Emerging Indian Adolescents and Youth of 21st Century in Chetan Bhagat’s Novel *Five Point Someone*

The beginning years of the new millennium has trumpeted the entry of new talent and new style in Indian writing in English. For the first time in the history of Indians writing in English has the record of landmark sale of a fiction with the publication of *Five Point Someone* (2004) by technocrat turn writer by chance, Chetan Bhagat. The granary of English literature in India has been already quite enriched by its predecessors. But the arrival of Bhagat is the birth of a voice for the new generation of readers. The issues subsumed in his fictions are the desires and aspirations of Indian youth who are very modern, globalised and technically well equipped. The previous writings have been wonderful, yet fictitious at many points. But the voice of Bhagat is undoubtedly the voice of emerging Indian youth. Bhagat fills the gap between the generations of writers writing for the youth. The previous writings seemed to ignore some important issues pertaining to adolescents and youth but Bhagat infuses a new life in it. The great Indian tradition of writing fiction is still proudly gripped by a host of writers. To mention just a few of them are – Sri Aurobindo, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan of colonial period and Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Deshpande Anita Desai and many other of postcolonial period. These are unquestionably gems of the great Indian tradition. Some of them are nationalistic, autobiographical, mystical, philosophical, highly suffused with literary merit and sometime even lyrical. But Bhagat is honest to the issues of young psychological upheavals who synthesize the starkly real through light-weight conversational narratives. Many critics and even some mediocre scholars try to reject Bhagat’s fictions putting up a big question mark on its literary merit. However, Bhagat’s style is the symphony of a pied piper alluring its young readers towards the vantage point where he desires his readers to arrive at and admire it spell bound despite its flaws. Instead of vain attempt to sound artistic, he straight way gorges into populist viewpoints and starts his typical mode of storytelling. He takes up simple conversational and informal language abundantly in usage among the techno-hit modern English educated adolescents and youth of India.
Five Point Someone: What not to do at IIT is unconventional in its style of presentation of the storyline. Bhagat presents the story exploring aspirations and predicament of the adolescents at transforming phase to young adulthood in the novel. The writer himself an IITian, creates the mood and space to relate his story as realistic as possible. It is unanimously agreed by the critics that the true feelings and thoughts of the generation are hardly represented half in terms of success parameter because the writers are either already grown up than the characters or they try to measure them up from a safe distance. This is the point where Bhagat recognizes his space and utilizes worth as well to unfold the true feelings, sentiments or thoughts or whatever associated with the young generation.

Five Point Someone published in 2004, is the best seller of all times in the history of novels written in English in India. It earns an immediate name and fame to an IIT/IIM graduate, the entire nowhere young writer then. This bildungsroman novel is hilarious and runs through the pages sparkingly however genuinely expressing the psychological pulls of the emerging young Indians of modern India. It upholds the true ideological issues of the Indian youth and takes on critically the system around where the young mind must nurture and grow up. The gap between the generations, the incomprehensiveness of the system and agencies, imposition against their consent, actually work as a mirror to the society in which the adolescent must negotiate. There is no option but to submit before the State Apparatuses designed and monitored since long decades by the past generations. It is not authenticated in accordance to the basic needs and aspirations for which the State Apparatuses are supposed to manoeuvre. The novel is short, crispy, conversational, yet a pure fun especially to the emerging adolescents and youth. Nevertheless, the voice for a change, ramifications, innovations and re-organisation is quite audible throughout the novel.

Bhagat in his debut novel Five Point Someone narrates the story of three reckless friends, Hari, Alok and Ryan, the newly joined IITians at IIT Delhi. Bhagat tries to be unconventional in his style and linguistic etiquettes. He even sounds dramatic by adopting the fourteenth century English classic style as he begins the narratives. He begins in medias res through the Prologue where he lets his readers just sneak into the
flavour of the novel in brief. The story is narrated by a first person narrator who himself is one of the protagonists in the novel, and most importantly, he is also an adolescent narrating the psychological impression of the characters from point blank position. Hari, the first person narrator, is 326 Rank holder, and his friend Alok Gupta 453 and Ryan Oberoi 91 Rank holder respectively in All India Entrance Examination for IIT. Thus, they are destined to meet at IIT Delhi as students of Mechanical Engineering and mainly due to boarding at Kumaon Hostel together. Sometimes, it happens very conspicuous to be co-incidental that spontaneously generates bondage of friendship between or among the people sharing co-habitation. This is what exactly happens with Hari, Alok and Ryan at Kumaon when they stand before their seniors like Baku, Anurag and others facing unprecedented ragging in the hostel. Hence, their friendship is better to consider as destined rather than by chance. But it is, of course, immediate because all of them are strangers till then. As soon as their ragging twists from decency to wild such as showing their arse to doing something fowl, Ryan suddenly appears as rescuer. He breaks up the coke bottles in a stroke and challenges the senior tormentors. It impresses both Hari and Alok who are waiting for certain embarrassment ahead helplessly, become immediate friends with the rescuer Ryan. But this immediate friendship deepens to very root where they are ready to sacrifice for each other. The first midnight is terrible with the trio as they face the tradition of ragging in the balcony. The seniors like Baku and his gang try to make the freshers’ life a real hell. They make the freshers naked. Both Hari and Alok race on fours on the floor while Ryan has to flex his muscles and pose like a model. But Baku fetches two coke bottles for Hari and Alok with an intention of something terrible for their arses. Ryan comprehends their intentions very fast as an experienced hosteller from his previous schooling and protests strongly. When they do not seem to care or stop, he, all of a sudden grabs the bottles and stamps hard on Baku’s feet releasing the bottles from Baku’s hand successfully. The entire incident takes place in a nanosecond comparable to lightening speed of typical “James Bond style” (5). He, then, breaks the bottom of the bottle by smashing against the parapet and challenges alone asking Baku’s team either to leave the place immediately or face the consequence. The stupefied friends of Baku are so frightened sensing Ryan’s mood that they flee from the spot. Thus, Hari and Alok finding their new saviour hug Ryan and become friends then onwards. The novel is not a
single protagonist lead story. All the three friends occupy almost equal space and contribute in the development of the plot. But Ryan somehow supersedes the other characters due to his larger contribution and impressive impetus to draw the novel to its climax. It is his way of manipulations, his ideas, his convictions and confident actions that shake the movement towards its final consequences. Hence, Ryan is, of course, a lead protagonist among the trio. Hari, the narrator, Alok and Ryan are introduced at the beginning of the novel itself as freshers at the IIT Delhi, in the department of Mechanical Engineering.

The first impression of Ryan Oberoi is a young man somehow unexpected in a strict institution like IIT. It is generally considered as a place where all the serious looking studious, career concerned young people throng to find a better way to future. His very introduction is indicated by the narrator in a quite amusing tone: “Now here was a guy you don’t see in IIT too often, tall with spare heights, purposefully lean and unfairly handsome. A loose grey T-shirt proclaimed ‘GAP’ on big blue letters on his chest and shiny black shorts reached his knees. Relatives abroad for sure, I thought. Nobody wears a GAP to bed otherwise” (5).

The narrator’s predictions are quite convincing when the readers get opportunity to verify the facts about Ryan as the novel proceed on. He is stylish and ultra-modern looking guy, handsome with a maintained physique and branded clothes on at bedtime also. The second impression is that he is a smart, confident and courageous boy. He establishes his level of confidence during the first day ragging on the balcony. When the seniors make the trio naked, Ryan does not seem to care much. As demanded by the seniors, he appears naked and starts flexing his muscles. But all the while his figure appears “flawless . . . a hunk; muscles that cut at the right places and a body frame that . . . the human body shown in biology books . . . describe his body as sculpture” (4). But as soon as he comprehends the certain problem of the other freshers Alok and Hari, he acts as fearless boy. It implies his love for just and friendship. He doesn’t care for his consequences and takes on risks for strangers in danger. Ryan’s attitude of ‘die for friends’ compels Alok and Hari fall for immediate friendship with Ryan.
Even though Ryan bears ‘die for friends’ attitude, he wants to live life as a common person. He dislikes any kind of impositions, unnecessary burden or anything that curtails his independence. He is not one always worried for career and serious studies. He wants independence in his studies, in his life and thoughts. So, Ryan is sportive, carefree, yet judicious towards activities that ensures pleasure to him: “sport, that is Ryan’s word. Ryan is always a sport. And Ryan is always confident and carefree” (100). He is actually a brilliant boy and enjoys anything creative. He does not feel being washed away by the motions flowing before him. He rather thinks offbeat and unconventional. His thoughts embark beyond the theoretical periphery. The parrot chirping of professors in the IIT, based on their bookish knowledge, irritates him. He likes practical, life-like, actions and craves the zeal for new findings. He doesn’t enjoy in the classroom at all listening all those professors of mechanical discipline howling around with the years of their crammed knowledge. The first day class of Mechanical Engineering with professor Dubey implies Ryan’s extraordinary and offbeat thought processes. Professor Dubey asks for a definition of machine in their first class but the professor’s disdainful look towards students and his opinion on the standard of “falling every year” annoys him. So, Ryan reacts in whisper to Hari: “Yeah, right. Busted my butt for two years for this damn place. One in hundred is not good enough for them” (9). He hates the typical bossy, unconcerned, insensitive behaviour of the professors against the real aspirations and desires of the students. When professor Dubey says the definition of a machine as ‘anything that reduces human effort’ giving example of all kinds of machines around reducing the human efforts, Ryan turns quite critical in his thoughts. So, he asks professor Dubey in return: “Sir what about a gym machine, like a bench press or something? . . . That doesn’t reduce human effort. In fact, it increases it . . . perhaps it is too simple a definition then?” (9-10). His response to the professor’s definition for ‘machine’ makes the entire classroom silent, the professor mumbles unfinished sentence and finally tries to skip the answer questioning if Ryan is seeking to prove him wrong.

As the first semester picks up its full momentum, the students have hectic schedules of their studies. So, time for entertainment, outing, dating, roaming or watching movies becomes alien to their lives. The schedule is packed up with everyday lectures from morning eight to five, tutorials and labs, evening in the library in their rooms
preparing reports and assignments, surprise quizzes and preparation for forty two tests for both major and minor subjects. Their lives are shielded into an automated machine sparing few hours of sleep. They are bound to work without any choice or time for extracurricular activities and entertainment. Everyone seems to accept the system and imposition but Ryan is exceptional. It makes him obnoxious, irritated and rebellious. So, one day, while engrossed into a Quanto-physics assignment deadline, he raises his voice straightway among his friends: “Damn . . . what a crazy week; classes, assignments, more classes, assignments and not to mention the coming attractions quizzes. You call this a life?” (13-14). Ryan, Hari and Alok often study in the same room together. Alok and Hari, both of them seem to concede the fate imposed on them. Whether they like it or not, they are the pursuant in accordance to the system’s demand. But deep down their psyche, they are also fed up with the burden of studying and working most of the time in the campus. The conversation among the trio protesting the system of the institution is worth observing:

“I think this is jail. It really is, damn jail”. Ryan said, hitting the peeling wall with a fist.

“Maybe you’re forgetting that you’re in IIT, the best college in the country”, Alok said, cracking knuckles.

“So? You put students in jail”, Ryan asked, hands on hips.

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


The conversation among the trio is a beautiful reference to understand the problem of negotiation of the young adults in institution. They believe it to be just unfair to put up so many burdens in their academic pursuits. That the education system of India fails to be suitable for the adolescents is thus reflected in the conversation. They want to
break out of that convention set by the elders. For them, such institutes are established without considering the psychological reception by the young generation. The wishes strangulated under the burden of study and hectic schedules get badly thrashed at the provocation of Ryan. It is, in fact, an irresistible call yet Alok and Hari are still indecisive whether they are really going for a movie. Anyway, finally, all of them leave for the movie *Terminator* at the ‘Priya Theatre’.

It is common among adolescents and youth to throng at any public entertainment spaces. Priya theatre showing *Terminator*, the Hollywood blockbuster of the time, where the most famous Hollywood hunk Arnold plays the cyborg, a new sensation among the young generation, is more welcome than suffer the beastly burden of responsibilities. The place is evidently occupied by the young people. However, there is difference of taste among the trio – Ryan much enjoys its sci-fi features, full of actions, robots and gadgets. But Hari finds it crap and Alok is offended for the difficulties in comprehending the American accent. Anyway their sole purpose is to enjoy the time, get momentary relief from the exhausted workload carried for days and months. Unfortunately, their trip to Priya for the *Terminator* compensates their relative score because when they are back to their hostel at midnight, they find panicked hostellers due to some rumour for surprise quizzes the next morning. They are still not done with the Quanto Assignment and another surprise quiz merely few hours ahead drives them crazy. They study till morning but without much gain as they perform very poor when the rumour turned into a real quiz next morning. Ryan likes anything real, practical or something that requires exercise and creativity. Ryan, Alok and Hari indeed like “sensational, spectacular . . . glitz, jazzy and live” (51). The difference between Alok or Hari and Ryan is that the latter grabs the opportunity whatever he has around, no matter how much his workload is put on. But Hari and Alok try to resist their urges as they feel much preoccupied by the IIT tests, assignments and reports. The illustration can be cited based on their interest on the war news just ahead of their major tests. The narrator says about their engagement with the Gulf war: “The war sucked us in like quicksand, Alok and Ryan got really into ‘who is going to win’ kind of crap. I mean, you stop doing that when you are twelve I think (Superman or Batman?), but there was no stopping of them. I liked watching the war as well, though I primly took no sides” (52). Adventures, battles, excitement, entertainment,
uniqueness and imaginative flights are always source of entertainment to the young adult minds and Alok, Hari or Ryan are also not different than the majority of their generation. However, the taste of each individual obviously varies according to the past mode of maturation.

The adolescent mind loiters on sensational news on war between America and Iraq on CNN, although his major tests are to commence shortly. Alok and Hari give up watching the Gulf War detail on CNN due to exam phobia but Ryan sticks to it till the wars are ended. But he is displeased that the war is not fought on ground label. He dislikes air attacks to Iraq instead of face to face ground battle. So, he expresses his dismay “Unfair man. US is a schoolroom bully” (53). His mind does not accept any theoretical and bookish ideas. He believes in ‘see and verify’ things. According to Hari: “. . . practical tests. It was the only part of the course Ryan enjoyed, and he dragged us early to the physics lab” (53). Apart from practicals, he only prefers FluMech classes among the other subjects. He hates other subjects not because they are totally useless but mostly due to distrustful dealing of the professors. He enjoys the classes of those professors who offer freedom of thoughts and extend scope for activities. Ryan finds the new professor of FluMech Veera more sensible as he deals his students on friendly terms and encourages them instead of humiliating at every step. So, Ryan enjoys Professor Veera’s class: “Never missed FluMech and he would do anything for Prof Veera. Others however – the tasty design prof, the painfully dull mechanics prof and the assignment-maniac thermodynamics prof – were a different story. Ryan could cut up their guts with a lathe machine in the machining workshop given a chance” (85).

