



CULTURAL CONFLUENCE IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S 2 STATES: THE STORY OF MY MARRIAGE**K. Kalaiselvi¹ and Dr. T. Vasanthakumari²****¹Ph.D. Full Time Research Scholar, PG. & Research Department of English,
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Govt. Arts College for Women (Autonomous), Pudukkottai.****ABSTRACT**

India is a nation which contains several ethnic groups within a society. The term 'Multiculturalism' is used to indicate the adoption or development of multitudinous cultures. There are disparate cultural customs which remain within every unique culture. There is a general belief regarding cultural diversity which divides people into numerous groups and sub-groups. It proves an obstacle to human association. The novel *2 States: The Story of my Marriage* is associated to his life. Two youngsters belonging to different states of India fell in love with each other in this novel. Environment and family subjugation prevented them from taking steps for inter-caste marriage. It is a typical Indian love story of Krish Malhotra who was a Punjabi boy and Ananya Swaminathan from Chennai who was a Tamil Brahmin girl. The paper discusses how they succeeded and the struggles and consequences they came across in their life.

**KEY WORDS :** *Cultural Confluence, Chetan Bhagat Inter Community Marriage.***INTRODUCTION**

Inter community marriages in India remain the dominant nuptial from the most villages to urban. But it creates a lot of love conflicts for both the lovers and their families. In India families belonging to two different cultures need to come on a common ground in different cultural, social, personal for the successful marriage. Situations are intensely painful. If matters are not handled properly, a lot of friction can occur. Chetan Bhagat's fourth novel namely *2 States The Story of my Marriage* (2009) is boisterous in nature. It tangled the pitfalls involved in inter-community and inter-state marriages in India. The two states namely Punjab and Tamil Nadu were ideal examples of two different cultures. Culture is perceptible and imperceptible. There are so many countries in the world which have different types of cultures that integrate group of people and form the base of the society. Thus the coexistence of many cultures has paved the way for multi-culturalism. In this novel, the author explained the consequences of cultural confluence in a talented way.

Many popular Indian English novels portrayed several perilous problems which are created due to the difference of cultural aspects. Indian English writers of the present day have explored the issues of cultural difference which affects humanity. Through their novels, the novelists of present day have ventilated the liberal values of 'Culture of Convenience' which could solve the problems of cultural divergence. Thus the new generation writers wanted to create a worldwide and universal culture.

Indian society has been multicultural from time immemorial. Arranged marriages are acceptable in Indian society. Love can be developed after marriage. Changes are occurring in the society due to the

expansion of western ideas. Women are demanding gender equality as they work in different places. Mostly societies approve arranged marriages. They have hostility for love marriages which occur between people belonging to different cultural groups, community following different religion. India is no exception to this. Usually bride-takers are considered superior to bride givers. Usually problems occur in arranged marriages when the youngsters decide to marry or select their partners of their choice. The situation becomes turbulent when individuals violate the norms followed in arranged marriages.

Generally, parents force their children for arranged marriages but arranged marriages disappear when the youngsters are exposed to western culture. Individuals having similar taste, aims and interest can live together. Hence they go for love marriages. In western culture, personal success and self-sufficiency are considered the most important factors. Hence individuals imagine that they have a right to find their partners of their own choice.

Chetan Bhagat makes an entry into the convergence of two entirely different cultures. When he resisted the incongruity of North-South traditions, he also explained about the cultural richness and variety of India. Chetan Bhagat cross examined the established conventions. He started questioning language, food, dress and religious rituals which created invincible hurdles in interpersonal relationship.

This novel recounted the love marriage of Krish Malhotra and Ananya Swaminathan. Western love story involved three procedures- Boy loves girl, Girl loves boy, they get married finally. But this novel did not belong to routine western love story. This novel described Indian love marriage which had strenuous tasks- boy loves girl, girl loves boy, girl's family has to love a boy, boy's family has to love a girl, girl's family has to love boy's family and boy's family has to love girl's family. Boy and girl will get married if they have love and affection after enduring the painful effort.

Krish and Ananya underwent arduous tasks and faced many problems as they were affiliated to two contradictory poles of India i.e. north and south India. The novel dealt with ethnic differences and the preconception of the people belonging to entirely different parts. The ethnic dissimilarity between North and South have their origin in mythological notion of Aryan and Dravidian races and the theory of Aryan entry.

Indian society was split into Aryans and Dravidians. Aryans came to North India around 1500 B.C. North Indians were the successors of Aryans and vice versa. People were different in their language and there is a difference in skin colour from north to south. Southern people were dark in their complexion. Dravidians occupied India before the arrival of Aryans. The Aryans ignored the culture of local people and sent the Dravidians to South.

