



## A Critique Study Of Chetan Bhagat's '2 States: - The Story Of My Marriage' In Indian Context"

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### Abstract:

*Chetan Bhagat, in "2 States: The Story of My Marriage" novel deals with a very serious theme of in a light way. This novel definitely gives us cultural shocks. Chetan Bhagat has touched some of the sensitive issues of cultural differences, father-son relationship and corporate exploitation. He is of the view that love knows no boundaries, whether it be of caste, creed, religion, states or countries. To some extent, this story seems to be of Chetan Bhagat, but he never claimed it. It's definitely love that triumphs against all odds. 2 States it's a story of inter-state marriage in India. Love story of a Punjabi guy Krish, and a Tamil Brahmin girl Ananya in his own style. Many families go through this condition in India. The research paper is about love marriage and the obstacles between protagonist and his wife faced coming from different regions of India. Chetan Bhagat conveys so well what happens when two worlds meet. The customs may be uniquely Indian, but the story is universal.*

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Critical analysis will be the Central agenda of the proposed research paper. The interpretation of novel is interpreted in different perspective. The novel is explored and explained with understanding different perspective of love marriage and its problems in Indian context with other social problems. The Harvard system of Research Methodology will be followed for this exploratory research paper.

### FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The cultural differences of north-Indian families and south-Indian families are portrayed very well in a funny way. Humor is one of the best things in this book. Loaded with some really good similes and metaphors. If you are a Chetan Bhagat's fan, you will enjoy this book more than his previous book, Three mistakes of my life. For those who are not fans of Chetan's books, or haven't read his books yet, I would say, you pickup this book if you want to kill a boring afternoon with 'a quick read'. If you are a fan of literary fiction and classics, if you read more of Tharoor, Seths, Roys, and Ghosh, I would say it is better you stay away from this book. In the disclaimer, he says, though the book is inspired by his own family and experiences, he requests the book must be seen as a work of fiction.

'2 States: the story of my marriage' is the fourth novel written by the author following a story of inter-state marriage in India. Love story of a Punjabi guy Krish, and a Tamil Brahmin girl Ananya and the

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sweet and sour marriage of paranthas and idlis, paneer and coconut, butter chicken and rasam. Chetan, in his own style, dedicates this book to his in-laws. In the disclaimer, he says, though the book is inspired by his own family and experiences, he requests the book must be seen as a work of fiction.

### INTRODUCTION & paper

The storyline of the book is predictable from the feel-good titling itself. Two protagonists Krish Malhotra (a punjabi) and Ananya Swaminathan (a tamilian) are classmates at IIM Ahmedabad. A rendezvous at the college canteen bonds them together, and in a matter of weeks (or rather, days) the duo are sleeping together in hostel rooms. Love blossoms, and by the time the duo pass out of college, they've decided to get married to each other. The hurdles seem insurmountable in the beginning – jarring differences between their parents, their cultures and the language barrier being the reasons. Krish gets himself posted in Citibank chennai, where Ananya is working with HLL, and sets the ball rolling. Their carefully-crafted plans suffer occasional hindrances and at one point in time, the entire affair goes topsy turvy but things magically (I repeat, magically) get sorted out with the typical, happily-ever-after-Bhagat-climax.

The cultural divide in India is more than what meets the eye. Industry, infrastructure, transportation, modernistic in the last six decades our country has grown faster than was ever imagined. Villages have grown into towns, towns into cities, and cities into metropolises. Three decades ago, telephones and cars were luxuries that many could ill-afford. Not anymore. But although the times may have changed, our attitudes have remained rooted! With all this 'growth' we haven't been able to outgrow our old mindset. We seem to be slaves to traditions that have long lost out on logic. Our so-called 'modernity' hasn't erased engrained ideologies. Although the caste system was abolished years ago, people in India still follow it blindly. Racial discrimination also creeps in when anxious parents look for a 'perfect match' for their children. In the best of times we are outwardly modern but inwardly we still live in the past. Set against the backdrop of an educational institution – this time IIM, the author has recited a love story on the 'North-South' divide, currently in the markets. Highlighting the pros and cons of two different cultural diversities; Chetan assures the fact that it's possible. Krish and Ananya meet in the canteen for the first time and eventually over a few days of combined study, fall in love. Life is great for them until their families meet each other. It takes sometime before they realize that they may not be able to convince their families to support their marriage. The twist in the tale is, they want to marry with their parents' consent rather than choosing the easy way of eloping. Inter-caste marriages are still a taboo in India and let alone an inter-state marriage of a Punjabi and a Tam Brahmin.

