

Sportive Spirit Themes Interwoven in Chetan Bhagat's Select Novels – An Assessment

Dr. Joghee Senthilkumar¹, Biyalfew Gizzie Lewoyhu²

¹M.A., C.A., D.C.A., P.G.D.E.L.T., P.G.D.P.M.I.R., P.G.D.R.M., B.Ed., Ph.D., (English)

Assistant Professor of English, Department of English language & Literature, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Gambella University, Ethiopia, East-Africa.

²Head, Department of English, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, East Africa.

Abstract

Chetan Bhagat has created a name for himself as a block buster novelist and as one among the 100 most Influential people of the world. Bhagat has fabricated readable stories of the youth and young men and women of the IITians, call centers, a love tale of the IIM Ahmedabad and the revolutionary type of young men of the business world, rising up his plots to twist the destiny of the protagonists in their love, corruption ambition and marriage, which have won the hearts of young readers of his novels. Fast Company Magazine has commended him as 'The Voice of India's rising entrepreneurial class'. The New York Times applauded Chetan Bhagat as 'The Biggest selling English language novelist in India's history'.

Key words: Influential people, destiny, revolutionary type, corruption, ambition and marriage.

Introduction

"I have told you the four thunder storms disappointment, frustration, unfairness and isolation, you cannot avoid them, as like the monsoon they will come into your life at regular intervals. You just need to keep the raincoat handy to not let the spark die".

Bhagat Chetan 'What Young India Wants'. 2012. (108) Chetan Bhagat explains all the above four thunderstorms in the coming passages giving an apt definition. Like monsoon they come and go at their proper times for which we have to keep our rain coat ready at hand to protect ourselves so that our spark cannot die.

Sportive Spirit Themes found in Chetan Bhagat's Novel, Five Point Someone (2004)

Chetan Bhagat's debut novel, Five Point Someone (2004) is narrated by the author, being the chief protagonist in the name of Harikumar. Hari Kumar makes friends with Ryan and Alok and the three stay in the Kumaon hostel, getting admissions in IIT Delhi. The senior students Anurag, a demon sized guy, another stout, dark hairy student and the third one being the boss of the gang want to rag these new comers as it is going on usually every year. They wanted these three freshers to introduce to them and asked them to take off their clothes to mock at them. When Baku the senior gang leader shouted at Ryan, the latter snatched the two coke bottles from the hands of Baku and stamped Baku's feet in a James Bond style. Not only that, Ryan broke the bottles into two, butt broken, waved the bottles, one in each hand and shouted at Baku in a rage. "Come, you Bastards" (6) Thus at the very beginning of the story one can find

a new comer, Ryan to show his bravery and the sportive spirit in him. Baku the ragging leader and others disappeared from the place seeing a stubborn and courageous new comer, Ryan. 145

Ryan comes to IIT Delhi from a boarding school in a hill town in Mussoori, his parents being rich. Ryan invoked certain sportive spirit in him calling the other guys to go with him for a morning walk to keep less their fat and to play squash and scrabbles and to be happy instead of putting their heads in mugging up the theories. He buys a scooter out of the money his father has sent him and rides these two other guys to the hostel, the ice parlour and other places wherever they want to go. He likes the modernity and advises the others to be free from disappointment, frustration and failure and about their five points in their semester examinations. Ryan thinks that the IIT institution with its system of relative grouping, overburdens the students, leaving no room for their original thoughts and creativity. Ryan knows how to make friends since his studies in the school hostels with his peer groups and has been friendly always. The friends all adopt the 'draw the line' policy dictated by Ryan to share their work so that they can spare time to play squash games in the court which would keep their minds in rest and the fat is reduced. He alerts and allows them to try and try until they practice well. He wanted his friends to enjoy as he enjoyed playing the games. Ryan inculcates the sportive spirit in his friends to rise and win in any circumstances as he does with interest. When Alok and Hari were worried about their poor performances in semester examinations, Ryan was able to face it with excitement.

