



Deconstructing the dynamics and underpinnings of contemporary education structure: An introspective study of Chetan Bhagat's "five point someone"

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Abstract

One of the widespread issues that academic utopias are firmly dealing with are Theoretical vs. Practical accomplishment of educational acquaintance. The issue is regarding the archetypal theoretical dynamics and likewise theoretical underpinnings that prioritises conservative rote grasping, accomplishing of top-notch grades and deteriorates the contemplating imaginary planes, perilous thinking, comfort of their selves that leads to the extremity of psychological and also societal compressions forced upon the young minds. The intensity of burden; youth of today is still confronting regarding the concept of memorization for the studies rather than a thought-provoking, intangible understanding and correct enactment of the information. Conventional educational methodologies and mundane outlook needs to get off in order to attain the literal insinuation of education.

Keywords: Theoretical education, youth, grades, study pressure, practical knowledge

Introduction

Review of Literature

The research paper namely "The Hyper Real Educational System: A Study of Chetan Bhagat's Novel Five Point Someone" by Parvaize Lone sightsees the depiction of contemporary society of India in one of the outstanding novels of Chetan Bhagat explicitly *One Night @ the Call Centre* and *Five Point Someone*. These immensely popular novels offer exclusive perceptions into the social construct, educational, and pecuniary society of contemporary India. This paper disparagingly examines the core themes, changing dynamics of characters' transformation and societal explanation inside the narratives, throwing light on the representation of author's modern India. Through the lens of inclusive study of significant elements, counting along the educational domain, business culture, interpersonal associations, and generational breaks, this study reveals the social workings and developing standards of contemporary Indian society. Another research paper by Dr. Prakash Eknath Navgire namely "A Critical Study of an Inner Struggle of Youth in Chetan Bhagat's Five Point Someone" focusses upon the thematic concerns dealing with the inner trauma of the youth. The novel is about the inner conflicts of the characters having the carriage of hopes and expectations of their families. The study focusses upon the rebellious nature of the characters who are defying the moral rigid codes, in order to attain fulfillment and inner happiness.

Research paper "Chetan Bhagat's Five Point Someone

A Critique of Youth Culture" by Dr. Bhupendra N. Kesur focusses upon the contribution of youth in nation building. Like it's a belief that, a nation's progress depends upon the rate of successful involvement of its youth in the nation building process. Only a responsible youth can have the courage of responsibility of a nation. Loss of a youth is often a loss for the entire nation. Though a nation wants its youth to become morally and ethically strong in order to lead his country, but on contrary some of the youth is thriving towards the unethical activities, wasting their

precious time and exploiting their talents doing wrong deeds, often resulting in the deterioration of the nation. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India also believed that the young minds of India should be ignited by the spirit of enthusiasm and vigor, as he was a firm believer of youth being a nation's backbone. His inspirational writings and speeches have such a blueprint in the minds of young India. The energy and minds of the youth should be channelized in the right direction, so that they could contribute their best for the nation. Chetan Bhagat, as a youth's favorites writing icon tried to depict so through his writings, particularly *Five Point Someone*. The novel deals with the predicaments of youth, their inner trauma while adjusting themselves into the conventional educational system. This paper sightsees the novel as an analysis of youth culture.

The research done earlier by the authors on this novel depicts the struggles, problems and dilemma of the youth of present time. Their concerns and issues have been the part of the research prior. The current research paper will focus upon the resolutions of dealing with such impasse and will try to figure out the best possible outcomes, that could actually help the youth in accessing the education in best imaginable way by focusing on the positive outlook of the education system.

Introduction of Author

Chetan Bhagat stands as a celebrated young icon of Young India, an author, a columnist and a screenwriter, youtuber and a podcaster. Time magazine also credited him for one among the 100 Most persuasive people around the globe 2010. He is quite popular and an inspirational speaker who has also got the opportunity to publicise his thoughts at more than 100 organisations in almost 75 cities worldwide. The wide range of themes that he shares his experiences and thoughts upon are ethical values, leadership, inspiration, team building and accomplishment of goals. Contribution of Chetan Bhagat to the arena of entertainment is perceptible. He not ever limited his fictional talents to

mere writing novels. As a responsible social person, he also writes columns in newspapers, citing and dwelling on various social and national issues. Many of his columns were noticed by parliamentarians and triggered serious discussions in the Indian Parliament

Fourteen bestseller books are credited to the writing domain of Chetan Bhagat. The books contain ten novels namely *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The Girl in Room 105* (2018), *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Arranged Murder* (2020), *2 States* (2009), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *Half Girlfriend* (2014), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *One Indian Girl* (2016), *400 Days* (2021) and four non-fiction ones namely *11 Rules For Life* (2024), *Making India Awesome* (2015), *What Young India Wants* (2012) and *India Positive* (2019). The books of Chetan's have continued as the bestsellers since their publication.