Bhagat writes: Love marriages around the world are simple. Boy loves girl, girl loves boy, they get married. But in India it's not that simple. Boy loves girl, girl loves boy. Boy's family has to love girl and girl's family has to love boy. Boy's family has to love girl's family and girl's family has to love boy's family.

The story begins in the [IIM Ahmedabad](#) mess, where Krish, a [Punjabi](#) boy from [Delhi](#) sights a beautiful girl, Ananya, a Tamil from [Chennai](#), quarreling with the mess staff about the food. They become friends within a few days and decide to study together every night. In time, they become romantically involved. They both get good jobs, and have serious plans for their wedding. At first Krish tries to convince his girlfriend Ananya's parents and at last convinces them by helping Ananya's father to do his first PPT and later convinces her mom by asking her sing in a concert organised by Krish's office. She was convinced as she had her biggest dream of singing in a big concert comes to be true. Then they tried to convince Krish's mom the problem was Krish's mother's relatives who doesn't quite like this, they say that Krish should not marry a Madrasi but ends up agreeing with them when Ananya tries to help one of Krish's cousin to get married and succeeds to do so. Now as they have convinced both their parents they now try to make their parents meet each other to know each. They go to GOA. But this dream of theirs ends as Ananya's parents find something fishy between Krish's mom and him. Ananya's family end 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 well.

Usually in books written in the first person, the author makes the reader sympathetic to his cause. Reasons are given for even shameful conduct and while the reader may not approve of his or her actions, they can at least understand the motivations. But Chetan Bhagat gives nothing – no explanations for why he acts like a prick. He completely alienated me and made me feel he deserved his misfortune.

His final plot resolution came out of nowhere. A complete deus ex machina. In real life he would be reaping the consequences of his actions to this date. Only in the middle of the book do I begin to like him when he's trying to win over the girl's parents. But then he falls back into prickiness again.

The book is full of stereotypes. No attempt is made at character development and our author happily judges people based on their hair do, their accent and the food they eat. Granted lots of people judge in this way, but I read an author for his superior insight into the world not for his superficial judgement of

appearances.

A wedding in India is a complex affair that involves more than just the bride and groom - it includes every member of both the families. Chetan Bhagat's 2 States is the author's personal account of the challenges that he and his wife faced in convincing their parents to agree to their love marriage.

The novel is a hilarious take on the complications that arise within Indian families, especially when youngsters from diverse backgrounds fall in love and decide to tie the knot. As Bhagat aptly portrays, not only should the couple be willing to wed, but their families have to accept the union too!

Bhagat leads his readers through the love story of Ananya and Krish, who belong to two culturally diverse states in India. They fall deeply in love during their time together in college, and as time goes on, they decide to get married. To be happily married ever after, though, they have an arduous task ahead. They have to persuade their parents, and for this, Krish must figure out a way to fit into a traditional south Indian household, and Ananya must try and compete with her Punjabi counterparts.

Bhagat belts out a quirky and witty novel that's peppered with humor, and the contrast of a Punjabi and Tamilian household is brought out through this book. Bhagat follows a light-hearted and simple way of writing. Though his books and columns have drawn sharp reviews from critics, he still enjoys a large fan base.

Love marriages around the world are simple. Boy loves girl. Girl loves boy. They get married. 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. Then they get married.

Chetan Bhagat is a name familiar to most Indians. He has single-handedly changed the face of Indian fiction in the last six years since his first book Five point someone was launched on an unsuspecting public. His latest book, 2 States: The Story of My Marriage has all the elements that have made his other books so successful. 2 states is the story of Ananya and Krish, IIM Ahmedabad alumni from, you guessed it, two different states.

Chetan Bhagat is a graduate from IIT (New Delhi) and a post graduate from IIM (Ahmedabad), and both institutes are of high repute and distinction. He married his sweetheart Anusha Suryanarayan, whom he met at IIM in the year 1999. Their love story was the inspiration for the book 2 States.

