Chapter 1.

Introduction
CHAPTER-1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into three parts: The first part sums up the evolution of novel as form of literature in Post-independence Indian Writing in English and the shift in the genre after the arrival of Bhagat in a literary scene. The second part discusses the life and works of Chetan Bhagat. The Third part contextualizes Chetan Bhagat as a writer in the conditions discussed in first two parts and puts forward the hypotheses objectives, methodology, review of related literature, limitation and scope of research of the current study.

(1)

Brief History of Indian Writing in English and Chetan Bhagat as a Revolutionary Wave in Indian Writing in English

The seed of Indian Writing in English was sown during the period of the British rule in India. Now the seed has flourished into an ever green tree, odorous flowers and ripened fruits. The fruits are being tasted not only by the native people, but they are also being enjoyed by the people outside India. It happened only after the constant caring, pruning, watering and nourishing. Gardeners like Tagore, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, M.K Anand, Salman Rushdie, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Kiran Desai – to name only a few, looked after the tender plant day and night. In modern time, it is guarded and nurtured by a number of writers due to that vision and maturity are getting awards and accolades all over the world. Indian English Novel of the first generation reflects the rising nationalism and has grown with the nation’s independence. The novels show concern with national and social problems. The novels of the 1960s have a private tone focusing on an individual’s life and are introspective. Novels from 1980 onwards created a watershed in the history of Indian English novels as they brought in a significant change in the worldview, expression and the form. “The birth and the development of the novel in India ‘as genre nursed by, if not born out of the tension between opposing systems of values in a colonial society, and modified by certain indigenous pressures.” (Mukherjee, 23)
The evolution of the novel writing in English, as a form, in India has been aptly described by Meenakshi Mukherjee in her above words. The development of novel, like any other literary form in the nation has been greatly influenced by the issues and environs of independent India. *Crisis in Civilization* by Rabindranath Tagore is a passionate and uncompromising statement of his loss of faith in Western civilization. The composition not only shows his ultimate disillusionment with the British rule in India, it is also a condemnation of the Western civilization. “I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether.” (Tagore, 11) Rabindranath, who had started his life as an ardent believer in the benevolence of the European civilization was later disappointed when he came across the disastrous consequences of the English rule in Indian subcontinent. It is with this disappointment the beginning of Modern Indian English Literature is marked, the earliest phase of which is described by H.M. Williams as ‘Georgian effusions’.

However, over a period of time, those effusions took a back seat with the British denial to grant Indian Independence. Therefore, the new generation that emerged was disillusioned by the West’s failure to keep its heady promises. The early novelists of 1930-40’s Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao can be compared to the Four Wheels of 18th century English novelists with themes and skills. These three early masters laid the foundation of the modern English novel in India by adapting English Language to the Indian needs by asserting an Indian Identity. This assertion of identity even by adopting English language was “Declaration of Independence from English Literature” (R.Parthasarthy, 157). It was a creative appropriation of English Language. At the same time it rejected the world of the existing British English Literature as well.

Anand with *The Coolie, The Untouchable* and *Two Leaves and A Bud* reveals the heroic suffering, the conflict between national and local sensibility, and the human concerns for the downtrodden under the guise of Moonu, Bakha and Gangu respectively. Anand’s novels express nationalism, social concerns and Gandhian socialism. His novels are recognized as an instrument to see the contemporary history of India. His experiments with social realism and the exuberance of North Indian
dialects, laid the foundation for linguistic and cultural representations in future novels. From South India, Raja Rao recaptures the magnificent mythical imagination of Indian antiquity successfully in the three novels – Kanthapura, The Serpent and the Rope and The Cat and Shakespeare and most of short stories he has written. The classic foreword to Kanthapura has been recognized as a manifesto for the path Raja Rao had opted and preached for Indian Writing in English. Raja Rao resolved the dichotomy of foreign (English) language and methods of Indian story telling tradition through a systematic Indianization of English and a spirit and tempo of Indian life. He deviated from the traditional structure of European novel and shaped it on the lines of the epic tradition of India. He complemented Anand’s effort of introducing North India to Indian English Novels by bringing in an unusual blend of South Indian – French cultural outlook and realities. R.K. Narayan is realistic fiction writer who depicts the comic mode as equivalent to the tragic in his evocation of mediocrity in metaphorical way with The Guide, Financial Expert, The Waiting For Mahatma and other series of novels in an imaginary ‘Malgudian’ touch. He focused on the anxieties, disappointments and struggles of a generation who stood on the threshold of independence, the point where the institutions established during British Raj were still dominating and negotiating their way into independent India. The great trio of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan had been penning down fiction in English before and after independence. However, writing fiction in English was not explored much by larger groups of authors in India during this period. In fact, for almost two decades after independence the exercise of writing a novel in English was considered against the norms of loyalty for the nation. It took more than ten years for a novel in English to receive Sahitya Akademi award. R.K. Narayan’s Guide heralded the era of acceptance of English novels by Indian authors as an indigenous genre by winning the Sahitya Akademi award in 1960. Indian English novel also developed with the general economic growth and prosperity after temporary setbacks of war and loss of great leaders. The sustained structure of the novel form too added to the arduous nature of representing Indian life in English. Moreover the novel being essentially a Western form imposed certain limits and also subsequently modified the Indian experience. Raja Rao pointed out in the preface of Kanthapura:
“One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated in an alien language… even though English is a language of our intellectual make-up it is not that of our emotional make-up.” (Rao iv)

