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Culture Clash and Duality of Youth in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*

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Abstract

This present study points out into the portrayal of a Duality of Youth Culture in Chetan Bhagat's novel 2 States: The Story of My Marriage. The protagonists Krish and Ananya serve to explore the complexities of cultural identity and the unique challenges faced by young individuals as they navigate the conflicting expectations of traditional values and modern aspirations in India. These two central characters come from different cultural backgrounds, Krish being a Punjabi from Delhi and Ananya a Tamil Brahmin from Chennai. Their love story serves as a lens through which Bhagat explores the complexities of cultural identity in contemporary India. Instead, they undergo internal conflicts and external pressures and they must reconcile their desires with the traditions and values passed down by their families. Because of the important cultural norms and values, Krish and Ananya can easily change their way of lives. The reflection of a journey of Krish and Ananya's personal experiences, conflicts, and their attempts to negotiate their diverse identities and cultural homogenization. Through the valuable theoretical insights provided by Paul Du Gay in Cultural Identity Theory it the captivating dynamics of contemporary youth in India is shown. The dual nature - a fusion of traditional values and modern influences is prevalent in modern day youths.

Key Words: Cultural Clash, Identity, Marriage, Youth, Duality

This study focuses on the problems cultural clash due to duality of youth culture in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*. Bhagat's *2 States* is the story about a boy and a girl belonging to different types of socio-cultural contexts. The novel presents the story of Krish Malhotra and Ananya Swaminathan, two young individuals from different cultural backgrounds who embark on a journey of love and marriage. Krish, a Punjabi from Delhi, and Ananya, a Tamil Brahmin from Chennai, confront the complexities arising from their diverse cultural heritage and the clash between North and South Indian traditions. The characters fall in love and they face difficulties due to their cultural belongingness. They face difficulties from society because their traditions and selves differ, as postulated in the text. Krish, a boy, belongs to a Punjabi family, and Anusha, a girl, belongs to South Indian Tamil family. The cultural norms and values of South Indian Tamils and Punjabi are quite different. Their way of life, thinking, doing, and perceptions differ. Therefore, these two youths, Krish and Ananya, are unable to unite rather, they deal with the situation of cultural clash and familial tussle.

The major characters suffer from dual nature cultures and differences in their cultural identity because of their socio-cultural barriers. India is a multicultural society. Though their nationality is Indian, they belong to different nations with their own cultural belongings. They undergo differences in their identity and culture which is the root cause to set them apart. Bhagat portrays his fictitious characters from different cultures to postulate multiculturalism, where people suffer due to their cultural identity. The concept of bipolarity is visible throughout the text, which underlines the plot of the fiction. In doing so, cultural identity insights propounded by Stuart Hall's theory of representation is the theoretical parameter in consideration with Myron Lustig's inter-cultural competence serving as the major theoretical

parameter to carry out this research.

In this novel, the writer has skillfully shown different types of cultural facets that are contradictory relationships, although they are the cultural assets of their nation. Punjabi people have some kind of their cultural norms and values, so as their sentimental and emotional affinity goes. Punjabi cultural norms and Tamils have distinct cultural norms and values; for example, Punjabi food is chiefly meat based while Tamilian food totally opposes meat. Cultures are not stable rather, they are changeable phenomena, which Chetan Bhagat wants to show through this novel.

The story begins in the IIM Ahmedabad mess hall as Krish sees her "stood to places ahead of he (me) in the lunch line at the IIM mess" (3). He catches sight of a beautiful Tamilian girl, Ananya, from Chennai. They become friends within a few days and get romantically involved. After their employment, they make serious plans for their engagement. Their plan of marriage and getting together face hardships as they are from two different states in India. They try their best to convince their parents to get their marriage's approval.

First of all, Krish helps Ananya's father to do his first PowerPoint presentation to win his sympathy. He teaches Ananya's brother Physics and convinces her mother by providing the singing chance in a big concert with S.P. Balasubrahmaniam and Hariharan organized by Citi Bank, where he works. Similarly, Ananya also tries her best to convince Krish's mom, but the problem appears when his mother's relatives reject the idea of their engagement. In India, millions of people reside within a single country but with different cultural identities. The old generation is not ready to overcome their root culture, because they believe it's their identity. But such a radical situation seems to be changed with the circumference of time. Youths of India are trying their best to overcome from their regional culture. By presenting different types

of moves through the fictitious character, Bhagat tries to present the cosmopolitan culture of twentieth century youths and their longing for. Old generation people are either from the south or the north and are not ready to deviate from their cultural norms and values, because marriage is such a cultural practice, "In India, there are a few more steps: Boy loves Girl. Girl loves Boy. Girl's family has to love boy. Boy's family has to love girl. Girl's Family has to love Boy's Family. Boy's family has to love girl's family. Girl and Boy still love each other. They get married" (321). In India, marriage is not a task of boy and girl rather, it is a cultural practice where the whole society is incorporated. In Western culture, marriage is viable whenever boy and girl are ready, but in the Indian community, due to the cultural inheritance, the matter is closely connected to those people who are in their familial nexus as Lustig and Koester define culture is a common phenomenon of a collectivity.

