

Selected Novels of Chetan Bhagat as Epitomes of Youth Culture

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on Indian Youth Culture reflected in Chetan Bhagat's novels. He is prolific writer. He has touched almost each and every aspect of Indian youth culture, whether it is of their professional, personal or emotional life. In short he highlighted his deep concern about the youth today. India is rich in youth population so how can be the issues of youth ignored by literature. In this field Chetan Bhagat gained popularity as he highlights the issues of Indian youth. In *Five Point someone* he mirrors the harsh reality of engineering institutions -a platform from where we can see struggling Indian youth well and feel how they run after to get higher marks, how they become depressed when they don't fulfill their and their parents expectation of getting highest score and how they become fearful of their career. The novel *Revolution 2020* deals with the colliding of a youth with the prevalent system for getting name and fame in the globalization era.

Key Words: Youth, India, Globalization, Struggle

Introduction

It is well known that India has the world's largest youth population. It shares a great part of country's population. India is a developing country and there have been many developing and radical changes since independence. With these developing changes the area of expectations and aspirations of Indians are getting broader. As Indian youth share a great part of India's population so the country's development affects this part a lot. Now the country's educated youth expect a lot with themselves. They dream about their future whether this future is related to their personal life or professional life.

Literature is the mirror of society. So how can Indian youth be neglected by the literature? Chetan Bhagat, a famous face in the literary scenario, emerged as a youth icon. The first thing that arises in our mind is why Chetan Bhagat is famous face among Indian youth: what constitute to reason that heightens the popularity of Chetan Bhagat? But when we study his novels and his non

fictional work we find the answer. There is a lot of stuff for Indian youth that attract them towards his writings. His novels are characterized with gripping narratives, cheaply priced, easy to read and fast. His novels do not deal with exceptional people chasing meaningless dreams. It is something realistic, something that common Indians are familiar with. In his non-fictional work – what Young India wants he says:

“India is the youth. This something you will hear often mainly because India's median age is twenty-five, and 70 percent of the population is below thirty five. However, despite these claims, the youth have little say in main stream politics or national issues. The youth are under represented. This is mainly because the India youth is not a vote bank. I have often been described as one of the vices for the youth of nation. I am not sure if that is correct, but I do try to speak about youth issue wherever possible. Young people read my books, mostly and I want to do something for many readers.” (97)

In the 21st century, the development of internet has helped humans go beyond the limitations of national boundaries, time and Geography. In the era of a knowledge-based economy, where knowledge is transmitted in a rapid pace, those who have the knowledge are the winners. In the age of globalization the competition is very fierce and if one wants to prove his/her talents there should be a combination of multifarious potentialities in a students like technology, innovation, adventurous spirits and multifarious potentialities in a student like technology, innovation, adventurous spirits and initiative as these are key factors to success. Talents can be nurtured through education and culture-related aspects. It is evident that education is the cradle of talented people and human resources it is also the cornerstone of civilization. Chetan Bhagat through his novel *Five Point Someone* indirectly conveyed a serious message in a humorous tone that it is a wakeup call for the elite technical institutes to replace the traditional teaching style of “I teach you listen” with an approach that inspires students creativity by developing their life-long abilities and that teaches student’s how to learn efficiently by developing their lifelong abilities and that teaches students how to learn efficiently and actively. The emphasis should be placed on learning method instead of knowledge accumulation. The emphasis should be placed on learning methods instead of knowledge accumulation. And we need to help students turn their knowledge into innovative ability and knowledge application ability, both of which are much needed in profit creation. His debut novel *Five Point Someone* revives the interest of reading among youth. He became motivation for the struggling writers. His novels go around the lives of the youth and he touched each and every aspect of a youth’s life which he or she is facing today most. After reading the novels of Chetan Bhagat a youth can found the solution of his problem also. He captures the spirit of Indian youth.

He is born in Delhi. He is the contemporary of Rushdie, Arundhiti Roy, Upamanyu Chatterji and Amitav Ghos. His seven novels *Five Points Someone*, *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, *One Night @ The call Centre*, *Two States Of My Marriage Life*, *Revolution 2020*, *Half Girlfriend* and *One Indian Girl* have romance, love corruption, ambition, political and educational system and adventure.

Through his debut novel *Five Point Someone- What Not Do at IIT* a story of three students (Hari, Rayan and Alok) he mirrors the harsh reality of an engineering characterized with ragging – a crime, work pressure due to assignments, the cut throat competition, love-affairs, criticism on education, student’s ambition, expectations, insecurities about the career and their struggle for getting good marks. As Rayan gives vent to his dissatisfaction:

“And this IIT system is nothing but a mice race. It is not a race, mind you, as rats sound somewhat shrewd and cleverer. So 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 leaning are about. Yes, that is what I think of the professors. I mean, what have IITs given to this country? Name one invention in the last three decades.”(101)

As Chetan Bhagat is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi so he experienced the engineering college life well and is successful in presenting those experiences, covering them with the fictional layers in his novel *Five Point Someone*.

The setting of the novel is Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. Hari Kumar, Rayan Oberoi and Alok Gupta are the three students of mechanical engineering around whom the story of the novel develops. Rayan oberoi hails from a well to do family, Alok Gupta is from poor family and Hari’s status falls between Rayan and Alik’s status.

