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Introduction

Human life is an extravagant journey of indefinite happiness and pathos that enrich a person with an abundance of experience and learning. The innate desire to share the experiences of life is overwhelming and universal. Words either written or oral come to our aid in communicating thoughts and feelings. Amid numerous exciting literary genres in contemporary English literature of India, there is a sub-genre known as ‘Campus Novel’. This genre has captivated the attention of readers. Ever since its commencement in the 1950s it has provided an opportunity to the people whether belonging to the literary background or not, to invoke their sensibilities and imagination by bringing forth their nostalgic experiences of college life.

Having its roots established in the western world, the sub-genre of campus novels emerged in India in 1960 with the publication of M. Nityanandan’s novel, The Long Long Days. Apparently, its growth had been rather slow paced in India but the last decade i.e. 2000-2010 has observed a remarkable growth in the contemporary Indian English literature. The campus novels garnered noteworthy popularity with the publication of Chetan Bhagat’s novel, Five Point Someone in 2004. Finding acceptance among the Indian readers, a number of writers have started writing and publishing the campus novels. Consequently, they are quite well accepted by their
readers. To capture the essence of the pivotal aspects of the campus novels, the present study proposes to explore varied aspects of the campus novels of the contemporary Indian English literature.

In the campus novels, the main action is set in and around the campus of a university. Baldick, Chris in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990) defines campus novel,

Campus novel is a novel, usually comic or satirical, in which the action is set within the enclosed world of the university (or similar set of learning) and highlights the follies of academic life.

Kramer, John in *The American College Novel: Annotated Bibliography* (2004) writes about campus novel that it incorporates an institution of higher learning as a crucial part of its total setting and … includes, among its principal characters, graduate or undergraduate students, faculty members, administrators, and/other academic personnel.

In order to comprehend the contents of campus novels precisely, it is important to know about its commencement. Campus novels started its journey after World War II. The need for educating people and for encouraging them to enroll for higher studies led to the increase in the opening of new educational institutions and expansion of the already existing ones in order to facilitate advance studies for the ignited minds. Creative writing was an important course and to teach that, experienced and established writers were invited to guide students.
Showalter, Elaine in *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005) writes that

The novelist before writing his novel should create or imagine a world which has some kind of logical realism to the real world, within which he can explore themes that interest him through the narrative.

University or college provides such a world - a small world which is a kind of microcosm of the larger world. Students are influenced by the ongoing activities as well as the people that inhabit their immediate surroundings. They write stories encompassing the incidents and people not extending the campus premises.

The word ‘campus’ was first adopted to describe a particular urban space at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) during the early decades of the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century, the meaning expanded to include the whole institutional property. The Latin term ‘campus’ which means ‘field’ is applied to the physical space occupied by a college or university. Thus, the Americans were the first to use this term in this sense. It entered the British English in the late 1950s. The earliest mention in the Oxford English Dictionary of the word ‘campus’ applying to a British University was in 1958, referring to the University of East Anglia, a university then being built on the American model—that is, a unified, self-contained site in a pastoral or park-like setting.

An alternative name for the campus novel is ‘Academic Novel’. In the opinion of critics, the phrase academic novel is perhaps more inclusive, but the term campus novel is far more expressive of the unity of place which characterizes the genre. Campus novels significantly approached the literary world in the works of Mary

Elaine Showalter has depicted the journey of the campus novels from the 1950s to recent times in her book, *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005). According to her, the campus novels published in the fifties are called the ‘Ivory Towers’ wherein the university was considered as a ‘utopia’. Professors’ loyalty to educational institutions was phenomenal. Science and Arts streams were considered starkly separate and there was a striking gap between teachers and students. Whatever revolt that took place finally subsided in the favour of the authority or the management of the university.

The campus novels published in the sixties are titled as ‘Tribal Towers’. The focus shifted from the university to the American English Department. The department was portrayed as an ethnographic entity, a tribe. This age witnessed the beginning of feminism. Mostly women writers wrote under a pseudonym. Universities encouraged professors to write academic novels in order to promote universities. The stories were like an ironic memoir of the unreliable narrator, the story of an extinct tribe.

Elaine Showalter calls the campus novels written in the seventies as ‘Glass Towers’. The university was no longer viewed as a sanctuary or a refuge. It was a
fragile institution rather than a fortress. This era provided ample of opportunities for innovations in teaching and research to the students and academicians.

The campus novels written in the eighties are referred to as the ‘Feminist Towers’. The novels were women-centric. There was a contrast between the old and new ideas and generally, the novels that dealt with the experiences of the students and academicians contained a tinge of optimism throughout its narration and usually had happy endings.

The campus novels in the nineties are named ‘Tenured Towers’. In this age, the monopoly of the English Department ended by paving the way to the science and engineering departments. The writers satirized the characters for their struggle for tenure, status and political correctness. The tone was more vituperative, vengeful and cruel than in the earlier decades. Scholars became technicians and there was demoralization of faculty and debasement of the curriculum. Elaine Showalter writes,

Too many authors looking at the university around 2000, it seemed that the risks and the joys of the erotics of teaching had succumbed to an increasingly bureaucratic and soulless institutionalization. (99)

Elaine Showalter calls the campus novels written in the 21st century as ‘Tragic Towers’. While earlier academic novels had been idyllic, satiric, ironic or even embittered, these were cosmic, mythic, and vengeful. Writers and their protagonists no longer recognized the university’s moral authority to solve its problems and resolve its quarrel intramurally. (101)
These novels are often too sensational and apocalyptic. Describing the vividness of the campus novels from its inception until now, Elaine Showalter is positive about its significance as far as students are concerned.

