



## Depiction of Aspiration, Individuality and Creativity of Youth in Chetan Bhagat's Debut novel: Five Point Someone

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### ABSTRACT

Chetan Bhagat is viewed as Youth Icon. He is considered a renowned author, motivational speaker and his major focus is always on youth related issues that are prevalent in the contemporary society. Each of his novels deals with the problems of younger generation. One can connect to his writings instantly and this might be the reason why the minds of the youth are captured the moment when they start reading his novels. Five Point Someone was his debut novel which is a campus based novel conveys a message of replacing the traditional teaching with innovative and modernized one. The present paper is an attempt of depiction of the protagonists' aspiration and their craving for individuality, original thought, creativity and ambition.

### KEYWORDS

Aspiration, Individuality, Youth, GPA, Creativity, Innovation.

It is no exaggeration to say that Chetan Bhagat is the biggest selling English language novelist in Indian history as all his novels remained bestsellers since their release. He chooses the best themes or subjects for his novels and undoubtedly the prime focus will be on youth – especially youth problems. Five Point Someone: What not to do at IIT was published in 2004 and focuses on the lives of three friends of IIT Delhi. The trio – Hari Kumar (the narrator), Alok Gupta and Ryan Oberoi. Each of them has his own ambition, aspiration and expectation towards life. All the three of them live on the same floor of the Kumaon Hostel and become good friends after having experienced a bitter experience in the name of ragging by their seniors Anurag and Baku. It was Ryan whose heroics are enough to make them to be friends. The very first encounter of the trio is with Professor Dubey, Mechanical Engineering clearly shows how old the teaching method at IIT. All the students are compelled to mug and by heart the subjects to secure good grades which are utmost important for an IITian. Chetan Bhagat expresses deep sorry for the sterile dogmatism of the education system. Ryan who is smart and outspoken poses a tricky question to Prof. Dubey about machine. The Professor loses his balance and almost threatens Ryan stating “Watch it son. In my class, just watch it” (FPS – 11). This statement has shocked Ryan immensely who always aspires for originality and creativity. He hates the existing grading system which is more important than the actual learning. He often calls assignments as crap and never likes mugging. Ryan always believes that the whole IIT system is sick. At one point of time, he lashes his whip towards the system by commenting – “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.” (Ibid., p35)

On the other side of Ryan, he strongly dislikes his parents who left him at boarding school. For him, friends are everything and that is why he loves them excessively. He wants to enjoy the life fullest and suggests his mates “Line drawing method” in which they study two-three hours a day, but rest of time to be spent for other stuff like – taking part in sports, debates, movies etc. Ryan is interested in creating something new. On one occasion, instead of connecting the resistor-voltage set up for doing an experiment, he connects resistors, capacitors, switches and cables to each other and this makes a radio even if it is not part of their compulsory experiment. Considering the IIT system to be nothing, he persuades his friends a new theory which is named C2D (Cooperate to dominate) in which he takes the lead and assembles all the underdogs whose performance is poor and delivers his feelings – “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. It is about mindlessly running a race for four years, in every class, every

assignment and every test. It is a race where profs judge you every ten steps, with a GPA stamped on you every semester. Profs who have no idea what science and learning are about. Yes, that is what I think of the profs.” (Ibid., p101). Later, Ryan hands out papers that contains the contents of C2D which is the only way to take on the unfair system through unfair means. He gets acceptance from his friends Hari and Alok. C2D, as they thought, a night substitute for them in which all assignments are to be shared, dividing up the course responsibilities, sharing lab experiment observations and thus enjoying the spare time to the fullest. But luck does not favour the trio and eventually they get poor grades in the exams. Earlier to this, in the first quiz they fail to secure good GPA on the 10-point scale. Ryan, Hari and Alok get only 5.01, 5.46 and 5.85 respectively. Soon afterwards they are called five-pointers. Almost until the end of the novel, Ryan is least bothered about his GPA and even do not sacred much when he is caught red handed along with his two friends who make a futile attempt to steal the question papers for their majors from the office of Prof. Cheriaan which is located on 9<sup>th</sup> floor. He tries his level best to be a free thinker, true lover of life and icon of individuality and creativity by not losing confidence in him even when he is not selected in campus interviews along with Hari and Alok. But being a Research Assistant for Prof. Veera, he continues his research on lubricants which is later funded by his dad.

