

Corruption as an Incurable Societal Disease in Chetan Bhagat's *Revolution 2020*

S. Sathyarani

Asst. Prof. of English

Adhiyaman Arts and Science College for Women

Srinivasa Nagar, Krishnagiri Main Road

Uthangarai (Tk.) Krishnagiri (Dt.), 635207

Sathyarani59@Gmail.Com

=====
Chetan Bhagat is the famous Indian writer, prominent columnist, youth icon and famous orator. His novel *Revolution 2020* mainly focuses on major themes of the societal realism. They are love, desire, corruption and ambition. Societal realism does not stop with saying how the ways of the life of the people. It also gives how life can be changed for the good of all.

The novel revolves around three close friends, Gopal Mishra, Raghav Kashyap and Aarti Pratap Pradhan, who are living in the central part of Varanasi. Gopal Mishra is the protagonist of the novel and he belongs to lower class family. His father is the retired teacher and mother died, when he is four years old. He is brought up by his father. His mother's illness has wiped out his father's savings. His father's share of land is also in dispute due to the greedy nature of his father's brother.

Gopal is born and brought up in limited comforts but with unlimited love and sentiments in the company of his father. During one occasion his father introduces his brother with tears as, "He is my elder brother... the loss of a brother hurt him more than the loss of land" (15). Whereas, Raghav Kashyap belongs to middle - class family and Aarti belongs to rich family. This class difference makes all the life change into different directions. It is strange to know how three dissimilar people with different background and with different life ambitions come to the acquaintance of making friendship.

All the three close friends survive with their own dreams of life. Raghav Kashyap is topper from the Sunbeam school and strong aspirant of IIT rank. He is a bright engineering student and his ambition is to become an honest journalist. He wants to do something for the world, so he tells as, society changes only when individual family norms are challenged. He is the close friend of Gopal from the school days. Unfortunately both of them fall in love with the same girl Aarti. Aarti belongs to a rich family and she desires to become an Airhostess.

Her parents expect her to become an engineer. As the name indicates, she is very beautiful, intelligent, soft in nature and bold enough to make decisions of her own. She is the rich granddaughter of ex CM and daughter of honest District Magistrate of Varanasi. She is brought up from a joint family and has a lot of affection for her family members and friends. She is a woman of honesty but even then she doesn't oppose to corruption in education system of Varanasi. Her life revolves around two close friends Gopal and Raghav. Gopal is her best friend and he is in true love with Aarti.

The politician wants to change his black money into white currency; so he selects education field. When he meets Shakula Ji with Sunil to open a new college, Shakula Ji suspects Gopal; whether he is capable for doing the corruption business. Bedi, Raman Lal Shakula Ji's personal assistant; understands the efficient ability of Gopal. Bedi tells positive motive about Gopal and the politician accepts to open institution with the help of his black currency. Raman Lal Shukla Ji is the silent partner of the Ganga Tech Engineering College. Gopal is unaware of the corruption at the beginning. Bedi, who is the assistant of the Shukla's encourages Gopal to demand and practice corruption.

Teachers are considered as greater than god. They are more important than everyone in the society. But now all the professionals concerned with the education system focus on the money only and forget their moral duty. Prof M.C. Srivastava is appointed as a Dean of the Ganga Tech institution. In Indian society, education is considered as goddess Saraswati. Prof M.C. Srivastava expects a huge sum of money to play a role as a dean. He thinks that education system is a business and commodity goods. To satisfy his money hunger, Gopal and Bedi are agreed to pay one lakh cash and seventy thousand cheque per month.

He is not satisfied and demands to pay extra ten thousand per hire apart from his salary. He asks separately cash and cheque to escape from the income tax department. As a dean in the reputed and prestigious institution, he forgets his moral and dignified profession and induces corruption in education system. He becomes money hunter and focuses on those motives as, "I'll charge ten thousand per hire as search fee, apart from my salary... I will come to campus three days a week... I am the dean that is why three days. Else, once a week is enough" (157).

The major part of the novel portrays how corruption is incurable societal disease in the education system. In the education system, how bribes are taken and given at every corner, how anyone and everyone are eligible to open educational institutions. Money, fame, power and wealth have changed the higher professionals and make them to forget their moral duties. Gopal appoints principal in Ganga Tech institution and he pays a large sum of money to play a role as a principal. He spends more money to build basic foundation, infrastructure facilities and also to get approval from reputed university. Ganga Tech institution, from beginning to end is involved in corruption system. Gopal becomes highly skilled man in doing corruption business and gives justice to his evil works as, "If I want to be a big man, I have to do big things" (130).

The city of Varanasi, also called the city of Learning. The Ganga tech college of Engineering is built in fifteen – acre campus in the highway main road. The institution is attracted mainly because of infrastructure and reputed name. This institution is set up with corruption and it plays a powerful role throughout the novel. All the officials from peon to higher officers encourage corruption. Gopal takes three years efforts to build his Ganga Tech Engineering College for inauguration.

