CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY URBAN INDIAN REALITY IN CHETAN BHAGAT’S FICTION

The tremendous success of Chetan Bhagat as a novelist is a miracle of rare device. The credit goes to his management skills, mushrooming of thousands of new private engineering colleges necessitating his mastery over simple past tense, his justification of immoral instinctive human acts in garb of new age realism and above all one term from great Hindu philosophy called ‘Prarabdh’-

"Throw a lucky man into the sea, and he will come up with a fish in his mouth".1

Since the phrase, the bestseller English language author has become the synonym for Chetan Bhagat. The legend deserves some critical attention and evaluation as the master of sentiments of young generation, a name and place, both in the hearts of their sweet hearts and in society. His five novels ‘Five Point Someone’, ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ and ‘One Night @the Call Centre’, ‘Two States of my Marriage Life’ and ‘Revolution 2020’ have adventure, romance, background music, expert comments on social, political and education systems. This writing style is now recognized as one of the important innovations taking place in the
field of novel writing. Chetan Bhagat has been defining the literary taste of budding book lovers since the publication of his first novel ‘Five Point Someone’ in the year 2004.

The place of Chetan Bhagat in Modern English Literature

‘Crisis in Civilization’ by Gurudev 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 an indictment of the Western civilization. Rabindranath writes,

“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.”

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. Three early masters of the Modern Indian English
Literature namely Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan laid the foundation of the Contemporary English novel in India by rejecting the Indian values and adapting English Language to the Indian needs by asserting an Indian Identity. R.Parthasarthy declared famously this as a:

“Declaration of Independence from English Literature”

It was a creative appropriation of English Language, but a rejection of the world of the existing British English Literature as well. While the triumvirate of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan successfully laid the foundations of the Indian reality and started to look at the Indian perspective and the Indian picture from a post-colonial point of view, the later generation went further and examined in detail the emerging patterns of the Indian socio-political reality born within and without the geographical boundaries of India. Hence, the arrival of Salman Rushdie, Amitava Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upmanyu Chatterjee, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and others who changed the face of Indian English Literature forever. With the persistent stress on the sheer Indiannes, these writers have successfully shattered the Western practice of looking at the East as the ‘other’, or sub standard as exposed by Edward Said in his ‘Orientalism’ published in the year 1978.

In such a context of Realism on the background of urbanized setting and cosmopolitan bent of Chetan Bhagat ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ presents itself as a trend setter. Published in the year 2005, this novel is
almost entirely different from the likes of those written by the big three i.e Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan and other similar writers. These writers sought to establish a national Indian character in their fiction especially because of their concentration on the crisis of identity problems. Chetan Bhagat – coming after Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Upamanyu Chatterjee and Ghosh-finds a ready market for the Indian English Literature. It is but natural that Chetan Bhagat is much bolder than the masters of the initial years. This boldness is specially found in his characterization. It may be worth recalling that most of the characters painted by the great Indian writers are essentially Indians. For example in Raja Rao’s ‘Kanthapura’ Moorthy is an idealist and a supporter of Gandhian ‘Ahimsa’ and ‘Satyagraha’, who wants to cross the conventional barriers of caste- so typical of a Post Independence educated Indian. In R.K. Narayan’s ‘Guide’, the character of Raju is a total transformation of his role as a tour guide to that of various ‘Ashrams’ from ‘Bramhcharya’ to ‘Sanyas’, that is in keeping with the traditional Indian idea of holiness. The porter boy Munno, in Mulk Raj Anand’s ‘Coolie’ points out the reality of the essential Indian social system. Thus, it is very much clear that the “Big Three” (Rao-Anand-Naray) had their primary task cut out for them-building a national Indian identity. In contrast to all this, Bhagat’s characters have nothing essentially Indian about them. In fact, the main characters, the six Call
Center Executives – Radhika, Esha, Priyanka, Varun, Military Uncle and Shyam - could belong to any other nationality. In their denial of the typical Indian value system, the emergence of a new India can be located on India which is poles apart from the Indian reality rotted in the much talked about “timeless India” excessively found in the writings of the great triumvirate. Shyam’s disregard for a marriage party in his family in order to reach office in time or Military Uncle’s decision to join a Call Center at an age when most of the Indians choose to live a retired life are examples in hand. Their own little world of the Call Center is cosmopolitan in nature. The cosmopolitanism does not spring out only as a result of the revealed or unrevealed presence of the customers from USA on the other side of the phones, but it is also in some measures due to the cosmopolitan life style of the male and female leads of the novel. Indeed drinking, dancing and partying at 32 milestone, working for a company headquartered at Boston, dating at ‘Mocha Café’ with its coloured Arabian lights and at Pizza Hut at Sahara Mall and going to the night club ‘Bed’ for break, the Call Center Executives may easily belong to young upcoming generation of any ultra modern society - with the exception of the Military Uncle - not because he is not cosmopolitan but because he is not exactly young. Their business names also give the taste of cosmopolitanism, for example: Radhika is Regina, Esha is Eliza, Varun is Victor and Sam for Shyam. Radhika is the only character in
which some traits of Indianness or Indian womanhood is found. She works hard day and night to keep her parents-in-law in good humour. Shyam comments on her condition:

“Cooking three meals a day and household chores and working all night…. the dark circle around her eyes” testify to her struggles to be an ideal Indian housewife. However, in course of chances upon the infidelity of her husband Anuj and decides to walk out from her marriage and her in-laws. The discovery is made through a telephonic talk from the Call Center, suitable to the prevalent atmosphere of the composition. Through the microcosmic reality of a call center the novelist takes into consideration to build up a simulated world to showcase the macrocosm of the prevailing reality of the Indian society. The revolt of Radika is the sheer display of the rejection of the traditionally found Indianness in the novels of the Big Three.

The point of crisis in form of looming pink slips is fabricated through subtle and intelligent touches of the narrator. Since the very beginning the atmosphere of slow down and fear of insecure job have been created by the novelist. He makes the reader aware of the crisis in their professional lives of the characters of the novel, as they fear that they are sure to lose their jobs since the business is low in their Call Center office. However, the novelist makes a brilliant shift from the professional crisis of the characters to the crisis in their personal lives. Shyam’s affair with
Priyanka has been almost been ended in whimper, leaving soul shattered Shyam struggling hard to get over the mental depression. Priyanka is bogged down by her extremely possessive mother, who hastily decides her daughter’s wedlock with an NRI. Esha, who inspires to be a model, finds her dreams shattered when she agrees to sleep with “a forty year old designer”. Only to realize later on that she has been rejected as a model, which leads her to an attempt to commit suicide. The Military Uncle is not accepted by his son and daughter-in-law and he is forced to stay away from his grandson. The website developed by Victor and Shyam has been stolen by their boss Bakshi, who has taken the credit of developing the website which is going to be really very helpful in increasing the business of the company. Beautifully interwoven professional and personal crisis builds up pressure cooker like situation in the climax of the novel, that reminds the reader some of the most disturbing moments of the modern Indian social life.

