

## Patriarchy in Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*

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### Abstract

Patriarchal system in an Indian society means that the family unit is based on the household structure, where a single male is the head of house. Usually this role does belong to the father or the male earning member. He does make choice in terms of marriage alliance, both daughters and sons, decision about buying and selling properties, and maintaining family property day-to-day life. In addition, a patriarchal character of the Indian family is that a girl has to leave her father's house to live with her in-laws for the rest of her life, meaning she is under the continuous protection of a male. And because an inheritance in India is usually traced through man, not a woman, the whole family sets are related to males who live together and share a property or even in case of tribal groups, a wife. As a consequence of a male dominated role in a family and kinship system women are treated as a less important tool in kinship and often an easy a disposable member, simply replaceable by new brides. This idea of patriarchy is still persistent in the novels of the male writers of India. The major Indian writers' themes are analysed with extra reference to Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*, a contemporary novelist of pop literature, portraying modernised India and youth in a patriarchal attitude.

### What is Patriarchy?

Historically speaking, the term patriarchy was used to refer to autocratic rule by the male head of a family. However, in modern times, it more generally refers to social systems in which power is primarily held by adult men. According to Sylvia Walby patriarchy is "A system of interrelated social structures which allow men to exploit women." According to April A. Gordon, Walby's definition allows for the variability and changes in women's roles and in the order of their priority under different patriarchal systems. It also recognizes that it is the institutionalized subordination and exploitation of women by men that is the crux of patriarchy; this can take many forms. It is even theoretically possible that patriarchy could express itself through a de-emphasis on motherhood in favour of women as wage earners or some other role.

### **History and Origin of Patriarchy**

Anthropological evidence suggests that most prehistoric hunter gatherer societies were egalitarian, and that patriarchal social structures did not develop until many years after the end of the ice age, following social and technological developments such as agriculture and domestication. Marxist theory states, patriarchy arose out of a primeval division of labour in which women took care of the home and men were occupied with agriculture. As capitalism developed the realm of production became monetized and valued and the realm of the home was never monetized and became devalued, and the perception and power of men and women changed accordingly. Aristotle portrayed women as morally, intellectually, and physically inferior to men; saw women as the property of men; claimed that women's role in society was to reproduce and serve men in the household; and saw male domination of women as natural and virtuous. Though this notion of the supremacy of the male gender has deteriorated with the development of civilisation, it still continues to prevail as a clandestine factor, which subtly erodes the female space.

### **Patriarchy in India**

It was during the freedom movement that the need for an egalitarian society was sensed. But it resulted in a patriarchal one. Women are still subjected to violence and discrimination even in modern India. The denial of basic rights and facilities to women even in the 21st century and significant high cases of female foeticide, honour killing, dowry death, etc. is a thing to ponder upon how the patriarchy is deeply rooted in the very foundation of the society.

Though there is considerable change in the status of women in the modern Indian society with women population almost half of the population of the country and Indian laws being implemented for the protection of rights of women, women still undergo a mental trauma, which is a result of the patriarchal influence that controls the women indirectly, forcing her to live the life a man wants.

### **Patriarchal Review of the Novels of Male Indian Writers – Post Independence**

Male writers depicted the traditional societal set up of India, showcasing not only the nostalgia and dissent of certain cultural activities but also the success stories of patriots and common men. The novels predominantly covered the success stories of Indian men and women, both in India as well as abroad and their utter failures too. Each novel depicted the multi ethnic and multicultural backdrop that portrayed the importance of men in the society with subtle reference to women, which provided something for the reader. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's

Rajmohan's Wife is the first Indian novel in English. Anandmath is the second novel. Then came Krishna Pant's Bay of Bengal, Kandan, Filler, Toru Dutt's Bianca, Jogendra Singh's Nur Jahan and Madhusudhan Dutt's Kamarupa and Kamalata. These authors comprised of the first-generation writers in Indian English fiction.

