

## Chapter I

### Multicultural Setting in Chetan Bhagat *2 States*

#### Introduction

The novel, *2 States* is Chetan Bhagat's fourth bestselling novel. It was published in the year 2009. The fiction was also adapted for the Bollywood movie *2 States* starred by Arjun Kapoor and Alia Bhatt in the year 2014. The story of the novel is based on the real love story of the writer himself. He has skillfully used some of the aspects of the story of his own marriage with a view to making it a work of a full-fledged fiction. The novelist, a Delhi based Punjabi boy and his wife Anusha Suryanarayanan, a Tamil girl, happened to meet in IIM Ahmedabad for their post graduate study in Management. Their meeting brings special meaning to their lives as they soon decide to get married. They initially find it difficult to convince their parents with the issue of marriage as they are from two different cultures. However, they get married, but much later than they have expected. The delay in their marriage is the cause of their different cultural background, which seems almost impossible to the traditional people like their parents. They are not only from different two states, but also from two different cultures. The clash between the cultures brought some awkward situation in the process of their marriage. Their marriage establishes a new trend in the traditional society, and this presents an example of multi-cultural bridge.

Bhagat has given special attention to the plot construction of the fiction. The novel has been divided into six acts. Each act is given a separate title like; Act 1: Ahmedabad, Act 2: Delhi, Act 3: Chennai, Act 4: Delhi Reloaded, Act 5: Goa and the Final Act: Delhi & Chennai. The division of the story-content into various acts facilitates the readers for reading the present fiction in the most comfortable manner.

The novel has been written keeping in mind a variety of themes. One of the

prime issues of the work is the multi-cultural Indian society and socio-cultural clashes between the North Indian and the South Indian society. The writer, by telling a simple love story of a Punjabi boy Krish and Tamil girl Ananya, has revealed many facets of contemporary Indian society and the thinking and behavioral patterns of two different cultures in one country.

At the beginning of the first act, Ananya Swaminathan, the chief female character quarrels with a hostel mess staff for not serving good quality food. Krish and many other IIM students who have been used to eating the food are in the queue to get the same food. They are all looking at the strange behavior of the newly admitted student complaining about the bad quality of the food. Ananya finds it a very tough time to live on such food as she is in the hostel culture for the first time. Finally, Krish settles her temperament by giving his Rasgulla bowl to her. Here, Krish and Ananya come to know each other and gradually become friends.

As Ananya does not like eating the hostel food, they frequently go out for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Once, professor of economics insults Ananya for not being aware of the basic mathematical formula of the marginal utility curve. She becomes very disappointed for her lack of basic knowledge and the arrogance of the professors towards the students. Krish promises to help Ananya with Economics to strengthen her base of the subject. He frequently goes to Ananya's hostel room to teach her economics. They fall in love with each other and very soon they are serious in their love, so they plan to get married. They do not want to elope or register their marriage secretly. They want to get married with their parents' consent. They want their parents to be happy at the marriage. At this juncture, they fall into a trouble; the issue is that they belong to two different cultural backgrounds. Krish is a Punjabi boy and Ananya is a Tamil girl. The Punjabi culture and the Tamil culture are quite different, and

neither of the communities has the tradition of cross cultural marriages. Krish and Ananya, on the occasion of their Convocation Day, plan to introduce their parents to each other and let them know their intention of marrying each other. Both of Ananya's parents attend the function but Krishi's father does not appear there. Only his mother attends it. When the parents come and meet, they do not consent to their marriage because of cultural difference. Finally, Krish and Ananya, decides that they should convince their parents at any cost for their marriage. After the study is over, Krish goes to Delhi for some holidays before he joins City Bank as a banker and Ananya goes home in Chennai for some break before she joins HLL.

In the second act, Krish tries his best to convince his mother for accepting Ananya as her daughter-in-law. She is very conscious about the matters of marriage of her son as she has had a horrible experience in her married life, with her husband for his irresponsible nature to her and to the family. Krish has already broken up all relationship with his father because of his arrogance and strictness. His father a retired army man is a big failure in his life. He has attempted many occupations after his retirement but he has still not succeeded in any. He does not like the relatives from his wife's side who are very useless in his point of view. He thinks that his wife Kavita always accompanies those who keep on poisoning her ears against him. Both the husband and the wife are not in good terms with each other and they keep on quarrelling as they meet. Krish's father stays out of the house most of the times. Krish's mother does not agree to his choice and meanwhile, she arranges his meeting with a girl from his community. She knows that her son is highly educated and good looking so she will have a lot of dowry if she gets Krish married in their own community. Krish, being a modern and educated young boy (and also seriously in love with Ananya) opposes any kind of such social evils like dowry. He cannot

convince his mother about Ananya, so he falls into a very difficult situation. Even for his job, Kabita does not want him to choose Chennai as his job location fearing that he will try to contact Ananya, however, Krish chooses Chennai and goes there to try his luck and to convince Ananya's parents for their marriage.

The third act is located in Chennai. Krish comes to Chennai to join the job in 'City Bank' and stays in a rented room. His real intention is to meet Ananya's parents and win their trust. One day, he gets the letter from Ananya, inviting him to her residence. He becomes excited to read it. In the evening, he goes to Ananya's home as she had asked him to come for sure. Ananya is not at home when he reaches there. He has a very tough time dealing with Ananya's parents as they have very bad experience with Krish's mother in Ahmedabad. Ananya comes home and Krish gets a little relaxed. For Ananya, her parents have chosen a boy named Harish, a highly educated young man from their own community. Ananya somehow manages to dissuade Harish by disclosing the secret of her loss of virginity. Finally, Krish wins the trust and consent of Ananya's parents. He gives tuition to Ananya's brother Manju for the preparation of IIT entrance test. Krish helps Ananya's father to prepare the power point presentation for his office for the annual meeting. He prepares an excellent presentation which saves the office reputation of Ananya's father. Krish makes a setting for her mother Radha to sing at the City Bank musical concert with the outstanding singing celebrities like Hariharan and S P Balasubramaniam. He also organizes a family dinner in a big hotel and proposes all of them to be convinced for their marriage. Finally, Ananya's parents are convinced for their marriage. With that the first half of the battle is won and now Krish and Ananya go to Delhi to win the other half of the battle.