Despite high expenses, cut-backs, issues of affirmative action, complaints about standards, from a student perspective, academic life is flourishing. More people than ever before in history want and expect to go to college. Their undergraduate experience continues to bring satisfaction, pleasure, and happiness. Today’s undergraduates have better research facilities, educational opportunities, counseling, living arrangements, scholarship aid, and social options than ever before. At most campuses they are happy; at some, deliriously so. (121)

P. G. Shridevi, in her paper *The Origin and Development of Campus Novels in Indian English Literature* (2011) marks that, “though the campus novel is considered as an Anglo-American genre, its practitioners in India are found in abundance.” The first Indian campus novel—*The Long Long Days* by P. M. Nityanandan was published in 1960. After a long gap of eleven years, second campus novel *The Farewell Party* by M. V. Rama Sarma was published in 1971. Moving on, in 1973, K. M. Trisanku’s *Onion Peel* was published and Saros Cowasjee’s *Goodbye to Elsa* was published in 1974. Following that, in 1982 Prema Nandakumar’s *Atom and Serpent* appeared. After this, from 2004 onwards, with the publication of Chetan Bhagat’s first novel *Five Point Someone* contemporary Indian English Literature witnessed a large number of writers who have made significant attempts to write about their experiences in the college life.
Rossen, Janice in *The University in Modern Fiction: When Power is Academic* (1996) remarks that,

The primary issue that these novels engage is the interplay between fiction and fact. There are many novelists who have portrayed the lives of students or teachers within the university or any similar seat of learning. They either devote the entire novel for the task or just include a few chapters dealing with campus life, although it may not be the main theme. (3)

Most of the campus novels are critical of one or the other aspects of life and are usually comical or satirical. Satirical elements creep into the campus novels since the authors both consciously or unconsciously break the traditional idealistic notions of academicians and try to portray the insider’s real experiences. They try to reflect the reality of the academic world and in this endeavour, the follies and foibles of the academic life get highlighted.

A literary piece is considered good if the writer relates to his/her time. Campus novel writers are not interested in portraying an ideal or false image of teachers or students who immolate themselves for the cause of education. They attempt at focusing upon the struggles the characters undergo during their academic sessions when caught between practicality and idealism. Academy being a closed world is most often viewed as an intriguing household and at the same time, it is an idealistic place to observe the people and the processes on campus because of its finite view. However, the academic writers aim to write about the activities that take place in this definite world and thus expose the readers to the struggles that the academicians face. Soma Das in her novel, *Sumthing of a Mocktale* in the initial pages of her novel, in *Letter to my Reader* confers campus novels as books “that talk.”
Elaine Showalter in *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005) considers the academic novel as her favourite literary genre by describing it as a narcissistic pleasure. She justifies this by saying,

> One theory about the rise of the novel argues that it developed because the readers like to read about their own world, and indeed about themselves. (1)

Campus novels have encountered phenomenal success among readers because of its universal appeal. Candid expressions and simplicity of language captivate the readers ensuring their pleasure and astute attention during their journey through the pages of campus novels. The following aspects enable campus novels to be enriching, relevant and interesting.

### 1.1. The Plot in Campus Novels

As per definition given in the *Literary Devices* (2014), plot is a literary term that is used to describe the events that make up a story or even the main part of a story. These events relate to each other in a particular pattern or a sequence. The structure of a novel depends on the organization of events in the plot of the story. It is the foundation of a novel or story, around which the characters and settings are built. It is meant to organize information and events in a logical manner. There are five main elements in a plot.

#### 1.1.1. Exposition or Introduction

This is the beginning of the story, where characters and setting are established. The conflict or main problem is introduced as well. Chetan Bhagat in *Five Point Someone*, informs the readers what to expect in the beginning of the novel.
Before I really being this book, let me first tell you what this book is not. It is not a guide on how to live through college. On the contrary, it is probably an example of how screwed up your college years can get if you don’t think straight. But then this is my take on it, you’re free to agree or disagree. (1)

In *Bombay Rains, Bombay Girls*, Anirban Bose, at the beginning of the novel, updates the reader about what they would read ahead in the story.

On learning that I was going to study medicine in Bombay, someone said to me, ‘You’ve got to see two things in Bombay: the Bombay rains and the Bombay girls.’

At that time it seemed kind of inconsequential; one of the hundreds of ‘drugs are bad’, ‘don’t smoke’, ‘you must call every week’ pieces of advice that people litter on an impressionable eighteen-year-old about to live alone 2,500 kilometres away from home. (1)

1.1.2. Rising Action

The rising action occurs when a series of events build up to pace up the ongoing narrative. The main characters are established by the time the rising action of a plot occurs, and at the same time, events begin to get complicated. It is during this part of a story that excitement, tension, or crisis is encountered. Ritesh Sharma and Neeraj Pahalajani in *Joker in the Pack* write about the conflict the students’ faces.

Sunday, October 12, was the beginning of a bitter journey. At 6:30 in the morning about two hundred PGP first-year students assembled in the common area of the MDC—the Management Development Centre, normally a beautiful
guest complex on campus for visiting executives and officers taking short term management courses, but now a placement bazaar where MBA students would flash their wares. (80)

Prashant John in Second Degree after introducing the major characters in the novel sets the action by writing about the conflict that would take place between the teachers and students during the remaining course of the novel.

Faculty at IIM-A is impressive, to say the least. Without exception, all of them have published several papers in international journals, consulted for the best companies in India and abroad and generally are smashing good at what they do. And once a person reaches that level of achievement, you don’t spar with others, especially your students. In most sessions, I could well imagine the professor laughing his head off at the silly discussions happening and the desperate attempts to get face time. You don’t mess with faculty and mostly they are above all the petty attempts we came up with to score brownie points. (134)

1.1.3. Climax

In the climax which can also be considered as the main point of the plot, there is a turning point in the story. This is usually a moment of the highest interest and emotion, where the reader becomes anxious to know the further narrative.

Abhijit Bhaduri in Mediocre But Arrogant fuels the readers’ excitement by writing about the tension faced by the protagonist during the placement time. In spite of being a bright student, Adi is stressed about securing a good job.
I was back in MIJ. Placement season was on. You could feel the strong undercurrent of tension in the air. All conversations began to turn to applications, questionnaires, jobs, work life, corporate lifestyles and other such areas which had seemed like distant concerns just two months ago. The same MIJ that had been so relaxed and laidback seemed to be picking up speed scarcely, like the athlete in the last lap of the marathon. Everyone wanted to breast the tape before others—only winning mattered. And the prize at the end of the race was a career. So the stakes were high. Anything and everything could be sacrificed and would be. (261)

In Second Degree, Prashant John, almost during the last phase of the journey in the novel, takes the course of action from the campus premise to an international location. This captivates the readers even more as they get interested to know about the experiences of the protagonist and other major characters thereon.