The second-generation trio Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan's fictions were society based. They discussed the plights of the subjugated lower classes and the plight of the middle class. They also satirised the bourgeois, their tendency of imitating the British. These novelists took to their own styles in bringing forth the traditional setup of the country. Mulk Raj Anand can be aptly compared to Charles Dickens, the prominent novelist of the Victorian age, famous for his exact portrayal of the vices of the society. Likewise, Mulk Raj Anand too is notable for his projection of the poorer classes of India, propagating a new literature called protest literature. In *The Sword and the Sickle* Anand focussed his attention on the sufferings, misery and wretchedness of the poor as a result of exploitation of the downtrodden class of the Indian society. His other novels focus on religious hypocrisy, feudal system, East West encounter, the place of women in the society, superstitions, poverty, hunger and exploitation are his common themes.

R.K. Narayan was the lucid South Indian writer. His writing technique was unpretentious with a natural element of humour about it. It focussed on ordinary people. He was able to write about the intricacies of Indian society without having to modify his characteristic simplicity to conform to trends and fashions in fiction writing. Raja Rao's works are deeply rooted in metaphysics. *The Serpent and the Rope*, a semi-autobiographical novel recounting a search for spiritual truth in Europe and India, established him as one of the finest Indian prose stylists. His first and best-known novel *Kanthapura* is narrated in the form of a purana by an old woman of the village. The novel advocates Gandhian philosophy through its protagonist Moorthy, a young Brahmin who works for the upliftment of the Pariahs.

The British rule had its high impact on these second-generation writers. Disillusioned by the failure of the British rulers to ameliorate the plight of the suffering Indians, there grew an atmosphere of earthly realism. Literature has now become a convenient tool to dramatise and popularize the national cause. They produced novels of social realism. The freedom struggle caught the imagination of the entire nation and these significant writers could not escape the impact of the mighty movement which was then sweeping the country. The next generation of miscellaneous fiction writers were political and satirical writers like Kushwant Singh, Balachandra Rajan. Kushwant Singh's prominent stories *Train to Pakistan* and *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale* basically deal with the partition, post-independence and the latter about the tension between the British and Sikhs. His stories are replenished with vivid chanting of conversations, revolutionary speeches, meetings and such. His novels also throw light on the Sikhs and Muslims and their internal conflict with the British. They examine varied group of people and increases the understanding of society and culture of that time and place.

Balachandra Rajan was a follower of John Milton, wrote two novels, *The Dark Dancer* which deals with the partition, and *Too Long in the West*, a more light-hearted satire of a girl's return to her home village. *The Dark Dancer*, a novel of modern India centers around national and

personal conflicts in its story of V. S. Krishnan, a Brahmin, who, returned after ten years of schooling in England, finds that his country's strife over partition and the English evacuation is reflected in his own struggle to find a meaning and a definition of his life. His career arranged, his marriage predetermined, he escapes disgrace in a civil demonstration and settles into his government service post. Although Kamala is the perfect Hindu wife, personifying non-violence in which resignation can be translated into resistance, when Cynthia Bainbridge turns up their friendship, begun in England, becomes a passionate affair but it is ended when Krishna realizes that his religion is no longer open to him. Joining Kamala in riot-torn Shantihpur, he is confronted by the vicious hatred of the Muslims and the threat of cholera and is the witness of Kamala's murder when she attempts to protect a Moslem girl. After the traditional rites of her burial, he returns to Delhi and Government Service knowing that Kamala's final profession of faith has effected a change in him even if it has gone for nothing in larger terms. The parallel struggles of individual and state for freedom, the symbols, fundamentals, rituals and practices of different Indian groups, are overlaid with heavy textured prose that is exhaustive in its exploration of contemporary Indian thinking.

Chaman Nahal too is one of the best exponents of Indian English fiction. His novels, *My true faces*, *Into another dawn*, *Azadi* talk of the pre Independence era. He discusses family relationships, sexual intimacies on par with the backdrop of political scenario. His quartets on Gandhiji profoundly describe the life of Gandhi, exhibiting a close study of the Mahatma. Arun Joshi's novels bear contemporary who are urban, English speaking and disturbed for some reason. His stories often explore philosophical dimensions of an individual's yearning to decipher the meaning of life and the throe of materialistic existence. The strange case of Billy Biswas, *The Apprentice* and *The Last Labyrinth* are some of his notable novels. Billy Biswas tells the story of a US returned Indian name Billy. He gets fed up of the materialistic life that revolves around him and being an anthropologist often visiting tribes in India, one day suddenly disappears in such a visit. His novels clearly depict the pangs of mankind, may be the after effects of the Second World War and man's failing faith in God. Joshi's male characters are mentally disturbed, cut off from all aspects of society. They are forlorn and regard themselves as strangers in the physical world.