His hatred towards those unrelenting professors and dismay against the system, comment on the title of the novel. It is his mission and execution that put the trio’s grade at five point something. So, the subtitle ‘What Not to Do at an IIT!’ entails Ryan’s way of judging, and maintaining the three friends’ lives through their IIT days. The character of Ryan is always inconsiderably sparkling in the novel. He is genius, a fine planner, good executor and hard-working. But the pity is that it remains unchannelized and undirected. His ingenuity can be perceived in all the major episodes right from the mice theory to lube project. Ryan’s comment, on the party night a year later at IIT hostel in Ryan’s
room, plays a vital role in establishing the real significance of the novel. The author’s ultimate intention of explicating the deformed and unsuitable system existing in the higher educational institutions and the problem of negotiations by the adolescent scholars are beautifully reflected in Ryan’s approach. The shuttered lives of the trio at IIT Delhi, earn them the tag of underperformers. All of them are otherwise brilliant and bright students. The institution is befitting for only those people who can devote maximum time and enjoy cramming. But students like Ryan defy such circumcision of freedom or minimum scope of break between works. It is Ryan who pulls Hari and Alok from the abysmal world of the book-worms. Somehow, their expectations are recalled for which they offer their consent. It is this minor compromise between life and career that throws them to piteous position of underperformers. As an aftermath of their screwed up grades, the party arranged by Ryan has a motto. He wants to find out solution in maintaining the both status of good performance with good GPA and the playful days full of life as well. His estimation of the system is worth consideration:

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

It is very difficult to subscribe Ryan’s observation with regard to the education system especially technical higher education like the IITs. But his judgement cannot be rejected outright because it has some fact, some sense and inevitable flaws in the system often visible around. It is a big question in the country regarding the contribution of higher education in invention and research activities. The system merely controls the automated growing up citizens. They create professionals, provide avenues for better livelihood or promising life-style to an individual but lamentably fail to constitute human beings in true sense. The inherent potentialities are somewhere neglected. It is an
undeclared race of an individual to derail the other. Hence, Ryan’s observation bears genuineness to some extent and hints for the need of rectification in the system. For him:

> This system is an unfair race. If you re a mouse who thinks or pauses to make friends with other runners, or stops to figure out what you want to do in life, or drag baggage from the past . . . then you will be pushed behind. As we have been pushed behind by morons like Venkat . . . But we can change all that . . . By living on our own terms. By being rats, not mice, work together and beat the system. I will not give up my friends for this system. In fact, my friendship will beat the system. (101)

Ryan has enormous courage, confidence and good will towards his friendship. His ingenuity and confidence are directed to challenge and beat the system. The friendship that seems to aggravate to success, is redirected to convert into power. Out of his bundle of strange ideas, he unfolds a new one to do it which he entitles as C2D plan meaning Cooperate to Dominate. According to Ryan’s C2D plan, he suggests to share all the assignments each for one individual only. Similarly, the course responsibilities are divided; lab experiences are to be shared. The rooms are to be divided into a single bed room, study unit and recreation unit. Accordingly, the cost of Vodka is to be borne equally irrespective one’s capacity of intake. But each individual assigned for particular task must carry out at any cost on rotation basis while the others will have the fun period. It is a wonderful idea but potentiality and commitment differs between the persons for which Ryan’s C2D plan fails irrevocably corresponding mere five points something to them.

It is the power/repression dynamic that operates within these adolescent IITians. The repression under the extreme power within ultimately gives birth to mischievous plan like C2D, and further embitters the relationship between the learner and the learned. The displeasure and disheartening approach towards the course and lifestyle at IIT germinated at the bedrock of the unconcerned attitude of the institution towards the needs of adolescent and youth. So Ryan puts forward some major reasons for which he and his friends disavow and turn rebellious. Ryan argues reasonably as to why the IIT system is unfair:
It suppresses talent and individual spirit.

It extracts the best years of one’s life from the country’s brightest minds.

It judges you with a draconian GPA system that destroys relationships.

The Profs don’t care for the students.

IITs have hardly contributed to the country. (108)

If life is considered to be fully brewed with fun and compassionate feelings for others, then Ryan is obviously a good observer on life itself. He doesn’t want his friends or himself turn up to be mechanical being even though they are to follow the particular tradition of the institution.

It is a crazy idea; everyone in the party is not in a mood to support Ryan. Alok and Hari try not to go with the idea considering it as a part of cheating. But Ryan is unique; he doesn’t impose this to anyone. He simply suggests the plan with authentic arguments and it is the decision of the person whether to agree or disagree. His arguments are so assuring and alluring at the same time that they don’t have the option but finally wish to approve it. For Ryan “it is not cheating, it is cooperation” (109). His argument is that since they have divided them with their GPAs, they would also unite together to fight back and defeat them in their own nestle of systems. All the friends at last approve C2D document and sign on it with their blood as decided by Ryan despite their unwillingness to shed blood for the purpose. The C2D plan is exciting and great for them because they have the opportunity to maintain balance between the workloads and entertainment simultaneously. Most importantly, they no more expect higher GPA except Alok.

Ryan’s extraordinary potentialities and creativity are always evident throughout the novel. He possesses a multifaceted talent but remains unexplored and unrecognized. His remarkable qualities are revealed when he announces about his lubricant project. Even his best friends Alok and Hari do not know about his new venture. Hari is utterly surprised at this new announcement and says in disbelief: “You have time to do separate papers?” (119). Ryan’s reaction to this surprise again reconfirms his motivational effort and determination to do anything that he admires to do. So, he says: “I have time to do
what I want . . . thoughts on doing some experiments with various substance mixtures to check the lubricant efficiency in a scooter engine” (119). He manages to work on the project without giving any idea about this to others. He does this alone in the fluid mechanics lab. He even sacrifices his scooter for his experiment. But his project is rejected outright without considering properly by ruthless professor Cherian, the Head of the department with his comment on the papers as “No Commercial Viability or academic value’ (183). His expectation for earning a research grant and zeal to work on is aggravated somewhere in the pool of files in Professor Cherian’s office.

Ryan’s stand as non-conformist against the institute’s systems leads to the worst consequences. It puts up the trio’s life and career in great danger. The operation pendulum what Ryan calls to break into professor Cherian’s chamber in the ninth floor of the institute’s building is beyond imagination of any one. But he devises the plan, a perfectly full proof plan. Alok and Hari feel scared as soon as Ryan divulges his idea before them. It is nothing but a straight suicidal attempt for Alok and Hari. They no way feel any chances of escape from either death or being caught red-handed in the act. However, Ryan has always attractive neat plan before he shares it to anybody. For Alok and Hari, it is a mission impossible but “that is how Ryan is, he decides and then he proposes, and then he does whatever he wants to anyway . . . kind of hard to argue with Ryan’s logic” (159). Despite their strong protest, Alok and Hari become the part of the Operation Pendulum when Ryan lets them imagine their life and career with the prospective grade A if the Operation is successful. Hari, in deep love with Neha, the daughter of professor Cherian whose expectations are always ten points from his students since he had one in his IIT grades, is allured by the idea. The success of the plan may offer Hari, the chance of getting Neha for life by impressing her father with grades. Alok, on the other hand, will have better jobs with Grade A in his result that he has been dreaming for his parents and a marriageable sister. Ultimately, they have to surrender against the logic of Ryan and venture into most dreadful action of their life at IIT Delhi. According to the plan, they are supposed to go to the roof of the ninth floor of Administrative Block. And Ryan has to slide down with the help of a rope. But the plan is changed when Hari gets the duplicate key made from Neha’s bunch of keys without her knowledge about it. It makes their effort easier. They break into professor Cherian’s
office at midnight on the sixth floor of the institute’s building. Their plan would have been amazingly successful has Alok not made the foolish mistake of making a call to his mother at home from Cherian’s office to save his money. It is enough to jeopardize their entire cunning process because a late night call from professor’s chamber is potent reason to alert the the exchange operator of the IIT campus and all the hordes i.e. guards, professors and deans. They are almost done with pilfering the question paper and re-sealing the packet with molten wax when the guards spot them and lock in. The next day decision of Disciplinary Committee predictably sabotages their lives. They start to feel that ‘five point something’ (my italics) or even just successful completion of their degree would have been better than the disciplinary actions taken against them. The panel decides to suspend one semester, an F in Indem and repetition of it and reconstruction of the final year project. Altogether, according to Hari, it implies that their “grade sheets are ruined . . . can’t get a job . . . have to wait an extra year to get a useless degree” (209). Somehow professor Veera saves them an expulsion but still it falls too heavy for them. As they come to know the decision of the committee the night itself from professor Veera, Alok declines to face the professors. So, he stays back on the terrace of the ninth storey building. Ryan and Hari get the message from the professor and return heavily to relate it to frustrated Alok on the terrace. Ryan already realizes the situation and the possible consequences. But it is very difficult to read his mind. Before the decision reaches them, Ryan very strangely stands on the edge of the terrace. It is difficult to understand whether a momentary wish to end up his life has emerged in his mind: “Ryan stood up and walked to the precipice of the roof . . . one step more and Ryan could enjoy his last few seconds of freefall weightlessness . . . stands on the edge and bends forward to look down . . . extends one leg out” (206). Hasn’t Hari become conscious that very moment or call up Ryan back, perhaps Ryan would have ended his life before the decision. However, he retreats on Hari’s call and says, “It is really high here” (207). But Alok, who always gets hyper on the issue of degree, job and family, becomes numb on hearing the decision. He stands up tensed without saying anything walks to the edge of the roof where Ryan had stood an hour’s back. Before Ryan or Hari would persuade to do something, he says: “You were right Ryan, it is pretty high here . . . you think only you can stand on the edge of the roof? For once Ryan, I agree with you. I’ve had enough too.
I think I’ll just go down” (209-210). Neither of his friends can discern the meaning of his fatal intention. He decides his fate and jumps down from the terrace of the ninth storey building.

This episode is the climax of the story that efficiently declares the position of adolescents and youth of India. It resonances the idea that adolescents and youth should be treated as too vulnerable, brittle yet powerful. Ryan’s demand for playful life is justified because one should have the freedom to grow according to his/her desire. The reaction of Alok on hearing the decision of the Disciplinary Committee is nothing but expression of helplessness of growing young adults. Significantly, this climax highlights on the inadequacy and uncompromising nature of institutions, society and family for proper maturation process in India. Have the stakeholding agencies of the society considered for better option for growth and future prospects, then the extreme decisions of Ryan, or Alok would not have flickered within the psyche of these characters.

Nevertheless, Ryan never apologizes, cries or remorses on anything. For the first time, Ryan feels badly sorry, guilty and remorsed. When Hari hugs Ryan, he hugs him back tighter and says in choked voice as if fighting back tears: “I am sorry Hari . . . I am sorry” (213). Alok sustains eleven fractures in the legs and two in the arms. The incident with Alok deeply simmers his being to the innermost corner of his psyche. It as if has changed sportive and playful Ryan to a more thoughtful and pensive person.

Bhagat delineates Ryan’s character not to represent him merely as a character for accumulating fame and financial gain. It is the representation of a vibrant youth; his unlimited potentialities yet deformed spirit in the hands of few automation makers. Otherwise, Ryan is genuinely a human being and a potent force if it would have been rejuvenated and judiciously organized. Ryan continues studying despite his disinterestedness or low GPA after the first semester. From the very beginning, his real purpose has not been to earn a respectable degree from the IIT. He unveils his heart in the hospital to Hari when he admits: “If it weren’t for him, I would have never studied to reach a five-pointer” (213). The testimony to this articulation of Ryan can be authenticated from the first day of ragging in the IIT when he took risk of his life before the senior college bullies. He is wildly depressed and sulked when Alok leaves Ryan and
Hari’s friendship blaming for his low GPA. He makes friendship with Venkat, the most studious but self-centred topper. Although Alok stays separated, he is really concerned for him. When he hears Alok’s helplessness caught between assignment and urgency to escort his seriously ailing father to the hospital as Venkat is completely non-cooperative to release him, he forcefully unbolts their room and offers to attend his father to the hospital himself. He is ever ready to help his friends whenever they feel someone’s selfless help.

There is nothing so important than the welfare of his friends. He doesn’t want to choose for the safer and cleaner path, he simply becomes instrumental to fulfill his friends’ desires, wishes and aspirations. He helps Hari when he is not in a position to afford a birthday gift to his girlfriend. He helps Hari get an artistic and impressive gift of lipstick box manufactured in the physics lab. Even he risks his life for Hari to meet Hari’s girlfriend Neha in the middle of the night because Hari wants so. It is his instigation to Neha to get closer to Hari so that Hari’s physical expectations from Neha would be fulfilled. His mice theory leading to C2D Plan is also the part of his cooperation to his friends as they are disappointed for low GPA and dissociated from a frolicking lifestyle as well. Similarly, the Operation Pendulum for pilfering the question paper is also his game plan to elevate his friends’ low GPA because good GPA would have earned his friend Hari his beloved. Besides, another friend Alok would have secured a good job, overcome the burden of sister’s marriage and bear his bed-ridden father’s medical expenses. But the entire exercise backlashes their education and career due to Alok’s foolishness.

Towards the end of their programme, both his friends are selected for job by the good MNCs through campus selection drive. But Ryan fails to earn one for him because he is the lowest GPA holder in the batch. However, it is conspicuous to establish that their IIT degree is saved from being completely ruined and Ryan still deserves the larger contribution; for it is his lubricant project that showers mercy on them. They work day-night and impress the authority, consequently their allegations are waived and finally regular IIT degree is awarded to all of them. Yet Ryan stays back to work as Research
Assistant with his most admired teacher, Professor Veera and regrets no more for losing selection in the MNCs.

Ryan is always silent about his parents. He does not want to discuss or share about them to anybody. Whenever Hari insists him to say something about his parents, he simply declines and says that he hates them. His parents send gifts, letters, cards and dollars in cheques from abroad. But somehow he is not happy with them. He wears branded clothes and even owns a scooter in the hostel. Even though his parents are in abroad, they try to support him with anything he might need in his study or for his comfortable life-style. Hari observes many times that he preserves letters in his shelf which he predicts that might be from Ryan’s parents. So many things have happened at IIT but he probably never let them know. He is not concerned even about their stay. When Hari provokes him to say something about his parents, he says that they live in “LA or something” (228). He never replies his parent’s letters back “unless it is a couriered letter” or in “case the delivery guy asks . . . to write a few lines right there” (228). It is under compulsion that he drops a few lines sometimes. Otherwise he doesn’t maintain consistent communication with parents. Hari persuades him to be sensible and reply to them because “they are just abroad trying to make a buck” (228). But Ryan has his own judgement against his parents. Hari’s provocation makes Ryan compelled disclose about them. Ryan’s hatred against his parents significantly highlights about his real being. For Ryan, his parent’s fail to do the duty of parenting. His dismay against them has, of course, some ground because the love and care Ryan as a child deserves during his growing up period, and has been declined to him since his boarding school days. According to Ryan, letters from his parents used to be every week at the beginning then gradually it turned to be once in two weeks and “. . . Now they write once a month” (228). For him, he has “nothing against them” but he is ‘just indifferent’ indifferent to their letters (228). Ryan feels really heavy deep down the bottomline of his heart without anybody’s notice. He hides his emotions from everyone. He doesn’t want to share it because he feels it to be too complicated. But due to Hari’s recurrent insistence and emotional blackmail, he finally reveals his heart a little bit. He says that he hates his parents because:
They are too strange. I kept calling them let us stay together after my boarding school. But the international business was really taking off them and they had to leave. I guess what I wanted was never in the picture. So, okay I get the dollar cheque, thank you. But spare me the we-miss-you shit. If you do, what the hell are you going to do about it? (229)

There is a tinge of agony in his words, the pangs of separation from his parents. He actually doesn’t prefer materialistic life at the cost of separation or the sense of missing his parents. There is also an expression of helplessness in what he says to Hari because there is no value expressing his heart pounding for them. Even though he wishes their company, he just receives nothing in return. So, he prefers distance under compulsion and turns indifferent towards them. Hari’s suggestion to join their business with his lube project also creates no impact in his decision. He is too annoyed as he says: “No way in hell . . . Never I will open a parantha shop, become a coolie, wash cars but I am not going to them” (229). Deprivation of parental care, lack of filial bonding, make him outspoken, a brute in one hand but it leads him towards those with whom he would feel himself a part or share sense of bonding on the other. And it is this particular residual affection for which he befriends Alok and Hari. He feels them closer to his heart. He is ready to sacrifice and prepared to do anything for them. By doing so, he fills the void of someone very close to his heart. His entire childhood and adolescence period have been dependent upon boarding schools and later in the Kumaon hostel of IIT Delhi. His deep emotional feelings are receded somewhere in the subconscious but he never allows them to erupt before anyone except on the day he says few words in response to Hari’s provocative lines.