Hardly any of us paid attention to when term three was coming to an end. We were busy focusing on the next big thing on the radar—international immersion. Simply put, it was the equivalent of summer internships with the exception that it mandatorily required everyone to be out of India for five weeks. We would spend a week at one of the B-schools IIM had tied up with and then spend four weeks in organizations with the sole focus of working in an international setting and then came back and share the wisdom with the class. The distilled collective wisdom of sixty experienced executives would then add to the enormous knowledge base of the class or at least that was the idea. (202- 203)
1.1.4. Falling Action

The falling action or the winding up of the story occurs when the events and complications start to resolve. The results of the actions of the main characters are put forward for the readers. Samar in *Love, A Rather Bad Idea*, feels happy for himself and his friends when they get saved from being expelled from the college.

‘Well, like I said, you let me have the identities of the other two friends of yours and we can have a talk around reducing your punishment,’ the Dean said, waving his hands at Pranav and Skimpy. ‘It’s very fortunate for you that good sense prevailed just in time. Another couple of hours and even I would not have been able to save you from the DISCO.’ The Dean was rushing through the summary, even as Samar struggled to grasp the import of the words. He was not sure if the Dean was letting him off or was about to come down heavily on him. The Dean continued, ‘Anyhow, I am most certainly taking a grave view of the situation. So while I concede that you and your friends here have acted honorably and with dignity. I am awarding all three of you 100 of community service. You shall report to the NSS Office and complete your 100 hours over the next 2 months. At the end of it I want a complete report of satisfactory completion from the NSS Office or else you would be in really big trouble. Am I clear?’ the Dean asked. (197-198)

Adi in *Mediocre But Arrogant* is relaxed after he gets the job. The hectic course of action mellows down.

With a job in hand, we lost the last dregs of motivation to attend the remaining few weeks of classes. The only way to get us out of this ennui was to rekindle
the competitive spirit that had driven us. Even the fear of poor grades not getting us jobs had gone, now that the myth was broken. (294)

1.1.5. Resolution

Finally, the resolution or the conclusion is the end of a story. It may occur with either a happy or tragic ending. The endings of all the ten contemporary Indian English campus novels under study are happy and the readers’ expectations are fulfilled. Shekhar Verma in Joker in the Pack expresses his happiness after accomplishing his desire.

Everything seemed to flash in front of my eyes—BIT, Anoushka, CAT, IIMB exams, summers, Vista, day zero….As the music got louder, I felt dizzy and decided to lie down on the concrete steps by the side of the dance floor. I looked up and saw the stars zipping all across the twirling sky, leaving behind sharp blazes of light. I took in a deep breath and closed my eyes, smiling at the thought that Shekhar Verma would finally be a king. (193)

Leaving the campus premises, Harsh in Everything You Desire becomes emotional and acknowledges the importance of studying in IIM and cherishes the relationships that he developed there.

The journey from Delhi had been full of nervousness and anticipation. The journey back from Bangalore again evoked mixed feelings - sadness at parting with IIM Bangalore and also nervous anticipation for what lay ahead in the corporate world. I would really miss Bangalore - a city which had become like a second home; a city where I spent what would arguably be one of the two most important years of my life. I would miss my friends, some of whom will
be thousands of miles away in different continents chartering the course of their lives. The friendships developed would remain invaluable; the ups and downs that we together shared will remain as fond memories. A part of me didn’t want these two years to end, while another wanted to move on to the next challenge in life. (246)

1.2. Characters in Campus Novels

The trio of students, teachers and parents form the major characters of campus novels. The protagonists of the campus novels are the students studying in prominent Indian educational institutions like IIT, IIM, JNU, MIJ, Bombay University and various colleges affiliated to the Delhi University. The entire course of action is generally the manifestation of views of the leading protagonists. The protagonist is a student who is surrounded by his/her parents, friends and teachers who have a lasting impact on his/her thought processes, overall development and sometimes an impediment.

The central character is generally the mouthpiece of the author who puts forth his/her views regarding the other characters, the education system in India, campus politics and life of the youth. Conventional characters like Venkat are juxtaposed by the non-conventional characters like Ryan in Chetan Bhagat’s *Five Point Someone*. Venkat believes in gaining good scores by learning things by heart even without a proper understanding of the content matter whereas Ryan believes in learning through experimentation and innovativeness. Such a conflict is witnessed in most of the novels under study.
Parents and teachers are generally viewed by the protagonists as archetypal, authoritative, dominating, monotonous, rigid and skeptical characters. Professor Cherian in *Five Point Someone*, Professor Chatto in *Mediocre But Arrogant*, Dr. Gomke in *Bombay Rains*, *Bombay Girls* where she was considered as a specimen of an old-fashioned propriety, overenthusiastic Professor Bichitra Roy in *Sumthing of a Mocktale*, Crazy Panther in *Joker in the Pack* and Professor Shankar in *Everything You Desire* are some of the typical educators who remain fossilized with their follies and reserved teaching techniques. Among these typical teachers are found Professor Veera in *Five Point Someone* and Father Hathaway in *Mediocre But Arrogant* who are both dynamic and charismatic. They are the hope of students and emblem of sound and erudite educators.

Most of the times, parents come across as moral instructors. They want their children to gain materialistic facilities but through fair means. As Adi’s father tells him in *Bombay Rains*, *Bombay Girls*,

> After working for thirty-five years, I still drive a scooter, have one suit and travel second class. (21)

They take pride in their way of life but enforce their children to foster a dream that is larger than life. They wish their children well and want them to achieve what was not possible for them to do. Indeed they are the ones whom the protagonist finally wants to impress, justify, feel proud of and prove their point. Their children, however, do not lag back in displaying their individuality. Adi and Ayesha in *Bombay Rains*, *Bombay Girls* seek admission in higher education institution to go away from parents and to refrain from marrying someone of their parents’ choice.
1.3. **Themes in Campus Novels**

The themes of a majority of the contemporary Indian English campus novels revolve around friendship, education, love life, career anxiety and campus politics as experienced by the major as well as the other prominent characters.


