

The Media Manipulation in Chetan Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes Of My Life*

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Abstract:

Chetan Bhagat is a contemporary writer. He is an entertaining social novelist from India. His writings concern about the civic responsibilities. He highlights the social issues in non- provocative narration. Here, this article explores the pervasive social problem called 'media manipulation and hegemony' in the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life*. How the media moulds a society is represented here and the deception and domination of the media is scrutinized. The character 'Ishaan' is seen as focal that the exploration of socio-cultural milieu regarding the impact of the media is to be done. Through his life journey which is talked by the first person narrator Govind who is friend of Ishaan, this generation's deviation and decline from practical life is explained well and the media maniac society is portrayed precisely. The novel pasteurizes the dependant nature called extreme passion or fanaticism on the media and sports degrading the citizens. The influence of media over the society is assessed through the qualitative research methodology to screen the lurking obstacle and how it manipulates the social constituent.

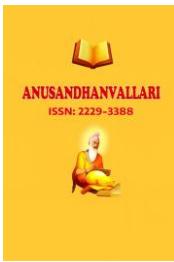
Keywords: Media- Manipulation, Cricket, Extreme Passion, Fanaticism, Media- Hegemony, Communal Tension and Communal Extremism.

Introduction

Chetan Bhagat is a novelist and youtuber. He is considered as a trend-conscious writer. His novels appeal to the expectations and inclination of young readers. Likewise, this novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* fulfils the anticipations of the young readers. The novel also is a political allegory. The has analysed civic responsibilities in the novel. In the novel, the impact of the media is subtly revealed by the author's narration of the plot and characters. How the media shapes a society is clearly visible in the novel. Ishaan gets struggles lot but he does not know that his excessive enthusiasm on cricket is the reason for his tribulation. Till the end of the novel, he does get not any gain. Let's look so deep about his life and the media's influence in the article.

The Cognitive Manipulation of the Media:

Chetan Bhagat explicates about the influence of the media on youths in the novel *The Three Mistakes of My Life* through the Character Ishaan. The Media entrances the folk and forges them into malicious notions that gradually degrade them. So, the society's moral fabric is crumbled. This is the contemporary context of our society where the people of all ages are obsessed with the media. It decides the people what they have to think on. The people losses



their autonomy in the media addiction. The author illuminates the societal constituents' condition, regarding the cognitive manipulation of the media. The people are hindered to not progress in their life by the deception of it. The dissemination of the media becomes trend. If they are constructive media messages, then the society gets advancement. If they are misleading, harmful and destructive, concentration has to be paid on them. The author explains that such perturbing condition is made by the media on the youngsters of our society. In the novel, Ishaan is an ardent admirer of cricket and dedicative player too. But due to his passion on cricket which hinders him to think about his future. The novelist portrays him as a socially and economically marginalized.

Media-Obfuscator of Objectivity

Coal trading, these days. People think it's only technology that's booming. But coal-the media pays no attention to coal, does it? The Chinese are consuming coal like crazy and the price is going up everywhere. Millionaires are being made, left, right, and center. (Adiga 127)

Aravind Adiga in his novel *The White Tiger* highlights the power of media even in people's cognition and choice formation. He says that coal trading is a lucrative business, but the media hides the fact and obfuscate the people from the truth. The truth is that many Chinese industrialists prospered even the tycoons of our country. Correspondingly, the media draws people's attention on futile and negligible pursuits like cinema and cricket. Ishaan is a cricket extremist but he has little value for himself and his family, regarding this. The youngsters are passionate on cricket but consuming the matches in the television or by the direct spectator ship is just a recreational pursuit and does not help to flourish except the media companies, sponsors and players and those related to them. Nowadays, the media's decision seems the attitude and aptitude of the people.

Moron making Media

The media illusion makes one to take wrong steps and decisions. Here Ishaan has a great chance of joining the defence service but regarding his passion on cricket, the media has made, he refuses it and struggles in his life. But he does not know that he suffers. This type people are more common in India, being fanatics on sports and cinema's actors and actresses, imitating them and being negligent about themselves and their family and wasting their life's precious time and moments. The media is the reason of such people, it idolizes the sports and the cinema that the people begin to believe them true and become fanatics on them. The media illusion makes the people to go astray from their family and social responsibilities.