“A recent phenomenon in the Indian National life would be the financial slump, when the professional crisis of several Indians precipitated individual crises in their personal lives.”

Desperate in their effort to overcome the pressure the executives opt to visit a night club that is going to be a temporary escape from the disturbing events of the night. It is during their journey back from the night club all sorts of confusions take place. First, Vroom feels nauseated
as a result of excessive intake of alcohol; second they break the window-pane of a restaurant which causes a burglar’s alarm to ring and most importantly, the Qualis in which they are travelling skids, crashes into a construction site and hangs precariously over a grid of iron rods. This is the height of the climax in the novel with death staring at their faces, the panic spreads as the rods begins to yield slowly. To further complicate their predicament they find to their horror that there is no network coverage in that place, which simply means they are not going to take any kind of help from the outside World.

This section of the novel unfailingly takes us to the pages of William Golding’s ‘Lord of the Flies’, where some British teenagers marooned from the modern civilization of their ultra modern life-style, and in spite of using state of the art gadgets like mobile phones and laptops, the six Call Center employee, none find themselves completely at the mercy of nature. The all enveloping utter darkness adds to the sense of doom. The novelist superbly fabricates the situation of calamity. First catastrophe in the professional crisis, then the individualistic crisis and last and final is the crisis of death. Here intention of the novelist seems to make his reader aware of the illusion of the Meta narrative and to bust the myth of scientific progress. Here, the novelist touches the post- modernist ideas of his contemporary world - a feature that is not to be found in the writings of his predecessors. If William Golding’s ‘Lord of the Flies’, is the
picture of the predicament of the human race under the shadow of cold war and the possibility of devastating Nuclear War, ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ by Chetan Bhagat shows the predicament of the mankind in the Post-Modern consumerist social set up. It shows the real value of the human kind, shorn off all its artificial embellishments. The blurring of the distinction of the so called grand and popular literature is another post-modernist quality of ‘One Night @ the Call Center’. When all hopes are lost and there are but a few minutes left for the end of the six Call Center employees, Bhagat introduces the technique of ‘deus-ex-machina’ in the form of telephone call from God.

In Western literature the employment of the ‘deus-ex-machina’ is practiced since time immemorial. The Greek Masters used this and Shakespeare also made use of it in several of his plays. In modern fiction Michael Crichton’s ‘The Andromeda Strain’, is one of the most notable examples of use of ‘deus-ex-machina’. Although, Bhagat’s way of using ‘deus-ex-machina’ is a little different with a touch of a little novelty. When the vehicle hangs precariously on the grid of iron bars, the people trapped inside the car wondering if the vultures will find out their bodies after their death, which seems imminent. However, it is at this point that Shyam’s mobile phone rings, in spite of the non-availability of network in that areas. To add to their surprise, the display of the phone tells them that the caller is none other than the Almighty, Omnipresent, Omniscient God.
They were already almost scared to death, now they start gasping, when God promises,

“Bye now. Remember, I am inside you when you need me."

The entire incident involving God may be a new device in literature but a movie lover recalls ‘Bruce: The Almighty’ where God does the same act for the survival of the male lead of the movie as he uses the modern device to contact the hero. Chetan Bhagat loves telephones. Every novel written by him has telephones playing decisive role that may change the entire course of action. Soon after the incidence of God, the six people save themselves not only from death but also from professional and personal crises. The business at the Call Center is saved. Priyanka reunites with Shyam and Radhika walks out of her infidel husband and starts living with Esha, who quits her modeling aspirations and works for an NGO, apart from continuing in the Call Center. Vroom and Shyam fulfill their lives ambition by opening their own web designing company and Military Uncle goes back to USA where his son makes amends with him. All this may appear like wish-fulfillment- with the insertion of God in the novel out of nowhere, the novelist shatters the conventional rules of rationality. The girl in the train who is God says (before revelation),

“Just like life, rational or not it just gets better with God in it. I reflected on her words for few moments. She became silent. I looked at her face. She looked even better in the light of dawn.”
Thus in its avowed contrast to the new age application of reason and logic, the novel ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ appears as much Post-Modernist as those of Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho, where such contrast can be easily located. For instance, it is little outlandish to observe how Coelho in his novel ‘The Zahir’ encourages things like occult sciences through the character of Mikhail, a young man from Khazakhestan. In his effort to raise his voice against the erstwhile communist rules Mikhail denies the scientific truth and accepts the myth of the charmed tree in his village - a brief against which the communist rulers of his country campaigned actively. In the real sense, Mikhail stresses upon the importance of what he calls ‘accommodator’- the giving up point."

This appears to be an intelligent and smart way of denying the importance of accumulated scientific and rational knowledge acquired civilization across the globe, and replacing them with the irrational, occult and supernatural. Thus for those finding fault with the Post–Modernist ideas provide handy weapon: the opposition to the principles of logic and reason; which built up the foundation of modern human civilization and progress. One may justifiably disagree upon such opposition, alleging that it betrays the cause of the “Enlightenment” as famously suggested by Jurgen Habermas in his essay titled ‘Modernity- An Incomplete Project.’ However, no one can deny the fact that with
such opposition, Bhagat’s novel becomes a part of the global Post-Modernist Literature-traversing a long way from the age of Rao-Anand-Narayan Triumvirate.

