

# Daniel Goleman's Theory of Emotions and Emotion in the Book of 2 States

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**Abstract**—The paper studies the role of emotions in Chetan Bhagat's novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* with special reference to Daniel Goleman's Theory of Emotions and Emotional Intelligence. The novel presents the emotional journey of Krish and Ananya, whose love relationship faces challenges due to cultural differences, family expectations, parental opposition and social traditions. Emotions such as love, fear, anger, sadness and empathy are strongly reflected through the behaviour and relationships of the main characters. Daniel Goleman's theory helps explain how emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills influence the decisions and actions of the characters. The study is qualitative and analytical, based on textual analysis of the novel. It shows that *2 States* is not only a romantic and cultural novel, but also a meaningful study of human emotions and emotional maturity. Krish and Ananya's struggle highlights the importance of patience, understanding, communication, and empathy in resolving conflicts among individuals, families, and cultures. The paper concludes that emotional intelligence plays an important role in overcoming social and cultural barriers and helps in building harmony in relationships.

**Index Terms**—Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman, Emotions, *2 States*, Cultural Conflict.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Daniel Goleman's Theory of Emotions is closely linked to the concept of Emotional Intelligence. According to Goleman, emotions are not just feelings that arise suddenly; they strongly influence human thinking, behaviour, decision-making, relationships and success in life. He explained that a person may be highly intelligent in terms of IQ, education or technical knowledge. Still, if that person cannot understand emotions, control anger, handle stress, motivate oneself or maintain good relationships, then success

becomes difficult. Goleman believed that emotions guide our actions in everyday life. For example, fear may protect us from danger, anger may prompt us to respond to injustice, happiness may strengthen social bonding, and sadness may help us reflect deeply. However, when emotions are uncontrolled, they can lead to conflict, poor decisions, stress, and failure. Therefore, Goleman's theory highlights that understanding and managing emotions is an important skill for personal, academic, professional and social development.

Goleman identified five major components of emotional intelligence. The first is self-awareness, which means the ability to understand one's own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, moods and reactions. A self-aware person knows why they are angry, nervous, happy or disappointed. The second component is self-regulation, which means controlling emotions in a balanced way. It does not mean suppressing emotions completely, but rather expressing them appropriately in the given situation. For example, a student who fails an exam may feel disappointed, but self-regulation helps them avoid giving up and instead prepare better. The third component is motivation, which refers to the inner drive to achieve goals despite difficulties. Emotionally intelligent people remain hopeful and focused even in the face of failure. The fourth component is empathy, which means understanding others' emotions and feelings. An empathetic person can understand another person's pain, happiness or problem. The fifth component is social skills, which means the ability to communicate, cooperate, lead, resolve conflicts and build positive relationships with others.

Goleman's theory also explains that emotions are closely connected with the brain. He discussed the role of the emotional brain, especially the amygdala, which

reacts quickly to emotional situations before the rational brain fully analyses them. Sometimes people react suddenly in anger, fear or excitement without thinking properly. Goleman called such situations "emotional hijacking," in which emotions overpower logical thinking. For example, a person may shout during an argument and later regret it. This happens because the emotional response becomes stronger than rational control. According to Goleman, emotionally intelligent people learn to pause, think and respond rather than react immediately. This ability helps maintain mental balance, reduce stress, improve decision-making, and avoid unnecessary conflict. Thus, his theory shows that emotions are powerful, but they can be understood, trained and managed through awareness and practice.

The importance of Daniel Goleman's Theory of Emotions is seen in education, the workplace, leadership, family life and social relationships. In education, emotional intelligence helps students manage exam stress, improve confidence, develop discipline and maintain healthy relationships with teachers and classmates. In the workplace, it helps employees work in teams, handle pressure, accept feedback and communicate effectively. In leadership, Goleman argued that emotionally intelligent leaders are more successful because they understand people, inspire teams and manage conflicts wisely. In personal life, emotional intelligence improves patience, empathy, trust and relationship quality. Therefore, Goleman's theory gives success a broader meaning. It states that success does not depend only on knowledge or intelligence, but also on how well a person understands emotions, manages feelings, motivates oneself, understands others and builds meaningful relationships.

## II. EMOTIONS IN THE BOOK "2 STATES"

**Love:** Love is the central emotion in 2 States, as the relationship between Krish and Ananya begins with mutual attraction, understanding and emotional attachment. Their love is not limited to personal romance, but gradually becomes a strong emotional commitment to each other. Even though both families oppose their relationship because of cultural differences, Krish and Ananya continue to support each other. Their love shows patience, sacrifice and determination, proving that true love requires emotional strength and maturity.

**Fear:** Fear is strongly seen in the novel through the characters' anxiety about family acceptance and social approval. Krish and Ananya fear that their parents may never agree to their marriage because they come from different cultural backgrounds. Their parents also fear losing control over tradition, family honour and community expectations. This fear creates emotional tension throughout the novel and becomes a major barrier to their relationship.

