CHAPTER-II

Educational and Other Middle Class Family Related Issues in Five Point Someone

[The present chapter focuses on the literary analysis of Chetan Bhagat’s first fiction Five Point Someone. The Major issues of Contemporary Indian Educational system have been explored and analyzed on the basis of the Research Tool defined in the first chapter. The deeper analysis of the novel brings out certain other middle class family related issues of the contemporary Indian society and their overall impact on Indian society. At the end, the chapter has been summed up with research findings.]

2.1 Introduction: Brief Review of the Novel, Five Point Someone

Five Point Someone: What not to do at IIT is the debut novel of Chetan Bhagat. It was published in the year 2004 by Rupa & Co, New Delhi. With its publication, Chetan Bhagat received unprecedented credit and popularity in Indian English literature. He was the first person to attract the common youth of India to read a literary book written in English. Earlier, it used to be the monopoly of the literary scholars, English language experts, university professors or literary critics in India to read or discuss a piece of literature written in English. The subject matter of the novel is very simple and lucid. The language is easy and straight forward. The Length of the content is a moderate one. The size of the book is little more than a pocket book. The price is affordable. No heaviness of content, no complexity of story. No show of Intellectualty or expertise of literary scholarship and such other exclusive features make the novel Five Point Someone what is truly called- this is 267 pages of pure fun.

There are three college friends Hari Kumar, Ryan Oberoi and Alok Gupta in the story of the novel. All of them are freshers. They are Mechanical Engineering students. The novel is set in one of the most prestigious technological institutes of India- IIT Delhi. Hari is the narrator of the story. He is an average student; he is a calm and quite sort of young man. Alok belongs to the lower middle class or a poor family. He is a cry baby. He has much burden of family responsibilities on his shoulders. He wants to get a good job so that he can help his
family as soon as possible. Ryan is creative and more intellectual of the three. He is smart and stylish and an out-spoken guy. He has a different perspective to look at things and situations. He is not a ‘yes’ personality. He is very innovative in his ideas and opinions. The three of them have one thing in common. They cannot cope with the current academic atmosphere in their institution. There is a girl, Neha Cherian, the daughter of Prof. Cherian. Hari and Neha are in relationship. They frequently meet and once enjoy physical pleasures also. Prof. Cherian is the professor and head of the Mechanical Department of the institution in which the trio study. He is a dominating teacher. He has some strict rules and principles for himself and his profession. Neha does not always agree with her father. She has some complaints against her father’s parental over-expectations. The academic atmosphere in the institution is rigid and monotonous. There is little scope for original ideas. Much work is based on mugging or cramming. The grade point average (GPA) system does not anyway promote creativity or innovativeness of any kind. The students madly rush after the maximum GPA. There is no scope for original ideas and implementation. Moreover, the teachers and their methodology have become almost obsolete. The three friends are not rankers. They can cover an average score of five points and something.

The story is not about the rankers of the institution rather it is a story about the average students, the under performers or a kind of losers. It exposes the inner sentiments of the average students who are underestimated or not given necessary importance in the classrooms. The trio feel themselves clutched in the system. They cannot adjust to it. They do not find interest in the lengthy assignments, surprise tests and mugging the theories. The novel becomes very interesting with the numerous attempts of the three friends to cope with the rigid and lifeless system of education in one of the most reputed technological institutions of India. The IITians are expected to win over the world but in the real sense of the term, they are trying to survive in the grade point system which nurtures in them absolutely nothing. The situation becomes so pathetic when Alok attempts to commit suicide and Samir, the only brother of Neha commits suicide for not being able to crack the entrance test to get into IIT. The letter of Samir, addressed to his sister Neha, exposes the mental pressures and tension felt by young boys and girls due to over expectations and needless domination of parents on their children. The atmosphere of IIT which is depicted in the novel may not be an exact picture of the IIT culture of the time; even it exposes many
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The follies and foibles of the educational system of India. The only ray of hope is found in the sympathetic behavior of Prof. Veera who appreciates the creativity of the students and stand by them. He is a symbolic illustration of an ideal teacher who motivates the students for their genuine creativeness and originality of ideas. He is a very good example of humanity expected in educational institutions. He has a high sense of identifying the best in both the high performers and under performers and giving the right direction to the talents. The end of the novel is very touchy. The rigidity of the education system is exposed in the convocation speech of Prof. Cherian. He, in the beginning, was a very strict and principled man but in the end he realizes that the GPA can make the best student but not the best person. Along with the studies, rank and GPA, there are many other things that should be given equal importance in life like family, friends, internal desires and goals. The success of education lies not only in grade points but also in making the students competent enough to survive and progress in the real world outside the institutions.

Though the novel describes the pressurized college life of average ranked students of one of the most leading technical institutions of India, the style is very witty, funny, innovative and appealing. The narration has a comical overtone. The descriptions and conversations are hilarious and sparkling. It has no high seriousness of literature which it expected to have in literature as told by Mathew Arnold but it has a very high universal appeal. The novel is written in an easy and funny tone. The story is funny but touching. Chetan Bhagat has invested much of his energy and efforts for making it a *perfect ten out of ten* book.

### 2.2 Contemporary Indian Society Portrayed In *Five Point Someone*

It has been a tendency of Chetan Bhagat to depict contemporary urban middle class society in his writings. He belongs to the urban middle class background. So his depiction of the same in his writings reflects the ground reality of the contemporary Indian urban milieu. *Five Point Someone* is his debut novel. He has written this novel with the intention of the pure entertainment of the reader. However, it reflects glimpses of the contemporary Indian society and its major issues. Though the issues of education system is one of the chief thematic concerns of the novel, the writer also throws light on certain other issues of the present Indian society like dowry, generation gap, challenging Indian family value system and lower middle class hardships. The picture of the Indian society which emerges from the novel is a lower middle class community and its problems. The major part of the novel
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covers the depiction of the educational sector of the contemporary Indian society with its problems. Education is an integral part of society. The progress of society is much dependent on the education imparted to the people. If education is given effectively, it shows positive outcome in society. People grow really human with a humanistic approach to life. In a democratic country like India the role of education in society becomes vital for inculcating democratic and nationalistic values among the people. Such people can become highly sensible citizens of India who can have nation and the interest of nation as their top priority. Such people also practice social and moral values in life and that way, society can experience all round progress and social harmony.

The education system of the contemporary Indian society which is depicted in the novel is very disappointing. Students are becoming victims of the system. They do not have self-confidence for doing anything in life. They are frustrated or depressed in their life. Even the hostel environment depicted in the novel represents the adversity experienced by the young generation of India. The fresh students at the beginning of the novel face problem of ragging. Even the food served in the hostel mess is of very low quality. Hari, the narrator describes:

> Several weeks later, we were in the Kumaon mess eating dinner. It was Thursday I guess, for that is when Kumaon had ‘continental dinner’. In reality, it was just an excuse for mess workers to not give us real food. The menu sounded nice- noodle, French fries, toast and soup. It tasted awful. The cooks made noodle in superglue or something-they stuck to each other as one composite mass in the huge serving pan. The French fries were cold and either extremely undercooked or brunt to taste like coal. The cream of mushroom soup could have been mistaken for muddy water, only it was warmer and saltier (Bhagat Five 155).

The system of education depicted in the novel is not promising in anyway. The system is rigid and conventional. The grade system is crushing the creativity and genuineness of the creative minds of the students. The students dare not screw the system as they know it for sure that their life would be screwed if they try to screw the system. The students are supposed to even think in the traditional direction so there is no scope for an original idea. The students like Alok and Hari in the novel live in constant mental pressure of examination
and grades and the future uncertainties subsequent to it. The professors like professor Dubey, professor Vohra and professor Cherian working in the system hardly accept change in their conventional teaching methodology. They are much old-fashioned in their approach to students and their profession. There is no rapport created between the students and the conventional professors of the institute. The students become victims of bad habits like smoking and drinking. They even plan to steal question paper to pass in the examination. Such ways lead them to take wrong paths in life. If the students are not treated with care and kindness, they will never get self-confidence in life to do anything. They indulge themselves in non-constructive activities and waste the valuable years of life. When they step to the real world outside the institute, with disturbed or confused mindset, they cannot contribute to themselves, to the employer, to the society or to the nation.

Chetan Bhagat has portrayed the contemporary education system of Indian society with a realistic overtone. The students are not happy or contented with the prevalent atmosphere of the institute. The life on the campus is not hopeful enough to nurture in them any values or standards of life. The students are shown frustrated, depressed or afraid of their future uncertainties. They try to screw the system but the system screws them badly. Chetan Bhagat gives an ideal solution to the problem of rigidity prevalent in the system by illustrating the character of Professor Veera who is much modern in his approach to his profession as a teacher. The students never prefer to bunk his lectures because of his modern approach to teaching. He shows care, kindness or sympathy towards the students when they are really in need of it. Professor Veera helps them many times in their problems. By giving the example of professor Veera, Chetan Bhagat perhaps wants to convey the message to the entire community of teachers to change their mindset and approach to their profession as per the changing need of time. If the students are not treated with care and kindness in student life, they will never inculcate the values and significance of kindness and humanity in life and the same can be dangerous to themselves, to the society and to the nation as well.

Along with the educational segment of society, Chetan Bhagat has drawn the attention of his readers towards the lower middle class of contemporary Indian society with its major issues. It is depicted in the novel how the lower middle class of society experience the hardships of life. The chief protagonists of the novel, Hari, Alok and Ryan are from lower or
middle class family background having all the hardships of life. Alok’s family represents the lower middle class section of current Indian social set up. Shortage of money is constant cause of worry and anxiety for the family. Due to the limited income resources the family has to do many compromises in life. Alok was interested in painting but he has to choose engineering because that way he can get a job very soon and help the family to come out of poverty. Marriage of his elder sister is not possible because the family does not have any saved amount to give as dowry. His father is a bed-ridden patient. He was a teacher but due to his illness he had to resign from the service. The only earning member in the family is his mother. She is a teacher. Half of her salary goes in his husband’s treatment; even he cannot get proper medical treatment because of the shortage of money. His mother cannot purchase a new sari in six months due to the scarcity of money. Due to the growing inflation, the family has to suffer a lot with the limited income. The middle class hardship of the family is reproduced in the novel as follow:

One Monday, five times repaired geyser had broken down and there was no money for a new one. On Wednesday, the TV antenna took a toss and a new one was too expensive. The family had to live with grainy reception until they could save some money. On, Friday, Alok’s father fell off the bed, which required a doctor to come home, another hundred bucks. There were other stories too- the ration shop had started double for sugar and the maid had ditched twice that week (Bhagat Five 122).

Ryan is the son of an NRI couple of middle class society. Ryan has studied all his life in boarding school and hostel. He never gets parental love and affection because of his parents’ staying in the US to earn money in dollars. The family bonding is much damaged. Ryan, though a clever and creative guy, is habituated to smoking and drinking. The family of professor Cherian is depicted as much disturbed in the novel. It represents the educated class of Indian society. The family, having all the comforts of life, is much distressed due to ruined ideals of Indian family value system because of modernity. Samir, the only son of professor Cherian, commits suicides owing to parental over expectation to maintain the intellectual heredity of his father. His father wanted him to pass IIT entrance examination to get admission in it and become an engineer. Samir fails frequently. His father stops talking to him. He also stops talking to his wife as he thinks she is responsible for Samir’s failure.
Samir commits suicide at the railway track. He wrote a suicide note to his younger sister Neha. Neha, prefers to keep distance from his father. She hardly talks to him. She dates with Hari, one of the three protagonists of the novel. The boy smokes and drinks frequently. She does not hesitate even to enjoy sexual intercourse with him who is not very serious in his life. The professor thinks he is very successful in maintaining discipline among the students but he drastically fails in maintaining peace and harmony in his own family.