**Chetan Bhagat: A voice of new generation**

In the same light the first novel of the author deals with dilemma of today’s engineering students in India who get into the country’s top University, only to rebel against the stultifying atmosphere of academic competition. The novelist has, from his first hand experience, clearly portrayed ragging, hostel life, work pressure from the higher authority, increasing suicide cases, a great criticism on education system in India following internationally landed IIT system that has stifled students creativity by forcing them to value grades more than anything else; uninspiring teaching and numerous assignments adding to their woes, while still making time to enjoy one’s youth. The novel very realistically describes the present scenario while revealing the fact that in India young people had begun to have far more options than their parents, but their choices remain circumscribed by traditional education system, and overbearingly high expectations. The second novel from the pen of Chetan Bhagat, ‘One Night @ the Call Center’, is a romantic comedy that details the anxieties and insecurities of the rising Indian, Middle class, including interrogations about career, inadequacy, marriage, family
disputes in a rapidly changing India, lack of financial growth for deserving people with better knowledge and skills and the relationship of the young Indian Middle class to clients whom they serve in the U.S.A. The author invites the readers to identify aspects of their own self that make them angry and dissatisfied and the change that they want to bring onto this world. One of the salient features of this novel is the key role of fiction that transports the reader to a different world, the world of Call Center. The night when the characters of the novel receive a call from God, soon after the dramatic and disturbing event during the night, they use this moment to re-examine their own lives. God motivates the group to such an extent that they instantly get ready to face their problems with utmost determination and motivation. The arrival of God in the scene is the most unrealistic part of the book though with the inclusion of the incidents before and after the phone call from God, the novel offers roller-coaster-joy-ride to the readers. God helps them to have clear cut goals in their minds. Thus they venture ahead with much more intellectual growth, confidence and positive thinking in the BPO industry. The book not only brings forth the real life experience of Call Center employees- thanks to the frequent visits of the author to Call Centers to gain firsthand experience of the place – but also gives a vision to people who aspire to become Call Center executives, as Call Centers are becoming a mainstream solution now. While there are several issue
related to Call Centers, Chetan Bhagat’s main concern through his Post Modern writing is on one issue that is, ‘Is the government creating the right kind of jobs?’ The novelist believes very firmly that if the government really gets its act together on infrastructure the young work force will get better quality jobs that are more fulfilling and will make India move ahead. The third novel, ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ by Chetan Bhagat, yet again, a story of Indian young generation of this modern world countering unexpected loved, thwarted ambitions, absence of family affection, pressure of a patriarchal set up and the work atmosphere of a globalized office. The story reveals the condition of aspiring businessmen in India, failing to pursue economic gains, the ups and downs in the middle class to earn bread and butter to keep the body and soul together. Gujarat Earthquake, religious politics and Godhara riots are some of the current issues of the time raised by the novelist depicting how they affect the life of a common man. Bhagat touches a chord not only in the young but at the same time; the act of elderly has also been detailed in the light of Realism. The novelist inspires the people to stand upright even after real-life nightmares have wreaked havoc to their dreams and to resurrect their lives even when all hopes have succumbed to devastation. Chetan Bhagat tries to picture the inhuman face of humanity as horrendous killing of innocent people out of religious frenzy as a stain on the much talked about the concept of tolerance.
expounded by the father of nation, ironically from the state of Gujarat. India has undertaken appreciable journey on the road of growth and development since the day of independence, but Indian mentality or the attitude of bestial kind needs to be changed very seriously, as Indians are very easily driven by emotions and not by practical thoughts. In his fourth publication ‘Two States of My Marriage Life’, Chetan Bhagat tries to narrow down his scope from his expanded themes of ‘Three Mistakes of My Life’ to concentrated social issues of marriage. The novelist narrates the story of a young man and a lady from two different states of India who fall in love and decide to get married but their parents do not agree due to cultural differences. The book covers their individual struggle to achieve goals, their strong bonding of love which wins them through all odds. A regular Chetan Bhagat reader may look for the development of Chetan Bhagat as a novelist but to the disappointment of the reader; ‘Two States Of My Marriage Life’ doesn’t promise anything extraordinary in the name of Realism as there is nothing new in the story and the way it is told has nothing but the typical style and language used by the novelist in his novels; with the exception of the length as this novel has a score or so more dense pages than the other three.

The novel depicts the perfect Indian Mentality of not accepting inter-caste marriages and the tradition of still living in age –old orthodox and
impracticable beliefs. The novels suggest throughout that India is a very religious country and older people have extreme views on religion and young people are quite unable to relate to it. For Bhagat, generational divide is one that India desperately needs to bridge. The older generation grew up in a time of scarcity and prized a suffocation social conformity where everyone lived separate but equal lives. The young are almost a race apart with a liberal attitude that is inimical to the Indian hierarchies of caste and creed. The novelist expresses his thoughts of optimism for inter-state marriage as the means of national integration that will significantly increase greater understanding between cultures resulting in much needed ultimate unity, absence of which has been expounded by the novelist in ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ that had created the pandemonium in the country which is known for its tolerance throughout the world. Revolution 2020 commands action on corrupted Education system that exists in India where the political leaders use all their powers in filling of money to their pocket rather than ruling wisely and serving the society.

Chetan Bhagat speaks out the mind of new generation. His characters are young blood, not the old age people. The author talks about three inmates of IIT in his ‘Five Point Someone’ and three friends are the leading male of his ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’; whereas a group of Call Centre executives constitute the major bulk of characters in ‘One
Night @the Call Centre’. The author loves to see the spark in the people around him.

"I see students like you, and I still see some sparks. When I see older people, the spark is difficult to find. That means as we age, the spark fades”.13

He knows very well that India has the largest population of youth in the world and he is sane enough to target these inexperience people as his reader or customer, most of them have just started opting reading as habit and unfortunately found easily available works of Chetan Bhagat in every nook and cranny. It is the voice of youth and its emotional cord that touches his readers the most-

“He did nothing in particular and did it very well.”14

The novelist doesn’t show expertise in writing about rural people and the seamy side of their lives but he prefers talking and targeting the Bermuda and Capri generation. In his first two novels ‘Five Point Someone’ and ‘One Night @ The Call Center’, his all characters share the same urbanized cosmopolitan milieu and in his third novel ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’, the outskirt of Ahmedabad with some characters of middle class traditional mentality find place in his narrative. Alok represents a ever perturbed lower class family in ‘Five Point Someone’, the striving friends Neha and Hari ever struggle to exploit every occasion to gain some sensual pleasure out of their friendship- the girl in pretext of
an antidote to her dear departed brother who is the victim of the cruel education system and, of course, the brutality of inconsiderate career oriented attitude of his father Prof. Cherian.

“With the pace of an autobiographical account, the characters are simple people with whom one can identify with almost instantaneously. Needless to say this pocket friendly tome is a lucid and clear account of a young wordsmith who succeeded in making this book a must read for the fun of it.”

Ryan is easy go lucky kind of fellow with the sound financial background he manages to thumb down studies at the prestigious institute and compel to do the same to his new friends. Alok and Hari –who are very much impressed with heroics of Ryan:

“Ryan Oberoi, I repeated his name again mentally. Now here was a guy you don’t see in IIT too often; tall with spare height purposefully lean and unfairly handsome. A loose gray T-shirt proclaimed ‘GAP’ in big blue letters on his chest and shiny black shorts reached his knees. Relatives abroad for sure, I thought. Nobody wears GAP to bed otherwise.”

The amazing pace of ‘Five Point Someone’ with successive logical showcasing of the events keep the reader spell bound, with the disclaimer of the author that “This book will not help youngest into IIT.”
The hard work that involves into securing admission in an IIT has been described in funny way.

“I think half the trees in the world are felled to make up the IIT entrance exam guides... All we would say as advice is, if you can lock yourself in a room with books for two years and throw away the key, you can probably make it here.”

Soon after the sane advice, the author describes the hard core reality of every higher educational institution of India- the social evil- a crime namely “Ragging.” “Another demon grinned at us, slapping his bare stomach every few seconds. There seemed to be no choice so we surrendered every item of our clothing, shivering at the unholy glee in Baku’s face as he walked by each other of us, checking us out and grinning.”

