

Social Consciousness: Social Imbalance in Chetan Bhagat's Novel *One Night @ the Call Center*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to bring out the “Social Consciousness: Social Imbalance in Chetan Bhagat’s novel *One Night @ the Call Center*”. Bhagat rocked the Indian sensibility with his thought provoking ideas of human condition twisted in the web of love, corruption, and ambition. He directly hits at issues like corporate life style, modern education system, misunderstanding, corruption, exploitation, patriarchal setup, and globalization in his novels. In *One Night @ the Call Center*, Bhagat tried to explore call center world and its’ culture. It is a romantic comedy set in an office where bored young Indians try to resolve the mindless inquiries of Midwestern American Technophobes at the call center. The story revolves around six friends Shyam, Priyanka, Varun, Rathika, Esha, Military uncle who are selling home appliances to the United States from a call center in India.

Keywords: Imbalance, Indian sensibility, Misunderstanding; Corruption..

I. INTRODUCTION

Chetan Bhagat is one of the of famous Indian novelists of modern English literature was born on 22 April 1974. He began his journey as a writer in 2004 with his first novel *Five Point Someone*. Bhagat is considered as a post-modern writer and he presented the youth of today in their world of luxury. His themes are wide and different. He tries to depict the ordinary normal human experiences like loneliness, strangeness, despair, and anxiety. The protagonist of his novels is suffering at the hands of modern disorganized life of disillusionment, alienation, loneliness, separation, and disorder. They all are broken off from the spiritual and normal life.

Bhagat’s themes of socio-political as well as literary factors dominate in his works. He makes a serious attempt to expose the state of India’s lucrative private education business which is the only hope for millions of people from all around the villages who are unable to pass the

entrance examination for Engineering Colleges. His novel *One Night @ the Call Center* describes the advantages and disadvantages of the society. Through this novel Bhagat portrays the life of the middle-class family in the major cities of the country. It is a story of emotion, love, sorrow, and pity.

Chetan Bhagat's *One Night@ the Call Center* moves around six people who are all working in the call center and is also describes that their problems and a call from God on one good night at their work place. Human expectations are unlimited and when it is not fulfilled they get frustrated and start to blame on God. Three male and three females working as a group in a call centre. Each character has their own problems at their background and they are fed up with their lives. Shyam is the narrator of the story, he is the main character of this novel. He is in love with Priyanka who has got engaged with Ganesh an NRI boy. Varun the friend of Shyam is not interested in the job because he and Shyam think that their boss Mr. Bakshi had cheated them. Varun stays in the job only for status. Priyanka gets engaged to Ganesh because of her mother's pressure, even though she has love for Shyam. Esha Singh runs out of her family to achieve her aim as a model. Radhika is married, even though she had a lot of love towards her husband she returns from her family life because of her mother-in-law. She finds her husband having an affair with another girl therefore she is fed up. And the final character is the military uncle the oldest person in the call centre is also upset because his grandson had stopped contacting him and he is upset in his loneliness.

In this way every character of the novel is upset in their life, they wanted something magic to happen in their life and all their problems as to be changed. Bhagat introduces God as a character who makes a call to everyone at one night. He gives idea to everyone to solve their problem through phone: "There are four things a person needs for success: a medium amount of intelligence, a bit of imagination, self-confidence and failure" (134). He motivates everyone to learn and face their problem by themselves with courage and he also say that this world is full of problem therefore everyone must learn to face it. God advised them to put their hundred-percentage effort to it, in order to achieve their aims. God said:

I think you need to understand how my system works. You see I have a contract with all human beings. you do your best, and every now and then, I will come behind to give you a bonus push. But it has to begin with you, For otherwise I can't distinguish who needs my help most. (135)

Bhagat and God -No novelist has presented God using mobile phone to guide his devotee's difficulty. God said:

For once you taste failure, you have no fear. You can take risks more easily. Then You don't want to snuggle in your comfort zone anymore-you are ready to fly. And Success is about flying, not snuggling, God said. God sighed before speaking again. I think you need to understand how my system works. You see I have a contract with all human beings. you do your best, and every now and then, I will come behind to give you a bonus push. But it has to begin with you, For otherwise I can't distinguish who needs my help most. (134)

After receiving the call from God everyone's life gets changed. They start facing their problems by themselves. As the result their problem are solved. All the characters portrayed by Bhagat face the common problem as well as personal problems. They bring out the present situation where the people face their day today problem such as work stress, love problems, night shifts, friendship, and in –laws restrictions. In spite of all problems the middle-class family tries to comfort themselves in a luxurious life, thereby they spent for pride and save less.

In *One night @ call center*, Bhagat brings out the problems of women that they face in the patriarchal society. They face a lot of problems in their work place, they work double shift one

at home and the other at the office in order to earn money, status, and enjoy a luxurious life. The people work all time and they are unable to face small problem with courage. They fail to understand other's feeling, they do not watch other's problems. They do not have real friends because, they are not true and share their reality. They just work like machine in office and their only aim was to be luxurious. This results in stress and they fail to face their own problem, they want someone to solve their problems.

Bhagat gives the solution for problem through God. His advice to the modern youngster is to believe in God and have faith on the supreme. Only believing on God can change their life from all type of stress and psychological problem. He motivates the youngster to follow the path of God; that is true to everyone. Bhagat also focus on the problems of the western influence on modern society like misunderstanding between youngster which leads to the increase in divorces, breakups in love, stress, frustration, and finally leads to increase of suicide.

Life at the Call Centre

The present call centre life is portrayed by Bhagat very clearly. The boss Mr. Baxi of the call centre does not wanted to call the character with their own names; he therefore changes the name from Indian to Western. For Radhika is called as Regima Jones, Varun as Vroom and Esha Singh as Eliza throughout the novel. This show how the western culture is influenced in India and how they treat human being as resources. The corporate exploitation is brought out by Bhagat in the treatment of human being at the call center job.

Bhagat's *One Night @ the Call Center* also deals problems like the use of alcohol and smoking as a style. In spite of educated, they know the side effects of such things although they use it as a style, to enjoy and have fun: "Six irresponsible agents found dead, alcohol in body' would be the headline" (128). When they are questioned, their reply is that they wanted relief from stress. These corporate sectors give holidays to enjoy and they influence the western culture on the Indians. The youngsters work in such corporate sectors think themselves to be western and follow their culture as a fashion. They speak only foreign language; they are addicted to drugs, alcohol, and smoking and even to a higher level of living a social life without getting married. Bhagat portrays all social imbalances in the society and how the Indian tradition and culture are affected.

II. WORK CITED

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