Conclusion

The novelists undertaken in this thesis belong to three different categories if we consider the subject-matter, characterization, narrative technique, plot-construction and tropes. Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee and Chetan Bhagat explore on multiple dimensions in terms of their subject-matters in the novels. However, the issues of adolescents and youth and successive growth at different level reveal some distinctive powerful elements that fuel to the maturation process of the respective characters. The manifestations accrued from various institutions, environment and situations confer particular identities quite distinctively identifiable in the characters. If Ghosh complicates by shrouding into a wide range of peripheries, Chatterjee explores into the hidden terrain of sexual orientations delving into the human psyche and Bhagat seeks voicing for the contemporary new generations of adolescents and youth. Hence, the select novels studied in this thesis obviously represent a panoramic view on Indian adolescents and youth culled from the historical past to the present realistic voice echoed in the 21st century of modern India.

It will be a repetition of the concepts discussed in the chapter I entitled ‘Theoretical Issues Concerning Adolescence and Youth’ of this thesis that adolescents and youth may not suffer from any monolithic psychosocial or psychosexual problems. He/she may suffer from any range of internalizing or externalizing disorders in this period. Even what Freud, Hall or Rousseau pointed out about all the manifestations emanated from sexual orientations also cannot be thoroughly conceded especially in the characters of the novels studied in this thesis. So, the multi-dimensional contexts of these select novels reveal that the period of adolescence and youth are highly problematic stage of development in human life-cycle. Each individual suffer from diversified problems that always pose the question of comprehensive outlook for compartmentalizing into a particular tapestry. The theoretical conceptualizations appear as only the means to generalize the ideas rather than absolute synthesis. Accordingly, the select novels occupy distinctive positions separately instead of accommodating them into a particular genre or tradition.
The Shadow lines, grappled with variations in its representations, is imbued with both comparative and contrastive characters. What makes the novel very remarkable is Ghosh’s potent power to revamp the adolescents and youth of three generations at a stretch. His frequent back and forth movement in the narrative is illusive yet shrewd mode to pierce into the historical past. Ghosh attempts to display the gradual transformation of adolescents and youth under the rising historical novelties according to the manifestations that contingently operate to construct and reconstruct ideologies through developmental process. It is very conspicuous to observe in The Shadow Lines that majority of the characters are made to grow in particular temporal conditions of three generations each respectively. The transnational movement of the characters enhances the necessity of universal growth irrespective of nation/state. The novelist very minutely highlights on the mode of maturation process of the first generation through retrospective dialogism or memory. Lionel Tresawsen or Justice Datta-Chaudhuri do not appear in flesh and blood in the narrative but their very existence and mode of maturation are mandated/mediated by some other younger generation characters. The period of their growth is characterised by adventure, invention and courage of the westerners and recent arrival of prevalent English snobbery of the British in India. The friendship bondage between Justice Datta-Chaudhuri and Lionel Tresawsen is the announcement of reciprocal good will between the occidents and the orients. It implies the gradual innovative relationship negating the colonizer/colonized binary. Their relationship reconstructs a new ideology against doubts, hatred and dissidence of pre-independence India that successively finds further ramifications in the later generations. Hence, the second generation characters of India like Mayadebi or her husband do not feel discomfort to be the guest of the Prices in London or other westerners. Here, of course, the narrator’s Tha’mma is exceptional as she refuses to concede the colonial regime or other ideological influences. She continues to be traditional nationalist till her death even though her grandson, the narrator, in spite of her all impositions is somehow allured towards the European culture, people and ideologies. Nevertheless, the foundational relationship of the first generation shifts towards the second generation characters and then impressively supersedes the typical Indian psyche of the third generation in the long run. These characters either directly or indirectly admire the European culture, people and
their ideologies. The Manichean concept of vulture in Fanon’s discourse is reinforced in this context. However, it is not through enforcement but by individual choice like Tridib or Ila. Tridib is admirer in seclusion but Ila is headlong splashed into it by her choice. Similarly, the narrator has admiration for it but perennial repression under the parentage of his maturation period makes him timid to flaunt off. Finally, of course, he admits his allurement and finds solace with May in his arms. Like the narrator’s Tha’mma, another third generation character Robi, is exceptional although his childhood experiences the western culture. His return to India for study strongly constructs his Indian being and he remains so in the novel.