They take admission in IIT, Delhi where they face the horror reality of ragging. As they are fresher so they are called by their seniors and ordered to put off their clothes, however Hari and Alok are rescued by the intelligency of Rayan a clever and outspoken guy.

In the Youth day friendship and falling in love are the instinctual feeling that young generation feels. The friendship of Rayan, Hari and Alok gets deeper day by day. They share their problems and feelings. On the other side the love affair of Hari and Neha also gets deeper with the time. Hari is very much involved with his love- Neha.

In engineering college Grade Point Average matters a lot. If someone is not getting a good GPA, he is not able to get a good job. The intensity of the Importance of GPA can be seen in one of the professor's wordings. As he says-

“Best of luck once again for your stay here. Remember, as your head of department Prof. Cherian says, the tough workload is by design, to keep you on your toes. And respect the grading system. You get bad grades and I assure you-you get no job, no school and no future. If you do well, the world is your oyster. So don't slip, not even once, or there will be no oyster just slush.”(11)

Today's youth also faces the anger of his parents if he is not able to fulfill his parent's expectation and dreams. To materialize their dream they have to struggle a lot. The same thing happens with Sameer, son of the Prof. Cherian. Prof. Cherian wants him to get into IIT but Sameer set his aim of becoming lawyer. He fails in cracking an IIT exam an IIT exam and commits suicide for not materializing his father's dream.

The same thing we found in What Young India Wants when he talks about Indian youth and the issue of Indian youth. It is academic pressure that sometimes leads some IITians towards committing suicide and Bhagat tries to answer the question of why do some IITians think of committing suicide –

“The answer is this in our constant reverence for the great institution (and I do believe IITs are great), we forget its dark side. And the dark side is that the IITs are afflicted by the quint essential Indian phenomenon of academic pressure probably highest in the world. (99)”

Chetan Bhagat, in this novel, seems to convey the message that GPA should not be the only measurement to measure the potentiality, personality and intelligence of a student. The traditional teaching method should be improved and it should be according to the younger generation. Revolution 2020 is the story of three childhood friends named Gopal, Raghat and Aarti, again the youth of India. The story develops in a city named Varansi where the three friends entangled into their feelings, aspirations and expectations. As the novel has the sub title-love corruption, ambition. So the three friends prove this title completely and represent most blatant issues of Indian youth today.

Young brigade's aims to conquer the world and try to make their dreams materialized at any cost. This thing is with the three friends. Gopal Mishra, the protagonist of the novel, aspires to be rich man; Raghat aspires to bring a revolution- a social change and Aarti aspires to be an air hostess. Gopal comes from Indian – middle-class background. His father wants him to be an engineer. But he fails every time in obtaining good rank in JEE. Although he tries his best as he goes to kota, search cheapest and best coaching institute. One time he gets higher rank in his institutional test but he becomes weak in his next trials because of his love for Aarti, Arti also loves Gopal but during his stay in kota Aarti develops her love for Raghav. This thing makes Gopal sometimes irritated, When Aarti goes to Kanpur IIT with Raghav he says so himself:

“I wanted to ask why she went to Kanpur IIT with Raghav. However, if I came on too strongly she should give me the silent treatment that could kill me.”

The feeling of enquiry that Gopal wants to have Aarti is the normal feeling of any youth after seeing the girl that like with other guy. The natural Instinct of youth to become rich and powerful sometimes makes them involved into corruption. Gopal's failure to fulfill his father's expectation and his aspiration to be a rich man leads him to wards corruption. Chetan Bhagat emphasizes the idea that education system becomes corrupt. Establishing a private college is one time investment whether this investment is done with white or black money then it gives more money. After his father's death all the debt that was taken by his father for his study has fallen on Gopal's head. Now Gopal is in problem. One day he meets Sunil who introduces him with MLA Shukla Ji a corrupt politician. As Gopal has disputed land which is an agricultural land outside of the city. But Gopal's uncle wants full portion of that land. With the help of MLA Shukla Ji Gopal succeeds in talking the full land and giving the bribe to VNN and other department for establishing the private College- Ganga Tech College. All the steps taken by Gopal to become a rich man unfair and corrupt. He becomes the director of the college despite obtaining qualified degree. On the other hand, Raghav completes his engineering and joins the largest selling newspaper-Dainik, as an

intern to fulfill his ambition of bringing a social change.

It seems that Chetan Bhagat Communicates his prophetic vision to ensure peace and justice in India. Raghav enters a mission to root out corruption. So he collects and produces adequate evidence to confirm that MLA is a corrupt man. During this he is busy in his dream project Revolution 2020. He has no time for Arti due to Raghav's business Aarti feels loneliness, develops love for Gopal and indulges in sex with him. It shows Aarti's fickle mindedness of having sex with Gopal.

Finally Raghav succeeds in sending MLA-Shukla Ji to join and achieving his ambition to free the society from the shackles of corruption. In the last of the novel the conversation between Gopal and Raghav changes Gopal's attitude towards life. He feels that Raghav is better person than he is. So he sacrifices his love for Raghav.

Thus Chetan Bhagat not only highlights the external struggle of Indian youth but also inner struggle by his characters as he shows in Revolution 2020 how Raghav struggles against corruption and brings a social change . In Five Point Someone, we have felt the love affair of Hari-Neha, Alok's fear about his career and Rayan's intelligence and his practical approach.

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