Alok was lamenting over his poor performance in the semester examination, while Ryan, who had positive thoughts tries to achieve things, overcoming the difficulties and to have new efforts to improve these are the key words that Chetan Bhagat tries to weave in his concocted story of **Five Point Someone**, through the character, Ryan. While Alok is a 'loser' and Hari is blind, Ryan played the part of a leader like Pied-piper to take the mice after him. Ryan had the good qualities to help his friends in times of need and he helped Alok's ailing father by admitting him in hospital. Keeping himself attending till 3 p.m with him.

Venkat the studious, another student in the neighboring room felt disturbed by Alok's laments over his father's sickness and shouted at him to vacate his room. In the right occasion Ryan appears before them and takes back Alok to their room and offers a reunion party with bottles of Vodka, rum. Juice, coke, lemons, ice, sugar to forget the past and to be happy in future. When Surdy, Vaibhav, Anurag and Alok commented about their future ambition, Ryan asked them to be sportive to take things easy with confidence and carefree as he did. He told that only positive attitude will help them to improve in life, facing whatever failures they meet.

Ryan boldly condemned the system of IIT examinations to be a mice race, mindlessly running a race for four years and the professors didn't know what science and learning are about. He criticized what the IITs have given to the country and he asked about any invention in the last three decades.

Ryan hits upon a plan and suggests the other boys to cooperate with him to Dominate, as "C2D". Whoever so it be either Hari or Alok, Ryan runs and gives his hand to assist them on critical occasions. Hari wants to give Neha his love, a gift for which Ryan suggests a lipstick box to be most suitable and helps him to buy the gift.

Ryan suggests for the assignments to be done by turn to save time and effort. Secondly, the course responsibilities are to be shared among the three along with the sharing of lab assignments as the third one. The fourth tenet of his C2D plan is to live in one room to live their hostel life to the fullest with spare times to play, to see movies and to chat. The other two guys signed in the agreement.

Ryan wants to do an experiment with various substances mixtures to check lubricant efficiency in a scooter engine, the scooter being his own. He combined different types of oil to check mileage and he did his assignment with effort and sincerity to satisfy Prof. Veera, who was generous to students. The sportive spirit found in Ryan makes him to sit and work not even going to movies to see that his course is completed successfully. He was not a mugger like Alok and Venkat.

147 At the time of Neha's birth day celebrations, Ryan suggested Hari to give her a cheap and best heart touching gift. That was to wish Neha as the very first person to do on that day in the early morning for which Ryan takes serious initiation along with Alok. He arranged suitably that Hari enters her sleeping room to say 'happy birthday' to her to be the first person in that early morning. As instructed by Ryan, Hari enters the separate room where Neha sleeps, climbing through the pipes, with a flower bouquet in his hand. Hari meets Neha and bid her 'Happy Birthday' and kissed on her cheek. Because of the plans dictated by the cute person Ryan their plot succeeded.

Ryan expected the day of the final major examinations where Alok and Hari couldn't find the way to get 'A' in their grades. The fatal blow of Hari during Viva as a result of taking several gulps of vodka still hurts him as an obstacle to win over the hands of Neha, the daughter of Cherian which made him sick throughout, as he thinks that he could not get through the examinations. At this juncture, Ryan comes forward to help him. Ryan's plans work out but their operation pendulum witnesseth a disaster in having caught red-handed by Professor Cherian and other staff of the IIT.

The fearlessness, brilliancy and the machismo attitude of Ryan is to be in a way observed and appreciated as his sportive spirit even though the operational pendulum plot is considered to be a crime, attempted in secret. While other two guys were panic stricken, Ryan the cute, smart, stylish and confident was expecting an occasion to take revenge on Prof. Cherian for his stern look and very strict instructions to students.

During the suspended semester two months period as an action taken by the Discocommittee against the three protagonists for having committed a crime by breaking the office of the Head of the Department for stealing the major question papers, Alok Gupta falls down from the top of the institution building. He was admitted in hospital. Ryan and Hari stayed with him, attending the injured Alok.