The best writings by Bhagat have also been adapted into the blockbuster films like *3 Idiots*, *Kai Po Che* and *2 States*. Bhagat also contributes as a columnist in one of the foremost Hindi as well as English newspapers, while concentrating on the young generation and issues of national development. Chetan completed his studies from IIT-Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad and that is why he is able to equate the dilemma and predicament of the student community part of such institutions, hence becoming the most celebrated one among this new dynamic generation.

Chetan Bhagat stands as a celebrated author of Indian origin, who has contributed in the domain of writing novels by hitting the academic realm with immense success. All of the novels penned down by him are the bestsellers since the time they have been released. His novels have also been filmed by the renowned directors from Bollywood. Bhagat is considered as an icon for youngsters, rather than merely a novelist. His stylistic and amusing way of representing the narratives has encouraged habit of reading among young Indians.

He is also outstanding as a leading columnist in countless top-notch newspapers of the country. He considers novels as a means of entertainment through which he represents his opinions about the society and realistic issues faced by the youth of India. He used to address issues concerning development and of national interests through the columns of newspapers. His columns are satirical representation of the social issues happening inside our country and sometimes his writings also trigger the high-end discussions in the country's parliament. Bhagat's achievements are not limited as a writer only, in fact he also delivers inspirational speeches at different institutions, companies and organizations.

Introduction to the novel Five Point Someone

The novel *Five Point Someone* by Chetan Bhagat stands as a critically poignant and deconstruction of the contemporary Indian system of education, specifically of the erudite organisations like IIMs and IITs. The book hence deconstructs the typical academic dynamics and also academic underpinnings that let at priority conventional rote learning, securing of higher grades and shuns the contemplating planes of imagination, critical thinking, well-being of their selves that results in the extreme psychological as well as societal pressures put upon the students.

The novel *Five Point Someone* sightsees numerous undesirable dynamics rampant in the present education system. One of the issues is Theoretical vs. Practical Implementation of Knowledge. The novel obviously criticizes the pressure on the theory of memorization for the studies instead of a thought-provoking, conceptualised understanding and literal implementation of the knowledge. One of the characters in novel, Ryan always used to advocate the approach of 'study from experiments', which used to be criticised by the conventional teaching methodologies and typical mindset professors.

Another concern is the Captivation with Grades and GPA that hampers the critical thinking of the youth by promoting the book-based culture. The panoptic theory of conflict actually focusses upon the grading system, where the 'five point something GPA' supports the traditional belief that a student's success and future can be judged on the basis of only grades and nothing else. Bhagat's anguish is regarding the immense obsession of professors with marks that is the outcome of 'blind rat race' and also a panoptic deceptive structure that controls and judges the future performance of a student merely on the basis of grades. Competition becomes so forceful and intense in IITs that duly created tons of pressures upon the students and meanwhile a remark is made by one of the professors during the class:

"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" (Biswas)

Extreme Academic Pressure amid Mental Health Concerns is also one of the issues among the protagonists in the novel. The laborious academic ambience and competitive spirit in IITs create an environment of psychological strain and anxiety for the students, resulting in gloomy thought process and draining of positive energy. The novel takes the turn when one of the main characters, Alok tried to attempt suicide due to the same obnoxious factors. This incident marks a question on the mental health being of the students and failure of the organisation to help the students in order to cope up with this all.

In the novel, Samir, Neha's brother and son of Mr. Cherian who was a suicide victim because of his oppressed father who enforced upon him his wish to join IIT, whereas Samir always wanted to become a lawyer. His disinterestedness to settle into the institution results in his failure, as his father Mr. Cherian never tried to understand his talents and interests. In fact because of his dominated father, Samir never dared to express his wishes and desires about his career to his father. This forced him to commit suicide.

While writing his suicidal letter to his sister, he mentions

"I have tried three times to get into IIT and each time I have disappointed dad. He cannot get over the fact that his son cannot handle physics, chemistry and maths" (C.M 131). Totalitarianism and Dearth of Voice of Students also stand as one of the extensive forces for the bright future of the young generation. The novel also portrays an adamant and authoritarian environment where professors frequently obstruct ground-breaking thought processes of the students making their imaginative powers sense stifled and restricted

by old conventional study ideas and unwanted rules and protocols.

