



### REPRESENTATION OF YOUTH CHETAN BHAGAT'S FIVE POINT SOMEONE

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#### Abstract:

*Studying follies in academics with the reference to Indian Campus novels is a fascinating subject. Yet it is a virgin area. We come across a number of studies on plots, themes and characters in novels but when it comes to academics, we find a few and far between, that to sketchy and random. Largely such a state of affairs in literary studies encouraged me to commence this study to unravel its different facets, shortcomings and fecundities. In a campus novel, academia is an integral and important component. Besides serving the purpose of a backdrop, it is of overriding significance as it determines the characters in most cases. Although, there are early examples of faulty academic system in Indian campus novels but full-fledged follies and remedies are found in Chetan Bhagat's Five Point Someone.*

**Keywords:** *Chetan Bhagat, campus, academics, grading, ragging, fears and insecurities of the students, joys and sorrows of friendship, drug and booze sessions.*

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The author who completed his mechanical engineering from the IIT and MBA from IIMA, his first novel has become a block buster and one of the bestsellers of English novels in India. He is none other than Chetan Bhagat. He talks about the lives and experiences of three best friends in Five Point Someone. They become friends at IIT. Throughout the novel, the author describes the life of IIT students. The setting of the novel is the educational campus of IIT Delhi. After the publication of this novel a new trend began in Indian English literature and the popularity of campus novel developed rapidly. After this novel was published by Chetan Bhagat in 2004, many people, who completed their study from IIT or in IIM, began to write about their experiences about the college and as a result of this, the development of the campus novel in India got a big boost.

This novel throws a light on the very busy schedule of

IIT students. IIT is one the best technical institutes in India. Students in IIT even don't get time to think of something new or something innovative. They are very busy in their studies. They have 42 exams including minor tests during the semester. The names of three friends are Hari, Alok and Ryan. Hari is the narrator and the protagonist of the novel. Narrator introduces characters very effortlessly in the first chapter. Seniors gather freshers in the corridor of the hostel for ragging on the first day in IIT. Hari meets Alok and Ryan for the first time. Ragging is the tradition of higher educational institutes. It displays the darkest side of the education system and the mentality of the students. The seniors get joy from seeing new-comers in weird condition and address them with abusive words and said "You bloody freshers, dozing away eh? Rascals, who will give an introduction?" (Bhagat 3) In addition to this, they get



something more and one senior named Baku orders the juniors to remove each and every cloth from the body. They all stand in a different pose. When Baku wants to do some more notorious thing to them with coke bottles at that time Ryan comes in action. He quarrels with seniors. Freshers become free from this hall activity. Hari, Alok and Ryan become friends after this incident. Novel opens with the incident of ragging. It shows us the present condition of the higher educational institutes. This indeed needs some strict rules to stop ragging and obey the rules strictly. So the fresh students don't need to face such a worst condition in the institutes.

Ryan believes that the educational system is faulty because it does not emphasis on students' new ideas and innovative thoughts. It just focuses on the GPA. Students who get good GPA are considered as winners and who fail to achieve remarkable or good GPA are losers. Ryan, Hari and Alok are highly intelligent but somehow they fail to get high GPA. They suffer a lot. Ryan gives idea about the suspension bridge in the design class. Professor Bhatia enthusiastically takes interest in it. He tells Ryan to prepare a scale drawing and submit it. This is not enough; he also offers special internship project. The situation takes turn when Prof. Bhatia checks his GPA. He calls Ryan and advises to forget about the bridge design drawing and internship for the sake of low GPA. This type of insulting and neglecting frequently happens with Ryan in IIT. One day Ryan goes to attend a class. Prof Vohra asks to solve a problem in the class. The problem is about designing a car jack to lift the chassis of flat tyres. All students from the class start to draw a traditional design which year by year the students of this institute have drawn in the past. But Ryan draws a design of modified screw-jack. There is no need to work manually for this jack. It will work through the power of the car battery. Ryan hopes that professor likes this design. But the exactly opposite happens. Prof. Vohra is not happy with the design and tells to Ryan "If you don't want to be in my class or follow my course, you may

leave" (Bhagat 118). Ryan argues to say that this is a new design. But he isn't ready to listen to him. He adds "who told you to do that?" (Bhagat 118)

Ryan works hard for the project of his interest and it is really a purposeful one. He prepares a proposal on lube project. It is rejected by the Cherian who is the head of the department. He is demotivated by the frequent rejections in the institute. His dissatisfaction can clearly be seen in his speech "what crap? I only did ten night outs on the proposal, the revised proposal and spent like the hundred hours in the lab. But in the end, Cherian shot it down. 'Too optimistic and fantastic,' he said. I could wring his bloody neck" (Bhagat 137).

The main reasons for his ideas rejection are less GPA and narrow minded professors in IIT Delhi. Ryan has to suffer because of this. Professor rejects Ryan's internship because of his low GPA. Prof. Vohra does not accept his new design because of his narrow minded nature. This is the naked fact of the education system. The base of the educational system is its professors but they are narrow-minded. So students' innovative ideas do not take shape properly and students become dissatisfied.