*The Circle of Reason* stands apart as the work of a set of objectives. The novel discusses the growth of adolescents from different angle than any other novel in his oeuvre. It is an attempt to represent the impossibility of maturation against all hostile people and environment. The novelist convincingly displays inconsiderate and improbable conditioning that may aggravate the proper growth from adolescence to adulthood. The novel is provocative in the sense that neither of the character in postcolonial period of India attains reasonable psychological maturity. Their growth is merely physical but the cognitive and psychological growth is very slow and rare. It doesn’t matter whether these characters are educated or not because neither of them is capable to ascertain his/her identity in the society. Alu, Maya and Rakhal are obviously too potential in their respective work fields. Alu is a very good trainee and super weaver in the next level. Maya is a good trainer, weaver and skilled in housekeeping jobs. Likewise, Rakhal is a good weaver, an expert salesman and owner of great physical strength. Yet all of them are fail cases only because they are unfortunately deprived of better opportunities, training and scope since childhood. Their mode of parenting is piteously improper, full of obstacles and misjudgements. These characters are either illiterate or just minimal literate but Jyoti Das is highly qualified and very potential yet he is unable to establish his identity. He is a police officer recruited through respectable Civil Service Examination but he does not get the scope and opportunity for flourishment as his professional choice is taken against his will. All these youthful characters are either marred by unfavourable conditions in their work fields or grow out of unsuitable childhood backgrounds. They are never given the deserving conditions since their
childhood so that they are capable to ascertain their identities in successive period of their lives. The maturation process is, as if, underscored by relentless temporal exerts against anything.

The world of Chatterjee’s novels is basically a detour through alienation, regression and postcolonial hangover of the late twentieth century adolescents and youth of India. His novels are the depiction of realistic social conditions of the time and its psychological underpinnings that irrevocably constructs ground for the growth of children making them typical byproduct of the period. The adolescents and youth of Chatterjee’s novels are not integrated persons. The maturation of such characters is characterized by a large number of social, historical, political and filial accumulations to be reflected in individual subjectivity. The absence of struggle to construct identity in the societal arena is a very conspicuous motif in the novels. Even though the novelist makes his narrative tell the saga of an individual from childhood to adulthood, his characters become victims of pitfalls and ditches obstructing comfortable assertion of their identity. Some of the important issues unavoidable in the narrative are parenting, peer relationship, state apparatuses, postcolonialism, and individual negotiation that are made to operate relentlessly to represent the typical conditions of deviated youth of the contemporary time.