As he tries to avoid any conversation about his friends, he is also secretive about himself. He thinks for others and helps them but he never talks about himself as if he has no agenda for personal things. Besides, he has no any special liking for girls. So, Hari presumes sometimes if he is a gay otherwise. But Hari himself counters against his sexual preferences: “But he wasn’t gay, for he did notice the heroines in movies, whistled at pretty girls on the street. May be he just wasn’t in the mood for women most of the time” (81). Moreover, his sexual urges are, of course, oriented towards the female opposite for
he has number of posters of nude voluptuous models and heroines dangling around the wall of his hostel room. Even though there is no any special episode regarding his particular sexual orientations or love affair in his college life he is instrumental to overcome the persistent embarrassment between Hari and his girlfriend Neha’s love relationship.

Again, Alok Gupta belongs to poor family and breaks down emotionally very soon. He is a fat guy about five feet five inch. A serious beginner at IIT but his friendship brings drastic changes of attitudes in due course of his mid-adolescent life. The character of Alok is the representation of an adolescent from lower middle class family. He is the perfect example of an adolescent intentionally overburdened by the surrounding demands of family, society and institutions. He is caught between individual desires and expectations of his parents. The duties and responsibilities an adolescent has to carry out in a typical hinduistic society in India are recurrently and stringently reflected in the character of Alok. The personal desires submit before the aspirations of his parents and society. There is nothing important an adolescent can run after; be it his ambitions, likes, dislikes or preferences. The entire course of ambition is intermittently and readily prescribed rather than by the adolescent’s spontaneous or intuitional commands. The individual is no more an independent decider of one’s fate because his/her fate is at the mercy of filial emancipation. Rousseau’s seminal text *The Social Contract* propagating the epithet that ‘a man is born free but everywhere he is in chains’ absolutely fits into the character of Alok in Bhagat’s novel *Five Point Someone*. Since he is the only son, so ironically, it is the right of his parents living in typical lower middle class hinduistic society, how to let their child grow up or negotiate against the institutions and preset parameters aound. The conventional ideological prescriptions overshadow even the contemporary changing landscapes of growing up children. The idea of freedom, importance of individual being or emerging trends of maturation under the impression of upsurging modernism fail to combat against those ideological issues.

Alok born in a metropolitan capital city of Delhi is sabotaged under his obligations to various agencies surrounding his life. He is a lower middle class adolescent form a suburbia whose growth is entirely dependent on the social and economic status
of the family. He has seen his childhood being cordoned off by financial crisis and the rising weight of filial obligations. The chapter seven entitled ‘Alok Speaks’ in *Five Point Someone* is a brief introduction of Alok and his filial affiliations, mode of upbringing and other things that have been so significant in successive process of growth. The very beginning paragraph of the chapter written almost like a monologue gives an idea about the background of Alok:

FATSO, CRY-BABY, MUGGER, TRAITOR, SSSY, THAT IS HOW I come across to you. You probably picture me as this boy who refused to grow up, the perennial prodigy who wants to show his good Report card to his parents’ years after years. You are free to judge me, my whining over grades, my splitting with the group, my reticence to cut apron strings, an umbilical cord that stretches out across Delhi all the way from Rohini Colony to the IIT campus, binding me to mother. (71)

The character of Alok is projected as an adolescent who does not want to understand the common traits and feelings one experiences during this phase of development. He grows up naturally – physically, cognitively and socially in normal mode yet he declines to give vent to those precipices, the ultimate inclinations. So, he himself feels that other might recognize him as a “boy who refuses to grow up” (71). The burden of compulsions is heavier than the ebbing desires of Alok. So, his desires must seek seclusion somewhere in his subconscious. His mission is only to achieve academic distinctions at the cost of his strangulated desire or aspirations whatever because it derives pleasure to his parents. And the pleasure of his parents matters much than what he holds as adolescent desires within his psyche. The performance in academic pursuits enlivens the dream of the family’s emancipation from the drudgery of the cursed poverty and the basic needs for subsistence. Hence, the individual desires of adolescent like Alok in Indian society are valueless, ordinary and appear irrational.

Alok, the only son of school teaching parents has no choice but to follow the particular route prescribed by his parents. His father an art teacher and mother a biology teacher, lead their lives in misery and ever rising wants. Since Alok’s parents are teachers, his study is considerably good for he has the advantage of two mentors at home
itself. Besides, he develops the taste for painting at an early stage being the disciple of a
good artist, his own father at home. He is excellent in painting, calligraphy and studies
that earn him prizes and gifts. His legacy of painting takes him to the dream to make
painting as his profession in future although he knows well that artists in India hardly
receive recognition and financial gain at least not before one is too old enough to enjoy or
ironically after one’s death. Expectedly, his ‘silly dream to become an artist’ nips in the
bud because his childhood faces the worst days as his father is bedridden half paralysed
patient due to fall while painting an ambitious project. His father fell down while taking
up the prestigious mural painting job on the roof of an institute’s building. Since then, his
mother let him remind of myriad responsibilities awaiting ahead: the responsibility of a
marriageable sister, the treatment of an ailing father, unburdening financial crisis of the
mother and entire dependency of household and family. His love for painting becomes a
day-dream and his focal point remains only to earn a livelihood with handsome salary.
This motivates him to undergo rigorous study for two years to clear his road to the IIT
Delhi which in his perspective has been the most promising location for a good career.

For Alok or anyone like him, things do not go according to one’s expectations
because there are certain human traits they either push someone to an elevated level or
throw straight down to an abysmal point. In Alok’s case too, the residual adolescent
‘storm and stress’ layered under his subconscious mind seeks slippage sometimes. His
first day at IIT Delhi becomes horrible but he finds Ryan as his rescuer. It is beyond his
imagination that his whole-hearted devotion to the IIT is nothing but a fake one because
there are some facets of desire, of aspirations of adolescence he has not given attention
to. The constant repression of desires makes him undermine the inherent power within.
But Ryan, his new friend at IIT, believes in enjoying life to its fullest measure. Ryan’s
typical adolescent frolics unknowingly carry him away sometimes and the subconscious
psychic things get involved in the act. He is always conscious about his mission to crack
the IIT hurdles successfully. So, he spends time in his studies, assignments and projects
as much as possible. But his desires and fantasies receded so long, upsurge with Ryan’s
occasional tampering. He accepts offer to the Priya Cinema for the Hollywood
blockbuster Terminator, visiting the restaurants, ice-cream parlours, occasional truancy
from the academic activities though he is ever aware of the burden borne at the conscious
level. The real adolescent being seeks space to go for the extreme but the next moment, he wants to avoid them. It is his adolescent power and desire for which he accepts the extreme level of criminal act like breaking into professor Cherian’s chamber for question paper. The C2D Plan and breaking into the professor’s chamber are part of his divided selves that sometime pull towards adolescing and sometimes to attaining better grades.

The character of Alok highlights on how Indian adolescents compromise with the ideological issues and also how they easily transfer the parental responsibilities to themselves. The individuality has no distinctive existence without any attachment to the family or parents. He is constantly aware of his ultimate duties shifted gradually towards him. When Hari asks him about his parents after his return from home, Alok utters the ever dominating anxieties and disappointments: “Miserable as usual. There was another big drama at home last weekend. That’s yet another suitable match for my sister but we can’t cough up the suitable money. Hence, either we say no or sign IOUs, meaning give it later when I pass out of the insti, get a job and then pay for it” (146).

For Ryan, it is ‘tough’ to concede such miserable condition and unwanted filial burden but Alok accepts without any regret or complaint. So, he says – “But it is my duty man and I love them. I don’t see it as a trouble” (146). He is ready to take up any job that pays him more. Money is the only solution to meet up with his condition. It appears as very silly thing considering Alok’s likeness towards money, but it is not for his individual gain. He wants it for his parents and sister. He wants – “An A Alok, I want an A” as he claims because it is the only way for him to support parents and get his sister married and a comfortable means of living for himself (147).

The constant tug of war between the experience of adolescing and the filial imperatives derail him from his only motive. He tries to escape the company of Ryan and Hari after he quarrels with them following his screwed up grades of five-point something. He shifts to befriend the bloody mugger Venkat, the brightest student of Mechanical Engineering department of the IIT Delhi. But he realizes after a year that his new friend is completely a selfish, unconcerned, and uncompassionate towards friendship. He understands the relationship when he is unable to visit his seriously ailing father before the day of Assignments. When Ryan rescues him from the situation again, he rediscover
his being that it is not only study or constructing better future prospects one needs in life but it is more than that – the friendship, rejuvenation of common periodic traits and relaxation as important and unavoidable. So, he rejoins that Ryan team and becomes the stupid trio of the IIT Delhi.

The delineation of Alok as helpless, marooned and overburdened youth is very commonly found in Indian society. The home-environment and lower middle class in financial crisis decide the fates of most Indian youth. Though the Indian youth shares more than 65% percent of the total population of India, the anxiety of food, shelter and clothing keeps on haunting their minds. Alok is always spendthrift, miser and cautious while meeting his expenses during couple of occasions. His utter miserliness is, of course, observed not by choice but by compulsions that compensates him more than anything in life. In order to save his few coins for a call, he dials that fatal free call from professor Cherian’s office while he accompanying his friends to break into the professor’s chamber for question paper in the midnight. His active participation in the act of this serious offence is the cause of number of manipulative elements; the most important among all are – intention of recovering better grades, emancipation from the cursed financial constraints, and necessity of precipitation of vocation for life. But his poor life reflects his salvation to helplessness. His youthful days are not dissimilar than any other contemporary Indian youth. They are good in their studies, ambitious, capable yet lamentably subjugated. The psychologists truly underline the risk taking behaviour, criminality and suicidal attempts of adolescents. Though such tendencies of the adolescents vary according to regional, social and individual manifestations, their root causes bear more or less similar features. The Indian adolescents are somewhat distinguished considering their societal and filial obligations. It is a chain of events and circumstances that encompasses social, filial and individual elements that lead Indian adolescents to such terrible condition of suicide, criminal activities or risk taking behaviour. Sometimes the causes are not exclusively administered by an individual’s psychological turbulences. It is rather the social, institutional and filial constraints that decide the extreme decisions of adolescents and youth in India.
In Alok’s case too, the extreme decisions are taken not for his individual cause. He decides to jump down the ninth storey building of the IIT institute building following the decision of the Disciplinary Committee for his direct involvement attempting to pilfer the question paper from Professor Cherian’s Chamber. He has a very negligible indulgence in gratifying his adolescence urges – it includes few outings, occasional drinks with friends, occasional reluctant truancy and entertainment to a certain degree. Even though he is very rigid not to take up the risk of breaking into professor Cherian’s chamber – there is always a space for friendship and trust for which he doesn’t want to reject the proposal of Ryan outright. But most importantly, his filial obligations – the responsibility of his marriageable sister with a fat dowry, treatment of his ailing father and his duty towards his mother of relieving her everyday pain of hard work become myriad in his thoughts and judgement. In his perspective a few hours’ toil in risky venture would have solved his multiple problems and decrease the burden of obligations. It is a promise of good grade, and so, has the hope of bagging better career with IIT degree from the most reputed institution of the country.

Again, Hari, the narrator of the novel *Five Point Someone*, is another prototype adolescent character suffering from the status of moratorium. He is casual and common adolescent newly admitted in the IIT Delhi. Hari is a fat guy with usual adolescent traits and behavior. He has no any self opinion on anything thus he lacks the judicious quality at the prospect of circumstances at times. There is no special attachment to any habits, attitudes and behaviors. His decisions are largely dependent on his friends whom he feels as better than him. His thought processes are not complicated by his self-proclaimed rationality like Ryan. It is his friendship he simply trusts on without considering much on anything that might follow consequences. He accepts and does the things merely as compliance to his friends’ judgement. In a way, he is truly an adolescent of life and blood wanting common needs that are always away from the adolescents of his age in and around his society. His involvement in drinking, driving, risking life, smoking, flirting, romancing and sexual orientations are some way or the other pulsated according to the infringement of his friend circle.
Hari is a simple guy who fumbles in front of his teachers to respond to any question from them. In his first class of professor Dubey at IIT, he becomes puzzled to reply very simple answer of the question on M-A-C-H-I-N-E. He is speechless, skeptic and timid often. So he says: “It was the first time the condition struck me, where tongue cleaves into dental roof, body freezes, blood vessels rupture and sweat bursts out in buckets” (09). Some kind of unknown powers as if pull him back to respond the person before him. In his own opinion: “Somebody inside me called but could only get my answering or at least a silly ‘I don’t know’ but it was as if my mouth was AWOL” (09). During vivas, it is Hari’s turn under their C2D Plan to respond. But he pitifully fails to do so. Professor Vohra asks him what makes C40 steel better than C20 steel for making rigid structures. He prepares the correct answer very well in his mind yet he fails to translate it to the teacher. There is some kind of apprehension that prevents him to respond though his mental reflexes get the answer well in advance: “I knew the answer . . . if only Prof Vohra would stop looking me in the eye . . . didn’t want to look at him . . . But all I got out was fat drops of sweat, on my face, arms and hands” (125). The professor tries four times with three different questions but unwanted numbness hits the boy.

The character of Hari represents the youth who veils his thoughts until it is prompted by some outward forces. There are many incidents where we discover him as hesitant, timid, shy and indecisive. His attraction towards the opposite sex is as natural as any common Indian adolescents. He avoids flaunting until his thought processes find proper freedom in his assumption. His first encounter with Neha, the professor Cherian’s only daughter, early one morning, displays his colourful sexual orientations. He wants to “milk the moment’ and flirt with her” (28). She appears as the only pretty girl in the entire IIT Campus in her barefoot driving the car with learner’s tag ‘L’ on the windscreen. Hari bumps against the car at the moment while he is already exhausted due to his life’s first jog in ‘fatso’ physique. But the very next moment he forgets the pain, and is swayed away by her beauty and develops expectations of intimacy. His pain is subdued by the sight of “Bare female skin on metal” for it “is enormously sexy” (29). Her offer to drop him back to Kumaon hostel is the courtesy generally shown by any defaulter after a hit though it is literally unnecessary considering the wound Hari sustains. But for
Hari, it is merely a temptation of companionship with the pretty girl. So, he says while getting off the car back at Kumaon “keep bumping me” (30). His inner psychic waves and his flirts with the girl are nothing but stirring up of adolescent desires that have been dormant for sometime under his hectic academic schedules.

He also likes enjoying the life of freedom. He visits dhabas, ice-cream parlours, restaurants, movies, riding etc. As much as possible, he tries to avoid physical exercises. Despite Ryan’s repeated struggle to wake him up to go for morning jogs, he surrenders after his only a day’s jog. He tries couple of times to get up early but miserably fails. He doesn’t find Neha with the car learning to drive and Ryan too gives up because he is threatened to withdraw from the draw-the-line study plan.