Choosing the IIT element was itself half a success. After cinema, politics, sports, IIT is the brand that enjoys celebrity and salability status in India. The IIT factor helped a lot initially. Mouth talk spread like a wild fire that the book ‘Five Point Someone’ is all about the dark secrets of IIT life. However, the realistic convincing story of erstwhile meritorious students Alok, Hari and Ryan who mess their quiz in IIT and from then screw up their lives struggling to maintain their grades. Apart from the routine way of securing good marks which is given the term mugging, the unheroic hero Ryan tries some other unconventional way to
upgrade the grades of trio. Disgusted with the IIT system, Ryan gives vent to his dissatisfaction:

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

Ryan, the unheroic male lead of the novel devices a system to crack the tricky examination questions and for the completion of the assignment; he gives it an attractive title:

‘*The C2D Plan” that is “co-operate to dominate.”*’

The plan is like a war cry against the elite education system that is nothing but the process of driving a set of prejudices down one’s throat. The comment on the conventional process of learning in ‘*Five Point Someone’* reminds and warns, at the same time, that education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught. According to this novel, the IIT system extracts the most promising years of one’s life from the country’s best minds thereby it suppresses talent and individual spirit. The
evaluation of the students on the basis of draconian GPA system is faulty and it spreads malice among the fellow students. The faculty is heartless and Professors don’t care for the taught. As far as the contribution to the country is concerned the premier institute has done nothing for the sake of nation in the form of offering it any path breaking research or invention.

To fight against the system the mind of Ryan fabricates ‘The C2D PLAN’ that appears to be less logical and more silly, that nobody would love to emulate and that proved to be an unsuccessful scheme in the later part of the novel. The key tenets of ‘The C2D PLAN’ were – don’t try this at home, or anywhere else:

1. “All assignments to be shared – one person will do each assignment by turn. The others will simply copy it. Saves times, saves duplication of effort.

2. We will divide up the course responsibilities. For instance, if there are courses in the semester, we will take care of only two each. One must attend all classes that one is responsible for but can skip all others.

3. We share lab experiment observations.

4. Our friendship is above GPAs. With all the new spare time, we live our lives to the fullest.
5. *We combine our hostel rooms into one living unit – one common bedroom, one study room and one fun party room.*

6. *We split the cost of Vodka regardless of how much drinks each person has had.*"^22

The glorification of waywardness makes ‘*Five Point Someone*’, a silly piece of composition. Kabul is famous for its horses but it doesn’t really mean that one cannot get donkeys there. But one does not look for donkeys in Kabul so is the case with IITs as one does not look for duffers like leading male leads of ‘*Five Point Someone*’ in IITs. The popular novel is unfortunately about the self-proclaimed so called smart mavericks devoicing a curious reader from the glory of the grand world class institutions. The same story line has been adopted for the major motion picture ‘*3 Idiots*’, but Rancho of the movie is a hero in a real sense who tops the list with the sheer power of his practical knowledge, who of course, does not agree with the mugging pattern cheating the essence of education. The specimen of a mugger is Venkat in ‘*Five Point Someone*’, who is disliked by one and all. The author paints the picture of the fellow who is an ideal inmate of the great institution.”Nobody in Kumaon talked to Venkat; given a choice he wouldn’t talk to himself. He had a good GPA and everything, but he was hardly human. Venkat woke up at four in the morning to squeeze in for hours of mugging before classes. Every evening he spent three hours in the library before dinner.
Then after dinner, he studied on his bed for another couple of hours until he went to sleep. *“Who on earth would want to be with him”.*

The way “Five Point Someone” is narrated is splendid with witty humour and required spice laced throughout the book. Ryan is carefree, Alok is careful and Hari is balanced with imbalanced thoughts. There is a beautiful and charming young lady Neha who acts as an item to the plot. Placing her as the daughter of Professor Cherian gave enough scope to bring in drama of trauma. Emotions are also worked out well by bringing in plot of Neha’s brother who commits suicide upon not meeting his father’s expectations of getting into IIT. It is a fun ride and becomes nostalgic on many occasions. Then there is the milieu of IIT and tough system and hard professors, who have been targeted by the author every now and then. Prof. Cherian is the embodiment of the most serious and sincere kind of professors in IITs as he himself was a perfect 10 points grader, he devoted his entire life to the cause of education. And of course people like him are the foundation stone in making IIT a brand. But the negative aspect of the strictness of the kind results in the loss of unprecedented kind that the men like Prof. Cherian does not even know for long, like the suicide of his son Samir. This suicide note is very touching and unfolds the layers of shocking truth. He writes to his sister:

*Dear Neha,*
I love you my little sister as much as the day I first held you in my arms when you were born. I was so proud that that, and will remain so forever.

Neha, can you keep a secret? By the time you get this, I may not be in this world. But you must understand that no one in the world must know of this letter.

I have tried three times to get into IIT, and time I have disappointed Dad. He cannot get over the fact that his son cannot handle Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. I cannot do it Neha, no matter how hard I try, no matter how many years I study or how many books I read. I cannot get into IIT. And I cannot bear to see Dad’s eyes. He has seen thousands of IIT students in his life and cannot see why his own son cannot make it.

Well Neha, he sees the students who make it, but he doesn’t see the hundreds of thousands who don’t make it. He has not spoken to me for two months. He doesn’t even talk to mom properly because of me. What can I do? Keep trying until I die? Or simply die?

If any one finds out that I took my own life, mom would probably not be able to survive. But I had to tell someone –who else but you. I love you Neha. And you tell them I went jogging.

Yours in eternity

Samir”

Samir”

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By writing ‘Five Point Someone’, Chetan Bhagat has undoubtly, touched a nerve with young Indian readers and acquired almost cult status while detailing what not to do at IIT. The critics may think of his works as literature in making but he has become the need of the new generation readers.

**Chetan Bhagat: The Advocate of Immorality**

Chetan Bhagat, though widely read, does not give any message to the youth of the nation. None of his characters are heroic, none of them are wonderful human attributes. The novelist is known for his best sellers and not for the creation of any brilliant character, rather most of the characters in his novels are driven by instinct, like sleep, food, fear, sex and self and above all unconventional foolishner, glorified everywhere by the money minded author. Wilde, in ‘The critic as Artist’ has made a witty statement:

“The difference between literature and journalism is that journalism is unreadable; and literature is not read.”

