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INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL WORLD OF YOUNG INDIA
(YOUNGISTAN): A STUDY OF CHETAN BHAGAT'S
FIVE POINT SOMEONE AND ONE NIGHT @ THE CALL CENTRE

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Abstract

Youth, an important segment of Indian demographic, consists of more than sixty percent of the total population. The youth depicted in Chetan Bhagat's fictional world represents larger segment of Indian youth, if not the whole. Chetan Bhagat observes Indian youth in the light of the most potent section of Indian society that is politics, religion, cricket, education and so on. Indian youth and his sentiment, his thought and his action are what get reflected through Chetan Bhagat's novels.

Key Words: *youth, thoughts, sentiments, relationships, career, problems, Indian, globalization.*

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INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL WORLD OF YOUNG INDIA (YOUNGISTAN): A STUDY OF CHETAN BHAGAT'S *FIVE POINT SOMEONE AND ONE NIGHT @ THE CALL CENTRE*

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In all of his novels, Chetan Bhagat has depicted Indian youths who are influenced by globalization. In his novels, the writer deals with the problems faced by the Indian youths, the ups and downs in their lives, their friendship, and the opposition that they face from each other. At times they are on the verge of serving their friendship and then again something happens that makes them to cling each other. The author himself belongs to the generation influenced by globalization and therefore knows very well the mental set up of *youngistan*, young India.

The novel, *Five Point Someone – What not to do at IIT!* (2004), is set in the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, during the period of 1991 to 1995. It is about the adventures of three mechanical engineering students (and friends), Hari Kumar (the narrator), Ryan Oberoi, and Alok Gupta, who fail to cope with the grading system of the IIT. Ryan is a bit smart and outspoken, whereas Alok and Hari are mildly cry babies. The three hostel mates-Alok, Hari and Ryan get off to a bad start in IIT. The book is narrated in the first person by Hari, with some small passages by his friends Ryan and Alok, as well as a letter by Hari's girlfriend Neha Cherian. It deals with the lives of the three friends, whose elation on making it to one of the best engineering colleges in India is quickly deflated by the rigor and monotony of academic work. Most of the book deals with the numerous attempts by the trio to cope with or beat the system as well as Hari's fling with Neha who just happens to be Prof. Cherian's daughter, the domineering head of the Mechanical Engineering Department. Their most important attempt was "C2D" (Cooperate to Dominate).

While the tone of the novel is humorous, it takes some dark turns every now and then, especially when it comes to the families of the protagonists. Most of the action, however, takes place inside the campus as the boys, led by the ever creative Ryan, frequently lamenting how the internationally lauded IIT system has stifled their creativity by forcing them to value grades more than anything else. Uninspiring teaching and numerous assignments add to their woes, though the boys do find a sympathizer in Prof. Veera.

The novel illustrates how students waste their opportunities in college years if they don't think straight. Through the story of three friends, the book describes various facets of IIT life-the academics, the professors, campus life and the rat race to get better grades. The book brings out the sheer brilliance of IIT students in a very subtle way. Prof. Dubey mentions, "The definition of a machine is simple. It is anything that reduces human effort. Anything. So, see the world around you and it is full of machines" (page 09). A student, Ryan asks: "Sir, what about a gym machine, like a bench press or something?That doesn't reduce human effort. In fact, it increases it" (page 10). The professor does not know how to respond. People who have studied in IITs know how students can pose fairly challenging questions based on their common sense and without any prior knowledge and unsettle teachers in the class. Again, when a professor asks students to design a car jack to lift the chassis in case of flat tires etc. Ryan draws a 'modified screw-jack,' in which one does not have to open manually and raise the jack. A flat tire does not mean the engine has failed. Hence once can attach a motor on the traditional jack and hook it up to the car battery. If one switches on the car ignition, the motor car derives power. Ryan is very happy with the design. But the professor finds it difficult to accept this original thinking. This example shows that many professors at the IITs are totally unequipped to handle the brilliant students who study there. At the same time, there are some professors who are different and whom students adore. The heroes of the book never miss the Fluid Mechanics class in the fourth semester and the reason is Prof. Veera, who is completely different. Prof. Veera makes it clear that he likes students who can think creatively and put the principles taught in the class into practice. Ryan builds a special relationship with this professor. It is in the last part, that the book really comes alive. The

traumatic final year that includes disciplinary action against the heroes of the book, Ryan, Hari and Alok for trying to steal an examination paper. There is an attempted suicide by Alok. But all the problems fortunately get sorted out.