Hari is just a bumbling IITian who can't get his grades or life in order. He is just kind-hearted and confused. He wants to keep his friends together, physically unappealing, always fumbles in viva-voices and gets screwed up. His dad was the Colonel in the army and was very strict and never allowed him watching TV, listening to music, and not even permitted to laugh loudly. The colonel hangs his belt in the closet that scared Hari and his mom together. Hari was instructed not to answer back the elders at any cost. He was brought up in such a home and that is the valid reason why he is not able to answer the questions posed by the Professors during vivas. He falls in love with Neha, daughter of Prof. Cheriaan. Hari is willing to do any sort of thing for the sake of Neha's love. He is threatened by Prof. Cheriaan and asked to keep away from Neha. His ambition in life is to win the hand of Neha and to secure a decent job in a reputed company. Neha promises him that she will introduce him to her father if he secures 'A' grade. Having got less confident levels, he is suggested to have vodka before going to answer Prof. Cheriaan in Viva-voice. Unfortunately, this makes the situation even worse and he is sent out of the class by awarding zero marks. But Hari is viewed as an emancipator for Neha who feels suffocated in the reserved environment of the home and she also makes physical relation with him. Though he is viewed as a loser and an idiot, he never loses the company of his friends. It is because of Hari; the adamant attitude of Prof. Cheriaan gets

changed and becomes soft. Hari secures an offer in Bombay and hates to live in such cramped cities and cannot stay away from Neha. Half of his salary is spent for making phone calls to Neha who is his soul and pines for her.

On the other side, Alok is from a lower-middle class home in one of the suburbs of Delhi. His parents are school teachers, art and biology respectively. Alok's aspiration is to become an artist when he grows up. But it is very unfortunate that his father falls from the bamboo structure and suffers from right side paralysis. He is bed-ridden and no more an earner in the family. Alok must spend most of his childhood time just by sitting next to his father's bed after school. He realizes the harsh reality that his family is in dire need of money and IIT, the one college in the country that fulfills the dreams of its aspirants with a guaranteed future. To become an engineer is the only way out of poverty. His mother is the only earner in the family but her earning is meagre and exactly with the intention to emancipate everyone from the problems in the family, Alok steps into IIT. He involves with Ryan and Hari in mischievous acts to overcome the shackles of poverty. He lives with the pressure as his family expects a helping hand from him but this burden makes him underperformer in the exams of IIT. Alok leaves his two friends after having secured poor grades and start living with Venkat, the topper at IIT, Delhi. But later he knows his folly and returns to stay with Hari and Ryan. When he is suspended for one semester along with Ryan and Hari for having involved in 'Operation Pendulum' which is nothing but stealing question paper from Prof. Cherian's office, he thinks that all his dreams are shattered and tries to commit suicide by jumping from the ninth floor of the institution building. But by God's grace survives and saves with thirteen odd fractures. Later, all the three friends resolve to put their efforts copiously by working hard to get the best grades in the upcoming exams.

The ambition, aspirations and dreams of the three protagonists will not be a reality unless Prof. Veera who does not come to their rescue. He is the one and only professor at IIT Delhi who encourages and motivates the student community to be free thinkers and thus strengthen their creativity rather than focusing merely on GPA. It is Prof. Veera who convinces the disciplinary committee especially Prof. Cherian to forgive the folly of the trio and gets succeeded to set right the problem. He also offers Ryan a project under his supervision when the latter has not secured a placement. By the end of the story, all the three characters fulfil their ambitions and dreams. The novel was well received by the public especially among the younger generation and thus brought Chetan Bhagat a large following. The striking feature of Bhagat's novel is – to listen to the voice of our inner heart and we should believe in ourselves first. He portrays his characters as the genuine revelers of the human life and exactly this attracts the youth and steal their hearts instantaneously. Chetan remains a heart-throb in the sight of the youth forever.

### References

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