The portrayal of the society and the life of the people in the novel *Five Point Someone* is the representation of the ground reality of contemporary Indian society. Chetan Bhagat draws a very appropriate and realistic picture of it. Though the novel has fun at the top of its priority, it can be interpreted as the social critique also. The theme of the fiction has many glimpses of Indian urban middle class milieu which discloses the actual picture of the plight and poignant life of people. The writer in the novel has touched on some of the most prevailing issues of Indian social set up and its effects on the life of the people.

### 2.3 Educational and Other Indian Middle Class Family Related Issues in *Five Point Someone*

#### 2.3.1. Educational Issues in *Five Point Someone*

The novel *Five Point Someone* throws light on some of the most serious issues of contemporary higher education system in India. The students in higher educational institutes are youth in the age group of 18 to 25. This period is considered a time of serious thinking for future career planning. Life is shaped or formed as per the right or wrong decisions taken during this period. Despite certain hormonal changes and their effects on mind, body and heart, the youth of this age group have a great responsibility of career building. Young boys and girls have to work extremely hard for entrance examinations like AIEEE, GATE, or PMT to get admission to some of the most reputed institutions of India like IITs, IIMs and other top ranked medical or management colleges. Chetan Bhagat—an IIT and IIM passed out, has depicted the hardship of such entrance tests in the first chapter of the novel *Five Point Someone* as: “half of the trees in the world are felled to make up the IIT entrance exam guides (. . .) if you lock yourself in a room with books for two years and throw away the key, you can probably make it here” (Bhagat Five 2).

Education is a dynamic process. The prime aim of education should be imparting a need based education that can inculcate in students the skills of employability and professional
ethics. It should also teach certain requisite life skills that help them to live life happily and respectfully. The prime vision of education is to prepare better citizens. The vision of making better citizens with democratic values can contribute to build up a nation as a super power in the real sense of the term. Education has to be so dynamic that it can accept changes as per the need of the time. The course curriculum, pedagogy and the evaluation patterns have to be modified to meet the latest need of the time. Government encourages and sponsors many researches to investigate the latest innovative techniques to impart education in various institutions and安排s training programs for the people working in various institutions. Much time, money and energy is invested in it, but the end result is not satisfactory. The reason behind it is that people do not want to come out of their comfort zone. They hardly accept the change. There may be a quite small percentage of working people who are dynamic in their attitude towards work, but most of the working people are rigid in what they do. In the field of education, where there is a possibility of dynamism every new day, rigidity or inflexibility has no space at all. If such a rigidity of any kind is encouraged, there raise many issues and problems which can affect the entire system very badly. And this is very true to the educational institutions where the future generation of the country is molded.

Chetan Bhagat in the novel *Five Point Someone* has echoed the problems and issues of contemporary Indian education system due to the prevailing rigidity and dogmas in the system. He has also focused on the effects of the same on the students’ future in particular and entire society in general. Bhagat has taken the base of the story of the three average students of IIT, with different mindsets towards the system. The simple and straightforward flow of the story also exposes certain very serious issues of the contemporary Indian education system as follow.

### 2.3.1.1 Problem of Ragging

Indian colleges and higher education institutes have the common problem of ragging the weaker students, especially the freshers by the seniors. Physical, financial or emotional harassment or exploitation of the freshers has become a very serious issue in the contemporary education system of India. Ragging is sometimes taken as a right of senior students over the juniors or the freshers, in some of the reputed educational institutions especially in medical and engineering institutions. Even girl students are found involved in
such menacing activity. Many students are humiliated, harassed or exploited physically, emotionally, financially or some other way, by the senior students of the institutes. And the end results are dreadful to the extent that some students commit suicide. Ragging has caused many deaths of innocents and spoiled the careers of the innocent students in previous years. The suicide case of Aman Kachroo in the year 2009 in a medical college of Himachal Pradesh is one such example of suicide due to ragging by four drunken seniors. The honorable supreme court of India has passed a directive under SPL No-24295 of 2006 dated 16/5/2007 and in Civil Appeal No-887 of 2009 dated 8/5/2009 for preventing the menace of ragging in educational institutions. Under this, the Court has given a very comprehensive definition of the menace of ragging as:

Ragging is any disorderly conduct whether by words spoken or written or by an act which has the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness to any student, including in rowdy or undisciplined activities which cause or likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in a fresher or a junior student and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the psyche of a fresher or a junior student.

Following that line of action, AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) New Delhi has passed a regulation titled ‘Prevention and Prohibition of Ragging in Technical Institutes and Universities Imparting Technical Education 2009’. The Medical Council of India has passed the regulation which is titled ‘Medical Council of India (Prevention and Prohibition of Ragging in Medical Colleges/Institutions) Regulations, 2009. UGC has also passed regulation with the title ‘UGC Regulation on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions 2009. The UGC has launched a portal https://antiragging.in/home.aspx with 24×7 toll free number 1800-180-5522 and the helpline email address helpline@antiragging.in to reach immediate help to the victimized students in the shortest time period. In spite of all the efforts and awareness the cases of the ragging has not decreased as much as expected. The anti-ragging portal shows the received complaints figure and it is still in thousands. However, they are lower in comparison to the earlier times. Ragging in higher education institutes is a great disgraceful shame for the modern education system of India. It has contaminated the lives and careers of many innocent students. Many
students have committed suicide or have left their studies or many others live under psychological pressure due to the problem of ragging.

Chetan Bhagat at the beginning of his first novel *Five Point Someone* has depicted the embarrassing issue of ragging by the seniors of the freshers in the hostel. It is the first day in college. Among many new newcomers in the hostel, there are three students Hari, Alok and Ryan who are the chief characters of the novel. According to the traditions they were called on the balcony for ragging at midnight. The seniors named Anurag and Baku started ragging which was very insulting to them. They were bitterly abused and forced to remove their clothes. The senior do all this for fun but one can imagine the psychological situation of the victims or the freshers who have yet not settled in the new premises. Baku one of the seniors asked for the introduction in a very rude manner saying:

“You bloody freshers, dozing away eh? Rascals, who will give an introduction?” He screamed. “You bustards” Baku was shrieking, “off with your clothes” “Aw Baku, let us talk to them a bit first” protested Anurag, leaning against the wall, sucking a cigarette butt. “No talking! Baku said one scrawny hand up. “No talking! Just remove those damn clothes” (Bhagat Five 3).

The freshers did not have any option but to remove their clothes. The mental condition of the victims is very pathetic. It is very embarrassing for young boys to remove clothes in front of many seniors who are making fun of them. They pleaded the seniors to allow them to go. When Baku, one of the senior comes closer Alok pleads: “sir, please sir, let us go sir.” But the seniors are not in a mood to let them go and they force them to bend down. Baku says: “what? Let you go? We haven’t even done anything yet to your beauties. C’mon bend down on all fours now, you two fatsos” (Bhagat Five 4). When freshers without clothes bent down, the seniors laughed at them like the hellish demons. The situation is very embarrassing to all the victims. One of the seniors suggest for racing. But Baku has a different idea in mind. He says: “No racing-vacing, I have a better idea. Just wait, I have to go to my room. And you naked cows, don’t look up” (Bhagat Five 5). Alok starts weeping and drops of tears come out of his eyes but still there is no way out. Baku ran into his room and brought two coke bottles. Even friends do not understand what he is going to do with the bottles. Later, he informs that he is going to pose in the James Bond style. Ryan is no
way ready to surrender to the situation and he intentionally stamped the cock bottles hard on Baku’s feet. He screamed out in deadly pain. Ryan now lost all his temper and challenged them to come for further harassment (and he will show this time). Ryan roars so loud this time that even the seniors had to retreat. Anurag, the other senior interrupts and tries to settle down the issue before the matter crosses all the limits. He says: “Hey, cool it everyone here, how did it happen? What is your name-Ryan, take it easy man. This is just fun” (Bhagat Five 6). But nothing was like fun to Ryan. He wants to cool down Ryan, but Ryan’s anger is not in his control. Anurag again tries to cut everything short but the condition is like that of a quarrel. He still threatens the victims saying: “Tell him to control himself. Or one day he will take you guys down too.” (Bhagat Five 6). Ryan passed most of his schooling years in boarding, so he was habituated to handle such situations. But what about the students like Alok and Hari to whom such a situation is quite pathetic and embarrassing. Moreover, the situation of revenge taking and torturing in all the coming years are more pathetic. It has its effects on the regular studies of the victims. Such students fall into a lifelong depression for not having self-confidence or self-esteem. The present situation of the problem of ragging in Indian educational institutions is comparatively much under control. The number of cases is decreasing due to the judicial protection and growing awareness about the seriousness of the problem. However, Chetan Bhagat took the opportunity to bring the seriousness of the problem to the attention on public platform in the year 2004 when there was no judicial protection against this serious issue of ragging.

2.3.1.2 Rising Notoriousness: Lack of Disciplinary Ethics in Campus Life

Growing notoriousness or rowdiness in the campus behavior of the students in higher educational institutions is another big challenging issue of contemporary education system of India. The level of discipline is comparatively very low and disappointing in the present time. College life is more for enjoyment and less for career building to many students. The student-teacher relationship is no more traditional Guru-Shishya relationship with whole hearted commitment to each other. In the modern times, the relationship is like that of a customer-vender where there is giving and getting and nothing more than that. The class rooms are mostly found empty and canteens are always houseful. The teachers who teach sincerely are no more favorite teachers for the students. They want enjoyment more and
education less. In such a contradictory situation the role of colleges and universities is very challenging. Except for some of the really disciplined institutions, the modern campus culture is not promising in most of the colleges and universities. Even an average tax payer in India pays additional 3% education Cess and the state and central government spends huge amount of money in the annual budget for educational purposes but the end results do not reach even the minimum expectations of the society. The teachers are happy in their staff rooms and the students prefer to keep themselves out of the classrooms. The use of mobile phone with internet connectivity is no more used for educational purposes by many of the students. Boys and girls sitting close to one another is now a common scene of most of the college campuses. One can frequently observe a group of some notorious students teasing or playing pranks or passing sarcastic comments on the girl-students passing by or staring at them with mal-intention. The friendship culture of the recent times in the college generation creates many issues like seduction, elopement, exploitation and black mailing. Smoking has become a fashion for most of the college students. Now such students hardly feel guilty of smoking if a professor is passing by. Even some professors are observed to be chain smokers. The sexual affairs between girl students and teachers have much spoiled the pious Guru-shishya relationship. Many cases are registered in the police records regarding the physical exploitation of girl students by giving temptation of higher score in internal examination evaluations. The language and behavior of most of the students is no more moderate. There is no fear of punishment in the mind of students, so there is least possibility for a constructive change in their behavior. For showmanship, they purchase rich clothes and expensive mobile phones, pay heavy bills of food and drinks. Many police cases are registered that college students are caught in vehicle stealing or mobile phone stealing. Such things happen because students spend a lot on eating, drinking and enjoying and to make up for the shortage of pocket money such students engage in such activities of stealing. What is more shocking to it is that some girl students are found, working as call-girls to meet such needless expenses. Drinking is becoming very common in most of the hostel surroundings. Watching pornography movies, sharing nude photographs through email or social sites or talking filthy matters among themselves are not a matter of disgrace in the present campus culture. Bollywood movies and television greatly influence the mind and attitude of the modern generation. For example, the IIM campus culture showed in the
recently released movie 2 States Staring Arjun Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, can never be and is never the real campus culture of IIM Ahmadabad which prepares world class managers and CEOs. But the new generation would take it as they have seen in such movies. If they do so, there occur certain problems of discipline. This is not only true of the illustrious institute, but also in many such other institutions. This may be all right for those students who do not have education as the top priority but to those who want to study and build career, such matters are very disturbing and embarrassing. The condition of many educational campuses, especially hostel building surroundings is very unhealthy.