In the light of this statement the works of Chetan Bhagat do not belong to the category of literature because the author is widely read. Traditionally, a person goes through the process of reading for the purpose of ‘instruction’ and ‘delight’. But what kind of instruction does a reader get by going through the works of Chetan Bhagat is hard to decipher. He compels the tender mind and heart of his reader to follow
their instinct. Love is not depicted as love at first sight but at the time of first kiss, probably, the kissers are not lost in the imaginative world of romance but they might be thinking secretly that this art of kissing will be the opener of further avenues of love or not. The prevailing atmosphere in the novels of Chetan Bhagat may be the result of his longing for the realistic writing but the world is not devoid of good, people with the flag of morality held high in their hands. The classical concept of the art of characterization that highlights ‘good’ in a character is denied by the author. ‘Nobody’ is good in his works. A daughter is not true to her family, a friend is not loyal to his friend’s family, parents cheat their children to mint money from the pockets of their children, the authority seeks opportunity to sleep with subordinates, professors are cruel to their students, sons are wicked that they do not even allow their fathers to see their grandson. So in present world of professionalism everyone is cheater. Vroom, the crook, is the leading male of the book, though Shyam the shy f-a-c-e-r has been projected as the hero of the novel. The scenes in the book shift from the Call center to Disco, to the dates of Shyam with Priyanka. They have been through bad times, though they have had enjoyed their lives together up to the maximum possible limit provided the use of a rubber shield. They feel quite uncomfortable in the company of each other after break up. The browbeaten Call Center Executives in ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ who have befooled themselves throughout
their lives have been depicted while fooling around with the Americans over the telephone. Their boss Bakshi plays a meek villain, ignorant of the fact that he is heading a whole bunch of bloody blackmailers that he cannot contend with in the realm of dishonest dealing. The female characters are loose characters in all novels of Chetan Bhagat. Whether Neha of ‘Five Point Someone’ or Vidya of ‘Three Mistakes of my life’ or Priyanka of ‘One Night @ the Call Center’, they are not the specimen of morality. Especially in ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ an aspirant Esha, does not mind sleeping with a big gun of fashion industry for getting a break to walk upon a modeling ramp.

“Clumsy sex is better than choreographed sex. And certainly better than no sex. I said as I pulled her close. By the way do you have a condom? she said. Yes sir, we live in constant hope’. I said as I pulled out my wallet.”

In the climax of the novel ‘The Three Mistakes of my life’, sms from Vidya comes as a comic relief in the surroundings of bloodbath which is still on.

“Hey stay safe tonight. By the way, just got my period! Yippee!! Relieved no? C U soon my hot teacher, Love-me.”

The beauty of the novel ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ lies in the cruel intentions of its characters. From the very beginning, the boss Mr. Bakshi leading the forefront of deception as he has been depicted exploited and
cheating his subordinates as his privilege. The husband of Radhika swindles his devoted wife. The mother of Priyanka emotionally blackmails her daughter as she already had enjoyed her life, now wants to enjoy the life of her daughter as well. Esha had been cheated by her Modeling Agent. Vroom the sentimental character biker has the bad family life. The most masculine character Vroom, experiences the emotional turbulence on the squabbling of his parents, so does the Military Uncle, as apparently the noblest character of the novel has some bleak background that is why his son does not allow him to see his grandson. God takes a new and the most modern incarnation in ‘One Night @ the Call Center’. No aura but the glamour that dazzles, no serenity but the charm that strikes the sight, no indulgence of soul but the ever soaring frustration of not getting the prized possession. No picture of Raja Ravi Verma but Vijay Malya’s Calendar of King Fisher. All in all, see the silver screen adoption of the book or see Katrina Kaif, the Goddess. The novel gives the most glamorous version of God. The version that does not follow the set convention or the tradition but the version takes into consideration the market demand.

“It was difficult to withdraw from the gaze of her eyes....” ‘I climbed onto the wrong coach. Luckily, the boggies are connected’, She said, adjusting her long hair that ended in countless ringlets----She was young. Perhaps the mid-twenties. Her waist-length hair had a life of its
own: a strand fell on her forehead repeatedly. I could not see her face clearly but I could tell one thing—she was pretty. And her eyes—once you looked into them, you could not turn away.”

The books of Chetan Bhagat are written precisely to meet the market demand to satisfy the bad literary taste of budding book lovers. A very interesting observation has been made in a research paper targeting both the bad literary taste and Mr. Bhagat’s composition ‘One Night @ the Call Center’. The authors write:

“After corrupting the social set up at various places, the generation that doesn’t oil its hair is all set to corrupt a very pious field that is the field of reading and learning. At least the recognition of rubbish like ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ hints towards the degeneration, thereby further threatening the deterioration of the literary taste of upcoming generations.”

Many writers have written books of class but they cannot secure their place among the mass. Various reasons can be given for the same. None of Upamanyu Chatterjee Or Vikram Seth’s book is available on the payment of 95/- (Excluding discount). None of the book of Chetan Bhagat requires to have a level of understanding and patience in the reader thereby they provide the best time pass casual reading. The books written by Bhagat do not keep its reader spellbound by literary worth but they have the capacity to do so with the sheer force of sensationalism. The feel
does not come out of the books of Bhagat to gradually grab the existence of its readers by transporting him out of himself but the reader, as no other option left, plunges himself into the pond of sensationalism, which is the writing of Mr.Bhagat. If one tries to bring in contrast two books written by two people from different background of higher learning, the books by Chetan Bhagat will be found to be not up to scratch. The reading of ‘English August’ written by a bureaucrat Mr. Upmanyu Chatterjee, an IAS of 1984 batch can be termed as pleasing and enlightening experience, whereas the reading of ‘Five Point Someone’, ‘One Night @the Call Center’ or ‘The Three Mistakes of my Life’, will make you not to pick up the book in hurry from your reserved berth after an interesting though disappointing reading for three hours or so, as soon as the train you are on board arrives to the destination. Somehow one will read the book but won’t love to preserve it.

**The Three Mistakes of My Life: The third mistake of Chetan Bhagat as a novelist**

After the block buster success of first two books ‘Chetan Bhagat’ has become a brand in India. He has got huge fan following from diverse field. Even top notch writers and critics are dumbstruck at his success. ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ has another interesting youth aspect of entrepreneurship. The book is all about business, cricket and religion. It is the story of three young men: Govind, Ishaan and Omi hailing from
Ahmadabad who start a cricket shop in the year 2000. How they handle situation like earthquakes, religious intolerance forms the bulk of the novel. As in ‘One Night @the Call Center’, he winded another fairy tale to start ‘The Three Mistakes of my Life’. He picked up the concept of a guy mailing him while committing suicide. Through it looks overboard as the person committing suicide does not appear to be a technology savvy guy as he does not use anything throughout the novel except occasional ‘smsing’ through his mobile phone. The novelist chose this medium to find a gripping mode in tracing the guy, knowing the matters that lead to the suicide attempt which form the story of the book.

The title of the third novel of Chetan Bhagat is kind of symbolic confession of the novelist that after leaving the job of a banker the third piece of composition from his pen is the third mistake of his life. All is very nice for Chetan Bhagat and his publisher but many people including some of his fans have now started complaining. His third novel ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ has reportedly sold 5,00,000 copies since its release within a month. Cover-hype? Some sources say only 60,000 copies of the book have been printed till then. He is being touted variously as people’s writer, a publishing phenomena and young voice of India, but the list of complaint against Chetan Bhagat as a writer is lengthening day by day. The readers complain that his social critiquing is a random and unfocussed. His works lack literary merit with the sheer
display of clunky writing style. With little experience of life he does not
display world-view of any kind. His books have silly titles and he has
chutzpah. Critics go on even saying that:

“Chetan is no real writer. He is simply pulp-fictioneer with luck.”