Hari is conscious about his appearance since his schooling days and he takes the things granted even if girls do ignore him. In his second meet with Neha in a bookshop, Neha intentionally ignores his enthusiastic greetings that make him feel strange. He knows that he has been some sort of a loser in school but in his estimation Neha is different. Though he feels badly humiliated and awkward, he gives up his vanity as soon as Neha clarifies her attitude at the bookshop by reasoning the presence of her strict father, Professor Cherian. Hari is often baffled with himself while responding to some awkward and naïve situations. His faculty of judgement deceives him to respond adequately. When he dates with Neha at the ice-cream parlour for the first time, he doesn’t find suitable words to console sobbing Neha while relating the story of her only brother Samir’s death. But his adolescent playful mind seeks the opportunity to be closer with her and holds her hand in his palms and estimates his own action of the moment: “I wondered if I could take a chance and hold her arms like she had a few minutes ago. I mean, that is how shallow I was. She was all choked up and everything, but all I could think of was if I could make a move” (46). Thus, Hari reflects his sexual orientations as a part of his primitive desire with a wish of dissipating it with Neha at least through sense of touch.

Hari’s relationship with Neha develops into more serious and intimate position. His primitive desire urges him to go ahead and experience the bliss of physical relation. It keeps on disturbing him ever since his first acquaintance but his natural inhibitions and
Neha’s typical Indian womanish attitude prescribing limitations, compels to retreat again and again. When he receives five kisses for the first time in life from a pretty girl like Neha at the ice-cream parlour as a reward of achieving five points something, it is a moment of disbelief for him (my italics). All the worries and anxieties of future prospects that have been killing him fade away at the unexpected sweet kisses of Neha. He remains spell-bound at the sudden approach of Neha. He keeps on mortifying for at least a momentary bodily pleasure – of touch, taste and gratification. But he utterly fails and stands at the mercy of Neha. He believes that Neha is a girl of principles who doesn’t admit premarital coitus or anything physical. Even when he takes her to the roof of the institute’s building, he is hardly confident of any advances towards his day to day adolescent fantasies. He is finally aided by Ryan to achieve his mission of physicality with Neha. It is Ryan who intentionally manipulates very astutely to get with the overtures of Hari on the roof of the institute’s building. He insultingly provokes Neha:

You are like this good girl. Like why else won’t you let him do anything? Dating for a year, still no kiss even. Just this goody goody prof’s daughter . . . You think you are dating a guy or someone asexual? You don’t think he has needs? . . . C’mon man. Show some guts sometimes. This is for your own good . . . Yes, every man has needs. And pretty girls like you are either not aware of them or deny them for power games. (114)

Neha is shocked and humiliated at such strange allegations against her by someone she has never been connected with. But the whole arguments before both Hari and Neha help them redefine and redirect their relationship accordingly.

Ryan’s few words not only trembles Neha’s women being, it also boosts some boldness into Hari’s individuality. His dates with Neha increase gradually and enable him to obtain more opportunity of kissing, embracing and companionship. Hari’s gradual transformation from inhibitions to boldness is observed just before their Operation Pendulum, when he intentionally visits Neha’s house. It is the 11th April, the day of Neha’s brother Samir’s death anniversary on which her parents go to the death spot for two hours’ mournful prayers. As he is already aware of the fact through Neha, he enters there with a mission to steal the key of Professor Cherian’s chamber that he saw dangling
along with the car’s key. In no way, his mind is engrossed with any sexual intentions except his determination to get the key somehow. But when he meets Neha, it is beyond his imagination that his adolescent fantasies would be really materialized. He experiences his first premarital coitus with Neha. It is, however, Neha’s advances and willingness to which he admittedly and blissfully explored with. His little bit of boldness offers him a straight leap into the world of experience and sexuality. Besides, his boldness and determination do not derail him from the pre-planned mission to steal the key. He pretends to be driven by the tendency to smoke. So, he asks Neha for the key of the car to go out for cigarettes. Neha, on the other hand, under the state of ecstacy of that whimsical moment, forgets the world around and wears his shirt and asks him to wear professor Cherian’s shirt instead. Nevertheless, he does accordingly without wasting the valuable time and gets out of the house. He goes to the key maker’s shop and gets the set of keys in duplicate. But unfortunately, he encounters Professor Cherian on the way back riding bicycle just ahead of him. As the professor recognizes his car being driven by a stranger, he stops Hari and comes home driving himself along with Hari. Although Hari tries to convince the professor with the best possible answers for driving his car that he offered to repair the punctured tyres, the professor Cherian is shrewd enough to understand his real motive. Everything becomes clear before him when he discovers his daughter wrapped up in bed-sheet and Hari in his own shirt. He is uncontrollably furious and warns him not to mess up with his daughter any further or he would ruin his life and career. Somehow he manages to escape the grip of Cherian and runs his fastest “jog of life” (175). But he doesn’t forget to inflict a mild revenge on the way back by releasing the air of Cherian’s bi-cycle abandoned there just a while ago.

Hari’s courage starts fading away as soon as he returns safe from the clutches of disdainful professor Cherian’s house. He says: “No way man . . . Hell, Hell happened . . .” (176). He is doubtful about the success of Operation Pendulum. He asks doubtfully – “So we’re still doing this? . . . I don’t know I am scared . . . I really am” (176). But Hari’s tensions and inhibitions lose their distinctions when Ryan soothes him and reassures of success. Hari’s concern over Neha’s probable destiny after his departure in front of her father is quite comprehensible. So he wants to have a conversation with her immediately for an explanation and to save his love life. But Ryan’s advice not to go
there sounds more reasonable and worth observing. Unaware of all the given conditions and consequences, he submits to Ryan’s plan because he also likes friendship and good grades more than anything else. Here we find Hari as selfish and indecisive in his personal opinions as well. Otherwise, he would not have abandoned Neha alone to deal with her father when the unholy premarital coitus (at least in Indian context) has been already discovered by a self esteemed and strictly disciplinarian father like Professor Cherian. He also has the choice to disclose his love relationship if he would have been bold enough or honest about his feelings instead of running away like a coward. At any rate, he estimates his friend Ryan to be better and more intelligent than him. So, he always wants to be like Ryan that he admits himself.

He never enters into critical thoughts, re-appraisal or reconsideration because friendship is the only thing he must give in his cause. Since Ryan is always better and smarter in his imagination, he believes in him with a good amount of confidence that it would be better to rely on him than his own personal judgement. Operation Pendulum for Hari is a sheer commitment to friendship rather than the necessity of a better prospect. He consents to steal the key at the cost of fidelity of his love relationship with Neha in danger. When he is discovered of his love-relationship by professor Cherian, he very feebly requests Ryan to reconsider the execution of Operation Pendulum. But Ryan’s re-assertion of successful achievement of the plan alone functions as overlapping aid to his apprehensions and releases from the burden of infidelity. His scary mind returns to boldness with Ryan’s assertions. But when he is caught red-handed along with his friends attempting to steal the papers from Professor Cherian’s office, his mind, perhaps for the first time, is badly fraught with resentment and irreparable remorse. He is now capable to understand the magnitude of his guilt and grim situations waiting before him. As he understands the consequences after the resolution of the Disciplinary Committee of the institution, he feels his earlier condition far better and wishes to reverse the position to it if by any means it would have been possible. He ponders: “Suddenly, my five point GPA seemed wonderful . . . If only I could pass out of this place with a simple job and this all could be over . . . even keeping that GPA and passing out was not going to be easy now” (190). Even though Hari inducted himself to the IIT, to ensure his bright career, his momentary distraction from the disciplined student’s life ushers in more chaotic situation.
Friendship, the adolescent fantasies, the exploration into the world of freedom and zeal to experience sex life screw up his grades. He, then, becomes self-reproached, curses himself and somehow blames too intimate relationship with his friends. His self-reproachment upsurges to its heightened level on friendship and himself while waiting night out for the result of the Disciplinary Committee on the roof of the institute’s building: “I hated myself for being a cheat . . . for everything else – agreeing to duplicate the keys being a part of Operation Pendulum and bringing my life to this” (205). He is surprised at his own deeds and so he questions to his other self again: “How did I get here? I was a topper in my school all my life. That is how I got into IIT right? But then, why am I now a low-performer, five point something?” (205).

Hari’s relentless thoughts turn egoistic and selfish as he reflects more on the given situation. Life for Hari appears more critical and gruesome than what he believes as an adolescent. His playful frolicking mind seems to come to a sudden halt. The general attachment of adolescent towards his/her peers a few moments ago is rather insensitive, unnecessary and despoiling. There is nothing important except the value of his five-point grading and at least negotiable future. Hence, friendship with Ryan or Alok is more negligible than his grades, future and Neha. So he ponders sulking:

I looked at my friends. Friends? What the hell is that anyway? Who is this Alok? And what the fuck do I care that his father is half-dead and his sister can’t be married without cash? Then I turned to look at Ryan. Yes, the stylish, smart and confident Ryan . . . Why do I listen to him and not Alok? And why is everybody so quiet. (205-206)

It is a psychological bump into the trio’s brain. Hari’s simple and unbothered attitude towards life even at some grim situation is now at the brink of going insane. Alok’s condition is worse than anybody. Even Ryan is shocked although his prime concerns are undisclosed. The conversation between Hari and Ryan on the Institute’s roof is quite significant to understand the mental agony they pass through:

“It’s cold here”, Ryan said.
I nodded my head. “Yes Ryan, it is miserably cold, infect, almost like a December night in Delhi, I wanted to say. But you know what, I don’t feel it. There are more important miserable things happening right now. Like we could be thrown out of IIT in a few hours, and may never find a respectable education or job again”.

... 

“Thank you Ryan. It is cold, it is very high and yes, Operation Pendulum was a bad idea”. (206-207)

The inner turbulences are so powerful that the surrounding effects are not even palpable. The chilling cold as if becomes effectless and morbid for Hari and his friends. Coldness and infectious weather have no power to distract the mental agony of Hari. It is an experience in a large scale to shake up Hari or his friends in redirecting the radar of life – a perfect maturation process.

Nevertheless, Hari is finally successful to achieve the degree, job and Neha’s love. Professor Veera’s relentless struggles help them to fix the matter and Professor Cherian’s unexpected mercy to return their lab grades on the basis of Ryan’s Lube Project research. Hari’s character undergoes gradual change then onwards. He takes the classes, projects and assignments seriously, and he also avoids frequent drinks. It is the rising ingenuity that saves his relationship with Neha. He overcomes his timidity before Neha or professor Cherian or anybody else. He even starts ignoring or reacting unsuitable proposals of Ryan that he formerly consented blindly. It is his rising boldness for which he kisses Neha inside the ice-cream parlour where he is once again spotted with Neha by Professor Cherian. But the discovery of the letter of his only demised son Samir torments him never like before. Professor Cherian’s mercy is showered on Hari and his friends because it is through Hari he comes to know the truth of son’s death and his indirect influence to bring his son’s life to an end. Anyway, Hari is a transformed boy from a blind believer in others to more responsible, sensitive, bolder, and hardworking person declaring the attainment of further maturation in his subjectivity.
Neha, the only female protagonist of the novel *Five Point Someone*, is the representative of emerging Indian female adolescent. She reflects few distinctive tenets that establish her as one struggling to liberate from the age old traditional cloak of women image of Savitri and Sita. More significantly, she is tossed between the two extreme polarities of tradition and modernity. Neither she desires to explore the exclusive modernist ideology nor does she prefer to tie down to the grip of traditional values, culture and society. Hence, her character perfectly maintains ‘go between’ strategies where she partly belongs to both the positions.

Neha is an educated Indian adolescent girl and daughter of a strict disciplinarian cum scholar like professor Cherian whose grade sheets of IIT days blinks with full Ten GPA in all the semesters. She is grown up under some prescribed rules set by her patriarchal legacy. Her childhood and adolescence is designed by her father in accordance to his preferences rather than by her own intuitions and choices. Since, she belongs to a very reputed family bearings, she has to mandatorily adhere to certain filial and social codes. She needs to compromise between her parents aspirations and hers. But at any rate, her life is somehow dependent and suppressed. However, she is offered a considerable degree of freedom because she is the only child alive in the family after the untimely death of her brother Samir. This makes her parents more sensitive and extra caring towards her. In all the circumstances, she must maintain respectable distance from the opposite sex of her same age group adolescents.

When the readers encounter Neha in the novel, she is found learning to drive a car early in the morning. She is bare-footed in T-shirt and shorts and accidentally bumps against Hari who for the first time takes up jogging at Ryan’s advice to lose weight. She is appreciatively enticing and ‘really pretty’ in her nightclothes (28). She is about Hari’s age and a student of fashion designing. She is a frank, crispy and self-conscious girl of modern India. For Hari, Neha is ‘too irresistible’ but a complicated piece of cake to share.

Though Neha seems to be very open to her mind and heart, she is somehow an unfolded being. Her interactions, conduct and idiosyncrasies display her confident attitude towards life and relations. She has grown up in such an environment where she faces stern, disciplinarian father and distinguished Professor of IIT Delhi. Her father
prefers distance between any male guy and his daughter. This obviously makes her extra cautious and shrewdly manipulative to some given situations. So, when Hari coincidentally meets Neha at the campus bookstore, she ignores him: “She acted as if she did not recognize him” (41). But she, later on, manages tactfully as soon as she is out of the bookshop following Hari in the street by apologizing on her behaviour. She lets him know Hari about her father who never allows his daughter getting intimate with anybody. She says Hari during conversation on her ignorance:

“My dad is really strict about me talking to boys and he will totally flip out if he hears I am friends with a student.”

“Really? Just greeting someone?”

“He is like that. And campus rumours always get blown out of proportion. Please I am sorry.” (43)

This conversation between Hari and Neha comments on her considerate approach to her father’s attitude; towards relationship with the male peers in one hand, and her father’s particular perspective against his own daughter on the other. However, Neha is skilled enough to handle out the situation and maintains a fine balance between her father’s apprehensive behaviour and her relationship with boy friend like Hari.

The character of Neha suitably complies with the power dynamic theory of adolescence and youth. She leads a duality of existence: her outward involvement with people or circumstances, and her inward feelings, repressed desires or womanly forbearance. In all the circumstances, Neha introduces herself as a strong and decisive character. It is her mental tolerance she is able to repress her desires, wishes and secrets from the world around otherwise it would have created chaotic situations at home and outside. She knows very well about the cause of her brother’s death. She understands that her brother’s death did not occur as a mere accident but a well-planned suicide by the railway yard. She rather likes to keep it as secret because she predicts the probable havoc that would have created in her family and lives. Since she had been emotionally detached from the friendly touch of her father, she started to be closer with her brother Samir for both were denied the cordiality of their father in terms of deciding their respective life
and vocations. Hence, her brother had written a letter to her instead of his parents justifying his suicide before he had died. She could have turned furious and rebel against her father’s autocratic parenting mode but she loves her father too for which she does not want to disclose the contents of the letter to anybody. Had any circumstances not compelled her to disclose before her boyfriend Hari, she would have kept the secret perennially.