My wife tells me that all people are like this. That almost everyone in India is entirely beholden to their parents. I can't and won't believe this. It's not possible for everyone to be such a big asshole as the main protagonist. Perhaps he exaggerated and actually did try and restrain his mother when she behaved in such a shocking manner towards the girl and his parents. I certainly hope so. If my wife is right and most people in India are like this I'm gonna get real depressed.

Ananya is from Chennai, with conservative parents who want her to marry a 'well-settled' Tamil boy. Krish is from Delhi. He has a boisterous Punjabi mother who is hell bent on him getting married to a well-to-do 'fair' Punjabi girl. Despite all the differences they do manage to get together and get married and more importantly they do it with their parents' blessings!

After they both have sex for the first time, the girl begins to ask him about their future. Granted it's a bit naive for her to simply assume that there's going to be a future and I can't blame the guy for not really thinking about it. But even after he becomes aware of how important the question is for her, he pretends not to understand what she's talking about and keeps putting her off. Total jerk material.

As the lines from the book's blurb suggest, it follows their numerous attempts to win their parents over to the Idea of an 'inter-caste marriage'. Chetan Bhagat has admitted that this story is partially autobiographical. The story is narrated from Krish's point of view in first person, a style Bhagat uses often. The story starts when Ananya and Krish first meet in the IIM cafeteria and follows the predictable course of the hot girl and nerdy guy becoming friends and then falling in love. This is when all the fun begins.

Bhagat utilizes the common stereotypes we are all familiar with. Be it the stress in the Punjabi household for marrying a girl with a big dowry, or the importance given to education and success in a south Indian household. However, I feel he manages to use these without hurting the sensibilities of either group. The book is not very long and the story ends before you start to lose interest. Though the story is not a literary masterpiece, it works as a 'time pass' novel that can fill up a couple of hours of your day.

The girl is only slightly better. She's unable to see how insulting her own parents are and refuses to say a word against them. She doesn't want to marry anyone else, but still allows her parents to fix up meetings with other men. It's not only unjust to the guy she's in love with, it's also unfair to the men who come to see her.

Chetan Bhagat's books work for two basic reasons. One is the engaging stories that read like a modern fairytale and the other is the sound marketing strategy of the publisher. His books are priced lower than most foreign fiction and his print runs are double of those same books. The publisher's confidence in the mass appeal of the books has netted them rich dividends.

Where the book falls short is the interpersonal dialogue between the characters. The way they interact with each other sometimes leaves much to be desired. One case in point will be the relationship between Krish and his father. I feel the reasons for their estrangement and their subsequent partial reconciliation, though hinted at, are not properly explored. Also, the author's habit of using informal English in print sometimes leaves the reader feeling as if it is more of a gimmick rather than a legitimate literary device. However, this type of informal writing also appeals to a wide spectrum of audiences.

Humour to me matters the most. A reader only picks up a Chetan Bhagat novel to spend his time laughing at silly jokes and end the day with a relaxed mind. No doubt, a traveller's time pass; the books promises to be just to the heavy hectic meeting you've just ended. A misfit for the company of the intellectual and the elite, this book holds no good in the shelf of someone who calls himself – 'a reader'. In all, I recommend the book for a light read.

Bhagat quotes an incident where his mother insists that he marry a girl because her father owns six petrol pumps and the family is rich -- a typical middleclass woman wanting her child to achieve what she could only dream of achieving.

By contrast, many of the younger generation

When the novel opens, we find Krish in a Psychologist's clinic to get counseling and here he narrates his story. In the first few pages we are introduced with the campus life of IIM Ahmedabad where Krish sees Ananya and falls in love with her at the first sight as in looks, she is a real traffic stopper. But Ananya wants to be just a friend with Krish. He wonders why any boy can just be friend with any girl. He says,

“Why would any guy want to be only friends with a girl? It's like agreeing to be near a chocolate cake and never eat it. It's like sitting in a racing car but not driving it. Only wimps do that.” (p. 9)

Ananya is a bold girl. She dares to oppose the mess contractor because he provides bad quality of food to all the students. At that time Krish offers her his help and takes her to a restaurant. The friendship between both of them develops very fast. Krish helps Ananya to learn Economics and at that time both of them start meeting frequently. Krish proposed her and she does not deny. They start to live in the same room and take liberty with which Indian society is not custom to. Krish says

“You put a boy and a girl in a room for a week and add lots of boring books, and sparks are sure to fly.” (p.26)

