

**‘New India’ as Reflected in Chetan Bhagat’s *Revolution 2020*: A Study**

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**Abstract**

‘Post-colonialism’ has given rise to developed economy in the Asian and African countries since the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The spread of education, development in the sectors like industry, business, commerce, management, information and communication, transportation etc. have positively created the necessary background to the development of ‘colonized’ countries. India has initiated its journey from ‘Old India’ to ‘New India’. Literature is the reflection of society; its revolution, culture, tradition, dreams etc. Chetan Bhagat is the mouthpiece of promising Indian youth with their dreams, aspirations, ambitions, struggle, challenges, longing to achieve their targets in life and their changing lifestyle. The ‘transformation’ of ‘Old India’ into ‘New India’ has already started. India has made progress in all sectors. At the same time, it gave birth to new challenges and problems. Overpopulation, corruption, unemployment, intense competition etc. are some of the challenges we are facing today. Chetan Bhagat’s novel *Revolution 2020* is based on two different perspectives. First way of thinking is to ‘use intelligence to make money’ and second is to ‘use intelligence to start a revolution’. The present research study focuses on the dispute between these two viewpoints in the ‘New India’.

**Keywords:** New India, Old India, Revolution, Corruption

**Introduction:**

India has been creating its distinctive identity since independence. Chetan Bhagat is the voice of modern India. Indian youth, their dreams, their living styles and approaches towards life have been reflected in the fiction of Chetan Bhagat. Ambitious modern youth is at the centre of the fictional work of Chetan Bhagat. His novels inspire to the Indian youth to undertake challenging tasks in life. His novels initiate thinking process among the readers. His novels are motivational and often impart some sort of message to the youth. Contemporary socio-economic, political, cultural and educational issues are the major themes of Chetan Bhagat’s novels. Bhagat has

created his unique identity in the Indian Writing in English through his successful novels like *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night@ the CallCenter* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *Half Girlfriend* (2014) and *One Indian Girl* (2016). His unique technique of narration has created his distinct identity in postmodern Indian English literature. The film adaptations of Bhagat’s novels have achieved high commercial success in film industry.

India has initiated its journey from ‘Old India’ to ‘New India’. The New Economic Policy of 1991 has opened the Indian market at global level. The terms globalization, privatization, liberalization,

nuclearization, marketism etc. are the offspring of the 'New Economic Policy'. Education field is also affected by these new changes at global level. Private schools, colleges, universities, foreign universities have opened in India at large scale. 'Education Industry' has become the factory of converting black money into white money. The necessary infrastructure is created by utilizing the black money; the investors are converting their black money into white money and develop highly polished 'Educational Campuses'. After entering into such campuses one gets the feel of 'Foreign University'. Founders, co-founders and trustees of the educational institutes are getting the sympathy from society as they are giving their contribution in transforming Indian society, increasing the rate of literacy and manufacturing graduates through 'Education Industry'. Another industry which is parallel, complementary and supplementary to the education is 'Private Coaching Industry/ Classes'. 'Coaching Industry' has glamorized certain trends in 'Education Market' in India at all levels from nursery to P.G. Parents and students are the victims of glamorized world deliberately created to make money. Parents, guardians and their wards are misguided and literally exploited to run the business of private educational institutes. Parents impose their unfulfilled dreams upon their children. Students take admissions in schools and colleges without their interest in a particular discipline. Parents do anything to avail good education to their children. Sometimes, they borrow loans from

others; mortgage or sale their property; do anything to support financially to their children. Children are made the racehorses. There is a little scope for sustainability, character-building and overall development of the personality. These are the major reasons of depression, frustration, failure and sometimes suicides by the students. Chetan Bhagat in his *Revolution 2020* made an attempt to put before the readers different dimensions of Indian Education System and the internal and external pressure that makes the life good-for-nothing.