Bhagat through *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* shows the transition from traditionalism to modernism. The writer, through this novel, puts the question of culture and youth identity changing Indian culture. Culture is considered as a social construction and identity is considered as a changing perspective. Throughout the text, the major characters suffer from social construction. The intrusion of cultural diversity in youth identity politics becomes a controversial issue that needs to establish a social change. In the light of this problem, this research tries to answer what is the relationship between culture and youth's cultural identity? What culture plays a role to shape youth's cultural identity? and how youth's cultural identity is defined through the culture where they live?

India is a land of diversity. Yet, most of the Indian people prefer making friends, being in touch with and getting married to people from their own community, caste, religion, region, or mother tongue. But, Chetan Bhagat presents this type of

cultural identity as being changed through Krish and Ananya who defied the norms and got hitched by someone not belonging to their community. Bhagat presents two-faced identity in the sense that either Krish or Ananya is sincere to their root culture. They have deviated from their cultural aura to get married in order to achieve their goal of achieving intercultural competence. Needless to say, Bhagat's novel *2 States* presents Indian culture and changing scenario of this culture.

Intercultural competence in terms of cultural practices can be seen in the moves of the characters. Formerly, the problem appears when Krish's mother's relatives reject the idea of their engagement. They opine that Krish should not marry a Tamilian but end up agreeing with them when Ananya tries to help one of Krish's cousins to get married and succeeds to do so. Krishna's father puts his strong disagreement with their marriage proposal, and Krish keeps intense hatred for his father—he neither shares his feelings nor keeps a harmonious relationship with him. Krishna's family members go to Goa to introduce each other's family members. Their dream of unification shatters as Ananya's parents smell something suspicious between Krish's mom and him. Ananya's family ends up deciding that Krish and Ananya will not marry each other. But, at last, Krish's father, who was like an enemy for Krish, helps Krish and Ananya to get married as he convinces Ananya's family successfully. This shows the changing mentality of the people, who previously had a strong affinity to their respective culture; they have to compromise on their cultural norms and values because culture is not a static entity rather, it is always changeable with the time and venue. The novel digs out both Tamil and Punjabi cultures. Ananya gives birth to twin boys. They rear and care under Punjabi and Tamil culture.

Different critics see the novel from different perspectives as the novel presents multiple literary phenomena. Pavanisidhar Avula discusses the religious faith and

its continuity in an Indian continent. According to her: In fact all his books have religious undertones at some place and in *2 States* Bhagat shows his religiousness through the Aurobindo Ashram episode with Guruji in Pondicherry-“Sometimes in life you just meet someone or hear something that nudges you on the right path.” (20)

For Avula *2 States* is about the religious practices which exist in the Indian continent. Being a religiously rich continent, there are different religious and cultural groups in different states of India which have been presented in the novel.

Rajani Sharma provides insights about the theme of social criticism and stylistic techniques used in the novel, which is represented by the two youth characters, Krish and Ananya, who eventually end up together. She hints about how Chetan Bhagat describes the social evils that exist in society and how he uses different techniques to deal with the sensitive issues related to cross-cultural clashes, which make the readers laugh and grasp the matter. Sharma writes:

2 States is a wonderful work of Chetan Bhagat. In this work, he has laid bare various social issues pertaining to young generation ranging from love marriage, generation gap, dowry etc. and also provides with a solution of these problem . . . The narrative technique, language selection, episode selection and cinematographic treatment of the subject content are par excellence and the readership is moved at each and every turn of the twists coming with the progression of the novel till the very closing of the novel when it ends with the positive note of happy married life of Krish and Ananya. (215)

Sharma observes *2 States* as a document that prevails over social evils. By defining social evil, she metaphorically describes the culture as a social evil. She also opens with how the author has used wit and humor to make understand the readers about the serious issues of love and clash of cultural identity in a simple way.

Arunkumar and Bennazir take the novel as a romantic tale that deals with the character's life. Being from different cultural groups, there is a layer of a suspect of racial discrimination, that's why people are not granted marriage in cross-cultural groups. They write:

2 States: The Story of My Marriage (2009) is a romantic tale of a young boy of Punjabi, Krish and Tamilian young lady, Ananya and their endeavors to change over their affection life into marriage with the consent of their folks. The most part of the book is personal that describes the account of Chetan Bhagat's marriage with Anusha Suryanarayan and cultural differences they looked in persuading their guardians for their wedding. (186)

Arunkumar and Bennazir describe how the author has presented the cultural discrimination which runs in society and how contemporary writers take the issue to compose a text. The presentation of cultural differences in the plot leads to confusion and a pessimistic tone. They contrast the culture and tradition of two different communities, which diversified the customs and rituals that prevail in India. The diversification of culture is depicted through the major characters in the novel.

Cultural identity dominates the plot of the text. However, it is noticed that they have not discussed much on the dynamics of youth's cultural identity in two-faced cultural practices in the text. That is why this researcher attempts to analyze dual nature of youth culture in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* from the notion of Stuart Hall's cultural identity. Regarding the definition of cultural identity, Stuart Hall states that, "Collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (4). Hall adds up more that identity is never the same; it is always in the process of changing. The process of globalization and free

migration has involved a practice of differentiating identity. Identity is the site of difficulty; what it is that it's perpetual postponement or deferral of equivalence. Hall explores the theories of identity from Althusser to Lacan. The constant change in identity creates confusion which arises many social as well as psychological difficulties; Hall, by quoting Judith Butler, opines that the constant change of identity should be abandoned.

