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Wake-Up Call for the Recent Education System in *Five Point Someone -What Not To Do At IIT*

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Abstract

Chetan Bhagat satirises on the education system which is prevailing nowadays. His first novel *Five Point Someone* begins in an extraordinary way and revolves around three friends studying in IIT. The novel is credited with the revival of popular readership in India. He gives a wakeup call for the institutions to improve the system which makes the students nothing but the Machine instead spontaneity in education. This is a clarion call for the teaching organization to prepare themselves to handle the cream students of institutions like IITs and gives confidence the students to think beyond the textbooks. A highly technocratic generation that could scarcely spare a minute off their telephones, television sets and laptops was rendered fascinated by the mere simplicity, natural emotional connectivity and easy-to-understand language of this IIT-based campus novel.

Keywords- *Education, Liberty, Technocratic Generation, National Development*

Chetan Bhagat is an Indian writer, columnist, and speaker. Bhagat is the author of five bestselling novels, *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009) & *Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition* (2011). Chetan Bhagat's entrance novel *Five Point Someone - What not to do at IIT* is one of the highest selling Indian English novels and remained on the bestseller list until now since its release in two thousand four. The novel begins in an unique way where the writer takes the liberty of sharing his opinions that the book is not a guide on how to get into IIT but it quote examples of how screwed up our college years can get if we do not think straight. Although treated in a mild and rather casual way, the story of the IIT includes in it matters deeper than can be seen on the face. That our structure of technical education has become a lifeless system, and needs renaissance has been fully apparent. The need for understanding the oft-quoted phrase 'Human Resource Development' by our educators is pointedly, though diagonally, suggested. But the real demand of the work is probably its faithful representation

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of growing years under pressure of conventional goal. The paper attempts to throw some light on the aspects of post modernist thought process where the engineering youth tries to place against the conventional system of conveying technical education and traditional way of evaluating the cognitive abilities of a student on the basis of CGPA.

Novel readership in India is on an all time high in the nowadays. The circulation of novels is slowly rising by leaps and bounds across the length and breadth of the country. The major credit of this remarkable liking towards English language novels can be attributed to the popularity and prominence of the sect of campus novels. Even though the popularity of campus novels dates back to the Inscrutable Americans by Anurag Mathur, it is the unique success of Chetan Bhagat's introductory novel, *Five Point Someone* that is credited with the revival of popular readership in India. The success of Chetan Bhagat's introductory novel paved way for a period of popular English Literature dominated by campus-based novels. Soon afterwards, the campuses of some of the most popular universities and colleges of India such as IITs, IIMs, JNU began being featured in the pages of the upcoming novels. Following the path of Bhagat, several other applicants donned the hats of popular fiction writers and released their potential by creating campus-based stories. A few prominent works creditable of mention include *Something of a MockTale* by Soma Das, *Above Average* by Amitabha Bagchi, *You Desire: A Journey Through IIM* by Harishdeep Jolly, *The Funda of Mixology* by Mainak Dhar. Chetan

Bhagat, an alumnus of Indian Institute of Technology IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmadabad, is seen more as a youth icon than as a writer. Time magazine named Chetan Bhagat as one of the 100 most dominant People in the World. Chetan Bhagat, an investment banker turned into a creative writer and through his writings he always focused on youth, career and issues based on national development. *The Five Point Someone* managed to create a strong grip among a generation of youngsters, which had almost discarded interest in novels and books. A highly technocratic generation that could scarcely spare a minute off their telephones, television sets and laptops was rendered fascinated by the mere simplicity, natural emotional connectivity and easy-to-understand language of this IIT-based campus novel. Almost every teenage youngster in the country could not help voicing out his admiration for Ryan, Hari and Alok, the then heart beats of the contemporary popular literature in India. The author is more concerned about what to do after getting admission into an IIT than the admission process itself. He points out that getting into IIT is not all that difficult as is made out to be. As he puts it, 'If you can lock yourself in a room with books for two years and throw away the key, you can probably make it here'. In the twenty first century, the development of internet has helped humans go afar the limitations of national borders, time and topography. In the period of knowledge – based economy, where knowledge is spreaded in a rapid speed, 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 or her talents there should be a combination of varied