Education as a theme is dominant in campus novels. The prevalent education system is often censured by the authors. There is a cry for creativity, originality and practicality. Campus novels offer a very coherent and concrete view of the academic life prevalent in the leading Indian educational institutions. The representation of teachers, students, examinations, viva, grades, evaluation parameters, dehumanization of students (ragging), inefficient administrators, coaching classes and students perceived as byproducts of industry display the prevailing conservative education system. Adi in *Bombay Rains, Bombay Girls* talks about the stress and tension experienced during the examination time.

Conducted with a psychopathic rigour bordering on institutionalized torture, the hallmark of the exam was the agonizingly protracted timetable…The practical exams and viva-voce would follow in the three subjects after a week’s lull, extending the torture by another fortnight. This four-week period
promised them hell, and they could think of little else as they began burning the midnight oil religiously. The nagging uncertainty of covering the sixteen-month curriculum in the few weeks that remained turned time into a precious commodity. (163)

The three Ds concept as suggested by Father Hathaway in Mediocre But Arrogant by Abhijit Bhaduri truly reveals the essence of all the other campus novels. Once in the institution, students have to remember that they have to stay away from Drinks, Drugs and Disobedience. They can even face expulsion if they bring continuous ‘D’ grade in successive examinations.

In the medical college, however, ‘D’ stands for distinction. Anirban Bose describes it in Bombay Rains, Bombay Girls when Adi tells,

‘D’ which stood for Distinction, meant a score of more than 75%. Recipients of ‘3Ds’ (i.e. Distinctions in Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry) became instant celebrities in the class, while 2 Ds also offered significant recognition. Their titular use around campus…led to instantaneous respect for both the achiever and the achievement. (174-175)

Love is an omnipotent emotion that makes its presence felt in the campus novels. Both idealistic and practical approaches to love surface quite efficiently in the narration of the campus novels. Hari’s feelings for Neha in Five Point Someone, Kaya’s feelings for Abhimannu in Sumthing of a Mocktale, Adi’s feelings for Isha in Bombay Rains, Bombay Girls, Samar’s feelings for Jiya in Love, A Rather Bad Idea, Tejas’ love for Shreya in Anything for You Ma’am are some of the instances where we
can witness the power of this feeling that encourages, energizes and enlightens the
vision and mission of the concerned characters.

Career anxiety is experienced by all the students during the time of final
placement. It is the time when some students manage to get a job as per their
aspirations and some have to be satisfied by just managing to get an offer from a
company. Stating the importance of placement, Harshdeep Jolly writes in *Everything
You Desire*,

It was the big day we had been waiting for. It was one of the main reasons
why you aspire to study at an IIM. It was the day when the final placements
were going to kick off…There was an air of nervousness, tension and
expectation. (224)

The lust for power and position also comprise an integral part of the campus
novels. Elections for CR and GS are held in the colleges and the candidates aim to
win these positions as it would instill in them oodles of self-confidence, appreciation
from others and power to reign. Yadav tells Samar about the importance of elections
in *Love, A Rather Bad Idea*,

You are surely knowing about institute G-Sec election…General Secretary for
cultural affairs, was the epitome of all student positions in IIT. The G-Sec was
in charge of all cultural events, promotions and most of all, Rendezvous. The
G-Sec elections…were nothing less than the American presidential elections.
It was all about ware withal, alliances and dirty politics. From this regard, IIT
followed a ‘winner takes it all’ policy. (25)
1.4. Narrative Techniques

Narrative technique refers to the writer’s style of telling a story. Writers of campus novels make use of varied narrative techniques very aptly to make their presentation crisp, comprehensive and commanding. First person narration is employed by all the writers of the campus novels under study. Juxtaposition, bildungsroman, In Medias Res, active reader response technique, humour, irony, info dumping, metaphorical use language and stream of consciousness are some of the prominent narrative techniques that are beautifully employed by the contemporary Indian English campus novelists.

The juxtaposition is observed among colleges, cities, class, gender, religion, regions, students, teachers, parents and urban and rural areas. In *Sumthing of a Mocktale*, Rumpa talks about the contrast between the two cities.

Calcutta is bustling with people but the way Metro handles there, Delhi can only dream of. No eve-teasing or adam teasing there baba. (21)

Bildungsroman is the narrative technique very effectively used by the campus novel writers. Without faltering, we can observe the mental, social and emotional growth and development of the characters through our journey from the initial stages of the novel till its culmination. In *Bombay Rains, Bombay Girls*, Isha observes,

You probably don’t realize it Adi, but you’ve changed so much from the initial days when you were a quiet shy guy, to today, when you have the confidence to walk up to the ladies hostel and ask me out…Earlier, you always behaved as though you didn’t belong…as if your presence in medical college was a mistake. But you’ve found confidence in yourself, cemented your position in class and it’s very nice to see you transform…so…seamlessly. It’s like
watching a beautiful tree grow from a tender sapling and develop strong roots.

(233)

In Medias Res is a narrative technique where the action of the story begins from the middle of the novel. *Five Point Someone* starts in this manner. In the prologue, Chetan Bhagat talks about Hari and Ryan taking Alok to the hospital after Alok attempted committing suicide.

Tushar Raheja in *Anything for You Ma’am* and Chetan Bhagat in *Five Point Someone* make use of the active reader response technique quite well. The characters of novels talk to the readers thus making them feel an important part of the novel. Tejas talks to his readers in *Anything for You Ma’am* by allowing them to think about their personal experiences.

Now, lie back, all you lovers and let your mind slip back to that fortunate accident, that ingenious stroke of fortune which enable you to meet your love. I do not talk about the moment you fell in love no, I talk about the accident, that singular coincidence, when he or she, not yet your love, bumped into your life. Now forgive me, I will ask you all to delete that incident from your life, though from its hinges your entire life; it is a scenario you shudder to contemplate, but do it; what remains is an aloo parantha without aloo. (21-22)

Crisp, sharp and easy humour provides quality of freshness and entertainment to the campus novels. Even when the circumstances are serious, writers do not restrain themselves from making lively and comical comments. This can be observed significantly in the narrative style of Chetan Bhagat in his novel *Five Point Someone* in the dialogue between Ryan and Hari when he and Ryan are tense about Alok’s condition after Alok attempted to commit suicide.
“He is going to make it! Doctor said it is pretty bad, but he is going to make it!”


