



## IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON CHETANBHAGAT'S SELECTED NOVELS

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### Abstract

*The impact of the process of globalization is felt in all the fields. Literature is not exception to this. In the post 1990s' period, the impact of globalization is seen in the literature of the developing countries. Indian literature also manifests the impact of globalization. The impact is, no doubt, reflected in all Indian regional language literatures. However, the present paper explores the impact of globalization on Chetan Bhagat's novels. Bhagat observed the changes in cultural, traditional life-styles of the people because of globalization and he mirrored in his novels. The novels of Chetan Bhagat reflect this new philosophy of modernized Indian people. He analyses the effects of globalization on Indian culture. He has thought provoking ideas and uses simple English. Bhagat emphasizes the need of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages for bringing about unity in diversity in the country. He shows exploitations of students by private coaching classes for IIT admission. Bhagat highlights corruption in education system, politics, business etc. He emphasizes the need and importance of English language in India. Thus, Bhagat exposes and explains the problems of India after globalization. These problems are the problems of multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and modern society.*

**Keywords:** *Globalization, impact, changes, literature, culture*



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### Impact of Globalization on Chetan Bhagat's Selected Novels

The term 'Globalization' is the most popular in the contemporary socio-economic sphere. It is self-explanatory. The term 'Globalization' can be perceived as the process of change from the indigenous things into international platform. It is not a phenomenon like revolution, war, invention or discovery but 'it is a continuous process for the veracity of regional, economies, societies and cultures through worldwide networks of exchange.' This process involves sharing or exchange of various things like skills, technology, goods, services, etc.

The term globalization can be used in different ways. Its meaning and interpretation are based on one who uses the term, and in what context the term is used. Even different countries also imply the term differently. If the European countries use the term then they may have different implication of the term globalization. When the term is used in India, the general

implication is making the local or regional things international. One can think breaking away from cultural and traditional issues. At the economic front, it can be considered as making our market open to all other countries and entering in the market of other countries also. In short, every country and every discipline has its own meaning. So Malik says, "Globalization has many meanings depending on the context and on the person who is talking about."(TanveerMalik)

The process of Globalization started with the people undertaking journey to foreign countries for varied purposes. The reasons of journey are tours and travels for enjoyment, business, trade, commerce, and finding good job opportunities, etc. Speeding science and technology motivated and encouraged more travelling. Science and technology have furthering effects on modernization and globalization. Recently, Globalization is the watchword in all the fields. All sorts of communications are made marvelously quick and cheap because of the various means of communications, social media, and top of all is internet. These communication facilities played very vital role in easing globalization.

Globalization has a great impact all over the world. It has hardly spared any field of life untouched and unaffected. The exchange of thoughts and ideas has caused tremendous change in behavior, living standard and lifestyle of the people worldwide. No country remained unaffected of this change. This change has been witnessed in India. "Globalization has been identified with the policy reforms of 1991 in India." (Tanveer Malik) Globalization began in India with the introduction of New Economic Policy in 1991. Economic activities cannot be separated from social, political, cultural aspects. Indian culture has undergone the transformation of lifestyle. Indian culture is an example of deep rooted tradition, customs and conventions. These traditions and conventions have started to lose their hold because of the effects of the globalization. India is considered as one of the famous countries for the rich cultural background all over the world. Globalization transformed India into modernization. Modernization is misinterpreted as imitating western etiquettes and lifestyles. As India is changed by the western culture and lifestyle, Indian culture and tradition have also effects on western minds. No country is unique because of its only geographic characteristics but she is unique because of her cultural and traditional uniqueness also. Geographic uniqueness cannot be easily changed but the cultural uniqueness can be affected because of the globalization. India is developing country. The effects of globalization can be faster and remarkable in the developing country like India.

After globalization, Indian English literature started to project the issues like loss of identity, multiculturalism, immigration, hybridization, loss of national or regional identity etc.