In spite of diversity in themes and techniques, the novelists during 1950s and 1960s have some common features like the presentation of personal narratives against the background of modern Indian, honesty, the conflict of values between the family and the individual and the awareness of social change. One can see the sensibility in different degrees in the writings of Sudhidranath Ghose’s four novels And Gazalles Leaping, The Cradle of the Clouds, The Vermilion Boat and Flame of the Forest; G. V. Desani’s All About H Hatter and Ananthanarayan’s The Silver Pilgrimage which reminds us of Don Quixote of Cervantes in the struggle for self-identity. Indian writers in English in this period were concerned about character development, psychological depth and an effort to negotiate the sense of alienation in the modern world, albeit, the nature of both ‘alienation’ and ‘modernity’ were not the same for India as it was for the west. The emergence of women novelists was a significant development of these decades. Women writers like Kamala Markandaya with Nectar In A Sieve, Some Inner Furry, A Silence of Desire and A Handful of Rice; Santh Rama Rao in Remember The House, while Anita Desai with Cry The Peacock and The Voices In The City have a fine eye for the urban and city life. Other women writers like Ruth Prawar Jabhwala and Nayantara Sahgal came upon the stage and shared the platform enjoyed by the well-known Indian English writers. These women writers of the first generation engaged themselves with the issues of women in conventional marriage systems, human relationships, and contemporary social and political developments from a woman’s point of view along with the psychological influences of contemporary world. Dr. Babhani Bhattacharaya and Khushwant Singh, in very different ways give us valuable insight into the pathos of economic impoverishment, mal-distribution of wealth and human degradation caused by political upheavals. The novels of these years exhibited a command over the form but lacked innovations. As
Shyamala Narayan and Jon Mee point out, except one or two examples, “None of the books of this period, … are interested in developing the conflict between tradition and modernity which are a thematic feature of so many of their stories- into any kind of formal exploration of indigenous narrative forms” (230)

Nevertheless several major Indian English novels were published during the 1960s. The conspicuous titles produced during this span of twenty years include - *The Serpent and The Rope, The Cat and Shakespeare, The Guide, The Man Eater of Malgudi, Sunlight on A Broken Column*, *A Bend in The Ganges*, *Storm in Chandigarh, A Handful of Rice, Nectar in A Sieve, Bye Bye Black Bird*, *Cry, The Peacock*. There was no huge spurt of creativity or production during 1970s. Economic decline, War and Emergency disturbed the nation during this time. The effect of the same was reflected through a very thin stream of creativity. This period remains as a memory lane where the writers of the next generation would visit and revisit.