Ishaan is disdained by his father too for being so passionate on cricket. The zeal on cricket shows him as a short sighted person longing for Instantaneous pleasure, thinking not about his future and family. In India, male children are expected to bear the responsibilities of their family, after particular age. He has no income also by the obsessive involvement in cricket. Here, a question is raised, how Ishaan has been a victim of such a fixation on cricket. The author gives answer for the question by showing the Television in his home. Whenever he is before the TV, he watches cricket matches. Here, it is the channel that the media comes in the name of entertainment and knowledge development called edutainment. Later the passive consumption of the media influences the watchers' thinking, decision making, and subtly their behaviour too. Here, the media conditioned behaviour is shown through the depiction of Ishaan's life. By him the author shows the media hegemony in every individual's life. The stark reality is that the people who become victims of media indulge complacency, loss the vigilance about their future.

The Influence of Media over Personality

The dependant state makes two big impacts on the life of the social constituents. One is that the person addicted to the media is unconscious on his lack of development and decline economically and socially but the inborn integrity is conserved. The second impact is that despite getting economic benefits and good reputation in the society, their innate virtues get corrupted. Ishaan belongs to the first category, even though he is infamous to his family and he wills to coach a boy named Ali who is skilful in batting. He does not expect any instant economics growth by it. By the media which idolizes the cricket, he becomes cricket-fanatic that makes him to meet failures in his life but the obsession has not corrupted his good nature of helping others.

Ishaan is a conscientious and dutiful person, for that here are some corroborations in the novel. When a person tries to gaze his sister Vidya, he punishes the guy physically and warns him. Next, he becomes so emotional on the state of the Indian cricket field. These scenes show him as a responsible person. His innate passion on cricket makes him radical and speculative thinker. He has to care about his financial and family condition and take decisions based on it also, while loving and being active in cricket but he is unable to do it regarding his victimized state by the media manipulation. His innate passion on cricket prohibit him take proper decisions in his life. Renouncing the military service is one of the instances of it.

According to Leonard Shecter:

Television buys sports. Television supports sports. It moves in with its money and supports sports in a style to which they have become accustomed and then, like a bought lady, sports become so used to luxurious living they cannot extricate themselves. So, slowly at first, but inevitably, television tells sports what to do. It is sports and it runs them the way it does most other things, more flamboyantly than honestly. (79)

The Gruesome Setbacks of the Media

The Media induces habitation deviates one from taking a right decision and makes their presence with slow or little progression. In this society, many people are in the passive consumption in cinema, reality shows and sports. In India, people are mostly addicted first to cinema next to sports especially cricket. The media broad casts the game as sole important of sports that it influences more watchers not only to be spectators and active participants. It is beneficial but going beyond the limit makes gruesome setbacks. Many youngsters of our country are passionate on cricket, they give priority to the game rather than themselves. Thus they become fanatics on the cricket. They are totally unconscious on their present state in the society where they are living and do not know how to improve themselves into a respectable condition. Their lives gradually become futile without their realization and they are not useful to themselves and the society where they belong.

The Media-Cognitive Desensitizer

His unconditional love on cricket makes him unobservant on his sister's affair with his friend Govind. At the peak of this affair, his sister has sex with Govind in his house's terrace when he watches the cricket match in TV. This shows how the media makes one as an oblivious on whatever are happening in his family and surrounding, in fact it makes him futile. But he is depicted as a fair minded guy, and does not get deceived or perceived by the religious politics. The readers know his neutral state in a scene where the three friends Govind, Ishaan and Omi meet Bittu

Mama is Omi's uncle who is an active member of a religion based party. He tries to join him to in his party but he does not show interest on that and he decides to teach cricket to a prodigy boy Ali, despite he is a Muslim. He knows what step has to be taken in his life as an altruist. But as a constituent of family and society, he spoils his opportunity of acquiring a financial support through the self-determination of selecting right choice for him and he is indifferent on his family welfare and respect, due to the passion on the cricket which has been forged by the Media.

The Media as a Hindrance of individual Progress:

His altruistic disposition is apparent in Govind's initiation of the sports goods business. When the decision is taken by Govind, he supported him. The author juxtaposes his benevolent nature with fanatic trait on cricket. He gives the idea that is also related to the cricket, so he is eager to contribute himself in the business which highlights his dependence on the sports (Cricket). He is not jealous on his friend's development instead he wants to be a step stone for his friend's progress. If Ishaan restrains his crave on cricket, he has the potentiality to achieve excellence later, and this is elucidated well by his virtuous traits. The defendant state made by the media's extensive coverage on cricket is articulated through the commencement of the business.