148 Then all the three guys concentrate to their studies and project works that were appreciated by Prof. Veera and he recommended them to the Dean, saying that they had done well with the feedback of Prof. Cherian the Head of the Department. Prof. Veera further told that their experimentation in the lab, their lub additives have potential. Ryan worked very hard and studied his lessons even upto sixteen hours a day. He ripped open his own scooter for his lab project.

While Hari is sportive enough to meet Neha whom he loves at anytime she calls him to meet her at the ice cream parlour, their rendezvous. He moves with Neha frequently besides hurdles. At the same time Hari too works towards the lub project to earn a good name from Neha's father, Prof. Cherian, the Head of the Department. Then, after having done their lub projects successfully and their examinations effectively, the three guys prepare themselves to attend interviews conducted by certain soft-ware companies. Alok gets an appointment in Delhi and Hari in Bombay while Ryan was advised to commercialize his products to become successful in life.

The sportive attitude of Prof. Cherian in making right men studying in the engineering college at IIT, now comes to realize that education is not for selfish personal gain but to help the country by doing research project like that of Ryan. Prof. Cherian, without reading the research proposals of Ryan adjudged it to be a successful one and told in the convocation hall that any investor who invests in that

will earn a rainbow. Thus, the five pointers in semester examinations pay more attention after their severallongest days in their studies in IIT with funs, humours, other adulthood enjoyments andstupidity causing damages of their studies. They finally achieve things and appreciationsfrom professors along with a degree that placed them in good posts as techno craft softwareengineers mainly with the sportive spirit that Ryan had in him, who was smart, cute and acreative guy with positive attitudes.149

Sportive Spirit Themes Traced among Characters in One Night @ The Call Center (2005)

The American outsourcing on Indians is delineated by ChetanBhagat inOne Night @ Call center and it is a story about the call center in Gurgaon. The 3,00,000people working in these BPOs help US Companies in their sales, services and maintenanceof their operations and usually younger people work there in night shift. It is pathetic that thepeople who work in call centers also have dreams which are literary nightmares; nightmarescaused by the boss or managers of the center.Even in their woes, the six protagonists show their sportive spirit to drift themselvesto the night clubs to cheer themselves up and find relief. Vroom takes every piece of hurtcaused to the group as a silly thing and shows extreme venture to tackle the situation. Esha isone among the six agents working in the call center, dresses well, wears a chunky brownearrings and her lipstick is a thick cocoa and uses most costly perfumes. She wants tobecome a modeling. She was hot, but looked pretty. She won the title of the ‘Hottest chickat Connections. She came to Delhi from Chandigarh against her parent’s wishes.Priyanka was jealous for she was not a hot girl as Esha was, Priyanka looked verynice and could get ‘Call Center cutie award’. She gets a message from her mother that aMicrosoft NRI guy, getting higher salary has given a proposal to marry Priyanka. The newsspreads among the six protagonists and Vroom teases Shyam whether he is upset to hear thathis lady love, Priyanka is getting married.Shyam is the team leader in a way to all these six guys and moves with Priyanka fromthe college days. Shyam denies it saying that he was not upset at anytime. What if she getsmarried to anyone. Shyam says that he has only a vestigial feeling like vestigial organs whichserve no purpose or value and that they never give anyone a pain in the appendix. He is notmuch worried if Priyanka is married to an NRI. It is his sportive spirit makes him to takethings easy.150

Priyanka

All the six guys to find themselves relieved of their monotonous work in the callcenter go to a night club at Pandara road. In the club canteen Shyam and others observe athird party, an old lady her daughter-in – law, her son and two little girls of the coupleshoutng. The old lady shouted at her daughter-in-law that her two daughters who were herown grand children to be the two curses on her and banged her daughter-in-law as a silentstatue.