The next watershed in Indian Writing in English came with the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* which went on to win the Booker McConnell Prize in 1981. The publication of *Midnight’s Children* in 1981 is considered to be a harbinger of renaissance in Indian Writing in English. Certain elements of postmodernism, experiments with language and grammar, focus on history, liveliness of language, innovations through magic realism and allegory, references to contemporary Hindi cinema all made a smooth entry to the world of Indian English novel with Rushdie’s highly influential novel. The language, style, theme and narrative technique employed by Rushdie is entirely original and highly innovative. He initiated a trend which cared very less about the continental method of writing novels. Incredible imagination, amazing comic sense and absolute word – play are the hallmarks of Rushdie’s works. After 1980, the novel flourished incredibly in themes, use of language, style and technique. Writers like Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai Vikram Seth have set their premise of writings around various socio-political and cultural issues that emerged in post independent India and rapidly changing Indian life; the socio-political, cultural issues of a young multicultural democratic nation and their impact on communities and an individual’s life. After Rushdie, the novel had been successfully worked out by the writers like Amitav Gosh
with his novels like *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines* and *The Glass Palace*. Shashi Tharoor captured the political scenario in *The Great Indian Novel* while Rohinton Mistry focused on the scams in banks when banks in India underwent transformation and were getting nationalized and the impact of the same on Parsi community. In 1990, Rohinton Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey* was short listed for the Booker Prize. On the other hand Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* accompanied by never before seen marketing drive in India in 1994. The New York Times (16 December 1991) has called these new Indian writers ‘Rushdie’s children’. These writers incorporate vibrant, pungent and colourful style of writing. Their use of Indian words seemed to be tingled with English language. The most noteworthy thing in their writing was the portrayal of India through the language which was a second language for them. Moreover India being a vast and diverse cultural country creates some additional problems like problems of expression. Nevertheless, Indian writers in English find the way out and showed an emerging India in their literary works. The common theme of Indianness binds them together. Along with this common theme their urban sensibility and ability to adopt the English language put them to the international credit. This generation of authors after 1980 were relieved off the burden of the consciousness of both English language and novel as a form as something that belonged to the west. These novelists use English language deftly, covering a larger canvass of emotional, political, cultural, geographical and historical issues. There is an awareness of national and international developments reflected in themes woven around the displaced, marginalized modern man and uninhibited modifications in the genre. There is a gusto of creativity, vigor, hope and confidence surfacing through rich, mischievous language, light – sometimes funny, comic and humorous approach that reigns their writing.

By and large Indian English fiction underwent some changes of theme and setting. The theme of Indianness bought the element of nostalgia in their writings. The writings seemed to be memoirs or quasi-fictionalized memoirs, travelogues or inspired in part by real – life experiences and in part by writer’s imagination. Contextually, these were the writers either of western based but having Indian origin or possibly the children of British Raj era- born and brought up in India and then migrated to the West. They exhibited the theme of nostalgia by romanticizing their
childhood which they passed in the nation. They tried to relocate and rediscover the past experiences at India. In a way they indirectly advocated the national spirit with the emergence of innovative writing techniques. Thus, their contribution to the Indian writing in English was enormous. Their works have noticeably recognized and rapidly stands in the world market. In this way Indian writing in English has certainly expanded its scope throughout the world. The writers of Indian origin manifest India in their works with a great zeal. Their writings were often less-self conscious and more light hearted and most probably concerning with impressionistic memories of place and people of the nation. Thus, they created a sign of long distant Nationalism.

In such a context of Realism on the background of urbanized setting, the arrival of Chetan Bhagat with his debut novel *Five Point Someone* in 2004 proved to be a revolutionary wave in the Indian Writing in English. A complete stranger to the literary establishment, Bhagat was an investment banker in Hong Kong. The novel, pioneering in devising a new genre of Indian Writing in English, was autobiographical in nature and portrayed the lives of three students at IIT who found it difficult to cope with the traditional education system, with scintillating humour and profound understanding. The fiction became a phenomenal success in the literary world with its sale of more than two hundred thousand copies. It dramatically changed the landscape of India’s domestic publishing scenario by expanding the readership of English novels beyond the miniscule, metropolitan, highbrow elite and reached out to the unassuming, urban middle class India and, more importantly, to the youth of the nation.

The novel *Five Point Someone* was rejected by many publishers before it was accepted by Rupa Publication. It threw gauntlet to the elitist view of literature which resonated only within the charmed circle of literary establishment that was dominated by hair-splitting critics and conceited academics. Indian English fictions before Bhagat were wealthy. We have Naipauls, Seths, Kushwant Singhs and Arundhati Roys. But Chetan Bhagat has actualized something all these established authors were not able to. The common Indian has never been a zealous reader. The only digestible reading material they had were news tabloids and film magazines. Earlier Indian authors were considered too sophisticated to be understood by the common man. Earlier Indian English novels are heavy and hard on eyes and brain and usually deal
with overly serious subjects. Only elite readers, scholars and academicians had the privilege to read novels. But Bhagat with *Five Point Someone*, single handedly brought forth a revolutionary change in the entire scenario. Now there comes a refreshing type of novel: comparatively short, written in easy-to-read language, about everyday life and problems of today’s young people. And it has all the cool and *masala* stuff thrown in good measures- coffee shops, malls, misery, alcohol, sex, poverty and so on. Bhagat got today’s mall-going, bear drinking, so called traditional-Indian-value-breaking young Indians to buy paperback novels (often pirated ones) and read them.

