



## **Full Length Research Article**

### **SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC ISSUES AS FOUND IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S "ONE NIGHT @ THE CALL CENTER"**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper focus upon the socio scientific issues in Chetan Bhagat's One night @ the call center. He has a far cry from the typical author image that lies in the mind of the common man. He is dealing with the harsh realities of life and problems faced by the young generation in his works. He holds a mirror to society and presents the reflection of the society of our own country. He selects subject which a reader can associate with socio scientific issues. The novelist describes a mix of sentiment, exploitations, romance, religion, supernatural influence, political conflict thoughts and family issues and technology and also social message depicted in 'One night@ the call center'. All characters live mechanized lives and finally there is a reformation of all characters.

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

As the title implies socio scientific issues in Chetan Bhagat's 'One night @ the call center', Chetan Bhagat is a modern social fiction writer. He writes for common people and dark topics, modern life, education, information technology etc. His language is very lucid and easy to understand. In this novel, Chetan Bhagat reveals harsh truths about call centers, a dark part which can't be seen by any one else. Even we can relate our life to any character in the novel. The entire novel is divided into two parts. All characters live mechanized lives. The novelist describes family issue, problems of work place etc. in a genuine and interesting way. The second part of the novel deals with reformation of all characters. Science Fiction is a genre of fiction dealing with imaginary but more or less reasonable content such as future settings, futuristic science and technology, space travel, aliens and paranormal abilities. Exploring the consequences of scientific innovations is one purpose of science fiction, making it "literature of ideas". Science Fiction is a largely based on writing rationally about alternative possible worlds or futures.

#### **Definition of Science Fiction**

Science Fiction is difficult to define, as it includes a wide range of subgenres and themes. Realistic speculation about possible future events, based on adequate knowledge of the real world, past and present, and a thorough understanding of the nature and signification of the scientific method. The first science fiction fanzine, The Comet, was published in 1930. Fanzine printing methods have changed over the decades, from the hectograph, the mimeograph, and the ditto machine, to modern photocopying. The earliest organized fandom online was the Science Fiction, Lovers community, originally a mailing list in the late 1970s with a text archive filing that was updated regularly.

#### **History**

Science Fiction has antecedents back to mythology as a means of understanding the world through speculation and storytelling. Science fiction as literature can be seen in Lucian's True History in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, some of the Arabian Nights tales, The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, etc. A product of the budding Age of Reason and the development of modern science itself, Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels was one of the first true science fantasy works.

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Following the 18<sup>th</sup> century development of the novel as a literary form. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mary Shelley's **books** *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man* helped define the form of the science fiction novel; later Edgar Allan Poe wrote a story about a flight to the moon. More examples appeared throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term "scientific romance" was used in Britain to describe much of this fiction. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, pulp magazines helped develop a new generation of mainly American SF writers, influenced by Hugo Gernsback, the founder of *Amazing Stories Magazine*. In the development of the World-Wide Web exploded the community of online fandom by orders of importance, with thousands and then literally millions of web sites devoted to science fiction and related genres for all media.

The term science fiction has entered popular culture, writers and fans active in the field came to associate the term with low-budget, low-tech "B-movies" and with low-quality pulp science fiction. The innovation of science fiction has provided criticism of developing and future technologies; it also produces innovation and new technology. The discussion of this topic has occurred more in literary and sociological than in scientific forums. Cinema and media theorist Vivian Sobchack examines the dialogue between science fiction film and the technological imagination. Technology impacts artists and how they portray their fictionalized subjects, but the fictional world gives back to science by enlargement imagination. While more common in the beginning years of science fiction with writers like Arthur C. Clarke, new authors still find ways to make the currently impossible technologies seem closer to being realized.

### Kind of science fiction

Hard science fiction is characterized by rigorous attention to accurate detail in quantitative sciences, especially physics, astrophysics, and chemistry, or on accurately depicting worlds that more advanced technology may make possible. The description "soft" science fiction may describe works based on social sciences such as psychology, economics, political science, sociology, and anthropology. Related to Social SF and Soft SF are the speculative fiction branches of utopian or dystopian stories. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, are examples. Satirical novels with fantastic settings such as *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift may be considered speculative fiction. Military science fiction is set in the context of conflict between national, interplanetary, or interstellar armed forces, the primary viewpoint characters are usually soldiers. Space opera is adventure science fiction set in outer space or on distant planets, where the emphasis is on action rather than either science or characterization. The conflict is heroic, and typically on a large scale. Space opera is sometimes used judgmentally, to describe improbable plots, absurd science, and cardboard characters. The study of science fiction, or science fiction studies, is the critical assessment, interpretation, and discussion of science fiction literature, film, new media, fandom, and fan fiction. Science fiction scholars take science fiction as an object of study in order to better understand it and its relationship to science, technology, politics, and culture-at-large.

### The Change of literature

It's often said that Science Fiction is the literature of change. When a culture is undergoing a lot of changes due to scientific advances and technological developments, and expects to undergo more. It's hardly surprising if stories about these changes become popular as a way of expressing people's feeling, 'this story must be set against a society significantly different from our own usually, but not necessarily, because of some change in the level of science and technology or it is not a science fiction story'. The science fiction story does not deal with the restoration of order, but with change and ideally, with continuing changes.