Globalization speeded the process of intermingling of cultural conventions and marketing of cultural icons 'Ching-Chang', 'Yippee', 'Pastha', 'Domono's Pizza', 'MacDonald's Pizza', 'Hakka Nuddles', 'Schezwan Rice', etc. These names can be easily found in metropolitan cities. Chinese, English, American products and brands gained importance than local, Indian brands and names. The celebrations like Friendship Day, Valentine Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day etc. are the effects of globalization.

No doubt, globalization has some opportunities and benefits however, some problems regarding culture, tradition, and ethnicity cannot be neglected. So, the contemporary Indian English literature reflects changes that have occurred in Indian culture, tradition and ethnicity due to globalization. The number of internationalized Indian is growing and hence their life-style is changing. New and modernized India is emerging.

Any change or transformation has its merits and demerits. The merits of globalization have been seen in fields like banking, trade, business, market, communication, import, export, science, technology etc. However, its demerits are also popular in the fields like air, water, soil pollution, adverse climatic changes, environmental damages, cyber-crimes, economic frauds etc. Globalization has occupied all the fields. The effects of globalization are seen in economic, social, cultural, political, literary fields.

The effects of globalization are immediate in literature because literature is a sensitive field. Literature of all languages and countries has been influenced by the globalization. Indian English literature is one of them. The present paper will focus on the effects of Globalization on Indian English Literature, in general and on Chetan Bhagat's novels in particular.

In the era of globalization, English language gained much importance. It is used by educated people for communication. It became not only popular but powerful language. Indian English literature reflects the various aspects of globalization. Some writers think that Indian writing shows new aspects of Indian culture. The process of Globalization has touched and changed all the walks of life. India is reaching towards various milestones. The remarkable impact of globalization can be seen in urban life. Socio-economic, socio-political factors always influence literature, and literature is reflection of these factors.

Indian English poetry reflects the themes of rootlessness and alienation. The new generation poets have changed their views during the process of globalization. Dramatists started to do new experiments. They revisited Indian mythology and sought a fresh interpretation in the light of globalization. The contemporary Indian English dramatists tried to break the cultural boundaries as well as they went back to their traditions. By going back to their traditions they wanted to recover their ancient traditions. The dramatic productions of regional languages

have been translated into English. This process of translation has many advantages. Literature, especially drama, came up to national level by crossing the regional boundaries. Vijay Tendulkar's plays are good example of this type. The translation of epics and classics into English helped many writers in various ways. These translations played an important part in Indian English literature. The translation or a part of translation when prescribed in curriculum helped students and scholars to fire their imaginations. No doubt, these translations made people aware of ancient traditions and conventions. With this, simultaneously, translations of regional drama helped to create national theatre. As a result, Indian national drama became a river of many regional streams.

The translations helped to mitigate the regional language gaps. They also helped to increase the creativity of contemporary writers. The contemporary Indian dramatists came together by crossing their regional language boundaries; they worked together for building Indian National Drama. The dramatists and directors those who contributed to the development of Indian drama are – Vijay Tendulkar, Satis Alekar, Amol Palekar, Badal Sarcar, Utpal Dutt, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Sadanand Rege, Girish Karnad and others. These dramatists explored and presented various aspects of Indian culture and traditions in their plays.

Some of the novels show the impact of globalization. Vikram Chandra's '*Red Earth and Pouring Rain*' (1995), Arundhati Roy's '*The God of Small Things*' (1997), Mohsin Hamids's '*Moth Smoke*' (2000), Kiran Desai's '*The Inheritance of Loss*' (2006), Aravinda Adiga's '*The White Tiger*' (2008) are the novels which deal with the impact of Globalization.