The amazing sale of Bhagat’s novel dazed the publishing industry. Bhagat’s *Five Point Someone* is a turning point of Indian English Fiction and marks the emergence of a new brand of Indian Fiction in English. Some critics, however, initially brushed off Bhagat’s success as a fluke but his lasting popularity with his consequent novels like *One Night at the Call Center*, *Three Mistakes of My Life*, *Two States* and *Revolution 2020* proved them wrong. All the books have remained bestsellers since their release and four of them have inspired Bollywood films like *Hello*, *3 Idiots*, *Kai Po Che!* and *2 States*. Bhagat is now considered to be a youth icon and has been labeled as the ‘Voice of New Generation’ for the young, emerging urban middle class Indians.

(2)

**Life and Works of Chetan Bhagat**

Chetan Bhagat –a novelist, columnist, script writer and motivational speaker –was born on 22nd April, 1974 in New Delhi. Bhagat comes from a middle class Punjabi family. His father was in army and his mother was a government employee. Bhagat grew up in Delhi. Bhagat has studied in an Army Public School, New Delhi from 1978 to 1991. About his middle class economic status, Bhagat writes in his non-fictional work *What Young India Wants*:

“Throughout my childhood, I remember the shortage of money being a constant theme in the house. We had enough to run the kitchen and pay for utilities but little to build assets on or make

9
expenses. For instance we couldn’t repair a broken sofa for
year. When guests came to our house, we found it expensive to
serve Coke and served lemonade instead.” (viii)

His middle-class economic status led him to think of a studying Engineering which
can guarantee a decent job with handsome salary. Bhagat liked science subjects and
prepared for engineering entrance test. He cracked the IIT entrance test with decent
rank and joined Mechanical Engineering at IIT, Delhi in 1991. However, his interest
was not machine but lives of people. He writes in What Young India Wants, “I was
never an extraordinary student at IIT. It had some real geniuses and I was not one of
them. While many IITians figured out machines, I realized something else. I was
more interested in people.” (ix, x) His interest in people led him to join IIM-A to do
an MBA. He did far better in MBA than what he did in Engineering and nearly ended
up at being top in the class. It was at IIM-A that he met and fell in love with his future
wife Anusha Suryanaray. He converted his love life into marriage. This experience of
converting their love life into marriage later provided Bhagat with the plot of his
novel 2 States: The Story of My Marriage just as his experience of student life at IIT
provided him with the content of his debut novel Five Point Someone. After
completing his course at IIM-A, he joined a Hong Kong-based investment bank called
Peregrine and left India for the first time. However, the bank collapsed in the Asian
crisis of 1997. After spending few jobless months in expensive Hong Kong, he ended
up in Goldman Sachs, one of the leading investment banks of the world. His job in
investment banking gave him a chance to see how money flows around the world. His
stay in Hong Kong made him realize that India is the least concerned country for the
investors in the world. He learnt to his disappointment how the East Asian countries
were transforming themselves through foreign direct investment but how the Indian
government, which also hankered after foreign capital, ignored the basic expectations
that came with it. He felt guilty for the poor condition of India in spite of our claims
for our greatness. He yearned to do something for his country and make it a better
place. In What Young India Wants, Bhagat writes:
“I knew the solutions but I didn’t know why India couldn’t implement them. I also didn’t have the means or the way to convince my country — both the common people and the policymakers — that we were on the wrong path. I wanted to scream from the rooftops. ‘We will lose the race to these nations if we don’t’ focus!’ However, I had no way to do it.”

(xiii)

As discussed in What Young India Wants, Bhagat had enough money, air-conditioned homes and great lifestyle of investment banker that allowed him to travel the world in luxury. But he couldn’t forget about India’s condition. An NRI living in posh area of Hong Kong and earning in dollars, Bhagat felt nostalgic about India.