Krish comes to Delhi with Ananya. He manages his transfer to a City Bank branch in

Delhi. Ananya requests her office to assign a week's professional trip to Delhi. When they reach Delhi airport, Krish's mother comes to receive them. She did not know that her son was bringing his girl-friend to Delhi. Ananya was to stay at the company guest house in Delhi. Krish's mother Kavita becomes very irritated to see Ananya with her son in the beginning, but she allows Ananya come home. The girl tries to win the trust of Kavita but she fails in all her initial attempts. Krish's father is also not happy with the stay of Ananya at home. Ananya also comes to know about the family problems in Krish's house. With many efforts, she also wins the trust and consent of Krish's mother. Ananya is taken to Krish's maternal sister Minti's marriage ceremony. She comes to know about the prevalent dowry system in the Punjabi community.

The wedding ceremony, Minti's in-laws demanded more costly car in place of what they have offered as the dowry. Minti's parents have been fallen into a very shameful situation because of the unnecessary issue raised by her in-laws. It is quite illogical and unreasonable. As a strong opponent of the dowry system, Ananya jumps into the matter and with her bright mind and convincing way of speech, manages to change the mind of the in-laws for not taking any dowry and saves reputation of Minti's family. Krish's mother and her relatives become very much impressed by the beauty and intellectuality of the girl and Krish's mother Kavita finally crazes for their marriages.

The fifth act of the fiction is located in Goa, a world famous tourist spot in India with beautiful sea beaches and natural beauty. Krish and Ananya select Goa for the gathering of their families. As soon as both the families meet, the socio-cultural differences play a villainous role and the meeting turns into a great fiasco. Krish's mother cannot keep the cultural bias away while talking with Ananya's parents. Being

from the boy's side, Kavita expects more privileges from Ananya's parents, being the girl's side. The arguments and counter arguments spoil the situation to the extent that Ananya's father starts feeling chest pain. Both Ananya and Krish manage for reciprocal apologies but Ananya over-hears the talk between the son and the mother which again creates misunderstanding between Krish and Ananya. Krish tries to convince Ananya a lot but she is not in a mood to listen to him and Ananya talks of breaking up their relationship. Their relationship is broken due to no fault of their own. After that both of them become busy in their respective life. Krish tries to contact Ananya many times but he cannot. Ananya has stopped taking any call from Delhi on her cell phone. Her parents avoid giving Krish's call to her. Ananya's office receptionist avoids Krish's call by showing the excuse of her being busy in meetings. Finally Krish turns back to his work, without caring for his look, or for his health or anything.

In spite of all the unhappy incidents in the love story of Krish and Ananya, the final act brings a happy ending to the fiction. Krish attempts to call Ananya with the phone number of one of his City Bank visitors from Mumbai. Ananya picks up the call. Krish requests her not to cut the call. He tries to convince her that he still loves her a lot. Ananya is not ready to accept him but finally she agrees that she loves him and she cares for him. They cannot immediately find the way to settle down the issue between their parents. Meanwhile, Krish manages to talk to his father, and rays of hope appear for a good relation between the two. Krish flies to Chennai to meet Ananya. There she gives the news that her parents are planning to meet Harish again to talk about her marriage. He has some time left before he flies back to Delhi so he meets his former boss Bala, who becomes worried thinking about the present condition of Krish.

Krish comes back to Delhi. His mother has arranged to meet a girl in their community. Meanwhile, Krish's father asks him about Ananya. It was surprising for Krish that his father asked for Ananya. This time, he answers in a sincere manner. Krish helps his father by typing and printing three letters to be sent to his pension office. The next day, he receives a call from Ananya at 5:00 am in the morning. She conveys to him that his father came to Chennai and met her parents and asked their pardon on behalf of his wife. He settles down the issues and differences and now Ananya's parents have given their consent for their marriage. The next morning, Krish meets his father and thanks him for his help. Finally, marriage of Krish and Ananya is organized in Chennai following the Tamil way of wedding. Krish's father refuses to come to Chennai with the crowd of relatives of Krish's mother, but he manages to come by his own means at the end. With the happy and joyful marriage ceremony, the novel comes to a happy ending.

After a couple of years of Krish and Ananya's marriage, Ananya is admitted into the hospital as she was about to deliver a baby. To avoid the delivery pain and the scare of the sight, Ananya asks Krish about the progress of his book to be published as he was more interested in becoming a writer than a banker. There, the doctor gives the good news that she has delivered a baby boy. Immediately after that, the doctor sees one more baby and it is also delivered. The happiness of the couple is doubled with the birth of the twins. The nurse cleans the twin baby boys and hands the mover to Krish and she asks him from which state the twins will be considered. Krish very proudly answered that both of them will be from a state called India. A very good message is conveyed by the writer at the very last line of the novel, that there shall be no more cultural or social differences in the minds of the new generation of India. The new generation will be identified first as Indian but not as Punjabi, a Tamil or a

Gujarati. The writer has utilized many autobiographical elements in the fiction to make it more interesting. Even the birth of the twins at the end of the novel, also gives a realistic touch to the fiction as the writer and his wife also have twin boys named Ishaan and Shyam.

Along with the love story full of romance and uncertainties, the writer has skillfully pointed out the ways of prevalent multicultural conflicts and their impacts on the contemporary Indian society. He has also raised some of the very serious issues of contemporary Indian society like ruining of Indian family system, the issue of dowry, and many other social menaces. He has interestingly interwoven social realism with modern Romanticism in the present fiction. The traditional mentality of the old generation is mockingly criticized, and is replaced it with the modern outlook. The writer seems to have taken due care for the art of characterization in the novel. Both, his chief male and female protagonists, are skillfully depicted in the novel. They perfectly represent the modern generation which is far away from all the conventional, regional and cultural differences and pre-occupations of any type. All in all, the present fiction has all the potential to be a perfect piece of literature in Indian writing in English.