“Yes, he fell on his bottom right into the fountain by the insti building. Can you believe that? Doctor said his fat bottom and the six inches of water cushioned the impact.”

Thank god Alok was a fatso. And thank god they made that useless fountain by the insti building. Eleven fractures in the legs and two in the arms isn’t so bad. Given to how much Fatso eats, he could probably build his bones in a day. (214-215)

The irony is reflected in *Bombay Rains, Bombay Girls* when Adi remarks about the characters that are perceived differently due to their hailing from a distant region and belonging to a different religion.

There is such dissociation between what the eyes see and what the mind envisions. The final thought is just a matter of interpretation, coloured by our experiences. We all saw Toshi, but perceived him *differently*: some saw a Naga, some an Indian, some a privileged student, a friend, or a combination thereof. And is Sam the class clown, a friend, a Maharashtrian, an Indian or a Christian? (442)

Info dumping is a narrative technique where the protagonist gives out detailed information about other characters in the novel. Through all the protagonists of the campus novels under study, we come to know about the other characters. Such information depends upon the protagonist’s perspective on others. In *Five Point*
Someone, Hari describes others but even Alok, Ryan and Neha get a chance to voice out their thoughts and feelings in the three consecutive chapters of the novel.

The metaphorical use of language is aptly employed by campus novelists. In Mediocre But Arrogant, Abbey compares the process of collecting their papers from Professor Chatto with the funeral march. Chetan Bhagat also employs metaphorical use of language when he describes Baku, a senior batch student as “a lungi-clad human toothpick” (2). Hari’s description of Alok after ragging is also an example of this style of language.

There is a reason why they say men should not cry, they just look so, like, ugly. Alok’s spectacles were sad enough, but his baby-wet blubbery eyes were enough to depress you into suicide. (6-7)

Mental conflicts and confusions are highlighted by the campus novelists with the use of the technique called stream-of-consciousness. Prashant John in Second Degree muses over giving priority to corporate finance or business ethics.

Looking at the situation of some of my batch mates, I could at times empathise with the corporate honchos of Enron and Global—when the markets are driving you to increase your revenues year on year and you had to deal with Corporate Finance and the markets on one hand and Ethics on the other—guess which one got priority? (190)

1.5. Reflection of Age

Novels encompass the cognitive and affective processes of the writers. The select contemporary Indian English campus novels reflect the writers’ experiences and observations of a particular age. The selected primary sources range from the
period 2004 to 2010. In them, the writers pen down their experiences of their college life that cover the approximate period ranging from 1985 to 2007. Thus, these campus novels provide an accurate description of the given ages. Mass communication has cropped into our lives as never before and we are blessed with its advantages. Contrary to this, the time which these campus novels present is the age of transition—the transition from Doordarshan to Zee, Star TV, transition from landline to mobile phones and transition from other dependence to self-dependence.

1.6. Self Realization

The select contemporary Indian English campus novels truthfully cover the fascination, inhibition and turmoil experienced by the characters through their journey in varied topnotch educational institutions in India. At the completion of this journey, they seem to have finally come to terms with realities of life and also become aware of their own selves. Professor Hathaway’s letter to Abbey in Mediocre But Arrogant probes this when he advises Abbey to be a source and a medium for bringing in the positive changes in the society.

1.7. Setting: Campus Premises

Majority of the action takes place in the campus premises. It consists of classrooms, hostels, canteen, laboratory, food joints adjoining to the campus and the sprawling campus spots. The campus offers an opportunity to the characters to mingle with people belonging to different regions and background, economic and social status, having the peculiar temperament, convictions and approach. These are the places where they study, gossip, revel and break down under various circumstances. Amidst this enclosed environment, the characters’ lives revolve and they adjust, develop and evolve to face the challenges of life that await them beyond the campus premises. Parasarthy Rocks and Ganga Dhaba in Sumthing of a Mocktale, Sasi in Five
Point Someone, The Central Canteen in Bombay Rains, Bombay Girls, Rambhai’s Cafeteria in Second Degree, MOJOS in Of Course I Love You..!, Athica and CCD in Everything You Desire and Timpoo’s Dhaba in Love, A Rather Bad Idea are the places where the characters frequently visit during the course of action in the novels.

1.8. Life Inside and Outside the Campus

The difference between realism and idealism is visible in the campus novels that connect as well as alienate the life inside and outside the campus premises. The university is seen as a microcosm of a larger society. Most of the events unfold in the campus premises but there are stints like educational tours, field observations, summer job placement and internship where the students become aware of the differences between the facts of real life and idealism preached in the campus. The issue of female feticide is grimly experienced by Keya during her educational tour in Sumthing of a Mocktale. The summer placement in the Britannia Company in Joker in the Pack makes Shekhar Verma travel across Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It is then that he comes to realize the difference between the management studies in college and actual market management.

1.9. Linguistic Expressions

As the campus novel is all about youth and its experiences, use of quite unconventional linguistic expressions, especially used by the students, are observed in the course of narration. Writers of campus novels take the liberty to create their own lingo and create abbreviations, acronyms and full forms that contribute to the delightful reading. The discipline committee is referred to as DISCO in Five Point Someone and CSODR (Centre for Study of Obstacles in the Development of Regions is coded as Centre for Suppression, Oppression, Depression and Repression) in Sumthing of a Mocktale. Prashant John in Second Degree introduces the ‘Lingo
Buster’ before the narration of the story to acquaint the readers with the acronyms and abbreviations which are frequently used by students studying in IIT and IIM. Experiences are expressed in simple language and sometimes regional flavours are also observed in the narration. This feature of the contemporary Indian English campus novels can be justified with the theory proposed by Braj Khachru. In *World Englishes: The Three Circle Model of Khachru: World-Englishes-and-their-features*, Mollin (2006) writes about the Three-circle Model of World Englishes developed by Kachru in 1985. According to him “it remains one of the most influential models for grouping the varieties of English in the world.” (p.41). Kachru (1985) described the spread of English in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. These circles represent "the type of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages" (Kachru, 1985, p.12). In the Kachru's Three-circle Model, the Inner Circle of Kachru's model refers to the traditional bases of English, dominated by the mother-tongue varieties, where English acts as a first language (White, 1997). The countries involved in the Inner Circle include the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The varieties of English used here are said to be 'norm providing'. The Outer Circle consists of the earlier phases of the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become part of a country's chief institutions and plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting (Rajadurai, 2005). Most of the countries included in the Outer Circle are former colonies of the UK or the USA, such as Malaysia, Singapore, India, Ghana, Kenya and others (Rajadurai, 2005). The English used in the outer circle is considered as 'norm-developing'. The Expanding Circle refers to the territories where English is learned as a foreign language. The territories do not have a history of colonization by members of the
Inner Circle and institutional or social role. English is taught as a 'foreign' language as the most useful vehicle of international communication (White, 1997). The countries in the Expanding Circle include China, Japan, Greece and Poland (Crystal, 1997). The English used in the Expanding Circle is regarded as 'norm dependent'. English is accepted as a second language in India. By adhering to the basic norms of the English language, the writers of the campus novels sometimes personalize the use of the English language to suit their temperament and convenience.