Bhagat, who calls himself destiny’s child, believes that his destiny leads him to writing profession from investment banker. He writes in What Young India Wants:

All of this became possible because of the one little, ignored aspect of my personality when I was a child — me as the entertainer. It surfaced again and changed my life. I mentioned earlier how I used to entertain my uncles and relatives when I was a child. That same entertainer reemerged in Hong Kong. My other banker friends took on hobbies like golf and bridge. Almost by chance, I decided to do what I enjoyed: tell stories. Perhaps I wanted to get over my depression and frustration. May be I wanted to reconnect with India. Whatever the reason, I decided to write a book.

(xv & xvi)
This decision to write a book changed his life. Although he had no formal literary training, he was an ardent reader of English novels. His favourite authors are: Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Orwell, J.D Salinger and Ernest Hemingway.

Bhagat’s first novel *Five Point Someone* was criticized in literary circles for its lack of literariness and its pedestrian English. But the novel became so much popular among the youth that now it is considered to be the highest selling English novel in India. The novel is set in IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) and it recounts the adventures of three mechanical engineering students who find it difficult to cope with the traditional education system that does not encourage original thinking. It compels these underperforming students to take on the draconian system through unfair means. The novel focuses on the negative aspects of Indian education system with its excessive emphasis on grades, marks, scores and placement and not on innovation and originality. The novel reveals how this system crushes students’ creativity. At the same time, the novel illustrates through the story of three friends – Hari Kumar, Rayn Oberoi and Alok Gupta – how brilliant students can waste their golden opportunities in college life if they do not think straight. This semi-autobiographical fiction was trailblazing a new genre of Indian English Writing and it admirably depicts the campus life of students who are caught in the conventional academic trap with brilliant humour and sarcasm. The novel won Indo-American Society Young Achiever’s Award (2004) and The Publisher’s Recognition Award (2005) and it dramatically changed India’s domestic publishing scene. The huge commercial success of the book inspired Bollywood director Rajkumar Hirani to make a film on it. The film named *3 Idiots*, starring Amir Khan and Kareena Kapoor became a sensational hit although it involved the author into controversy with the filmmaker over issue of the story’s credit.

The very next year came *One Night at the Call Center* (2005). This second novel, which depicts the aspirations and plight of Indian call center agents with sympathy and understanding, made Bhagat one of the largest selling Indian writers in English. The novel revolves around six people, three men and three female to be precise, working in the same group in a call center. Though distinctly different in all aspects there was something which bound these folks together – their messed up lives. The
story is about thwarted ambitions, lost love, absence of family affection, pressures at home and the work environment at a call centre. All their problems are resolved when God gives a call and advises them to improve their lives. However, its movie adaptation, *Hello* (2008) that parodied call centers was unable to make huge impact on the Indian audience.

With his third novel *Three Mistakes of My Life* (2008), Bhagat shifted his focus on the lives of semi-urban youth from that of metropolitan youth. He has tried to reproduce the reality of the area where entrepreneurship, religion and cricket have always co-existed and played important role in people’s lives. Set in modern India, it is a story about a young man, Govind Patel, his two best friends and how he made the three biggest mistakes of his life. In late-2000, a young boy in Ahmedabad called Govind dreamt of having a business. To accommodate his friends Ish and Omi’s passion, they open a cricket shop. Govind wants to make money and thinks big. Ish is all about nurturing Ali, the batsman with a rare gift. Omi knows his limited capabilities and just wants to be with his friends. However, nothing comes easy in a turbulent city. Set in the backdrop of Gujarat earthquake, Goghra massacre and the consequent communal riots in Gujarat, it is a story of three friends and the way they face difficulties to realize their goals. They will have to face it all – religious politics, earthquakes, riots, unacceptable love and above all, their own mistakes.

After the three novels became bestsellers and ensured him a huge readership, Bhagat decided to quit his lucrative job as an executive director in Goldman Sachs, a major international investment bank, and devoted to writing as a full time vocation. In 2009, at the age of thirty-four, he retired and came home to Mumbai. He now lives there with his wife Anusha and his twin sons, Shyam and Ishaan and devotes his time to writing to make change happen in the country.

