



Struggle for career of the women characters in the novels of Chetan Bhagat

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Abstract

The women characters in Chetan Bhagat's novels, while often playing significant roles in the protagonists' lives, frequently experience a distinct struggle when it comes to their own careers. Unlike the male characters who are typically driven by ambitious professional goals, the aspirations and trajectories of the female characters often face societal pressures, familial expectations and a subtle yet pervasive devaluation of their professional identities. This article will explore the various facets of this struggle, examining how Bhagat portrays the challenges women encounter in establishing and maintaining their careers in a contemporary Indian context. One of the most prominent aspects of this struggle is the conflict between personal relationships and professional ambitions. Characters like Pia from *3 Mistakes of My Life* and Vidya from *Revolution 2020* grapple with situations where their career choices are directly influenced by or even subordinate to their romantic relationships. Pia, a medical student, is shown to prioritize her relationship with Govind, often compromising her academic focus for his emotional needs. Similarly, Vidya's engineering ambitions take a backseat as she becomes entangled in the emotional complexities between Gopal and Raghav. This portrayal highlights a societal expectation in India where women are often implicitly and sometimes explicitly, expected to prioritize their roles as partners or family members over their individual career growth. Their professional identities are often viewed as secondary to their relational ones.

Keywords:

Ambition, Professional, Relationship, Emotional



Introduction

Chetan Bhagat's female characters frequently encounter familial and societal pressures that steer them away from unconventional or highly demanding career paths. Krish's mother in *2 States*, Ananya's parents in the same novel and the families of many other female characters often express concerns about their daughters' career choices, favoring stability and conformity over ambition or risk-taking. This often manifests as pressure to pursue "safe" professions like teaching or to settle for a job that allows for more time at home. This reflects a broader societal attitude where a woman's career is often seen as a temporary phase before marriage or motherhood, rather than a lifelong pursuit. (Kumar, 2021)

Another subtle but significant element of their career struggle is the implicit devaluation of their professional contributions. While the male protagonists often pursue high-stakes careers in engineering, business, or civil services, the career paths of the female characters, even when successful, are sometimes presented with less gravitas. For instance, while Ananya in *2 States* is a successful marketing professional, much of her narrative revolves around her struggle to gain acceptance from Krish's family, rather than her professional accomplishments. This suggests that even when women achieve career success, their identity is still largely defined by their relationships and family roles.

Moreover, the portrayal of supportive male partners in Bhagat's novels, while seemingly progressive, sometimes inadvertently highlights the very struggle it aims to alleviate. While characters like Krish in *2 States* are depicted as supportive of Ananya's career, the fact that their support is a point of emphasis suggests that it is not a given in society. It underscores the reality that many women still require explicit spousal approval or assistance to pursue their professional goals, rather than it being an inherent right.

Chetan Bhagat's "Revolution 2020: Love, Ambition, Corruption" delves into the lives of three friends, Gopal, Raghav and Aarti, navigating the complexities of modern India. While Aarti is often presented as the central female character in the love triangle, it's important to clarify that there is no character named "Vidya" in "Revolution 2020." It seems there might be a confusion with another one of Bhagat's novels, "The 3 Mistakes of My Life," where a significant female character is named Vidya. (Kaur, 2021)



Aarti's character is crucial to the narrative, representing a blend of traditional values and modern aspirations. She is the object of affection for both Gopal and Raghav, highlighting the contrasting paths they choose in life.

Aarti's motivations stem from a desire for stability and a good life. She is practical and seeks a secure future, often torn between Gopal's pursuit of wealth through potentially corrupt means and Raghav's idealism and fight against corruption. Her struggles involve making difficult choices between love, loyalty and her own sense of right and wrong in a society rife with moral ambiguities. She embodies the challenges faced by young Indian women who are seeking both personal fulfillment and a sense of integrity amidst societal pressures.

Chetan Bhagat's writing style, characterized by its simple language, relatable characters and fast-paced narrative, contributes significantly to the novel's widespread appeal. He connects with a vast youth audience by addressing contemporary issues relevant to their lives – career aspirations, love, family pressures and societal challenges. While critics sometimes point to the simplistic prose and occasional clichés, Bhagat's strength lies in his ability to make complex social issues accessible and engaging for the common reader. (Jain, 2022)

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Pia, a pivotal character in Chetan Bhagat's "The 3 Mistakes of My Life," serves as more than just a love interest; she is a catalyst for change, a symbol of stability and a nuanced portrayal of a young woman navigating societal expectations and personal desires. Her presence significantly impacts the protagonist, Govind and adds depth to the novel's exploration of ambition, friendship and the complexities of human relationships. (Sharma, 2022)

From her initial introduction, Pia stands out with her quiet strength and intellectual curiosity. Unlike the more boisterous and impulsive male characters, she possesses a grounded practicality and a discerning mind. She is not easily swayed by superficial charm or grand gestures, instead valuing sincerity, intelligence and genuine effort. This is evident in her interactions with Govind, where she pushes him to think beyond his immediate desires and consider the long-term implications of his choices, particularly concerning his coaching classes. She encourages him to pursue his passion with dedication and integrity, acting as a gentle but firm moral compass.