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The main problem of the study is based on the following research questions:



1. What types of cultural clashes have appeared in the society as depicted in *2 States*?
2. Why do such conflicts arise in multicultural society?, and
3. How can a cultural bridge be brought to remove cultural conflict?

On the basis of the research questions, the study is planned to conclude with the following objectives:

1. To identify the cultural conflict as depicted in *2 States*.
2. To explain the causes of the cultural conflicts, and
3. To describe the ways of bringing about cultural bridge.

The study will proceed with the hypothesis that modern social changes bring about the change in the traditional thinking about cultural bias and this helps bring the cultural bridge.

### **Review of Literature**

Chetan Bhagat's *2 States* has been analyzed by various scholars through different perspectives, and these perspectives have provided the readers with new ways of interpreting the work. The novel is taken as one of the most notable works with a powerful narrative style. In this regards, M. Aarthi remarks, "The narration is superb, sometime while reading you will feel like you watching a movie, also the book is full of great humor and lastly it also gives a message to the society that love marriage is bonding between two souls and not about what the society perceives of it" (569). It is the superb narrative style of the author that has fascinated diverse readers. The narration is moving and a reader is carried away by the images used in the story. Chetan Bhagat has given love-marriages as a prospective solution to various social evils like dowry and suicides.

Bhagat is more interested in the contemporary social issues than in the literary fashion of writing. His language and subject matters are more related to practical life

than ideal life. Common interest of the people, social evils and the love for nation has taken space in his writing. In this connection, Talluri Mathew Bhaskar remarks:

Chetan Bhagat is a writer with a mission. He does not believe in art for art's sake. He does not care about literary snobs and their biased criticism that often smacks of jealousy. He has no pretention of literary merit and can easily shrug off vicious criticism. He knows and admits that he writes popular fiction—stories of contemporary India that his readers can easily relate to, and not stories that are of literary merit. He is the first Indian writer who writes English novels for the masses. His books provide quick, pacy read and their plots have an unmistakably contemporary feel, although they do not employ any sophisticated style. He catches the pulse of the nation by using a language that the youngsters swear by. (74)

Though a writer of literary creation, Bhagat departs from most of the traditional writers in matters of howness and whatness. The style and the issues he chooses are not for art for art's sake, but for practical life. His focus on common people, national integrity, real social issues and their solution are what has made him a popular writer.

Writing about *2 States*, Bhaskar calls it an autobiographical work with an aesthetic appeal for common people. He asserts:

His fourth novel is a largely autobiographical book that narrates the story of his marriage with Anusha Suryanarayan and the socio-cultural barriers he and his wife faced coming as they did from two different regions of India. A major Hindi film bearing the same title was made from this book in 2009. He believes that a work of art should have an aesthetic appeal for a common man. (74)

Bhagat, by raising the issue of marriage of two young people from different states and cultures, he is trying to point out the problems and disharmony brought about in the Indian society. By pointing out this practical problem, he communicates the message to common people that nation as a whole is more important than the states within it. India is a land of multicultural society. In the book edited by Jagdish Batra, named, *21st Century Indian Novel in English: Emerging Issues and Challenges*, Priyanka Lamba, in her article “Beyond Barriers: Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*” has spoken about ‘multiculturalism’. According to her the term multiculturalism refers to the recognition or advancement of various cultures for practical reasons and also for the sake of multiplicity. It is useful to the demographic set up of a particular place, such as, a business organization, school, city or a nation (100). This article intends to look at Bhagat's *2 States* in order to find the presence of intercultural communication through the activities of the characters of the novel. Literature is the reflection of society. *2 States* is a narration of the complexities involved in inter-community and inter-state marriage. While talking about the cultural identity Beena Agarwal in her book *Chetan Bhagat: A Voice of Seismic Shift in Indian English Fiction* says that cultural identity is a complex phenomenon and it includes all possible modes of habits and experiences. “The reconciliation of two cultures becomes an enigma that seems to follow no conclusive end” (101). The love marriage between Krish and Ananya becomes more difficult and complex as they belong to the two opposite cultures of India. The novel draws our attention to the cultural variances and the bigotries of the people from these two parts of India.

Reena Sablok in her book *The Emergence of the Best-Seller Chetan Bhagat and His Metro Fiction* has said that Chetan Bhagat has brought the theme of Pan-Indian identity to this novel (143). There are frequent references to the food habits of

the Punjabi community and Chetan Bhagat excavates at their obsession with food through his memorable one-liners – “Nothing soothes an upset Punjabi like dairy products”(44). To manifest her right on her son Krish, his mother took one biscuit and put that in his mouth to assert her maternal right on Krish (50). For Punjabis food triggers an emotional response (222). Bhagat seems to have gone deep into the cultures the major characters are connected to.

According to Priyanka Lamba, the cultural differences, between the North and the South India have their origins in the age-old concept of Aryan and Dravidian races. “This age-old concept of Aryan and Dravidian race has been found incorrect, but this theory of great divide has already done the great damage by creating rifts in the Indian society” (102). The North Indians are considered the progenies of Aryans while the South Indians of Dravidians. Along with dissimilarities in language groups, there is a dissimilarity of complexion in between the two cultures. While most of the North Indians are fair, the majority of the South Indians are black in their complexion. The Aryans defeated them, ignored the local culture and pushed the Dravidians to South.

Beena Agarwal in her book *Chetan Bhagat: A Voice of Seismic Shift in Indian English Fiction* says that Chetan Bhagat in his presentation of his idea of marriages discovers the social issues like the idea of dowry in traditional marriage and the examples of matrimonial alliances in the developing form of conducts in multi-cultural and multinational societies. While mother is resolute to compel Krish to arrange a formal meeting with Pammi Aunty’s daughter, but Krish makes a candid confession, “I allowed my mind to be trapped again by thoughts of my South Indian girl” (60). He through the difference of the attitude of Krish and his mother points out the cultural diversities in Punjabi and Tamilian families.