#### **Objectives:**

The objectives of the present research can be stated as below:

1. To present the 'New India' with special reference to Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*.
2. To focus on different socio-economic, educational, cultural and political issues in India as reflected in *Revolution 2020*.
3. To present the conflict between 'use intelligence to make money' and 'use intelligence to start a revolution' with reference to Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*.
4. To make a comprehensive statement on transformation of Indian society.

#### **Material and Methods:**

The following materials and methods are used for the present study:

1. The survey of literature was conducted and focus was given on study of transformation of 'Old India' into 'New India' and new trends in Indian English Literature in postcolonial literature.

2. An attempt was made to explore the concept of 'New India'.
3. Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020* was studied thoroughly in order to present 'New India' with new opportunities and challenges.
4. The other novels of Chetan Bhagat are also studied in order to support the concept of 'New India' as reflected in Chetan Bhagat's novels.

#### Survey of Literature:

M. Rakesh Babu and E. Titus Livingston in their research article entitled 'Societal Evils in Contemporary India from Chetan Bhagat's Perspective in *Revolution 2020*', focused on 'corruption: a deep-rooted poison'. In this research article, emphasis is given on Indian education and politics. Dr. Arvind Kumar Sharma in his research article entitled 'Corruption in Education System in Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020, Love, Ambition, Corruption*', focused on ambitious parents, the passions of youth and the corruption in education system. T. S. Varatharajan in the research article entitled 'Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020: A Tale of Love, Corruption and Ambition*' presented two different viewpoints i.e. Gopal wants to be a man of power, money and respect; on the other hand Raghav wants to transform India in a better direction. Dr. Sunil Chaudhari in his research article focused on modern Indian youth, Indian society and realism as presented in Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*. The researcher has discussed the trend of coaching classes in India as reflected in *Revolution 2020*. M. Krishna Veni and Y. Vigila Jebaruby in their

research article- 'Societal Pressures on Youths: A Study on Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*' focused on different aspects of younger generation in India-economic conditions, education, relationships, and human values with reference to *Revolution 2020*.

#### Discussion and Analysis:

*Revolution 2020* is the story about childhood friends—Gopal, Raghav and Aarti who struggle to find success, love and happiness in Varanasi. The three stages of revolution as love, ambition and corruption are presented successfully by Chetan Bhagat. The three major characters in the novel- Gopal, Raghav and Aarti represent the 'New India'. The Cambridge University Press has rightly explained the 'New India' or 'New Indian' as below:

There is a new India, which is different from what it was before, an unstated 'old India'. Presumably there is also a new Indian, who is assumed to enjoy the fruits of a modern, industrial, dynamic India, neither bound by the past nor by provincial thinking. India and Indians are now modern and global.

The New York Times has made liberal use of the prefix 'new' to describe India, as in 'the high life of young, exuberant New India' (Sengupta 2008). The new India refers to the country's stirring middle class, its new-found wealth, changing consumption patterns that mimic Western lifestyles, and India's technological sophistication (Simmons and Kahn 2009a, 2009b).

Gopal, Raghav and Aarti are the childhood friends. Raghav is target

oriented and his approach is highly focused. Raghav does not want to get distracted; even though he does not have interest in IIT and Engineering, even then at least for the sake of his parents he continues his study and achieves the target set by his parents. His interest was in journalism and so while pursuing his degree, he was able to use his time for journalism also. After his graduation, he decided to pursue his career in journalism. Raghav does not find any interest in making money. He believes in his values. He could achieve his financial goals by accepting handsome packages from MNCs, but journalism is Raghav's passion and he chooses it in order to clean the society. Raghav does not want to compromise with his own values at any cost. That's why in the concluding part of the novel, Gopal realized the dedication and commitment of Raghav towards journalism. He did not accept journalism as a career path in order to make money. But Raghav wants to eradicate corruption from Indian society. He is highly sensitive and committed to his responsibility as a modern journalist who wants to make India corruption-free.

Money is everything for Gopal. Perhaps, 'money' is one of the targets in Gopal's life. His second target is to win the love of Aarti and get married to her. Aarti comes from a highly sophisticated wealthy family. Even more, she does not know- what is poverty? The poverty or the economic condition did not come in between the friendship of Gopal, Raghav and Aarti. Aarti never made an attempt to humiliate anybody on the ground of her

financial superiority. This is the new approach of 'New India' which is presented by Bhagat. Gopal, Raghav and Aarti were the best friends. And their friendship was genuine. They never made any comparison on the grounds of economic stability. Aarti was supporting morally to both Gopal and Raghav to achieve their targets in their life. Gopal was very close and intimate to Aarti in their schooling days.

Lack of self-motivation is one of the weaknesses of Gopal. It is the major reason that he could not fulfill the dream of his father. Throughout the novel, it seems that Gopal was not sincere and honest with his father. No doubt, he is the victim of his father's dream to make him an engineer which he could never bring to truth. The dreams of Gopal's father are completely shattered. Gopal's father becomes the victim of Gopal's failure in entrance examination. And he could not endure the failure of Gopal. The death of Gopal's father is shocking to the readers. Gopal loved deeply to his father. Unfortunately, Gopal and his father did not realize each other's viewpoints towards life. His father wants to make Gopal an engineer from IIT and settle his life. What was wrong therein? Gopal's father is a pensioner, a retired person pushing the life with meagre pension. He was in utter poverty. He did everything to arrange money for Gopal's classes at Kota.

How power, may be political or economic can manipulate day-to-day, personal or public affairs in India are presented by the writer. Gopal's father is

deceived by his elder brother i.e. Gopal's uncle. The prolonged court-case was going on regarding their ancestral landed property. Gopal's father did not get his share of their ancestral property. Gopal's father is the most unfortunate victim of legal procedure. During his lifetime, he did not get the justice. After his death, Gopal made an alliance with Mr. Shukla, the local MLA. Through political and economic power of Mr. Shukla, Gopal not only obtained possession of their ancestral land but he also taught lessons to his uncle and cousins. Gopal took revenge on his uncle.

The harsh reality of 'Coaching Industry' in India is one of the subject matters of the novel. One separate section is dedicated to the life in 'Kota' which is described by Gopal as 'Kota Factory'. Commercialization of education in India is presented in the novel. The student living in the room before Gopal had committed suicide. Lack of communication with parents, friends and relatives; pressure, stiff competition etc. are causes of students' suicide. Success ratio of JEE and AIEEE entrance examinations are presented in the section 'Kota'. On the other side, newly opened private colleges, their administration and exploitation of students and their parents are one of the major issues of discussion in the novel. Chetan Bhagat has clearly explained the procedure of starting a new college, corruption at all levels in order to obtain different approvals and permissions and other cases of corruption and black money in the novel.

To sum up, the realistic picture of

'New India' with new opportunities and challenges are portrayed by the writer. The curse of corruption has lessened India's development towards 'Superpower Country'. The novel ends with some positive changes which can empower India. For example, the corrupted MLA like Mr. Shukla is imprisoned for his misdeeds. Chetan Bhagat has initiated the movement of making India free from corruption through his character Mr. Raghav. Raghav started his anti-corruption campaign from Varanasi, the spiritual capital of India. The devotees and visitors from all over the world visit Varanasi and take bathes in the Ganges, the most sacred river in India and experience the purity of body, mind and soul. Chetan Bhagat's 'New India' has initiated its journey from Varanasi to make India a developed country in coming years. Committed, smart, honest and dedicated journalists like Raghav can create the necessary environment in order to control corruption in our society. Transformation occurs in case of Gopal also. Highly qualified, rational, tech-savvy and committed Indian youth can empower India. As Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has rightly stated- 'India will be governed by noble leaders'. Chetan Bhagat is also expecting the same about 'New India'. Rabindranath Tagore has written in his poem-

Where the mind is without fear and  
head is held high  
Where knowledge is free  
Where the world has not been broken  
up in fragments...  
My father, let my country awake.

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