

REALISM IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S "FIVE POINT SOMEONE: WHAT NOT TO DO AT IIT"

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Abstract

Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist, and screen writer. Chetan Bhagat's novels have been adapted as movies. He is one of the most successful writers and his novels awarded as best-selling novels. He quits his banking career in 2009 in order to bring changes in the society. He decided to lead his whole life as a writer. Chetan Bhagat introduced some unique trends in the Indian English Literature. He has pointed out the interest of the youth and has written about their ripe energies into proper direction. There is no wonder if the readers applaud him as the youth writer. His novels touch an emotional chord of the third generation. By chance or choice all the novels of Chetan Bhagat have numeric in the title which is associated with one another. According to him, the writer's prime duty is to strike a chord, and not to please only certain circles. His first novel *Five Point Someone* took him to the peak of popularity. In *Five Point Someone*, Chetan Bhagat focuses on the lives of three friends of IIT Delhi, Hari Kumar, Alok Gupta and Ryan Oberai. They are not happy with the teaching method. Students are instructed to mug the subjects in order to score good grades. This system does not help to enrich their mental ability. He exhibits the current scenario of the education system in India. This paper discusses Chetan Bhagat's realistic approach and thoughts in *Five Point Someone*.

Chetan Bhagat is a contemporary Indian writer. He was brought up in Delhi in a Punjabi family in an uncertain home environment where his parents used to fight a lot. His father, an army officer, was very strict and he wasn't allowed to watch television or films. He did his major part of his education in Delhi. He studied in an army public school of Dhaula Kuan. He completed his Mechanical Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi in 1995, and IIM Ahmedabad in 1997. He has eleven years of experience as an investment banker. Later, he switched over to Mumbai and started writing and became a writer. By chance or choice all the novels of Chetan Bhagat have numeric in the title which is associated with one another. His novels are *Five Point Someone*, *One Night @ the Call Center*, *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, *Two States*, *Revolution 2020*, *Half Girl Friend*, *What Young India Wants*, *Making India Awesome* and *One Indian Girl*.

Chetan Bhagat's novels deal with burning issues of our society. He portrays ordinary young people's suffocation. They are forced to chase the dreams not theirs but their parents'. His writings strongly exhibit that India needs to have an academic and social revolution to prevent young people simply regurgitating what they

learn is without thinking. His first novel **Five Point Someone** took him to the peak of popularity. In **Five Point Someone** Chetan Bhagat focuses on the lives of three friends of IIT Delhi, Hari Kumar, Alok Gupta and Ryan Oberai. The writer has visualized the darker sides of the IIT and tried to picturise the present education system. Chetan Bhagat showed the real image of IIT students and how they try to overcome the difficulties and problems.

“Five Point Someone: What not to do at IIT” is written by Chetan Bhagat. This novel starts with a disclaimer, “This is not a book to teach you how to get into IIT or even how to live in college. In fact, it describes how screwed up things can get if you don’t think straight”. This disclaimer throws light on the novel is not about getting admission or showing ways to perfect college life. It reviews the life of three hostel mates named Alok Gupta, Hari Kumar and Ryan Oberoi who get admitted for their Mechanical Engineering at the elite Indian University, the New Delhi Indian Institute of Technology.

As we know IIT entrance exam is complex to crack but these three people cracked it and got admitted college education is a different one where we are not expected to perform great things whereas at IIT’s one has to perform spectacularly to reach highest GPA.

Hari is the narrator of the story. He is slightly fat and unattractive and he is a ranker in school. The problem of Hari is he likes to do whatever Ryan wants to do. Why because Ryan is a very cool-dude has a perfect and well-built body. He sets Hari and Alok free from the hands of their seniors in the hostel’s corridor when they were being ragged. Baku was crying,

“You bastards, off you’re your clothes”

“No talking, just remove those damn clothes....”