In the novel, Bhagat demarcates very entertainingly a series of cultural features of Tamil Brahmin and Punjabi communities which are in sharp contrast to each other. In one occasion it is found that Krish makes fun of Tamilian's habit of reading the newspaper. During the marriage ceremony too, Ananya's relatives are found to pass copies of the newspaper. Krish's family has a fascination for 'bright complexion' (56), whereas the South Indians are dark and love wearing heavy bright coloured sarees with lot of jewellery. Describing Ananya's relatives he says "Given their dusky complexion, everyone's teeth shown extra white. All old women wore as much gold as their bodies could carry and silk saris shiny as road reflectors.

In her observation of the novel *2States*, Beena Agarwal (165) says that it is remarkable that Ananya and Krish survive in their private life. But for the settlement of their marriage both are committed to their family traditions. For them the emotional bonding with their parents is as significant as their personal relations. When Krish asks "What do you want to be?" with a light hearted laughter she admits, "Well, I do not know. My mother already feels I am too ambitious and independent (17). For Krish, the greatest challenge is to make spaces in Ananya's family where South Indian tradition of food and living dominate. Similarly, Krish manages all events in such a manner that Ananya can prove herself a dynamic and docile daughter-in-law fit to adjust in a North Indian Punjabi family. According to Agarwal, in the novel *2States*, Bhagat negotiates the issue of inter-community marriages in context of the synthesis of culture and solidarity of nations. "He looks forward to cultural combination and harmonious survival of man beyond social prejudices" (111). The new perceptions of social relationship require the reorientation of the social system to ensure a balanced mode of relations to resist the forces that are creeping fast in the era of globalization and multicultural. It ensures that he observes human conditions

entirety and no longer celebrates the idealized images of life.

Chetan Bhagat brings out the subtleties that exist in the lifestyle and outlook towards the life of people from different states. Indian society is not liberal for mixed marriages between different castes, religion or geographies. This couple come from two different states in India and thus they face hardships in convincing their parents for the acceptance of their marriage. They suffer because of generation gap, communication gap and cultural gap. He depicts complex and deeply rooted socio-cultural problems of multi-cultural India light heartedly. He wants the readers to laugh at their follies, their prejudices and their wrong doings. He does not attack them directly, but through fiction he attempts to make them to realize their faults and gives a chance to rectify their mistakes in their real life. From the cultural perspective, they believe they are the care takers of their culture. One can compare Bhagat's dictum in the light of the above encyclopedia's concept of marriage and the rituals, and the ceremonies of it. One can easily think of the greater complexities of Indian culture as he compares India to the world around.

### **Structure of the study**

The thesis is divided into three chapters complemented with different sub-titles. The first chapter presents introduction part, literature review and organization of study. The chapter evokes the ideas of multiculturalism and Chetan Bhagat depicts a realistic account of his own love affairs leading to marriage and all the difficulties that are faced by them. Both Krish and Ananya represent two different cultures and two different states. It shows how the variations in two cultures create problems in the matrimonial alliances and how the couple has to fight against the fate to be in the wed-lock. Here we can see the hurdle in love and this is very true in the case of Krish and Ananya. The main focus is about inter-caste marriage which is still a taboo in

India.

The second chapter is the major part of the study. It begins by defining culture and brief introduction to cultural variations. It applies multicultural theory in *2 States*. Bhagat deals with the grim realities of life and the difficulties faced by the young generation for the love marriage. Parents of both admire their own culture and blame another's culture. Both look down upon each other for different reasons. They enjoy each other's food, but hate each other for the unknown reasons. They have diversities in their customs and rituals. Modern Indian youth, grown up in an atmosphere of cosmopolitanism and globalization and, refuse to carry the old, conventional baggage of cultural dissimilarities and racial discrimination like their parents. *2 States* is a typical novel which forecasts the cultural contradictions between two different states of India. The degree of arrogance has been slightly reduced due to education

The third chapter presents harsh realities of life and modern culture life of young generation and problem faced by the young generation in his works. He brings about corporate culture is a term used to describe beliefs and a value system that provides its unique taste and attitude to a marriage in multi-culture. He selects subject which he reader can associate with different culture. He has faction with a mix of sentiment, romance, religion relationship, culture ,economic and family relationship and social message depicted in Chetan Bhagat novels several have objected to the relations an either too simplistic or patriarchal value and also he truly captures the essence of different India culture.

## **Chapter II**

### **Gaps and Bridges in Society: A Theoretical Overview**

Culture is a phenomenon strictly related to human life and human society. It is often placed opposite to nature because it is man-made system of conducting human life. The word 'culture' is derived from the Latin root 'colere' which means to inhabit, to cultivate or to honour. It refers to the capability of human beings to classify and inhibit the various experiences to encode and imbibe them meaningfully. According to C.N. Shankar Rao, "Culture is a very broad term that includes in itself all our walks of life, our modes of behaviour, our philosophies and ethics, our morals and manners, our customs and traditions, our religious, political, economic and other types of activities. Culture includes all that man has acquired in his individual and social life." (189). The definition is clear enough to claim that everything except what has been given to us by nature remains inside our culture. It incorporated everything and every aspect of life and society we learn after birth.

Multiculturalism is the existence of various cultures in a social setting. In such situation, people who practice different lifestyles reside together. Traditionally, people following one cultural practices look down upon those following other cultural practices. But with some modern concept and knowledge, we can see harmony among the people following diverse culture. For example, the American society today may be one of the best examples of multicultural society with high level of harmony. Rob Pope briefly defines multiculturalism as, "awareness of the distinctively plural and hybrid nature of all Cultures" (144). Thus multiculturalism is the product of the combination of diverse cultures. It is almost impossible to find a mono cultural setting in today's world moving towards globalization. According to Pope, multiculturalism includes different races, different ethnic groups, and different classes, rank, castes,



sexuality, occupation, gender, age, etc. (144-45). It means we cannot confine the meaning of multiculturalism in a single entity of human life and society.

Multiculturalism is sometimes loosely taken to have positive connotation, that is, it also gives the concept that harmony is the outcome of the multicultural setting.

