
The Girl In Room 105: A Novel Of Modern Issues

¹Geeta Bisht Walia

¹Associate Professor, Deptt of English, Jwala Devi Vidya P.G College Kanpur U.P.

Received: 10 Jan 2022, Accepted: 20 Jan 2022, Published with Peer Reviewed on line: 31 Jan 2022

Abstract

The present research paper depicts the contemporary issues of Indian society. Through the research paper I want to attract the attention of readers towards the contemporary social situation of our country. The paper discusses the novel of Chetan Bhagat named *The Girl in Room 105*. The novelist through his characters portrays the real picture of modern India. The novel revolves round the murder of Zara Lone and how the murder mystery is solved. But the novel is not just about the murder mystery. The novel unveils the hidden human emotions, the religious animosity that exists in society but modern and educated people do not exhibit it clearly. The unemployment among the youngsters, aspirations of young ones for IIT, pre-marital sex. The novel not only entertains us but also teaches us a lot.

Keywords:- Love, religion, religious conflicts, sex, unemployment.

introduction

Indian English Literature is the encounter between eastern and western culture. English was brought to India by British people. Gradually it gained popularity in India as a link language and now it has become the second language of our nation. But despite of its popularity it is said to be the language of elite class. It is a language of the brain of Indian people and not a language of their heart. Indian English Literature gained popularity in the hands of the trio-R. K. Narayan, Anand and Raja Rao in 1930s. Since 1930s the Indian English Literature started developing.

We have many famous writers who contributed in its development like-Khushwant Singh (1915-2014), Arun Joshi (1939-1993), Girish Karnad (1938-2019), Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004), Shashi Deshpande (1938-), Salman Rushdie (1947-) and many more. These writers have given international recognition to our Indian culture through their writings.

Aim Of The Study: The aim of the study is to make the people aware of the contemporary social problems. It further shows how an illicit relation can lead into a heinous crime like murder. It also suggests that love and truth is the foundation of relationship.

Society always changes with the time and this is clearly visible in the contemporary literature. Since 2000 there has been a radical change in Indian society regarding women education, sex, food, clothes and many more important issues. Our society is gradually becoming westernized. This synthesis is best expressed in Indian English Literature Derrett says:

Because of their first-hand experience of the west, they (Indian writers in English) have the power to perceive differences; they have experienced the oriental adjustment to a western society and re-adjustment again to the oriental; and from this they have a slightly view of their own society-not detached and slightly repellent view of the de-Indianized Indians. They must feel a sense of release in expressing their sensation, which after all demand expression and as one writer expresses it: "Since we cannot expect others to try to understand our achievement in our own terms, we have to present it in a language which they (the west) can understand."¹

Today a new genre has developed in fiction that is known as popular fiction. This genre does not fall under the category of literary fiction. Being non-literary it is entirely understood by non-literary people also. The language used by the novelists is easy, simple and clear. Chetan Bhagat's novels are categorized under popular fiction.

Chetan Bhagat was born on 22nd April 1974 in Delhi. He had graduated in Mechanical engineering at IIT Delhi and completed his MBA from IIM Ahmedabad. He began his career as an investment banker but left it to pursue his career in writing. Today he is one of the most important people of India. The New York Times has called him "the biggest selling author in India's history" The works of Chetan Bhagat are *Five Point Someone* (2004), *3 Idiots* (2009), *One Night @ Call Centre* (2005), *2 States: The story of My Marriage* (2010), *The Three Mistakes of my Life* (2008), *Half-Girlfriend* (2014), *One Indian Girl* (2016), *The Girl in Room 105*(2018), *One Arranged Murder* (2020), *400 Days* (2021). Out of the above novels One Night @ the Call Centre, The Three Mistakes of my life, Half-Girlfriend, Two States ,3Idiots have been adapted into Bollywood films.

In the present research paper, I will discuss his novel-*The Girl in Room 105*. This is the story of an elite society. Chetan Bhagat's novels are full of realism. Though the plot and characters are fictitious but they are taken from real life. We feel as we have known these people. This is one of the most important features of his novels.

The story of the novel revolves round a girl named Zara Lone, a beautiful Kashmiri. Keshav and Zara were in love but due to certain circumstances they broke up. Zara moves forward, gets engaged to Raghu, owner of a tech company. While Keshav is still in love with Zara. One day on Zara's birthday Keshav receives a message from Zara's phone and Keshav goes to meet her in her hostel room no 105. When he enters the room he finds Zara lying dead on her bed. Initially he is suspected to have murdered Zara but due to her intelligence and labour he finds out the real culprit, Raghu, Zara's fiancée. In his journey to find out the truth many truths are revealed to him like Zara's step brother's involvement with terrorists, Zara's sexual affair with her cousin, Faiz, a military officer. At the end of the novel Keshav himself realizes that he unlove Zara. Though the novel is about a murder mystery but Chetan Bhagat through his characters depict modern Indian society and its new social values. In the initial pages of the novel, we find Zara debating. Through Zara Chetan Bhagat displays a girl of new generation, a fearless and smart girl who is not afraid to express her views in front of the public even on religion. In her debate against her opponent, she says:

You can still pray five times a day. Maybe have an app to remind you on your phone. Listen to the prayers on the headphone. But don't impose them on the whole neighbourhood. And I would appreciate you didn't say things like "as a Muslim". I am not here as a Muslim; I am here as a finalist in the clash of the Titan Debate competition. ²

The above lines show the boldness of Zara regarding religion. She proves that a person should not be judged on the basis of his/her religion but on his/her opinions.