Myron Lustig and Koester in their book *Intercultural Competence* define culture as "Culture is a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms and social practices, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people" (25). So, in a sense, culture is learned through different factors. Culture is a commonality that ties up people through its different positions. They add up more by describing "Human are not born with the genetic imprint of a particular culture. Instead, people learn about their culture through interactions with parents, other family members, friends, and even strangers who are part of the culture" (25). The writer gives emphasis on the cultural adoration of the people. By birth, no culture is imprinted on their mindset; rather, it is an entity that inscribes on the mind of people as per their affinity towards it. Lustig and Koester emphasize the situation imprinted on their mind where they belonged to. In their opinion, it can be said that people born in South Indian continent, he/she has grown adapting South Indian culture and the people who are born, reared, and grew up in the Northern Indian periphery, certainly acquire North Indian cultural values. The novel shows the same thing. Krish and Ananya acquired their respective cultural norms and values, which later on collided with each other because native cultural norms and values remain in the inner core of any person.

Jane Assman and John Czaplickatake's cultural identity as a matter of cultural

memory attempts to relate the three extremes of culture; memory, culture, and society. In their opinion, when cultural memory stores the knowledge from society, identity is constructed. The access to transmit knowledge is controlled by the need for an identity. The important and unimportant symbols represent and reproduce the self-images in society, which helps to create a cultural identity. When people cannot differentiate the symbols, there becomes a gap, and cultural identity does not form.

Jane Assman and John Czaplicka take opine:

The binding and reflexive character of a heritage can display varying intensities and appear in various aggressions. One society bases its self-image on a canon of sacred scripture, the next on a basic set of ritual activities, and the third on a fixed and hieratic language of forms in a canon architectural and artistic types . . . though its cultural heritage a society becomes visible to other which creates knowledge and emerges identity. (133)

Culturally people are not bound free. Their respective cultural instincts shape their cultural concepts. Each of these concepts of culture, mind and brain has its own social, intellectual and disciplinary history. According to them, while at any point in time, people's notions of culture, mind, and brain often are presented as givens, they also can be understood as constructions. Assman and Czaplicka's idea of cultural construct culture has to be defined with respect to its cultural metaphors. They write "The metaphor of construction seems apt when describing social phenomena that we have set in place deliberately through creative invention, cooperative actions, and collective agreement. There are rich traditions of social and cultural constructivism, which study the changing constructs that constitute our social worlds" (5). Different types of cultural metaphors are responsible for shaping one psychology and affinity to its respective culture. Culture is a collective agreement. In any culture, people can do

the activity frequently, but the activity is not allowed in another culture. Therefore, culture is constructed via different types of cultural codes and conducts, and finally, they work as cultural metaphors, which are vividly incorporated in the novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*.

As the novel starts, students seem to be in IIM mess. They are postgraduate-level of students, and they are well aware of their cultural belongingness, but knowing all these things, Krish allures to Ananya because he is internally ready to cross the cultural boundaries of his Punjabi culture, becomes prepared to relate a love affair with Ananya, a girl from South Indian culture, it was due to trans-cultural affluent that has been greatly influencing in India. Krish could not remain untouched from this cultural development as collective memory plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity, as it provides a shared narrative that binds individuals together as member of a particular culture or community. As educated personalities either they are from different cultural norms and values or their social taboos fail to restrict them to unified, they are guided by two-face culture.

Krish, to win Ananya's family sympathy, helps Ananya make her able in Mathematics. He tries his best in order to convince Ananya's parents for their approval for their marriage. He gives tuitions to her younger brother Manjunath who is preparing for IIT entrance exam. He helps her father to prepare official documents and power point presentation as well. Ananya's parents are well known about their relationships and intentions of their plan. They equally like Krish for his kindness, politeness, sincerity and intellectuality. In their inner core of heart, love and affection towards him germinates. They think about her marriage to him. Ananya keeps on rejecting marriage proposals from her community, giving different reasons. Her mother is worried about her marriage. She consults some local priests whose black

magic may help her to forget Krish. Ananya's mother gives and tells her to wear the magic locket, but she does not believe in all such things and throws the magic locket in the Bay of Bengal. Ananya writes Krish:

Meanwhile, I am fine in Chennai. My mother is at her neurotic best, my father is quiet as usual and my brother always has a book that says Physics, Chemistry or Maths on the cover. In other words, things are normal. I mentioned you again to my mother. She called a priest home who gave me a pendant to make me forget you. Wow, I never thought they'd react to you like this. Well, it is going to take more than a pendant to forget you, but for good measure I tossed it into the Bay of Bengal on Marina Beach. (73)

Above lines show that Indian cultural heritage and the cultural gap between new generation and old generation reveals as the two face cultural integrity. Mother in any cost is not ready to give her consent for marriage. Ananya's mother exercises her cultural practices. She invites a cultural priest in her home in order to cast black magic over her daughter. Priest gives her a magic locket to be given to Ananya to keep it with her which may make her forget Krish but Ananya doesn't believe in all such things and she throws the magic locket in the Bay of Bengal. Ananya's mother is solely guided by her cultural norms and values. She is not ready to cross cultural norms and values because "culture as a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms and social practices" (Lustig & Koester 25). Due to cultural affinity, as Ananya belongs to a South Indian Tamil family, they are not ready to agree with her rather they are doing their cultural practices so as to detach her longing from two face cultural affinity.