One of the incidents in the novel also throws light on a significant chord the feebleness of the Professors' way of handling the brilliant outstanding students who can even pose as a challenge for them by asking questions on the basis of their senses. One of the professors from Mechanical Engineering Department, Prof. Dubey says: "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. (Biswas) Whereas in order to clarify his doubts, Ryan, a genius student asks: "Sir, what about a gym machine, like a bench press or something? That doesn't reduce human effort. In fact, it increases it." (Biswas)

After hearing so, the professor was speechless and rather felt humiliated as unable to justify his question. He rebuked Ryan in front of the class by saying that he is just wasting the time of the class by asking stupid questions. This particular incident is the proof that some of the professors are still using longstanding conventional methodologies in their classrooms like dictation, teaching from the books, providing of notes, hence hampering the actual creativity of the students. Instead of practical knowledge, their focus is more upon theoretical underpinnings, which is leading to the assassination of their authenticity and thoughts. The novel deconstructs the underlying factors and underpinnings of the assessment that perpetuate this flawed system:

Societal expectations and hopes of the family force the students to step in such a system where they find themselves least interested and to join the prestigious institutions like IIMs and IITs becomes their only sole target. Not just that after getting into such system, they are expected to grab superior grades in order to secure a place in financial arena with a stable future. Such an external pressure shuns the personal passions and creative interests among the students, that forces them to vanish their internal desires to do something that they love.

One of the characters Ryan when discloses his sheer interest in professional photography, this astonished his friends and when Hari visits his home and witnessed his interest in photography tried to argument with his father that 'Why instead of pushing his boundaries, his father forced him into such a system that he didn't even like'. His father was least bothered about the choices of his son, rather he was more into the societal system that forces the children to do the same that the whole world is doing.

The educational system portrayed by Chetan Bhagat in IITs is a kind of some factory established to produce engineers. The focus is on churning out graduates with empty minds and untalented skills merely for job market purposes. There is no concern about their holistic growth, personal development and timeless creativity, as the focus is only upon mugging up and seeking grades for a hopeless future.

The three main characters of the novel namely Hari, Ryan and Alok stepped into this IITian system not because of their keen interests, but of their family and circumstances. They were least interested in turning out to be engineers, rather they were forced upon to become engineers. The world they were living in and the world they aspire to build was extremely different tons of miles. Their inner souls and passions were unstoppable, that is why they always used to score average throughout their studies hence justifying the title of the novel as well 'Five Point Someone' means something stands for average not for good grades.

The book portrays the dichotomy of professors with a deep disparity between inflexible, outdated professors like Professor Dubey and Cherman who impose the current status quo on the students, and on the other hand supreme educators just like Professor Veera who knows the value of nurturing inventiveness and also provides a valuable and stable approach to the domain of education. Professor Cherman's ultimate realization and touching convocation speech as concluding words of the novel provide a flash of redemption and hence a call for a great change in the educational realm.

He says,

"And that is when I realized that GPAs make a good student, but not a good person. We judge people here by their GPA. If you are a nine, you are the best. If you are a five, you are useless. I used to despise the low GPAs so much that when Ryan submitted a research proposal on lubricants, I judged it without even reading it. But these boys have something really promising. I saw the proposal the second time. I can tell you, any investor who invests in this will earn a rainbow." (Biswas)

The old conventional notion of success finds a new plane of challenge by breaking the dogmatic definition of success and relating it with handsome salary, perks and status. Instead of that, protagonists in the novel finds the plane of success that talks about the theory of self-attainment, self-realisation, true meaning of friendship and above all to become the best version of oneself on the humanitarian grounds. Success achieved through false traits and negative mindset is merely a piece of temporary satisfaction, whereas the real success lies in the character and personality of oneself. Success is incomplete if we don't have people of right magnitude to celebrate with and success without appreciation is merely an achievement. Ultimate goal of education is to create an 'academic utopia', which means 'academic utopia' where every being is craving for the best and also contributing the best for the society with optimum efforts.

But the kind of education, Chetan Bhagat condemns is the one that only forces the students to mug up the things without its practical implications and knowledge. According to him, the best education provides the learners with lifelong learning and actual knowledge and helps them to become the best version of themselves. Education shouldn't be a thing of survival; in fact, it should be a survival in itself.

The change in the education system is a dire need of the hour, which the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India has inculcated so far recently in 2020 through the implementation of NEP 2020 (New Education Policy), that focusses upon the life-long learning skills of the learners and prepare them on the basis of knowledge and concepts not merely indulging them in cramming or rote memory. NEP's focus is on more comprehensive, inclusive multidisciplinary education that boosts creativity and analytical thinking among the learners. It creates a ground for the students where they can study a wide-variety of courses, including sciences, arts, and professional training, as compare to the old conventional, obstinate system. The ground-breaking academic policies framed under FYUGP NEP 2020 works under student centric approach that works for the ultimate welfare of the students by providing them with ample of opportunities in

academic domain from choosing subjects of their own choice to choosing career of their own choice.