His next novel, *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* (2009), is a love story of a Punjabi boy, Krish and Tamilian girl, Ananya and their efforts to convert their love life into marriage with the consent of their parents. The story, told in a humourous way, is about the predicaments of lovers to persuade their traditional parents who do not agree with their marriage beyond their clan. It is a largely autobiographical fiction
that narrates the story of Bhagat’s marriage with Anusha Suryanarayan and socio-cultural barriers they faced in convincing their parents for their marriage. The stunning success of the novel inspired a movie with the same title directed by Abhishek Varman, with Arjoon Kappor and Alia Bhatt in lead roles. In 2010 Bhagat’s name appeared in Time magazine’s list of world’s 100 Most Influential People, and The New York Times called him ‘The biggest selling English language novelist in India’s history.’

His last novel, Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition (2011) is a novel of love, betrayal and corruption. It is a story of three childhood friends i.e. Gopal, Raghav and Aarti. Three of them have their own ambitions. Gopal wants to be rich; Raghav wants to change the country and Arti wants to be the airhostess. The problem is both Gopal and Raghav love the same girl. It is a love story set against the backdrop of corruption in the education sector, which affects millions across the country. The story also hints at a possible youth revolution in the country to replace the present rotten system with a better one.

During this period, Bhagat’s speech titled ‘Sparks’ at an educational institute became a hit on the Internet. It went viral and opened up a new career for him. He became a motivational speaker and gave more than hundred talks in various educational institutes across India and abroad. He learnt more about youth of India due to his visits to different education institutes in various cities of India. He writes in What Young India Wants:

I realized that even though the regional cultures were different, all Indians wanted the same thing – a better life in a good society. My travels around the country refreshed my understanding… My stage had become bigger, the audience wider. The time had come to tell whosoever I could reach how we ought to change the nation. And just had destiny had planned it, I received an offer to write columns. (xviii)
The Hindi newspaper *Dainik Bhaskar* approached him to write for them in 2008. In few months he received another offer to write columns from *The Times of India*, the leading English-language newspaper in the country. In 2012 *What Young India wants*, a collection of Chetan Bhagat’s selected essays, columns and speeches appeared. With this book Bhagat, the storyteller, ventures into the territory of non-fiction. Here he airs his views about Indian society, politics and youth and articulates clearly what he calls ‘My Great Indian Dream.’ The book is an honest attempt to find out an answer to the most pressing question: What young India wants today?

(3)

**Hypotheses:**

Chetan Bhagat’s novels cater multidimensional interpretations. Reading novels in this age of social networking media was perceived to be the trade of geeks and nerds and not the cup of tea of an average youth. Reading novels of earlier writers was too sophisticated to be understood by average young man because of overly serious and philosophical subject matter and traditional literary style. The proceeding writers had taken by heart that the function of good literature is to make reader uncomfortable by opening window into new worlds and by challenging readers to understand lives and belief that are different from their own. However, ‘Chetan Bhagat’s mass-market fiction in India performs the opposite function; it’s about reaffirming what readers already know of the world. Hence friendly, conversation-driven fictions about call centers, IIT and IIM campuses aimed largely at young readers who have already experienced these things. His writing has made those youths read his novels who wouldn’t normally list “Reading” among their hobbies.

His bubblegum novels have changed the landscape of Indian fiction writing and gave rise to a new generation of Indian writers. Many professionals across the country, taking inspiration from Chetan Bhagat, turned English authors, some of them even best sellers! Chetan Bhagat’s novels are based on the college life, young call centers executives, entrepreneurs, love and pre-marital sex which reminded today’s youth about their college life, their love stories and inspired them to write a fiction. Chetan Bhagat’s novels destabilized the notion that only scholars or persons from literary background can write a novel. Amit Verma’s *My Friend Sancho*, Tushar Raheja’s
Anything for You Madam, A Romance with a Chaos by Nishanth Kaushik, Nothing Can Be as Crazy by Ajay Mohan Jain, Of course I Love You by Durjoy Datta, and I too Had a Love Story by Ravinder Singh are all new voices of new India; all of them, in one way or the other, taking inspiration from Chetan Bhagat.