'*The Namesake*' (2003) of Jhumpa Lahiri deals with the life of American born Gogol Ganguli. The novelist explores emotional and cultural themes. The novel shows the conflict and problems of an immigrant Bengali couple to the United States. The novel describes the events in Calcutta, Boston and New York. The emotional struggle of the persons who live in two conflicting cultures, religions, and societies is examined. Gogol, the main character, fights to balance between American and Indian culture. Gogol wants himself to become free from bondages of Indian cultural traditions because he wants to be welcomed by American society. '*The White Tiger*' (2008) is Aravind Adiga's first novel and won man Booker Prize. Aravinda Adiga became world famous because of this novel. The novel shows economic progress of India in the world and at the same time the opposite picture of Indian rural poverty. Rural and poor India is represented by Balram, the protagonist of the novel. The remarkable changes in Indian society have been recorded in the novel. He shows how cultural, traditional, conventional values have been changed. Because of the changes, the lifestyle of rural, poor Indians are torn between the new, modern life and old values. At one hand, Indian economy

is progressing and on the other hand poor people in rural India are suffering. The novel also shows class struggle in India. Balam Halwai, a village boy, narrates his story in a globalized world. He goes to Delhi, Bangalore and ultimately he goes beyond his caste and he becomes a successful businessmen. The novel deals with the issues like caste, religion, corruption, poverty in India.

The novel takes place in the era of globalization, and the fastest growing economy. Globalization made it possible to create “an American atmosphere in India.” India is looking like America having shopping malls - having cinema inside, Microsoft, American Express, American Companies. So Ashok says, “There are so many more things I could do here than in New York now ... The way things are changing in India now, this place is going to be like America in ten years.” (The White Tiger, 77) Balram materializes the opportunity of globalization. He says, “I’m always a man who sees ‘tomorrow’ when others see ‘today’.” (The White Tiger, 274) In this way, the novel is a commentary on the impact of globalization on rural India and international India.

The novels of Chetan Bhagat reflect this new philosophy of modernized Indian people. New trends are emerging in Indian cultural, traditional, economic, political scenario. All these changes have been reflected in Chetan Bhagat’s novels so Donald Greenless says, “Chetan Bhagat might not be another Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie or Arundhati Roy, but he has authentic claims to being one of the voices of a generation of middle class Indian youth facing the choices and frustrations that come with the prospect of growing wealth.” (Greenless, Donald) He analyses the effects of globalization on Indian culture. He has thought provoking ideas and uses simple English.

His first novel is ‘*Five Point Someone: What Not to Do at IIT*’ (2004). The novel is narrated by Hari. It deals with the lives of the three friends. It shows the struggle of students to seek admission in Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. Hari, Ryan, and Alok protest against the methods of “continuous mugging, testing and assignments, where is the time to try out new ideas.” (Five Point Someone, 25). Further he questions, “Where is the room for original thoughts? Where is the time for creativity?” (Five Point Someone, 35) They become frustrated because of monotonous academic work. The novel shows the problems of young generation and criticizes technology in India.

Next novel, ‘*One Night @the Call Center*’ (2005) satirizes call center culture in India. The novel portrays the six employees working at call centers in Gurgaon. Shyam Mehara, the protagonist and narrator, tells a story of lost love, frustration, lack of family attachment, etc. Shyam has lost his beloved Priyanka. She plans to arrange a marriage with another person.

Vroom loves Esha. Radhika is not happy in her married life. The young characters in the novel are bored by working at Ashwani Rana Call Center. They have to resolve the inquiries. Shaym, Sam, Esha, Vroom, Radhika, Priyanka are the modern Indian youngsters and work mechanically. They are struggling for satisfaction but all their attempts become unsuccessful. But ultimately these six persons decide to face their problems. The novel deals with the themes of insecurities, anxieties, career problems, marriage problems, family problems of the rising young Indian middle class.

*'The 3 Mistakes of My Life: A Story about Business, Cricket and Religion* (2008) is the third novel of Chetan Bhagat. It deals with the religious, political, cultural problems in the modernized India. The issues like pre-marital sex, marital infidelity, inconsistency in relations have been highlighted. This is the story of three friends in Ahmadabad – Ishan, Oni and Govind – who are struggling for their goals. Govind Patel, the narrator of the novel, is a simple boy has an ordinary ambition to become a businessman. He belongs to poor family, earns extra money by tutoring Mathematics. He loves Vidya, the younger sister of Ishan. Vidya wants to cross all the limitations of middle class family and society. She desires to go to Mumbai for a PR course. Govind, high ambitious student of Mathematics, attempts to commit suicide for his three mistakes in life. The novel deals with love, romance, sentiments, family relations, friendships, religious issues, social problems, etc. of Indian youths.