The novel *Five Point Someone* stands as an analysis of an educational system that couldn't prepare students to handle the complexities and frivolities of the tangible world, advocating rather than an educational system that gives importance to individual growth, originality, and the chase for their desire over sheer academic accomplishment and societal authentication.

As Chetan Bhagat has always been a keen observer and a specific writer of young generation's menaces. He used to feel more connected with the young generation while arising their concerns and treating them with deep understanding in order to avoid any kind of ambiguity. His main idea lies in dealing with this generation with broader approach rather than a mere transformation. The issues emerging among the young generation should be solved under the right hand with right approach. Through this novel, Bhagat has tried to reach out the maximum strata of young generation through his voice of writing and this is the reason of his likeliness by most of the young generation. His unpretentious and relatable language finds more accessibility by most of the people, that makes his writing more accessible to the wider audience. His novels explore contemporary Indian themes of social issues, career and love and hence make him more popular among urban middle-class young generation.

At the end of the novel, the main three characters Alok, Hari and Ryan found to be graduated from IIT in spite of their meagre performance done on academic grounds. Though they were categorized as 'five-point someone's', but afterwards realized that only grades can't define acumen of a person's worth and upcoming success. Each of them moves forward having a better consideration about life. After attaining their degrees and confidence, Hari reinforces his relationship, Alok does his best to support his family by fulfilling his duties and Ryan learns how to value inventiveness by breaking the conventional shackles of success decided by the society on impractical parameters.

The prominence of this study focusses upon the true nature of education that meant to foster analytical thinking, contemplation and individual growth despite of just academic accomplishment. Professor Cherian also witnesses transformation by understanding the fact that extreme pressure and unfeasible expectations can only lead to distressing repercussions for the students. The study eventually advocates for more philanthropical and well-composed educational realm that values academic brilliance and specific potential.

A person's potential cannot be measured on the basis of merely grades. Academic scores stand as one of the parameters of measuring success and it should not mean to control a person's worth. The actual motive of education is to boost creativity. On such grounds, the novel disparages learning by memorization and hence endorses origination, inquisitiveness, and practical implication of knowledge. During adversity, a true friendship proves to be a boon academically as well as personally that can be witnessed through the friendship bond among Hari, Alok and Ryan.

The novel also emphasizes on psychological and emotional security of the youth by highlighting the destructive effects of extreme academic compression and impractical expectations. Success in terms of professional achievements is as important as individual development, ethical standards, meaningful relations and self-confidence. Sometimes

expectations of society and family impact choices of the students. The novel also represents that how financial pressures and ambitions of parent's impact lives and choices of the students.

Institutions need to implement a student-oriented approach. Educators and educational organizations must guide students instead of judging them exclusively on the basis of grades. The actual purpose of education is to prepare the mindsets of students for lifetime not just for grades. A meaningful education is what will make them ready to face the adversities of life, not just grades. A very well said quote by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, "Adversity is the opportunity for self-introspection", which means merely good grades can't transform you in a better human, until or unless you understand the real essence of meaningful life. Sometimes adversity comes to make best things happen to us. Mistakes cannot be labelled as just failures; in fact, they are our opportunities for progress. In the novel also, the protagonists acquire valuable life learning lessons from their catastrophes and poor choices.

Sometimes enquiring rigid moral systems is mandatory for educational transformation. Through the character of Ryan, the novel inspires readers to encounter obsolete educational practices and promote for more constructive change. In general, *Five Point Someone* argues about the right purpose of education which is not just to have high-scoring lifeless graduates then to produce highly capable, ethical, imaginative, and expressively robust personalities who can in the best possible way contribute implicitly to humanity.

On the grounds of Pedagogical Humanism, the novel looks for a more human-centred archetypal of educational excellence where psychological well-being, ingenuity, and ethical development are appreciated alongside academic brilliance. The study promotes a shift in vision from a performance-based education set up to a didactic humanitarianism that prioritizes all-inclusive development, compassion, analytical thinking, and well-being of the student.

The concept introduced by Michel Foucault 'Panopticon', claim that educational institutions act as a surveillance-based organization where grades, standings, and relentless assessment discipline students. The contemporary system of education has advanced towards an "academic panopticon" where incessant assessment, CGPA, settlement statistics, and expectations of institution control behaviour of student. The novel can also be set on the grounds of deconstruction of meritocracy.