He tries to manipulate directors, inspectors, principals and lecturers in the name of bribery. For getting approval, Gopal pays a huge sum of money for Prestigious University for opening a new Engineering college in Varanasi. He spends a lot of money to set up basic foundation of the college. Gopal spends one lakh for advertisement about his college in local newspaper. He tells as, “Life is to be enjoyed; Look at me, I will make four crores this year. What is the point if I don’t enjoy it?” (3). Now-a-days, advertisement plays a major role in spreading fame of the institution. Advertisement tries to cheat innocent people because of their artificial techniques.

Raghav and Gopal in *Revolution 2020*, suggests the two dimensions of the corrupt education system. At every stage Raghav is apprehensive of Gopal’s ambitious plan of Ganga tech. He enquires, “What will be the faculty ratio? ...And in the same breathe admits, “I can’t be a part of a corrupt enterprise” (161). Shakula, the MLA, has clear plan in his mind how to use his art for manipulating these directors of the college. It has convictions that direct dealing is of no avail to acquire power and to open education institutes. Shakula himself reflects on the hypocrisy of the corrupt system, “If we had a straightforward and clean system, these professors would open their own colleges. Blue-chip companies and software firms could open colleges. The system is twisted; they don’t want to touch it. That is where we come in” (166).

Bhagat tries to bring out the issues of engineering college through this novel. Gopal tries to capture the expectations of the students and spends more money for infrastructure facilities. In Varanasi, Ganga Tech is the biggest institution because of infrastructure and approval from the reputed University. When the students aren’t able to get admission in government colleges, they try to seek admission in private institution to fulfill their ambitions. But the private management makes of this opportunity and demands corruption and fails to provide good education. Due to this evil-minded people, the students become victims.

The novel moves to another important character Raghav. He excels in studies. Of many aspirants to IIT, he is the only person who gets pass in the examination. Yet he decides not to pursue the course. His passionate approach to life and his desire to change the society makes him to take up journalism. He has a strong conviction that youth can change the world. He joins as a trainee reporter for a well-known newspaper Dainik. His main aim is to clean all the evils and corruption in the society of Varanasi. Raghav comes to know about the famous Ganga technology and wants to know the secret of their

success. He meets Gopal and takes an Interview. Raghav is surprised because within a short period, the institute has developed and reached far fame throughout Varanasi. He understands Ganga technology is evil corrupted institution and tries his best to eradicate the disease in Varanasi.

Bhagat tries to portray the societal disease (corruption) through the characters. Gopal feels very proud because of his achievement within a short period. He wants to achieve more than Raghav in life. In Dainik newspaper, Raghav starts to write about the corruption of new engineering institution in Varanasi. Raghav researches about the Ganga institution and came to know the institution is set up with corruption and brought this into light. In his article he writes corrupted money make the Varanasi polluted.

The novel of the title *Revolution 2020* indicates fight against corruption and eradication of the societal disease (corruption) in Indian education system. Raghav with the support of media highlights about the major threat of corruption. Through this instance, we can understand how media plays a strong part in projecting the evils of the society. Shukla Ji gets angry for spreading a false remark about the reputed technology. The institute is about to celebrate the inauguration event with a grand success. It is to be inaugurated by chief minister and state education minister. The inauguration celebration is cancelled because of remarks in the newspaper. It causes a great pain in Gopal's first success path.

Even corruption sometimes fails and honesty wins. This is proved when Shukla is sent to jail for his evils. Raghav faces many problems and extreme pressures from highly influenced political persons. Even than he never step back from his profession and passion. He strives a lot to make the society, which is free from corruption. Shukla's followers are extremely angered and they demolish computer, printer and other printing materials in Raghav's office. Raghav decides to wipe out the corruption in the society, even after many failures. He starts his first success path in starting his own newspaper *Revolution 2020*.

He tells his supporters that real change will take time and the revolution will come in 2020. Raghav takes resolution to begin his own newspaper and names it Revolution 2020. Aarti with a positive zest of life is hopeful of the changes in the social system to save humanity from being disgraced. Raghav's goal is well portrayed in the following lines, "Revolution 2020. That's his goal. That India must have a full-blown revolution by 2020. Power will be with the youth. We will dismantle the old corrupt system and put a new one in place" (197).

Raghav has a realization that the game of corruption will not continue for long and one day there will be a revolution for eradicating the present corrupt practices in society. His mission is, "there will be a real people's revolution in India one day, that's his thing" (149). He writes about the corruption and measures to wipe out corruption in education system. He points out about the corrupt system in India as:

This has to stop. We have to clean the system. Che Guevara, the great Revolutionary, once said, ‘power is not an apple that falls from the tree into your lap. Power has snatched from the people who already have it.’

We have to start the revolution, a revolution that reset our corruption system. A system that shifts power back into hands of the people, and treats politicians like workers, not kings. Of course, this won’t happen overnight. This also won’t happen until the real suffering begins. As India’s young population increases, we will need more good colleges and jobs. Soon, there.....And it will all begin in Varanasi. For the reason, we bring you *Revolution 2020*. (205-206).