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potentialities in a student like technology, innovation, adventurous spirits and initiative as these are key aspects to success. Talents can be cultivated through education and culture - related aspects. It is evident that education is the frame of talented people and human resources; it is also the keystone of civilization. Chetan Bhagat through his novel *Five Point Someone* indirectly conveyed a serious message in a funny tone that it is a wakeup call for the best technical institutes to replace the traditional teaching style of 'I teach; you listen' with an approach that develops students' own abilities to collect, select, clean and absorb information; that inspires students' creativity by up-warding their life - long abilities; and that teaches students how to learn competently and keenly. The emphasis should be placed on learning methods in lieu of knowledge buildup. And we need to help students turn their knowledge into innovative ability and knowledge application ability, both of which are much needed in proceedings. *Five Point Someone* in a mild tone points out that our technical education has become a lifeless system and needs reformation. It is about the adventures of three mechanical engineering students, Hari Kumar, Ryan Oberoi, and Alok Gupta, who fail to cope with the grading system of the IITs. Ryan is a bit smart and frank, whereas Alok and Hari are slightly cry babies. Chetan Bhagat gives an inkling of the glaring effects of ragging which is infected quite common in engineering colleges through this novel. The fresher of Indian Institute of Technology including the three students Ryan Oberoi, Alok Gupta and Hari Kumar were called by the seniors up on the gallery for ragging at midnight. Baku and other senior students instructed them 'Off with your clothes.' Such kind of upsetting incidents in the name of ragging creates a great psychological effect on the minds of students which may increase the suicidal attempts. Ryan, good looking and a bulky man revolted against the age old tradition of ragging and the senior - fresher discrimination. He has saved Hari and Alok from the coke bottles at the very first day and they became good friends for all the four years of IIT and then. The novel also touches an important harmony the helplessness of the Professors' to grip the brilliant students who can pose challenging questions based on their common sense.

This is a clarion call for the teaching organization to prepare themselves to handle the cream students of institutions like IITs and gives confidence the students to think beyond the textbooks. *Five Point Someone* focused the friendship of the prominent characters of the novel: Hari, Ryan and Alok. It is of this trio's screwing the grades at the big time because of their over attachment with each other to have a fun and detachment from studies. In college life romance is like a forerunner which spreads the message of love in the loving hearts. The romanticism reminds with the love affair of Hari and Neha, the daughter of Prof. Cherian is remarkable. Hari gets ready to do anything for his lady love Neha. Hostel life is all about friends, estrangement from families, smoking cigars, drinking vodka and listening to Pink Floyd. Commitment to relationship overrules the fresh admitted undergraduates to such a degree that they are ready to do anything for earning popularity. Ryan Oberoi always gives

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priority to his friends more than his parents. Alok , a resident of Rohini Colony, Delhi is a sincere guy but he also gets ready with Ryan and Hari in ill-disciplined acts to overcome the shackles of poverty. Seemingly, IITs are known as Centers of Excellence but the institute could not succeed to win laurels for the country by making significant technical contributions. The grading system to assess the students' performance has not only overburdened the students but also ruined their originality. The limitations of the IIT system was elaborately brought out by the remarks of Ryan Oberoi in a get together party:

You know guys, this whole IIT system is sick. Because, tell me, how many great engineers or scientists have come out of IIT? I mean that is supposed to be the best college in India, the best technology institute for a country of a billion. But has IIT ever invented anything? Or made any technical contribution to India? Over thirty years of IITs, yet, all it does is train some bring kids to work in multinationals. I mean look at MIT in the USA... What is wrong in the system...? 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 time for creativity? It is not fair.¹ (<http://www.the-criterion.com/V2/n2/June2011>)

Competition is so intense in IITs which has suitably created lot of pressures amongst the students and one of the professors made a remark at the end of his class, 'best of luck again for your stay here. Remember, as your Head of the deptt. Prof. Cherian says, the tough workload is by design, to keep you on your toes. And value the grading system. You get bad grades, and I assure you – you won't get a job, no school and no future. If you do well, the world is in your hands. So, do not slip, not even once, or there will be no oyster, just slush. Hari Kumar, Alok Gupta and Ryan Oberoi joined Indian Institute of Technology with good All India rankings but gave full of preferences to fun and friends in place of focusing on majors, questions and assignments. The consequences were expected that they became underachievers. Their Grade Point Average came to the floor line. The three underperformers characters invent C2D (Cooperate to dominate) formula to save time and plan to share the coursework for the sake of fun. In relation to them today's exams, quizzes, GPA are useless. Ryan, Hari and Alok are all five pointers. They blame IIT system as sick and for it is not contributing to nation building, and for churning the most cerebrals of the country. They say IIT do not care for their creativity and original thinking. To revolt against this established norm, they planned paper theft of Majors from Prof. Cherian's room and were caught red handed. Finally, a disciplinary action was taken against them and they were finished for one semester. Alok jumped from the roof but was luckily saved with thirteen odd fractures. They have changed thereafter. All worked hard then more than fourteen hours a day, got extra grades and degrees in time. It will be unjustifiable to say about some Professors' attitudes like Prof. Veera who respected the creativity of the students. He loved creativity of Ryan though