Instead of encouraging knowledgeable inquisitiveness and creativity among the learners, this atmosphere frequently endorses conformity, nervousness, and an extreme focus on arithmetical pointers of accomplishment. Some students begin to associate their self-esteem with the attainment of the grades and positions, thus reducing the process of education to an unjust structure of performance somewhat than a method of rational growth.

Having this framework, the novel *Five Point Someone* should be considered as a deconstruction with respect to the philosophy of meritocracy. The book also questions the broadly acknowledged belief that only academic scores and recognized rankings are dependable measures of intellectual acumen, aptitude, or impending success. With the understandings of its characters, Chetan Bhagat reveals the boundaries of an organization that privileges consistent assessment while overseeing imagination, applied skills,

emotional aptitude, resilience, and invention. While doing so, the writing challenges the supposition that excellence is objective and rather discloses it as a paradigm shaped by official norms and disciplinary practices.

The theory of deconstruction proposed by Jacques Derrida focusses upon the reading of texts from introspective point of view. Instead of accepting the surfaced truth, it focusses upon the ideas beneath. Derrida condemns the acceptance of meanings as fixed entities and looks forward for incongruities and concealed assumptions. Just like the novel discloses the contradictions in terms of merit. Character of Ryan highlights this nature of contradiction so vividly, as he was always under-recognized on academic forum rather than his creativeness. Derrida's idea of deconstruction doesn't support the validity of academic excellence over intellectual competence.

Critical scholars of education like Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire, Bell Hooks and Henry Giroux argue about the adamant nature of conventional educational system and in fact it boosts creativity, development of critical thought processes, endorsement of self-regulating learning system and not just to emphasize on memorization and performance on the basis of exam. In fact, they adhere to the domain of profound understanding and critical innovation.

Paulo Freire doesn't support the 'model of banking' in terms of educational system, where students are the mere receivers of information, instead of thinking critically. In this novel, students were seen memorizing the content in order to fetch grades, instead of developing the thoughtful understanding of the facts. Hence, the novel supports the argument by Freire that the real education cultivates the analytical learning among the students, instead of mere rote learning. Likewise, Henry Giroux also claims that the actual purpose of education is to empower the minds of the learners, not just thinking about grades. Great minds crave for inventiveness, whereas the fixed ones look for a just answer. Young minds should be prepared for the upcoming future challenges in the optimum manner and this could be imaginable by stimulating the renewed ideas in their young minds.

According to philosophy of critical pedagogics by Giroux, true education should transform the competences of learners into self-determining, critical intellectuals who can think more than questioning of prevailing beliefs, challenge prejudice, and vigorously contribute to the well-being of the society. An academic transformation not just enhances the career, but most significantly it helps the learner to become a better human being, who could contribute the future of the nation. Hence, standard of grades must be regarded as a by-product of knowledge rather than its eventual objective. Grades don't decide the actual nature and outlook of a being. Ethical values and moral conduct measure the factual success of learners as a successful human being.

Giroux additionally suggests that sincerely creative and broadminded minds are motivated by curiosity, modernization, and the craving to push their boundaries beyond limit and discover new future possibilities, however individuals having a static mindset frequently search merely for predetermined or precise answers. Consequently, educational organizations should move leaving behind rote memorization and consistent testing by inspiring students to ponder and act critically, resolve real-world difficulties, and represent innovative ideas.

Young learners should be ready to encounter the intricacies and worries of the upcoming life, and it can be imaginable only when true education nurtures ingenuity, imagination, academic independence, and an enduring will power for learning. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President and a great mentor for millions of youth also believed that the objective of true education is to generate virtuous human beings with ability and knowledge and this is true so with respect to Five Point Someone as well.

Academic accomplishment should be analysed on the parameters of liberties and competences that students attain like ingenuity, moral judgment, resilience, and introspective, instead of mere examination grades itself. Students must be treated as the dynamic agents of education, instead of just passive receivers of acquaintance. The novel's insightful thought of learning as a collaborative effort is highly validated. The participation of learners should be a mandatory part in designing the curriculum and evaluation should recompense innovation instead of rote learning.

Deconstruction theory challenges the idea of static nature of grades and accomplishment in the academic domain. Grades shouldn't act as constraints and limit the competence of the youth. In fact, the emphasis should be on the real-life practical implications and skills that could actually help the youth in accomplishing their best for future. The deconstructive study proposes an optimistic vision for academic reforms in terms of grades and success in today's epoch and future as well, where thoughtful contemplation is misjudged over conventional rigid system of intelligence.

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