Neha’s character reflects the influence of rising feminist sensibilities that have been observed in abundance among the educated Indian women. There is an internal desire to break out of the traditional yoke of age old ideal woman’s image of Sita and Savitri. She wants to be invincible, confident, liberal, individualistic and self-dependent almost in all the spheres of adolescent life. She wants to project herself as an equal half of the mankind but the process is somewhat incomplete for which she is recognizably an educated Indian woman caught between traditional values and modern contemporary trends. Her outlook is still largely underscored by the patriarchy to which she feels much associated with rather than the rising impact of feminist sensibilities. The feminist sensibilities are already well co-ordinated in her being. However, she wants a decent break out that she identifies as decent one because the patriarchal mode of integrity is still unavoidable in her Indian psyche. If her stance is considered in accordance to her attitude and maintenance of relationship with the opposite peers, it is nothing but her feminist’s strategic deals. According to Ryan, Neha’s behaviour is stained with “power games” (114). She wants to overrule through her particular feminine strategic manipulations. If the circumstances are observed through which her character comes across, we can identify number of underpinning phases that recurrently reflect Neha as essentially a liberal, modern, contemporary and self-assessed woman. She likes movies, occasional drinks, cigarettes, dates, rides, playfulness, and even sex. But strategically, she is capable to put everything under the veil of Indian ideal woman. She does not mind to go for movies with her boyfriend Hari. Even the ads on family planning and contraceptive measures shown before a movie are not much annoying to her while her accompanying boyfriend Hari feels embarrassed more than anything on such acts. It is very surprising for both Hari and Ryan to discover that she is already used to occasional drinks otherwise she would not have kept a pouch of cardamom pieces to go home “minty fresh” after the
rounds of drinks on the insti roof in the midnight (111). It is her liberalism of judgment that supplies energy and courage to go with a boyfriend to such a risky place like the institute’s roof, or asking vodka herself as if she is certain to get drinks over there. Besides, she would not have the courage to hold Hari by hand in some public places or imprint full five kisses on Hari for securing mere five points something.

Again, she continues her strategic stance even in sexual orientations or gratification. Here, we can beautifully justify the power/repression dynamic operating in the process. The significance of her primordial desires, aspirations and expectations are strangulated by the cultural codes she has been shouldering along. The cultural idiom rooted in age-old institutions and practices always overcast their shadows on desires or aspirations whatever. The social institutions to which her patriarchal legacy feels so attached with, hinders her advancement from the point where she is superscribed. The discreteness of women being and delimitation of her essence vaguely bow down against the myriad formations of cultural, social and filial obligations. There is however, a continual forceful spur she has to overpower in her essence of being woman. It is that dynamic power that constantly drives her being thoroughly. But it is also sometimes strangulated down somewhere which we can literally recognize as repression of her desire. Otherwise, we would not have discovered her falconic fall at first given opportunity with her boyfriend Hari in her own room. She advances towards Hari under the impression of sexual hemlock for final gratification without enquiries over his intentions of meeting her alone. The readers keep on realizing the gradual feeling of infatuation in the novel but the successive outcome is unpredictable. It is the prolonged accumulated power she has kept repressed so far that gives a final leap towards the world of sex and the world of experience. It is the feeling of achievement, a sense of attainment that she wants to cherish. She is momentarily carried away to the world of ecstasy. She loses the distinction between time and space, between what she is and who she is. Her intensity of feel compels Hari to wear her father’s shirt to get the key of professor Cherian and take away the car for a duplicate one. Her ecstatic moment is flaunted till she opens the door for expected cigarettes from Hari who has skipped a while ago on this pretext. However, her magical moments wrapped in a bedsheets are far stricken away in a second when she unexpectedly finds her father along with Hari caught by his collar.
All the same, she is well designed by traditional image. Nowhere in the novel is her boyfriend capable to identify her liberal thoughts or her hybridized attitudes. Throughout those days, he nurtures an opinion on her as a self-restrained, decent and well cultured girl upholding the highest traditional Indian values in life. Many a times, his feelings drive him crazy to explore her sexual orientations and feelings. But when he views her from his own perspective in typical Indian psyche, he always loses his courage to advance towards her. Despite his desire, he is compelled to repress it down lest he might challenge the self-respect of Indian women’s chastity and commitment.

Neha is a pretty girl and a vibrant soul. She is a commendable good daughter and an honest girl friend for Hari. It is her needs as a human being and the webbing adolescent desires of curiosity that brings her to experience carnal desire with the boyfriend Hari; for drinks, movies, dates and shopping. It is her unfortunate destiny that her physical relationship is discovered. Otherwise, she tries to maintain balance adequately between her secrets and dignity with father. The relationship of Neha with Hari cannot be associated with the one divinely blessed or something else. But it is starkly real whatsoever might happen to their final destiny. But as usual, despite Hari’s obsessional love for her, the final words pose the same question of her unification with Hari. Towards the end i.e. before the idiot trio depart, Hari says to Neha on the date for final words of parting from the IIT: “Yes, that night we met and said we loved each other . . . And we promised to keep meeting forever and ever . . . But forever is a long time you know . . . A lot can happen between now and forever . . .” (266). When he spends few months in Bombay working for a company after the separation, he again says: “God, I missed her – her hair, her laugh, her eyes, her holding my hand and everything else . . . I pined for Neha” (267). Both of them along with Alok and Ryan decide to meet on the wedding day of Alok’s sister. But no clue is left whether Neha’s female Indian being receives due recognition from her boy-friend she has sacrificed her sanctity or she is finally a duped girl as abundantly found in such love-relationship.

Bhagat’s novel Five Point Someone efficiently upholds the mirror of contemporary adolescents and youth of Indian society. That the cultural, institutional and state apparatuses are inadequate to accommodate the cause of these emerging adolescents
of 21st Century India is beautifully portrayed through these life-like characters. The institutions constructed so far still bear the testimony of traditional values that pathetically fail to recognize the new technological advancements, ideological transmutation so inevitable in maturation process of adolescents and youth. The adolescents and youth are not estimated according to their potentialities and individual needs without which proper flourishment is never discernible. The conventional mode is always viewed as imposition giving rise to non-cooperation, self-reproachment, deformity and gradual misalignment from the right path of adolescent and youth. So, Bhagat’s novel works as a voice against all the oddities and inconveniences faced by the emerging adolescents and youth of contemporary Indian society.
Contemporary Youth Caught between Cultures in Chetan Bhagat’s Novel

*Two States: The Story of My Marriage*

Chetan Bhagat’s another best-seller *Two States: the Story of My Marriage* (2009) can be read as sequel to his debut novel *Five Point Someone*. The location in this novel is shifted from the previous IIT Delhi to IIM Campus Ahmedabad. The protagonist changes his name from Hari to Krish and his girlfriend second in row is Ananya. This novel also comments on the filial obligations, incompatibility with the institutions around and the tensions of vocation. The protagonist Krish an IIT graduate and Ananya a graduate in economics meet at IIM Ahmedabad with an ambition to earn good vocation for them. In comparison to the previous novel, another bildungsroman *Two States*, presents more independent, vocationally concerned and matured youth of 21st century. Both of them belong to two different states and cultural background that posit problems of union in their relationship. The novel beautifully narrates the way the modern emerging Indian youth successfully overcome the differences between the cultures, backgrounds, ideologies and differences in locations. They resolve the problem with the help of their maturity, sensible moves and acute co-operation. The novel presents a picture of Indian culture, psychical responses, complexities which are still prevalent in the society that have been in practice since the time immemorial in the Hinduistic society of India. It authentically substantiates Sudhir Kakar’s developmental psychology that establishes synthesis between inner life and outer social reality. It resolves the problem of amalgamation without neglecting cultural, historical and psychological phenomenon. Besides, it reflects Kakar’s notion that culture of a particular society is always determinant of one’s identity. For him, “culture is so pervasive that even when an individual seems to break away from it as in states of insanity, the ‘madness’ is still influenced by its norms and rituals” (Kakar 37).

The novel *Two States* is a graphic representation of contemporary youth’s changing needs in the fast transforming technological society. The erstwhile concept of adolescence and youth as docile, inhibited and subjugated are remarkably replaced by the contemporary self-dependent, outspoken, independent, courageous youth of 21st century. They no more prefer to be dominated by patriarchal or matriarchal limitations as has been
observed in previous literature or society. The Indian adolescents and youth were largely dependent on parental care and guidance in deciding their future course. Their education, life-style and choice of vocations were mostly dependent on parents or elders whosoever had happened to boss the family. But such traditions are rapidly changed of late without much validation to the new shift at the crossroad of twenty first century. In no case, it can be figured out as merely the influence of western cultures that have been irresistible in postcolonial India. The fact cannot be denied that the trends have been set mostly by the western culture, literature, technology that have necessitated globalization, individualism, technological advancement and most importantly modern education system originated mainly from European and American nations. The explosion of electronic mass media and its impact on the global perspective facilitate the Indian adolescents and youth to get acquainted with the new waves and gradually get accustomed to it. The age old traditional system started to appear as non-employable gradually and hence, the new generation ultimately had started to crave for a better vocation and life-style.

The impact of new education system has recently changed the outlook of Indian adolescents and youth. They have started to redefine everything from a novel perspective and judge the things according to the compatibility of their age and individual needs. They display disregard to social institutions, societal obligations, between love and sex, marriage, traditional dressing, educational system, culture, relations, food habits, mode of livelihood and choice of vocations. The traditional Indian values smeared in ethics and lessons of morality lose its weightage under the burden of powerful multivalent forces of changing age. The voices and opinions of parents or elders that had been mandatorily dictating the psychology and acts of children are not necessarily followed or observed now. The contemporary adolescents and youth are the product of the new age of mass media and globalization.

Bhagat, recognized as youth icon, deals with such issues in his novels where he wants to invite a new approach to youth of contemporary society. His novel, Two States is beautiful depiction of contemporary youth of India caught between cultures against their individual necessities and choices. There is a wide gap between the generations evidently affecting the normal growth, maturation and amalgamation. The psychological
impact is very larger than one can realize. Neither the generations seem to overcome the differences and perspectives, prescriptions and necessities. Bhagat who himself is nurtured by the technological age and education, functions as a voice of new generation before the world demanding proper empathy towards this generation. He invites fresh attention and attitudes for better fostering of their potentialities that are obviously curtailed by the traditional outlook and institutional limitations.

The novel *Two States* narrates the story of cultural differences across the states within India that makes an unwarranted interference in the lives of the youthful characters in the novel. It is the story of two leading youthful characters Krish Malhotra and Ananya Swaminathan who belong to two different states, and hence, a number of differences between them are enumerated in their relationship obstructed in their union. It is their academic pursuit having more probability of better vocations that they are destined to meet at the IIMA campus of Ahmedabad, one of the most academically-oriented B-Schools in the country. Krish is a Punjabi guy graduated from IIT Delhi while Ananya is Tamilian Brahmin girl and a bright graduate in economics. The difference between these two characters poses problem because they differ in geographical spaces and corresponding cultures, traditions and ideological issues. Krish upholds and represents the cultural matrices of North Indian Punjabi values quite dissimilar to Ananya’s southern India. Punjabis are remarkably non-vegetarian while Tamil Brahmins are strictly against such food habits. That Ananya is a Tamil Brahmin makes a big difference for her “No meat and no drinking” stance. But she becomes an “instant pin-ups” in testosterone-charged, estrogen starved campus in Ahmedabad (3).

Though Ananya is a typical Tamilian Brahmin strictly prescribing life of piety, she does not completely withdraw from anything sensual or non-vegetarianism. She is distinctively a representative of new Indian women seeking break out from the bondage of extreme slavery to the tradition and practices observed in her family or society. There is modern approach to life, attitudes, dress and whatever she does. She is remarkably a carefree girl because she is confident about what she thinks. She very astutely maintains a fine balance between her paternal obligations and her choices outside her home and
society. When she comes to IIMA Ahmedabad she is a different person than what she happened to be at her home.

Krish is an IITian from Delhi and a Delhite Punjabi guy. He grows up in Delhi and he has no idea about his caste, but he eats chicken a lot like any Punjabi. His hostel life has enabled him to digest bad sambar better than Tamil Brahmins. Krish also tries to break out of stereotyped Punjabi cultural yoke. He ruins his grades at the IIT Delhi. So, now, he is at the IIMA Ahmedabad to reconstruct his career in Marketing and Finance. He is well experienced in love-relationship through the experiences accrued from his IIT days with the south Indian girl-friend of that campus. When Ananya enters the IIMA institute, he is quite strategic to patch up with the only exceptional girl in his relationship. The IIMA campus privileges Krish and Ananya to chart their future according to self-chosen life-styles. And the novel very delicately represents the various issues pertaining to modern Indian youth through these two characters.

Both the characters do not want to disclose their internal feelings at the beginning days in the campus. Ananya assumes nonchalant towards the overtures of several admiring youth and Krish, on the other hand, presents himself as disinterested guy on her exceptional beauty. But Krish tries very astute moves and creates opportunities to talk and befriend her. Ananya’s repulsive views on the food stuff at the dining hall of the IIMA and the precautionary show of sympathy of Krish for her prepares ground for formal introduction between the couple. But their first informal introduction gradually turns into good-friendship. Ananya, who is very careful not to face any awkward situation before her admirers with immediate marriage proposals every now and then, finds Krish as the only safer guy in the campus to consider for friendship. The ‘just friend’ relationship however gradually takes both for frequent outdoors, shopping, restaurants and casual walks. But their company being too consistent and rather everywhere all the time attachment feature unknowingly gives a bit impetus in their ‘just friend’ relationship. Their advancement is mandated due to the necessity of two different individual needs: Ananya’s for comfortable and safer company and Krish for the allurement of her exceptional beauty. The consistency of their relationship and ever increasing interdependency bring them to the level of study in togetherness even in nights
at Ananya’s dormitory. Although the room is shared to study and do assignments for the mutual benefit of the both, Krish feels somewhat uncomfortable to carry forward the ‘just friend’ relationship. His desire for more intimacy, for physical love and verify the definition of his relationship with Ananya, compels Krish to suspend the attachment momentarily. It is also a part of his game to obtain the true attention of Ananya which he himself is unable to disclose before her. As natural, Ananya feels disowned, lonely and disappointed for she has already become dependent and habitual of his company. She tries to talk to him in the class, in the dining hall and at breaks for tea but Krish willfully maintains distance from her. Even though she is irresistible, and he, in fact, heartily pines for her company, he wants to break down Ananya to the core of her heart and let her fall herself. There is not much elaboration on the mental state of Ananya in absence of Krish in private and public life; the readers are well aware of the undercurrent agony she comes across. So, as expected and desired by Krish, one day she enters into Krish’s room at nine in the night. She wants to know the reason of his avoidance to her. When she asks Krish on his newly devised method of escape, he says: “I can’t be just friends. I’m sure some guys can be friends with girls. I can’t. Not with you” (23). Still confused Ananya seeks more clarification and asks: “What do you want?” (24). Krish who has been waiting for such an opportunity to disclose his feelings towards her, says: “I want us to be a couple . . And this is not a proposal. I am not Mr. Fourteen” (24). In one corner of his mind, he has been scared of rejection if he would express his feelings before her. So, he grabs the opportunity to know her opinion by disclosing his feelings in one hand and yet showing his honesty in repressing his desire on the other. In his explanation to his recent behaviour, he says:

To sit and study with you is an exercise in double self-control. First I have to force myself to pay attention to these boring cases. Secondly, I have to avoid looking at your face as much as possible because when I look at your face, all I want to do is kiss you. But we have this stupid just friends deal and you are cool about it and so that leaves me whipping my mind to study nicotine-free cigarette and not think about your lips and the little mole that is there below the lower one. (24)
He lays out his heart before her and by doing so he expects her response of either acceptance or rejection. But it is his beyond imagination what Ananya does next because she straightens up and kisses on his lips with her “frooti laced lips . . .” (24). It implies the mutual attraction and the growth of dependency on each other.

Both Ananya and Krish overcome their prejudices in due course of time from being ‘just friends’ to good friends and then to deep love-relationship. Bhagat shows very smooth transition of their relationship in the novel. So the novelist’s opinion is well expressed by Krish: “Needless to say, one thing led to another and within two weeks we had sex. You put a boy and a girl in a room for a week and add lots of boring books, and sparks are sure to fly” (26). Though the novel seems to be very common story with ordinary plot construction abundantly found in bollywood masala films, the novelist intends to explicate the transforming attitudes of Indian youth in the novel.