*English, August,* written in coming of age tradition, is the genuine representation of alienated and misled youth of contemporary India whose life if largely shadowed by the pull between the ethoses of modernity and tradition. It is further complicated by the fondness of colonial desire and individual needs. The characters’ attempt to assert their identities are illusional by the pervasive colonial narratives and prevalent essence of hinduistic society of India. More the characters seek to recognize the right path further they are pushed away under the illumined socio-political temporalities of the period. No any character right from the so called protagonist Agastya and his friends like Dhrubo, Prashant, Renu and Neera to Bhatia, Sathe and Kumar can be identified as integrated being. They actually lead the life of duality – one in superficial abstract plank and another in psychological inner realities. The world can witness their false being they do present before and the real being inside the shell never unveiled before the world.
The inner world of *English, August* is further intensified to the extreme point in *Weight Loss* because the inner world here is more heinous, darker and too filthy. If sexual impulse in *English, August* is one of the most important layers in identity construction, it is the supreme agency that drives the wheel of the novel *Weight Loss*. Chatterjee leads into the darker terrain of human psyche that may be so disfigured, un-placid, mean and plagued. The author very efficaciously manipulates the narrative by preparing the context for fostering of childhood sexuality. The ground is very authentically founded to display the orientation of bisexuality in a growing child of transformative age from childhood to early adolescence. The novel presents all the youthful characters as sexually driven social misfits and individually sterilized morons. The general discourse in an adolescent novel like – education, child-rearing, peer relationship, family or social institutions obviously claim presence but the sexual orientation of the adolescents and its successive impact in their later lives has greater design. The protagonist Bhola is a confused adolescent since his schooling days. His ultimate growth is ever stemmed by his family, school and society. Even though he is a student of of one of the poshest schools in the city, he is a deprived child. The circumstances created before him is as detrimental as anything. He is confused whether he is a male or female, a real being or merely a shadow in automation. He cannot recognize his actual desire whether it is for a particular person, object or feelings till the end. His desire has no specific form and destination. The subjectivity formation that starts from his childhood onwards and through schools, college and profession has no integration because he is ever driven by an unrequited desire for the unknown. His pursuit for objective desire in the form of Moti is only a search of awkward illusion. The deformed sexual orientations inherited in childhood constantly swings from one to the other. The pursuit is complete in MKMZAP College where he meets Moti. But his object of desire is deceitful as he gradually changes its goal in some other figures of both male and female sexes. Other young characters like Dosto, Anin, Moti and Titli also constantly run after something unfathomable. The desire of these individuals is also characterized by unusual and unknown. Even the grown up characters like Dr. Borkar, Dosto’s uncle, the teacher Anthony, Miss Jeremiah, the Sadhu, Gopinath and Mrs. Manchanda suffer from the desire for the unknown. In fact, the source of origin of their desire is also somehow or the other has its linkage with the
sexual objects. The range of intensity is dependent on the respective background they come across that decides their fate in due course. Redundant and deformed sexual practice of Bhola compensates more than he has ever presumed. Comparatively, the innocent characters like Moti and Titli forfeit much more than they can afford due to their stupidity and helplessness. Accordingly, Dosto, Anin and Bhola attain their ultimate neurotic state of mind towards the end of the novel.

The perspective enunciated in the novels of the late 20th century is replaced by new outlook on the issues of adolescents and youth at the beginning of the new millennium. Among the host of new generation writers, Chetan Bhagat becomes the voice of contemporary adolescents and youth. The enigmatic multivalent problems are acutely expressed through his novels. The publication of *Five Point Someone* (2004) drives adolescents and youth of India crazy as it beautifully contests the problems of the young generation. Bhagat raises his voice against all the repressive agents ever at work to despoil the ambition, desire and deserving growth. The raging issues that avert the negotiation of the young generation in institutions, society and family are potently raised through dialogic construction of pertinent idioms. The author’s personal experience in premiere institutions and its reproduction in conformity of the subjects in *Five Point Someone* demands self-acclaimed genuinity. The narrative centred on the IIT Delhi is the best location to transgress into the psychological realm of adolescents and youth because such institutions accommodate the highly ambitious young people from across the nation. So, the inner tumults and twists infringed by the desire of various configurations can be genuinely represented. The IIT Delhi is a metaphor where the middle adolescents are expected to lead a life of self-contentment, abundance and better flourishing opportunities but actually it is not. Ryan, Hari, Alok and any other IITians have their different ambitions, wants, desire and backgrounds but the IIT seems to be inefficient to contend their issues and problems adequately. Their life in the institution is predestined automated machines without any scope for individual choices. The youthful characters like vagrant Ryan to the popular bookworm student Venkat feel their lives extremely superimposed. The system completely ignores the inherent potentials of each individual. The life in the chains of the IIT system is further jeopardized by their desire particular objects in one hand and haunting memory of childhood on the other. Bhagat gives recurrent impressions
in the novel that the past of an adolescent plays a vital role in negotiating the future challenges. Ryan’s separation from his parents, Hari’s scary childhood under military-like discipline and Alok’s poverty-ridden helpless conditions are always at work in their future resolutions and activities.

