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**Revolution 2020 - Battle for a Perfect Life****Dr. Archana Durgesh, Md. Ammaar, Md. Osama, Md. Ashraf, Md. Faiz, Md. Kashif***BBD NITM, Lucknow, (U.P.) India***Abstract**

Chetan Bhagat's latest *Revolution 2020* is about the current topic *du jour*, corruption. Add to this a prologue and epilogue of such incredible conceit and you have another best-seller in the making. As far as the characters are concerned Gopal is well sketched out through him Chetan Bhagat has tried to convey that what an aspiring student goes through if he/she somehow doesn't end up qualifying to premier educational institutions in India, the myth that these Institutes have created for themselves in the minds of students and parents alike and how it is being perceived as being a shortcut way to riches. Love happens once only, rest is life and if you recognize your true love then the rest of your life will be complete. Money can't buy you the real happiness, real happiness lies within one's inner self.

**Key Words:** Corruption, Education, Politics, Relationships

Once upon a time in small town of India named Varanasi "where the world comes to die," (p. 53) lived two intelligent boys. One wanted to use his intelligence to make money, while the other wanted to use his intelligence to start a revolution but the problem between them was the girl whom they both loved. Set in the back drop of the holy city of Varanasi "Probably the only city on earth where death is a tourist attraction" (p. 109) the story revolves around the lives of the three people Gopal, Raghav and Aarti, who spend their childhood together, with Gopal and Aarti being best of good friends. Aarti is the female lead with whom both the guys fall in love. As they grow, they observe corruption prevail everywhere. However, as life takes unexpected turns the friendship between two men turns out to be more of a competition. Chetan Bhagat's latest *Revolution 2020* is about the current topic *du jour*, corruption. Add to this a prologue and epilogue of such incredible

conceit and you have another best-seller in the making.

The novel begins with Chetan Bhagat visiting Ganga Tech College in Varanasi to deliver a speech. There, he meets Gopal, the 26-year-old protagonist, whose sole purpose, which soon becomes clear, is to try and ply Bhagat with drinks "Chetan sir, one drink?" So he can deliver his line: "I can tell people I had a drink with 'the' Chetan Bhagat." Somehow, Bhagat ends up accompanying the self-indulgent, sniveling Gopal to hospital after he over-binges, on Glenfiddich of all things. Gopal survives of course, so he can recount to Bhagat his life story. The life story, predictably, is a love story, or rather a love triangle involving Gopal, and childhood friends Raghav and Aarti. Gopal is poor, Raghav is middle class and Aarti well-off, each meant to neatly represent the background to which they belong. As is wont to happen with a trio of friends, one (Gopal) falls in love with

another (Aarti), who professes her love for the third (Raghav).

This novel states a fascinating story of GOPAL, RAGHAV and AARTI who struggle to find success, love and bliss in Varanasi. Gopal, who was a poor boy and couldn't attend the top college because of his lower grades, later builds engineering college of his own and becomes rich. Meanwhile Raghav, after having graduated from top college, campaigns for social progress as a journalist and exposes scams. However it's not easy to attain these in an unfair society which rewards the corrupt as Gopal gives into the system and Raghav fights it, who will win is the question? Gopal, Raghav and Aarti were school mates. All the three had their own ambitions in their life. While Gopal, the protagonist wanted to become wealthy, Raghav wanted to bring about a change in the world, precisely India and Aarti wanted to become an air hostess.

The starting conversation between Gopal and Chetan Bhagat (The author of this novel) is nice and tinctures interest among the readers (The famous author is curious to know Gopal's story and so our expectations raise). Soon, the three main characters are introduced in their childhood with Gopal portraying the mental stage of his childhood, sharing his rather weird and embarrassing moment of having being caught eating Aarti's school tiffin and then standing quietly while his class teacher throws tantrum at him for his mischievous actions. They were, then, in class V and Gopal had fallen for her since then and wanted to make her his. Since years Gopal's father had been fighting for his legitimate right for his share in the land his father had left for him and his brother. But, his brother had wittingly seized the entire land leaving him to be a nobody.

The story moved on with its required pace and Chetan Bhagat's remarkable art of grabbing attention of the reader after every aspect of a certain incident was appreciable. The chapters involving the AIEEE and JEE preparations are nicely written and the psychological trauma in the child unable to compete for the competitive exam is nicely brought out. Some dialogues like "... 9 and half lakh students along with me didn't clear the paper..." (p. 32) "...A few more bits right would have made a lot of difference..." (p. 52) are really good and reflect the reality. The scenes are perfectly relevant in the Indian context and Chetan Bhagat did a nice job by exposing them out. The attention of a reader was caught when Raghav and Gopal aimed for JEE and AIEEE. Raghav, being a better competitor managed to crack both AIEEE and JEE, but chose to join IT-BHU to study journalism as it was his passion and he was into that stream. Whereas, Gopal couldn't make it and was compelled by his father to drop a year and prepare for the competition again.