As the protagonist of the novel Krish tries his best to convince Ananya's parents for their approval. He helps Ananya's father for preparing his office

presentation. They really like Krish for his sincerity and intellectuality. Ananya says:

‘there is only one way you can get regular access to my home,’ Ananya said after staring at the horizon for a minute.

‘What?’

‘IIT tuitions for my brother. They’d accept anything for that,’ she said.

I let go of her and sat up straight. ‘Are you crazy? I prepared for the IIT exam eight years ago. I can’t teach him.’ ‘I’m sure you can revise some notes and help him. My parents have to get comfortable with you. Only then can I ask them to seriously consider you.” (97)

The root cause of their struggle in their love affair and change this relationship into marriage is cultural difference. As Ananya belongs to South Indian Tamilian culture and her parents including her whole familial relations are not ready to accept her marriage with a boy who owns Punjabi culture. As Ananya is guided by dual nature cultural identity, she is ready to marry with Krish and tries every possible stunt that can help for the approval of their marriage. For that, Krish transfers his job from his home town Delhi, to Chennai only for Ananya. Despite all these, Ananya’s parents do not agree to the marriage as they fear of social humiliation. They believe that if they get their daughter married out of their caste or community, it will bring social dishonour to their family.

Ananya’s father requests Krish as:

‘Don’t meet Ananya too much. We are simple people, we don’t say much.

But don’t spoil her name in our community,’ he said.

‘Uncle but...’

‘I know you are classmates and you are helping Manju. We can be grateful, we can feed you, but we can’t let Ananya Marry you. (109)

Ananya's father is fascinated towards his Tamilian cultural norms and values. Having deep cultural affinity for cultural identity, he requests Krish to leave Ananya for the sake of God. He insists that if they marry her daughter to a person who is not from their culture, the issue will be known as the social stigma and they will face so many social hardships in forthcoming days.

Andrew Edgar and Pater Sedgwick write in *Cultural Theory: The Key Thinkers* about how cultural practices turn to be social stigma as:

Once the reason is created enlarges the rupture in social heteronomy, it acquires a potential universality, since every human being can reimagine what another human being has imagined'. Reflective and deliberative subjectivity is also possible due to the psyche's centrifugal relation to society. Institutions guarantee the preservation of humanity as a living species. (34)

A cultural phenomenon is not a private phenomenon rather it is a collective task. Being a social entity, it is shared and owned by the social members. If some member of the society tries to defy such social norms and values, it turns to be a social stigma because it creates disharmony in the society. Ananya's father is also interested to Krish, because he is well educated and capable person who loves very much to Ananya but unfortunately he could not cross the social taboo due to the social disharmony and stigmatization. It is only because when someone has an affinity for cultural identity, it means that they have attraction to it. In case of Ananya's father's cultural affinity, it means that he has subconscious attraction towards his Tamil culture which is a group consciousness that resembles through different institutions, social customs and customaries.

Chetan Bhagat, in this novel portrays the real picture of Indian social landscape. At the very beginning outlook, Bhagat clearly focuses on the cultural

clashes between the two different cultures: the North Indian Punjabi culture and South Indian TAMILIAN culture through the fictional Punjabi and TAMILIAN families. Both the families have their own different cultures, social rituals, customs and ways of lives. As they are from different cultural groups, they generally do not accept or respect the other cultures, except Ananya and Krish. There arises no issue when the two different families are not meeting anywhere, but as soon as they come together, it creates many differences, clashes and tensions. Citing the difference of difference between male and female in Indian culture as Sudhir Kakar mentions “The diminished differentiation between male and female representations in Indian culture is further reinforced by an important, perhaps dominant aspect of religiosity that not only provides a sanction for man's feminine strivings but raises these strivings to the level of a religious-spiritual quest” (37).

In order to have marital ties in India youths has to match religious, regional, class and caste. All the diversities between them, their food habits, dressings, language, social customs, ways of lives, thinking and behavior patterns are the root causes of their two face cultures. Bhagat exposes some of the cultural clashes and the writer discloses some of the social evils of both the cultures due to their cultural distinctiveness although they are not apart from India.

Being educated persons Ananya and Krish are ready to marry each other and celebrate their conjugal life which is their revolt against social status quo. The caste as well as cultural systems is extravagantly flourished though the Indian continent that directly or indirectly cages the people within certain boundaries within different cultural discourses.

Stuart Hall believes cultural norms and values are perpetuated on behalf of social constructions. He writes:

In common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation. In contrast with the 'naturalism' of this definition, the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed - always 'in process'. (2)

Hall claims that culture is that very entity which is made of on back of a social recognition. It means they are perpetuated according to geographical situations. In South Indian society, there is their own cultural assumption and in northern side it differs according to the social foundations. Cultures are such projects they never completed; rather it is a project that develops and advances within the circumference of time and venue. The main agent of this advancement are human beings as in the novel Krish and Ananya tries to overcome from their own cultural landscapes and adopts two-face culture. Ananya is not hesitating to exercise Punjabi culture and Krish vice versa. Krish and Ananya struggle for their marriage because they have better understand about the culture which does not remain constant.

Indians have much fear in accepting the girl or a boy of other clan. In India marriage is not between a boy and a girl but it is the matter of the two families. Bhagat writes on the back page of the novel that love marriage is less complicated in the world but it is not applicable in India as:

Love marriages around the world are simple:

Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy. They get married.