This may not be true to all the educational institutions of India. There are some institutions and educational campuses in India which run on the basis of strict measures of discipline and campus behavior. But from an average point of view, the campus life has been much polluted. Most of the education campuses face the problem of discipline among the students. Politics and students’ unions sometimes play a crucial role for such disciplinary issues. Some students are politically associated with one or the other political party or one or the other students’ unions, so they are not afraid of doing certain wrong things on the campus.

Chetan Bhagat depicts the serious issue of campus discipline very graphically in Five Point Someone with comical overtones. The major characters are frequently found drinking Vodka in the terrace of the institute building, smoking cigarettes and turning the pages of pornographic magazines in hostel rooms. By this, he touches the ground reality of the campus life which has a major problem of discipline and campus behavior. The hostel life which is depicted in the novel is very sarcastic which exposes the realistic picture of campus life. The students freely speak abusive words to each other and also to some of their professors, who are not their favorite or somewhat traditional in their pedagogy and attitude.

When the college friends arrange a party in the hostel room as a part of their ‘cooperate to dominate’ strategy; the description of the party scene is very realistic on the deteriorating culture of campus life. The party scene is like:

> We entered and it was dark (. . .) Ryan had laid out vodka and rum bottles, juice from the roadside vendor, coke from the canteen, lemons, ice, sugar
and finally, joints for the guests. When ready-made joints are served, you know the host is someone who gives attention to details.

That was not all. Nude women adorned the walls; posters extracted from US porn magazines, which made their way to Kumaon through ex-seniors in innocuous, red-heads, thin, voluptuous and petite, posed on Ryan’s wall, uniformly wanton (Bhagat Five 97).

They smoke and drink too much that night and discuss kissing the girlfriend, mice theory, C2D plan (co-operate to dominate) and much more. The writer has taken the right opportunity for describing the contaminated reality of hostel life by this narration. Such a culture is a common scene in most of the hostels of higher education. Many innocent students either join such notorious students for fun or they are sometimes forced to join them. The students feel that such is modern culture and if they do not join them, they would be considered Dehaati or indigenous people. Sometimes they forget their real objectives of study and career building and they start deceiving their parents and themselves too.

The notoriousness of the students in the novel crosses its limits when Ryan, one of the chief protagonists, drinks vodka when they face annual viva voce of the head of their department Prof. Cherian. When Hari reminds of the viva at 11:30 a.m. the conversation between Hari and Ryan is very abusive and astonishing:

Ryan: “I have vowed not to view that bastard’s face as much as I can.”
Hari: “Up to you, I still think you should come. Anyway what is your idea?”
Ryan: “I don’t think it will work.”
Hari: “Just tell me man. I am desperate.” ( . . .)
Ryan: “Vodka, the solution to all problems”
Hari: “What?” “Vodka?” I am talking about a viva Ryan, I am not organizing a party.”
Ryan: “I know. But you know how vodka makes one less inhibited and makes you talk more? Who knows, a couple of swings and it may work for you” (Bhagat Five 150).
Hari also joins Ryan and drinks vodka before they go for viva. Now during the viva Hari is not in a position to answer any question asked by Professor Cherian and he is baffled. Immediately Prof. Cherian smells something like vodka. And he asks: “Why are you talking like that? And what is this smell? Are you drunk Mr. Hari? Are you drunk in my class?” ( . . . ) “You are actually drunk” (Bhagat Five 153). He is much shocked about the audacity of these students that day. He was very much angry and orders him to get out of the class and gives him a big zero with red pen.

The notoriousness of the students doesn’t stop here. They plan now to steal the question paper from Professor Cherian’s office to get an A grade in his subject. Hari manages to get the duplicate key of the professor’s office with the help of Neha, his girlfriend and the daughter of Prof. Cherian. He goes to Cherian’s house at 11:30 a.m. when Mr. and Mrs. Cherian are not at home. Neha is also involved in the plan to get the duplicate key of the office. When he reaches the Cherian’s, Neha approaches him for physical pleasure and soon both of them enjoy sexual pleasure. She also wishes to smoke a cigarette as she has heard that a cigarette is good after sex. Neha, a ‘so called’ modern girl, has modernized perspectives of life and so she doesn’t feel guilty of exploiting the trust of her parents. Though she is much disturbed for the untimely suicidal death of his brother due to parental pressure for studies, she does not think even once before losing her virginity on the very day of the death anniversary of his brother, with a boy who is a drunkard, also an under performer in his studies, and does not show any gesture of seriousness in life. Hari successfully gets the duplicate keys of Cherian’s office when he goes to buy a cigarette packet soon after being physical with Neha. Chetan Bhagat through the whimsical characters like Neha and Hari has criticized the shallow modernity of the new generation which has no guts or sustainability of the great Indian family culture.

The three protagonists, in the next evening, plan to steal the question paper from Prof. Cherian’s office on the six floor of the institute building. Stealing of question papers and selling of them at high prices is a matter of great shame in the modern education system. This is not true only with the higher educational or university education system but also such cases of question paper leaking in competitive examinations and entrance examinations are frequently registered on police records across various parts of the country. Once such incident occurs, the immediate action of the authorities is to cancel the
examinations. Those who work hard and honestly appear in the exam have to suffer a lot. Hari, Ryan and Alok successfully enter into the cabin of professor Cherian and steal the copy of the question paper. They are about to leave the place by setting everything as it was but Alok tries to use the landline telephone to call his parents. Here, the security guard doubts something wrong in professor Cherian’s office in the telephone exchange booth of the institute and he immediately calls him and the students are caught red handed. The disciplinary committee is set against them and they are given the punishment of one semester suspension of the studies. Disciplinary committees are already appointed in most of the higher education intuitions but the punishment given by the committee is always comparatively light and care is taken not to spoil the career of the accused students. Here, some mischievous students take wrong advantage of it and they do not come out of their notoriousness. Alok, being more serious and sensitive, jumped off from the institute roof and he was hospitalized. In spite of this accident, either Alok or the other two did not inform Alok’s parents about it even after two months. Some days later when Alok’s parents came to see him in the hostel room, he was sitting in the bed reading porn magazine and eating chips. Ryan was next to him smoking cigarette filling Alok’s room with smoke. When Hari rushed into the room to inform them of the arrival of the parents, he was amazed to see them. He said: “Are you guys nuts? Smoking and porn early morning? “What are you so worked up about? Why not do the best things when one is still fresh,” Ryan said (Bhagat Five 224). Immediately they set everything right as if nothing has happened. Finally his mother comes to know about the plaster of Paris applied to Alok’s leg, they cover up the secret of suicidal attempt giving details of small scooter accident. Finally at the close of the novel professor Cherian is much moved after reading the letter by his son Samir as a suicide note addressed to Neha. He accepts his mistakes of being too much rigid and conventional in his professional life. On the convocation day, he gives very inspiring and motivating speech though Ryan and Alok make a lot of fun of it. They were very delighted to know that Prof. Cherian was weeping on the stage.

The words like fuck and bastard are frequently used by the chief protagonists and here, Chetan Bhagat has rightly exposed the nuisance of free use of vulgar language on the campus life. The sarcastic comments on the girl students, or concocted stories of love affairs between a male and a female professor has become very common talk of the campus life.
Some boys and girls from a decent family background feel very much embarrassed by the nuisance of using vulgar language in common conversation. It spoils the academic atmosphere of the institute and proves fatal for the survival of the institute on a long run. This very problem of offensive use of words and gestures in college premises is really an immediate issue to be sorted out by giving proper counseling and motivation to the students by conducting workshops and seminars for the improvement of campus behavior. There should be some strict measures of punishment for the deliberate violence of disciplinary norms of campus behavior.

Alok is a boy from a poor family. When he took admission in the institute, he was very clear in his goal to study seriously, get a good job and start helping his family as soon as possible. He was very keen to what he decided but the friend circle and the rigidity of the educational atmosphere diverted him from his goal. He started taking lightly and easily. He started smoking and drinking vodka. He could not pay attention to his studies even by changing his friend circles. Finally he grew so notorious that he drank vodka along with his friends when he faced the viva exam and he was detained from the final examination. Here he realized his mistakes of taking his studies so lightly and there was no option left for him. So he attempts suicide. Fortunately he was saved but he was not serious in his studies after that accident.

Chetan Bhagat, through the character of Alok, points out the effect of bad company and undisciplined environment of campus life on poor or middle class students like Alok and their parents who do everything possible for educating their children for better future. Chetan Bhagat in the novel *Five Point Someone* has very critically depicted the effects of notoriousness and indiscipline on the studies and future career of the students.

The researcher expresses his utter sense of worry regarding growing notoriousness and indiscipline in contemporary Indian educational institutions. He feels that it is a matter that requires an immediate action plan to be implemented for taking corrective measures. Human society is one of the stakeholders of the education system. So if the education system is healthy and if it can produce better human beings, the society will be highly benefited and so will be the humankind. If disciplinary ethics is not nurtured among the students in the academic years, they may be equally in undisciplined in their public life and may not feel ashamed of doing anything undesirably to the society and the nation as well.
Some kind of freedom in college life is useful but if it is not restrained, it may prove fatal for the individual, society and the nation.

2.3.1.3 Rigidity and Monotony in Academic Work

The prime aim of educational institutions is not to transmit the knowledge monotonously to students but also to nurture the values and ethics of life. In this context, the Vedic system of education seems much relevant when the guru and shishya are discussing a particular topic which has its practical significance in life also. Asking questions and answering the same in an interesting manner help the students to actively participate in the teaching learning process. The contemporary teaching methods in the classrooms are comparatively more rigorous and they lead to utter monotony as the active participation of students is very limited. The teaching work is highly based on the examination point of view and sometimes teachers are bound to do the same. The completion of the syllabus is given priority at the cost of proper understanding of the topic being discussed. The evaluation system in the Indian education system is much conventional and it urgently requires a complete modification. The lecture method or the chalk and talk method is not that much effective in the present context. The new generation is very impatient and hyper active that cannot pay attention in teaching in a concentrated manner. The new generation is smarter and keeping silence even for a minute is hardly possible in this world of cyber revolution. The new generation uses smart phones and computers with 24×7 internet connectivity for searching any information with one click and changes one hundred T.V channels in ten fifteen minutes. The teachers having fixed salary, limited teaching resources and lower self-confidence due to pressure of job responsibilities and job insecurities, cannot cope with the super smart generation easily.

A very clear generation gap is visible between the cyber smart students and the traditional mindset of the teachers. The teacher after getting a job becomes conventional day by day as innovativeness in teaching requires much time and energy. A kind of rigidity enters with the passage of time. He/she hardly thinks or behaves as he/she used to when he/she was a student. The learner now becomes learned who hardly reads or learns to become updated. The progress of teacher stops the day when he stops learning new things. The time and situations change every new day. If a teacher does not cope with the changing time and situation, he/she cannot serve effectively in the class rooms with the high-tech generation.
A teacher should be a dynamic agent of change. He/she should have the attitude to learn what is added new to his subject and to the educational environment. Those teachers, who do not accept the latest innovations in their teaching pedagogy, cannot get the favor of the students. Such teachers do not get co-operation of the students and they feel a deep sense of frustration and depression. They become short tempered. They lose their self-confidence in teaching. They do their duties as a part of their job. They cannot enjoy their work. They cannot experience a deep sense of job satisfaction.

Rigidity is there in the education system. There is a very limited space for creativity and innovativeness. Even one can find many teachers who are really dynamic and active. Students rush to attend their lectures. Students want entertainment. Teacher’s duty is to give education. The gap can be filled by giving Edutainment i.e. education with entertainment. Let imparting of education become so entertaining that there cannot be space for rigidity or monotony. If there is innovation and creativity in teaching, the students would definitely like it. A teacher knows the students well. Each class is a different class with heterogeneousness among the students. Sometimes one strategy of teaching may not be applicable to two different classes for the same subject and same topic also. Here the intuition of the teacher can play a pivotal role for bringing variety in teaching. It’s a great responsibility of the teacher how to remove monotony and rigidness to teaching process. The age of the teacher should not come in the way of bringing novelty to his work. A teacher should live not in his age but the present age or the present time. He should be very eager to know and learn new technology in his subject in particular and education in general. That way he would be able to give the best to the students. It is a teacher who can remove rigidity and monotony in academic work.