In his *'2 States: The Story of My Marriage'* (2009) Bhagat emphasizes the need of inter caste and inter-religious marriages for bringing about unity in diversity in the country. The novel is semi-autobiographical as this is Bhagat's love story and marriage with Anusha, Tamilian girl. Bhagat belongs to Punjabi family. He convinces his parents about his love marriage and requests them to accept his Tamil wife. He shows how multicultural realities affect the modern generation. He wants marriages to take place irrespective of caste, religion and culture and they should be accepted by the parents.

*'Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption. Ambition* (2011) is about three childhood friends, Gopal, Raghav, and Aarti. It deals with triangle love. This is the story of two friends loving the same girl. Gopal wants to become a rich because poverty taught him many lessons, while his friend Raghav wants to fight against corruption in India. The novel shows exploitations of students by private coaching classes for IIT admission. Only few students become successful in seeking admission in IIT and fulfill their dream while others frustrate. Bhagat highlights corruption in education system, politics, business etc.

*What Young India Wants: Selected Essays and Columns* (2012) deals with the various issues and their impact on the Indian people. It is non-fiction, a compilation of his speeches and



essays. He satirizes the Indian Government and immoralities prevailing in all walks of Indian life. Bhagat poses various issues of modern India, and suggests remedies on them. He expects young people to change the corrupt social, political, educational system.

*Half Girlfriend* (2014) is a romantic novel. It is a rural-urban love story of Madhav Jha, Bihari boy and Riya "high class English-speaking rich Delhi girl." Riya Somani refuses to be a girlfriend but wants to be his 'half girlfriend'. Riya marries Rohan even though Madhav loves her and settles in London. Madhav is her childhood friend. Afterwards, Riya divorced from Rohan. She returns from London and meets Madhav. Madhav now looks after his mother's old school in his village. The condition of the school was not proper. He needs money for school. He requests local MLA Ojha for financial aid but MLA refuses to finance. Later on, Ojha tells about the visit of Bill Gates to some of the schools in Bihar. Madhav wants the development of his school through the funds of Bill Gates. He prepares the speech for Bill Gates with the help of Riya. Both are successful in raising fund for school. After that Riya goes to New York pretending having lung cancer. There she becomes a singer. Madhav goes to New York and meets her. Madhav and Riya marry after three years. In this novel, Chetan Bhagat emphasizes the need and importance of English language in India.

Thus, Bhagat exposes and explains the problems of India after globalization. These problems are the problems of multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and modern society. Chetan Bhagat wants that young Indian generation should eradicate the age-old cultural traditions, religious constraints, and social limitations and make new promising and powerful India. "Thought India is getting a global recognition and slowly moving towards to become a major economic and political strength, still many basic problems like rural poverty, corruption and political instability remained unsolved." (Chatterjee, Subhankar)

Globalization means crossing the national, cultural, traditional boundaries and sharing the same with others. This is a process of change. It has impact on all cultures and countries. Globalization has merits as well as demerits. Literature reflects whatever is happening in the society. Indian English literature shows impact of globalization on Indian lifestyle values and cultural aspects. No doubt, Indian culture is influenced by the world culture. But especially, there is an impact of western culture on Indian culture. We cannot totally reject or accept the impacts of globalization. We have to be very careful in accepting and rejecting them keeping in our mind our cultural, national, traditional high values. The impact of globalization will continue in the future also. So, we have to highlight our cultural traditional, national, regional, rural values.

Thus, the writers like Chetan Bhagat throw light on the issues like caste system, marriage institutions, changing lifestyles of people, exploitation of students, and corruption in education, politics, business etc. in their novels. They also represent changed cultural, traditional life-styles of the people because of globalization.

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