

**CHETAN BHAGAT'S VISION OF LIFE OF THE  
MODERN URBAN YOUTH: A STUDY**

**Synopsis submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH**

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**MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY  
(University with Potential for Excellence)**

**MADURAI – 625 021**

**DECEMBER 2020**

## Chetan Bhagat's Vision of Life of the Modern Urban Youth: A Study

### INTRODUCTION

The simple meaning of literature is the reflection of society through written work of a particular culture or people. The aim of a few novelists is to represent the society as it is where as others aim at representing as it must be and a radical few bring in a touch of magical realism bringing in creativity into reality. The first half of the century concerned especially with linguistic theories, with form rather than content while the latter half attempted to focus on content and context, history and new historicism.

Indian English literature however is very much a twentieth century phenomenon. By then English had become the language of political debate. Novelists such as Ahmed Ali, Mulk Raj Anand, G. V. Desani, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao, were resolved to provide a very different view of India to colonial writers. The works of members of Indian diaspora, such as V.S.Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Agha Shahid Ali, Rohinton Mistry and Salman Rushdie, has been a major contribution to Indian English literature.

R.K. Narayan was an inspiration who captured beautiful tales about the small town life which remain timeless. South Asian writers began creating new linguistic paradigms for the English language and won literary prizes. Many of them have been widely translated. But V. S. Naipaul is the only English novelist of Indian extraction to have been a contender for the Nobel Prize.

In this connection it is observed that the writer, Chetan Bhagat is an author of today's era who wrote several brilliant books that have been published reflecting the changing perspectives, changing paradigms, and changing thematic concerns of society. The arrival of Chetan Bhagat with his debut novel *Five Point Someone* in 2004 proved to be a revolutionary

wave in Indian Writing in English in such a context of realism in the context of urbanized settings.

Chetan Bhagat has been acclaimed as one of the best-selling novelists of the popular literature. One of the reason Bhagat attained unprecedented success is because his work struck a chord with middle-class young India, the India that is not used to reading Indian writing in fiction, that held and still holds English in awe and fear, which belongs to the tier 2 and 3 cities of the country. Chetan contributes routinely and efficiently to social and national issues by writing sections in papers in addition to writing novels. Many of his sections have advanced towards the Indian Parliament and have triggered important talks. To tell the truth, he wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi featuring the corruption issue that millions in the country are looking at. Chetan Bhagat received the 'Society Young Achiever's Award' in 2000 and the 'Publisher's Recognition Award' in 2005 for his contribution to the general public and the government assistance of individuals. Chetan Bhagat also made it to the rundown of 'World's 100 Most Influential People' on the planet in Time Magazine in 2010, at 36 years old. Since he followed his heart and sought his fantasies, Chetan Bhagat managed to scale unbelievable statures and arrive at the pinnacle of achievement.

Chetan Bhagat in his book *What Young India Wants* recollects his history which allowed him to be the author he has become. It is important to understand the author's life circumstances that not only made him an author with millions of readership across India, but also a visionary with a passion to impact young Indian minds.

Chetan Bhagat with a stroke of luck made it into IIT Delhi joining Mechanical Engineering, which was the turning point of his life. He did not consider himself a genius among the IIT'ians and was more interested in people than machines. He admitted that like most that was a means to achieve the middle class dream. However, his decision to join IIT

was an acknowledgement to his interest in people which seems to be a pattern from his earlier childhood as an entertainer narrating stories to his relatives. Like most IIM Graduates, he was successful in getting a well-paying Job at an Investment Bank in Hong Kong. There are a few young minds who work outside India, seem to put down their birth country in comparison with the adopted country. However Chetan Bhagat had questions with pain in his heart as he acknowledges this reality which was made clear once he landed in Hong Kong.

The impressive young multi-talented writer has authored twelve fictional works; *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ The Call Center* (2005), *The Three Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *What Young India Wants* (2012), *Half Girlfriend* (2014), *Making India Awesome* (2015), *One Indian Girl* (2016), *The Girl in Room 105*(2018) *India Positive* (2019) and *One Arranged Murder* (2020). Which constitute the collections of his news articles and columns, written as a motivating speaker for various leading newspapers. The writings of Bhagat are more influential and impactful as they are even adapted for the films of Bollywood. It is observed that both the literary version and the film version of Bhagat's style of narration makes it versatile and embraces it as a reader novelist.