Chetan Bhagat in *Five Point Someone* has very critically drawn attention to the rigidity and lifelessness in the contemporary education system of India. The institute which the writer talks about is an institute of the national reputation but the working of it is very much like that of primary education where a child is required to obtain a given criteria to be promoted to the next standard. The chief characters like Hari, Ryan and Alok, the first year mechanical engineering students cannot adjust with the grade system of evaluation. The rigidity is clearly observed in the very first lecture of Manufacturing Processes by Professor Dubey who on the very first day wants to stuff, all he has, in the minds of the students. Actually,
the first lectures should be served for introduction of the students and the teacher with all
the possible details so that a kind of rapport can be created. He spoke two or three lines of
his introduction: “Welcome everyone; I am Professor Dubey, Mechanical engineering
department…so first day in college. Do you feel special?” (Bhagat Five 7). He immediately
distributed some handouts which contained course outline and the grading pattern of the
course like Majors- 40%, Minors-20%, Practicles-20%, Assignments (6-8) and Surprise
quizzes (3-4) - 20% (Bhagat Five 8).
When the students started looking at the handouts, immediately he ordered to close it and
pay attention to what he taught. He asked the definition of machine to the students. When
they could not answer the question he deeply expressed his disappointment which was
enough to de-motivate the students on the very first lecture of the first day of the college.
He said: “See the standard just like keeps falling every year. Our admission criteria are not
strict enough” (Bhagat Five 9).
When the students failed to define the concept of machine, he defined it as everything that
reduces human effort is machine. He illustrated many things around from huge steel mills to
simple brooms. He was somewhat happy when the students started giving other similar
examples of machine around them.
Ryan, one of the three chief protagonists of the fiction asked a slightly funny but different
question like “what about gym machine (. . .) that does not reduces human efforts. In fact it
increases it” (Bhagat Five 10). The professor immediately got angry as his conventional
definition of machine was challenged somewhere. This situation is enough to understand
the rigidity of the traditional mind set of teachers that cannot accept any thought provoking
comments by the students.
   “What are you trying to do?” the professor asked tight lipped as he came
close to us again, “Are you saying that I am wrong?”
   “No sir, I’m just…”
   “Watch it son. In my class, just watch it,” was all prof. Dubey said as he
moved to the front (Bhagat Five 11).
He was angry but there was no way to get off the situation, so he didn’t prolong the
discussion and changed the topic. What he said before he left the class was enough to
threaten the students on the very first day of the college life not to be over smart in the classroom and keep attention fixed on what he taught. He said:

“My course is very important. I am sure many professors will tell you about their courses. But I care about Man-Pro. So, don’t miss my class, finish your assignments and be prepared, a surprise quiz can drop from the sky at any time( . . .) Remember, as your head of department Prof. Cherian says, the tough workload is by design, to keep you on your toes. And respect the grading system. You get bad grades, and I assure you- get no job, no school and no future. If you do well, the world is your oyster. So don’t slip, not even once, or there will be no oyster, just slush” (Bhagat Five 11).

Students can get much tensed up in mind if they hear such words from the very first lecture of the very first day of college life. The words of motivation and encouragement have no space in such an environment, so there is no question of innovativeness and creativity. This is an imaginative picture of the situation but it is true of many higher educational institutions of India where professors have their mind much conditioned to certain rigidness. They hardly accept any new idea or innovativeness in their traditionally acquired knowledge. They sometimes do not think beyond what they have taken for granted in their subjects. Those students who possess a kind of thinking beyond the boundaries are not supported or encouraged to do so. Their minds are conditioned to think in a specific direction that may help them to obtain maximum points, pass the subject and get a good job. They are prepared not as living human beings but like a programmed device which run effectively and accurately on specific command but do not think beyond that. The students are supposed to think in a straight line as a horse wearing blinkers is supposed to run straight while hitched to cart. Bhagat himself very appropriately tells his readers about his fiction Five Point Someone as “it is not a guide on how to live through college. On the contrary, it is an example of how screwed up your college years if you don’t think straight” (Bhagat Five 1).

The description of the daily routine of the students in the second chapter Terminator very clearly reflects the realistic situation of the engineering students in the institute of national status. Hari the narrator of the fiction says:
Every day, from eight to five, we were locked in the eight-storey inst-building with lectures, tutorials and labs. The next few hours of evening were spent in the library or in rooms as we prepared reports and finished assignments. And this did not even include the tests! Each subject had two minor tests, one major and three surprise quizzes; seven tests for six courses meant forty-two tests per semester, mathematically speaking (Bhagat Five 12).

The students are kept busy all the time in assignments, tests and reports. There is no space for thinking something different or something that is innovative. The monotony of the mindless work really puts them in great suffocating situations that they start thinking the institution as a jail which is not going to change.

“What a crazy week; classes, assignments, more classes, more assignments and not to mention the coming attraction quizzes. You call this a Life? (. . .) “I said you call this life?” Ryan asked this time looking at me. (. . .) “Call it what you want,” I said, words stifled by a Titanic Yawn, “but that is not going to change it”

“I think this is jail” it really is. Damn Jail.” Ryan said, hitting the peeling wall with a fist (Bhagat Five 14).

All this is happening in one of the best engineering institution of the country. Such an embarrassing situation does not promote any new or creative idea in the mind of the students because one needs to have a tension free mind to think something creative. The students are expected to reach certain standards to study in such institutions. That is the reason why the students are kept overloaded with the academic work. The talk of the students is really thought provoking who are facing such a clutching situation where they are expected to work like a horse with blinkers.

“May be you are forgetting that you’re in IIT, the best college in the country,” Alok said, cracking knuckles. (Bhagat Five 13-14)

“No but you expect a certain standard,” Alok said, putting his hand up to indicate height.

“This is high standard? Working away like moronic drones until midnight Man-Pro yesterday, Ap-Mech day before, Quanto today...it never ends,” Ryan Grumbled. “I need a break, man” (. . .) (Bhagat Five 14).
The students feel like jail and they need a break. They go for watching a movie. When they come back to hostel rooms, they come to know that some other students have submitted their assignments late in the evening and so they had to work up to two o’clock late at night to finish the assignments. They realize that the idea of a movie in such a hectic schedule was a dumb idea as they have to submit their assignment in time with the other students.

The chief characters of the novel Hari, Ryan and Alok live in a great deal of academic pressure. They cannot adjust themselves to the overpowering situation of the institution. They feel that the system is at fault. They have many complaints against the working of the professors and the institute. It does not mean that they do not have any interest in studies. The case is that they do not find anything interesting or entertaining in the classroom teaching process, so they feel a kind of pressure in the mindless work. Though they feel boredom in the traditional lecturing of the professors, they are always eager to attend the lectures of Professor Veera. Hari, the narrator says:

We never missed the fluid mechanics class in the fourth semester and the reason was Prof. Veera. (...). Prof. Veera was completely different. For one, he was like twenty years younger than other Profs. No more than thirty, he dressed in jeans and T-shirts, which bore his US university logos. He had like five degrees from all the top universities- MIT, Cornell, and Princeton etc, (....) Students said Prof. Veera had just joined the institution, and was not supposed to be taking a full course so early (Bhagat Five 84).

Prof. Veera is a new generation teacher. He wears t-shirts and sometimes keeps in his mouth chewing gum and greets his students with ‘Hi’. Prof. Veera has enough potential and qualifications to impress the students. He is not traditional in his teaching pedagogy. He looks around the class and not only sticks to the front benchers. He has a different way of tackling the students. He never makes any distinction between the brighter students and the average students. He does not de-motivate the students rather he invites new ideas and innovations. All the students like this attitude of Professor Veera. Hari talks about professor Veera to his girlfriend Neha as:
“He is really different,” I said. “He doesn’t discriminate between nine – pointers and five-pointers. And he likes original thinking. Even his assignments push you to think more.”

“Like how?”

“Like he gave a term paper asking students to think about an engineering problem linked to fluid mechanics. Most professors would have just said, ‘do all the numericals at the end of chapter 10’ or something, but Prof. Veera invites ideas” (Bhagat Five 89).

Professor Veera is a very scholarly personality. He possesses five different degrees of reputed foreign universities. He has all the courage and depth of a mature professor so far as knowledge is concerned. Having boundless capacity, Professor Veera is not permitted to take sessions in the upper semesters as he is junior by age. The rigidity of the system does not allow some brighter minds to contribute in India. Here, evaluation of a person is not based on performance or the capacity to perform rather it is based on the total service length he/she possesses. Even if professor Veera has all the potential and prospects, he would have to pass through the rigidity of the system and there is no escape from it.

Chetan Bhagat has very aptly described the rigidity and monotony of the academic work in the contemporary education system of India. He has very cleverly depicted the pathetic situation of Indian education system. The story of the novel revolves round the rigidity and unproductiveness of the system. The characters and the incidents of the novel are much affected by the monotony produced by the rigidity of the system. The plot structure of the novel takes its base on such elements of rigidity and dogmas of the education system. The characters are the victims of the system also. Along with three main characters Hari, Ryan and Alok the other characters like Samir, Neha, Professor Veera and of course Prof. Cherian are one or the other way affected by the system. Samir commits suicide because he cannot crack the IIT entrance test and his father Professor Cherian does not see future in any other discipline than engineering. Professor Veera is highly qualified and has all the potential of his subject knowledge but he cannot get the immediate higher position in the system. Neha has grown bitter hatred towards the system as it has taken her brother’s life. Bhagat has worked out the theme of the novel very skillfully based on the very serious issue of rigidity and lifelessness of the system.
2.3.1.4 Mindless Mugging: Big Blow for Creativity and Innovativeness

The novel *Five Point Someone* throws light on another serious issue of contemporary Indian education system, that is, mindless mugging. Cramming out the notes and theories mindlessly is becoming an unavoidable constraint for obtaining maximum score in the examinations. No considerable importance is given to the original ideas and creativity to be applied to the existing theories and principles of knowledge. The evaluation system is designed such a way that there is little space for new ideas. Mugging has become one of the most serious issues of contemporary Indian education system, especially in higher education institutions. Students generally prefer readymade notes prepared by the professors or the publication agencies in reference book form. They have readymade material and so it very easy to get through the examinations. For the whole year they hardly pay attention to what is being taught in the classrooms. Cramming does not promote thinking of any kind. Sometimes a mugger does not know what he has exactly mugged. So if he/she forgets any line or word, the whole mugging of the topic is forgotten. It’s a coincidence that what is asked in the examination is what is mugged. If it doesn’t happen so, the whole effort goes in vain. Mugging is all right for remembering an equation or a quotation, but it should be with proper understanding of the same. Mere mugging is discouraged by changing the examination pattern into MCQ style of paper format. Most of the entrance tests for getting admission and preliminary tests for being eligible for further procedure of job interviews are now conducted on MCQ bases. The MCQ system has reduced mugging to some extent but it has also not completely eliminated it. It is alright with logical reasoning and calculation based questions but again the question is still there about some specific information based questions. It has reduced the size of mugging or cramming but at the same time it has left the candidate in the hands of fortune and co-incidence. The candidate may work very hard and prepare all that he has collected but if such questions are not asked as he has read about, the whole attempt goes futile. Chetan Bhagat once sarcastically commented on the system of MCQ as “bloody one hundred MCQs cannot decide one’s future”.