The great Indian value as propagated in hinduistic society that never allows any premarital coitus is being very strongly questioned. Friendship between a boy and a girl is never confined to ‘just friends’ limit. The true friendship stories narrated in history or classic movies that tell some immortal tale always jostles in sacrifice and good will without expecting any reciprocity. It is also remarkable that true and just friendship stories between two opposite sexes are hardly found in Indian classical literature and Indian history. But friendship in contemporary society gains new definition and fresh impetus where opposite sexes are considered as friends as between the friendship of two persons of same sex. Besides, the contemporary Indian society seems to provide license to both friendship and premarital coitus although it is unlawful and viewed as social taboo. They want to exploit the self-imposed licentious relationship between opposite sexes and accept premarital coitus as valid under the impact of expanding pulp culture in western society. Otherwise, the traditional society of India would have never permitted Krish to study till midnight in the girls’ dormitory or Ananya’s stay with Krish in live-in-relationship in the boys’ dormitory of IIMA Ahmedabad. Such relationship in European and American society is very common and also consented by laws in many countries. But its reflection among the Indians is a very new concept in our society. Neither the law nor
the social codes approve of such licenses though there is the rise of voice in support by the emerging Indian youth in recent times.

The love relationship between Krish and Ananya also comments on the deformity and devaluation of divinely love as accounted in many classics. There is nothing like panegyric note and mere admiration of one’s love towards the other beloved. The upsurge of capitalism that has belittled men and women into mere commodities or rather give and take allegory is observed in love relationship among the contemporary Indian youth. It is this spontaneous feeding of ideologies to youth that defines relationship between friends. Krish doesn’t want to continue his ‘just friends’ bondage for he cannot repress his desire any longer and hence, he seeks its due return in pleasure principle, in physical relationship or acute gratification of feelings. Similarly, Ananya’s initial moves are partly of her means for safer route as a conscious girl. But she is bit lenient towards Krish because of his sympathetic outlook for her and prospective utility of IIT degree of Krish in her assignments. Thus, the progression of their love-relationship is capitalist in nature though they want to settle it down according to their newer mode and not playing it the elder generation way.

The most striking feature of Bhagat’s Two States is how the characters negotiate between the two clamouring cultures. The Indian culture is always glorified before other nations or in the narratives of all forms as monolithic, homogeneous and much heightened without distorting its variations. Kakar very beautifully underlines the arbitrary nature of Indian culture in his seminal text The Inner Life. He observes that culture in India is not a monolithic term because it varies from nation to region, and then to community, clan and family. Moreover, the term ‘culture’ as propounded by cultural anthropologist to be fluid in character befittingly conforms to the theme of the novel Two States. That Ananya is a Tamil and Krish a Punjabi makes vast distinction in their characteristics ranging from food habits to traditional rites. Again, the case of Ananya’s birth into a Tamil Brahmin family is different than the general concept of other common Tamilians of her state. So, Ananya, at the beginning pages of the novel refers to this difference at the ‘Topaz’ restaurant while introducing herself formally before Krish: “Tamilian, please be precise. In fact Tamil Brahmin, which is way different from
Similarly, Krish introduces himself to refer to his particular cultural identity: “I am a Punjabi, though I never lived in Punjab. I grew up in Delhi. And I have no idea about my caste, but we do eat chicken” (7). So, the cultural identity of both the characters underpins the discreteness within the state and within the community. Their first identity is Indian, the second one is regional, third one is within the community and finally in family legacy of each one. It is further nurtured and also acculturated through the institutions around which they grow up and encounter in their maturation process.

The impact of globalization ushering in new western pulp culture at the backdrop of technological mass media is pervasive and obvious. Their conversation is a commentary on the perspective of Indian youth’s disregard towards the discreteness of each culture.

As has been discussed in the previous two chapters dealing with theoretical issues, it is needless to repeat the fact that the identity of an individual is always mediated by all the agencies through which one grows up since his/her childhood to maturity. In Two States also, Ananya comes from a family of conservative thoughts. She belongs to a family that doesn’t permit autonomy to their children. A growing up child in her family must know and admire the carnatic music, and other traditions adopted by them. They have different food habits than any other regional communities of India. They still use banana leaves as plates to eat meals and maintain strict discipline. Ananya has special fondness for the family and culture that have been grooming her life. But there is still distance with her mother for bossing interferences about her personal likes and dislikes. However, maintenance of discipline in the family and awful regards to other relatives are mandatorily observed. Again, Krish’s growth in a Punjabi family is largely influenced by all the relatives around him. At home, his childhood has not been much happy although he is the only child. He has been facing uncomfortable disputes between his parents. He has been growing up under the threat of his inconsiderate father. His father is a drunkard and still comes home late night only to quarrel with his mother or to inflict physical torture. Consequently, he has been suppressed by his father and is compelled to seek shelter under the folds of his mother. He has been witnessing how his mother has been tolerant over the years without any resistance or permanent guile against his father. But his mother is a typical woman who always seeks good relationship with the relatives under the influence of their social snobbery. She is naturally like many other Indian
mothers expecting her son’s marriage into a good Punjabi family of her acquaintance whom he believes to hold the reputation of very rich in the neighbourhood. So, the fate of Krish and Ananya’s love-relationship has number of barriers to overcome for final union through formal social marriage. Any breach from the community and culture is never tolerable, respectful or compatible for the families of Krish and Ananya. They must overcome the differences between their parents, society, culture, community and state.

Since Ananya and Krish are over-achiever children of their respective parents, they somehow believe in themselves to win the consent of their marriage. It is remarkable that both of them are graduates from respectable institutes of the country and are successful in earning good career. At the end of their final semester, Krish cracks the campus recruitment drive as banker in reputed multinational Citibank and Ananya in HLL Marketing. If they would have preferred to elope away and re-start the life anew they would have been successful to do so. But they are matured enough in their thoughts and reasonings. They have special regard to their parental cultural heritage and tradition somewhere in the corner although they do not conform to such beliefs in their individual lives and deeds.

The larger part of the novel revolves around those two characters struggling to conquer the hearts of their parents and earn their due approval to their relationship. The process starts with the degree award ceremony of IIMA Ahmedabad. Krish invites his mother but avoids his father on the ceremony day as he has dissidence against his father since childhood days. On the other hand, Ananya invites her parents and her brother on the occasion. Though it is the tradition of the institute to invite parents, they grab it as an opportunity to arrange formal introduction and meeting of their parents so that they can understand each other and forget the differences between cultures, regions, clans and prejudices. On the way to his dormitory after receiving his mother at the airport, Krish tells her to meet Ananya and her family. But his mother is unnerved immediately to hear her son having friendship with someone outside her caste and community. She becomes doubtful about the relationship with the girl whom he has been insistent to meet and behave properly with her parents. She has the habit of being outspoken, fussy and irritant on anything on matters relating to Krish’s marriage. It is more than impossible in her
view for the relation outside the periphery of her Punjabi culture, tradition and society. When she learns that the girl and her family, whom she is expected to meet, are Madrassi, she immediately becomes hyper. Ananya’s parents also arrive a day before the ceremony and visit the award ceremony. Krish and Ananya occupy seats beforehand for their parents in the same row. Though they introduce their parents before the award function, their intention of bridging the gap between the parents becomes rather critical and unhealthy as Krish’s mother behaves indecently. Noticing the disgusting attitudes of the lady, Ananya’s parents seek distance from her and withdraw from the arranged seats to some other as they are very decent and reserved people. However, they are able to persuade their parents for a trip to Sabarmati Ashram and a family picnic there in the same taxi hired with equal share. But there again, the intention of providing more time to the parents to assuage the differences, backlashes against them for the differences between the parents are distinguished not only in culture and tradition but also in individual characteristics of the parents. The reserved nature of Ananya’s parents is ironically challenged by the outspoken habits of Krish’s mother. The latter’s fumed appearance and ever insulting comments in her mother tongue irritate Ananya’s parents. They overhear the reactions of the Punjaban lady saying: “These South Indians don’t know how to control their daughters. From Hema Malini to Sridevi; all of them trying to catch Punjabi men” (48). She has no any intention to visit Sabarmati Ashram at the outskirts of the city but she has to give in due to insistence of her son. It is a very ludicrous moment when all of them have to fit into a small Indica car instead of the Qualis booked for the trip. Neither of the ladies is ready to accept the proposal for substitute arrangement of an auto as both claims the equal share contributed for the vehicle. Finally, Ananya’s father sits with the driver occupying front seat with Ananya on lap and Krish at the back seat squeezed between two frowned ladies along with Ananya’s brother on his mother’s lap. Both Ananya and Krish try their best for an immediate reconciliation between the parents but every attempt proves futile. Neither Ananya’s mother nor Krish’s spare any opportunity to insult each other in language, attitude and behaviour. Ananya’s mother feels Punjabis as having limited knowledge and under educated while Krish’s mother has the prejudices on the Tamilians as ever seductive to North Indian men. Krish’s mother even doesn’t want to maintain minimum courtesy of
sharing her ‘nice biscuits’ with the Tamilians but only her son whom she feeds into his mouth herself forcefully that Krish is helplessly unable to defend. As they sit under a tree for the packed lunch picked up from the Topaz, there is no any mirth or courteous formality except the silent gulping of the food stuff. Nevertheless, Ananya dares to disclose her relationship with Krish breaking the silence that they like each other. It is a moment of great confusion for the parents of both the parties as it works to refuel the dislikeness and hatred between the parents. Krish’s mom already doubtful about her son’s relationship says furiously: “I told you. I smelt something fishy . . .” (52). Ananya tries to make the things clearer by elaborating the fact: “There’s nothing fishy. There is nothing to be worried about. We just wanted to share our happiness. We are just two people in love . . .” (52). But it makes Ananya’s parents very upset and her mother shouts Ananya to keep her mouth shut. She takes away her family back in an auto while Krish foolishly and his mother happily, of course, stay back munching the remaining food. Krish’s mother is more relaxed than concerned at the sudden change of things that she believes at least to be in her favour. They fail in their attempt to patch up the families into consideration status and are separated temporarily as both leave for home expecting the new postings in their workplaces.

There is nothing like impossibility or compulsion for the formal union of Krish and Ananya. But there are certain unwritten traditions in the names of culture, region, religion, social status and particular practices that Indians hardly desire to compensate and the families of the duo are also not different from such stances. If noticed from a rational point of view, the relationship is quite comfortable and adequate because both of them are now matured enough, well educated, promising professionals and above and all, they want to die for each other. Still the Indians like their typical families of every region and culture are inconsiderate in terms of marriage. The novelist’s point is very contextual to start with the reconciliation process in his plot construction situating it at the historically suitable location like Sabarmati Ashram, an abbot of truth, love, compassion and oneness. Gandhi’s Sabarmati Ashram is really the most suitable place for bridging the gap of differences between the Indians of two separate states of the same country; for Gandhiji believed all Indians contributed his spirit to earn independence to all the Indians irrespective of caste, creed, culture and region. The Ashram is genuinely symbolic for the
two grudging families to forget that false ideologies. Here, the guide leading to the important point of the Ashram befittingly says to support the context: “Gandhiji strongly believed that all Indians are one” (51). But the story of the novel negates its existence in reality and instead bitingly satirizes the Indian psyche representing differences on the regional or cultural terms or whatever.

Before joining the Citibank, Krish spends a few days with his parents in Delhi. His mother tries all her means to distract her son’s attention from Ananya. She displays her disappointments and indulges into recurrent arguments against her son’s decision. She even threatens of her death if he doesn’t change his mind. When she understands that her every conversation has no effect on her son, she starts showing options of some beautiful girls in lucrative professions and wealthy heritage in Punjabi community itself. She is always enchanted towards those Punjabi families who are generally known for the proprietorship of reputed farms with exhaustive modern luxuries and heaps of cash in their accounts. In order to divert her son’s attention, she insists to meet her Pammi aunty who prefers to flaunt her riches before the guests and acquaintances. These are the points where Krish’s mother ever bears weaknesses and ever impressed by someone’s all the modern luxuries – cars, classy sofas, flats, conditioners, free-hand shopping in costlier shops, international dry fruits served to the guests and lots of money. She never hesitates to establish a relationship with that family as they are the owner of six petrol pumps and huge cash. It doesn’t matter whether the girl she wants to ask for Krish is merely a graduate from correspondence course and just a bundle of fashionable doll without any skill of worldly affairs or genuine attitude to life. Pammi aunty’s show off about her poshy status and his mother’s admiration for her is another episode of Bhagat’s power of ironical presentation of Delhiites artificialities and social snobbery. Krish is introduced with Pammi aunty’s daughter whom his mother behaves as if the relationship between her son and Dolly is already granted. Pammi aunty also hints on the future one will have if someone suitable agrees her daughter for marriage. She says during their conversation: “Who knows ji about whose daughter she will become? We only have two girls, everything is theirs” (62). Krish is sent away with Dolly for matchmaking in the newly purchased Honda City which he accepts only to “enjoy . . . mainly to get away from here and ride in the new Honda” (64). After shopping for half an hour, both arrive at Barista
for coffee. Dolly reveals that she has already heard about his South Indian girl Ananya. She also assures Krish that she would make him forget her if he agrees to choose her as the girl for marriage. But Krish slams her idea and discloses about his two years of togetherness with Ananya. He asks her to reject the relationship before her parents on the ground of disliking him as boring and geeky type. Back home, his mother demands the reasons of his rejection to the proposal. His Shipra massi, present for the dinner on invitation interferes comparing the marriage to be a deal and demands explanation. She argues with Krish’s mother because she chose to marry an educated and professional man against the family for which she has been suffering with her husband since her marriage. So, there is some factual ground of comparing the marriage. She asks: “How much will that Madrasin earn? . . . Dolly would have filled your house” (68). For Shipra massi, his mother Kavita or Pammi aunty, marriage is an institution of co-modifying the relationship rather than the union of two hearts. According to Shipra massi’s judgement, Krish should marry Pammi aunty’s daughter Dolly because – “Pammi is buying one more house in the next lane . . . for her daughter” implying the advantage of marrying Dolly instead of Madrassin Ananya (67). Apart from her cash and luxuries, Pammi’s family is hi-fier than any common Punjabi that inspires Shipra massi to insist upon Krish to marry Dolly. In her typical fussy manner, she says: “Do you know Pammi bought that phone, the one you can talk around with everyone?” (68). Krish’s idea of becoming a writer instead of continuing the Citibank job is a foolish one for Shipra massi, his mother and Pammi aunty. According to Shipra massi, it is the worst consequence of educating children too much. Otherwise, such idea must not have come to his mind because – “That South Indian girl must have told him. They love books” (68). Both the sisters fail to convince the idea of marrying Dolly. So, Shipra massi says: “Look at him, these black people have their black magic . . . Don’t be foolish, Kavita tell Pammi he will remain in Citibank and make a lot of money. Get his price properly” (68).

Nevertheless, her entry into the IIMA Ahmedabad creates ripples of joy among the youth of the institutes for she is “definitely above average. Actually well above average. In fact outlier by IIMA standards. She had perfect features, with her eyes, nose, lips and ears the right size and in right places . . . she looked like Sridevi’s smarter cousin, if there is such possibility” (4). She is Brahmin yet commoner because she
dislikes propagating the tilted glory of her Brahmin clan in her very first lunch with Krish at Topaz in Ahmedabad; she surprises both Krish and the waiter by asking chicken with bear. When Krish says that Ahmedabad is a ‘No wine zone’ due to Gandhiji’s birthplace, her reaction is very significant reflecting her character and attitudes in the conversation:

“Do you have beer?” she asked the waiter.