Zara loves to join protests. Once she goes to protest against Indian Army for using pellet guns. Keshav joins her. When she introduces him to her Kashmiri Muslim friends, Keshav is bound to think about his home town, where people are still conservative and do not mingle with people of different religion. He thinks:

Back in my home town, Alwar we don't really mix with people of other religions. My mother might have fainted seeing me in a crowd of Muslims. ³

Chetan Bhagat depicts the reality of small town where people are still religious fanatics while in metropolitan cities people have changed their mental attitude. Keshav and Saurav represent the youth of today who is facing the problem of job of choice. Both, Keshav and Saurav hates to teach in Chandan classes as tutors but they do not have another choice as they were not getting jobs of their will. The novelists also show the professional attitude of the coaching centre preparing for IIT. These

institutes lure the students and their parents to get admission in their institutes. Keshav says that once to impress a parent Chandan, the owner of the institute drags him out of the classroom and says;

Does he look like there's anything special about him?

See, if he can get into IIT, your child can too.⁴

In this novel we also find abundance instances of pre-marital sex. Zara Lone, the heroine of the novel is shown as a modern girl who does not hesitate to have sex with her boyfriend, Keshav. After her break up with Keshav, she gets engaged to Raghu and enjoys sexual relation with him. Even being in relationship with Raghu she develops a sexual relation with her cousin Faiz, a military officer. Faiz gives a cause to their relation. He says that Zara was missing the fun of her life with Raghu because Raghu is an ambitious person and he is always busy in making future plans. This shows the real nature of Zara. She lives for herself and does not give much importance to the word 'loyalty'. Faiz falls in love with Zara and is ready to leave his wife and kids for her but Zara does not intend to marry him. We also find that though Zara is officially engaged to Raghu but she does not like his physical features as Raghu has dark complexion. Zara after having relation with Faiz becomes doubtful of her pregnancy and through WhatsApp chat discuss the matter with Faiz. When Raghu asks her about her chat, she lies that she is using social media and replying a stranger. But Raghu through Zara's gestures doubt her and checks her phone after she sleeps. He reads the message as:

Have my baby

What?

Even if you are with Raghu. At least our child will be super looking.

With him, you never 'Will, you don't want Raghu's looks for your kids, do you? All black black ugly ugly.'⁵

The above messages enraged Raghu. He feels cheated and worthless. He thinks that his girl is having sex with other man, could be pregnant and if he marries her, he would be raising a bastard child and if leaves her, he would lose half of his company (he had given half shares of his company to Zara). In both the situations he is a loser. So, he decides to kill Zara and makes a super plan of her murder and tries to trap Keshav in the murder. So, he sends messages to Keshav from Zara's phone after murdering her because he knows that Keshav still loves Zara and will surely come to wish her on her birthday after seeing the messages. But he underestimated Keshav and falls into his own trap.

Chetan Bhagat writes about the contemporary issues in his novels. This is the reason the readers feel connected with him. In the present novel, he depicts one of the realities of our society that is religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Despite of education most of the people are not able to get rid of this feeling. When Keshav brings Zara to his home in Alwar and confesses his love for her, his

parents are shocked. They are not able to bear their son's professing love for a Muslim girl. They disagree of the relationship and Keshav's father ordered him to take Zara out of their as soon as possible. He is not ready to listen any plea of Keshav regarding Zara and Muslims. He says:

I am not speaking to these Kashmiri Muslims about Kashmir.

Just tell me when she is leaving our house.⁶

When Keshav goes to Zara's house, he finds them modern. They knew about their relationship and were not shocked to meet him as it was in the case of Keshav. Keshav does not have the courage to tell the truth about his and Zara's relation to his parents while Zara is bold enough to confess the truth to her parents. Keshav thinks that Zara's parents will accept him as their son -in-law but he is shocked to hear that Mr. Lone was not happy to know that Zara is in relationship with a Hindu boy. Mr. Lone also forces Keshav to adopt Islam to marry his daughter. When Keshav refuses to convert his religion, Mr. Lone becomes angry and threatens him not to meet his daughter. He says:

You are just a kafir. Taking advantage of my precious daughter.

Leave her alone, or it won't be good.⁷

This was the end of Keshav and Zara's relationship. It displays the stark reality of our society. Religion is a major cause of breaking off of such relationship. The novelist also satires the present situation of government administration. When the murder mystery of Zara is solved by Keshav and Raghu is caught by police, they drive Raghu in gypsy to police station along with Keshav and Saurav. When Keshav asks the driver to drive fast as there is no traffic on the road, then the inspector Rana winks and smiles and says that it is his order. He is waiting for the media to come and find out that police have solved the high-profile Zara murder case. When they reach the police station, they find that media has arrived and they take Rana's interview. In his interview, Rana boasts how he has solved the murder case while the case is solved by Keshav and Saurav. Rana says:

I am happy to say we have solved the Zara Lone murder case.

The murderer is Raghu Venkatesh, Zara Lone's fiancé and owner of a tech company in Hyderabad. As you can see, the courageous

Delhi police is not scared of arresting rich people.⁸

The novel talks about the modern issues but it also depicts the journey of Keshav. It shows how he finds the true meaning of love. He at the end says he unlove Zara. He becomes a detective at the end of the novel and thus finds the job of his choice. Thus, we can say that Chetan Bhagat has been successful in depicting the modern India with its changing social ethos in the novel *The Girl in Room 105*.

WORK CITED

- 1) M.E, Derrett. *The Modern Indian Novel in English: A Comparative Approach*. Bruxelles,1966, p.152.
- 2) Bhagat, Chetan. *The Girl in Room 105*. Westland: Seattle,2018, p.10.
- 3) Ibid., p.25.
- 4) Ibid., p.19.
- 5) Ibid., pp.291-292.
- 6) Ibid., p.114.
- 7) Ibid., p.126.
- 8) Ibid., p.301