### Socio-Political Conflict

The present paper is an attempt to study the impact of globalization in the selected works of Chetan Bhagat. Likewise the modern stories by Chetan Bhagat are based on the lifestyle in the I.T sector of Gurgaon and Bangalore. The story is narrated in such a way that it looks more like a movie rather than a novel. Bhagat bringing about a radical change in the style of writing wants to explore globalization. Globalization means development in technology and business. That technology entered into market that is known as B.P.O. In India B.P.O flourished because we have manpower, affecting the youth of India to entire night. Due to call centers, every night all potential is wasted. All characters live mechanized lives in the call center. Consumerism is fallout of Globalization in the corporate world and this concept is reflected in this novel. With the advent of globalization, the scenario of the corporate world has become more of consumer centered or product centered. Consumerism means developing managerial skills, uplifting of a system, upgrading of technology, approach to the problem and immediate solution of problem and satisfaction of customer. In this novel, Bhagat criticizes our government and call centers in Vroom's voice:

"Our government doesn't realize this, but Americans are using us. We are sacrificing an entire generation to service their call centers." Bhagat determinedly draws parallels between United States behaviour and the behaviour of India's governmental and managerial elites. The call center is achieved by convincing United States customers of Western Computers, the firm that outsources its support to the Indian call center, that terrorist have attacked the United States with a computer virus that will do untold confusion upon the United States economy. Customers are persuaded of this fact by being encouraged to activate an in pulled testing script within Microsoft Word which results in the software generating page of text. They are then encouraged to repeatedly call the help line as a means of notifying authorities about the process of virus. Vroom likens United States American military action to the behaviour of the call-center manager, Bakshi, and describes "the whole world [...] being run by a bad stupid-evil boss" (208). Likewise, United States overseas investments and employment practices are represented as demeaning and inequitable, so that Vroom also complains about Americans tossing "their loose change" at Indian workers (228) and decrying the reality. The corrupt state of politicians in our country is mentioned in the novel, "Why don't politicians commit suicides?"

A call center employee points out that even though housewives, businessmen, employees and film stars commit suicide but politicians never do so because they are never hurt, they don't feel anything and unfortunately this nation is run by people who do not feel anything. All call center employees slog night after night so that they can have some money with which they can realize their simple dreams like building nursery schools and the like. There is uncertainty in their jobs as their jobs are depending on their companies, their clients, in case other client companies fail they would also be negatively affected. The general feeling of call center employees is that Americans are successful because of their money power. As far as the call center jobs are concerned, call centers pay more, but only because the exchange rate is in the favor of the Americans and that they toss their loose change at us. It seems like a lot in rupees. But jobs that pay less could be better. There could be other jobs that define us, and make us learn or help our country. The fact is that money is not progress in building something lasting for the future.

### Exploitation

All characters are exploited in the name of Globalization, but Esha's and Radhika husband's characters are replicas of globalization. Esha has compromised by sleeping with a designer to get a modeling contract. However the guy turned out to be opportunistic as he betrays her by telling her she can't become a model due to her height. He also tries to console her by sending her some money. Esha feels terribly betrayed and tries to suppress the mental pain by inflicting herself with physical pain by purposely cutting her skin. Vroom is shocked to learn that Bakshi has cheated him and Shyam by submitting their work as his own. To add to his miseries, he overhears Esha telling the other girls that she had slept with a designer to get a modeling contract. In this world of Cosmo Culture, everybody is involved in an extra marital relationship.

Radhika, who loved her husband very much, is shocked to learn about his dark side. When Vroom calls up her husband portraying as a radio jockey and asks him to dedicate roses and a song to someone special, he chooses his girlfriend Payal over his wife. Radhika who listens to this gets terribly upset as her husband has betrayed her. Radhika is a very faithful and innocent wife. She never ever complains to her husband regarding the misbehavior of her mother-in-law. She is very responsible too. So she does house-hold activity during the day time and works at a call-center at night. Mr. Bakshi exploits like any thing, he puts aside ethics and all moral values just to grow up. He forgets his inner self too "Western Computers Troubleshooting Website, Project Details and user Manual Developed by Connexions in Delhi Subhash Bakshi Manager, Connections... (P.145)." He had cheated Shyam and Vroom, by submitting the Troubleshooting Website to the Boston Center as his own without crediting Shyam or Vroom. Through this episode we can say that youth is hungry for success through issues. The novel ignores fundamental intra-national inequalities of class owing to its faith in the liberalizing potential of modern capitalism.