Observing all the tortures of the old lady, Priyanka, taking a call center ID card andflashed it at the face of the old lady and shouted that she would be punished for three yearsfor harassing her daughter-in-law and she pretended as a CBI officer and dialed to certainnumber in her cell phone. She asked her to shut her mouth and told that they would keeptrack and if anything mess around them found, both her son and herself would be made to eatin jail. This behavior of Priyanka flashed across her mind in a nanosecond reveals how muchsportive spirit she had.

The sportive spirit of the six protagonists in Chetan Bhagat’s One Night @ CallCenter made them to ride on the Highways at midnight after their sixteen weekends ofsacrifice as one of the nocturnal people,

where Vroom showed his exasperated spirit and rode their company Qualis at a speed of eighty kilometers an hour to the Bed Lounge and Bar.

Esha

Whenever or wherever Esha poses herself in the call center she used to look at the small mirror kept in her handbag, arranges her hair and rubs lipstick on her lips to look younger as if she is a modeling girl forgetting her pains in her long hours of work in the call center. 151

Shyam

While they were chatting inside their room in the hotel, Shyam condemns the government, not concentrating on useful work but allow only BPOs to be opened thinking that they have taken care of the youth. He continued to say that the MTV is a stupid channel showing a demented chick to show a dance in her underwear and will make the program a youth special. Shyam could criticize the government and the MTV only because of certain sportive spirit that he possessed.

The God

Above all, when their vehicle the Qualis skidded in a pit during a pitch dark night, God speaks to them and delivers a message to get back their sportive spirit and to take things easy. God advised them to kindle only their 'inner call' because it is only the most important call in the world and to ignore things that distract them. God continued that no one should outsmart him. And told that there are four things a person needs for success. The two obvious ones are a medium amount of intelligence and a bit of imagination. The other two are one is self-confidence and the second one is to face failure. 'One needs to experience failure, feel failure, taste it and to suffer it and only then one can shine', said God (288)

Vroom and His Sportive Spirit

In order to teach a lesson to the bad boss, Bhakshi, Vroom and other played a trick upon Bhakshi's computer as if Bhakshi had sent an e-mail to Esha, the call center 'The hot chick', asking her for his sexual favours in exchange for job, which makes Bhakshi's head down because Vroom the damn spirited agent working under the bad boss hit upon a pre-plant to cut his nose by playing a foul game on him to make him sound like a hapless beggar. They threatened Bhakshi that they would give this piece of news to the headlines of newspapers, to NDTV to relay that news for a week to the police, the journalists and over the video conference to Boston. 152

Operation Yankee Fear, the Bug of MS Word

Notwithstanding with these messages Vroom goes one step forward to give message to all the agents of the call center requesting them to disconnect all their calls. Vroom from the broad-cast room of the call center getting the key from the bad boss, Bhakshi and hurried to the speaker room and switches on the mikes to connect to all the agents. He talks about the mismanagement of the idiots in the call center to throw out more than one third of the agents and sends an e-mail to all computers, the subject of the message being, 'Operation Yankee Fear' and told about 'evil forces', unleashing a computer virus. He did some wonders in the MS word and in the Word File, a spooky word document reads like this for two hundred pages. 'The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog', to be the MS word bug, which contains

all the twenty six letters in English Language. (229). This shows how Vroom is that sportive to give Bhakshi, the boss, a shock treatment.

A Rocking Man

Vroom was praised as a 'Rocking Man' by Shyam because he played a trick on computers to give a shock that America is under a virus attack and asked one Mr. William to keep calling Indian agents every four to six hours that would be more than a hundred thousand calls a day which would last for another two months to rectify that position of the call center with a new manager and extra sales effort of the 'Connexion' call center to recover. No agent is thus out thrown from his position and the agents reassured the customers,

'No problem. We will save this country.

The evil forces will never succeed'. (230)

153

The Sportive Spirit Themes as found in Chetan Bhagat's Select Novel 2 States: The Story of My Marriage (2009).