In India, there are few more steps:

Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy.

Girl's family has to love boy. Boy's family has to love girl.

Girl's family has to love boy's family. Boy's family has to love girl's family.

Girl and boy still love each other. They get married. (321)

Bhagat portrays the milieu of Indian way of marriage, but while going through the the novel, this trend of marriage is no more remained in the Indian society because the people of India have guided by the multi-cultural ethos and pathos Deviation in cultural rules and regulations is inevitable because cultural practices are manmade things and constantly change over the time.

Hall in his essay also insist that culture is not stable thing it is:

. . . constantly in the process of change and transformation. We need to situate the debates about identity with in all those historically specific developments and practice s which have disturbed the relatively 'settled ' character of many populations and cultures, above all in relation to the processes of globalization, which I would argue are coterminous with modernity. (4)

According to Hall, culture is not static rather it changes within the time and venue.

According to them this change is also called modernity. With the rise of time, Indian people are not deprived of cultural transformation which Chetan Bhagat portrays through the fictitious characters. Formerly, marriage in India was taken as the matter of two families including their relatives but now the deviation on such radical cultural practices has occurred because they are guided by the dual nature cultural identity.

Due to the modernity and city, the cultural amalgamation can be seen in the novel. As science and technology took place, the people's movement in order to achieve better options either they are cultural, economic or educational, they wandered far and wide which can be seen in the novel too. Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad is the top college of management in India where students from different states come there in order to adjust themselves in modern

Indian socio-economic arena. As they come there, they dilute with foreign students socio-cultural phenomena which provide them to be accustomed to.

As Kelvin Robins believes, culture is always progressive, "Progress can only be achieved through cultural receptiveness and reciprocity" (64). Culture is always constructed through interchange among and between different cultures. Krish and Ananya also accustomed in college despite being from different cultural backgrounds. They are not radically presenting themselves in terms of cultural barriers because they have intermingled Tamilian and Punjabi culture into a new notion. As their future aspirations are interwoven into mental as well as physical attachment, it was due to their acceptance. Ananya assimilates herself in Punjabi culture. In a party Ananya tries to adjust her dancing style with Punjabi songs. She wears a sari and takes interest in taking Bharatanatyam training in dancing to Krish's cousin Nikki. Krish appreciates her as "Her years of Bharatanatyam training made her the best performer on the floor. She picked up the Punjabi steps fast and even taught my cousin a few improvised moves. She looked beautiful in her dark green Kanjeevaran. Like an idiot, I fell in love with her all over again" (205).

Culture is not a reformable thing; rather it is such sociocultural exercise that can be perceive. Ananya, a Tamilian girl learns Punjabi way of life. She takes Bharatanatyam training and performs beautifully as Punjabi people performing since last many decades. It means, being culture is such an entity that constantly changes time and again. The people of respective cultural groups are the agents of its development. Ananya holds Tamilian as well as Punjabi way of life hence, she lives her two-faced cultural life because culture is not static rather it is constantly changeable by its nature as cultural theorists Hall and Gay claim in *Questions of Cultural Identity*.

The central crux of this research is the issue of two faced youth cultural on Ananya and Krish and other characters by modernity. In the novel, Chetan Bhagat is raising the issue of cultural deviation. Indian cultural orthodoxy do not provide any privilege to love and physical relationships before marriage, but in the novel, Bhagat exhibits that Ananya and Krish indulge in physical relationship because they are guided by modernity. Ananya and Krish are educated persons and they are not able keep safe from modernity. They are guided by modern way of life. Ananya and Krish from quite different cultural paradigms, met in IIM College, Ahmedabad. In first look Krish fascinated to Ananya because he is guided by two-face cultural norms and values. Despite being known about his own cultural barriers, in first meeting a Punjabi youth triggers towards South Indian Tamilian girl. Krish utters his inner desire as:

She stood two places ahead of me in the lunch line at the IIMA mess. I checked her out from the corner of my eye, wondering what the big fuss about this South Indian girl was. Her waist-length hair rippled as she tapped the steel plate with her fingers like a famished refugee. I noticed three black threads on the back of her fair neck. Someone had decided to accessorize in the most academically oriented B-School in the country. (3)

In these lines, it clearly depicts that Krish is well known about the first look of the girl. By cultural dress he recognizes that she belongs to South India. Ananya was physically fit and equally beautiful too. Her academic strength proves strong as she gets admission in IIM College where normal people cannot take any admission at all. By calculating all these things, a modern Punjabi boy Krish is sure that it will be better if he has a relationship with Ananya. In the same way, Ananya also tries to make a company with Krish. As she always keeps touch with Krish in Mumbai, she is

not ready to let him alone. As Krish takes transfer to City Bank Branch, Delhi, she also requests her office to assign a week's professional trip to Delhi. When they reach Delhi airport, Krish's mother comes to receive him. She did not know that Krish was bringing his girl-friend to Delhi. Krish Says, "Let go of my elbow," I said. 'Why?' Ananya said, 'I see my mother.' Mother waited at the arrivals area" (188). Krish and Ananya both of them are headed towards metropolitan culture where everything is viable. Krish after finishing his study, joins his banking carrier and request his posting to Chennai despite being strong disapproval, Krish says his mother, "I want to go Chennai" (72).