### Psychological Issues

This is social disorder. Everybody is looking for money. Nowadays in the new generation, hungry generation, dialects,

genres, gathering places, slang music, social class can be an important factor. Today in India youngster may keep unsocial hours, neglect his family obligations, drink excessive cocktails and date each other with a casualness that horrifies parents. Everybody wants high salary, fashionable life style. They are our country's most productive generation. Everybody is working for social recognition, economical and even social status. People loss their culture and beliefs when they enter call center. Today everybody lives a material life. Every character is from the common people of society. The employees have no time for attending even cousin's or neighbor's weddings all that was of importance to them is to hop on to the Qualis to go to work because their philosophy is that "there is activism in chasing money too." The reason for chasing money is because they have cash. "...the only reason Americans have a say in this world is because they have cash." The day we get money we can win them over. So the first thing we have to do is get the money. The Call Center working at such places with no sense of self worth but only money to goad you along is naturally depressing and the employees get over their frustration by visiting the dance floors in the malls: "Drinks, dance floors, loud jarring gay music, drunken fights, and a fight means a party is totally rocking." One has to strategic vision and managerial leadership and the like to do well in life. They were shallow with no emotions or in depth feeling for anything in life-leave alone relationships. The boss was so manipulative on taking the credit for software prepared by his employees.

Nowadays we are living with luxurious life though we don't get peace to listen our own inner voice. This new generation is using advanced technology. Due to this drastic change in life, people live a life in distance and under disappointment, misery, tension etc. The solution to the problem of call center employees arrives in the form a motivational and soul searching advice from God that one should not blindly follow the Americans and that they can achieve happiness only if they follow their inner call which instigates and guides us in the right direction and that the four principles which create success are intelligence, imagination, self-confidence and to be really successful one must face failure and not remain snuggled in one's comfort zone. The fact is that money is not progress in building something lasting for the future.

### Inter Relationship Sentiments

The expression of Indian nationalism is given even greater prominence in *One Night @ Call Center* because it is metaphorically connected to the central love interest in the novel, the narrative of Shyam's relationship with Priyanka. The changes of reconciliation are apparently imperiled by priyanka impending marriage to the NRI Ganesh, a Lexus-driving Microsoft employee in the United States. Priyanka is first happy when she is engaged to Ganesh Gupta, who works for Microsoft but becomes furious when she hears that her parents have planned her marriage the very next month, which she feels is too early. Both her mother and Ganesh press her to agree to this proposal. She is even more saddened by the fact that Shyam was eavesdropping on her conversation with Ganesh. When Vroom and Shyam show her that Ganesh had forged his pictures to hide his baldness, she disapproves Ganesh for having cheated her.

Over the course of the novel, however, this relationship becomes a metonym for the relationship between Indian entrepreneurialism and the Indian economy, with India's marriage to foreign capital playing the role of the dishonest NRI. This extended imagery culminates in the mistaken identification of Microsoft's in-program testing code as a "bug" which proves that "nothing is perfect", even Microsoft Word (Bhagat 257). Shortly after, Ganesh is likewise shown to have feet of clay, when it is revealed that the photograph which he has been using to secure a bride has been retouched, with an unflattering bald spot removed.

Military Uncle tries to be nice to his son and grandson. But when he sends some pictures via mail to his grandson, his son loses his cool and asks him to keep out of his life. This leaves Military Uncle heartbroken. One has the strategic vision and managerial leadership and the like to do well in life. They were shallow with no emotions or in depth feeling for anything in life-leave alone relationships. The boss was so manipulative on taking the credit for software prepared by his employees.

### Supernatural influence

Some circumstances issue in the novel *One Night @ the Call Center*, The phone call from God is one of the salient features in the novel. The author has represented god as a friendly figure rather than a boss. He is shown as speaking in modern English rather than the stereo-typical pure English or Latin. All the lead characters of the novel decide to go and enjoy at a night club. After enjoying for a while, they leave for office. Midway through the journey, Vroom starts to feel revolted after drinking alcohol and so they stop and venture out. Vroom throws up and also breaks the window-pane of a shop thus spreading an alarm. They rush out of the place in fear. While frequent, they face a life-threatening situation when their Qualis crashes into a construction site hanging over a net of iron construction rods. As the rods began to yield slowly, they started to panic. They are unable to call for help as there is no mobile phone network at that place. In this situation, Shyam's mobile phone starts ringing.

The phone call is from God. He speaks to all of them and gives them suggestions to improve their life. After that, God also advises them on how to get their vehicle out of the construction site. The conversation with God motivates the group to such an extent that they get ready to face their problems with utmost determination and motivation. Meanwhile Vroom and Shyam hatch up a plan to throw Bakshi out of the call center and prevent the closing of Connexions call center, whose employees are to be downsized fundamentally.

When they emerge out of danger, they have clear-cut goals in their mind. On returning to the Call Center, they carry out their plans with dexterity.

### Conclusion

This paper has attempted to express multiple perspectives on the circumstances changes in technology using society as they affect in science fiction. The secret of success for Chetan Bhagat. He selects subject which a reader can associate with socio scientific issues. His language is very lucid and easy to understand. In this novel, Chetan Bhagat reveals harsh truths about call centers, a dark part which can't be seen by any one else. Even we can relate our life to any character in the novel. The entire novel is divided into two parts. All characters live mechanized lives. The novelist describes family issue, problems of work place etc. in a genuine and interesting way. The second part of the novel deals with reformation of all characters. Chetan Bhagat has segmented with a mix of sentiment, exploitations, romance, religion, supernatural influence, political conflict thoughts and family issue and technology and also social message depicted in the novel 'One night@ the call center'.

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