1.10. Campus Novels for the Neo-readers

Campus novels are concise, comprehensive and provide a glimpse of the educational institutions. The narration is mostly in the first person, language is lucid and crisp. Generally, the story travels at a fast pace. In spite of focusing on grave matters of education, relationships and career, these novels also provide pleasure to its readers. These characteristics help the neo-readers to enjoy the verbal and virtual world of books.

Appreciating the campus novels, Soma Das asks the readers in her Letter to my Readers that appears on the initial pages of the novel Sumthing of a Mocktale to,

Read the book if you have ever led a campus life, if you are living it now or will live one in the future. If you are the bindaas type, you will relate; if you are the bookworm type, you will know what you are missing. Read it if you ever desired to know openly or secretly, the unofficial unedited account, if you believe in books that talk. Read this if you want to live life one-degree fuller, if you want to have serious ‘FUN’.
1.11. **Target Audience — Indians**

Contemporary Indian English campus novelists frequently use words from different Indian languages in their novels. Most of the writers don’t even gloss these words as their target audience is Indians who would easily comprehend the vernacular language.

1.12. **Multidisciplinary Approach**

In its initial stages, campus novels were written only by the members of the English Department. Later on, this sub-genre was keenly adopted by people belonging to different faculties, having a strong inclination and skill to write and communicate their ideas and feelings. Thus, contemporary Indian English campus novels possess a multidisciplinary outlook and are written by the writers belonging to arts, science as well as commerce faculty.

1.13. **Limitations of the Study**

P.G., Shridevi in her paper, *The Origin and Development of Campus Novels in Indian English Literature* (2011), writes about the survey of campus novels in India.

Campus novels in Indian English Literature can be grouped into various categories. The main categories can be taken as—

(a) Campus novels focused on students  
(b) Campus novels focused on teachers  
(c) Campus novels focused on vice chancellor  
(d) Campus novels focused on the malfunctioning of the campus  
(e) Bildungsroman
An individual campus novel may be enlisted in more than one category as it is done by Shridevi G. She categorizes the campus novel *Corridors of Knowledge* by M. K. Naik as a campus novel which focuses on teachers, malfunctioning of the campus and bildungsroman. Similarly, *Atom and the Serpent* by Prema Nandakumar is categorized as the campus novel which focuses on the vice chancellor as well as of the malfunctioning of the campus.

The sub-genre of campus novel is vast and vivid. Considering its enormity, the researcher has observed the following limitations in order to justify the quality of the content matter and its relevance.

1. The course of action in all the ten novels under study begins and ends in the campus premises.
2. All the ten novels under study are student-centric and written by the ex-students of the prominent higher educational institutions in India.

### 1.14. Literature Review

Humans are blessed with an exceptional memory which has the capacity to store the information, use the stored information when needed and add to that information as per the need of the time. Books, journals, encyclopaedia, papers, handbooks and the internet are some of the enormous storehouses of all kinds of knowledge relating to various spheres of life. When a researcher undertakes a study, s/he makes use of the information which is readily available and, after completion of the study, adds to the vast storehouse of knowledge for the review of the future researches. Best, J. W. and Kahn, J. V. in their book *Research in Education* (1993) writes,
Practically all human knowledge can be found in books and libraries. Unlike other animals that must start anew with each generation, man builds upon the accumulated and recorded knowledge of the past. His constant adding to the vast store of knowledge makes possible progress in all areas of human endeavour. (65)

If knowledge is not founded in the literature review, the work of the researcher is likely to be superficial and naïve. In this chapter, the researcher has made an attempt to go through the research works carried out in the past which deal with the concerned investigation. The researcher has reviewed the following works for establishing the tone and nature of the present study. The Literature Review displays the references to the relevant works that support the present study. They contemplate on the history of campus novels, narrative styles, use of English language, development of the genre, thematic perceptions, characterization in campus novels, representation of American, British and Indian societies in the campus novels, global campus as well as intellectual pretentions and realities that encompass the education system.


Philip G. Altbach, Monor University Professor, Boston College in his foreword writes that the book provides an overview of the complexity of the academic system and deals with the problems that are faced by the higher education system. There is a discussion about the most central issue facing India’s higher education establishment—the immense challenge of funding the massive system in ways that
can provide quality and access, workforce development, the role of research and others.


In this book, a comprehensive view of the higher education system in India is presented. It addresses some of the problems faced by the higher education system in social, political and economic contexts. As the papers are written by experienced experts and based on rich information and proper perspective, the book is very useful in understanding the higher education system in India.


The book gives a glimpse of the ongoing activities of American universities. It is about life on campus and it discusses the issues of ‘pluralism’ and ‘diversity’ on campus. Blacks, feminists and homosexuals are regarded as oppressed victims. It questions certain issues on campus like – Should universities promote integration or separation? – Should universities subject students to ‘sensitivity education’ aimed at raising their consciousness of race and gender? The issues of race and sex are inevitably personal and detachment is considered difficult, if not impossible.