Ananya and Krish Malhotra's love sprouted at the IIM cafeteria. After becoming friends, they planned to study together every night. This propinquity grew into love with the passage of time. They decided to get married after they passed out of the college. They struggled so much to get married because of jarring, ethnic and spiritual differences. Human beings are creations of God. The purpose of this creation is to feel. Love is sweet, romantic and is filled with sparkling lights. Love is a sensational feeling. As the lovers belonged to two different states, the course of true love did not run smooth.

In India, marriage is between two different communities and not between a boy and a girl. Even though caste system has been judicially obliterated in India, inter caste marriages are contemplated as impermissible for the conservative mindset of the people. The two lovers wanted to get acceptance of their parents instead of running away secretly. It seemed to be discordant to customary practice. Ananya and Krish's parents attended convocation function but they were biased against each other. During convocation function, Krish's mother made a silly comment on South Indian women. Krish's mother says, 'These South Indians don't know how to control their daughters. From Hema Malini to Sridevi, all of them trying to catch Punjabi men' (48).

This statement made Ananya's parents to leave the place and thus the meeting became a complete failure. In Sabarmati Ashram, Krish's mother expressed that it was called Dandi March as Gandhi carried a stick. This statement made Ananya's mother to comment on Punjabi people. So she said, 'Intellectually,

culturally zero. Something crass uneducated something' (51). Thus the tour to Sabarmati Ashram could not remove the cultural and attitudinal differences between the two mothers.

Krish complained that it was customary among Indians to accept national anthem, national currency, national teams. But they never accepted their children to get married outside their caste. But Krish wanted his children to be Indians neither Tamil nor Punjabi. Krish wanted young people to get married outside their community. Thus Krish preferred the amalgamation of Punjabi and Tamil culture.

Anil Mathur, country head of Citi Bank visited Chennai branch in an ordinary class with Madrasis. He shouted at his secretary for travelling with Madrasis in a business class seat. Everyone in the room got offended except Krish and Anil when he passed on a statement about Madrasis.

Verma, General Manager in the bank was boastful of his position. According to Verma, South Indians were top class number 2 officers but horrible in number one positions. While Verma (North Indian) was a General Manager, Swaminathan (South Indian), was a deputy manager. We could find the cultural confluence in Verma's statement which pushed Mr. Swaminathan to mental agony.

The Punjabis had firmly embedded ethnic prejudice against Tamilians. Krish's mother warned her son against Ananya who was his Tamil girl friend: 'Stay away from her. They brainwash, these people.'(56)

Krish confronted preconception against himself (a north Indian), when the auto driver charged him Rs.100 for the ride to his Chummary. He was surrounded by three other auto drivers in support of the Tamilian auto driver. He came out of this turmoil by "a sardarji". Krish tried to unite North and South Indian culture by wearing the lungi of Ananya's father, showing interest towards carnatic music, developing a taste for south Indian food.

Due to cultural, religious and regional division, the endangerments seemed to be inscrutable in the beginning. Krish adopted many methods to fit into a traditional South Indian family and Ananya also tried to convince Punjabi counterparts. Krish endured hardships in persuading his mother who felt biased towards dark-skinned Madrasis girls. She wanted her son to marry one of the wealthy Punjabi girls. Ananya's parents desiderated her daughter to marry a Tamil boy who settled well in life. Krish's attempts were in vain in the beginning. But he triumphed in his expedition by taking tuitions for Ananya's brother, helping her father in preparing power point presentation, giving her mother a chance to sing in a concert organized by his office.

Ananya helped one of Krish's cousins to get married. She too got victory over winning the hearts of Krish's family members. At last they persuaded both their parents. Verbal explosions took place between the two mothers in Goa. Their marriage became endangered after verbal explosions. Krish's father rescued Krish by visiting Ananya's family which was a pleasant surprise and the quantum leap too. Finally the two families felt satisfied and the conjugal knot was tied with the blessings of both parents.

Ananya gave birth to twins. Hospital authorities enquired them to which state they belonged. Krish replied that children belonged neither to Delhi nor to Chennai but to India. Krish's statement indicated that Indianness outstripped all the divisions of states. The most important societal practice is marriage which could be interpreted as the best method to remove the hurdles of caste system. Successful marriage is invigorated on the outlook of correlative understanding and affinity.

Bhagat handled the delicate problems of ethnic dissimilarities predominantly in the case of marriages. Though scientific and technological advancements take place, the perspective of the people are purely traditional. The author believes that Cultural Revolution would not take place unless immersed doctrines are expunged. In order to change the conservative minds of Indian people, ethnic insurgency is needed. He adopted the gentle but strong course of assimilation in order to unite two families. He tried to bridge the gap between the past and the present. Hence he did not act against the old traditional culture.

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