Mere mugging or cramming out the theories and concepts of the subject crushes creativity and innovativeness in the mind of the student. It cannot add anything to the existing knowledge. The traditional examination or the evaluation pattern is designed such a way that it promotes no creativity and genuineness from the students’ side but mere mugging
and cramming. The grade points system or the percentage system is the only way to certify the standard of the students as the best performer. So the students would rush after that to obtain those standards. At a result of it, students never ever try to think or do not have even time to think in the direction of something that is creative. The readymade notes and most important questions are the only things on which they pay their total attention.

One of the three main characters of the novel, Ryan scornfully says to his other two friends: “Let us mug and cram, otherwise, how we will become great engineers of this great country” (Bhagat Five 18). They confess that they have mugged a lot to get into IIT; the institution of the national reputation. They have passed days and nights for mere mindless mugging to pass the entrance test. Hari says:

> Boss, mugging is the price one pays to get the IIT tag. You, mug, you pass and you get job. What let down are you talking about? “That is the problem, there is this stupid system and there are stupid people (. . .) continuous mugging, testing and assignments, where is the time to try out new ideas? (Bhagat Five 25).

Monotony or boredom in the academic work in the classroom is sometimes created by the traditional professors. Such professors do not motivate any new or original ideas of the students. Not only this but such professors discourage the students saying that they would not be allowed such things in the class. They consider such things as a nuisance by the students that distract the class from the regular teaching activity. The students also take care that the knowledge and caliber of a professor should not be challenged or it would trouble them in future. Here, there is no scope for two way communication. The students remain passive or silent in the classroom and the teachers keep on speaking. Such passivity creates a kind of monotony and boredom in the students. As there is no active participation of the students in the teaching activity in the classroom, the students prefer to keep themselves out of the class. Not that the students do not want to study but they can’t sometimes tolerate the boredom created by the lifeless talks by the professors. Further, they are detained on the basis of inadequate presence which leads to spoiling their career in the long run. Here, the concept of Edutainment needs to be immediately practiced in classroom teaching so that such a situation can be avoided.
One incident depicted in the novel clearly reflects the above discussed matter. Professor Vohra is engaging a design class. He gave a problem to be done by the students in fifteen minutes. The problem was to design a car jack to lift the chassis in case of flat tires. He wanted them to draw a simple sketch. Ryan tried to draw the same problem applying certain innovative ideas. The idea was to reduce needless effort of screwing the Jack to lift the entire body of vehicle. He had an idea to attach the car battery for avoiding the effort of screwing the jack in case of a puncture or certain other fault with the car wheel. When professor Vohra came to know about what is Ryan doing, he was irritated to see him doing such distracting things. The conversation between the two clearly manifests the rigidity of a professor who does not allow any innovation from the students in the classroom as:

“What is this?” Prof. Vohra said, twisting his head around to make sense of Ryan’s unfamiliar drawing.

“Sir, this is a modified screw-jack,” Ryan said, “It can be attached to the car’s battery…”

“Is this an electrical engineering class?”

“No sir, but the end need is the same…”

“Is this an internal combustion engines class?”

“Sir, but…”

“If you don’t want to be in my class or follow my course, you may leave.” (. .)

“Sir, this is a new design,” Ryan said, as if it is not painfully obvious.

“Really? And who told you to do that?” Ryan did not answer, just lifted his assignment sheet. Then there in one stroke, he ripped it apart in two pieces.

“There it is useless now,” Ryan said.

Prof Vohra’s face contorted and turned red, “Don’t act smart in my class.”

“Sorry sir,” I said, though it was not for me to say it (Bhagat Five 118).

The students are not supposed show their smartness in the classroom. The professor wants them to be hard workers but not the smart workers. Sometimes such incidents occur in real life also. Such an incident is an outcome of the superiority complex or motiveless malignity of the leaned professors who think that only they are the experts of the subject. They cannot tolerate juniors or students doing something innovative. Many a time, it so happens that a senior professor is not doing anything creative but if his junior or his student is doing
such things he will throw in certain obstacles. This is all considered as professional jealousy. This may not be true in all the cases but in most of the cases this observation is applicable. Such a situation can produce the best workers, businessmen and traders but not the best engineers or scientists who can contribute to existing knowledge. The fact is discussed very aptly in Line Drawing, the fourth chapter of the novel when the main characters; the students are discussing the failure of the system of education with the specific reference to the IIT system of India.

You know guys, this whole IIT system is sick,” Ryan declared. (. . .) “Because tell me, how many engineers or scientists have come out of IIT?

“Many CEOs and entrepreneurs have” I said, a mistake as Ryan had not finished yet.

“I mean this is supposed to be the best college in India, the best technology institute for a country of a billion. But has IIT ever invented anything? Or made any technical contribution to India? (Bhagat Five 34).

The above comments can be considered as the personal observations of Chetan Bhagat who is also an IIT passed out student. The central government funded IITs are expected certain higher outputs from both the students and the professors. The aim is not only to produce technocrats or engineers who serve in multinational companies but also to produce good researchers who invent certain things that contribute to the happiness of the people of our country. Ryan sighs over the working system of his college which has drastically failed to contribute to the country. He shows his annoyance against such failure as:

“Over thirty years of IITs, yet, all it does is train some bright kids to work in multinationals, I mean look at MIT in the USA.”

“This is not the USA,” I (Hari) said. (. . )

“It is not always the money,” Ryan Said.

“So IITs cannot do space research, but we surely can make small cheaper products? And frankly money is just an excuse. If there is value, the industry will pay for research even at IIT”. “So what the hell is wrong then? I (Hari) was Irritated. (. . .)

“What is wrong is the system, “Ryan denounced soundly like a local politician.
Ryan had more. “This system of relative grading and overburdening the students, I mean it kills the best fun years of your life. But it kills something else. Where is the room for original Thoughts? Where is the time for creativity? It is not fair (Bhagat Five 35).

The students do not find any space for original thoughts. They do not find space for creativity and innovativeness due to the rigidness of the system. Such a system exploits the very important years of students’ life. These years can prepare them for the future challenges of life. This important time has all the potential to make their life happy or miserable. If they are taught to shape their thinking for future challenges, they can never fail in their life and if they fail in any case, they can never be afraid of it rather they can bravely fight it. Such self-confidence or self-esteem never comes with the mindless mugging rather it comes in creative and innovative minds.

The system of IIT depicted in the novel reflects the failure of the system which has not contributed anything productive to the country. Ryan who is very creative and innovative in his approach does not cop with the current situation. He shows his annoyance at the system as:

This IIT system is nothing but a mice race. It is not a rat race, mind you, as rats sounds somewhat shrewd and clever. So is not about mindlessly running a race for four years, in every class, every assignment and every test. It is a race where professors judge you every ten steps, with a GPA stamped on you every semester. Prof who have no idea what science and learning are about. Yes, that is what I think of the professors. I mean, what have IITs given to the country? Name one invention in the last three decades (Bhagat Five 101).

The character of Ryan sometimes looks like mouth piece of Chetan Bhagat himself. What is spoken by Ryan seems the indirect voice of Chetan Bhagat himself against the lifelessness and rigidity of the contemporary Indian education system. The issue of mindless mugging has been criticized very strongly in the novel. The author wants to convey a clear message how the creativity and original ideas are crushed under the domination of rigidity and mindless mugging in contemporary education system of India. Much time, money and energy is invested in educational activity but if the end results are not satisfactory, it a matter of serious concern for the responsible authorities.
2.3.1.5 Students’ Unrest, Fear, Insecurity, and Controlled Stress

In the present world of cut throat competition, the principle; ‘survival of the fittest’ is proved right. Students experience high degree of fear, insecurity and controlled stress in their life. The rush for getting higher education has considerably increased in the last two decades. Over population in the country has played a pivotal role for the rise in the competition level and the tension among the students for survival. Modernization and globalization have also played a significant role for increasing the competition level for the new generation. The new generation is passing through very tough criteria of competition. Moreover, the conventional structure of Indian education system creates a considerable degree of confusion and complexity. On the one side, there are world level career opportunities which require high intensity of creativity and innovativeness of minds. On the other side, there exists the controlled rigidity in the lifeless system of education which does not promote or encourage any original ideas. The teaching pedagogy, as well as evaluation pattern in contemporary education system of India, still cannot promote the promising talents of the nation. This can be one of the reasons for thousands of students preferring to take admission in foreign universities for higher studies. The system has been established in such a way that those who are extremely talented students have to pass through certain rigid parameters of the system and there is no escape from it. Take for an illustration, the entrance tests for getting admission to higher studies or the preliminary screen tests for eligibility for a job interview. Those who can, anyhow, crack the nut are considered eligible for the admission or the job. Those who pass such tests are not necessarily competent or capable for the determined purposes. For example, the UGC has made it mandatory to pass the entrance test for doing Ph.D. or NET/SLET examination as a basic eligibility criteria for lectureship. The initiative is worth appreciating but it also prevents some really genuine scholars from coming in the field of education. The career of the students appearing in such tests goes to the hands of fortune or co-incidence. The candidates will be highly benefitted if the questions are asked which he/she has happened to read otherwise, all the brilliance of the subject is not useful for the same. Moreover, the reservation system and the merit system have caused a great damage to the careers of many bright students. Those who come in such category are benefitted both in the entrance examinations and job
opportunities. Some really talented students have no other way but to surrender themselves to the rigidity of the system.

In such a situation, the students from the beginning of the study live under stress and tension of career building. They know the reality of the system and they have to fit into the frame somehow. Students spend very important years of their life in tension, depression, frustration or stress. That way, they cannot build self-confidence or self-esteem which has all its significance in their life. Under the stress and tension of career building, they sometimes cannot spare time for enjoyment. That way, they think that they would be successful in life but the rigidity of the system obstructs them from achieving the goal for which they have already paid much time, efforts and energy.

This fact is well illustrated in the novel *Five Point Someone* by Chetan Bhagat. Two of the three chief characters of the novel Alok and Ryan are talking about enjoying college life fully along with their studies of engineering courses. The depiction of the incident apparently reflects the reality of the stress and tension the students go through at the beginning of their college life. They converse as:

I know you are upset and everything but there is no need to overreact. Just for some stupid grades... (Ryan Said).

“I am not overreacting.” Alok said and set back down. “And it is not just stupid grades for me. I don’t have my parents earning dollars like yours. I (Alok) came to this institute with purpose. To do well, get a good job and look after my parents. (. . .)

“My grades are important to me. My future is important to me. (. . .) And you guys don’t understand. Ryan wants to play chess, see TV, and enjoy his years. I hate enjoyment (Bhagat Five 64-66).

This situation is very true especially to the students from middle class families who have a brighter career as the top priority. They hate enjoyment not because they really hate it, but they have to sacrifice their enjoyment of life for building their career. They believe that, if they fit in the system, it would help them for becoming successful in life. The students in the novel experience overload of the academic work on daily basis. There is no time for rest. They know that they are doing drudgery but they keep on doing it. They think that this is the only way out to get a degree and a job in future. If knowledge is not increased, it is alright to
them but what is important to them is to keep on bearing it. Here, the characters are victims of the system. They do not have any way out. They keep on working mindlessly like donkeys. They do not have time for enjoyment. Such a mental pressure can lead even the sincerest students to take some other ways for removing the mental stress. One can observe in the present novel that the major characters prefer to try out other alternatives like going for a movie, arranging parties in hostel room, talking about vulgarity, turning the pages of porn magazines, smoking and even drinking to get temporary relaxation from the stress. When the situation is unbearable, they work out a plan to find out the time for enjoyment from the hectic schedule of academic work. They give a name to the plan; ‘cooperate to dominate’. They know that it is very tough to work without rest. They think that if they share and distribute the assigned work among themselves, it is possible that they would find some time to be spared for enjoyment of the college life. Ryan, the creative chap is the mastermind of the plan ‘cooperates to dominate’. He calls a meeting of all his close friends in the hostel room to explain the plan. He circulates one handout of the plan among the friends. He found out certain reasons why IIT system is unfair. He believes that IIT system is unfair because:

1. It suppresses talent and individual spirit
2. It wastes the best years of one’s life from the country’s brightest minds.
3. It judges you with the draconian GPA system that destroys relationships.
4. The professors don’t care for the students.
5. IITs have hardly contributed to the country (Bhagat Five 108).