If *Five Point Someone* is about the issues of middle adolescents, *Two State* is notable work as the voice of late adolescents or youth. The novelist harps mainly on four pinpoints – parent-child relationship, independent choice, vocational tensions and cross-cultural mitigation. In *Two States* as in *Five Point Someone* or other novels of Bhagat, he announces the quiescence of the decades long colonial and post-colonial tensions and hangover of the last century that have been so inevitable as one of themes in the writings of Indian English Literature. Alienation and aimlessness are replaced by confident, smart and balanced youth of the 21st century of India. The generation knows well to speak for individual wants. He/she is shrewd enough to choose, determine and pave the way for ownself. They can assert their autonomy and chosen identity through planned hard work. If there is any tinge of repression in their subjectivity then it is just momentary because they are independent youth. They never retreat to quench their primordial desire or any such pressing aspirations inculcated in inner psyche. Krish and Ananya are the representatives of contemporary India propagating the renewed ideologies of modern, globalised techno-skilled generation. They break down the conventional boundary and the false social realities segmenting the society against the idea of nationalism. Here again, IIM Ahmedabad is a centre that promises more autonomy with comparatively lesser constraints for the youth on the verge of final preparation to define individual identity statuses. The problem of incompatible institutional system is persistent of course, but not to that degree to overall displeasure of the emerging young adults. The difference between male and female as separate and absolute entity prohibited for any premarital physical relationship loses its significance in this novel. It is a normal orientation for the youth and they are not hesitant to maintain a live-in-relationship while still they pursue their education or vocation. More than that, *Two States* as the title indicates, in fact, represents two separate spaces with particular ethno-cultural disposition that bridges the differences through these youth characters. The impossibility in assimilation of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and locational differences is rejected by the marriage of Punjabi guy
Krish and Tamilian Brahmin girl Ananya. Throughout the novel, Bhagat argumentatively voices against conventionality and the necessity of reformation in society, institution, ideological stances, attitude and fresh outlook to make the nation congenial to the adolescents and youth.

Whatsoever, the novels studied in this thesis display distinct division in characteristic features contained according to the historical development of the time and its compelling influences on each novel produced in particular time. It may be admitted without any doubt that colonial/postcolonial background plays very significant role in driving the force of these novels. Amitav Ghosh avoids to be called as postcolonial writer in *A Correspondence on Provincializing Europe* with Dipesh Chakrabarty. But most of his novels are constructed around these temporalities especially in the novels about India and its people. Again, Chatterjee who is a bureaucrat of Civil Service just after three decades of independence observed the impact of colonialism persistent that he necessarily constructs the plots of his novels. Although the intensity of this background is irresistible in constructing the subjectivities of adolescents and youth in the select novels of Ghosh and Chatterjee, the grip is very feeble in Bhagat’s new generation characters. The glorification of western and American culture so perceptible through language, dress and behaviour of the characters in Ghosh and Chatterjee lose its importance in Bhagat’s characters. Comparatively, Bhagat’s characters are culturally sensible and they do not want to reject the society and institutions outright.

The select novels in this project display a commonality at least with regard to childhood memory. *The Shadow Lines* is a novel in recurrent interplay of memory that shapes the foliage of all the three generation characters. The childhood experiences are recalled in young adulthood and often take perverted forms. The long repressed images of childhood return as monstrous to influence their identity construction. Ruth Parkin Gounelas in his text *Literature and Psychoanalysis: Intertextual Reading* (2001) says that the unmediated desires of childhood resurface when the individual recurrently feels his void. He wants to explore it through his fantasy, dreams and activities. *The Shadow Lines* projects Tridib, the narrator, Ila and Tha’mma as the individuals whose later lives are largely affected by the memory of the past. Even Agastya and his friends in *English,*
August are badly simmered by the memories of childhood experiences. This constantly diverts their attention from vocational and social responsibilities. The childhood memory so deeply ingrained in their inner self as if they are unable to breathe without recuperating its presence in their life journey. Tridib, the narrator, Ila, May, Nick or even Tha’mma run after the object/image that has permanent impression in their inner psyche. The Circle of Reason is also an endless chase about the object that remains suspended throughout the extremities and oddities experienced continually. In due course, the characters either meet their destituteness, death or continue the chase. Alu’s chase for the two sewing machines invites disastrous consequence to his life and cohorts. Again in Chatterjee’s English, August, the childhood desire to be like Anglos and Tibs hurl the characters down into the lives of indetermination and dissatisfaction. Agastya, Dhrubo, Neera, Renu, Bhatia, Gandhi and Dr Multani are professionally successful in the society. But there is hardly a tincture of happiness, satisfaction and stability in their individual lives. Similarly, Weight Loss though considered as dark humour, it is essentially the childhood memory that is contingent to lead the protagonist Bhola to the world of heinous incest and debauchery. Lacan’s concept of me’connaissance or misrecognition is in acquiescence with the childhood of Bhola in Weight Loss. Whenever he attempts to identify his object of desire on someone, he is counterfeit. Everywhere he finds that he is not like the object. He is made to believe that he is different. He is not given the recognition as one of them either. So, he runs after one object of desire to the other entire his life till he attains his most pathetic ultimate death in neurosis. Again, Bhagat’s Five Point Someone is also founded on childhood memory that makes Ryan disinterested towards his responsibilities. Hari is timid because his childhood memory reminds him the consequence of any misdeeds. Alok cannot participate in friendship frolics because he has experienced the worst days of his childhood he is preoccupied with and he wants to change the future at any cost. In Two States Krish’s mind is not tranquil due to his conflict with father until he realizes its protuberance through the Guruji of Aurobindo’s Ashram in Pondicherry.