**Anger:** It appears frequently in 2 States, especially during conflicts between Punjabi and Tamil families. Krish's mother becomes angry because she feels Ananya's family does not respect Punjabi culture, while Ananya's parents are also upset with Krish's family's behaviour and expectations. Krish himself feels angry and helpless when his love is judged by caste, region and family pride. This emotion shows how cultural misunderstanding can create emotional distance between people.

**Sadness:** Sadness is an important emotion in the novel because both Krish and Ananya suffer emotionally due to family opposition. They feel hurt when their relationship is not accepted despite their sincerity and commitment. Krish also experiences sadness because of his disturbed relationship with his father and the emotional pressure created by his mother. The novel's sadness reflects the pain of young people who struggle between personal choice and family expectations.

**Empathy:** Empathy is one of the most meaningful emotions in 2 States. Krish slowly learns to understand Ananya's family, their culture, traditions and emotional concerns. Similarly, Ananya tries to understand Krish's family background and his emotional difficulties. Empathy helps both characters move beyond cultural prejudice and build bridges between the two families. This emotion plays an important role in reducing conflict and creating acceptance in the end.

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Goleman, D. (1995), in the book titled "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ", Daniel Goleman explained that emotional intelligence is the ability to understand one's own emotions, control emotional reactions, motivate oneself, understand others' feelings, and maintain healthy relationships. His theory emphasises self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy,

and social skills. In relation to 2 States, this theory is useful because Krish and Ananya face emotional pressure from family, culture, love, rejection and social expectations. Their success depends not only on love but also on patience, emotional control, empathy and relationship management. Goleman's theory helps us understand that emotional maturity is necessary for solving personal and social conflicts, as is clearly reflected in 2 States, where the lovers must manage their emotions carefully to unite two families.

2. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990), in the research paper titled "Emotional Intelligence", Salovey and Mayer introduced emotional intelligence as the ability to recognise, understand, regulate and use emotions in thinking and action. Their work became the foundation for later theories, including Goleman's popular model. In 2 States, Krish and Ananya show emotional intelligence as they try to understand the feelings of both families, rather than focusing solely on their personal desire for marriage. They realise that emotions such as pride, fear, insecurity and cultural superiority influence parental decisions. This study supports the idea that emotions are not weaknesses but important tools for decision-making, and that in 2 States emotional understanding becomes the main means by which love is transformed into social acceptance.
3. Cherniss, C. (2000), in the research paper titled "Emotional Intelligence: What It Is and Why It Matters", Cherniss discussed the importance of emotional intelligence in personal and professional success and explained that Goleman's work made emotional intelligence popular in organisational and social contexts. The paper highlights that people who manage emotions effectively can handle stress, conflict and interpersonal relationships better. In 2 States, Krish faces emotional stress due to cultural differences, parental opposition and family tension. His emotional intelligence is evident when he does not react aggressively but instead tries to win over Ananya's family with patience and respect. Cherniss's study helps to conclude that emotional intelligence is essential for handling difficult relationships, and 2 States demonstrates this through Krish's gradual emotional growth and his effort to balance love, family and culture.
4. Goleman, D. (1998), in the book titled "Working with Emotional Intelligence", Goleman extended his theory by explaining that emotional intelligence is highly important in practical life, especially in work, leadership and relationships. He argued that emotional competence can be learned and developed through practice. In 2 States, Krish's work and family lives both require emotional balance. He works in a corporate environment while also dealing with emotional conflict in his personal life. His ability to communicate, adjust and remain calm reflects Goleman's idea of emotional competence. Goleman's work shows that emotional intelligence is not limited to personal feelings but also affects social behaviour, career and family relationships; similarly, 2 States presents emotion as a practical force that shapes love, marriage and social harmony.
5. Boyatzis, R. E., Goleman, D., & Rhee, K. (2000), in the research paper titled "Clustering Competence in Emotional Intelligence: Insights from the Emotional Competence Inventory", Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee explained emotional intelligence through competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. These competencies help individuals perform effectively in real-life situations. In 2 States, Krish and Ananya must manage not only their own emotions but also their parents' emotional expectations. Their relationship succeeds because they slowly develop emotional competence, especially empathy and social awareness. This study is useful for analysing 2 States because the novel shows that love alone is not sufficient; emotional competence, patience and relationship management are required to overcome cultural barriers and family resistance.
6. Bar-On, R. (2006), in the research paper titled "The Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence", Bar-On presented emotional-social intelligence as a combination of emotional awareness, interpersonal skills, stress management, adaptability and general mood. His model is closely connected to Goleman's ideas because both focus on practical emotional

functioning. In *2 States*, the characters experience stress due to family disapproval, cultural prejudice and social pressure. Krish and Ananya must adapt to different cultural environments and manage the emotional pain of rejection. Bar-On's model helps to understand that emotional intelligence includes adaptability and stress management, and *2 States* shows how emotional adjustment becomes necessary when individuals try to build relationships across cultural and regional boundaries.

7. Ahlawat, R. (2016), in the research paper titled "Chetan Bhagat's *2 States*: A Study of Cultural Contradictions", Ahlawat studied the cultural issues in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States* and highlighted how the novel presents the differences between Punjabi and Tamil Brahmin cultures. The paper explains that the novel represents youth, modern love, inter-state marriage, dowry, family expectations and social contradictions in contemporary India. From an emotional perspective, the novel shows how love is challenged by pride, prejudice, fear, and family attachment. Ahlawat's study helps conclude that *2 States* is not only a love story but also an emotional study of cultural contradiction, where emotional intelligence is required to reduce misunderstandings and foster acceptance between two different families.
8. Kumar, A., & Siwach, J. (2014), in the research paper titled "Multiculturalism and Cross-Cultural Marriage in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States*: The Story of My Marriage", Kumar and Siwach examined multiculturalism and cross-cultural marriage in *2 States*. Their study focuses on how Krish and Ananya's relationship becomes difficult due to linguistic, regional, food, family, and marriage traditions. Emotionally, the novel presents love, anxiety, humiliation, hope and frustration. Krish's emotional appeal to the families shows that marriage is not only a social contract but also an emotional union between two families. This study shows that cross-cultural marriage requires emotional maturity, mutual respect and empathy; therefore, Goleman's emotional intelligence theory is highly suitable for understanding the emotional journey of Krish and Ananya in *2 States*.
9. Sharma, G. (2021), in the research paper titled "Evidence of Custom Conflicts in Inter-State Nuptials through Chetan Bhagat's *2 States*," Sharma analysed custom conflicts in inter-state marriage through *2 States* and explained how family traditions and social customs create barriers in the relationship of Krish and Ananya. The paper shows that customs are deeply emotional because they are connected with identity, family honour and social belonging. In the novel, parents resist the marriage not only because of culture but also because of emotional insecurity and fear of losing control over their children's future. Sharma's study helps to conclude that emotional conflict in *2 States* arises from customs and family identity, and Goleman's theory helps explain how empathy, self-control and communication can reduce such emotional and cultural tensions.
10. Karthik, S. (2024), in the research paper titled "Exploring Cultural and Middle-Class Mentality in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States*: The Story of My Marriage", Karthik examined the cultural and middle-class mentality represented in *2 States*. The paper explains that the novel explores parental possessiveness, social judgement, marriage expenses, regional prejudice, and family expectations. These issues are highly emotional because middle-class families often associate marriage with honour, reputation, and social approval. Krish and Ananya's emotional struggle reflects the conflict between individual choice and collective family decision-making. Karthik's study supports the view that *2 States* presents emotions within the framework of Indian middle-class society, and Goleman's emotional intelligence theory helps explain how self-awareness, empathy, and social skills are required to negotiate love, family pressure, and cultural identity.

#### IV. RESEARCH GAP

The literature review shows that many studies have discussed Daniel Goleman's theory of emotions and emotional intelligence, particularly its role in self-awareness, self-control, empathy, motivation, and relationship management. Similarly, several studies on Chetan Bhagat's *2 States* have focused on cultural

conflict, inter-state marriage, family pressure, middle-class mentality and social customs. However, very few studies have directly linked Goleman's emotional intelligence theory to the characters' emotional experiences in *2 States*. Most existing studies analyse the novel from cultural, social, or marital perspectives, but they do not deeply examine how emotions such as love, anger, fear, anxiety, rejection, empathy, patience, and emotional maturity influence the decisions of Krish, Ananya, and their families. Therefore, there is a research gap in studying *2 States* through Goleman's theory of emotions to understand how emotional intelligence helps characters manage cultural differences, family resistance, and interpersonal conflicts.

## V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative, analytical research methodology. It uses a descriptive research design to examine the role of emotions in Chetan Bhagat's novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* with special reference to Daniel Goleman's Theory of Emotions and Emotional Intelligence. The study is mainly based on secondary data, including the primary literary text *2 States*, books on emotional intelligence, research papers, journal articles, reviews and online academic sources related to emotions, emotional intelligence and Indian English fiction. The novel is analysed through textual analysis, in which major emotions such as love, fear, anger, sadness, and empathy are identified and interpreted through the characters' behaviour, dialogue, and relationships. The study also applies Goleman's concepts of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills to understand how Krish, Ananya, and their families manage emotional conflicts, cultural differences, and family expectations. Thus, the methodology connects literary interpretation with psychological theory and provides a deeper understanding of emotions in the novel.

**Conclusion:** The paper concludes that emotions play a significant role in Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, as the novel presents love, fear, anger, sadness and empathy through the relationship of Krish and Ananya and the cultural conflict between their families. Daniel Goleman's theory of emotions and emotional intelligence provides a suitable framework for understanding how the characters

manage emotional pressure, family expectations, cultural differences, and interpersonal conflicts. The novel shows that love alone is not sufficient for a successful relationship; emotional maturity, patience, self-control, empathy and effective communication are equally important. Krish and Ananya's journey reflects the struggle between personal choice and social tradition, while their emotional intelligence helps them gradually win family acceptance. Thus, *2 States* can be understood not only as a romantic and cultural novel but also as a study of emotions, in which emotional understanding becomes the key to resolving conflict and building harmony among individuals, families, and cultures.

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