V.S. Naipaul is known for his early comic novels set in Trinidad and Tobago, his bleaker later novels of the underworld and his autobiographical chronicles of life and travels. Ahmed Salman Rushdie is a British Indian novelist and essayist. Much of his fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent. He combines magical realism with historical fiction. His work is concerned with the many connections, disruptions and migrations between and eastern and western civilizations. His first novel *Grimes* is a part science fiction tale. It's his next novel acclaimed literary notability for the author. *Midnight's Children* follows the life a child born at the stroke of midnight, the time when India gained its independence. The protagonist Saleem has been compared to Rushdie himself, though the author denies the idea. His next novel *Shame* depicts the political turmoil in Pakistan. The characters are based on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Muhammed Zia ul Haq. *Satanic Verses* consists of a frame narrative. He once again implements magical realism. The story is about two protagonists Gilrul Farishta and Saladin Chamcha compared to Amitabh Bacchan and N.T. Rama Rao, and the ensuing tangle between the two.

Shashi Tharoor is regarded more of a politician and journalist than an author. He started writing at the age of six. His World War II adventure novel *Operations Below*, inspired by the Biggles books was serialized. His first novel *The Great Indian Novel* is a comparison of the epic Mahabharata to the Indian democracy post-independence. *Pax Indica* is a nonfiction book about India's foreign policy. His other novels namely *The Elephant*, *the Tiger* and *the Cellphone*, *India from Midnight to the Millennium* trace the history and the politics of the nation. *The White Tiger* is the debut novel by Indian author Aravind Adiga. The novel provides a darkly humorous perspective of India's class struggle in a globalized world as told through a retrospective narration from Balram Halwai, a village boy. In detailing Balram's journey first to Delhi, where he works as a chauffeur to a rich landlord, and then to Bangalore, the place to which he flees after killing his master and stealing his money, the novel examines issues of religion, caste, loyalty, corruption and poverty in India. Ultimately, Balram transcends his sweet-maker caste and becomes a successful entrepreneur, establishing his own taxi service. In a nation proudly shedding a history of poverty and underdevelopment, he represents, as he himself says, tomorrow.

Davidar published short stories and poems in newspapers and literary magazines, before publishing his debut novel, *The House of Blue Mangoes* in 2002. The novel, which was based on Davidar's own family, and covered fifty years of South Indian history, had been twelve years in the writing. Davidar's second novel, *The Solitude of Emperors*, which was based on his experiences as a journalist, and the outrage he felt at the communal riots that took place in India in the 1990s. His third novel, *Ithaca*, set in the world of international publishing.

### **Chetan Bhagat**

Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist, screenwriter, television personality and motivational speaker, known for his English-language dramedy novels about young urban middle-class Indians. Bhagat is the author of bestselling novels *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Centre* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *What Young India Wants* (2012) (speeches and columns), *Half Girlfriend* (2014), *Making India Awesome* (2015) and *One Indian Girl* (2016).

A close review of the novels manifests the common ideas that were the need of the then post independent society. These male writers were predominantly patriarchal in their approach giving little emphasis on female identity. Their novels describe the plight of women supported and pacified by the alpha male, without whose protection and support the mere survival is a question. Even in the patriotic novels the protagonist is always the male. Hence, he is the deciding factor of the family, society and polity. The novel taken up for study is Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*, since he is a contemporary writer depicting modern society which is still deemed to be patriarchal.