Chetan Bhagat produces read and throw stuff. His first novel ‘Five Point
Some One’ has no plot at all. Even if one tries to locate one it is so flimsy
that one can knock it down with a strand of hair. It purports to describe
the lives of three students during their undergraduate years at IIT Delhi.
As one start reading the book, the reader keep waiting for the plot to
appear so to speak but half way through the reader gives up by that time it
is realized that the plot is not turning up. The book throws at the reader
incident after incident, all of them in connected in every detail but one:
they are all happening to the same set of characters. So one reads about a
ragging incident right at the beginning that one thinks will build up into
something, but doesn’t. Then one reads about a classroom incident which
one thinks will act as a precursor to something more substantial, but
doesn’t. Then split of Alok and Ryan takes place and the reader wonders
if it will have any impact on the story, but it doesn’t. Then the reader just
gives up locating the plot. So the question is how did a fiction do so well
with such a blatant lack of plot. The answer may be it banks on our
vulnerability to nostalgia. At more than one point in this book the reader
will sigh reflectively and stare through the pages into past and get lost in
the memories of experiences. And why not? Regardless of where one studies, how many of Chetan Bhagat’s reader have not skipped lectures to watch movies? How many of his readers have not copied assignments? How many of them have not been average students. And still how many of them have not fallen in love? Just the fact that a book makes the reader warm and fuzzy inside about his glory days doesn’t make it a good book, it just makes it a clever one, especially if that is all it does. The general feeling of disquiet among the students in general with regards to IIT is the most realistic rendering by the author making the book a resounding success. The IITians keep telling that they are the best, brightest brains in the country, that their ridiculously tough entrance exam is simply their style and that they are proud of the high standards they set. Not surprisingly most of the readers react to them the same way they react to arrogance anywhere else: a common reader wants to see the facade come down; he wants to be told that the IIT is just another institution, that the students are just as human as the reader himself; and the reader wants the aura of perfection surrounding the institute destroyed and so when one of their own paints a picture of the IIT(true or not) that makes it look just like any other college and the reader gobble it up voraciously. The art of characterization takes a nosedive when a book is so full of caricatures. Ryan is a typical rich kid with everything but his parents love and attention. Alok is the exact antithesis of Ryan, with a family to support
and source of income. Hari, by his own admission, is somewhere between the two. Prof. Cherian is a bad professor who topped all his courses during his undergraduate years and somehow cannot even seem to smile. Add in typically Indian good girl in Neha and a flash back with a suicide note the reader begins to wonder if Chetan Bhagat is really bad at it or if he really could not be bothered. After all a story teller needs characters if he has a story to tell which he did not.

The narrative, with no constraints like characterization and plot, flows smoothly with no glitches at all. In fact the book reads like excerpts from someone’s diary for most of the time, with some funny one-liners thrown in here and there. The language is designed deliberately to appeal to the youngsters, which is typically ‘Collegeish’ with plenty of swear words sprinkled all over the place. This is probably the final nail in the coffin that leaves on with no doubt as to whom this book is targeted at. If a reader is the kind of person who loves to read book and reads them at every available opportunity, he will not probably like this one, because the gulf in quality between this and all the other books that one has read before in his life will be too big to gloss over. But on the other hand, if a reader is the kind of person who likes a bit of light reading now and then and usually prefers magazine to books, Chetan Bhagat fits the occasion. And judging by the sales of book, one can easily tell which group makes up the majority. There are parts in the book where Bhagat shows
glimpses of being good, but they are too far and fleeting in between. Same is the case with his second novel ‘One Night@ the Call Center’ as well. A work of fiction especially a novel needs to have a story. His first two novels don’t have story. The fiction novel has to showcase the author’s creative imagination. Again his first two novel do not have the signs of the creative imagination. And finally, a fiction novel must have some interesting characters, ‘Five Point Someone’ and ‘One Night @ the Call Center’ have none. ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ is a little improved version of the novel as an art form because it has a plot dealing with the entrepreneurial efforts of Govind amid the trio of Indian obsessions- Cricket, religion and business. The novel has a story as well told in the pure Bollywood style, fast and racy as a bitter sweet small town comedy set in the city of Ahmadabad. By this book, again, the writer covets mass appeal. He exploits the interest of a common Indian in Cricket by infusing it as one of the most important components of the novel. The mass of talk about the novels of Chetan Bhagat decreases successively. A few people talk and write about his first novel. With the publication of his second novel the number of people talking and writing about it decreases and nobody talks about ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ and ‘Two States of my Marriage Life’. Chetan Bhagat well understands his conditions. That is why he has devised a new management technique to make his latest novel ‘Revolution 2020’ another
best seller. He offered the book to his fans on the payment of Rs. 20/- Only, provided they fulfill a simple condition of recommending the name of his book ‘Revolution 2020’ to five readers through electronic mail.

In the maker of Contemporary Urban Reality, Chetan Bhagat touches the emotional chord of young generation. The emotionally agitated young people dominate the bulk of his fiction. Their failure and frustration are not unknown to anyone. Their sentiments of:

“The to be or not to be” or “Now more than ever seems it rich to die to cease upon mid night with no pain.” are the sentiments that come to the mind of each and every one, especially the young people, every now and then during the emotional turmoil. That’s why suicide is an important component in all the works of Chetan Bhagat. In his first novel, Neha’s brother commits suicide, Alok tires to do so when he finds the surmounting pressure unbearable, Esha in ‘One Night @the Call Center’ could not refrain herself from thinking of attempting the unnatural way of terminating her life. Same is the case in the third work of Chetan Bhagat, where the author appears to be so preoccupied with the concept of suicide that the novel opens with the suicide note of Govind. The exposition of the work is dominated by the concept of suicide. This is one way through which Chetan Bhagat tries to take his readers in his confidence by talking of one most common alternative of suicide available with everyone to get rid of trouble tribulation and torture of this unreal world. His fourth novel
'Two States of my Marriage Life’ is all about suicide though, if the concept of marriage is taken in non-serious conventional way of thinking.