In this connection, Pope remarks:

Finally it should also be noted that multiculturalism is a term that can be used in a superficial, merely expedient way. It can be used to promote the sense that everyone should simply 'get on' with one another-- regardless of persisting disparities in access to education, work, housing, health care, etc. Then the concept papers over the cracks in a fundamentally unequal system. Some purportedly 'multicultural' programmes may encourage a kind of sham or fragile consensus, but without addressing the real (largely economic) causes of conflict. It also depends upon whose interests are really being served by the maintenance or dissolution of existing cultural differences.

(145)

As seen around the world, multicultural setting has bipolar reactions: that is, we find both inherent differences and superficial unity. But in today's globalized world, multicultural situation directly or indirectly tells people that tolerance and brotherhood is essential in today. However, in the name of harmony, a group may invest greater interest in it.

Multiculturalism is a late twentieth century literary, socio-political movement. It is an ideology that considers all cultures and issues of study. It has influenced literature, art, education, and social. The picture of "melting pot", which was used before where minorities give up their individual identity to mix and integrate fully

with general society, has shifted to model called multiculturalism where unique identities remain intact and contribute to the greater development. Deb says; Multiculturalism draws our attention to the differences that inform our social existence and not merely to what is common to all human beings. These differences are constitutive of what we are and wish to be although in other respects we may have the same concern as the rest (106).

Multiculturalism means the acceptance, and promotion of various cultures in cities or nations. It expresses the respect for diversity, and advocates equitable status to distinct ethnic and religious groups. It is compared to 'bowl of salad' where every piece maintains its taste and adds to total. Multiculturalism tries to avoid the use of 'us' and 'them'. In other words it defends cultural rights of every group as well as individual.

The present study attempts to analyze the different behaviour and activities of the people from different cultures. This is the multicultural setting. The people in this novel, both the older and the younger generation, have a multicultural background. This provides ample scope to make a scholar comments on multicultural setting in the novel. Side by side, the people who are antagonist due to their different cultural have come to reconcile with each other. This aspect of the novel provides enough background to explore cultural bridge in the story.

### **Diverse Cultural Setting of the Characters in *2States***

People follow different religions and sects of their choice. People of one caste or community differ from the other in matters of dress, food habits, languages, dialects, customs and traditions, and many other aspects of life. The Indian society consists of innumerable diversities and differences from their physical features to the ways of living life. The reason is that, India is a large country with diverse cultures

and geographical regions having all the diversities and differences, however, they experience a common identity as Indians first. This is the main message that Chetan Bhagat tries to convey in the novel *2 States*.

In *2 States*, Bhagat seems to raise his voice against the present situation of diversity in Indian society. Through the chief characters, Krish, Ananya and their parents, Bhagat presents diverse cultural setting of the characters, which sets the background for cultural clash. He has raised his voice against the prevalent diversity in the society and its effects on the new generation. The new generation has been taught throughout their schooling and higher studies that India is their country and they are proud of being Indian. This is only in principle. When they step into the society, they experience a different world, a world where there are differences and diversities of all kinds and what they have been taught about the national integrity have no meaning.

Most of the societies have their own sets of rules and traditions which may be different from their national values. This difference brings a kind of generation conflict. For example, Krish and Ananya never thought of their status, their cultural difference seriously while studying in the same institute. Ananya, being a born Tamil, does not feel any hesitation to eat non-vegetarian food or drinking wine. She wears short cloths and moves with her boyfriend freely. Even Krish has lived most of his years in hostels so he has never grown any cultural complexes in his life. He frankly tells Ananya, "I am Punjabi, though I never lived in Punjab. I grew up in Delhi. And I have no idea about my caste, but we do eat chicken. And I can digest bad sambhar better than Tamil Brahmins" (7). Both Krish and Ananya never have any problem in their friendship or even their serious relationship because of their cultural or social differences. They are very happy with each other. They move together in market, eat,

drink and smoke together, even they share the common bed, but they never experience anything unusual because of their different social and cultural backgrounds.

The real problems start in their lives when Krish and Ananya plan to get married with the consent of their parents, who are highly influenced by their cultural and social norms and values. Krish's mother wants her son to marry a girl from the Punjabi community so that she may get dowry and a daughter-in-law who can be under her control. Ananya's parents, in spite of all their mentality, feel that their daughter should marry a boy from their community so that their social reputation may not be spoiled. These are some of the examples in the novel which start the cultural clash.

The main theme of the novel is the differences between Punjabi and Tamil culture. The protagonist is torn between cultural diversity. There are many differences in culture between Krish and Ananya's families, which makes it difficult for them to fit in. There is a significant difference between the Punjabi and Tamil cultures. Bhagat has made deep analysis of this issue in the novel. There are a lot of different customs that are followed in marriages from different parts of the world.

Ananya is a Tamil girl and Krish a Punjabi boy. Tamil culture and Punjabi cultures have practices different from each other. The author provides brief descriptions of the Tamil people, who are known for their culture. They place a great importance on education and enlightenment. Tamilian love educated people. (83) Tamil people are known for their love and care for their education. In the meeting between Kavita and Radha, the customs of both cultures were revealed. Radha visits Kavita without any gifts, which upsets the latter. According to Punjabi culture, Ananya's parents have committed a punishable offense when they visit guests without gifts. It shows Punjabi culture of giving gifts. "Kavita gifts a beautiful tussar silk sari

to Radha and says that she purchased it from an Assam store. It seems that both Kavita and Radha get high-quality silk saris from Kanjeevaram.” Kavita continues “Actually, Punjabis are quiet large-hearted people. We like to live well. When we meet people, we give them nice gifts” (223) This is clear from their conversations that they come from different cultural backgrounds and are proud of their own communities.