The Media as a Trend Setter

Next the three confidants named their shop as "Team India Cricket Shop" this phrase is a microcosmic symbol on the influence of the cricket all through our society. This name manifests the heightened media coverage. It discloses the truth that the media shapes the thought and behaviour of every individual. It happens consciously or unconsciously. His excessive desire on cricket that is made by the media promotion and altruistic disposition urge him to go Australia for the cricket coaching and good future of Ali. This also shows the representation of selective truth of the media that the Indian cricketers are not equipped well in comparison to the foreigners, it suppresses the truth behind the players' quality deficiency. Bhagat points out: "I passed by the Nana Park, extra packed with kids playing cricket as India had won the match" (06). Further he says: "A sports store really, but since cricket is the most popular game in Belrampur, we will focus on that..." (15).

The media driven culture prevailing society is shown well in this novel. The youngsters especially the children are in fervent attachment with the game. During the cricket matches between India and any country, the place seems as if it celebrates a festival. Such a scenario unveils the cultural authority of media. It fashions the collective consciousness and cognitive behaviour of the mass. The media makes the sports-cricket as a central cultural spectacle. It has been attached with people's emotion. It is delineated well by the author through the portrayal of Ishaan's life journey in the narration of Govind. The media makes the cricket as a passion and fashion of our country.

The Media as an Erosion of Social Fabric

Trouble has started in the city. I heard a mob burnt two buses down in Jamalpur, Omi said. We came to the tuition area of the backyard to have our dinner. Omi had cooked potato curry and rice. Rumour or true? I said. 'True, a local TV channel showed it as I left,' Omi said, 'It's strange at home. Mami is still praying for Dhiraj's safety. (Bhagat 218)

You may have heard about riots several times or even seen them on TV. But to witness them in front of your eyes stunts your senses. My neighbourhood resembled a calamity movie film set. A burning ran across the road. The Hindu mob chased him. (Bhagat 220)

The author depicts that one local TV Channel propagates incendiary news. A place is described that two buses has been burnt there. The news gets disseminated by the media. This makes a big riot between Hindus and Muslims. Here the circulation of the hard news paves a way for substantial fatalities. As a culmination of such sensitive news, a group fanatics burn a person alive to death. This scene shows the media's hegemony. The media decides what the people have to think and act. It has an arch-power over the society, and the socioeconomic elites use the media strategically for their benefits by the erosion of social fabric.

Parente explains that the intimate relationship between sports and television can be explained in terms of four basic propositions: 1. For many sports, television rights payments represent a substantial portion of gross revenue. 2. Broadcast revenue is normally a stable source of income that is less subject to the changing whims of fan allegiance than is typically the case with attendance. 3. Television is one of the few sources of income for many organizations that has potential for increase. Many teams and events have little room for growth in attendance and little opportunity to raise ticket prices, which are about as high as the market might bear. 4. The decision-makers in sport have apparently found it easier to change the nature of their sport to appeal to the desires of television rather than to the wants of the live spectator. (229)

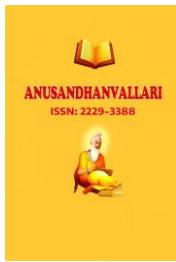
The Media-Medium of Communal Tension

Every day Anjum, new to the news, watched TV reports about bomb blasts and terrorist attacks that suddenly proliferated like malaria. The Urdu papers carried stories of young Muslim boys being killed in what the police called 'encounters', or being caught red-handed in the act of planning terrorist strikes and arrested. (Roy 23)

Arundhati Roy in her book *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* explains the communally biased media-targeting particular group of people or community in a collective biased retribution and how such sensational news spreads invasively and reinforcing communal extremism. The same is shown here in the Chetan Bhagat's novel. One whole community is seen as enemy for a punitive retaliation to the vehicular arson done by some provocateurs. The media seems the exclusive reason for the communal tension.

Conclusion:

Chetan Bhagat expounds the gross side of the media-how it dominates and forges a society. The people have to discern everything whatever they consume through the media. Despite seeming passive viewer outwardly, one has to be with sound mind to analyse and accept the media productions to preserve the sound heart. Ishaan is a quintessential example of the straying youths. His lifestyle moulded by the media and hardships due to his happy-go-lucky nature are practical in the lives of today's youngsters. By *delineating* the character, the author sheds light on our society's youngsters' pathetic condition under the media domination. An obsessive obsession with cricket-related activities that has a detrimental impact on relationships, everyday life and mental health is the hallmark of cricket addiction, a behavioral disease. Cricket enthusiasm soon turns into an obsession, with people following games, betting and playing fantasy leagues for extended periods of time.



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