There is also one good natured professor. He doesn't go through the GPA. He is Prof. Veera. He is very popular in IIT. He is very intelligent and possesses the best five degrees from the best institutes of America. He is a younger than other professors of the department. He asks questions to all the students. He does not only ask the students who sit in the first bench but to all who are present in the class. He supports Ryan in his lube project. He gives permission to submit the project proposal under his guidance. He frequently helps other students. Prof. Veera also helps Hari, Alok and Ryan in Disco. He calls Hari and his friends to meet them before Disco. When Alok comes back to hostel from hospital after two months, he goes to his hostel room to welcome him. He constantly tries to do something for these three friends and he gets the permission from dean to work on lube project during his suspended semester.



Another professor who generally appears to be rigid is Prof. Cherian. But in the end, he becomes kind to Hari, Alok and Ryan. He is the head of the department. Hari and his friends are five credits short to clear their degrees. Cherian offers to Hari and says he will give extra five credit for his lab work if they will continue the lube project. It means he shows mercy for Hari and his friends. They are not able to get the degree without these five credits and they have to wait for one more year.

There are the two different types of professors in the institute. Few are very helpful and show the right path how to come out from the difficulties as well as encourage the students to do the best work, they find out the interest of the students and inspire them to go ahead in the same field. Such professors think about the future of the students. On the other hand, there are some professors (like Prof .Vohra) who are narrow minded and do not accept the new ideas. Also, some professors like Prof. Bhatia try to judge the students on their GPA and percentage.

According to Ryan, the system of IIT is sick. He has enough reasons for this. Professors pressurize the students to work hard. Students overexert themselves to manage average grade. They work hard to improve the average grade. Hari, Alok and Ryan work together and they also succeed to get the average marks in some subjects but miss out on Physics. They have very busy schedule in IIT. So they don't get chance to do something new or innovative. They just study in conventional manner. So Ryan says, "I mean this 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?" (Bhagat 34).

Students find out the way to enjoy the life in college.

Hari, Alok and Ryan decide to read just for three hours and spend other time in enjoying the life. "And how exactly do we tell the system to stuff it?" (Bhagat 40). They want to enjoy their life along with the study.

Ryan does not trust and believe that this system is the best system. He says,

*And this IIT system is nothing but a mice race. It is not a rate race, mind you, as rats sound somewhat shrewd and clever. So it is not about that. It is about mindless 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 prof. I mean, what IITs given to this country? Name one invention in the last three decades. (Bhagat 101)*

This clearly exposes Ryan's feeling about the IIT's education system. People become aware of that IIT is the best institute of India but does not provide little space for creativity and innovation. Ryan compares the system with the mice race. Hari and his two friends decide to do work in C2D theory, means cooperate to dominate for this harsh system "... the only way to take on the unfair system is through unfair means which is C2D" (Bhagat 108). According to this theory, one should take care of two subjects and others do the copy and paste from his work. They do not believe that it is a cheating. But they believe that it is cooperating. Ryan argues that system divides us with the help of GPA and they pull together to fight back through this theory. Hari, Alok and Ryan get enough time with the help of this theory. Hari, Alok and Ryan pass time in sports, visit tourist places in Delhi, see movies etc. This clearly indicates that the assignments is not properly checked by the professors. They catch Hari and his friend's cheating if they check properly. His theory succeeds in this rigid system.

Hari and his two friends Alok and Ryan frequently fight against the system of IIT and try to change it. Ryan says "By living on our own terms. By being rats, not mice, work together and beat the system. I will not give up my friends for this system. In fact, my friendship will beat the system" (Bhagat 101). They want to give importance to new ideas, innovation and invention in IIT. They get



partial success when Cherian gives speech in convocation and says "that we need to look at the system. Sometimes the pressure is too much. Something about lesser tests and more projects etc. didn't really follow it — I was dozing off a bit you know" (Bhagat 265).

The novel depicts that the students have so much pressure about getting the good marks, to get the admission in the best institute and to get the good salary job. Parents pressurize their children to work hard to get the good result to develop or maintain status in the society. Sometimes parents don't understand the condition or interest of their children and force to choose particular course or stream. Samir is Prof Cherian's son. He does not have interest to study in IIT and become an Engineer. But his father forces Samir to study in this institute. Samir tries hard but he doesn't succeed. He says "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" (Bhagat 166).

Samir is not able to get admission according to his father's desire. So Cherian doesn't talk properly with his wife. Cherian even doesn't talk with his son Samir for the last two months. He feels easy to die than to study or live in this condition. He commits suicide on railway tracks. It shows the reason, why students commit a suicide. The main reason is their parents' expectations. Parents do not understand children's capacity and IQ as well as their interested field for study. Parents just pressurize their children according to present trends.

Students depicted in the novel are mostly addicted to smoking and drinking. It is frequently described

throughout the novel. Hari and his friends smoke and drink. They want to feel that they have had a good day and have enjoyed their life fully. This malpractice taking place in college days is depicted in various incidents. Hari says "third year student now, alcohol no longer a novelty. This meant we could drink less and not throw up every time to certify having a good time" (Bhagat 136). Hari and his friends need some reason to drink. They want to drink in both conditions, namely, when they are happy and sad. Hari and Ryan generally drink on the roof of the institute building. Ryan throws a party when Alok comes back after one year. They enjoy vodka and rum etc. in this party. Hari, Alok and Ryan drink and give the two reasons for drink. The first reason is Ryan's lube project is rejected by Cherian and the second is Hari messes up another viva.

In this way the novel Five Point Someone is set around the life of the students who study in IIT. It reflects the mental status, thought, and behavior and so on about the IIT students. Only highly intelligent can get admission in IIT but sadly their creativity is ruined by the faulty system.

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