Raghav was always known as a topper and someone who would outdo any random student in academics and he did excel. Gopal, however, felt as if he had brought his father down and started having a sense of hatred towards Raghav. He took whatever little money his father had and joined a coaching in Kota for a year, "KOTA the place where coaching institutes were like a shop which coaches you to get into top engineering college." (p.55) after reaching Kota, Gopal found himself, "in a sea, along with the lakhs of other low rankers, kicking and screaming to breath. The water closed over us, making us irrelevant to the Indian education system." He strove hard, had an absolute zeal, congratulated himself at times when he performed well and would try hard to

perform better whenever his concentration shifted from studies to Aarti. The unrequited love is certainly a sort of bane for any person and an absolute curse when the one sided lover becomes too serious to do anything but to think of him/her. The same misery Gopal was going through. He did perform well in classes, but in vain. All his hard work was futile. He couldn't crack both JEE and AIEEE again and was finally convinced that engineering is not what he ought to do. In those tough moments of life, Gopal had to handle two most big failures of life: - (i) he had failed to achieve anything in academic front. (ii) the only love of his, Aarti happened to be dating his own friend Raghav. The inclination of Aarti towards Raghav which results into Gopal's jealousy and frustration are also nicely brought out. The Varanasi backdrop is enthralling.

Gopal, however, returned to Varanasi all empty handed. After having lost his father, Gopal was having a burning desire to maneuver to outdo Raghav as he had achieved what the majority of the people only dream of and most importantly, he had stolen the love of his life. Raghav, eventually, joined Dainik as a reporter. Although his choice brought a sense of awe and surprise to everyone's mind when he acquainted this plan of his, he continued to follow his passion- journalism. In the meantime, some glimpses are provided about Raghav's passion by Aarti. One wonders what amazing things he is really going to do. Except the fact that he endeavoured to live his dream, he turns out to be a disappointment. The busy factor only served the purpose of love blossoming between Gopal and Aarti. All the things Gopal did are expected, predictable and the consequences are also likely.

It was this time when two friends parted their ways to follow their individual passions, one

passion totally contradicting the other. Raghav had an approach of making wrong things right, no matter what price he has to pay, however great the obstacles are, and he would stick to his aim to bring about revolution by 2020. He wanted to transform the corrupted country into a wise one. The way the reality of India is cast and revealed is certainly very true. Chetan Bhagat Bhagat has brought out the actual hypocritical attitude of politicians, who work to make money through prevalent aid, corruption and forget their duty of making India a better place to live in. The author has well- criticized the callous attitude and negligence of the people who have power in their hands and begin to rule. The revelation of the darker side of education and politics is well brought out and the author indeed deserves applause.

The inferiority complex developed in Gopal of not cracking the exam can probably be said to be a reason for him choosing to give in to the system of corruption and embrace the corrupt practices. A promising career and seat in a decent college would have stopped him. Gopal rose with the help of MLA Shukla, a famous politician who helped him get his father's land back and even got it re-zoned. His thinking was, "We don't fix cases we fix people in cases."(p. 125) He helped him build a college named Ganga Tech and through that he began yet another business of corruption into which Gopal got involved more than willingly.

Raghav was making great strides to remove the façade of MLA Shukla despite knowing the fact what he was up against. He finally succeeded to denigrate Shukla's reputation and sullied his image after having published many shocking scams. The scams involved Ganga Action Plan Scam and the money he made in Dimnapura Sewage Treatment Plant. Shuklaji was

convicted and Raghav consequently lost his job. He started with his own paper Revolution 2020 in an attempt to bring about a change while his career fluctuated; Gopal took advantage of his negligence towards Aarti. Gopal made progress on his college business and had become extremely rich. He also won Aarti's heart and finally possessed everything he sought after in life.

The jealousy so strongly felt for Raghav for stealing away the love of his life had slowly, with time, metamorphosed into revenge and with Aarti safely secured, Gopal is impulse in getting even with Raghav. Basically, deep down, Gopal is fighting a duel with himself, he cannot let go of his past failure of not being able to break into the ranks of IIT and holding a lifelong grudge against his friend. Now that he has won back some respect for himself, he tries to face his own guilt, rather the guilt which he owns to his father. But the encounter with Raghav changes him psychologically and emotionally and the sense of grudge and feelings of revenge gives way to respect. This change of outlook in life and the sense that he should do something to change the tide of corruption, as his bitter experience while setting up the college, Gopal decides that the right course that needs to be followed is to take a step back from the life of his beloved, whom he chased his entire life, and let the affections of his once estranged friend grow back into her. Soon he became conscience- smitten and felt an urge to look for his redemption. He was obligated to undo the wrong he had done and thought that he should clean up his actions. Since he had power, one sentence from him, made Raghav got his job back in Dainik and most importantly; he sacrificed Aarti for his

redemption. Aarti went back to Raghav and got married to him.