Raghav has a clear vision that the reformation is required in the small cities where people are the victims under the educational reforms like Shukla. He brings out the clear position of the society, “Yes, of course. Kids from big cities are cushioned against the system. They have decent colleges, get good breaks. The revolution has to start from a small city” (197).

Revolution 2020 becomes a voice of changing social system against corruption. It becomes a voice of radical awareness. All the famous media persons and eminent agencies stand at the front of Shukla’s home and shout slogans as an MLA corrupt. It becomes a greater challenge for Raghav in reforming social changes. He declares:

‘Well, we are a small newspaper called Revolution 2020. There are four of us, including me. We don’t have much experience but we are passionate about our work’.

‘What are you passionate about?’

‘Making a difference. Changing India for the better. That is what we live for, Raghav said.

‘Is it true that you believe India will have a revolution in the year 2020?’

‘Yes, but we all have to work towards it and make sacrifices for it’.(243).

The next important political matter is the responsibility of Gopal. Election is nearer but Shakula Ji is in jail. He instructs Gopal to become an MLA and to create strong foundation as a powerful political leader. In India political parties have power to rule anyone in the society, no one dare to question the rulers in the society. They think that they are born to rule the people in the name of power. Gopal by using his high influence, he tries to change black currency into white. Shukla asks Gopal to meet Pradhan whose father Brij Pradhan was an ex-CM. The people of Varanasi have more trust on their family, if Gopal have their support he can easily win in the election. He is also interested to enter into politics to fulfill his life-time ambition of his father.

In the beginning of the novel, fate dominates Gopal's life. But as the novel moves on, luck plays his life. His main ambition is to become a rich person and wants to take revenge on life for all his failures. He has a strong belief that failures make life success. This belief has become true in Gopal's life. Aarti's father does not have interest in politics but his son-in-law is interested to nominate and compete with the other nominators' in the election.

Gopal thinks that he has become one of the reputed people in Varanasi. He feels, it is a right time to marry his life-time friend Aarti. His intention about Aarti's expectation is wrong. He is sure that she never refuses him because of his power, money and reputation. Again fate begins to play in Gopal's life, when she openly declares that she is not willing to marry him. Even though Gopal is equal to her status and reputation, she likes to marry Raghav because of his honesty and good nature. Gopal understands Aarti's love for Raghav and sacrifice his true love for sake of his both close friends.

Bhagat brings out the fact that no revolution and reformation is successful out of jealousy and violence. Raghav's press is burnt but the voice of revolution and the anti-corruption spreads everywhere. The novel shifts to pathetic situation of Raghav. His dream to make the society, which is free from corruption, fails because Shukla Ji's supporters demolished his computers and entire office. Gopal is hurt because of Raghav's pathetic situation and he has true affection for his close friend. Gopal's master brain decides to make Raghav as an MLA. If Raghav becomes an MLA he will strive to clean the society by the use of power. Even though Gopal is corrupted man, he expects some good changes in Varanasi. He wants to spoil his name in front of Aarti, so he pretends to have affair with other women. The true love story of Gopal reaches to climax. Aarti marries Raghav and her desire is fulfilled. Honest is united with honesty. Gopal's love on Aarti is not bonded in a day but throughout his life.

Like all the fate of the heroes, Gopal's life is also projected in the novel. For him it is an utter loss, to sacrifice his childhood love and sensibility, no hopes and no dreams. In the race of success, he feels himself a looser.

He calls his dean Shrivastava and orders him to keep him busy in his business affairs, so that he does not think about Aarti and their past life. The intensity of passion reflects in his confession, "Dean Shrivastava, I want to work hard. Let's take Ganga Tech to new heights I want us to be present in every field of education. Keep me busy. So busy that I don't have to think" (293). He is desperate to forget his past as well as his present in the fit of intoxication. He fills his glass of whisky to forget his past life. His college becomes reputed in Varanasi. Gopal reaches his success path and becomes the director of the Ganga tech college.

Bhagat discusses about the quality of the education in the Indian society. Education is considered as a tool for business motives. The Indian government is ruining the life of the coming generation. He warns that, we are destroying an entire generation by not giving it access to the world-class education.

He admits, education must be free from the shadows of commercialization. This entire speculation on this aspect of education and corruption has become the central theme of the novel *Revolution 2020*.

Bhagat through his novels intends to construct the inner world of the consciousness of youths who wander in the wilderness in the absence of definite aims and ideologies. His characters strive to uphold the cause of family values, social and national values to save society from being lost in the wilderness of corruption and fragmentation. *Revolution 2020* can be appreciated as the beacon light for new generation.

Works Cited

Bell, Daniel.” The social Framework of the Industrial Society,” The Information Technology Revolution, edited by, Tom Forster, Oxford Blackwell and Cambridge, MIT Press,1980.

Bhagat, Chetan. *Revolution 2020*. Rupa, 2011.

---. *Revolution 2020 Love, Corruption, Ambition*. Rupa Publication, 2011.

Jeffrey, Raig. “Rev. of Revolution 2020.” *The Times of Literary Supplement*, 24 Feb, 2012.
