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Commercialization of Education – A Social Crime : Study Based on Chetan Bhagat’s Novel Revolution 2020, Love. Corruption. Ambition

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Abstract: The pioneer of Indian popular fiction, Chetan Bhagat’s ‘Revolution 2020’, can analyse under the parameter of social crime. Social crime refers to taboo acts and behaviours that are somewhat socially acceptable but illegal by law. It is a conscious challenge to the current social order and its values. The book unfolds the corruptions that existing in current educational scenario. It reflects the stark realities of the coaching industry which thrives on scams, corruption and all kinds of criminal activities. It also shows the writer’s revolutionary attitude towards the commercialization of education and the approach of government towards this system. Only the toppers can get admission in the topmost government colleges. Rests of the students have to seek admission in any of private colleges. He exposes how the education has become a huge business even though it is against the law. He tried to explore the psyche of Indian youth, crushing in between their own aspirations and parents’ ambition. Contemporary education system makes the students competitive rather than cooperative. This creates enmity among them, which affects the social order and values. This paper exposes how the corruption swallowed the whole education system in India.

Key Words: Commercialization of Education, Corruption, Social crime

Chetan Bhagat, a renowned Indian English writer is popular for his realistic novels. He is known as the pioneer of Indian Popular Fiction. He is a novelist, a columnist, a motivational speaker –all rolled into one. He writes about India and its culture. His characters are common middle class Indian, especially the Indian youth. Being an Indian, he is confident enough to write the social condition of India. He has opened a new world of realities, which were hidden today. His simple language and realistic approach made him a crowd-pleaser. Even though the language is simple, exactly produces the impact that is needed. His novels hit the market with great success.

Through his light hearted novels, he tries to point out the dark realities of Indian society. He portrayed the changing urban realities in India in the globalized world. The major themes he handled in his novels are: The problems in Indian education system, unemployment, dowry system, husband-wife relationship, corruption, racism, ragging, conflict between daughter and mother in law, teacher-student conflict and search for identity. Other post modern writers are also concerned about these issues, but the realistic approach, that makes Chetan Bhagat different from others. He lead off a campaign against annihilating the evils of the society through his sugar coated novels.

Even though he is eminent in criticizing the focused issues, he slammed the present Indian education system more. He opened up the corrupted educational system to his readers. He is anxious about the future of Indian youth, who were crushing in this corrupted system. From his debut novel itself he tried to attack the flaws of Indian education system. He remarked, “The Indian education system is a problem that can be fixed. It affects the country’s future, impacts almost every family, everyone knows about it and it is commercially viable to fix it” (Bhagat, What Young Indian Wants 119).

The predominant problem, which we are facing now a day regarding the system of education, is its commercialization. Commercialization of education carried out by global corporations is the practice of altering or disrupting the teaching and learning process in schools from kindergarten through college by advertising and other commercial activities in order to increase profit. Commercialization made the system corrupted. As it is corrupted, it is a social crime. Social crime refers to taboo acts and behaviours that are somewhat socially acceptable but illegal by law. It is a conscious challenge to the current social order and its values. Chetan Bhagat opines his view on commercialization of education in one of his articles in ‘The Times of India’, as: “I have nothing against commercialization of education. Commerce and business are good things. However when it comes to education, it needs a sense of ethics and quality (Bhagath).

Chetan Bhagat’s 5th novel “Revolution 2020” was set in the back drop of the holy city Varanasi. It stands for the writer’s revolutionary attitude towards corruption, ambition and love. The novel has addressed the issue of how private coaching institutions for courses like IIT,JEE exploit aspiring engineering students. Bhagat wants to reveal the developing corporate culture and unveil the impact of mushrooming of self financing colleges and entrance coaching centers. He also discloses the psyche of Indian youth crushed in between their own aspirations and their parents’ ambition.

“Revolution 2020” is the story of three friends, Gopal, Raghav and Arati.They represent the ambitious youth in India. Gopal comes from a poor family, Raghav from an upper class family and Arati belongs to a bureaucratic and political family. The story is narrated in the voice of Gopal. While speaking to India Real Time (IRT) Bhagat himself states about his novel, “But, frankly, when you read the books you see it is not so political. It’s still 80% love story and rest is about the issue I am talking about”(Bhagat). Even though it tells a triangular love story, Bhagat incorporates all elements that trigger the reader’s mind to read it. Bhagat

highlights the corruption in educational system due to its commercialization. People are rush for professional courses. But the flawless chances are a few. Unaware of the trap of the self financing colleges, they became the victims.