Among various improbabilities like the arrival of God through telephone, Govind’s suicide note to the author through email, and the visit of the three leading male of ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ with ‘Ali’ to ‘Australia’ on the invitation of Fred Lee, the Australian Fast Bowler’, the description of the incident of Godhara Riots and its after effect give a sense of novelty to the reader as Chetan Bhagat tries this realistic front for the first time in his third novel. The novelist doesn’t go into detail about the reasons of Godhara incident but he tries to display that how a common human being suffers through different traumatizing faces of life under the consistent patterns of society, politics and religion, all on the backdrop of one incident of intolerance. An individual is pictured insignificant in front of uncontrolled madness of the communal frenzy, which is not a sudden production. The violence is not spontaneous. It is prompted and promoted by certain groups, which find themselves incapable of motivating the common mass for the involvement in the carnal, bloody and unnatural acts. The politically motivated groups project the regular scenes of violation to engulf all those area and men not yet coloured in blood. ‘Train to Pakistan’ by Khushwant Singh, convincingly expounds this very thought in its act of describing the involvement of innocent Mano Majrans in attacking the
train bound to Pakistan, caring the Muslims of the village. People react out of fear. They store petrol, red chili powder, guns and other means of protection at their homes out of fear and one spark of violence sweeps away the sense of peace and security. Chetan Bhagat very realistically describes the scenes of the riots:

“Call to Shiva and Rama combined with drumbeats. We climbed the stairs two floors to teach the bank’s roof. The city glowed orange in thick winter night. One, two, three- I saw three balls of flame across the poles. The nearest flame came from a building fifty yards away. A crowd of people stood outside. They throw stones on the burning building. I couldn’t see well, but could hear the screams mixed with celebratory chants. …… My neighbourhood resembled a calamity movie film set. A burning man ran across the road. The Hindu mob chased him. He stumbled on a stone and fell, around twenty yards away from us. The mob crowded over him. Two minutes later, the crowd moved away while the man lay still.”

The scenes of communal frenzy have been described with extreme vividness and sense of detail. The partition novels like ‘Azadi’ by Chaman Nahali, ‘A Bend in the Ganges’ by Manohar Malgonkar and ‘Ice-candy-Man’ by Bapsi Sidhwa have bold-curdling scenes of communal riots, offering the first hand experience of the fatless time. Khuswant Singh leaves his readers shivering with fear when he writes
about the outcome of the violence as seen in swelling Sutlej, which present a terrifying sight. In the night the rivers looking like a sheet of paper symbolizes the black deeds of the violence. The cries of the human voices calling for help, seems to arise from the water. The cries of jackals deepen the atmosphere of awe. The river offers a terrible sight.

“Horses rolled from side to side as if they were scratching their backs. There were also men and women with their clothes clinging to their bodies with their arms clutching the water and their tiny bullocks dipping in and out.”

It can be said that the violence has been described here as in ‘The Three Mistakes of my Life’- as the second hand experience but the character who is describing is not directly associated with the violent act. Similar scene of terror is very vividly expounded in ‘Azadi’ by Chaman Nahal, the scene when brought is comparison with the quoted scene of ‘The Three Mistakes of my Life’ appears to be far better in detailing the atmosphere of terror shouting loud the arrival of death in its ugliest form. Nahal writes that Hindu and Sikh dwellings become the hide out of the feared mice from the hungry battalions of cats. The novelist looks pretty precise on projecting forth the dominating fear from different angles. Unbearable becomes even the beating of the drums for the scared helpless minority. The general rhythm was daga-dum-dum, daga-dum-dum, daga-dum-dum. The last ‘dum’ was given by the powerful right hand, which
held the strong, slightly bend stick. The first ‘daga’ and second ‘dug’ alternated between the left and right hand, both on a softer tone until the right hand repeated the stroke with mighty ‘dum’. As the frenzy rose, the first and second beat were repeated many times over, like stretching out a live wire, when in the end came the explosion, the final powerful stroke of the right hand-‘dum’. The dum was the full stop of the foot of the rhythm and had the key to your heart beat, as it were. For when it fell, when the juggler with the sticks had concluded his run, you rose up like a maniac and along with you, each fall of the ‘dum’ rose up weird spirit which came and stood by your side:

“The drummers were in madness of purest kind. And why shouldn’t they be? Today their Pakistan had been sanctioned – the land of pure. Today they had become pure, at the last. And they bent their backs projecting the drums in front of them, and went daga-dum-dum”

A concentrated and careful reader loves to float on the flow of the narrative. Unity of action is anticipated by one and all. The scenes of comic relief have been introduced by the dramatist traditionally and also on silver screen by the film maker, but the mix up of tragedy and comedy mars the intensity of the effort. The same practice is one of the apparent demerits of Chetan Bhagat’s Novel. It seems as if he is more concerned to please his reader on every possible occasion even on the cost of the effort.
“A few mobsters run out of the bank gate as their clothes caught fire. I suppose it is much more fun to burn people, than get burnt yourself”.35

Chetan Bhagat becomes sheer Bollywoodish in the climax of ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ through the scenes of catastrophe demands more seriousness. Ali, the batsman uses his skills to handle the villain.

“Slam! Ali struck the ball with the bat. He had one shot and he didn’t miss it. The ball hit Mama’s temple hard. Mama released the ball in his hand to hold his head. The ball fell on the floor and Ali kicked it to Ish. Ish threw it again. Ali connected and slam! The ball hit the center of the Mama’s forehead”. 36

One wonders, how he manages to retain his sense of humour despite writing on topics that are actually the harsh realities of life. Bhagat shares his secret,

“It is an art you know, writing on dark topics and still retaining some humour in it. I am lucky I still have it in me.” 37

The novelist writes about the programmed people those who are born and brought up to opt for a high paid profession. The aim in life, for the most of time, is thrusted upon them by their parents who keep their words aloof from culture and tradition, values and society so that the aspiration of life can be achieved compromise with everything other than the one pointed in with in life has the sanction of every family. When a high paid job is obtained even after sacrificing dream and health, freedom and passion,
values and character, truth and honour, the person is said to be an achievement, the incarnation of success, the apple of his or her friends’s and family’s eye. And when the beaten track is not followed, the pressure of expectations can even provoke a young chap to commit suicide as Sameer does in ‘Five Point Someone’. He writes to his sister about his letting down his father,

“Well Neha, he sees the students who make it but he doesn’t see the hundreds of thousands who don’t make it---- what can I do? Keep trying until I die? Or simply die?”

Suicides, which is an act of crime is a dominant feature in the novels of Chetan Bhagat. When the pressure cooker like situation prevails the people directly affected from it prefer to end their lives, in place of facing the challenges of life. The third novel of Chetan Bhagat begins with a suicide note displaying the fact that the idea of suicide strikes every now and then to every individual especially the young lot, who keeps it abreast as a reserved option to get rid of all demands and expectations of life. The suicide note in ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ serves as the marked feature of Chetan Bhagat’s typically opening with the element of surprise:

“Heead_busi
Sent:12/28/2005 11:40 p.m
To: info@chetanbhagat.com

Subject: A final note

Dear Chetan,

This email is a combined suicide note and a confession letter. I have let people down and have no reason to live. You don’t know me. I am an ordinary boy in Ahmedabad who read your books; and somehow I felt I could write to you after that. I can’t really tell anyone what I am doing to myself—which is taking a sleeping pill every time I end a sentence- so I thought I would tell you.