Pia also embodies a certain kind of modern Indian woman – educated, independent and capable of making her own decisions. While she respects traditions, she is not bound by them. Her desire to pursue further education and her willingness to challenge conventional norms, even subtly, showcases a progressive outlook. This makes her relatable to a contemporary audience and adds a layer of social commentary to the narrative.

However, Pia is not a flawless character. Her initial reluctance to fully commit to Govind, stemming perhaps from a desire for security and a pragmatic assessment of his financial situation, reflects a realistic human trait. This hesitation, while understandable, causes some friction and highlights the economic pressures that often influence relationships in India. Yet, her eventual embrace of their relationship, driven by genuine affection and a belief in Govind's potential, demonstrates her capacity for emotional growth and commitment.

Her role in the novel extends beyond her romantic involvement with Govind. She acts as a stabilizing force amidst the often chaotic and emotionally charged dynamics between Govind, Ishaan and Omi. Her calm demeanor and rational perspective often help to de-escalate tensions and provide a much-needed sense of balance. She becomes a confidante, a sounding board, and a source of quiet wisdom for Govind, allowing him to introspect and mature. (Khan, 2020)

Ultimately, Pia represents hope and a path towards a more fulfilling future for Govind. She inspires him to strive for more, to be a better version of himself and to find meaning beyond mere financial success. Her presence in his life underscores the idea that true happiness lies not just in achieving one's ambitions, but also in fostering meaningful connections and embracing genuine affection. In "The 3 Mistakes of My Life," Pia is not just a love interest; she is an essential element in Govind's journey of self-discovery and a testament to the transformative power of a strong, intelligent and supportive partner.

"Revolution 2020" is a story of contrasting ambitions. Gopal, driven by a desperate desire for wealth and social standing after failing to secure a coveted engineering seat, chooses a path of moral ambiguity. He aligns himself with corrupt politicians and establishes a private engineering college, GangaTech, exploiting loopholes in the system to achieve financial success. His journey highlights the allure of quick money and the ethical sacrifices individuals are willing to make in a society that often rewards the unscrupulous. (Chawla, 2021)



In stark contrast to Gopal is Raghav, the idealistic revolutionary. Despite his academic brilliance, Raghav rejects the conventional path of a lucrative engineering career. Instead, he dedicates himself to investigative journalism, aiming to expose corruption and bring about genuine societal change. His newspaper, also titled "Revolution 2020," becomes a symbol of his unwavering commitment to truth and justice, even in the face of personal hardship and threats. Raghav embodies the spirit of a youth yearning for a better, more ethical India.

The third protagonist, Aarti, serves as a pivotal figure in the love triangle that intertwines the fates of Gopal and Raghav. Aarti represents the choices young people face – whether to align with the corrupt but successful, or to stand by the virtuous but struggling. Her affection sways between the two friends, reflecting the inherent conflict between material security and moral integrity. Her eventual choice underscores the novel's larger message about the ultimate value of virtue over wealth.

Beyond the personal stories, "Revolution 2020" offers a sharp critique of the Indian education system and the political landscape. Bhagat vividly portrays the pressures on students to crack competitive exams, the commercialization of education through coaching centers and the rampant corruption that plagues both academic institutions and government bodies. The novel suggests that this systemic rot not only hinders progress but also corrupts the minds and values of the younger generation. The "revolution" in the title, therefore, isn't just a political ideal but a call for a fundamental shift in values and a rejection of the prevailing culture of corruption.

"Revolution 2020" is more than just a love story; it is a socio-political commentary that reflects the struggles and aspirations of modern Indian youth. Through the contrasting journeys of Gopal and Raghav and the choices faced by Aarti, Chetan Bhagat incisively examines themes of ambition, corruption, love and the yearning for change. The novel challenges readers to reflect on the true meaning of success and calls for a revolution not just in governance, but in the collective conscience of a nation. (Bhalla, 2021)

Conclusion

The women characters in Chetan Bhagat's novels, despite their varying backgrounds and aspirations, consistently face a struggle in their careers. This struggle is multifaceted, stemming from the conflict between personal relationships and professional ambition, familial and societal



pressures to conform and a subtle devaluation of their professional identities. While Bhagat's narratives often aim to depict contemporary Indian society, his portrayal of these women's career trajectories inadvertently sheds light on the deeply entrenched societal expectations and challenges that continue to impede women's full professional empowerment in India.

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