Ryan said “Sir, stop.....stamped hard on Baku’s feet” (5)

Since then Hari starts liking Ryan and does whatever he wants to do. Ryan is smart and bright one who keeps forcing Hari and Alok to do different things to explore. He comes from a wealthy family and gets cheque from his parents who are in USA. He hates them since he is thinking they don’t have love for him. Ryan said,

“I don’t know why. I mean, I have been in boarding school when I was six, Of course, like every kid I hated it and cried..... I got everything..... So, somewhere down the line, I don’t miss them anymore..... I mean for me my friends are everything, they are my family..... Mom and Dad are nice, but I don’t love them” (39).

Contrary to Ryan, Alok comes from a poor family whose father is bed ridden and his mother is a breadwinner of the family, working in a school. Alok has a sister for whom the family is looking for a groom. He is very sentimental and wanting to get a job to help out his family from poverty.

This novel further discusses the hostel life and arrangements. How do some students die for getting grades? These three Hari, Alok and Ryan are not ideal students but an average and have got five point

something scores. In a life, a student one has to pass love as far as school, college or higher education are concerned, Our Hari is no exception. He falls for Neha Cherian who happens to a daughter of Prof. Cherian, the strictest, toughest and head of the Mechanical Engineering department.

Their lives get ruled by the other side of college life like, bunking the classes, roaming around, watching movies, copying others notes, drinking in the roof of IIT etc... of these three Ryan Oberio are considered to be the mouthpiece of Chetan Bhagat. He criticizes the futile grading system, false vanity of IITians, patriarchal system of education class texts, surprise quizzes, major exams and assignments. It is assumed that it is not Ryan but Chetan Bhagat who is the alma mater of IIT, Delhi.

One of Rayan's plans to make it through IIT and Still have some fun is "C2D" (Cooperate to Dominate) where he plans to divide work among themselves, each attending only a third of the classes, but sharing their notes and everything with others. This "C2D" may be a cheating but the system of education has made them forget what the real meaning of the life is and moral values. Even Ryan wants to prove the semester system to be fallacious. While Ryan was talking to Alok saying that

"Yes, but frankly, this place has let me down. This isn't exactly the cutting edge of science and technology as they describe themselves, is it?" (25)

Hari responded to it saying

"Boss, mugging is the price one pays to get the IIT tag. You mug, you pass and you get job. What let-down are you talking about?" (25)

Ryan angrily said

"This is the problem, there is this stupid system and there are stupid people like you.... Continuous mugging, testing and assignments. Where is the time to try out new ideas?"(pg.25) ".....you know guys, this whole IIT system is sick" (34).

Ryan further mentioned that

"This system of relative grading and overburdening the students. I mean it kills the best fun years of your life. But it kills something else. Where is the room for original thought? Where is the room for original thought? Where is the time for creativity? It is not fair." (35)

Even these three try to beat up the system in some other way by stealing question papers from Prof. Cherian's cabin and get caught red handed. Such incidents occur not because of the incompetence but because of the way the system functions. It is fascinating that the hopes and aspirations of Hari Alok and Ryan who are typical as well as strong individuals having different aims and aspirations and at the same time they also represent the broad community of the prestigious institutes of nation.

However, they try accusing the patriarchal system of education, teaching method and mugging up the subjects eventually they flung into their studies to secure high-paying job they are chasing after. It is further detailed that how do these boys learn new study topics, projects and bad addictions in campus life. At early these three get diverted from the main stream and later different incidents have made them study hard and to get through the system of education which once they had seriously criticized.

The novel also discusses another social issue which is experienced by the children today. Parents who set non realistic goals for their children who drive them mad. Prof. Cherian has an untold story about his son Samir. Samir despised studying science, Physics, Chemistry and he had his own reasons to follow his dreams. But due to Prof. Cherian's urging aspirations Samir was forced to crack IIT entrance exams in which Samir miserably failed out of frustration as he could not get through exams, Samir committed suicide.

References

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