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he was a half pointer and gave him a chance as Research Assistant of him. He tried his level best to save the three students from finishing. Prof. Veera is a symbol of humanity who came to meet Alok in the infirmary with a box containing 'Kaju and burfi' and disclosed the news of Ryan's project approval. Prof. Veera has set an instance before us that a teacher ought to encourage his or her students and inspire them a lot. A teacher has a missionary zeal and an innocent motive to recognize the latent talents both in achievers and underachievers and also treat them kindly. The heart of the entire novel lies in the last part of the novel when Prof. Cherian, Head of the Engineering Department, addresses the convocation ceremony and congratulates the graduating students.

Through this novel the writer means to convey a social message that GPAs are not the ultimate factor to decide students' potentialities and creativity. To become a topper with 10.00 GPA is a great achievement absolutely but there is something more in life which is yet to be achieved that is vow towards family, friends and our internal needs and goals. Hari, Ryan and Alok had a dream to join Indian Institute of Technology which they satisfied by entering but they twisted up for not taking the grading system seriously. As a result it landed them down to many startling troubles and they had to remain satisfied with the little triumph they could manage with the support and encouragement of some well wishers like Prof. Veera. Chetan Bhagat wrote the novel *Five Point Someone* in a serene note and in some areas it has given an alarming call for the pedagogues to come out of their traditional text book theories and meet up the challenges posed by the gifted students. Another most outstanding feature is that the whole background is set in an engineering institution where an engineering student should be encouraged to present his or her thoughts in a creative way so that he can have hands-on experience only then a country can advance both technically and economically. Each and every student is granted with a special qualities and CGPA - Cumulative Grade Point Average- should not be the measurement to determine their future prospects. One who is a five pointer in college may reach the pinnacle of his career and set a model for all those who are about to achieve success. The trio suffers mockery of the teachers and the classmates. However, they affirm to reform the patriarchal system of education. They dislike the teaching method, which is as old as the college itself. The students are asked to mug the subjects with the aim of scoring good grades. Chetan puts emphasis on the observational training and hints towards a post modern thought of adding in a technique called 'learning by doing'. He believes this technique must help the students in getting rid of mugging. It must support them to catch the things in a natural way. The observational technique makes the students to observe the things minutely and find out solution in the objects. After all, if they fail to make it out, they are invited to discuss the same with the teachers and other colleagues. In the end, the student finds answer to his inquiry. Nevertheless, such method is a good for nothing in the big so called institute. Bhagat grieves for the sterilized rigidity of the education system. He finds the professors bigotry not to allow

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any prolific change in the system. Bhagat is straightforward in his approach to life. He listens to the voice of his soul, which he strongly believes in, is ever accurate. The man listening to the inner voice may suffer a big loss but finally emerges out victorious. For instance, all three friends suffer humiliation at college campus. All the teachers with the students take them for nuts, idiots and losers only because they under perform in the exams and score five points something. But like others they are not muggers, they are freethinkers, true lovers of life, harbingers of innovative ideas, icons of liberty and precursors of the youth-calling-approach. They never lose self-confidence, work harder on the assignments and consequently their project is approved and they succeed to achieve big fame and name.

The critique of his writings has exposed that in almost all his fictional and non-fictional pieces of writing, he handles the sentiments of young generation because whatever he writes is about them and the life portrayed in his novels, more or less, if evaluated, without any bias towards his style of writing, is identical to that of youths to a considerable extent. That he has changed the point of view of young generation and is a writer of the youth can be canonized with the point of view that he deals almost all issues pertaining to their life situation because his sensibility next to his minute observation towards life led by modern generation, and specifically, educated ones, allows him to write. Apart from this, he has showed himself to be an alert and expert writer who has experimented with the genre and techniques of novel writings, be it them, narrative techniques, plot construction, and language and there is no shortage of romance, background music, political and sentimental issues in his writings.

Work Cited

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