The waiter shook his head in horror and left.

“We are in Gujrat, there is prohibition here”, I said.

“Why?”

“Gandhiji’s birthplace”, I said.

“But Gandhiji won us freedom”, she said, playing with the little onion. “What’s the point of getting people free only to put restrictions on them?”

“Point”, I said. (6)

The conversation between Ananya and Krish is one of the most powerful comments on the changing perspective of Indian adolescent. The hinduistic belief and the age old societal system are sharply being criticized. It is an attempt to break down the barrier of social obligation set by the forefathers and builders of Indian cultural idiom. Women in India are still not extended the freedom of public means of entertainment. They are better portrayed as domestic, docile and submissive opposite sex. The observance of patriarchal, social or national obligations at the cost of their subjugation is cherished in the ideal model of society. But Krish and Ananya are the product of the new age and ideologies. So, their question on culture and tradition is obvious and spontaneous. The globalization of education system, the rise of technology and Mass communication break down the boundaries between the nations, epistemology, psychology, culture and tradition since the contemporary age feeds on a mixed ideology culled from multiple locations and variegated sources. What Ananya says in response to the argument of non-availability of chicken and beer has some truth in her feelings because the term ‘freedom’ implies any kind of freedom one can avail in his/her life. In
her understanding, it is the true interpretation, which, of course, will not be consented by the elder generation. But there are plenty of Indian youth to support such defiant ideas on social limitations or what Gandhi had dreamt in his life. So, Krish finds ‘point’ in Ananya’s reactions at the ‘Topaz’.

At the beginning of the novel, it evokes the issues on educational constraints posed before youth in institutions. There is no parallel attention to its suitable criteria as desired for their proper grooming. The IITian graduate finds difficulties with the marketing subjects while the graduate in economics with the project assignment. It is this deficiency that functions as bridge between Krish and Ananya to come closer to each other apart from the other physical and psychological urges. The conversation between Krish and Ananya on the system of education is worth observing when she fail to answer the question on utility curves despite being positioned third in her economics from Delhi University:

“I have never been so humiliated” she said.

“Nobody cares. All professors are assholes. That’s the universal truth” I offered. “At least where I come from”.

... ... ...

“I came third in the entire Delhi University. These wannabe engineer Profs have turned economics from a perfectly fine liberal arts subject to this Greek symbol junkyard” she said as she pointed to the formulae on the board.

... ... ...

“You are from IIT. You probably love these equations” she said and looked up at me. Despite her tears, she still looked pretty.

I looked at the blackboard. “Yes, I did have a fondness for algebra. It’s nothing to be ashamed of. Yet, this wasn’t the time. No, I am not a big fan. Greek symbols do take the fun out of any subject.”
“Exactly, but these profs don’t think so. They will have these equations in the test next week. I am going to flunk. And he is going to turn me into this specimen of the educated but clueless Indian student. I bet I am the staff-room discussion right now.”

“They are all frustrated,’ I said. ‘We are half their age but will earn twice as them in two years. Wouldn’t you hate an eleven-year-old if he earned double?”

(11-12)

There is a strong note of disenchantment in their conversation. The displeasure experienced at the IIT is still horrible in Krish’s memory. The system is uncomfortable for the students like them. Again, the condition at IIMA Ahmedabad is also not much different than the previous one. The vast generational gap between the teacher and the taught is reflected through their conversation. The pleasure of academic pursuit is spoiled by the dominating attitude of the professors and unwanted preoccupied mean conceptualization about the potentialities of the young generation. The new generation is viewed as doubtful, incapable and undevoted towards the academic goal while the young generation considers these professors as bossy and jealous of their bright future prospects in work spaces.

The cross-cultural negotiation is one of the most significant deliberations in the novel. Krish is a Punjabi guy with conventional mother and a disconcerted boozing father. On the other hand, Ananya is a pure Tamilian Brahmin with a strict father and bossy mother. As both of them are in live-in-relationship since their IIM days in Ahmedabad, they want to get married. But they want due approval of both the families that seems to be almost impossible as a Herculean task. For there are number of differences between the families: one is vegetarian and the other is non-vegetarian, one is north Indian and the other is south Indian, one is talkative and the other is introvert personality. Krish’s mother wants a relationship with someone Punjabi and rich inheritance, while Ananya’s parents want their daughter to marry a gentleman from Tamil Brahmin lineage only. There are number of examples how the constant oppositional reactions have destabilized the lives of the both. One such example is the conversation between Krish and his mother on the proposed marriage:
'Madrassi girl?'

‘Ananya,’ I said.

‘Stay away from her. They brainwash, these people.’

‘Mom I like her. Infact, I love her.’

‘See, I told you. They trap you,’ my mother declared.

‘Nobody has trapped me mom,’ I said as I thwacked a bhindi on the table. ‘She is a nice girl. She is smart, intelligent, good-looking. She has a good job. Why would she need to trap anyone?’ (55-56)

The contemporary Indian youth like Krish and Ananya feel comfortable in union without any hesitation for the social and cultural gap. Soulful meeting and common understanding are more important than any other thing in their lives. But their respective parents are tied to the conventionalist post they always feel proud to cherish it. Colour, caste, creed, culture and customs cannot be an obstacle for Krish and Ananya for they hardly pay value to such social beliefs and practices. But it is this particular point where voices of the two generations collide and clatter for supremacy. For Krish’s mother Ananya chooses her son for marriage because “They like North Indian men for they are fairer than the South Indians” (56). According to her, Tamilians have “A complexional complex”. Krish’s argument that Ananya “went to IIM, she is on one of the smartest girls in India . . . She is fairer than me” has no any effect to deceive her opinion. The criteria for a match is not the qualities one possesses in Indian society, it is the culture, the religion, the region, the lineage and other rites of passage that matter as more important. Being an IIM graduate, beautiful, smart, fair and sensible has no value in the society they live. But they successfully overcome their barriers towards the end by devising their smart moves.

Both of them represent the emerging youth of contemporary society- educated, smart, and sensible yet independent in their thoughts and doings. Ananya is the symbol of feminist outlook appreciated in Indian society as well. She doesn’t hesitate for a live-in-relationship, wearing, jeans, T-shirts, tops, dates, yet career conscious and smart. She is
the flag-bearer of contemporary Indian educated girl: independent and confident youthful girl.

The difference between the generations concerning the ideologies has number of connotations. Neither of the generation wants to compromise with the other. The conversation between Krish and his mother or Shipra massi reflects a wide gap prevailing between the generations of Indian society and within the members of the same family as well. The conviction of Krish’s mother is further multiplied by other members of the family such as Shipra massi. She also has similar opinion on race, ethnicity and culture. She offers Krish to seek better educated girl from their own community to pacify his temper. But Krish is determined and firmly stands his position in counter arguments with his mother and Shipra massi. Shipra massi says: “Son . . . that is all fine. But how can we marry Madrassi? Tomorrow your cousins will want to marry a Gujarati”. Yet Krish has more sensible arguments to challenge their false conventional stance and retorts: “So what? Aren’t they all Indian? Can’t they be good human beings?” Being unable to convince in any way, Shipra massi finally comments to Krish’s mother: “Your son is gone. I am sorry, but this belongs to Jayalalitha now”. (69)

The arguments of these characters are some hints on the idea of nationalism that is ever loosening its grip in the Indian psyche. The question – “What is your problem?” is acute mode of asking each generation on their respective ideologies (69). The great Indian tradition of nationalism as propounded and fostered before independence is gradually losing its thread somewhere. The elder generation wants to recoil back to its false discreteness in fragmentation whereas the young generation is genuinely ready to accept its true significance through its medium of expression and actions.

The novelist wants to explore such illustrations as means of satirical dossiers against the prevailing societal system crippling the Indian psyche. He wants to present the rise of new Indian psyche that seeks to dismantle the barriers to integrity and destroy such irrelevant social evil clasping the mind sets. It is a mode of shovelling out the practices like dowry still persistent in the larger part of India where one can find innumerable buyers and sellers of relationship at the cost of sacrificing individuality. The narrow conservatism is one of the most effective means through which a large section of
elder generation seeks to subjugate the young Indians. They look after the means to curtail the autonomy in the name of silly customs, traditions, culture, religion and region. Moreover, they want to reassert the feeling of dependency of their children even though they are grown up well and skilled enough to deal the worldly affairs independently. Krish and Ananya are merely an example in the novel. Otherwise, there are many Indian adolescents and youth whose matrimonial decisions must conform to the aspirations of not only of their parents and elders but also of their relatives like Krish’s Shipra massi and pammi aunty. It is a common approval that dictates the fate of two marriageable minds whose lives depend on each other instead of their dear one’s approval.

From the middle part of the novel, the narrative takes the readers into a couple of important episodes of Krish and Ananya’s struggle to conquer the hearts of their parents. After a prolonged battle between his duty and desire within before filling up his Citibank form seeking option of posting, Krish writes equal preference to both Delhi and Chennai entrusting God to decide the right path. He neither wants to disappoint his mother’s insistence for Delhi nor dares to miss out Ananya achingly on wait in Chennai. Ultimately, he is sent away to Chennai by his Citibank authority that he most probably wished from the bottom of his heart than Delhi as merely for the satisfaction of his mother. Anyway, he accepts his posting in Chennai and gets his accommodation at Alex Plaza, Nugabakkam. The very next day onwards, the attempts of the duo to achieve their mission accomplished are initiated. He visits Ananya’s residence for dinner on her invitation. Presumably, he is an unwelcome guest in the Swaminathan’s house. Neither of Ananya’s parents shows a good temperament for his unexpected visit. There is always a sense of outsider in their behaviour that he feels around. The distinction between the cultures evidently performs as a symbol of separate entities between the hearts. The discipline of the Swaminathans’, food habits and treatment of guests are quite different than the cultural matrices Krish is grown up with since his childhood.

Two months separation between Krish and Ananya makes the duo more intense for intimacy. They want the repetition of another similar episode they did spend in togetherness at IIMA Ahmedabad. So, they seek every opportunity to get the company of each other that sometimes take them to early walks by the Marina Beach to ride away
from the city Chennai. There are some more instances in the novel that substantiate the issue of subjugation of Indian youth. The first intimate meeting of Ananya and Krish in Chennai at Marina Beach, is one such example where they sacrifice their early morning nap for a much awaited longer companionship. Since they don’t feel secure at Ananya’s house, they expect a suitable place at the beach. But their experience is horrible because a constable watching them in one another arms threatens to take them to the police Headquarter for not abiding the code of conduct of that place. They are extremely offended for the unwanted disturbances. So, Krish elucidates his complains before Ananya: “Why do they have police headquarter’s opposite a beach?” (98). However, they are able to fix the situation by paying a fifty rupee note bribe to the policeman. They arrange another meet at Krish’s chumery one weekend on the condition of feeding chicken and beer to Ananya. Although both are grown up enough to be professional, Krish finds difficult to arrange chicken and beer. It is his extra bucks a bottle for which the shopkeeper supplies him beer even though he is under-age customer of twenty five years old. The flat he shares with other corporate members is purely a non-vegetarian neighbourhood. Wine and meat are strictly not allowed but he very shrewdly packs up the chicken and beer bottles and smuggle them to his room. It is the first intimate moment for Krish and Ananya to exchange their feelings to plan their future strategies in order to conquer the hearts of their parents. But it is very unfortunate because the landlord of the building Mr. Punnu discovers that his flat is being used by person like Krish who has dared to bring chicken, wine and ladies inside. The argument between the landlord and Krish displays how the generation gap prevails in the society. Punnu, the landlord, is strict adherent to ‘no meat – no wine – no ladies’ category of Indians while the young Indians like Krish and Ananya have easy acceptance and access to chicken, beer and friends of opposite sexes. In their opinion, those three things are what men live for anyway. It doesn’t matter whether Krish or Ananya are highly paid professionals in corporate sector. There are beliefs and practices like vegetarianism that elder Indians would love to hold on proudly. But the contemporary Indian youth want to emancipate from such age-old practices. So, there is a strong note of disappointment and rage in the voice of Krish. Neither Ananya wants to pay much heed to those elements criticizing
some young Indian girls like her for drinking wine or sparing intimate moments with the boyfriend.

It is the process of seeking reconciliation against all the differences rather than a journey of two love-birds seeking its happy ending. The novel portrays the two characters in love belonging to two separate states. Though the feeling of oneness is propagated at the national allegory, its absence in reality is the focal point the novelist wants to present before his readers. Krish and Ananya want continuation of their deep love relationship and recognition to it in societal arena. But their attempts must concede recurrently before the realities posed before them again and again. Yet the duo in love struggle to find out the thin silver lining persistent among the Indians i.e. the heart in its bare position that doesn’t understand the outer layers opaquely shelling the Indian societies across the states. So, Krish is given the responsibility of tutoring Ananya’s brother who is aspirant for the IIT. It is the only means through which Krish would be able to access the Swaminathans easily. It is his responsibility also to rekindle the feeling of oneness of India in the hearts of Ananya’s parents. The basic human instinct that pervades the interior of every human being can be exploited. It can insinuate the spontaneous outflow of feeling that actually pulsates in the hearts of those conventionalist parents. Both Krish and Ananya understand well that it is very difficult to pierce down the obstacles of customs, cultures, languages and regional sentiments. However, the demand of their hearts does not want to give in. Krish witnesses the disappointment and resentment of Ananya’s parents for his presence. He is able to distinguish the differences between Ananya and himself. Ananya’s parents can deduce the relationship between Krish and their daughter yet they want their daughter’s marriage with someone in their own community. So, it is a very disheartening moment for Krish to witness Harish, a Tamilian in US based professional, seeking hands of Ananya for marriage. He is at a very critical crossroad when Ananya’s father pleads with folded hands: “Don’t meet Ananya too much. We are simple people, we don’t say much. But don’t spoil her name in our community. I know you are classmates and you are helping Manju. We can be grateful, we can feed you, but we can’t let Ananya marry you” (109). Thus, he is caught between sympathy for an elderly man pleading before him and his sincere love demanding due recognition.
It is very important to convince parents and relatives in Indian societies in order to get married into a family. There should be mutual agreement and satisfaction between the families which is really a herculean task to obtain in an inter-community marriage. So, Krish has to convince his girlfriend Ananya’s parents and the only brother Manju. There are remarkable phases in Krish’s mission to marriage at the Swaminathans – as a tutor to Manju, as an assistant to Mr. Swaminathan in his job, and as a promoter to Mrs. Swaminathan’s singing talent. He is greatly acknowledged by the Swaminathans as they have particular enchantment towards the IITians. So, it is not much a big deal to obtain the tutorship of their only son Manju and opening a safe and regular access to Ananya. But it is more than the limit of tolerance for Krish to earn the least attention from Ananya’s father; for he is always a less-speaker, self-possessed and an elderly disposition. The day he folds his hands before Krish appealing for distance from Ananya, Krish loses the courage to cope up with the situation. However, he is able to shift attention of Swaminathans from his position as unwanted pest to considerable guest tutor. His diligence carrying overloaded work schedules at his Citibank at days and Swaminathans at nights for a week cracks the ice between Krish and his would be in-laws. He sacrifices his time and sleep for this purpose. He is not only able to impress Ananya’s father by preparing the PowerPoint presentation for him but he is also able to share drinks and wear Swaminathan’s clothes at his home. By the end of the task, he at least expects the position of a ‘good boy’ than a really good boy like Harish, the guy seeking Ananya’s hand for marriage.