While Bhagat has received incredible fame, he has been subjected to derision and pooh-poohing by the elite readers and critics who pejoratively refer to what they call ‘Chetan Bhagatification’ of Indian English Literature. Among the elitist readers, his fictions have become the synonyms of ‘catch up’ and Bollywood masala movies. Bhagat’s opponents are found everywhere in all sections of literati. For many of them Bhagat’s books are like black-sheep of Indian Writing in English. There seems to be an undisputed disapproval of Chetan Bhagat among the high-brow Indian writers. He has been frequently accused for polluting the sanctified vocation called literature, for lowering the standards of literary writings. Though Bhagat nurtures a fine and lovable relationship with youngsters, accusations hurled against him are as great as is the number of his admirers. Lack of sophistication, flat and unimaginative characters, absence of imagery, and unliterary style are some of the most common complaints of Bhagat’s novels. There is almost unwavering hostility between Indian intellectuals and the writer of five best-sellers. The former group looks down upon Bhagat with utmost disdain, coming pretty close to label his work as ‘crap’. The part of the reason behind such disapproval of Bhagat’s work lies in the fact that intellectuals see Bhagat catering to popular, almost plebeian tastes.

Objectives:

1. A good writer is not the one who has won literary prizes only, but the one who has won the heart of people by connecting his stories with them. In this sense, Chetan Bhagat is a successful writer of world literature because in the market where 5000 to 7000 copies sold is enough to label a bestseller, his novels sell in the million. The proposed study aims to study Chetan Bhagat as a contemporary Indian novelist and as a game-changer of Indian English fiction writing.

2. The study aspires the close examination of Chetan Bhagat’s novels by teasing out the contemporary issues interwoven in his works and Bhagat’s view on the way to make the society better. It accommodates the analysis of the presented Indian society and
social rituals in Chetan Bhagat’s novels.

3. The study aims to evaluate Bhagat’s fictions as the voice of contemporary Indian youth. It will take into account author’s views entrenched in his works about the contemporary tribulations faced by the current generation and their possible solutions. It also includes the psychology, aspirations, desires, college life, love, premarital sex, exploitation at workplaces and concerns of youth portrayed in his works. It also investigates the qualities of each work that makes youth read and appreciate it.

4. One of the reasons for Bhagat’s stunning success is his simple narrative techniques. The study tries to evaluate Bhagat’s fiction from the point of view of narratology employed by Bhagat in his works. It will also attempt to trace if there is any design in his works by close examination of recurring themes, recurring elements, portrayal of characters, titles and observation made by him.

5. The research scrutinizes the way language of youth has found place in a literary works of Chetan Bhagat.

6. Beyond the shadow of doubt, the study aims to evaluate Chetan Bhagat as a popular fiction writer.

Methodology:

It is a library research work. Collected data from print and e-sources are evaluated and interpreted according to the research methodologies. To interpret texts and data, scholars’/ critics’ interpretations are cited with the help of MLA seventh edition.

Review of Related Research:

To carry out the investigation, the related research works in the field for popular fiction have been studied. Besides research papers as mentioned in the bibliography, *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction* by McCracken, *Popular Fiction: The Logics and Practices of a Literary Field* by Ken Gelder and *Postliberalization Indian Novels in English* by Vishwamohan are a few of many critical books reviewed for the investigations. Reading pulp fictions of the writers like J.K Rowling, Nicholas Sparks, Sidney Sheldon, Dorjoy Dutta, Amit Verma, Ravindar Singh, Amis Tripathi, etc contributed in establishing the foundation of the research.
Limitations and Scopes of the Research:
Bhagat is not a literary writer. He writes for the mass. So his novels cannot be evaluated with the parameters of classical novels. However, Bhagat has expanded the novel readership in India by writing novels about and for the youth. His novels are read and appreciated by almost all college going students in India. He has given a rise to a new generation of writers. Many writers took inspiration from him and started writing novels about their college lives. In spite of his popular status, he has some literary qualities too that can make him literary. The parameters of classic and popular keep changing across the period. For example, Shakespeare and Dickens were popular in their times. But today they are considered to be classics. This research work can prove to be a foundation stone for including Chetan Bhagat’s novels in the academic world.

Organization of the Thesis:
The thesis has been divided into six chapters which are preceded by the Acknowledgments and Table of Contents. Chapter One contains the brief history of Indian writing in English, the change in the trend after the arrival of Chetan Bhagat, life and works of Bhagat, Hypotheses, Objectives, Methodology, Review of Related Research, Limitations and Scope of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two traces out the realities of contemporary Indian society as reflected in Bhagat’s fiction. Chapter Three analyses Bhagat as a writer of youth. Chapter Four brings narrative techniques employed by Bhagat into light. Chapter Five evaluates Bhagat as a Popular Fiction Writer. The last chapter, Chapter Six, is the Conclusion of what has been discussed in the previous chapters. The thesis ends with the Bibliography.
Works Cited:


