

URBAN LIFESTYLE OF YOUNGSTERS IN NOVONEEL CHAKRABORTY'S *MARRY ME, STRANGER*

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the intricate relationship between tradition and modernity within the contemporary urban lifestyle of young individuals. Urban settings offer a distinctive environment where young people can articulate their identities, pursue their interests, and interact with a variety of cultures and ideologies. The paper analyzes the influence of technology, social media, and urban infrastructure on the experiences and perspectives of young urban dwellers. It also addresses the challenges and opportunities that city life presents, including the quest for professional growth, personal independence, and experiences that prioritize fulfillment over material possessions. The paper references Novoneel Chakraborty's *Marry me, stranger* to explore how urban lifestyles affect the identities, relationships, and emotional experiences of young individuals. Through the journey of the protagonist Rivanah, the trilogy depicts the city as a complex and multifaceted space that provides freedom, self-expression, and opportunities for development, while also posing challenges such as isolation, uncertainty, and vulnerability. The research underscores the importance of urban areas in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity, as well as their role in shaping the future generation of leaders and change-makers. By examining the intersections of urbanization, technology, and youth culture, this paper offers valuable insights into the changing dynamics of urban lifestyles and their implications for society.

KEYWORDS: Urban lifestyle, urban infrastructure, social media, urbanization, youth culture

The contemporary urban lifestyle of young individuals is a lively and dynamic fusion of tradition and modernity. City residents, especially the younger generation, find themselves in a fast-paced setting that ignites their ambitions and passions. They flourish in the diversity and anonymity of urban environments, where they can freely express themselves and pursue a variety of interests. From

fashionable cafes and street food establishments to music festivals and art exhibitions, urban locales provide limitless opportunities for entertainment, self-expression, and social interaction.

The youth in urban areas are proficient in digital technology, with smartphones and social media influencing their interactions, relationships, and perspectives. Their focus frequently centers on professional development, personal autonomy, and experiences rather than material wealth. Living in urban environments also introduces them to diverse cultures, ideologies, and ways of life, promoting open-mindedness and flexibility. Although city life presents challenges like traffic congestion, pollution, and elevated living expenses, numerous young individuals perceive the urban lifestyle as thrilling and rich with opportunities.

The contemporary urban lifestyle of young individuals has emerged as a significant influence in society, molding cultural standards, economic patterns, and social conduct. Urban areas provide a diverse environment where youth can articulate their identities, follow their interests, and engage with peers who share similar values. Young urbanites are at the forefront of innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity, utilizing technology, social media, and networking avenues to establish startups, display artistic works, and foster community connections. Their rapid and vibrant way of life impacts consumer behavior, fashion trends, music, and the entertainment industry.

Furthermore, young people in urban areas are transforming conventional values by adopting principles of inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability. They place greater importance on experiences rather than material goods, pursuing personal development, well-being, and social influence. As urban demographics expand, their lifestyles and preferences will persist in influencing the societal framework, fostering advancement, creativity, and constructive change. "Cities will continue to thrive, not despite their complexities and challenges, but because of the opportunities and energies they generate." (Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy*.)

The contemporary urban lifestyle embraced by today's youth is on the rise for various reasons. Metropolitan areas provide unmatched opportunities for education, professional advancement, and personal growth, which attract young individuals eager to improve their skills and future prospects. Urban environments serve as centers for innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity, offering a stage for young talents to thrive. The diversity and anonymity inherent in city living enable young people to express themselves openly, pursue different interests, and engage with peers who share similar passions. The availability of modern conveniences, entertainment, and social events enhances the allure and vibrancy of urban life. Furthermore, cities generally boast superior infrastructure, transportation options, and access to healthcare services, rendering them appealing to young individuals who prioritize convenience and a high quality of life. The urban lifestyle's focus on experiences, self-expression, and community also strongly resonates with youth. Consequently, cities persist in attracting young talent, propelling growth, innovation, and cultural advancement.