Again, he very shrewdly and also stealthily fits Ananya’s mother into a cultural programme organized by the Citibank at the ‘Fisherman’s Cove’ resort. He witnessed Ananya’s mother’s weakness for music. While proposing for the cultural programme at the Citibank office, somewhere he builds up an idea for fixing a suitable space for Ananya’s mother. The programme is very grand in scale as it is featuring the musical maestros like Balasubramaniam and Hariharan but he hides the new upcoming talent to be another attraction of the programme from everybody. It is very hard to convince Ananya’s mother for she had never sung any popular number. She outrightly rejects the idea of Krish and doesn’t agree to share the stage with great personalities like Balasubramaniam and Hariharan. Finally, however, Krish is successful to convince her.
He supplies her some popular bollywood and Tamil music CDs for her rehearsal. Everything is arranged very secretly. Neither Ananya nor her father or even Manju could imagine that the programme is also featuring Radha i.e. Ananya’s mother. She lives home for a couple of days to her relatives before the programme. When everybody including Ananya, her father and Manju occupy their seats, it is a moment of disbelief for all of them as Mrs Swaminathan appears for the performance. She sings some popular numbers and the audience greatly applauds her performance. The Swaminathans are surprised to witness such a hidden talent of their own family member.

Krish is successful to earn consideration of the Swaminathans. As he is satisfied on the situation under control, he plans a fresh proposal to the members of Ananya’s family at the ‘Raintree’. The utterances of Krish just before the proposal is the expression of contemporary youth tossed between the cultures and communities. He takes utmost care to get the things clarified in his final shot and says:

We thought our love is enough reason for us to get married . . . Well, we were wrong . . . We could have run away. We could have forced our decision on you. However, Ananya told me she had this dream of both sets of parents smiling on our wedding. And so, I want to see if we can do that. Also, I didn’t think we had done anything wrong that we had to run away . . . And ever since I came to Chennai, I have tried to be accepted by you. I don’t expect you to love me like you do Harish, but at least you can accept me. . . . And while you may not love me, I don’t want you to merely tolerate me either . . . Keeping all that in mind, considering your daughter’s happiness and taking a view of what you know of me . . . I, Krish Malhotra, would like to propose to all of you. Will all of you marry me? (182-183)

His utterances are the beautiful illustrations of social sensibilities of modern Indian youth. The elder generation declares the new generation as rebellious, agitated and disrespectful. They are, of course, agitated within and without yet they have the zeal to resolve the problem of differences in their own fashion. What Krish says is nothing but the stark reality that the elders must appreciate. It is the product of giving time to the new generation that successfully nullifies their prejudiced opinion on the new generation.
They are able to know the keen bondage still sparkling within the hearts despite the superficial distinctions. All the four rings brought by Krish from the best jeweler in Chennai for each member of the Swaminathans confirm the speculations that it is not merely a girl’s or boy’s acceptance but the acceptance of its each member of the family is mandatory in a marriage between two persons belonging to different cultures, communities and states. They accept the marriage proposal of Krish with their residual doubts on his parents as their experience with his mother during the convocation had already been horrible.

After conquering hearts of the Swaminathans by Krish, it is the turn of Ananya to earn the favour of the Punjabis of Delhi; the relatives of Krish. So, she spares a week in Delhi on the pretext of official visit and accompanies Krish along as the later is transferred back to Delhi after his mission accomplished with the Swaminathans. But her visit is obviously unwelcome to Krish’s mother or her own parents as she has resentment over the issue since the day she has heard about Ananya’s Tamilian background. She ignores even her presence at the Delhi airport. She doesn’t let loose an opportunity to hurt her feelings by implying her possible spell cast on Krish. She doesn’t like the idea of making Ananya her guest for a day. But Krish manages to impose and let her tolerate for he wants consistent interaction between Ananya and his mother for timely reconciliation.

It is a common expectation of majority of the mother-in-laws in India that their daughter-in-laws assume the role of a good cook and caretaker. But Ananya whom Krish intentionally encourages to cook dinner for everybody, she miserably fails. She ends up cutting her finger, burning spices and proving herself a bad match to the particularly conscious foodies in a typical Punjabi family. Ananya is no way a docile girl comparable to Sita and Savitri imprinted in Indian imagination. She retaliates to any comment hurting her self-respect. There are some points Krish’s mother is privileged to re-assert her as a mismatch to Krish. Ananya’s experience with the Malhotras is also not even to the level of social etiquettes by Indian standard. Krish’s father doesn’t take pain at least to respond her greetings as guest at home. Instead, he quarrels with his wife for not informing about the new visitor at home. The very next day, she is shifted to her company’s guest house but Krish takes her to his cousin Minti’s Sagan ceremony and later at wedding at the ‘Taj
Palace Hotel’ so that she is introduced before the relatives being one of the most suitable occasions of the Punjabis where all the important relatives of the family throng. She is hardly noticed by the elders as they knew that she is more than a friend to Krish and has cast her spell on North Indian fair complexioned Punjabi guy Krish. But she is able to break their ‘complexion – complex’ with her stunning appearance. Everybody acknowledges her beauty with slight biases but the younger cousins befriend her instantly. On the wedding day, she witnesses typical Punjabi marriage ceremony with all its verbosity and gaiety. The dowry system prevalent in their society is really shocking for her. She sees how Minti’s father Jassimama takes the risk of a fat loan for such grand ceremony in a five star hotel. She watches everything before her eyes – the helpless father and all the closest relatives on the verge of losing their self-respect before the groom and his party. The father of the groom shows displeasure and refuses to proceed with the marriage rituals only because Minti’s father has gifted him a Hyundai Santro instead of an Accent car. They demand an immediate cash of the same value before proceeding for the rituals. Since everyone declines the prayer of Minti’s father for immediate support with the huge cash, the women relatives remove their jewelleries and put forward as ransom for the car. But Ananya feels discomfort and interferes in their family matter although Krish pleads not to do so fearing his own relationship in danger. She requests the elder relatives of Krish to solve the problem through young generations’ ways. She summons all the young relatives of both the parties including the Duke the groom and Minti the bride. She ensures annihilation of Duke’s inner being, his pride holding the status of the boy’s party, the symbolic of patriarchal dominance. She lets him realize how mean he is by doing so. Anaya reminds the groom about his accumulated repressed power of youth. The groom capably regains his senses and declines any other demands and also convinces his parents as well not to impose anymore burden to the bride’s family. He says his greedy parents that he wants a life-partner not luxuries. Thus the problem of the wedding is resolved out by Ananya’s efforts and courage. It is a great relief for the entire relatives. They appreciate her for helping them retain their family reputation in the community. Since the relatives find her a nice girl, there remains nothing significant for Krish’s mother to adhere with the previous stance. She withdraws her rigidity after a few sessions of protests. By the time Ananya returns to Chennai, Krish
is able to earn the consent of his mother and informs Ananya about this. Krish doesn’t feel the necessity of his father in his marriage due to unresolved issues and incompatibility with his father that has been chasing him throughout his childhood to young adulthood.

The great re-union programme between the families is arranged in Goa accordingly. But Krish’s mother, Kavitaji, is unfortunately still preoccupied with her insistence to meet the Swaminathans. She expects a Punjabi respond in terms of traditional practices prevalent in her society which is very much unknown to Ananya’s parents. As a part of formal Punjabi initiation, she offers a sari to Ananya’s mother which she accepts with due acknowledgement. When her expectation of a return gift doesn’t come up, she bitterly reacts before Krish and cites the probability of huge return in case the relationship would have progressed in her own Punjabi community. Ananya’s parents unaware of such practices remain unconcerned until Krish lets Ananya know about it.

The outspoken nature of Krish’s mother offends Ananya’s parents terribly in the dining hall of the five-star hotel as she doesn’t refrain from embarrassing the family with sharp comments on their typical nature, culture and community. Ananya’s parents demand immediate apology from her which she declines outright. When Ananya has a little to say in reminding her faults, she starts her drama before Krish. She claims Ananya as misfit since she is not a docile type observing mother-in-laws at finger points. She is not the type ready to abide by her mother-in-law anyway. Krish is badly caught between duty and love. He pleads Ananya to fetch her parents for a final truce through one to one interface. But unfortunately Ananya overhears the conversation between the mother and the son that she doesn’t want her daughter-in-law to raise voice or answer her back. She has to be under her thumb. In order to control her temperament he adds that she can make her toe the line but be patient for the moment. Ananya and her parents just arriving for a truce misunderstand about Krish’s opinion. She breaks up her relationship on her misconception and completely slams down communication with Krish thereafter.

Since the day of his break-up with Ananya, Krish suffers from depression, sleeplessness and lowliness. He forgets to take care of anything – his appearance, food, rest and normal conversation. In order to avoid his intensity of miserable feelings, he
invests most of his times in his office. His devotion to time at the office contributes to achieve double than the target set before him. He enters home late night and keeps himself awake longing for Ananya. His deplorable condition woes his mother badly. She instructs him to take his lunch properly but he abandons it in his bag till it stinks. She even offers to arrange a meeting with some good Punjabi family for marriage. In between, he tries his best to communicate Ananya at home but nobody offers the phone to her. He also tries everyday to get a conversation at her office number but she doesn’t respond properly. Rather she suggests him to go ahead and spare her to come up with her condition. When every trial is futile, he flies to Chennai for a day’s conversation with Ananya. But she despises him and warns him not to create a scene. Helpless and fatigued, he visits his Chennai office, having still few hours in his hand for his return flight, and meets his former boss Bala. He is immediately recognized by Bala that he is not well. So, he suggests him to consult a doctor of his acquaintance. When the doctor understands that it is a psychological condition rather than the symptom of some disease, he sends him to meet a lady psychiatrist, doctor Iyer. She understands his psychosomatic disorder and let him release his mind by explaining the reason behind his turbulent cause. Reluctantly, he relates the story of his love before the doctor which is a part of her merely talking cure therapy. Back at home, he is once again caught up with more intense feelings mixed up in deadly longing for Ananya and deprivation as well. His relationship with his biological father is still unresolved and the distance from his mother soaks his life in hell. Unaware of anything, he helps his father one day by typing a couple of letters to his pensioner’s office. The next day his father returns home late. He doesn’t respond to the insulting comment of Krish and sleeps in his room. The very next early morning he is taken aback to hear Ananya’s excited voice over telephone. He is yet to understand whether it’s real, she informs him the biggest news that is more than enough to banish his horrible state of depression. She tells him about his father’s visit to their house in Chennai and settling the marriage proposal of the duo. He also even apologized on behalf for anything happened in the past. Krish hardly believes that everything has been normalized. His heart is filled with special awe and affection for his father whom he has been denouncing at all for all these twenty four years. It is the greatest moment of his life to have the opportunity to unburden his two heavier inner wounds – one, his re-settlement with his love life and –
two, melting down of hatred and resentment towards his father. He could never disclose his heart about his relationship with his father not even with his girl-friend Ananya. It is only with a guruji of Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, he couldn’t help. It was a moment of trance that compelled him to unleash the untold story of his relationship with father disturbing his mind and soul since his childhood. There was a sense of guilt and remorse dipped within his subjectivity. But the mystical urge and illuminating touch of the Ashram’s Guruji helped him locate the pain he had been carrying throughout his life. He made Krish understand that it was not the relationship with Ananya or the complexities of union but his unburdened pangs hidden under the debris of his psyche keeping him awake and worried. So, he finds an opportunity and occasion at the same time to adopt forgiveness he has been looking for to patch up with his father. Without any delay he thanks his father heartily and acknowledges his importance in his life.

Finally, his marriage is solemnized purely in Tamil customs accompanied by all his important relatives. Though his father declined to participate at the beginning for his other relatives’ probable participation, he joins them the night before the marriage.

Nevertheless, the entire novel is a process to delineate the trivialities, formalities and individualistic idiosyncrasies that erect a boundary between two different communities, cultures, regions, languages, customs and prejudices. The marriage of Minti in Delhi or marriage of Krish and Ananya in Chennai represent how the cultural discreteness of each community prevents in assimilation. Otherwise, the marriage as an institution has nothing but the only motive of soulful union of two people irrespective of any differences between the couple.

On his way to Chennai along with his relative in Rajdhani Express, he has enormous feelings wobbled up in his mind and unknowingly he engages into self-retrospection about his past and the glaring situations that he has overcome throughout the year. As he comes outside to stand at the compartment door, the wave of feelings in him forays important significance on the theme of the novel on which the whole novel is constructed:
The train whizzed past Agra, Gwalior and Jhansi over the next few hours. I still had a day to go as the train traversed through this huge country, cutting through the states I had battled for the last year. These states make up our nation. These states also divide our nation. And in some cases, these states play havoc in our love lives. (248)

His journey by train for the wedding ceremony is symbolic of his long struggle to decrease the distance between the states to arrive at his destination. It is a metaphor to be groveled out that a nation accommodates all the citizens irrespective of cultural, communal or regional affiliations yet the national bonding is seamlessly apart between two people of two separate states. The differences recurrently poised before Krish and Ananya by their elders are never valid if perceived as humankind or at least as one national. For Kavitaji, it is the question of gifts and other worldly things that matters more important than the feelings of her son’s love for someone. She and her relatives consider food, DJ music and gifts as the sign of people possessing better hearts and society. She doesn’t like Mrs Swaminathan considering her as arrogant whereas she ignores her own follies like over-possessiveness, temperamental and fussy attitudes. The Swaminathans are quiet people to such an extent that even her daughter considers them as ‘weird people’. It is not the proper estimation of each other between the families that constructs a bridge between them. Culture, community, customs, states and language are merely pretexts not to identify that intuitional affinity between the hearts. This is where the contemporary Indian youth like Krish and Ananya are defiant and develop the sense of deprivation of their needs. The speech delivered by Ananya’s father on the wedding party night is the most befitting part of the novel to sum up the context:

I know the number one topic all of you have discussed in this party – why is Swami marrying his daughter to a North Indian fellow? I know it, as we would have done the same . . . In fact when Ananya first told us about Krish, we were quite upset. As all Tamilians know, we are so proud of our own culture. We also thought our daughter is one in a million; she will get the best of boys in our own community. Why must she go for a Punjabi boy? . . . We did our best to discourage her. We didn’t treat Krish well even though he moved to Chennai for
us. We even showed her Tamil boys. But you know kids of today, they do what they want to do . . . So why do parents object to this? It is not only about another community. It is the fact your daughter has found a boy for herself. We as parents feel disobeyed, left out and disappointed. We bring our children up from babies to adults, how can they ignore us like this? All our frustration comes out in anger. How much we hate love marriages, isn’t it? . . . But we forget that this has happened because your child had love to give to someone in this world. Is that such a bad thing? Where did the child learn to love? From us, after all, the person they loved first is you . . . Actually, the choice is simple. When your child decides to love a new person, you can either see it as a chance to hate some people – the person they choose and their families. Which is what we did for a while. However, you can also see it as a chance to love some more people. And since when did loving more people become a bad thing? . . . Yes, Tamilian in me is a little disappointed. But the Indian in me is quite happy. And more than anything, the human being in me is happy. After all, we’re decided to use this opportunity to create more loved ones for ourselves. (265-266)

Mr. Swaminathan’s delivery becomes the voice of newly enlightened generation of elders providing space for the aspirations and desires of the contemporary modern Indian youth. There is nothing important than making inner being happy and establish that fathomless bondage between peoples. Voice of Krish and Ananya is the message to reconstruct the idea of Indian nationalism rejecting all the differences whatever has been prevalent between culture, communities and states. They set the foundation of the new Indian society by earning their successful union. The last line in the epilogue of the novel in response to the nurse who asks what will be the state of the newly born twins as both the parents belong to two different states, substantiates this initiation. So, Krish declares: “They’ll be from a state called India” (269).