctively marked by his instincts; Guidance is subject to decline. It is amazingly visible that influence of western culture and tradition has its noticeable impact among the Indian youths. But the clash between the old culture and the new is rampant in current novel. The age old traditional system confronts with the new being influenced by globalization and individualism. There is a wide gap between the generations that affects the growth or progress.

The novel narrates the two different cultures and their differences making a huge and mountainous problem in front of Krish and Ananaya. In fact their relationship gets obstruction and they lost academic progress. Probability of better vocation to their expectation is no more present. Ananya Swaminathan is a typical Brahmin, modern in her approach to life, attitudes and dressing. She maintains a balance but faces a lot of problems because of cultural differences. Coming from IIMA they fell in love and prefer to maintain their self chosen life style. They didn’t want to disclose their relationship at the initial stage in the campus lest the cultural gap create hindrance. Their consistency in relationship and intimacy bring them togetherness even at Anany’s dormitory. Gradual development in their relationship came to the notice of their parents. Just now the problem starts. Inter-caste marriage is still a taboo in India. Love knows no boundary. It blossoms through the suitability of the love birds. But the Indian perspectives in this regard seem insurmountable. Parents must understand the feelings of their children and should give justice. Bhagat’s minute observation of the campus life is linked to the different cultural setting. The eager boy wants his love but faces a lot of
problems due to cultural differences. India is a country of diversity leading to various issues. In fact we have to resolve them at our best which doesn’t happen initially.

Racial discrimination is prevalent in this fiction when the anxious parents look for perfect matches for their children. In fact we are outwardly modern but inwardly we still live in past. The novel is set on the background of ‘North-South-Division’ highlighting the cultural diversities. The author exposes the backwardness among Indians to accept the inevitable changes and criticizes the non-acceptance of inter-caste marriage which is still considered as a social stigma.

The differences between the generations concerning the different ideologies never want to bring a compromise in the process of smooth relationship. The conversation between Krish, his mother and Shipra Massi reflect a wide gap between two cultures related to ethnicity or race. Shipra Massi says, “Son … that is all fine. But how can we marry Madrassi? Tomorrow your cousin will want to marry a Gujarati” (Bhagat 69). The middle part of the novel narrates about the couple’s important episodes of struggling to conquer the hearts of the two families.

The most important aspect of Bhagat’s novel is to strike out that how the characters negotiate two clamoring cultures. Ananya’s parents are more conservative and orthodox to approve the relationship. Among the Tamil Brahmins the autonomy of children is less. On the other hand Krish’s growth in a Punjabi family is largely influenced by all the relatives around her. The novelist criticizes the feelings of the parents towards their children’s happiness. At last they got united but not without serious and hectic confrontations from both family.

In fact, Bhagat narrates the story about some critical issues in a light way so that it attracts others. Definitely the novel gives a cultural shock wit reference of various sensitive issues of the orthodox society. Bhagat bears an opinion that love knows no
boundaries. No caste, creed, religion, states or country take position before true love. This wonderful aspect of life triumphs over the rest. Nowadays diversity is typical in most of workplaces. Globalised world with advancement of technology the world has been shortened and the novelist necessitates meeting the challenge of cultural barriers.

Conclusion

After all it’s a novel of lot of laugh and light moments for the readers which are loosely based on the life of Bhagat’s own life. On the other hand it’s the story of many young Indians who are in the critical cross roads in their love matter, facing troubles from their parents or the society. Major characters are college goers. The novel has humour as an undercurrent and its black humour. In fact Bhagat is being criticized that he writes the issues that appeal to the masses and writes very light subjects. It’s hard to minimize the scale of his reputation in Indian literature. Rather he doesn’t make it esoteric which might perhaps alienate the readers from him. The novel got emotions, sex, friendship, music, betrayal and exploitation in a comic and satiric way. The book is humorous taking a dig at both the Punjabi and Tamil community. Common people can connect to the Indian sentiments that are beautifully portrayed throughout the novel. Bhagat tries to maintain humour consistently. All most all of his novels go round the life of youth and issues related. In fact, he depicts their real life pictures and entertains all classes and cadres of people.

The book is written in simple style and laymen’s language that creates much laughter among the readers. The novel touches the theme of intensity of love through educated and intelligent youths, it touches the issues of intense relationship predicaments, it touches the problems related to dowry and again it touches the egos and eagernessness. The novel reflects the crisis of relationship and crisis of social identity. It talks about that how genuine love can minimize the gap between differences and detachment. He manages to retain his sense of humour relating to the harsh realities of life. He can feel the pulse of the nation and narrates it almost in a comic way attracting
a huge reading mass. He is apt in depicting the social and other topical issues in a perfect comic and satiric way of description. The magnitude of such great thoughts is really magnified.

REFERENCE


Web Sources