### ***Revolution 2020***

This book follows the story of two friends separated by their ambitions and passions yet connected by their love for the same girl. While Gopal, who has experienced the harsh realities of life due to poverty, aspires to become rich, his friend Raghav is a boy from a well-off family who desires to "revolutionize" India by fighting corruption. Aarti and Gopal have been child deep but platonic in relationship. As teenagers, Gopal pushes Aarti for more, but she later reveals



that she was not ready for anything. Gopal gets a low ranking in the AIEEE exams while Raghav is among the toppers. Gopal moves to another city (Kota), to join reputed coaching classes to help with his ranking. Raghav becomes a celebrity in the town after he passes the Indian Institute of Technology entrance exam. Aarti falls for Raghav during Gopal's absence. Aarti and Gopal chat online, and Aarti reveals her relationship to Gopal, who is heartbroken. He studies hard but gets a low ranking in the AIEEE exam for the second time. His father dies shortly after. Raghav decides to become a journalist and pursue a career in a newspaper publishing house.

Meanwhile, Gopal is contacted by a politician who wishes to build an engineering college on the highly valuable land that Gopal's family owns. Gopal agrees to the deal and joins the system of corruption in India in order to build the college with the politician's black money. He is tired of "giving white envelopes" to officials but has no other choice. Raghav, now a journalist, exposes the corruption-funded college and is eventually fired from the news-house. Raghav starts his own newspaper, *Revolution 2020*, to "change the world" and expose the corrupt system in India. After another expose, Raghav's newspaper is shut down by politicians and thugs, and he loses almost everything.

Raghav is still passionate about his activism and forgets about Aarti. They are still unmarried. Aarti and Gopal reconnect and often meet after work in coffee shops and other places, without Raghav's knowledge. Gopal books a hotel room in the same hotel that Aarti works. Gopal seduces Aarti who returns his love, giving in to years of suppressed feelings. Aarti falls in love with Gopal and begins to cheat on Raghav. Gopal then decides to disclose to Raghav that he and Aarti are into a relationship. Gopal goes to Raghav's office but by chance encounters a poor farmer and his kid who had come to Raghav for help shakes him up and he realizes the folly of money, power and wealth. He decides to let go of Aarti perhaps realizing they were never meant to be together and Raghav would always remain Aarti's love. He invites two prostitutes as a part of his birthday surprise and ensures Aarti witnesses it, provoking her hate him forever. He anonymously helps Raghav get a job, and suggests he become a politician (MLA) to bring about the "revolution" he desired. Aarti and Raghav get married.

Gopal becomes a rich and successful businessman but is still heartbroken over Aarti. Despite sacrificing his lifelong love to bring about the "revolution", Gopal still doubts whether he is a "good man".

### **Patriarchal View of *Revolution 2020***

The two dominant male figures, Gopal and Raghav exhibit two polarised views of patriarchy. Gopal who is in love with Aarti since his childhood tries in vain to woo her. His efforts materialise only after he becomes successful in his life. Chetan Bhagat tries to bring into the picture that women are lured by power and money, expressing the menial attitude of women which could be compared to women being gifted with precious jewels when a paramour is in need of her. The only difference here is the modernised attitude of status. When Gopal decides to forsake his lover girl for his friend Raghav, he gets two prostitutes to make Aarti hate him, but before that affirms that he sexually enjoys Aarti exploiting and luring the women sex with his power and money. He uses two women prostitutes as a tool to bring forth the effect he wants.

While Gopal and Raghav settle for jobs which help in moulding of the society, Aarti works as a receptionist in a hotel, though being the daughter of a renowned man in the town. Her aspiration of becoming an air hostess is not treated with much importance compared to that of her male counterparts, thus expressing that the profession of a woman is not of much importance. Gopal who is vexed about his failures in love life and economical status goes to the point of forsaking his life, if not for the politician who happens to come by, but the life and likes of Aarti are not given that much prominence. She seeks favouritism with her boyfriends, meaning that she is weaker and is in need of an emotional support from some male counterpart. When Raghav is absorbed in his profession, he fails to pay attention to Aarti, thus forcing her to turn towards Gopal. Thus, it could be concluded that the Indian society is still patriarchal in its view but in a very subtle manner. The society continues to be in its same form failing to recognise women as an equal counterpart.

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