In spite of Krish and Ananya being from different cultures, they succeeded in arranging their wedding by persuading their parents. It is already clear that they are from different cultures. Even in their wedding, a lot of cultural differences are seen and they have new experience of the ceremony, which is held in a beautiful setting. “She wore an Amaroon Kanjeevaram sari with a mustard yellow-gold border... Ananya looked prettier than any girl on any Tamil film poster ever made” (254). The wedding takes place in a close-knit family setting with relatives from both the bride's and groom's cultures participating in prayers and blessings. Dance is a popular part of Punjabi weddings, while rituals and chants are important in Tamil weddings. Dishes of food also differ from culture to culture. In the novel we find different dishes used in Tamil and Punjabi culture. Krish says that Punjabi food is a significant factor in this culture. “For Punjabis, food triggers an emotional response, like say music”(222). Food has the ability to evoke strong emotions, like music. Chicken, wine, parathas, and butter are significant food items that they consume. “Food stalls served eight cuisines Punjabi, Chinese, home-style Indian, Thai, Italian, Mexican, Goan, and Lebanese” (208). A Punjabi wedding is incomplete without food and drinks. There are a variety of cuisines at Punjabi weddings, including Punjabi, and some other intercontinental dishes. Other restaurants serve samosas, tikkas, healthy salads, etc.

In contrast to Punjabi culture, Tamil food is described as simple food. Tamil have dishes different from Punjabi's. Talking about Tamil food, Krish says, "We ordered kozhakattai, masala paniyaram, adikoozh, kandharappam, seeyam and athirasam" (181). Other common foods in Tamil culture as mentioned in the novel are rice, sambhar, rasam, idlies and chutney. The description above shows the characters in the novel are from different cultural setting.

The Tamil people eat rice based veg recipes, but Punjabis are non-vegetarians who regularly eat chicken and drink wine. Not only that the way of serving dishes is different in the south India, where banana leaves are used as plates:

We sat on the floor for dinner. Anaya's father passed me a banana leaf.

I wondered if I had to eat it or wipe my hands with it.

'Place it down, it is the plate,' Ananya whispered...

I followed Ananya as she loaded her plate with rice, sambhar, funny looking vegetables and two kinds of brown powders. 'What is this?' I asked.

'Gunpowder, try it.' She said.

I tasted it. It felt like sawdust mixed with chilies. (93-94)

Cultural differences cause difficulty to a normal way of life. Krish feels isolated in the new environment in Chennai because of the new people and new language. He tells Kavita that he plans to convince Ananya's parents regardless of what she thinks. "He describes the Tamil form as follows: "I am battling Ananya's parents here anyway. This is such a strange city; I am welcome nowhere" (158). The lack of social interaction can lead to psychological stress and other problems. He feels out of place among the new cultural people and their customs. He feels geographically and linguistically removed from Ananya's parents due to language barriers. "Can you

speak in English? I can't follow the conversation..." (95). When he first arrives in Chennai, he gives a detailed description of the customs and the appearances and attire of the people there. He says that all Tamil women wear flowers in their hair.

### **Cultural Clash in *2 States***

*2 States*, represents the cultural differences between the Punjabi culture and the Tamil culture on a variety of aspects like language, food, dress, traditions and customs and many other ways of living life. The writer has also centered considerable focus on the cultural clashes arising out of cultural diversities. Bhagat depicts complex and deeply rooted cultural problems of multicultural India light heartedly. He does not attack them directly but through fiction, he attempts to make them realize their faults and gives a chance to solve their problems in their real life. Through the novel, Bhagat explores series of cultural quarreling between the families of the south and the north India. In one of the instances, the novelist arouses a comic situation at the time of convocation when Krish's mother makes racial and ironic remark on Ananya's family by addressing them as 'Madrasis.' ( ...). Through this remark, Bhagat tries to uncover the conventional mentality of Indian people. It is shown when Krish and Ananya's parents meet for the first time. Krish's mother expresses her presumption about the Tamilian girls. "I am under control. These South Indians do not know how to control their daughters. From Hema Malini to Sridevi, all of them trying to catch Punjabi men.' My mother had spoken so loud that the entire row heard her. "For a few moments, people's attention shifts from the convocation ceremony to us" (48). Krish's mother in a sense seems out of rank in that crowd of formal ceremony. The way she talks and expresses her views is the result of what she has learnt in her culture. She shows the conservative and typical old Indian mindset towards her son's girlfriend Ananya. She thinks that the South Indian girls are a flirt

and Ananya is one of those types.

Krish tries to calm mother down but he does not succeed to convince her. His mother expresses her negative attitudes towards the South Indian girls as a reason to dislike Ananya: “This is what I mean when I said about South Indian girls. There are somany cases in Delhi only,’ my mother said, itching to slam Ananya's mom again. ‘Mom, chill,’ I said” (52). Her remarks are so rude that they hurt Ananya’s parents. It affects Krish and Ananya’s relationship. She tries to separate them away in front of their family.

Bhagat depicts complex and deeply rooted cultural problems of multicultural India but light heartedly. Krish and Ananya arrange the date for their parents to meet. Two families need to meet and talk about the marriage. Unfortunately, it creates a new problem. It is hard to make two families from the two different cultures and states like each other's. They also have different tastes in food and drink. Differences are found in their preference of meals and the way they eat. “Few things bring out the differences between Punjabis and Tamilians than buffet meals. Tamilians see it like any other meal... For Punjabis, food triggers an emotional response, like say music. And the array of dishes available in a buffet is akin to the Philharmonic Orchestra” (222). Krish’s explanation show that Punjabis will put everything in the one plate. Meanwhile, Tamilians pick only what they like.

In another situation, the difference between Punjabis and Tamilians is shown from their favourite food. “Chicken is too good. Did you try?’ my mother said and lifted up a piece to offer them. ‘We are vegetarian,’ Ananya’s mother said coldly even as the chicken leghung mid-air” (223). Ananya’s family is a Tamil Brahmin. They pick vegetarian dishes. It does not match with Krish’s family who like chicken and beer. Those differences lead to a clash in matters of dishes.



The cultural diversity between the Punjabi culture and the Tamil culture is reflected in the present fiction in their food and clothes patterns. The Punjabi people eat more spicy food. Ananya's family tries to be nice, but Krish's mother thinks that her people are the best. She begins to compare them with Tamilian:

‘What OK? You may be jumping with joy inside. Where will you find such a qualified boy like him?’ My mother said.