His first novel, *Five Point Someone*, is set between 1991 and 1995 at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and the choice of subjects for his books by Chetan Bhagat is very significant. It's a story about the journey of three engineering students, Ryan Oberoi and Alok Gupta, the storyteller Hari. With the IITs' grading system, they fail to cope. Ryan is intelligent as well as an outspoken boy, while Hari and Alok are relatively introverted personalities. The front liners aren't that bright, and five GPA points are always safe, which is very low. Things are always getting worse for them, even though they are trying to improve their grades. While in this book, the grim side of some education systems, which is

praised by the elite, is both directly and indirectly discussed, the focus is on the life of those modern youth in the institutions and the journey from feeling alone in the struggle, to finding the inner strength to do everything required to take control of their lives. When parents, teachers and the society label the five pointer students as losers. Chetan has giving hope for the young minds of India that it is passion with the right attitude towards life, which will lead one to success.

Bhagat's second novel, *One Night @ the Call Center*, is a story about the events that occur in a call center over one night. The story revolves around six main characters: Shyam, Varun, Priyanka, Esha, Radhika, and Military Uncle. A story of love and conflict, exploitation at work, the absence of family affection, the darker side of the modeling world, identity crisis, unfulfilled ambitions, and a globalized office's working environment. Through the perspective of Shyam, the protagonist, who works as a call center agent, *One Night @ the Call Center* is told. Every character has some ambitions in *One Night @ the Call Center* that they want to fulfill during the course of life, but don't know the right path to fulfill their purpose. So, Chetan Bhagat introduced the episode of the call from God to direct them in the right path and focus on their inner purpose and to show them the youth of India have everything they require to succeed and that when they focus on their purpose, the life would become more joyful and impactful .

*The Three Mistakes of My Life* is a remarkable hat-trick by Chetan Bhagat after his debut *Five Point Someone* and second novel *One Night @ The Call Center*. Bhagat seems to continue the same passionate zeal in presenting hopes and aspiration as well as failure and frustration of this generation in remarkable fashion. The novel ironically unfolds some of the bitter truths of human life which is now more influenced by passion rather than emotion and ambition. Chetan Bhagat is more vibrant in this novel because of his growing maturity and

sharpening sensibility. Adolescent is an important stage in terms of psycho social development particularly in their identification of their Self.

The novel revolves around three friends who portray the passionate ambition to succeed in life. Each of these protagonists has their own core values and attachments, with business, cricket and religion governing their lives. The motive for Govind is to make money to be a successful businessman; Ishaan wants to train Ali to be a technically perfect batsman, while Omi just wants to be with his friends. As the novel continues, the characters have to deal with various incidents that spoil their lives, such as an earthquake, community riots, religious politics, and their own mistakes. Govind is the narrator of the story, and during the course of the novel, it is Govind who commits three mistakes. While it is easy for youth to mourn on the mistaken they have committed, Chetan focuses on the internal growth of these protagonists through their journey and finally their path to finding purpose in their life, which is in most aspects beyond their own selfish needs.

The fourth novel of Chetan Bhagat, *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is inspired by the true story of Chetan Bhagat and his wife Anusha, respectively, from Delhi and Tamilnadu. It's a love story about Krish, a Punjabi boy, and Ananya, a Tamil girl from various states in India who wants to get married. Their parents do not agree with their marriage, and with their parents' consent, the couple has a tough battle to get married to each other. Through *2 States: Story of My Marriage* Bhagat exposes Indians' backward mentality, regional and religious nuances, and how inter-caste marriages are still seen in India as a social stigma. *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is a tale in which Krish and Ananya never allow the choice of their parents to affect their choice. While the novel focuses on how two young lovers overcome obstacles in bringing their family together in their marriage, it is also a testament of modern urban youth with the right intent can influence their parents into

having profound mindset shifts and focus on the importance of love and humanness rather than Ego and selfish motives .

*Revolution 2020* is foremost a love story, in fact a love triangle, as two main characters in the novel love the same girl. Corruption particularly in the education sector is the back drop of the story. Like all his novels the bestselling writer shows the reality of problems the younger generation face and also, gives them confidence they are the masters of their own destiny and they can find solutions to the problems. In this novel both the protagonist Raghav and Gopal both strive to achieve success but the definition of success for each one is different. Both the characters are gifted intellectually but have ambition that is a world apart. One is running after money and the other nourishes ideas to make a better India and wants to be part of a revolution. The common thread in their life is the women they both love Aarti. But for both their goal looks far more beyond their reach as they think that the society they are in promotes only corruption. While in the beginning it looks like Gopal would do anything to achieve success, even if it influences unethical activities, through the multiple events in the book he has an internal transformation which triggered the inner purpose in his life and that money and fame are mere mirages. He starts to orchestrate a plan to bring happiness into the life of his friends, at the expense of his love and even though the whole journey was painful, he accepted that it was the right thing to do.