One Night @ the Call Center (2005) revolves around a group of six call center employees working in Connexions call center in Gurgaon, Haryana. It takes place during the span of one night, in which all of the leading characters confront some aspect of themselves or their lives they would like to change. The story takes a dramatic and decisive turn through a literal deus ex machina, when the characters get a phone call from God. The book begins with a frame story which recounts a train journey from Kanpur to Delhi. During the journey, the narrating author meets a very beautiful girl. The girl offers to tell the author a story on the condition that he has to make it his second book. After a lot of hesitation, the author agrees. The story within the story, which comprises the bulk of the book, relates the events that happen one night at a call center. Told through the eyes of the protagonist, Shyam, it is a story of almost lost love, thwarted ambitions, absence of family affection, pressures of a patriarchal set up, and the work environment of a globalized office. Shyam loves but has lost Priyanka, who is now planning an arranged marriage with another; Vroom loves Esha. Esha wants to be a model, Radhika is in an unhappy marriage with a demanding mother-in-law, and military uncle wants to talk to his grandson; they all hate Bakshi, their cruel boss.

The themes involve the anxieties and insecurities of the rising Indian middle class, including questions about career, inadequacy, marriage, family conflicts in a changing India, and the relationship of the young Indian middle class to both executives and ordinary clients whom they serve in the USA. The phone call from God is one of the salient features in the novel. The author has represented god as a friendly figure rather than divine. He is shown as speaking in modern English rather than the stereo-typical pure English or Latin that one usually encounters God saying. The circumstances in which the characters of the novel get a phone call from God are discussed in the next paragraph. In order to cheer themselves up, all the lead characters of the novel decide to go and enjoy at a night club. After enjoying for a while, they leave for

office. Midway through the journey, Vroom starts to feel nauseated after drinking alcohol and so they stop and venture out. Vroom throws up and also breaks the window-pane of a shop thus spreading an alarm. They rush out of the place in fear. While returning, they face a life-threatening situation when their Qualis crashes into a construction site hanging over a mesh of iron construction rods. As the rods began to yield slowly, they started to panic. They are unable to call for help as there is no mobile phone network at that place. In this situation, Shyam's mobile phone starts ringing. The phone call is from God. He speaks to all of them and gives them suggestions to improve their life. After that, God also advises them on how to get their vehicle out of the construction site. The conversation with God motivates the group to such an extent that they get ready to face their problems with utmost determination and motivation. Meanwhile Vroom and Shyam hatch up a plan to throw Bakshi out of the call center and prevent the closing of Connexions call center, whose employees are to be downsized radically. When they emerge out of danger, they have clear-cut goals in their mind. On returning to the Call Center, they carry out their plans with dexterity.

The novel, *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008) explores how politics, religion, business and cricket influence Indian youth. It will also discover pro-business mind set of Gujarati community. Impact of communal riots on young Indians will provide another angle to study young Indians. Chetan Bhagat observes Indian youth in the light of the most potent influencer of Indian society namely politics , religion , cricket ,education and employment .Indian youth and their sentiments , their thought and actions is what largely gets reflected through Chetan Bhagat novels .

The novel is set in the years 2000-2005, when a young boy in Ahmedabad called Govind dreams of starting a business. To accommodate his friends Ishaan and Omi's passion, they open a cricket shop. However, each has a different motive: Govind's goal is to make money; Ishaan desires to nurture Ali, a gifted batsman.

Omi just wants to be with his friends. Govind is the narrator and the central character of the novel and the story revolves around the three mistakes caused by him and the religious politics. Govind Patel is an ordinary guy with whom anybody can relate. He has very few desires but he is obsessed with the desires he covets. His main ambition is to become a businessman as he thinks that being a Gujarati, business is in his blood. His best friends are Omi and Ish (Ishaan). Govind is an agnostic. His father has abandoned him and his mother, who runs a business of selling home-made food items. To support her financially, he takes mathematics tuitions. He continues these tuitions even after starting the cricket shop business. He is the narrator of this story and the one who makes the "Three Mistakes". During the course of the story he falls in love with Vidya, Ishaan's younger sister for whom he is a private tutor. Govind is the one who looks after the financial part of the business as he has good business sense and mathematical skills. Ishaan is a big cricket freak and also a patriot at heart. Ishaan has been the best cricketer in his locality and school. He suggests the name of their business as "Team India Cricket Shop". He helps Govind's business by organizing daily cricket coaching camps. He has a family which makes life situation by keeping quiet. He has a younger sister, Vidya, about whom he is quite protective. When he discovers that a boy called Ali is a very talented batsman, he decides to go any length to give Ali proper training. Ishaan usually looks after day-to-day shop activities as he has genuine interest in any cricket- related thing.

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