‘Actually, we do get qualified boys. Tamils value education a lot. All her uncles are engineers and doctors. Ananya had many matches from the USA.’

‘Yeah, but they must be all dark boys. Were there any fair as Krish?’

Look- wise you cannot match Punjabis,’ My mother said. (226)

The woman does not care what other people might have felt at her uncultured remarks, but she goes on talking about the Tamilians negatively.

Ananya's mother defends her family and society. Some type of misunderstanding is created in the meeting. Ananya wants Krish's mother to apologize. It is difficult to make Krish's mother apologize to Ananya's parents. Therefore, Krish has to make her mother agree to do that and he pretends that he is on his mother's side. Krish says that he will make Ananya obey them after the marriage. Unfortunately, Ananya overhears the conversation. She thinks that it is a manipulation. As a result, they break up. This example shows how serious clashes have appeared due to cultural variation.

The further conversation between Krish's mother and Ananya's mother clearly reveals the difference of nature between the people of the two different cultures:

‘You may have landed my son, but it doesn't mean he has no value.’

‘We haven't trapped anyone, Ananya's mother said finally. ‘He used to

keep coming to our house. We are decent people so we couldn't say no.'

'Mom,' Ananya said.

'Why should I be quiet and get falsely accused? We haven't trapped anyone.

Aren't we suffering? We all know Krish's father is against this. Our relatives

will ask. Still we are accepting it,' Ananya's mother said.

'What are you accepting? You don't even deserve my boy,' my mother said, her voice nice and loud.

'Please, don't shout. We are educated people,' Ananya's father said.

'Are you saying we are not educated? My mother challenged.

'He meant "we" as in all of us, right, Uncle? We all are educated,' I hastily put

in. (226-227)

The conversation shows how possessive and arrogant Krish's mother is. She stupidly says that her highly educated son has been manipulated by Ananya's family. It is quite unreasonable.

Bhagat has pointed out very complex and deeply rooted cultural problems of multicultural India lightheartedly in the present fiction.<sup>2</sup> *States* mirrors the cultural clashes of Indian society for the readers so that they can realize their common errors and also possibly rectify them. He gives multitude of cultural conflicts which are predominant in modern Indian society through his works.

Language is another aspect that brings differences between the people from the south and the north India. Krish tells us how the linguistic difference brings

cultural clash:

Ananya came to my place at two o'clock. I greeted her politely in the living room. My flat mates exchanged shy glances with each other as she greeted them. Sandil spoke to her in Tamil. Tamilians love to irritate non-Tamil speakers by speaking only Tamil in front of them. This is the only silent rebellion in their otherwise repressed, docile personality. (101)

Naturally, people get irritated if they are vexed by using language other than they speak. Use of different language in a group from another linguistic group is a type of insulting act if a common language can be used there.

After completing his studies, when Krish comes back to Delhi he tries to convince his mother to accept Ananya as her daughter-in-law, but his mother Kavita is not ready to do so. When Ananya calls him, Kavita keeps a sharp watch on what her son and that girl talk about. One can observe one more example of cultural differences when the mother and the son are talking about after the call ends:

‘Madrasi Girl?’ ‘Ananya.’ I said.

Stay away from her. They brainwash, these people.

Mom, I like her. In fact, I love her.

See, I told you. They trap you, my mom declared.

Nobody has trapped me, mom. she is a nice girl. She is smart, intelligent, good looking. She has a good job. Why would she need to trap

anyone?

They like North Indian men.

Why? What's so special about North Indian men?

North Indian are fairer. The Tamilians have a complex. (56)

Krish's mother is so biased against the Tamil people and the way they behave. She exaggeratedly describes the features of the Tamil people in a negative way. The mindset that she has had is the product of her culture.

The same racial biases are there in the minds of the other minor characters like Shipra Masi, Swaran aunty and Kamla mami who belong to Punjabi community. Kavita's sister Shipra has racial bias for the south Indian people. She thinks that south Indians are black and they practice black magic over the Punjabi boys to get their daughters married to them. Shipramasi comes to know from Pummi aunty that Krish would leave the job of Citibank to be a writer. She asks Krish to give her reason for that. She immediately realizes her prejudices for the south Indian people who love books. She says:

That south Indian girl must have told him. They love books. Shipra Masi said. 'Nobody has asked me to be a writer. Anyway, it is none of your business, Shipra Masi. Nobody Look at him, these black people have done their black magic, Shipra masi said. Don't be foolish, Kavita, tell Pammi he will remain in Citibank and make a lot of money. Get his price properly. (68)

As mentioned earlier, the writer also tries to reveal that the South Indian people also have certain racial prejudices for the north Indian people.

### **Reconciliation in Multicultural Setting in 2States**

The novel depicts the story of a love affair between two major characters Krish and Ananya in a multicultural setting. Krish is from north India and Ananya from the south. The love affair between them develops into a marriage through various ups and downs. Cultural differences play major role to cancel

the marriage. Especially, the parents of both the boy and the girl are reluctant in this marriage, but the young couple tries their best to convince their parents, and finally they succeed.

Krish and Ananya, both college students, meet up in a college and establish a relationship despite their cultural differences. Their families however, are deeply rooted. The differences between the North and South India are also polar opposite. It is seen in the choice of food, language, career choices, dresses, to the way of communications. The young couple however, sets out to sort out the differences between the families and find reconciliation for their marriage.

In the novel we find such examples that are oriented to convince the culturally biased people. The youngsters try to get married under consent of their parents. Ananya's mother angrily reacts to her daughter's friendship with a Punjabi boy his way: "Mom, stop hyperventilating. He is my boyfriend. You understand?" It is interesting to think how Ananya defends her love for Krish. But her mother explodes in anger, "You are my daughter, do you understand? You are spoiling our name in the community, do you understand? I brought you up, educated you, made sacrifices for you, do you understand?" (151). The mother sounds so much possessive of her daughter that the daughter cannot do anything on her own.

Krish's mother frequently tries to convince her son to forget Ananya and marry a girl of her choice but he does not agree to it. She puts forwards the reason that Krish is imposing the girl of his choice on her. The following conversation between the son and the mother reveals the fact of over parental possessiveness of the Krish's mother for him.