Chetan Bhagat rakes upon the sensitive issues which concern to the society in his novels, ranging from the romantic love story to a deplorable condition of the present educational system. He has started a crusade against eradicating the evils of the society by his ‘sugar coated novels’. Chetan Bhagat, in almost all his novels, highlights the problems faced by the youth. He presents before the readers a world which is full of optimism and comic elements. Chetan Bhagat has acumen of giving comic treatment to a very serious theme. The

main objective of this paper is to bring out the Voice of Youth in Chetan Bhagat's writing along with the way in which he presented his characters. The thesis will also discuss the concept of social reflection and the concept of modernity and how through the delineation of the various characters he portrays the contemporary reality.

Chetan Bhagat is not someone who just shares his ideology through his books with his young readers but also someone who lives by his values to be the change that he desires in this world. He had completed his studies from the top university in India, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institute of Management (IIM). He got a high paying Job in Hong Kong along with his family and worked as an investment banker with the famous Goldman Sachs. Even though Chetan Bhagat was successful, he had a deep sense of belonging to India. In an attempt to reflect his inner feelings towards Indian youth, he tapped into his inner entertainer and wrote his first book *Five Point Someone* in the year 2004. His ability to reflect the reality and have the reader relate with the circumstances of the protagonist, made his first book one of India's best sellers.

Chetan Bhagat was more interested in writing books and having his book reach millions of young readers, who were able to connect with his style of writing and his ease of allowing them to connect with his books. In the next few years, Chetan Bhagat decided to quit his high paying job and become a full time novelist and his passion allowed him to further explore other aspects of his writing to then become a columnist, script writer and also a motivation speaker. In the researchers' opinion, he is one of the very few others who has reached millions of young minds and impacting them positively by means of his novels. The psychological tendencies of youth and their ethos, aspirations, emotions and alienation in life are mainly exposed in his novels. The different reflections of contemporary young society are focused and carried out in each novel. Though taking hardships in their lives, Bhagat creates

his characters as good human beings, responsible citizens, and cultured individuals. This kind of representation of young people by him reveals in a positive way his ambition to bring about a change in present modern youth society.

The present study has been done with primary objective to bring out the Vision for Modern Urban youth in Chetan Bhagat's writing along with the way in which he presented his characters' and following are the secondary objectives which are going to be discussed in study detail.

- To know the biography of Chetan Bhagat and a summary of his novels, which are related to the study.
- To discuss the Reflection of Reality, to establish the national issues impacting the lives of youth in Chetan Bhagat's select novels.
- To study the Anxieties and Insecurities of Indian youth and their internal struggle and pain in the novels of Chetan Bhagat.
- To explore the Emergence of Optimism, where in even in the face of hard life circumstances, the young protagonist allow for the internal growth of their characters in the novels of Chetan Bhagat.

The researcher focus is to understand the hidden meaning within the text of Author Chetan Bhagat, to extract the Vision of Life of the Modern Urban Youth in the selected books of Chetan Bhagat and hence used the research tool of Psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalytic theory enables the researcher to use the extensive work done by psychologist and research books to read between the lines of the characters behavior and thought process, there by hypothesizing the unconscious or conscious intention behind those actions. This tool allows us to further understand the author in this case Chetan Bhagat and his behaviors, actions and deduce the intentions and in this case the Vision of Modern Urban Youth .

The study having taken psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud as the base and has explains the concept of reality, ambition, insecurity and optimism in the character of Chetan Bhagat's select novels. Psychoanalysis is not simply a branch of medicine or psychology; it helps understand philosophy, culture, religion and first and foremost literature. In developing his theory of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud has often related it to art in general and to literature in particular. Psychoanalytic literary criticism focuses on analyzing the author and his/her life and the literary work explaining characters' behavior and motivations; explicating the appeal of the work and analyzing the role of language and symbolism used. The authors and writers are influenced by the psychoanalytic concepts which are reflected in the characters of their works and also in their mind.

Later student of Freudian psychology in the name of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) re-directs his view to suit his own social milieu in the understanding of psychoanalysis. It is Jung who sees the basic human behaviors in myths and legends. A later development of psychoanalysis embraced Alfred Adler (1870-1937) who sees man as a social being. In the sense of Adler we are motivated by social needs, "we are self-conscious and capable of improving ourselves and the world around us" (McConnell 250) Thus, we can begin to perceive that there is a mutual fascination between the field of 'Psychoanalysis and Literature' is the major 'mediator' between the two disciplines.