For over a generation, shocking cases of censorship at America’s colleges and universities have taught students the wrong lessons about living in a free society. Drawing on a decade of experience in battling for freedom of speech on campus, the author reveals how higher education fails to teach students to become critical thinkers which should be a mandatory aim of any education system. By stifling open debate, our campuses are supercharging ideological divisions, promoting group thinking and encouraging an unscholarly certainty about complex issues.


The thesis includes six chapters namely, exordium, histographic metafiction, interfaces, subject in/of history, across discourses and conclusion. Literary histories, in general, agree that the Indian English novels developed with the appearance of the first novels ‘Trimurti’—R. K. Narayans’s Swami and Friends (1935), Mulk Raj Anand’s Untouchables (1935) and Raja Rao’s Kanthapura (1938). In histographic metafiction time and its treatment in narration is explored in terms of intertextuality. The textuality of historical knowledge denies any single text’s wholeness. There can be no master texts in reality. The originality of the style of the authors is questioned. One fact of intertextuality is that traces of other novels found in works of the authors. It means that the same idea is repeated in different narrative contexts by different authors. Comparative stance is brought out by the re-positioning of the narrator and the subject of narration across times and across cultures. The chapter, Across Discourses, is about the use of books, magazines, radio clippings etc. in the novels to reiterate the truth or facts. Non-English words have been woven into the narrative governed by necessity rather than the desire to mark cultural distance. The reader also realizes that language is not neutral; its function of communication is not entirely
innocent. It carries the culture of its speakers. English has been appropriated by new
groups of people and transformed to make way for new meaning. The dispersal of
English to Asian and African countries caused what Braj Kachru (1983) calls the
“nativization of English.”


The process of writing is itself a liberating experience. The development of
Indian writing in English can be traced to the firm establishment of British colonial
India. Both colonial and post-colonial novels written by Indian writers like Raja Rao,
Attia Hossain, G. V. Desani, Shashi Tharoor, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie etc.
have made attempts to break the old fictional forms. Srinivasa Iyengar examines the
changes that have taken place in Indian English fiction. “Indian writing in English is
being increasingly recognized as one of the dozens or more authentic voices of India.
What was at one time a tool for the leaders of the Indian renaissance to rouse the
prostrate nation to register its awakening, self-respect and presently to protest against
the evil of foreign domination, has now grown after a series of vicissitudes in our
national history, into a creative choice of nourishment in all its richness and
manifoldness.” The use of English as the medium of expression created intricate
problems for the Indian novelists. The search of the Indian English novelists for a
suitable expression succeeded with Raja Rao’s Kanthapura. The novel Kanthapura is
an expression of the confidence that Indian English writers attained during the 1930s.
It was also an affirmation of freedom and showed how the English language could be
used and shaped by the Indian writers for serving their purposes. By domesticating the
English language, the Indian English writers have made their first attempt towards
freedom. It gave them the confidence to use language as per their discretion.

Third World Fiction Narratives are preoccupied with the contingencies of everyday life and do not indulge in the act of imagination. Mostly all the novels of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Vikram Seth are hybrid and trans-cultural. Indian writing in English moves away from the standard linguistic practices, subverts the master language and creates a new idiom combining diverse cultural elements thus reflecting the multilingual and multicultural ethos of the country. The cross-cultural pollination has enabled to create new hybrid varieties of English which have little or no semblance to the parent language i.e. standard language. In this process, the English language has multiplied into its many variations, which point to its flexibility.


In recent times, the Indian English Campus Novel has gained a recognizable position among all the forms of literature. It stands at par with its counterparts written in the English-speaking countries. The international literary awards like The Booker, The Pulitzer, and The Sinclair won by the Indian novelists show that they have been appreciated even by the Western critics. Indian English Fiction has grown rich with the increase of various sub-genres. Campus novel is also one such sub-genre which has added to the development of the Indian English fiction. In recent times, substantial progress has been observed in India in the field of campus novels. But as they have not been sufficiently explored, an attempt has been made in the present paper to carry out a survey of the campus novels in India. The paper tries to focus on the various central points in Indian campus novels and provides examples for each type.

Like many sub-genres of novels, campus novels were first written by the western writers. The number of novels dealing with academic themes is sufficient that they can form a corpus called campus novel. It has been observed that campus novels appeared in Indian English literature from 1960. The campus novels written during this half-century require good critical scrutiny. Therefore the study of the theme and form of campus novels that appeared from 1960 is undertaken in the proposed research thesis. The objective of the study is to inspect the treatment of various aspects of the nature of professors and students in the institutions of higher education as themes and the form of the narrative taken up in the selected campus novels. The methodology of critical analysis is employed in the thesis.


The main intention of this thesis is not only to introduce the genre of “campus novel” and its most known British authors but also to give details and express why the campus novels by Kingsley Amis and his successors Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge are much accepted. Each of these authors had their own individual style of writing and created memorable satiric novels. The researcher focuses on the narrative techniques, themes and characters of the campus novels and tries to validate the importance of the study and the significance of campus novels.

This thesis deals with the functioning of the universities and characters of novels of David Lodge’s campus novels *Changing Places* (1975) and *The Rebel Angels* (1982). David Lodge wrote a lot about British universities and tried to relate the campus premises with the actual world. The two worlds, however, did not become one, but David Lodge tried to bring them as close as possible. On the one hand, he tries to tell something about universities to the reader who is inexperienced where the universities are concerned. He wants all his readers to enjoy his novels and for this reason, he uses various comic devices and elements in his writing. On the other hand, he also attempts to make people who are acquainted with the norms of the universities become conscious of its problems and he does so also by using the same means. His main intention is to criticize by using humorous techniques, like parody, irony and satire. In his campus novels, he compares the British and American way of doing things. He intends to make fun of both the universities, but as he spends more time in the British environment, he also takes more time criticizing the British lifestyle, the educational system, its traditional viewpoints as well as the government.


This is a study of David Lodge's campus novels: *The British Museum is Falling Down, Changing Places, Small World* and *Nice Work*. Unlike most of the previous studies of Lodge's works, which have dealt with the literary-theoretical issues, this dissertation aims at unfolding some of the ideological impulses that form his campus fiction. A basic hypothesis of this study is that literature is never disinterested and it is always an ideological statement about the world. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic relationship between self and other provides a means of investigating the interaction between author and reader. Central to this project is
Bakhtin’s notion of how to reach an independent, ideological consciousness through the active scrutiny of the authoritative discourses surrounding us. Lodge’s campus fiction affirms the myth of the isolated Ivory Tower. The attempted bridging of the gap between the academy and the outside world is not successfully accomplished. For most readers, his texts remain one-dimensional portrayals of extraneous campus clowns.