In the midst of all this we come to know the reason of the tense relationship of Krish with his father when Krish visits Shri. Aurobindo ashram. He meets the Guru and tries to seek his help for his restlessness in love. Krish in meditation brings before us an incident that happen three years back. He says when he was in IIT Delhi; he had an affair with his professor's daughter. The girl's father was against their love relationship and he was sending his daughter abroad. Krish wanted his father to go to the professor and set the situation right but instead of taking his side he started to scold his mother and also bit her in front of him, which he often did with her. Here Krish lost his temper and fights with his father. Krish says,

“I slapped his face once, twice, then I rolled my hand into a fist and punched his face. My father went into a state of shock, he couldn't fight back. He didn't expect this; all my childhood I'd merely suffered his dominance..... It was a reaction to two decades of abuse.....I punched his head until he collapsed on the floor..... My mother sat on the bed, fighting back her emotions. We looked at each other. We were a family, but pretty much as screwed up as they come..... I looked at my father and vowed never to speak to him again. (p.167)

Krish did not lose hope and carries on his desperate attempts to win the love of Ananya's family members. He also helps Ananya's mother to present herself at a concert, organized by his own bank. Ananya's mother's talent in music is appreciated by all and she becomes the center of attention in the concert. Then after a dinner party is arranged by Krish exclusively for Ananya's family. Here he proposes to accept him as their son-in-law. The emotional appeal of Krish is really heart touching. “I, Krish Malhotra, would like to propose to all of you. Will all of you marry me?” (p.183) He finally wins the consent of all the members of Ananya's family. Now comes the turn of Ananya to win the love of Krish's family members.

Ananya also wins the heart of Krish's family but what about the two families union? Krish arranges a meeting of two families in Goa, but there also Krish's mother verbally explodes and the relationship of Krish and Ananya is in jeopardy. Ananya decides to break off with Krish. And Krish tries his best to convince Ananya that everything can be fixed up again. But Ananya does not show any affection for him. At that time Krish's 'bad father' comes to his rescue and goes to Chennai and convinces Ananya's family without Krish's knowledge because now he does not want to miss the opportunity of helping his son.



He missed the opportunity for once and still he pays a heavy price for that. When Krish gets a call from Ananya, he is very much surprised, and wants to hug his father. Father-son relationship is always incredible.

Finally the two families are reunited and Ananya and Krish get married to each-other. The marriage ceremony held in Tamil style is also full of comical elements. It is really true that the love marriages around the world are simple but as mentioned on the back cover of the novel the senerio is totally different when it comes to India.

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

The end of the novel shows that it is very difficult to adhere to one's principles in the era in which we live as it is a world of the mighty and for the mighty. The educational field is also not an exception from this bitter truth. Chetan Bhagat, in one of his essays 'The Business of Teaching' rightly remarks that corruption in the field of education should not be taken lightly. He says;

"You don't need to be an expert to realise that what is happening is seriously wrong. However, policymakers are doing little about it. Perhaps, much like the bootlegging industry, so many regulators and inspectors are making money that nobody wants to fix it. However, corruption in the education sector is not to be taken lightly. When you have corruption in infrastructure, you have pot-holed roads. When you have corruption in education, you have pot-holed minds. We are destroying an entire generation by not giving it access to the world-class education it deserves".

The New York Times called Chetan Bhagat as the biggest-selling English-language novelist in India's history. With his first three books already being widely read in India, he released his fourth book recently which generated a lot of anticipation before the release on Twitter and other online spaces. One thing that can be credited to this man is his ability to induce a reading culture amongst the audiences of India to pick up a book and read.

#### CONCLUSION

The book is light and breezy and the language is simple. The author uses a lot of cant words that Indians use every day. The narrative of the story stays fresh. Though the ending of the story is predictable, you still find yourself rooting for the lead characters to get together at the end, which I think is the best thing about the book. You get involved with the characters, their despair, confusion and joy. As a South Indian who has lived all her life in Delhi, I found myself relating to both the characters and their families at some level. Be it the mom who brings biscuits to her son's graduation or the one who loves to sing Carnatic music but is intimidated by her more qualified peers. It is narrated in a first person point of view in a humorous tone, often taking digs at both Tamil and Punjabi cultures. The novel ends with Ananya giving birth to twin boys. They say that the babies belong to a state called 'India'.

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