

# INTOLERANCE AND POLITICS OF RELIGION IN CHETAN BHAGATS THE THREE MISTAKES OF MY LIFE AND KIRAN NAGARKARS SEVEN SIXES AND FORTY THREE

Mr. Shitalbabu A.Tayade

Assistant Professor  
Ramkrushna Mahavidyalaya, Darapur  
Tal- Daryapur, Dist- Amravati  
Maharashtra- 444814

**Abstract:** Culture, religion and politics are always moving hand in hand. Since the history of the development of human race, the stigma of political existence always remains alive as an essential part of existence. Many generations are passed on and the formats of the culture are changing, but the intolerance and political-religious ideology remain the same which shape culture time to time. Chetan Bhagats The Three Mistakes of My life and Kiran Nagarkars Seven Sixes and Forty Three are the novels of two different decades but they can be termed as novels of reflection of the common thread which is based on Intolerance and Politics of Religion.

**Keywords-** Intolerance, Caste, Religion, Conflict, religious disharmony, Communal Frenzy

Intolerance and violence are not hereditary in a human being. It is the product of the differences. Every segment of the society wants to superpower the individual position and tries to put oneself on the top latter of the social order. The seeds of the conflict and skirmishes lie in the internal will of the individual which turns in to the wish of the mass and of the community. Literature is the reflection of society always projects the sensitive issues of the society. Especially the issues centred around the religion and cast have a very loud voice in literature. Commenting on the issue of the indifference and intolerance

*Amartya Sen says, " violence is fomented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities on gullible people, championed by proficient artisans of terror "*

Chetan Bhagats The Three Mistakes of My life describes the dependency of the Indian politics on religion. India is the country with the religious backbone. Religious teaching should lead to the augmentation of the society. Some of the clan of the society intentionally focus on the religion to cash the opportunity to become the religious leader which assist them to lead the political ladder. Such a class act as the protector of the religion and the community. Such leadership is always protected by the people and society blindly accepts such leadership without any question. Political leaders create unrest for their own advantage Chetan Bhagat strongly denies the parallel journey of the religion and politics when he says,

*"The gods we pray to, stayed away from politics in their time. If we truly want to follow our gods, we must keep our religion separate from politics. Religion is private, politics public"*

*(The Three Mistakes, 152).*

The story of the novel set at the backdrop of the issue of Ram Mandir and of the Babri Masjid, The novel presents the character of Parekhji by whom the religion is followed for the self-benefits. All the time he insists on the religious philosophy:

*Devotees, the Hindu religion teaches to bear a lot. And we do bear a lot (. . .) our scriptures tell us not to harm others. They teach us acceptance of all faiths, even if those do not accept us. They teach us patience. Thousands of years ago, our wise men thought of such wonderful values, valid even today. And today you great men pass on these values to society. (The Three Mistakes, 42)*

Parekhji is not alone working for the religion and community. They have the chain of the social positions. Bitto mama works for Parekhji and Parekhji works for Hasmukhji, a political leader, who has the stronghold in the political party based on the Hindutva. The novel describes the faith and belief of the community. According to Hindu belief, Ram Janmabhoomi in the city of Ayodhya is the birthplace of Rama. It is therefore considered one of the most sacred religious sites in the Hindu religion. Parekhji stands as the trumpet blower of the religious. His discontent for the other religion and specially for Muslims when he says,

*I don't even want to go into who this country belongs to. Because the poor Hindu is accustomed to being ruled by someone else- 700 years by Muslims, 250 years by the British. We are independent now, but the Hindu does not assert himself. But what makes me sad, is that we are not even treated as equals. They call themselves secular, but they give preference to the Muslims? The most brutal terrorists are Muslims, but they say we are hardliners. More Hindu kids sleep hungry every night than Muslim, but they say Muslims are downtrodden. (Three Mistakes,43)*

Novelist describes the initiation of the intolerant movement by the three characters of the novel Praekhji, Bitto mama and Hasmukhji raise the issue of Ayodhya and compel the people to join the political party not for the benefit of the people but for the sake of self. They create the bitterness between the communities for the sake of the own benefits.

Sapna Tiwari in her article brings out the hypocrisy of the politicians,

*History reveals that religious and cultural different times of our country played a very negative role and now let us trust the responsibility of maintaining communal harmony to youths of our country. Ours is a land of various religions and culture and three differences of them cave a hatred and bitterness among the followers of different religions. (Tiwari,3)*

The seeds of the religious feelings are rooted in Omi by the Bitto mama which are responsible for his outrageous behaviour. The sense of religious superiority and the force of the religious background give power to the human expression. The same attitude comes through following lines when Omi has the confrontation with Ali's father. He argues with Ali's father who is the leader of the secular party when he requests him to visit his party as:

*Do you know who you are talking to? I am Pandit Shastri's son. You have seen the Swami temple in Belrampur or not? How does that matter, son? Ali's dad said. Are you telling me to come visit your party? I am a Hindu. We won't hold that against you. Ours is a secular party. It is not secular. It is suck-ular party. Suck up politics that is all you know (The Three Mistakes, 64).*

Omi, young character of the novel, who establish cricket shop with his friend Ishan and Govind. He comes under the influence of the religion so easily that he forgets his own business of cricket and behaves in religious toxicity. On one of the occasion, he comes in contact with the father of Ali. Ali is a small Muslim boy who has the great talent for the game of cricket. Ishan being the failure in the field of the cricket wants to make Ali as a cricketer and wants to fulfil his dream of cricket. But being Muslim boy it is difficult for Omi to tolerate him. On one of the occasion, Omi argues with Ali's father as:

*Here is the bias, you call us communal. Your party gives preference to Muslims, but it is secular. Why? Omi said. What preference have we given? Ali's dad said. Why can't you let us make a temple in Ayodhya? Omi said because there is a mosque there already. But there was a temple there before. This is not proven. It has. The government keeps hiding those reports. Incorrect. Whatever. It is not an ordinary place. We believe it is the birthplace of our Lord. We said, "Give us that site, and we will move the mosque respectfully next door." But you can't even do that. And we, the majority, can't have that one little request fulfilled Parekh-ji is right, what hope does a Hindu have in this country? (3Mistakes, 69).*

Chetan Bhagat gives a sly touch of the staunch religious atmosphere of Gujrat to the story. Bittoo Mama a very close relative of them teaches them about the importance of Hindutva and tries to imbibe in their minds a consciousness for their religious identity. The idea of communal prejudices existing for Muslims becomes vital before their eyes. Prakashji preaches them:

*Our scriptures tell us not to harm others. They teach us acceptance of all faiths, even if those faiths do not accept us. They teach us patience. Thousands of years ago, our wise men thought of such wonderful values, valid even today. And today you great men pass on these values to society (The Three Mistakes, 42)*

With this discussion, Chetan Bhagat desires to express the intolerant way of the social segments of each other. He also describes the communal frenzy in the novel where Hindu and Muslims fight against each other and communal activists attack Ali's family. Commenting on the issue Anindita Chatterjee, in the article titled as Chetan Bhagat and New India asserts that, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life which follows next is set in Gujarat and subtly alludes to the blood-soaked sectarian riots of 2002, and deals with grave issues like that of religion, politics, tolerance which according to Bhagat were the most important issues that baffled and confused the young Indians. (Chatterjee, 71)*

In Kiran Nagarkar's Seven Sixes and Forty Three reflection of the religious intolerance is clearly seen. It describes the struggle of caste and class. It states the burning issue of communal disharmony in the then Bombay. It always remains the sensitive place for the communal riots and religious frenzy. The novel describes the story of the protagonist Kushank Purandre. One of the occasions of the Ganesh festival he goes to visit the deity. He becomes fully impressed and completely engrossed in the feature of Lord Ganesh. He says,

*"I was face to face with archetypal forces and which make myths more meaningful, inevitable and powerful than both reality and rationality". (Seven Sixes and Forty Three, 207)"*

His unity of thought with god no longer remain the dream and the attachment to the devotional world. It is distracted by the communal agitation which appears as a reversal of situation all of a sudden.

*Looks like a South Indian. Long live Shivsena. The first blow knocked out three of my teeth. Don't talk shit. The bastard's Muslim. Look at his eyes. Throttling me. Check his penis to make sure. Don't allow the motherfucker to desecrate Lord Ganesh. Jai Bhavani. Long live Shivaji, Sirens, police. What evil spell has the son of a bitch been casting? Blows, sticks, arriving at the police station with a torn lip, bloodied, black and blue. (Seven Sixes and Forty Three, 207 – 208)*

India is a democratic country. Everything is abide by the law. Being tied with the bond of law police of the country has limitless powers. They can empower and enforce any innocence behind the bars. In the novel, Kushank has to face mistaken identity. He supposed as a Muslim citizen by the police and the security forces, which drag him into the police station. The police give him third-degree treatment. Police torture him blaming that he pollutes the sacred God of Hindu Lord Ganesh. Kushank suffers a lot due to the treatment from the police. He says

*This is my second trip to a police station. They all look the same. The colours of the uniforms change. A picture of a smiling toothless Gandhi on the wall, and the current president. It was Radhakrishnan in Benares, here it is Girdi. (...) Then they beat me. How these people beat you. At Chowpati and here at the station. Beat you, beat you, beat you, beat you, beat you. Kick's iron rods, rats down your legs, sticks, boots, I don't remember any more. Singly and collectively, they keep beating. Putting their boots into my kidneys, shoving lighted cigarettes up my nose, rapping my swollen testicles with the butt end of a pencil, breaking the bridge of my nose, blue, black, green, purple, beat you, beat you, beat you, they never stop. (Seven Sixes and Forty Three, 208 – 209)*

Very dreadful, inhuman, intolerant and bias treatment is given to him by the police. He further says,

*It took me a long time to surface after he had kicked me in the back. Then I was out of the water and had hit the air. I could breathe but couldn't force the air down my throat. My eyes bulged and my ribcage came apart at the seams. Then I lost control over my body and the breath flowed in. I moved my leg and found that I had wet myself "Oh, God," I whispered, "This can't be happening, can't be." (Seven Sixes and Forty Three, 212)*

The torment and suffering is beyond his reach which turns into his tragic death.

## Conclusion

Communal disharmony and conflict always remain the part and parcel of the human race. Since the origin of the earth, the progress of human life and the different creeds are based on the race which results in conflict. It is always said that literature is a reflection of society. Kiran Nagarkars Seven Sixes and Forty Three published in 1974, and Chetan Bhagats The Three Mistakes of My Life is in 2008. The two novels have publication gap of thirty four years. This span should indicate some constructive changes in social harmony as far as invention of modern science and technology is concern But the society of the then and of the modern era is likely to be same even one witness the enforcement of intolerance and religious politics is at rising day by day in society and so in literature

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