The contemporary urban lifestyle of young individuals in India presents many benefits. Cities facilitate access to high-quality education, career prospects, and personal development, empowering young people to chase their dreams. Urban centers serve as epicenters for innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity, nurturing an environment conducive to experimentation and taking risks. Indian metropolises such as Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi offer a multitude of cultural experiences, entertainment avenues, and social interactions, thereby enriching the lives of the youth. Additionally, the urban way of life enhances connectivity and networking, enabling youngsters to forge relationships and partnerships that can advance their professional journeys. Furthermore, cities across India have witnessed substantial enhancements in infrastructure, healthcare, and transportation, thereby rendering urban living more convenient and pleasant. The extensive integration of technology and digital services has further improved the urban experience, granting young individuals immediate access to information, services, and opportunities.

Urban regions provide a venue for self-expression and individuality, enabling young individuals to delve into their interests and passions. The interaction with various cultures, ideologies, and lifestyles within cities promotes open-mindedness, adaptability, and tolerance—qualities that are vital for both personal and professional advancement. Moreover, urban India is a catalyst for economic growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship, generating opportunities for the youth to play a role in the nation's progress. The urban lifestyle's focus on experience, community, and social impact resonates with numerous young Indians, who are increasingly in pursuit of purpose and fulfillment in their lives.

In general, the contemporary urban lifestyle of young individuals in India presents a distinctive combination of opportunities, experiences, and personal development, influencing the forthcoming generation of leaders, innovators, and agents of change. Given its various benefits and advantages, urban living is set to maintain a crucial role in the advancement and progress of India. "Cities are incubators of innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity, providing young people with the freedom to experiment, learn, and grow." (Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*)

In Novoneel Chakraborty's *Marry me, stranger*, the urban lifestyle of today's youth serves not merely as a setting but as a dynamic influence that molds the identities, decisions, and emotional experiences of the characters. Through the experiences of Rivanah Banerjee, a young woman relocating from Kolkata to Mumbai, Chakraborty crafts a striking depiction of modern urban youth as they traverse ambition, anonymity, and emotional fragility.

Rivanah's journey from a girl in a small town to a professional in the city reflects the dreams of numerous young Indians today. The trilogy encapsulates the charm of city life—liberty, self-sufficiency, and the excitement of transformation. Mumbai, characterized by its rapid tempo and limitless opportunities, serves as both a playground and a pressure cooker. The city provides Rivanah with the opportunity to discover her uniqueness, yet it also reveals the more somber aspects of urban life: isolation,

uncertainty, and the perpetual requirement to validate oneself. “Somewhere deep within her, Rivanah felt Ishita did what she herself wished to do but couldn’t: going to nightclubs, dating guys on a hunch without emotional attachment, living a carefree life with nobody to question” (Chakraborty 61)

Technology is pivotal in the urban lifestyle portrayed in the trilogy. The enigmatic figure who starts to influence Rivanah’s existence does so via digital channels—text messages, emails, and surveillance—underscoring the profound connection modern youth have with their devices. This reliance on technology illustrates a wider reality: in urban environments, technology serves as both a unifier and a separator. It facilitates relationships while simultaneously promoting isolation, as in-person interactions are frequently substituted with virtual communications. “She used to put heavy make-up on and click selfies only to post them on Facebook in order to garner more and more likes. The likes and comments made her feel important. It was her way of defending her own pride which had been punctured” (Chakraborty 101)

Marry me, stranger further explores the intricate emotional dynamics of young adults residing in urban environments. Rivanah's connections—with her family, friends, and romantic partners—are characterized by uncertainty and emotional upheaval. The cityscape intensifies these conflicts. In an environment where individuals are pursuing various aspirations—such as success, love, and validation—it becomes simple to forget one's true self. Chakraborty employs Rivanah's inner struggles to examine themes of identity, trust, and self-esteem, which strongly resonate with contemporary audiences.

Another notable aspect is the representation of gender dynamics. Rivanah's journey illustrates the struggles encountered by numerous young women in urban India—balancing personal autonomy with societal norms and safety issues. The trilogy does not hesitate to depict how the city can serve as both a source of liberation and a potential threat, particularly for women striving to establish their own identity.

The psychological depth of *Marry me, stranger* is what renders it especially captivating. The portrayal of urban life is not idealized; rather, it is depicted in its full complexity. The city itself acts as a character—enticing, daunting, and occasionally, frightening. Through Rivanah’s perspective, readers are immersed in the ebbs and flows of urban youth culture: the thrill of fresh starts, the pain of isolation, and the unending quest for significance in a world that seldom pauses.