The main intention of this thesis is to explain the interrelation between society and literature. Literature is the reflection of society. Real life incidents are adopted by the authors and played by the vivid characters in the novels. In the researcher’s estimation historical context contributes to the shaping of a literary work, therefore knowledge of social and historical background is crucial for the better comprehension of a text. Literary history studies elements that give to the composition of literary works, such as the author’s life, the culture and ideas of the author’s contemporary world, and the literary tradition (Stevens, p. 46). The researcher has examined the social and autobiographical essentials in the three novels by Kingsley Amis, Malcolm Bradbury, and David Lodge. Nevertheless, the researcher does not assert that it is possible to judge a literary work based on its social and historical backdrop. Many other influences are also observed and thus there always will be manifold interpretations.

The paper focuses on the academic world in David Lodge’s and Malcolm Bradbury’s novels. Critics have observed similarities between the two writers’ works. David Lodge and Malcolm Bradbury write about academics and they are the most productive writers in the campus genre in Britain. Analyzing David Lodge’s novels (Small World, Changing Places: A Tale of Two Campuses, Nice Work) and Malcolm Bradbury’s novels (Eating People Is Wrong, Stepping Westward, The History Man, Rates of Exchange) the paper draws attention to the idea of the two authors that the world is a global campus. The most motivating aspects of the self/other dialogue in the campus novels may be found where the academic community and the world outside unite on the border where attitudes congregate or clash, but, ultimately, there is a probability for new meanings to unfold.

15. Bhat, Rekha. The Indian English Campus Novels: A Study in Genre, Department of Studies in English, Karnatak University, Dharwad, 2010.

The last few decades have observed an increase in the number of people entering the vivid educational campuses with an aim of acquiring higher education. Their day-to-day experience has been the theme of a range of forms of campus literature. The turn of the previous century has witnessed the publication of a number of novels sharing the experience of the campus dwellers, giving rise to a new genre named ‘Campus Novels’. The researcher attempts to authenticate the existence and establishment of this rising trend called ‘The Indian English Campus Novels’. As such novels display a mixture of recognizably Indian sensibility with a mark of form, substance and expression, the developing genre is looked at in the light of both Indian and universal conventions. Novels are analyzed separately as the treatment of the theme; the style and the purpose seem to vary considerably. The researcher has taken into account five representative novels for comprehensive study and analysis. The
focus is on faculty-oriented novels. The researcher has focused on Prema Nandakumar’s *Atom and Serpent*, D. R. Sharma’s *Miracles Happen*, P. M. Nityanandan’s *Long Long Days*, Chetan Bhagat’s *Five Point Someone*, Abhijit Bhadhuri’s *Mediocre But Arrogant* and Amitabha Bhagachi’s *Above Average*. The research is an effort to confirm the usefulness and the purpose of campus novels for the campus dwellers and general readers. It is strongly felt that campus novelists do have a responsibility towards the academic set up and the general public as it is one of the links between these two entities. The researcher believes that the novelists have to be cognizant about the kind of impact that their novels can make on the readers.


The study concentrates on the Indian English and Tamil campus fiction. The researcher deals with the characteristic features of both the fictions and deals with the striking contrast between the students and teachers during the earlier and contemporary times. Brief biographical sketches of the campus novelists are mentioned along with the list of their works. It also discusses the other relevant branches of campus novels. There are more campus novels written by students rather than teachers in India. The study focuses on the follies and foibles related to the academic world as displayed in the Tamil and English campus novels.

Review of related literature helps the researcher to examine the area of research with focused attention and critical insight in order to undertake the pursuit of the present study with freshness and innovativeness. The reviewing of the literature has helped the researcher to know about the use of language by the Indian English
writers, multidimensional approach to literature and the studies that have undertaken in the sub-genre of campus novels. This has helped the researcher in further strengthening the conventions and aspects of the contemporary Indian English campus novels.

1.15. Chapterization

Chapter 1: In this chapter, the researcher has discussed the title, definition, history, emergence, relevance, aspects, conventions, limitations, primary sources of the campus novels selected for study and the literature review.

Chapter 2: In this chapter, the researcher deals with the tales of camaraderie and conflicts among the people in the contemporary Indian English campus novels. This chapter is about the varied relationships shared by the students among themselves, their teachers and parents.

Chapter 3: This chapter is titled, ‘Speaking from Inside Out: Views of Authors on People, Processes and Place of Higher Education’. This chapter analyses the views of different authors about the significance and loopholes of the education system prevalent in some of the elite educational institutions in India.

Chapter 4: In this chapter titled ‘Where do I go from here? A portrayal of career anxiety among the people in the contemporary Indian English campus novels’ the researcher explores the career anxiety experienced by students and their quest for securing the best career opportunity to fulfill their desires.
Chapter 5: Findings and Conclusion. This chapter sums up the findings of the research and drives home the relevance of the study.

1.16. Conclusion

Contemporary Indian English campus novels portray a wide canvas of diversities and similarities of life. There seems to be more than the killing pressures of academics. They deal with the issues of lost identity wherein we find the characters give up their ideals of life and lifestyle and imbibe a whole new culture of the campus in order to get accepted by the others and to overcome their inferiority complex. They do so in order to conform to the college rules, develop friendships and become familiar with the campus culture. They feel proud of the brand name they adhere to like MIJ-ite, JNUites etc.

It’s an “Indian Middle-Class Dream” as mentioned in the novel Joker in the Pack, that in order to define one’s life one needs to study in English medium school, join coaching/tuition classes and befriend those whose focus is education and career. Apart from this, in order to be larger than life icon, one needs to get admission in prestigious educational institutions. However, hard work, conflicts, pressures, fights and politics finally pave the way to the holistic development of the individuals by strengthening their self-esteem, confidence and optimistic approach towards life in order to find money, power, position, love, achievement and satisfaction.