Ryan has analysed the reasons for calling the system unfair, so the only way he finds to take on the unfair system is through unfair means-which is cooperate to dominate or C2D. For that he works out the key tenets as:

1. All assignments to be shared-one person will do each assignment by turn. The others will simply copy it. Saves time, saves duplication of efforts.
2. We will divide up the course responsibilities. For instance, if there are six courses in the semester, we will take care of only two each. One must attend all classes that one is responsible for, but each class you attend for your course take copious notes. The rest will merely copy them.
3. We share lab experiment observations
4. Our friendship is above GPAs. With all the spare time, we live our lives to the fullest.

5. We combine our hostel rooms into one living unit—one common bedroom, one study room and one fun party room.

6. We split the cost of vodka regardless of how many drinks each person has had (Bhagat Five 108).

The C2D plan is an unfair means of study but this is also an outcome of the unfair system of education. The students who experience a lot of stress and tension agreed on to cooperate to overcome the stressful situation of academic work. The students also drink vodka on the day of the viva exam of professor Cherian—the head of the department to avoid the stress of mind because they feel that they are not well prepared for it. They also go to the extent of stealing question paper from the cabin of the head of the department. The action of stealing paper is never fair for any student but they do such a mean activity. This can also be considered an outcome of the system. The students have never gained the self confidence that they would pass the examination. Passing of the examination is unavoidable for them to get good jobs but as they have no confidence, they take the wrong step of committing the crime. They are caught red handed and the discipline committee suspends their semester so the tension of the students is almost doubled. Finally, Alok a student from poor family cannot bear it and he tries to commit suicide by jumping off the institute building because his career was spoiled and there was no other way left to fulfil the dreams he had in his mind for himself and his family. He was saved from death somehow. He and his friends realise that the plan C2D was a big mistake to escape from the studies for enjoyment and the attempt for stealing question paper which they called ‘Operation Pendulum’ was the biggest blunder they ever planned. The punishment by the discipline committee leaves a lasting impression on them and now they start thinking straight. They realise that they have tried to twist the system and they were twisted instead. They tried to screw the system and they themselves were screwed. Finally, they had to surrender to the rigidity of the system and think straight like that a horse with blinkers as all the students are supposed to think. Hari, while talking with his girlfriend Neha describes their daily routine of the study about the overloading work schedule after all the wasteful tries to escape from the rigidity of the system as:
“Classes, classes and more classes. Eight to six every day. Then another three
hours in the library. Then another two for assignments and revisions. I am
going mad. But what to do? Never had this much course-load before.”

“What are about Ryan and Alok?” She said.

They are equally over worked. And we’ll still fall short of credits,” I said.

“What about C2D, the whole cooperate to dominate…”

“That was all crap (. . .)

“It is about knowledge. And making the most of the system, even if it has
flows (Bhagat Five 237)

The system of education in contemporary India runs on certain strict conventional
measures. Along with certain promising outcome, one can also observe lack of sympathy
and humanistic concerns. The system has its own merits and limitations. It is competent
enough to reach the determined goals and targets of imparting knowledge to make them
good for their profession but it is not capable of making them good citizens or good human
beings. At the same time, it also fails to inculcate professional, social and nation values in
the students. The reason for it can be that the system strictly runs on examination basis. So
passing the examination becomes one of the prime objectives of the system. The students
set their prime goal to get maximum score in the exam so that they can get good jobs based
on the grades or percentage they obtain. The students sometimes forget the importance of
basic knowledge and skills to be mastered which are useful in the professional life. The
teachers are sometimes evaluated based on the overall passed out ratio of the students
whom he/she have taught. That way, they closely concentrate on the completion of syllabus
and the shortest ways to get maximum students passed in the subject he/she is teaching so
that timely increments and other benefits may not be stopped. In such a blind race of
getting score or highest result the teaching-learning process becomes dry and mechanical.
The system is established such a way that the students cannot find space to grow their
personality fully. Such and the other things create a kind of monotony and disgust for
studying in the dry atmosphere. Here, the concept of humanistic approach in dealing with
the students becomes necessary. When the students are being taught they need to be
treated with humanistic approach and behavior. If they ask anything or share any innovative
idea with a teacher, it should not be taken as waste of time. The students sitting in the class
is a heterogeneous group with a lot of differences in their family background, intellectual level and grasping capacity. Each and every student may have different potential and caliber. The role of education is not only to stuff him/her with the information and the syllabus content. Rather, the prime role is to bring out the best in him/her by providing necessary motivation and guidance. If the students are treated in an emotionless manner they would grow foolish and mannerless. If the students are not timely taught certain social and national values they would never impart their duties towards society and the nation as well. Schools and colleges in the blind rush for merit and percentage, drastically fail to inculcate certain humanistic values. They should not be treated very roughly or rudely even for their mistakes. They should be treated with care and kindness so that they realize the importance of the same in their life. The concept of counseling and motivation is to be practiced effectively in schools and colleges and other educational institutes so that the students do not grow negative mind set towards themselves, the society and the nation.

Chetan Bhagat has very diplomatically twisted the end of the storyline of the novel. He tactfully conveys the fact that the rigidity in the contemporary Indian education system is so dominating that one can be either in the system or out of the system. There cannot be anything between the two. If one wants to be in the system, one has to be ready to do all the sacrifices and compromises as per the established system. The present system of education in India along with certain constructive results has brought about considerable stress and unrest in the life of the students. Bhagat apparently reflects in the novel that the system of education runs on the traditional basis and hardly accepts any change. The system drastically fails to nurture self-confidence and self-esteem in students that can help them to survive the cut throat competition in the real world outside the college campus.

2.3.1.6 Suicide Under Parental and Academic Pressure: Cold Blooded Murder

Over expectations on the parents’ side sometimes lead a deep sense of stress and anxiety in the minds of the students. The illustrations are there that such mental pressure leads the students to commit suicide. Parents provide their children with best of the possible resources for education. In return to it, they also assign to their children certain higher goals to be achieved in life. There is nothing wrong in expecting return from what one invests but higher expectations lead to certain damaging results. The parents are observed to put their children in very tough educational competitions. They want their children to be so much
talented and ingenious that they can feel proud of them in society. It is a proven fact that every child has its individual potentials and limitations. The parents need to understand this fact soon, so that a child is not an object to be twisted as one’s will. As a part of their moral and social duties, parents are supposed to give their children the best education and the best facilities for the same without too many expectations in return. The parents should let their children grow by themselves. As they grow, they should be given freedom of thinking so that they can develop their inner strength and self-confidence to face the future challenges of life. In the present time, the parents are sometimes observed to keep over expectations from their children sometimes for social or personal status. Parents have all the right to take pride in the achievement of their children but they cannot force them to achieve something so that they can take pride of it. It leads to a lot of stress and uneasiness in the minds of the children and they cannot even study well. Parents sometimes put their children in bitter competition or comparison with those children who are competent to achieve higher goals. Parents should understand the inherent limitations of their children before assigning certain goals to them. If not so, the children would not be able to reach those goals and constant torturing by the parents can direct them to take steps which are never thought of by the parents. Cases are observed in Indian society that student commit suicide because of poor results in S.S.C or H.S.C examination. What can be the reasons for such happenings in society? One of the reasons can, undoubtedly, be the over expectations of the parents.

The case of Samir in the novel *Five Point Someone* is one such case who commits suicide under parental pressure. Samir is the son of professor Cherian who is the head of the mechanical engineering department IIT, an institute of national repute. Professor Cherian wants his son Samir to get admission to IIT and become an engineer. This is perhaps because he is the son of a father who is an engineer and a successful academician. Samir tires many times to crack the entrance test to get admission to IIT but somehow he is not successful. That is a matter of dishonour for professor Cherian because of his higher designation and position in his institution. He stops speaking to Samir because he fails to crack the entrance test for getting admission in IIT. He even does not talk properly with Samir’s mother, perhaps because he feels that she is responsible for spoiling the career of his son out of motherly love and affection. The expectations of his father are so much
pressuring and poignant to Samir that he prefers to commit suicide at the railway tracks and brings an end of his life. He writes a letter to his younger sister Neha which describes his mental pressure and embarrassment because of the parental pressure from his father for achieving what is not in his reach due to his natural limitations. He writes:

Dear Neha, ( . . . )

I have tried three times to get into IIT, and each time I have disappointed Dad. He cannot get over the fact that his son cannot handle physics, chemistry and maths. I cannot do it Neha; no matter how hard I try, no matter how many years I study or how many books I read. I cannot get into IIT. And I cannot bear to see Dad’s eyes.

He has seen thousands of IIT students in his life, and cannot see why his own son cannot make it. He sees the students who make it, but he doesn’t see the hundreds of thousands who don’t make it. He has not spoken to me for two months. He doesn’t even talk to mom properly because of me. What can I do? Keep trying until I die? Or simply die? (Bhagat Five 167).

Samir commits suicide at the railway tracks because of the stress and depression caused by parental over-expectations. Another incident depicted in the novel is about the suicide attempt by Alok out of academic pressure which is also caused by parental expectations from his poor family. Alok is from a poor family background. His family income is very low. His father is a bed-ridden patient and his mother is the only earning member in the house. Half of his mother’s salary goes to the medical treatment of her husband. Alok has an elder sister who is near her age of marriage and they have to save money for giving dowry. Alok is the only hope for the family for further help to remove the poverty of the family. Though he is not a bright student, he gets admission to IIT. Now, his mother frequently keeps on reminding him about the current position of the family and the importance of his study and job to the family. Alok in the company of his friends like Hari, the narrator of the novel and Ryan, the son of an NRI, gets distracted from his original aim and objective of study and joins them in different mischievous activities and bad habits of smoking and drinking. Alok has involved himself in such and other notorious activities to get relaxation from the deep academic pressure because of the rigidity and dogmatic system of education of the institute in which they are studying. Their notoriousness crosses all its limits when, one day, they
plan to steal the question paper from the head’s cabin. They are caught red handed and the discipline committee suspends them for one semester. The other two can tolerate it but Alok realises his mistakes in spoiling his life and the expectations of his family. So he jumps off the institute roof to commit suicide. Luckily, he is saved because of the immediate medical treatment, but he gets many fractures and bed-rest for two months.

Alok, by his academic track record, is a five grade point average student. That way he is not an engineering material. He has preferred engineering so that he can get a job soon. His parents wish him to get a job immediately and start helping his family. Every time he goes home, his mother keeps on telling him about the family budget and the problem of shortage of money. Alok has all the commitment to fulfil the expectations of his family but he cannot cope with the system and the surrounding environment of the college and the hostel. He is easily drawn into the flow of the situations. This is because he has never built up the inner strength and self-confidence to survive in tougher situations of life. He does what his friends do as he takes them right. He doesn’t have any restraints over himself and at the end the situation take him to the extent of suicide attempt.

The question here becomes very critical in the case of Samir and Alok. Can the suicide of Samir or the suicide attempt of Alok be taken as a simple attempt to escape from failure? The answer is not in the affirmative. The researcher feels that in the case of Samir that it was a murder; a cold blooded murder. Samir did not commit suicide because he was not competent enough to pass the entrance examination for getting admission in IIT. From the letter he wrote to his sister Neha, one can realise that he knew that there were thousands of students who were not able to pass the entrance examination and he was one of them. He committed suicide because it was his father who constantly and deliberately tried to ignore him for the last two months. A young boy of twenty-two years who is being ignored by his educated father for about two months can definitely experience the meaninglessness of his life. His father did not also behave properly with his wife i.e. that is Samir’s mother. Samir started believing that the domestic happiness of his family was in trouble just because of him. The constant ignoring and disturbed domestic environment might have killed him hundreds of times before he brought an end to his life by being crushed under the railway train. Constant Ignoring of a person creates mental torture and such a thing is worse than physical punishment or even death. One can understand his
mental condition before he finally decided to commit suicide. He was killed many a times before he killed himself.