The major cause of going to Chennai Bhagat exposes from the following conversation between mother and son as:

"Oh God !" my mother's mellow mood shifted gears to overdrive. She got up from the bed. 'I find this harder to deal with than your father. Are you mad?'

'No, I like Ananya. I want to give our relationship a shot.'

'You'll become a Madrasi?'

'I am not becoming. I'm only going there to live. (72)

Krish, the only son of his parents, whom they rear and care of their best. They expense their toil in order to make him able stand his on his own foot. As he finished IIM College with best position, City bank selects him as an employee. His parents hope and expectations spoil over the ground as broken earthen pot when he decides to go to Chennai with reference to his Job. He says with his mother that he is going there because of a girl who belongs Madrasi family. And he openly accepts that he is in love with her and wants to consummate this relationship.

Krish is ready to marry with her because he has deviated from his own Punjabi culture and Ananya also equally loves him because she is also deviated from Madrasi

culture and ready to accept Punjabi culture. Therefore, after two years as Krish transfers to City Bank, Delhi branch, she also arrives with Krish holding his hands. Krish's mother comes to receive them. She did not know that her son was bringing his girl-friend to Delhi. Krish's mother becomes very irritated to see Ananya with her son in the beginning, but she agrees to take Ananya home. Ananya 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. In due course of time, Ananya also wins the trust and consent of Krish's mother. She takes Ananya to Krish's maternal sister Minti's marriage ceremony. She comes to know about the prevalent dowry system in the Punjabi community.

It was a misunderstanding in the mind of Minti's in-law that her father Rajji mama promised to gift the Hyundai Accent car to Minti's husband to be, named Duke, which costs about five lakh rupees but he could manage to give him a Hyundai Santro car which costs about three lakh. "Some misunderstanding has occurred. When Rajji gave the Hyundai keys, Duke's parents thought it was Hyundai Accent. But it was a Hyundai Santro. Accent costs five lakh, Santro only three lakh" (209). Now Minti's father-in-law wanted the difference in cash or he would not permit to continue the marriage ceremony. The family women become ready to give their gold ornaments to be kept as credit till the money is arranged. With her bright mind and convincing way of speech, Ananya jumps into the matter and manages to change Duke's mind for not taking any dowry and saves the family reputation of Minti's family. By performing her modern thinking and doing against the traditional norms and values that have been descended last many decades and continuing in Punjabi culture.

Georg Simmel in his article, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” explains how people deviate from their cultural constraints and ready to acquire other cultural as Krish, Ananya and other characters are adopting metropolitan lifestyle. Simmel points out that “the deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of an individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life” (87). Simmel, regarding the culture opines that it is a way of life where people indulge within the circumferences of historically perpetuated cultural manners. As depicted in the novel South Indian TAMILIAN culture and North Indian Punjabi culture represent Indian cultural orthodoxies where people of old generation follow it as literally. But Bhagat presents Krish and Ananya including other young people deviating and questioning the old orthodoxies.

In the marriage ceremony, Duke's father feels insulted when Minti's father provides a Hyundai Santro instead of Hyundai Accent because socio-cultural superstitions brutally blind him. As a rebellious person Ananya comes ahead, collects all the younger claiming that "this matter concerns grown-ups" (212) and entices them dowry system is a social stigma in the name of culture continuity. In order to maintain cultural harmony, “instead of reacting emotionally, the metropolitan type reacts primarily in a rational manner . . . sensitive and furthest removed from the depths of personality” (78). She takes the way of duality of youth cultural identity. She does not totally discard the Indian way of marriage system but she does not totally believe in marriage cultural orthodoxies such as dowry system and many more which triggers towards the verge of danger. Ananya says Duke:

Do you know what Minti's parents had to go through to do this wedding for you? That car cost two and half years of your salary, Mr Duke! These two

parties have thrown him into debt. Now you want an Accent? It won't be your Accent, it will be what you managed to wrench out of a helpless father, who didn't want a drama at his daughter's wedding to turn into a scandal. (214)

Ananya shows the cultural orthodoxy and its negative consequences therefore her stance to cultural deviation from orthodoxy is inevitable which lays the way of life in a harmonious manner. In Punjabi marriage system, dowry is inevitable and it is an integral part of socio-cultural aspect that sinks bride's parents towards bottom of level of socio-economic condition. The custom of dowry system in Indian marriage is deep rooted cultural phenomenon that confronts and lag behind Indian people on the way of economic and social justice.

The novel portrays the dual nature of youth culture in India, where young people often adopt different way of lifestyles while still holding onto traditional cultural values. Hall believes, "Identity is such a concept - operating 'under erasure' in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all" (2). Cultural identity is not fixed entity rather it changes within the interval of time. If we see about the cultural orthodoxy, it changes generation by generation. Cultural belongingness and practices smoothly change within the rise of new generation because of the science and technology. Cultural is always dynamic and the nature of people always try achieve newness erasing old way of cultural exercises. The same thing reveals from the very beginning of the novel.

Indian people have started to achieve western way of educational attainment. The government of India has opened western way of education system and IIM College is providing management which is also playing crucial role in collision of cultural values. As formerly India was the colony of British government, the Indian

people were fascinated towards western way of lives. White people dress and their education system including their everyday tasks triggered Indian people towards western way of education system. IIM College is such institution where people from different countries came there and Indian people also compare and contrast their cultural norms and values with theirs. Their way of lives also entice Indian people think over once again about their cultural norms and values. Consequently, Krish and Ananya as they see their own cultural practices and find as problematic. They dare to challenge it.