It is known that the closet connection between literature and psychoanalysis has always been deployed by the academic field of literary criticism or literary theory. Among the critical approaches to literature, the psychoanalysis has been one of the most controversial and for many readers the least appreciated. In spite of that it has been regarded one of the fascinating and rewarding approach in the application of interpretative analysis. This psychological interpretation has become one of the mechanisms to find out the hidden

meaning of a literary text. It also helps to explore the innate conglomerate of the writer's personality as factors that contribute to his experience from birth to the period of writing a book. The goal of psychoanalysis was to show that behavior which was caused by the interaction between unconscious and consciousness. According to Monte "Psychoanalytic theories assume the existence of unconscious internal states that motivate an individual's overt actions." (1977)

The hypothesis of this research is that there is an underlying vision for modern urban youth embedded in the writings of the author through the life circumstances and internal growth, in the selected novels of Chetan Bhagat.

The Thesis is divided into 5 Chapters. The following scheme highlights the whole process and planning of the thesis.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **2. REFLECTION OF REALITY**

## **3. ANXIETIES AND INSECURITIES**

## **4. EMERGENCE OF OPTIMISM**

## **5. SUMMINGUP**

## **WORKS CITED**

The proposal Chapter is introductory by nature. Opening chapter 1 highlights a brief analysis of Indian novels, novelist and themes .Indian English fiction incorporates literature written originally in English by authors of Indian ancestry, nationality or birth and hence it is also associated with members of the Indian diaspora. It took a host of writers to beat new

paths for themselves and those to follow. This chapter looks to understand the course Indian English fiction has taken which is necessary to look at the gamut of work by Indian writers in English.

**Chapter Two:** “Reflection of Reality” deals with introducing national issues & realities in Indian society. The chapter introduces Bhagat’s thematic world deeply highlighting the issues in the select five novels. The second chapter entitled ‘Reflection of Reality’ discusses the impact of globalization in select Bhagat novels. Bhagat documents the lives of modern urban youth with their personal complexities and professional exploitation. It connects to so many of the problems of social defects and follies; corruption in education, globalizing, complex relationships, job insecurity, self-loathing, world domination, freedom, modernization, the spirit of money and nationalism. To portray Young India’s life struggles, he selected the young city aspirants as cast. Protagonist reveals the individual’s psychological awareness of life and society.

While *Five Point Someone*, which speaks of flaws in the Indian education system; *One Night @ the Call Center* depicts youth exploitation at work and the impact of globalization, *Three Mistakes of My Life* depicts the key negative aspects of Indian Cricket, Business, Politics, and Religion on the youth ; *2 States* explore the caste and inter-state differences which creates more gap in dividing India by language and culture, and *Revolution 2020* investigates into corruption in Indian Society and the commercialization of education System as means of Financial gain .

**Chapter Three:** “Anxieties and Insecurities” brings out the social issues causing anxiety or insecurity in youth. The chapter also introduces Bhagat’s characters and their similarities with current Indian urban youth. Confers his deep insight into society reveals an optimistic approach that raises the negative shades of society. In his novels, he tries to expose

the problems prevailing in society especially the youth concerns. He captures the disadvantages of society and portrays them with his subtle interwoven character lives to better bring about change in society. Through simple and sensitive love stories, he reveals the most common problems affecting society and people's lives. He depicts the fictional world by characters and circumstances in real life.

**Chapter Four:** "Emergence of Optimism" deals with the characters' dreams and ambitions. It depicts the protagonist's revival from the depth of their personal sorrow. Their internal growth leading to accomplish their dreams and passions with the hard life difficulty acting as trigger point for a better future. It represents perfectly the modern society of the middle class and its reflections on the lives and aspirations of the individual. Bhagat's novel explores the ambition of young people towards enterprise and the blows of disappointment, frustration, unfairness and isolation and a disastrous career failure. Chetan Bhagat is focusing openly on the sensitive questions of the community, religion and politics that influence contemporary Indian society.

**Chapter Five** sum-up with the findings of the thesis using the research tool psychoanalytical theory uncovers the hidden Vision of Life of the Modern Urban Youth. Also, revealing the endorse of author Chetan Bhagat as a visionary like Abdul Kalam's focusing on positively impacting the youth of India and finally gives the scope for further research.