Professor Cherian passed his entire life running behind success. He was a very bright student of IIT. He scored 10.00 GPA during his studies. In the blind rush for success, he did not enjoy his life. He did not have any friends. He lived his life with principles. As time passed he grew so much rigid in his life that he started expecting the same from his son. He, with all his genius, failed to understand his son’s inherent limitations and he had to lose his only son. But when he came to know the actual reason of his son’s death, he realised that the system has drastically failed to prepare good human beings. He accepts in the convocation speech at the end of the novel that GPAs make a good student, but not a good person (261). He could be a successful professor of engineering but he severely failed to be a good father. Finally in his convocation speech he accepts his mistake for taking life as a means for achieving something at the cost of real enjoyment of life. He in his convocation speech gives very useful advice to the graduating students as:

1. Believe in yourself and don’t let a GPA, performance review or promotion in a job define you. There is more to life than these things-your family, your friends, your internal desires and goals. And the grades you get in dealing with each of these areas will define you as a person.

2. Don’t judge others too quickly ( . . . ) it is great to get into IIT, but it is not the end of the world if you don’t. All of you should be proud to have the IIT tag, but never ever judge anyone who is not from this institute-that alone can define the greatness of this institute.

3. Don’t take yourself too seriously ( . . . ) Life is too short, enjoy yourself to the fullest. One of the best parts of campus life is the friends you make.

And make sure you make them for life (Bhagat Five 261-62).

Many students in contemporary Indian society commit suicide every year by hanging themselves to ceiling fans, jumping into canals or swallowing poison out of unbearable academic and parental pressure. Students who are short tempered or highly sentimental take such steps at the heat of the moment. Even parents cannot understand the psychological situation of their children and after the incidents they repent a lot. That way our country loses quite huge number of bright young boys and girls who could achieve and
contribute the best to certain other fields if properly counselled and motivated in time. The Government and the NGOs should come forward to take initiatives to save the lives of such students by launching 24 × 7 helpline numbers to provide last moment counselling so that the lives of such students can be saved.

Bhagat, by the suicide case of Samir and suicide attempt of Alok in the story of the novel, has taken the chance to communicate a sensible message to the over expecting parents. He wants to convey the fatal consequences of putting academic pressure in the minds of the young boys and girls in the modern era of short temperedness and intolerance. Parents should take it for sure that if their children are inculcated with self-confidence and self-esteem, they would never fail in their life. Education is the medium for the mental or intellectual growth but it is not the only means for the same. Parents will have to understand that life of their children is more important than a degree or career. If young boys and girls get a degree but do not build in them capability, calibre and quality, all the degrees and certificate will not help them survive in their career. Parents should also recognize the natural potential of their children and assign moderate goals to be achieved in life.

2.3.2 Other Issues Related to Indian Middle Class Family

A deeper analysis of the novel Five Point Someone brings to the surface certain other issues of contemporary Indian society along with the issues of contemporary Indian education system. They are the problem of dowry, the problem of generation gap and certain other issues related to middle class hardships. The prime focus of the theme of the novel is on the rigidity of the system of education and the consequences of the same in the life of the students and their careers. The sequence of the incidents in the novel is based on the notoriousness of the three protagonists Hari, Ryan and Alok to protest against the inflexibility of the system and the problems caused by the same. Though the novel has been written for the purpose of entertaining the readers, it brings out the realistic picture of the contemporary Indian society. The writer has deliberately tried to make it pure fun but the depiction the incidents and the theme discusses some shabby image of the society where the issue of dowry is still disturbing the life of middle class Indian families and modernity has created the generation gap between parents and children.
2.3.2.1 Dowry

Chetan Bhagat has mockingly depicted the issue of dowry in his novel *Five Point Someone*. Alok, one of the chief protagonists, is from a poor class family. He has an elder sister of the marriageable age. The family is not in a position to find a suitable boy for her because of the burden of dowry. Alok’s father is a bed-ridden patient and the salary of his mother is not enough even to run the family. So it is not possible to give dowry to the groom’s family. The family also fears that the older she gets, the more dowry they will have to give. The only hope is Alok. If Alok gets a good job after completing his studies, the marriage of his elder sister will be possible. This also is one of the matters of constant worry for Alok. He lives in constant pressure of the social responsibilities burdened on him. He feels stress due to the family accountability and the same keeps disturbing him a lot in his studies. Alok’s happiness and tension are reflected in the telephonic talks with his mother regarding his sister’s engagement as:

Hello Mummy, How are you? Yes, I know I have not come home for a long time.

What? Didi got engaged? You mean the boy’s side has agreed?

I am really very happy, how is Dad…I know… of course. I’ll pay everything once I get a job mom. Yes, you are taking loan for gifts... (Bhagat Five 154).

The intensity of the problem of dowry is depicted so poignantly that poor family of Alok has to arrange the gifts by taking a loan and the young boy is ready to pay everything as soon as he gets a job. Alok’s mother conveys that the groom’s family demanded a car in dowry and they have agreed on till he starts earning but they have put a condition that marriage ceremony will be conducted only after the gift of car is given. Hari, the narrator, believes that it was a deal of some kind. If you want to get your daughter married, pay dowry. When Hari asks the reason of the big hurry for the marriage of his sister, Alok replies as: “The older she gets, the more dowry people will demand. Waiting will mean more expense later. I am happy the deal is cut (154-55). Later on the engagement of Alok’s sister was broken because the groom’s family was not ready to wait till Alok starts earning. The real cause behind it was that they had a better deal from another family. The conversation between Hari and Alok reflects the fact as:

“The boy’s side cancelled the proposal,” Alok said.
“Why? I (Hari) said.
“They wanted a portion of the dowry right now, to lock-in the boy. Mom said she will apply a loan but it will take a few months. Meanwhile, they got another deal and it is all over. Bloody idiots,” Alok said (Bhagat Five 178).

The writer does not prolong the issue of dowry any further in the theme of novel but he throws a little light on the serious issue of dowry and its effects on poor families of the contemporary Indian society. The issue of dowry keeps the family of Alok in tension. His sick father does not eat sometimes because of the tension of his daughter’s marriage. The family budget is disturbed due to it as Alok’s mother has to take a loan for giving gifts to the groom’s family. Alok also lives in constant pressure to study and get an immediate job so that he can help the family to get the girl married in time or he will have to pay more dowry. Though the writer has not given much space to the issue of dowry in the storyline of the novel he has successfully conveyed its consequences in the contemporary poor families of India. The writer has linked certain critical issues prevalent in contemporary Indian society to the theme of the novel that makes it an appealing piece of literature.

2.3.2.2 Generation Gap

One of the most serious problems of contemporary Indian family system is the widening gap between the old generation and the young generation. The old generation is comparatively traditional and rigid to the young generation which is advanced in its different approaches to life. The young generation easily accepts the changes and innovations in comparison to the old generation. The new generation can easily absorb modern science and technology. The modern values of life are easily accepted by the young generation whereas the old generation cannot accept the same immediately. The thought pattern of the young generation is developed quite differently from the old one. The traditional approaches to life have certain present relevance at the time of modern uncertainty and insecurity but the modern values also have their own significance. The traditional Indian family system has its exclusive merits. It has all the benefits in the context of the typical Indian society; however modernization and westernization have left some lasting impacts on it. The western value system appeals to the younger generation, as it provides much freedom of thinking and freedom of behavior. The modern generation utilizes scientific and technological approach at every step of life. The modernity has extended the horizon of thinking. The younger
generation differs from the older generation in thinking, behaving and understanding. There are certain advantages of modernized approach to life but the same disconnects the younger generation from the already set ideals and principles of the great Indian culture which have practical relevance in the contemporary Indian society.

The generation gap in the Indian family system is observed in the different approaches to life as in the thinking pattern in various fields like educational opportunities, job selection and earning resources, marriages and man-woman relationship and many such matters. The new generation sees worldwide educational opportunities. The knowledge of science and fast changing technology attract them a lot. The job opportunities to young generation are not confined to government or public sectors which provide job securities. They prefer multinational companies that give them space to think freely and practice their skills or caliber in full blossom. The younger generation does not want any needless interference of the older generation in their decision making process associated with their life. They like freedom of mind and heart. The younger generation has much freedom to express themselves in the present era of technology. The social sites provide them a better platform to express their happiness or sadness, their love or hatred, or their sentiments without fear. The young generation believes in secular values which keep them away from social and religious discriminations. The new generation does not believe in prejudiced nationalism, rather it accepts the ideal national values that contribute to making the country great. Concepts like international understanding and universal peace and harmony appeal to the new generation quite spontaneously.

The difference in approaches to life creates a communication gap between the two generations. The young do not accept the authority of the older generation mute. If the authority is biased or wrong, the new generation does not accept it. The older generation believes it a right to control the younger generation. The new generation definitely compromises with certain really valuable ideals of society but not necessarily accepts all the ideals blindly. One can sometimes observe an element of jealousy or distrust in the older generation over the thinking and behavior of the new generation. There is very limited scope of communication between the two because of the bias, preconception or misconception for each other. Such a communication gap widens the generation gap and
creates a sense of fear, insecurity, tension or depression in life. The generation gap sometimes brings catastrophic consequences in society.

In the selected novel *Five Point Someone*, the researcher observes generation gap between the young students and the experienced professors in course of the novel. He also sees the generation gap between Ryan and his NRI parents, between Neha and his father and between Samir and his father.

In the novel generation gap is clearly observed in the thinking and behavior pattern between the young students and the experience teachers. The experienced teachers like professor Dubey, Professor Vohra and professor Cherian have conventional way of dealing with their students as per the way they were perhaps tackled in their own student life. They expect the students to be sincere and silent and they should think straight as per their conventional philosophy of life. The old generation believes in conventional ways of teaching whereas the new generation believes in the modern ways of learning where creativity and original ideas have space. The new generation students like Hari, Ryan, Alok and others are not in a position to cope with the rigid system of education and they feel a lot of stress and depression as they cannot revolt against the authority directly.

In the very first chapter *Bare Bearing* professor Dubey tries to explain the definition of machine as *everything that reduces human efforts* to the newly admitted students. He also gives various examples of machines around them. One of the students named Ryan asks a counter-question whether Gym machine can be called a machine or not. He also gave explanation that it does not reduce human efforts but it increases human efforts. Here, the definition which was traditionally given by the professor was challenged through different way of thinking. The professor became red with anger and instructed not to make such fun in the class. He could not accept the different way of thinking and told Ryan: “What are you trying to say? (. . .) Are you saying that I am wrong?” (Bhagat Five 11). He cannot accept the new generation thinking differently to the way he wants them to think. The same is the case with the students and Professor Vohra. He does not encourage or promote any new ideas to the traditional theories of his subject. If a student tries to bring any innovation to the traditional theories in his subject, he immediately rejects it. Again here the conventional thinking pattern of the older generation does not accept the novelty of the modern generation. Professor Cherian has an exclusive mentality for his intellectual tradition. He
was the best performer in his student life. He never had any friends in his college years. He did not have family as his priority. He thought it right what he practiced for the whole of his life. He wanted his students and, of course, his son to follow the same. The students and his son are a modern era generation. They do not take it for granted what professor Cherian thought or believed. There was a clash of ego of two generations. Finally, at the end of the novel professor Cherian confesses that what he believed was wrong. It was obsolete and had no practical value in modern times.