‘One night@ the Call Center’ is also not devoid of the incident of suicide. Esha the aspirant model tries to end her life when she was cheated by her Modeling Agent even though she had compromised with the greatest possession of a woman. In a way, the glorification of suicide has been done by the author. The frustration of young generation finds voice in the works of Chetan Bhagat. He appears in the pages of his novel as a soft cushion to absorb the emotional jolts of his characters, as he does with Govind in ‘Three Mistakes of My Life’.

The movie ‘3 Idiots’, the mega bollywood hit, inspired by Chetan Bhagat’s ‘Five Point Someone’ has a wonderful song expounding the direct quotation of heart, mind and soul of a frustrated, disappointed and
broken young man. The song goes like: ‘Give me some shineshine, give me some ray, give me another chance, I wanna grow up once again... In this world of tough competition, the search for a hero is a difficult task to perform. The novels of Chetan Bhagat have no hero in conventional sense that possesses the heroic qualities of truth, honor, freedom, endurance, sacrifice and courtesy. All the characters in his novels appear to be snobs, who meanly admire the mean things. For them success and monetary gain is everything in life. To achieve this purpose they go up to any extent. Three spoilt brats who after putting a lot of hard work managed to secure admission in an IIT, but soon after their admission, they shrug off the option of hard work and opt for the unfair means to maintain their grades. They are sick of the system therefore they try to crack the system by their criminal acts like stealing question papers. This growth of daring is not sudden. It develops by and by, day by day, as they started to be unruly by bunking classes, enjoying outing and by consuming alcohol on the top of the roof of the college-a holy place, the temple of Goddess Saraswati in traditional sense. When they were caught red handed while stealing the question paper, they expect to be forgiven. By keeping the hope of staying in the college alive, the author glorifies the ever growing tendency of immorality in young generation. As it has always been easy to be immoral, corrupt and dishonest than to move on the path of morality, truth and values. And most of the time people love to follow
what is easier and instant, that is why the unruly, immoral and valueless people are more in number and when the bad is glorified – like adopting short cuts, abusing professors, sleeping with their daughters, consumption of alcohol, cheating people by the use of modern machines like computers-truth, values and morality take the new age ‘Charvak’ in form of Chetan Bhagat. The bad people with worse literary taste appreciate the glorification of bad. However, the novelist knows his standing in the world of literature that’s why he confesses in the acknowledgment part of ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ that:

“I am very ambitious in my writing goals. However, I don’t want to be India’s most admired writer. I just want to be India’s most loved writer.”

The one word, frustration explains many things in modern civilization – which is increasingly becoming more uncivilized though. The immoral acts of people have frustration in the background. Neha sleeps with his boy friend in ‘Five Point Someone’ because she is unhappy with the incident of suicide; committed by her brother Sameer. Right after revealing the suicide note, she gets emotional sanction like that of thunder and storm, the situational sanction, in the darkest of the night in Hindi movies and her boy friend is very much there, and agog to be – though not sound enough but the author justify the same in the light of sadness.
but what is wrong is wrong always, one cannot defend it by any reason. The lines from Chaman Nahal’s ‘Azadi’ speak volumes about the creature called Man.

“The appalling misery they were going through had to have some meaning. They had to emerge different, modified and reborn otherwise; one might as well shut up being a man.”

The characters in Chetan Bhagat’s novel drink more wine than water. Enamored by the charm of wine the novelist entitles one whole chapter in ‘Five Point Someone’ as ‘Vodka’. Whatever is done secretly gives more pleasure. The consumption of wine is not done openly in India and it has not yet gained wide social sanction. The novelist tries to win the support of the mass of the young lot who secretly consume wine but try hard to conceal the fact from their parents and relatives. On the point of accepting wine as a social drink Chetan Bhagat favors drunkards thereby wins their votes. Since so many young people respect wine more than their parents, they adore and love the use of wine by the author with the hope that the support from the bestselling author may let the flow of the wine be more smoother in club houses, schools, colleges, libraries, drawing rooms, guest rooms, bed rooms and where not. So every reader who loves wine loves to read Mr. Chetan Bhagat:
“Few things surpass old wine, and they may preach who please, the more because they preach in vain-Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter, sermon and soda-water the day after”.42

After the first novel, the novelist ran out of titles for the chapters of his upcoming novels. He could entitle five chapters only, out of thirty-eight chapters of ‘One Night@ the Call Center’ and those five chapters are entitled same as ‘My Past Dates with Priyanka’ with the exception of numbering them from I to V. And from his third work onwards Chetan Bhagat doesn’t bother to waste time in search of titles for the chapters as he knows that there are so many good for nothing people with bad literary taste roaming around to purchase his books available on the payment of Rs. 95/- only at every nook and cranny of the wonder called India. Chetan Bhagat does not provide any solution to any problem prevailing in the country; rather he supports and promotes what is considered unethical in traditional sense. Since his books are sold like hot cake the way they are written, he prefers newspaper column, speeches and other means of communication to moralize people for the awakening of India.

Whatever may be the case but Chetan Bhagat finds lucrative niche in chronicling lives of middle class youth. He is the bestselling author in English one has ever heard of. His name doesn’t grace any Booker list, but it is found on the lips of every college student in India. While the
global literate dwell on the fiction of India’s glorious past, Chetan Bhagat has become India’s favorite author by embracing the present.

At the age of thirty five, Bhagat’s chronicling of the trials and tribulation of the country’s luckier middle class youth has made him a publishing phenomenon in India. He even favors young generation by dwarfing the grown up aged people. He doesn’t specially spares professors who are working hard to produce minting new generation.

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

The novelists covet mass appeal. He prefers supermarkets and malls to launch his books. He wants his books next to jeans, jams and bread. His formula is simple: write in quirky, quick fire campus English that young Indians use and focus on absurdities of how novels feature everything which is popular among the young generations. They feature drinking, games, soft drug use, an affair between a student and his professor’s daughter, the back ground music supporting the ongoing dominating emotions, religion, politics and even the kind of marriages which are found in Suraj Barjatya’s movies. For Bhagat, generational divide is the one that India desperately needs to bridge.

According to the feel of his works; the older generation grew up in a time of scarcity and prized a suffocating social conformity where everyone
lived separate but equal lives. The young are almost a race apart with a liberal attitude that is inimical to the Indian hierarchies of caste and creed. The author’s own story is a reflection of the hunger that drives the young India of his novels. By his mid-twenties the author had become the embodiment of the Indian dream: an investment banker in Hong Kong. Disillusionment set in after his firm went bust in 1998, Asian financial crisis just as his parents divorced and his father refused to accept his son’s decision to marry a woman from a different part of India. Ever since he has not really spoken to his father. For him a model society is China, not because of its economic success but because of its social upheaval. According to his novels, India needs a cultural revolution to change mindsets. In China it was bloody but India needs to learn that the old ways are not always the best ways.
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