As far as the characters are concerned Gopal is well sketched out through him Chetan Bhagat has tried to convey that what an aspiring student goes through if he/she somehow doesn't end up qualifying to premier educational institutions in India, the myth that these Institutes have created for themselves in the minds of students and parents alike and how it is being perceived as being a shortcut way to riches. The desire to land the coveted seat runs too high and Gopal is swept off his feet in this mad rush all the time pinning for the love of Aarti and jealous of his once best friend's success. He perceives that getting into the hallowed halls of any IIT, would make his beloved fall in love with him again, therefore the decisions of Gopal, goes many levels down, which is quite effectively brought out by the author and gets you hooked and immersed into the story. What follows next effectively mirrors the hapless drowning of multitude of students who are forced to pursue a dream, which is not even theirs, eventually throw in the towel after a brief struggle.

Further down the narrative, we behold the epic failure of Gopal and when the magnitude of his failure sinks in, he decides to somehow fulfill the dream of his father. The prose of Chetan Bhagat delicately captures the burden that most parents thrust onto the shoulders of their children of their own unfulfilled dreams and achievements and we see a young Gopal rushing off to fulfill it without having the maturity to understand the complexity of this decision or its consequences. Somehow Gopal's college gets inaugurated and he settles down to run it all the same time trying ways to get closer to Aarti. After many encounters he manages to quite a major degree to change the perception of Aarti

about Raghav. Love can make people do silly things and try harder when the odds are stacked against you. We see Gopal incessantly making the effort and are treated to some very good conversations which show the deep insecurities that women in India live in with all the time.

Chetan Bhagat was solely interested to expose or show the scourge of corruption that seeped into one's life as a *de-facto* truth; Aarti could have been done away with without her being so intense and enchanting. Aarti steps in to fill this or there would have been a void in narration and she does it so beautifully without coming across a hitch. She surrenders to powerful men, men who lust, long and cherish her. You are treated to her insecurities, her aspirations, her loneliness and her expectations which mirror the average girl next door but she is educated, ambitious and intelligent and like the modern generation of her times still subservient to her family's wishes and to generic Indian sensibilities and traditional values. So in a sense she is much more than what meets the eye. Aarti is the epitome of Indian cultural and traditional values regarding women. The patriarchal values have slowly given way to accommodate an educated girl, freedom to pursue her dreams and tolerance of her sexual needs. So Aarti is an embodiment of partially free women of India obedient enough to uphold the traditional values of a patriarchal society and intelligent enough to pursue one's desires and dreams. In all it is Aarti who stands out as the glue which holds together the framework of the narrative.

Raghav is an engineer turned journalist with a peculiar kind of firebrand journalism that we one saw in the initial publications of *Al Jazeera*. Like any idealist, the system isn't very kind of his particular taste in exposing corruption and

thus begins his quest for understanding of himself.

The ending is pretty predictable. The character of Aarti is confusing both to the author and the readers. Raghav termed as a passionate and inspiring individual loses importance in the end. The only character with which the reader can stay tuned is Gopal. In the end, we are left to ponder over who is right and who is wrong. Probably, Gopal is right since he has purified his soul (in Varanasi) and is responsible for Raghav to contest for election.

Though almost every reader might have disliked the ending, that of Aarti getting married to Raghav. We wish to differ from this. Gopal getting Aarti would never have made Gopal feel bad about his corrupted life. On the contrary, it would have made him win over all his corrupted activities and that is not *Revolution 2020* story plot was for. We must remember we have always believed in "Only Truth Will Win." One cannot deny the ultimate truth of poetic justice; where virtue is rewarded and evil punished.

Here the story ends but as it has been said, "End is not the actual end of the story; it is the dawn of new story." So, here the dawn of the new story starts. Love happens once only, rest is life and if you recognize your true love then the rest of your life will be complete. Money can't buy you the real happiness, real happiness lies within one's inner self. "Girls are best topic switchers in the world." Human relationship is about selective sharing and hiding of information to the point of crazy confusion. End of novel is to some point, unpredictable and leaves the reader in a state of shock for a few moments. You may not agree with such an ending like as it is vague and over dramatic perhaps, inspired by Bollywood drama movies.



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