Essentially, Novoneel Chakraborty’s trilogy reflects the contemporary urban experience. It encapsulates the essence of a generation navigating the tensions between tradition and modernity, connection and isolation, freedom and apprehension. In this way, it presents a compelling, emotionally resonant narrative that is both intimate and universal.

In *Marry me, stranger* authored by Novoneel Chakraborty, pubs function as more than mere casual gathering places—they transform into symbolic environments that mirror the emotional and psychological conditions of the characters, particularly Rivanah Banerjee. Situated within the vibrant urban landscape of Mumbai, these nightlife establishments are intricately integrated into the storyline as

sites of escape, confrontation, and discovery. “While Ishita danced and openly hit on men in nightclubs and pubs, Rivanah preferred drinking alone sitting by a corner and return to her flat totally sloshed, cursing Ekansh with newer and unapologetically vulgar slangs every time” (Chakraborty 103)

For Rivanah, a young woman grappling with the intricacies of independence, relationships, and a shadowy stalker, pubs symbolize a fragment of the freedom she yearns for. They serve as a venue for her to connect with friends, relax after work, and at times, find comfort amidst the turmoil of her disintegrating life. The gentle clinking of glasses, the subdued lighting, and the rhythmic beat of music provide a fleeting sanctuary from the paranoia and dread that start to engulf her. In these instances, the pub transforms into a cocoon—an illusion of security in a city that is far from predictable.

However, Chakraborty does not idealize these environments. Rather, he employs them to emphasize the dual nature of urban existence. The very pub that provides solace can simultaneously serve as a platform for vulnerability. In numerous scenes, Rivanah discovers herself emotionally exposed—whether through a fraught discussion with a friend, a moment of romantic uncertainty, or the unsettling feeling of being observed. The figure of the Stranger casts a significant shadow, even within these ostensibly public and safe spaces, serving as a reminder to readers that peril does not always hide in the darkness—it can be right there among the crowd.

The novel additionally employs pubs as a means to examine the social dynamics of contemporary youth. These venues serve as environments where relationships are challenged, secrets are disclosed, and identities are simultaneously unveiled and hidden. Rivanah's engagements in these contexts frequently reflect her inner turmoil—caught between her true self and the person she is evolving into due to the Stranger's impact. The relaxed ambiance of a pub stands in stark contrast to the depth of her psychological odyssey, generating a tension that maintains the readers' suspense.

Furthermore, the pub scenes provide a nuanced critique of the performative aspects of urban social existence. In a society where individuals strive to convey confidence and authority, the pub transforms into a stage for facades. Characters engage in laughter, flirtation, and playful exchanges, yet beneath this exterior resides a stream of insecurity, yearning, and trepidation. Chakraborty skillfully illustrates this, revealing that even amidst a crowd, one can experience profound solitude.

Essentially, the pubs featured in the novel transcend mere physical spaces—they embody emotional terrains. They mirror the peaks and valleys of Rivanah's experiences, providing instances of joy and connection, while simultaneously acting as reminders of the constant dangers that loom over her existence. Through these environments, Chakraborty crafts a complex depiction of urban youth culture—characterized by vibrancy yet susceptibility, freedom yet delicacy. It is this intricate representation that allows the work to profoundly resonate with readers who are traversing their own interpretations of city living.

In conclusion, the modern urban lifestyle embraced by young individuals in India represents a dynamic and intricate phenomenon, filled with both opportunities and challenges. This research paper, viewed through the perspective of Novoneel Chakraborty's "Marry Me, Stranger," has delved into the complex relationships between tradition and modernity, technology and human connection, alongside the themes of freedom and vulnerability that characterize urban youth culture. The results emphasize the importance of urban environments in nurturing innovation, entrepreneurship, and creativity, while also stressing the necessity for safe and inclusive spaces that facilitate personal development and well-being. With the continuous growth of urban demographics in India, it will be essential to comprehend the complexities of urban youth culture in order to shape policies and initiatives aimed at supporting the progress of this group. Ultimately, this research enriches our understanding of the changing dynamics of urban lifestyles in India and their extensive implications for society.

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