The Story, 2 States: The Story of My Marriage of Chetan Bhagat begins in the IIM Ahmedabad mess, where Krish, a Punjabi boy from Delhi gazes at a beautiful girl student, Ananya, a Tamilian from Madras, quarreling with the mess staff about the food served to them. They became friends within a few days and decide to study together every night. Intime, they become romantically involved and the duo sleep together in hostel rooms. Love blossoms, and by the time the duo pass out of college, they decide to get married each other. Life is great for them until their meet each other from the North and the South. The hurdles seem to be insurmountable in the beginning jarring differences between their parents, their cultures and the language barrier being the reasons. It takes sometime before they realize that they may not be able to convince their families to support their marriage. The only good and noble aspect of the story is that they want to marry with their parents' consent rather than choosing the easy way of eloping; Inter-caste marriages are still a taboo in India and let alone an inter-state marriage of a Punjabi and a Tamil Brahmin. The major difficulty is that, **'The boy loves the girl, girl loves the boy. Boy's family has to love girl and girl's family has to love boy. Boy's family has to love girl's family and girl's family has to love boy's family'**. Was it possible? Tracing through the story lines will help us know of the Sportive Spirit of the love mates.

Krish

Only because of the Sportive Spirit in both the boy and the girl, namely Krish and Ananya, in their joint and whole hearted effort, these two guys take too much initiation to make those both ends meet together. Both of them get good jobs and they seriously plan for their accepted marriage. Krish arranges a tour programme to Goa and both the families go there. At first Krish tries to convince his girl friend Ananya, and then her parents and at last convinces them by helping Ananya's father do his first PPT and later convinces Ananya's mom by asking her to sing in a big concert that became a grand one.

154

Ananya

On the other side Ananya tries to help Krish's cousin to get married and succeeds to do so, which made Krish's mother happy over Ananya's intelligence. During the marriage between Manorama (Minti), Krish's cousin and the gentleman Dharamveer (Duke) B. Tech, Ananya succeeded in winning over the hearts of older generation of the Punjabi women. Thereby Ananya an IIMA graduate working in HLL is recognized by the younger cousins of Krish's family.

Sportive Krish and Ananya

Krish and Ananya arrange to make their parents introduced to each other at Louis Khan Plaza lawn on the Convocation Day. They take them to Gandhi Sabarmathi Ashram. When they were seated in the auditorium where the MBA Degrees were about to be distributed, Ananya's mother was irritated by the words of Krish's mother. The Punjabi old lady blamed the South Indians that they didn't know how to control their daughters. She commented that from Hema Malini to Sridevi, all of the movie actresses trying to catch Punjabi Men. Both the parents find themselves fishy about trivial talks which shattered the good hope of the lovers. In their Goa trip also things were not settled.

It is a complex affair that involves more than just the bride and groom in a wedding in India. It includes every member of both the families. Chetan Bhagat's 2 States is the author's personal account of the challenges that he and his wife would be faced in convincing their parents to agree to their love marriage. It was possible to them only when their sportive spirits flashed in their mental language to set right things amicably.

Krish at Ananya's Home

Krish was not upset even when a bride groom, Harish, a Tamil Brahmin appears at Ananya's house in Chennai, with his parents for arranging a worthwhile match for Ananya. While he was in Delhi, Krish's distant relative, a Punjabi woman, Pammy aunty with a rich background visits Krish's house with her daughter Dolly to speak about her marriage to Krish.

155

Swaminathan and Radha, the parents of Ananya didn't show any sign of cheerfulness, when once Krish enters Ananya's house in Chennai. He has to join his job in the Citi Bank. The grumpy face of Ananya's father and the eerie silence that her mother maintained inside her house made Krish to think their house to a psycho's home. Krish always thinks cool, positive and without any agitation or disappointment, digests whatever happens in his way.

Krish in his adverse situations

Krish in his hostel room gets chicken and beer for Ananya one day besides the owner being a Brahmin who hates eating chicken and drinking beer. His flat mates are very well aware that Krish is moving with a Tamilian, Brahmin girl. That is his sportive spirit that makes him to behave like that, unmindful of the surroundings. Krish feels congested and uncomfortable to think of his drunkard father beating his wife who always turning against him as an enemy and the other side, another father, Ananya's father had a folded hands tries to keep Krish away from a daughter whom Krish very badly needs. Whatever he faces from either side, Krish is able to go smoothly with an unshakable confidence to win the hands of Ananya in marriage.