Krish and Ananya cross their cultural barriers only because they want to live their lives happily. They are not happy with their culture, because neither Tamilian socio-cultural taboos nor North Indian Punjabi cultural taboos accepts and provide respect in terms of their marriage. As it is a strategy of survival, they also decide to marry and settle their lives in a well manner. While doing so, they neither they completely follow traditional way of marriage nor they completely deviate from cultural norms and values. Before they get married, they involve in sexual relationship which is not viable in Indian cultural conducts. Due to the dual nature youth cultural insights they deviate from their root culture and questions towards the grand narratives and the notion of objective truth. The two faced nature of youth culture is also evident in how Krish and Ananya navigate their relationship. They have to keep their relationship a secret from their families, which force them to adopt a more western approach to dating. They go on dates, share intimate moments, and express their love openly. However, when they remain in their native culture, they feel a kind of fear. The conversation between Ananya and Krish, it seems that they are in two-face culture.

Needless to say, one thing led to another and within two weeks we had sex.

You put a boy and girl in a room for a week and lots of boring books, and sparks are sure to fly. 'This is my first time,' she said after we did it and pointed to her mother's picture on the wall. 'And if she finds out, she will flip.' 'We should cover these pictures when we do it. They freak me out,' I said, scanning her family members. (26)

The conversation between Ananya and Krish postulates that they are not able to freed themselves from their own cultural norms and values. They indulge physical relationship in the room of Ananya where the pictures of her mother had pasted on the wall. Ananya feels a bit hesitation as if her mother is present there and seeing all the activities they underwent. She insists that they will cover up all these photographs while doing sexual activities next time. Behind her such thinking, it seems that she is guided by two-face culture. On the one hand she wants to liberate her life from the bondage of her cultural taboos which does not let indulgent in sexual activities before marriage but another hand she could not totally reject all the cultural things. She wants to be respectful towards her parents and maintain a certain distance and follow the customs and traditions of her family. In such condition she seems in two-faced nature of youth culture in India, where young people often adopt western lifestyles while still holding onto traditional cultural values.

Krish and Ananya's families come from different regions in India, and they have different cultural practices and values. They are guided by their own life philosophy. Ananya is pretty looking and a good job and Krish too. They don't care about their cultural norms and values. They did not think there is anything wrong in their relation. But when the time of marriage comes, the old practices and customs have not given way as they thought. Being a two-face culture, they could not take any decision regarding their marriage. Therefore, they decide to meet their family in Goa.

Krish and Ananya chose Goa as the location for their family gathering regarding their marriage proposal. As soon as both the families meet, the socio-cultural differences play a villainous role and the meeting turns into a complete failure. Generally in Punjabi culture, prime importance goes to boy's side, but in this meeting Ananya's parents do not give any importance to them. Krish's mother raises her anger:

‘At the airport. You don’t even realise you have become their servant?’ . . .
 ‘Nonsense, and why did they take the sea-view room? We are the boy’s side.’
 . . . ‘And I gave her a silk sari for two thousand bucks. She didn’t even appreciate it.’ ‘No, she was bragging about her South saris,’ my mother said.
 (221-222)

Due to cultural differentiation, there emerges the issue of prestige. Krish's mother is not happy as she gets off on Mumbai Airport. She accuses Ananya's family not being responsible and barbarians who lack of cultural knowledge that how to behave with them. Being from the boy’s side, she expects more privileges from Ananya’s parents. Krish tries his best to calm down mother but she is not ready to understand rather she accuses him this marriage is worse one, "This is one of the huge downsides of getting married" (222). She expressed strong disagreement this meeting and she is quite anxious about the matter that Krish fails to understand his own culture and keep his value. Mother blames, "You will take their side only. You are trapped.’ She muttered. ‘Stupid boy, doesn’t know his own value" (222). As they reach Airport, Krish takes his bags himself which has to be taken by Ananya's parents according to Punjabi culture. She says, "In Punjabi terms, Ananya’s parents had committed a cognizable offence. You don’t meet the boy’s side empty-handed. Ever" (222). In Punjabi culture, bride side provide much more privilege and respect but in Tamilian culture it

is not the matter of big things, Ananya's parents treat Krish parents as usual behavior which haunts their psychology.

The collision of Tamilian and Punjabi culture occurs in hotel. As they are from different cultural belongings, they have their own way of lives. Their eating styles to eating stuffs are different. In the hotel, while both of the family members share the same table. Punjabi family prefers to eat meat items whereas Tamilian family is vegetarian.

The following lines show the cultural differentiation and tussle in terms of food items as:

"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 leg hung mid-air.

'Oh,' mother said.

'It's OK, aunty, I will try it.' Ananya said. (223)

Krish's mother feels something different as Ananya's mother rejects meat item. Ananya's family sees Krish's family as if they are from lower starts and family background. Non-veg people in the eyes of vegetarian people are taken as if they inferior, but in the same time Ananya accepts the proposal of Krish's mother. In the same way Krish's mother comments on easting stuffs and style of Ananya's parents. She says, "Their fingers itched to feel the squishy texture of rice mixed with curd and dal. Ananya had made them curb their primal instincts to prevent shocking my mother" (223). Generally south Indian people eat with their hands because they do not satisfy their eating until and unless they eat with their fingers which is problematic in North Indian Punjabi culture. Krish's mother underestimates the way of eating and

quantity "You are having rice?" my mother said as she saw the others' plates" (223).