The generation gap is clearly reflected in the thinking of Ryan and his parents. His parents are NRIs working in the US earning a lot of money. Ryan has lived in boarding schools and in hostel for most of his student life. He is given the required money from time to time for regular expenses but he cannot get the parental love and care as the parents live abroad. His parents write letters regularly to him. He also replies every letter but never posts them. Ryan does not agree to what his parents believed. Money was the top priority for Ryan’s parents whereas he wanted more friends and he wanted to enjoy his life. One day a letter comes from his parents. He just looks at the envelope and put the letter aside. He does not bother to open that envelop and read the letter. The talk between Hari and Ryan reflects that the generation gap between Ryan and his parents is very deep:

“Is that letter from home?” I (Hari) said.

“If you say so. Where are they now- LA or something,” Ryan said.

“How often do your parents write? I (Hari) said.

“Used to be every week, then once in two weeks. Now they write once a month,” Ryan said.

“Do you write back?” I (Hari) said. “No, not unless it is couriered letter. In that case the delivery guy asks me to write a few lines right there”

So what is the deal here Ryan? They are just abroad trying to make a buck.

What is have you got against them?
I have nothing against them; I am just indifferent (Bhagat Five 228)

Ryan wants to live with his parents as family but the parents are busy earning money. The gap of thinking has widened the gap of communication. Ryan stops communicating with his parents because he thinks that it matters little to his parents. Hari says Ryan has nothing to worry after IIT as his parents earn good money, but Ryan is determined not to go to them.
He says: “No way in hell. Never, I will open a paratha shop, become a coolie, wash cars but I am not going to go to them.” (Bhagat Five 229). Hari understands the tension between the son and the parents. One day he writes a letter to Ryan’s parents, as if Ryan writes to them and fills the gap of communication. The new generation has a different way of thinking and the older generation has not come out of the traditional mind set where money is given more importance than family relations.

Samir, a young boy choses to commit suicide but does not overcome fear to talk to his father professor Cherian regarding his inadequacy for passing the IIT entrance test. For two full months he suffers the torment of his father’s ignoring him at home but he cannot express in front of him what he really wants to do in life or what he feels about his life. Samir knows that there are thousands of students who cannot pass IIT entrance and he is one of them. He writes a letter to his sister Neha. He dare not even to even write to his father directly. The domination of the elders is depicted so rigid that the new generation has no space to do or think according to individual choice. Even Neha is so much unhappy with her father that she hardly talks to him. She prefers to share her sentiments with an irresponsible kind of student who smokes and drinks frequently but she does not prefer to talk with her highly educated father with a very stronger professional profile. The new generation is depicted with modern values and modern ways of thinking and belief system in the novel.

The writer always advocates modern values of life in all of his fictional works. He has a strong voice against the prevailing rigidity of contemporary Indian society. He creates the theme of his work so skilfully that his voice against the contemporary issues of Indian social system is powerfully echoed. The same matter is proved right here in Five Point Someone. His art of characterization in the novel is so lucid that he can successfully accomplish his objective of conveying his message to the readers fully and effectively, of course, in a funny manner. Though the novel is a debut work of Chetan Bhagat, he has taken due care to make it a work which has prime social and literary values.

2.3.2.3 Ruin of the Indian Family Value System

Chetan Bhagat in the novel Five Point Someone also throws light on the ruin of the Indian family value system. Neha, the daughter of professor Cherian, is shown as a female character with modern perspectives of life. In the family of professor Cherian, one cannot
find any family bonding which is based on love or affection, care or kindness. Modernity has left the family nowhere. Samir is a boy who fears to share his problem with his father. Professor Cherian is the dominating husband to his wife, and a father of a young boy and a young girl who does not give enough space to his children to share their problems. The entire family lives under one roof but every member has created an individual small world. Though Neha has all love for his dead brother Samir, she is not very serious in her life. She dates with Hari who is a careless kind of young boy, who smokes and drinks frequently. He is not very serious in his life. Neha is not seriously in love with Hari as she has never spoken or expected Ryan to speak the three magic words to express love. When her parents went to pray for the soul of her brother Samir who committed suicide at the railway tracks, she enjoys physical pleasure with his boyfriend and also asks for a cigarette as she believes a smoking cigarette is good after sexual intercourse. One can say that Neha does not maintain strong Indian family value system. Physical pleasure with a boy, who is not very serious in his studies or life, and when the parents are hardly a kilometer away can never be Indian family value. She cheats her parents for her pleasure. She breaks the trust of her parents. All this happens because the family of professor Cherian is not built on strong Indian family value system otherwise such things cannot occur.

Chetan Bhagat is sometimes blamed for deliberately putting in his fictions sensuous scenes where young boys and girls freely enjoy physical pleasure. To some critics, it is intentionally done for grabbing larger readership as young readers like such scenes. This is like some hot scenes in the Bollywood movies to attract larger audience. In every fiction, such a scene is there so the critics go to the extent of saying that Bhagat is a pornography writer. In support of Chetan Bhagat, one can say that this is also an apparent reality of the contemporary Indian society. Many young boys and girls now a day, have a tendency to enjoy physical pleasures freely. Sex is still an untouchable subject for public debates and discussions but one cannot deny that Indian value system in this matter is much damaged at the present time. It cannot be completely denied that depicting sensual scene in every fiction is Bhagat’s tactic to attract the readership but it can also be taken as one of the darker sides of the contemporary Indian society.
2.3.2.4  Lower Middle Class Hardships

Contemporary Indian society is chiefly divided into three social strata like the upper class, the middle class and the lower class. The major portion of Indian population comes in the category of the middle class. The population of the middle class community is roughly divided into upper middle class and lower middle class. In the time of globalization and modernization the development of the urban areas of the country has been very much promising. With the urban development, the middle class community gets considerable benefits of the development like good facilities of health, education, sanitation, transport, employment opportunities, and so on. Along with that, the middle class has to face some kind of hardships also. The urban areas of the country are overcrowded with population, so the problems of slum areas, pollution, and traffic, shortage of residences, job insecurity, and inflation are acute.

Urban middle class social milieu has been a prime thematic concern of Chetan Bhagat in all of his fictional writings. The problems and sentiments of the urban middle class people are chiefly reflected in his fictional works. Bhagat also belongs to an urban middle class family, so he can depict such a society with his personal observations and experiences. The hardship of the lower middle class people has been reflected in the novel Five Point Someone. The family of Alok in the novel has been depicted to highlight middle class hardships. The family experiences constant shortage of money in the house. Both his father and mother were teachers. Due to illness, his father had to leave the job. His mother is the only earning member in the family. There is an elder sister of Alok who is marriageable age. They do not have enough money to give the dowry, so her engagement is not becoming possible. Alok is the only ray of hope in the family to remove their poverty. He was interested in arts and painting but he left his hobby aside and now he is in the IIT which promises a job soon after the completion of studies. The poor middle class boy had no time for fun or enjoyment. He explains the reason of his becoming serious in studies to his college friends as:

You don’t understand that I have responsibilities. I have to do well to support my family. Half of my mother’s salary goes for my father’s medicine. She has not bought a new sari for herself in five years (….) and my sister needs to be
married. Everyone is counting on me. You guys don’t understand. Ryan wants to play chess, see TV, and enjoy his years. I hate enjoyment (Bhagat Five 66).

Alok takes his two friends Hari and Ryan to his home once. Here comes the hardship of the poor middle class community of India to the surface. Alok’s mother starts describing the problems faced by the family due to the shortage of money when the friends were eating food. Hari the narrator describes that: The food was delicious but the conversation was tasteless. Hari also listens to the problems and he guesses that almost all problems have one solution and that is more money. The problems in the house of Alok are typical problems of the poor middle class community of contemporary Indian society like:

One Monday, five times repaired geyser had broken down and there was no money for a new one. On Wednesday, the TV antenna took a toss and a new one was too expensive. The family had to live with grainy reception until they could save some money. On, Friday, Alok’s father fell off the bed, which required a doctor to come home, another hundred bucks. There were other stories too- the ration shop had started double for sugar and the maid had ditched twice that week (Bhagat Five 122).

In the novel, Chetan Bhagat has not described the issue of poor middle class hardship in details. It has been a part of the story of Alok’s life. The description of Alok’s poor middle class background makes it very clear why IIT is an unavoidable choice for him. The poor background of Alok forces him to study seriously by keeping aside all the pleasures of college life. It causes a lot of stress and tension in the mind of Alok. The pangs of poor class hardship are even more severe than described by Chetan Bhagat in the novel. People have to do a lot of compromises to survive. Those who live in the urban area have to maintain certain standards of life even though they are not in their reach. The middle class has to suffer a lot because inflation or price rise affects them badly. The globalization and modernization of contemporary Indian society have promised many advantages to them but they have also increased hardships in their life. Chetan Bhagat, in the present fiction, does not go much deep to describe the poor middle class hardships but he has just taken a chance to give a glimpse of it. The family budget of Alok’s house is disturbed as soon as the regular income of his father is stopped. The middle class has very limited sources of income in India and the regular expenses are increasing. Such a family cannot save for future
uncertainties like sudden medical expenses etc... So any break in regular income disturbs the life of family members. At the result of it, stress, tension, depression and worry get hold of the family and the life of the entire family is affected.

2.4 Summing Up

The detailed analysis of the novel *Five Point Someone* from the prime perspective of major issues of contemporary Indian society brings to the surface certain noticeable findings. The researcher could explore certain issues of contemporary Indian educational system and the effects of the same on the people and the contemporary Indian society. The researcher could also explore certain other issues of contemporary Indian society which have serious effects in the society. He has experienced during his literary research analysis of the novel that the writer is not very serious even while depicting certain serious issues of contemporary Indian society. The serious matters are sometimes given a light or funny tone.

The researcher agrees to what the writer mentions on the cover page of the novel, that novel has been written for pure fun. It has no profound gravity or seriousness that Mathew Arnold expected to have in a piece of literature. The novel is the debut work of Chetan Bhagat in Indian English Literature. **Bhagat has not been very serious rather he seems sincere about what he wants to convey.** He has described the story line of the present novel in a very light mood. The description of various incidents is sometimes very funny with ridiculous overtones. The conversation between the characters is sometimes very pleasing but thought provoking. The theme of the novel has some exclusive significance. The plot structure of the novel is framed with extreme care and concentration. The novel can be read and interpreted from different perspectives. The exclusive literary analysis of the novel with reference to major issues of contemporary Indian society brings to the surface some really very serious issues of Indian society in a very light mood. The theme of the novel mostly centers round the rigidity and dogmas prevailing in contemporary education system of India in a sarcastic manner. Along with that, the novel mockingly focuses on the various other issue of contemporary Indian society like the already existing problem of dowry, the issue of generation gap (defined in the Research Tool) and its effects on human relations and also to the society. Bhagat has very aptly raised and also scornfully criticized certain issues of the education system of India. He has also drawn the attention of the readers to the damaging effects of the same by creating certain realistic situations in the novel. He has conveyed that
parental over-expectations lead to suicides, over rigidity in education system crushes the creativity and innovative ideas of the new generation and the aim of education is not only to produce good engineers, doctors, managers, teachers or technocrats but also to create good citizens and good human beings. Education being an integral part of life has a vital role to play in society for creating good human beings that keep alive the spirit of humanity. The system of education should be highly dynamic to provide every student with skills to grow his/her potentials for the betterment of self, of the society and of the nation. The researcher has analyzed the novel keeping in view the defined Research Tool: Select Issues of Contemporary Indian Society. The analysis of the debut novel of Chetan Bhagat ‘Five Point Someone’ reflects certain issues of contemporary Indian society. The major portion of the novel covers the issues related to education system and its effects on the contemporary Indian society. The researcher could explore certain other issues of contemporary Indian society like the issue of Dowry, generation gap and certain other issues related to middle class hardships and the ruin of Indian family value system which are included in the present Research Tool. The researcher finally concludes that the other issues of contemporary Indian society which are selected in the Research Tool are not reflected in the novel.