‘Mom, she is not just a friend. I want to marry her.’

‘Oh, Krish, don’t start this so late at night. A girl friend is fine, do whatever you want in Chennai. But why are you forcing her on us?’

‘I am not imposing. I am telling you about my choice of life partner,’ I said ‘Leave your job if you have to. We will find another one. There is a Canara Bank right across our house.

‘Mom, I am in Citibank. It is an MNC.’

‘Fine, we will look for a multinational. Swear on me you will ask for a transfer. Don’t be trapped in that city with the horrible black people.

(159)

The mother is so hard to his imploring son. The boy seems to be trying to convince his mother. There are other examples in which Krish tries to convince his parents and other relatives. The following conversation reflects how the people keep complexes over inter-caste marriage:

‘I have an educated girl. I like her. She has a job, she is pretty, decent, hard-working and has a lot of integrity. What is your problem?’ ‘Son’, Shipra masi said, her voice soft for reconciliation, ‘that is all fine. But how can we marry Madrasis? Tomorrow your cousins will want to marry a Gujarati. ‘Or Assamese?’ My mother added. ‘My god!’

Shipra masi said. ‘So what? Aren’t they all Indian? Can’t they be good human beings? I said.

Shipra masi turned to my mother. ‘Your son is gone. I am sorry, but this boy belongs to Jayalalitha now.’ (69).

The boy sounds definite for his determination in his marriage to Ananya. His expressions give the impression that he cannot be dissuaded to marry Ananya.

On the other side, Ananya’s parents are also not giving their consent for their

marriage. Ananya keeps on rejecting marriage proposals from her community giving one or the other reasons. Ananya's mother is much worried about Ananya's marriage. She keeps on consulting some local priests whose charm may help her daughter forget her boyfriend. One priest gives her a pendant to be given to Ananya to keep it with her which may make her forget Krish but she does not believe in all such things and she throws the pendant in the Bay of Bengal. Krish has already taken his placement in Chennai. He tries to convince Ananya's parents for their approval. He gives tuitions to Ananya's younger brother Manju who is preparing for IIT entrance. He helps Ananya's father for preparing his office presentation and all. They really like Krish for his sincerity and intellectuality. Despite all these, Ananya's parents do not agree to the marriage as they fear of social humiliation.

When the parents meet together, the air of comfort began to blow. The parents finally give in to the young couple's insistence. Ananya's father says, "If you take care of my daughter, then it is a yes from me" (183). A jubilant Ananya hugs her father, further the real melting point comes when the mother also gives her consent but she begins to wither her concern, "It is not that we don't like you. But our communities...." (184). She then quips, "I know he will take care of you. But will Krish's parents treat my daughter with respect?" To this, Krish responds, "We'll work on that, too... if they do, then?" Perhaps Krish's remark is one of the pillars to support their stance to marry.

At this Ananya's mother says, "Then it is a yes from me" (183). The nod marks the triumphant moment for both the lovers who finally convince their parents for the marriage. Like typical Indian families both the families finally gave their green signal for their conjugal life. Wrongfully taken two polar opposites North and South cultures make their way from differences to the reconciliation at last.

## Chapter III

### Cultural Bridge in *2States*

The present study is an intensive literary analysis with the prime objective of exploring the major issues of multicultural Indian society and possible ways of cultural bridges, especially as reflected in the novel *2 States*. The deep analysis of the novel has brought to the surface many issues of contemporary multicultural Indian society. The typical issues raised by the writer Chetan Bhagat in the novel are the issue of antagonism among the people from diverse cultures, disturbed interpersonal relationship, issue of the dowry system, issue of pre-marital relationship, ways of cultural bridges, and certain other issues related to youths like modernized thinking and behavioral pattern, the generation gap and generation clashes of the modern generation. The study is focused on the impact of multicultural setting on disturbed family relationships, interpersonal emotional clashes, misunderstanding between the people from different cultures and possibility of cultural bridges.

The story of the novel develops from disparity to solidarity. Krish and Ananya get united through their love affair. They do not care about their cultural taboos and regional thinking. Only love is what they want to make the part of their lives. They succeed in love making process, but it is not the end of their mission. Marriage is the goal, but their parents stood as the unbreakable wall between them. There is nothing else but the cultural difference that forces the parents to reject their marriage. As they think that marrying a boy or a girl from another culture is like a taboo. They unreasonably take their own culture superior to others'. Certain cultural practices have made them arrogant. These are some of the major illogical views that the parents of both sides have clung to. Strong motivation is needed to change them from their cultural arrogance, and the young couple have been able to change them with their



different activities, behaviour, and counseling.

There are two findings of this study. The first finding explains the impact of cultural conflict on individuals. The conflict causes family conflicts resulting in emotional disturbance. In the novel we find Krish and Ananya being emotionally disturbed when they know that their parents have rejected their marriage. Not only that the parents also demonstrate their strong disgust towards the planned marriage between Krish and Ananya. Moreover, the cultural difference has also caused family conflict. The family conflicts play an important role in their emotional development. Initially, being unable to settle the matter, Krish runs away from the situation, but with the help of his girlfriend he tries to face his problems. He does not run anymore because wherever he runs, his father's shadow stays with him. Krish begins to face the reality, letting go the past to build the new future with Ananya. He leaves his adolescence and moves forward as an adult.

This study reveals that the cross cultural marriage takes place between Krish and Ananya. It happens when the characters realize their blindness with the perspective of the single culture. Initially both of the families show an extreme pride of their own respective culture. Therefore, Krish and Ananya face the diversity between the two cultures. However, the young couple has been able to erase the illogical, unreasonable practices of their cultures. They try to mix themselves and become a part of the multi-culture itself. They pass their ego; leave it behind and blend together to solve their problems, but it is very difficult for them to convince and persuade their parents. Sooner or later everything should come to an end. The same happens in the novel, too. The ending of the story is predictable, we find the characters coming into a common ground. The lead characters get together at the end. This is the pleasant thing about novel.

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