As she sees more plates and their way of eating, she says so.

Legacy of root culture can be seen in the behavior of Krish and Ananya. As Ananya overheard the conversation of mother and son, she asks with Krish as Ananya meets him "for a walk post-dinner at Park Hyatt's private beach" (223). She further insists that her "parents are upset, Ananya said, 'your mother should learn to talk" (224). In these lines it can be said that due to the cultural belongingness, both parties feel insult and upset. Ananya's parents are upset due to Krish's mother's cultural arrogance, as she deals with the objective truth and in the same way Krish's mother is feels insulted as Ananya's parents fails to address as she aspects.

Cultural legacy as they inheritance, they could not easily forget it. Krish also somehow keeps faith on his North Indian Punjabi culture and suggests Ananya that her "parents should know how to behave (223)" with them. Meanwhile Ananya's cultural legacy wakes up and she also ironically asks. The conversation between Ananya and Krish postulates the dual nature of youth culture as:

"How can they behave better? she said.

'I will tell you. But you must do exactly as I say, ' I said.

'If it is reasonable," said my sensible girlfriend.

'Step one, buy my mother an expensive gift.'

Anything else?" she said

Yes step four is to make love to me on the beach'. (224)

Confrontation due to cultural differences as Ananya and Krish keep faith on two-faced youth culture, they taught their parents about each other's cultural ethos and pathos. As they have not completely deviated from their root, they seem in cultural between ness. Ananya convinces her parents' Punjabi culture, "Ananya's parents

stayed back in Panjim for shopping" (225).

Cultural reconciliation can be seen in the evenings when they collect during the time of dinner. As Krish makes understand Ananya about the cultural expectations of the grooms family, her parents buy gifts within "three big brown bags" (224) and provides respectfully to Krish's mother as:

Kavita ji, this is for you,' Ananya's father passed the bags to my mother. No, no, what is the need?' my mother simpered as she took the gifts. The first bag had the saris. The second bag had four shirts for me. The third bag contained sweets, savoury snacks and Goan cashews. (225)

In these lines, how cultural orthodoxy and deviation on it occurs. Ananya's parents compelled to follow Punjabi culture for the better happiness of their daughter which is their two-faced cultural exercise. These lines opens up the changing Indian scenario regarding their cultural continuity and deviation on it. The degree may differ, all the characters are guided by dual nature cultural experience as Hall claims culture always remains "under erasure in the interval between reversal and emergence" (2) and Gay it as a "large part as a 'cultural' crusade, concerned with the attitudes, values and forms of self-understanding embedded in both individual and institutional activities" (151).

Culture is a crucial aspect that shapes person's beliefs, values and behaviors. In the novel, the characters' cultural backgrounds are highlighted, and the cultural differences between the two families are shown. The different ways in which the families celebrate their festivals, the food they eat, their language, and their customs and traditions are highlighted by the novelist. How the cultural norms and values are important and they are not easily ready to change their cultural way of lives. Heartily affiliation towards cultural belongingness can be seen in the behavior of Krish's

mother and Ananya's parents as well. They are ready to pay heavy price but they are not ready to give up their cultural practices. As the two families come together, the differences in their cultures become more pronounced. Ananya and Krish struggle to reconcile their own cultural identity with that of their partner's culture. They also face resistance and opposition from their families due to the cultural differences. In Goa meeting, tussle arises due to cultural differences, Krish and Ananya exchange their cultural code of conduct during meeting of two families. Krish convinces Ananya about Punjabi culture and Ananya's parents provide Saris, T-shirts and chocolates to Krish's mother as a gift. Krish's mother feels that Ananya's parents are providing respect. This shows that how culture can influence one's identity and the challenges that arise when different cultures come together. It shows the importance of understanding and respecting different cultures, and how cultural differences can be overcome with communication, compromise and a willingness to learn and adapt.

In *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, the two central characters come from different cultural backgrounds, Krish being a Punjabi from Delhi and Ananya a Tamil Brahmin from Chennai. Their love story serves as a lens through which the researcher explores the complexities of cultural identity in contemporary India. Krish and Ananya embody the modern, progressive aspects of youth culture. They challenge societal norms and stereotypes by falling in love across regional and cultural boundaries. Their relationship represents a break from traditional arranged marriages and reflects the growing trend of young Indians choosing their own partners based on love and personal compatibility.

In this way, the researcher finds the major characters grapple with the deep-rooted traditions and conservative attitudes that are deeply ingrained in their respective cultural backgrounds. Their families, steeped in age-old customs and

beliefs, struggle to accept their relationship due to these cultural differences.

Researcher sheds light on the challenges faced by youth caught between the desire for personal freedom and the weight of familial and cultural expectations. The exploration is of internal conflicts and external pressures that arise when individuals must reconcile their own desires with the traditions and values passed down by their families. This research showcases the dual nature of youth culture in India through the complexity and diversity within the youth demographic, where individuals are simultaneously shaped by their cultural heritage and influenced by the forces of globalization, modernization, and individualism.

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