

Educational Problems, Discussed Through *Five Point Someone*

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Abstract:-

Chetan Bhagat usually deals with the problems faced by the youth in contemporary India. In his novel *Five Point Someone* he has narrated the problems of the trio, Hari, Alok and Ryan through Hari's point of view. Hari has a trauma because of some childhood problems because of which he suffers at the IIT. To add to this he falls in love with his professor's daughter. Alok is from a middle class family and has to deal with economical problems. Ryan has a very creative mind but he can't pull himself out of the curricular problems because he considers them as a cage to him.

Keywords:- Youth, GPA, Innovation, Creativity, Trauma, Love.

Introduction:-

Chetan Bhagat's Indian English novelist well known to everybody. He introduced innovative techniques in his creative writing for narrating the stories. He is popular fiction novelists who comments on Education, Society and current events. He is considered a renowned author cause of his five bestselling novels,

'Five Point Someone – What not to do at IIT!' (2004)

'One Night @ the Call Centre' (2005)

'The 3 mistakes of My Life' (2008)

'2 States' (2009)

'Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition' (2011).

Chetan Bhagat is a columnist and motivational speaker; also he is an iconic person for the Young generation. Every novel written by him deals with the problems of the younger generation. He highly values human relationships than any other thing in life. In all his stories his major focus is on the problems of the youth in contemporary India. He majorly discusses the problems in love, ambition and corruption in education. The realism is the portrayal of life with fidelity. Realistic work acquaints us with a real picture of society either it is good or bad. Bhagat is a realistic writer who does not bother about the didactic purpose rather presents the naked reality of the contemporary society blatantly.

Chetan Bhagat began his journey as a writer in 2004 with his debut novel *'Five Point Someone – What not to do at IIT!'* (2004) after graduating from IIT Delhi, in 1995 and IIM Ahmedabad in 1997. Unlike the other novels in this one, the author begins

in the different way not telling how to get into IIT but instead telling how messed up our college years can get if we don't think straight. Chetan Bhagat doesn't write like the typical English writers but his way is extremely informal. He wishes to write in the actual way people talk in the college and not some flowery interpretation of it extremely informal which may be considered as modern English. This is the type of the language that the real people speak and hence they are familiar with it and so they find it easy to connect with the novel and appreciate it better.

Three heroes of the novel (trio) are Hari Kumar (The narrator), Alok Gupta and Ryan Oberoi. Each of them has his own ambitions, aspirations and expectations towards life. Ryan is a bit smart and outspoken, whereas Alok and Hari are mildly cry babies. All the three of them are the students of Mechanical Engineering who live on similar floors 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. Seniors instructed the fresher's "Off with your clothes." Such ragging incidents create a negative effect on the student's mind set and this is one of the reasons for the increase in suicidal attempts. Such incidents even scare the students from enjoying their time in the hostel to the fullest and instead they wish to run off from there. The very first encounter of the trio is with Professor Dubey, Mechanical Engineering clearly shows how old the teaching method at IIT. Professor 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 9) A student Ryan asks: “Sir, What about a gym machines, like bench press or something? That doesn’t reduce human effort. In fact, it increases it.” (Page 10)

The teaching fraternity should equip themselves after seeing something like this on how to handle the cream students of the institutions like IIT. Instead of demoting the students they should encourage them to think wide and something out of the box. The professor loses his balance and almost threatens Ryan stating “Watch it son. In my class, just watch it.” (Page 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 is commenting about the system. “This system of relative grading is overburdening the students. I mean it kills the best fun year 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.” (Page 35)

One of the sensitive topics is brought by the writer of the incapability of the professors of answering the challenging questions of the bright student’s. This is seemed clearly in the extract mentioned above. On the controversy in the same novel writer mention attitude of Professor Veera who appreciates creativity of students, encourage them to think out of the brackets of books. Prof. Veera gave an opportunity as Research Assistant to Ryan though he was five pointers that is low scorer but nature of Ryan is very creative, and loved it. Professor Veera’s visit in the hospital to Alok with a box containing ‘Kaju-Barfi’ is a symbol of humanity. Veera has set an example before us that a teacher should encourage his students and motivate them a lot. A teacher should be someone who can see the latent talents of not only achievers but underachievers as well and should be capable to motivate and help the students in bringing them out in the open.

Prof. Cherian, Head of the Engineering Department, during a convocation ceremony, congratulates all graduating students while

addressing them. During this moment he become quite emotional and narrates his own story. “Once upon a time there was a student in IIT. He was very bright, and this is true, his GPA was 10.00 after four years. He didn’t have a lot of friends as to keep such a high GPA, you only have so much time for friends.”

“This bright boy thought his classmates were less smart than him, were selfish and wanted to make the most money of go to the USA with minimum effort. And many of his classmates did go the work for multinationals and some went abroad. Some of them opened their own companies in the USA – mostly in computer and software.” (Page 258)

“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.” (Page 261)

With the help of the novel writer convey the message to people that GPAs make a good student, but not a good person. It means that GPAs are not the exact factor to decide of to judge student’s potentialities and creativity, ability to handle a problem, practical knowledge. To become a topper with 10.00 GPA is a great achievement undoubtedly but there is something more in life which is yet to be achieved that is commitment towards family, friends, and our internal desires and goals.

Hari Kumar is in love with Neha, the daughter of Prof. Cherian, the HOD of Mechanical Engineering. The Professor warns him time and again to stay away from his daughter but Hari is unable to do so because of his love. Hence he gets on the top in the hit list of the professor. As a child Hari’s father had warned him not to answer elders and this had created a fear and trauma in his mind. Now during his VIVAs this fear and trauma has reflected back and he is unable to answer any questions asked in VIVAs. For getting daring and courage in a VIVA he drinks wine and this make the situation worse. He does it because he wants an A grade in Prof. Cherian’s subject. Neha his girlfriend

had promised him that if he got an A she would introduce him to her father. This again becomes the cause of the lower grades of the group.

All three Ryan, Hari and Alok are very depressed and harassed by the system of GPAs they are desperate to keep their standards on a level with the system. As a part of this coping up they rely to "Operation Pendulum." They decide to steal question papers of Professor Cherian's subject so that Hari gets an A in his subject and the GPAs of all of them rise. They all risk their life and break in to the house of the HOD in chill winter night. If they had been caught, their whole life would have been ruined but the spirit of friendship encourages them. For them to be trusted is greater than to be loved. They believe in theory of true relationship. But they are caught and have to face the Disco-Disciplinary Committee. The Disco is in no mood to let them go. They have to pull Professor Cherian's daughter (Hari's girlfriend) in to all this. This and Professor Veera's kind help saves them all from this trouble, still they are suspended for one semester and an F (Fail) in Prof. Cherian's subject. Due to burden and frustration of getting F Alok cannot handle the pressure on his mind and he thinks that all his dreams are shattered so to save his two friends from the guilt of stealing question paper he jumps from the Professor Cherian's cabin on ninth floor of the institution building. But by God's grace survives and saves with thirteen odd fractures.

Conclusion:-

By the end of the story all three characters meet their ambitions and dreams, aspirations. It is not come true without their copiously efforts by working hard to give their best performance in their upcoming exams. Professor Veera's encouragements and motivations help them in their college life. Finally

three of them getting low GPA five point something but they are good person and Hari getting some-one (Neha his girlfriend) extra with his poor performance and poor grade five point.

The name of the novel is based on the narrator Hari's performance in the last year. The grading system used by IIT is on a scale of zero to ten points. Five point something is usually given to the low performers. But Hari got "*Five Point Someone*" which implies that five points in curriculum and Neha as his girlfriend.

Work cited:-

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