The topmost professional colleges like IIT and IIM can accommodate only 10% of students. They are the top scorers. Remaining students were normally depend self financing colleges. Only the toppers can crack the entrance exam and the average students are the victims of the commercialization. Gopal, the protagonist of the story is an average student. He couldn't crack the entrance exam, even though he is not a dull student. But Raghav cracked the exam. Gopal imagines himself, "in a sea along with lakhs of other low-rankers, kicking and screaming to breath. The water closed over us, making us irrelevant to the Indian education system" (Bhagat, Revolution 2020 24).

This system makes the student competitive, and it creates enmity among them. Gopal and Raghav were friends for the last 10 years, after the result of JEE entrance exam, there became a mental separation between them. Gopal says, "I had to meet Raghav, I had not even congratulate him. True, I did not feel any happiness about his JEE selections. I should have, but did not. After all we had been friends for ten years. One should be happy for pals. However, he would be an IIT student and I'd be a fucking nobody. Somehow, I could not feel I, thrilled about that" (Bhagat, Revolution 2020 39).

Gopal's father's ultimate aim was to make his son an engineer. So he joins the entrance coaching classes at 'Kota'. Kota has become a major contributor to the city's economy. Kota is considered as the capital of entrance coaching centers. Bhagat pictures the real business behind coaching classes in Kota in a realistic manner. The inclusion of the names like Bansal, Career Point, Resonance along with Kota may have helped the writer to make the readers closer to the novel .Many coaching centers have also appointed counselors to help students. The centers having high qualities, established tie up with CBSE schools Gopal writes, "it was rumoured that the CBSE schools received a handsome kick back from career path for the cooperation extended" (Bhagat, Revolution 2020 65).

Gopal is the victim of the system. He failed for the second time. His father dies without having fulfilled his last desire. After the death of his father, he decided to start an engineering college with the help of a corrupted politician, Remanlal Sukla. He is the most corrupted leader of Varanasi. He rendered the financial aid for the college, Ganga Tech. Finally Gopal became skilled at handling corrupt politicians whom he offers bribes for the completion of his work. Suklaji explains, "If we had a straight forward and clean system, these professors would open their own colleges. Blue-chip companies and software firm could open colleges. This system is twisted; they don't want to touch it. That is where we come in" (Bhagat, Revolution 2020 166).

Chetan Bhagat wants to say that, in India, no education is needed to become the owner of a college. Gopal is a good example. Without any qualification he became the owner of Ganga Tech. Self financing colleges are sprouted across all over the nation and people are making

money out of it. It is now a business. At the same time Raghav, got interested in journalism and became the reporter of the daily 'Dainik'. The article of Raghav has been published in 'Dainik' including the lines regarding Suklaji that new engineering college is opening in the city with corruption money. He wants to expose the malpractices in the field of education. For his intention he had to suffer a lot. . Raghav is dismissed from his job without any misdemeanor for criticizing the ruling class. This is a big corruption indeed. Suklaji takes revenge on him. Here Chetan has criticized policy of ruling party. Finally Gopal realized his mistakes and he was willing to change himself.

Chetan Bhagat, through this novel unveils the fact that, whatever is going on in the education system is seriously wrong. Ganga Tech Engineering College is the representation of many other self financing professional colleges in India. Chetan Bhagat speaks through the voice of Raghav, who entered a mission called 'Revolution 2020' to root out corruption, to help the poor and bring about a revolution to build the India of our dreams. Raghav says, "The world has changed. Our college, our city, our country need to change too...we will shake the world"(Bhagat, Rvolution 2020 96).

Through the novel "Revolution 2020", Bhagat revealed difficulties of average students and how they crushed in the clutches of this corrupted educational system. He started the novel by pointing out a serious problem. When it comes to an end, he solved that problem. It shows his optimism. Through his works he motivates the readers to bring innovative changes in the conventional and patriarchal society. According to Chetan Bhagat, government's no profit allowed policy for private institutes is one of the biggest reasons of corruption. He says in 'Times of India', "every educational institution has to be incorporated as a non-profit trust"(Bhagath).

Education is the back bone of a society. Presence of corruption in education is a curse for the people of any nation. As per the law, every individual have equal right to education. But the commercialization of education made it worse. Chetan Bhagat's "Revolution 2020" is apt for the present scenario, as it exposes the corruption in Indian education system. If the same system continues for a long, a huge number of Indian youth will become unemployed. So we need a change. In 'Revolution 2020' Chetan Bhagat wants to show that corruption happens not only in human society but in the human mind also .

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