Besides, the theme of incest is another lurking issue that runs as undercurrent force through the novels of Ghosh and Chatterjee. In The Shadow Lines the narrator appears to be a very simple guy always being inspired by the words and actions of his
Tridib kaku, develops strong desire for his own cousin sister Ila. In Freud’s concept the incestuous relationship refers to the sexual relationship between a male child and mother basically. The mother-child sexual relationship is never acknowledged in social reality. Hence, such relationship often occurs behind the common people’s knowledge. It is a punishable offence. But this concept is gradually broadened up in later psychoanalytic discourses and presently it encompasses any relationship unacceptable between the respective blood relatives in accordance to particular social norms of that space. So, the narrator’s relationship with Ila in a Hinduistic society is always unacceptable considering it to be incestuous. In *The Circle of Reason*, Alu is an irresolute boy but he is tantalized and seduced by the motherly figure Zindi no matter in what condition does it takes place. The novel *English, August* has no direct articulation about the incestuous relationship. But Agastya’s shameless utterance ‘for a quickie’ with his friend Dhrubo’s mother is no way a permissible object of desire for a friend’s mother shares similar respect in Indian imagination as ordained to one’s biological mother. His articulation is the expression of hidden desire in his sub-conscious. In the same vein, Bholo’s sexual relationship with Mrs Manchanda is never permissible or considerable as sacred. Bholo’s extreme moral erosion is reflected to have a relationship with Mrs Manchanda because he often finds the image of his own biological mother in her face. It is made more pungent when his own small daughter’s body is stained with his sperm. However, Bhagat’s novels are free from the theme of incest though he is quite open to heterosexual relationship even in premarital stage of adolescents and youth.

Moreover, power/repression dynamics is another conspicuous theme in the select novels of this thesis. It permeates through the novels intertwined with the major issues of adolescents and youth such as – family, institutions, individuality, desires, ambitions, vocations, sexuality and society. It is very significant to observe that the novels of Ghosh and Chatterjee navigate power/repression dynamics as postulated by Althusser. The Marxist theorist Althusser identified that power is mainly operative from the superior to the inferior. The individuals are viewed as merely toys that the power is exerted upon by the superior. It is mainly possessed by the institutions to oppress the individuals of the society. The youthful characters of Ghosh and Chatterjee are repressed by such institutions in the novels for which they can never profess their identity. They keep on
prying their desires and aspirations never to attain final sense of accomplishment. In
contrary to that Foucault’s idea of power is progressive in nature because the repression of
institutions is never static; it is reproductive of new behaviours. It always dissipates the
oppression through contest and analysis. Since power is relational, it comes from all
directions and circulates everywhere. The characters of Bhagat are also well-equipped
powerful young generation. So, the oppressive power exerted by the institutions and
society attempts to repress them in vain. They analyze and contest it to mend their own
way.

The wide range of operational aspects counted at the best possible manner, there
is, of course, strong ground to relinquish the conceptualization of Deleuze and Guattari
that identity construction in every temporal condition irrespective of its exigent
emissaries, is rhizomatic and ever transient. That identity of adolescents and youth is
fluid and ever in process of reconstruction can be a generalised idea. The concept of
integrated subjectivity with regard to adolescents and youth is real only in metaphoric
conjecture or till the inner psychic terrain and its mapping remains veiled from the outer
world.