The Green signals to Krish and Ananya's Marriage

The movement Krish makes in between the members of Ananya's family like coaching Ananya's brother Manjunath, introducing Ananya's mother, Radha to sing in a concert and helping Swaminathan, Ananya's father in preparing his office files and above all the intimate love he shows towards Ananya, he being a Punjabi is not an easy joke but it is possible for Krish, who is doing things only playfully not worrying about the consequences to be faced in a Tamilian family of Chennai.

156

It is assumed that Chetan Bhagat the author of this book is a god-fearing Man, who has 'Faith in God', the teachings of Gita and other holy books. It is quite visible in every of his books. In 2 States: Krish goes to a Guruji to represent his owes and grief about his father's drinking habits and torturing his mother by beating her for nothing. The Guruji advised Krish to 'Forgive' him and asked Krish to remove the bags he carries on his head, the bags of anger, pain and loss. The best advice Guruji delivered was, **'Surrender to God'.**

The God has chosen

To give the gift of life,

Surrender to Him.'

After everyone in Ananya's house knowing about Ananya's mother, Radha's singing in a concert that became a grand success, Ananya's father Swaminathan said,

'If you promise to take care of my daughter, then it is a yes from me.'

Ananya's father blessed her with a hand on her head, Ananya's mother too consented saying,

'Then it is a yes from me'

Ananya planted a kiss on her mother's forehead.

Ananya is the product of South Indian conservative Brahmin family of Madras. Whereas, Chetan Bhagat's Krish hails from Punjab and both have made their own comforts to develop their real life in the modern society in the story of 2 States: The Story of My Marriage, in which Bhagat, reflects his own love story with Anushaa, a Tamil Brahmin girl. The story has authenticity as the author has used names of same real places, people and institutions as they represent cultural icons of today and done in storytelling.

157

The flamboyant Krish and the cute, beautiful girl Ananya fly to Delhi as Krish gets a transfer from Chennai and Ananya, HLL Manager gets a consent from parents for a week's stay in Delhi with Krish.

'So I have to agree with your mom,

Whatever she says. Like whatever',

Ananya said to Krish as she grabbed the arms of Krish at the same time her parents melted out of sight when the flight flew over thirty thousand feet high.

On the Milky Way Krish advised Ananya,

"Make my mom happy, Ok?"

After certain days Krish Ananya marriage took place at Arulmighu Kapaleeswarar Karpagambal Thirumana Mandapam in Chennai in a very grand manner with all marriage ceremonies.

The sportive spirit found in the two protagonists Krish and Ananya to have sustained innumerable harassments and bangs from parents of both North and South on many occasions was only possible for the lovers who had a real cultural and educational background. Their maturity in age, studies in IIT Delhi

and IIM Ahmedabad and in having moved for about three years in college, understanding each other's minds have given them that strength to resist, sustain and forget all worries, conflicts and oppositions from all sides to get through all situations until they are married with their parents' consent and blessed with twin children, both boys, to becoming from a state called India. (158)

Conclusion

The incisive and elaborate analysis of this paper traverses through the psychological and subliminal affecting the mind without being aware of the protagonists the Three IIT guys in Chetan Bhagat's debut novel, **Five Point Someone (2004)** The close examination of Bhagat's **One Night @ Call Center (2005)** throws light on the pivotal aspect of faith in God and in only the 'inner call' of the men of the world that would bring peace and harmony in life, whether it is a call center or any sort of work field to them. It is the broad based central idea of Bhagat to have suggested the outcome of children of parents who have fallen in love, committing a cross cultural marriage and the birth of twin children belong to the 'State of India', which could be a noble idea Chetan Bhagat had derived in his **2 States: The Story of My Marriage (2009)**.

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