

# Evidences of Historical and Cultural Themes of Chetan Bhagat Spun in His Select Novels

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## **Abstract:**

The debut novel of Chetan Bhagat gives a description of the IIT in Delhi , the institution buildings , Kumaon boys and girls hostels , the ice-cream parlour within the premises where thousands of engineering aspirants tread , study and stay in are the historical themes since the establishment and opening of the college since 1961 are interesting to learn that IIT Delhi is one among the esteemed institutions of technology in India. The debut novel , Five point someone of the author delineates the behaviour of the draconian professors and the hardships of the students ,undergoing entrance examinations to get themselves admitted and their over burdening assignments every week end tell the sorrowful history of institution in the storylines which the writer himself has experienced in his own lifelines . The very next product of Bhagat ‘One night @ the call center’ spreads its passage to identify the harsh and the commanding bosses who get benefited out of the long hours of tiresome workloads of the agents working in call centers are traced out from the storylines to identify how they represent the historical and cultural themes in them.

**Keywords:** Draconian Professors, Historical Themes, Esteemed Institution, Ice-Cream Parlour

## **Introduction:**

The main purpose of the research is to bring out the thematic study in respective of the historical and cultural of the select novels of Chetan Bhagat particularly in this study which can be traced only through the intensive study of the select novels . The third select novel chosen for representing the above themes is ‘2 states : The story of my marriage’ that would certainly be the autobiographical depiction of his own love tale with a Chennai based Tamilian girl , Bhagat being a Punjabi .

The Tamil and Punjab are the two poles of India , one is south and the latter is North It is an accepted fact that the world has become close due to modern technology and various academic institutions . The Punjabi guy and the Chennai based Brahmin Tamilian girl come close as they chose to study Management courses at IIM Ahmedabad and they fall in love and try to become one through the

institution of marriage . Though the story is said to be modern and real, it paves the way for modern realism as a social reflection with all the historical and cultural themes in it which would be crystal clear if the readers go deep into the study of this particular novel of the author published in 2009.

The present study tries to identify the historical and cultural in these select novels as well as in the remaining novels , namely , 'The Three Mistakes of My Life' and 'The Revolution 2020' published in 2008 and 2011 respectively .

### **Historical Themes spun in Bhagat's Select Novels**

Chetan Bhagat's debut novel, **Five Point Someone** depicts the hardships of the three protagonists, namely Hari, Alok and Ryan in their studies in IIT, Delhi, and the original love – scenario of Hari and Neha in the landscape of the Kumaon hostel, the ice cream parlour and the professors quarters in Delhi, IIT.

The close examination of Chetan Bhagat's **One Night @ Call Center** throws glaring lights on the tiresome, tedious and long hours of works that the call center agents had to do within their centers in Gurgaon, their surroundings, their Qualis to travel to and fro from their hostels to the Call Center and about the corruptive bad bosses in call centers. The six chief characters namely Shyam Mehra, Vroom, Military Uncle, Priyanka, Esha and Radhika find their works night and day to be tortuous, wearisome and find solace in gazing at each other, where Shyam woos Priyanka and Vroom finds a place in Esha's heart. We come across Western Computers and Appliances in Boston, many cafeterias, Musafir lounge, night clubs, Sahara Mall the biggest shopping centre in Gurgaon , Pizza Hut and Bed Lounge and Bar are the places to which the boring call center agents use to visit during week ends to drink, smoke, chat and to dance and thus while away their times pleasurely, spending half of their earnings to enjoy lavishly. Then Chetan Bhagat portrays a vivid picture of the Call Center employees and the bad Boss Bhakshi, who was finally thwarted by all the six protagonists adhering to the phone-call message they received from God.

In the third select novel, **2 States: The Story of My Marriage** the protagonists Krish and Ananya want to make their parents meet each other to forget their differences and they select God to visit and all land at Dabolin Airport and stay at Port Hyatt-resort. They visit Dona Paula to see a Hindi film. 'Ek Thuje Ke Liye'. Another time Krish takes Ananya alone to a Guruji, who was staying in a Hotel called, L'Orient on the Rue Romain Road.

The cities of Chennai, Delhi and their surrounding hotels, beach, parks and Kumaon hostel of the IIM Ahmedabad and other vicinities have been highlighted by Chetan Bhagat with factors of the social milieu of the families of Punjabis and Chennai Tamil Brahmins are matters of interest to be pondered over, as certain historical themes in this novel.

The commentaries of Chetan Bhagat about the places of interest in Madras, the language of a Madrasi, descriptions of the Sabarmati river, Sabarmati Ashram, The Gandhi Mandapam and the Dandi March led by Gandhi etc., bring us memories of historical facts that are interwoven in these select novels of Bhagat.

The other customary occasions like Varsha Poruppu Pjua, the flamboyancy style of the Punjabi people, eerie silence that Brahmin ladies observe at homes, the detailed expressions of the cultures, costumes, the salwar kameeze, beauty parlours and the location preferences between Chennai and Delhi (72) and the descriptions of Anna Salai Nungambakkam, Loyola College, T.Nagar, Marina Beach etc., give a vivid picture of the city and its surroundings.

Taxila Business School, MBA+PGD BM College, ranked 21<sup>st</sup> across India and graded A++ the highest in the grading system in India, imparting two months corporate training in every semester, industry integrated course, corporate culture in campus, dual major specialisation from 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester, international trainings and placements, business mentorship training and much more are certain other factors to say about history of the Management studies in Ahmedabad.

To give a vivid description of the city of Hong Kong where Chetan Bhagat was serving as an investment Banker, he explains how Hong Kong had opened his eyes as soon as he landed in the city. He comments that it is a city that he never had imagined with roads so smooth, the streets clean and the buildings slick. The city was so developed and affluent. There were no poor people. Unlike in India their public transport was better than private transport which made him to think why India is like this so divided so suppressive, so unfair and so corruptive with poverty-stricken citizens, as a poorest native on earth. He wants to say that India is a poor and irrelevant country.

The bank in which he started his career at Peregrine collapsed in the Asian crisis of 1997 and Chetan shifted his job to Goldman Sachs, one of the leading investment banks of the world, joining the ratings advisory department, where the seniors and Chetan Bhagat guided the governments of Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines on how to improve their credit ratings. The advisory department staffs use to meet finance minister rating agency heads and economists etc., reveal certain historical events in the career of Chetan Bhagat.

All Far East Asian countries then had been transformed by foreign investment. The politicians realized the potential of international capital coming into the nation. Finance ministers in these countries lobby with Silicon Valley companies to set up factories in their country, something that is unthinkable in India. The entire story of ‘2 States’ of Bhagat portrays the locations of the IIT Delhi, IIM at Ahmedabad, the cafeteria in the IIM hostel, the important roads, train roads in Delhi and Chennai, the City Bank and HLL in Chennai and the rest of the historically importance places like Merina beach, Bank of Baroda, Mahabalipuram, Meenambakam, Mylapore in Madras,. The University in Delhi, the convocation hall in Louis Kahn Plaza, The Law Garden (44) has been illustrated in between the novel selected for this research study.

Certain popular singers in movies like S.P. Balasubramaniyan, Hariharan, Ilaiyaraja and the music concerts of the Tamilians and about the conduct of casual vibes in the city are depicted to say about the Tamil Cultural history in the novel has been brought in between the story lines in ‘2 States’ of Chetan Bhagat.

### **History Unfolds Chetan Bhagat’s Fame**

Chetan Bhagat earned an appraisal as the “**the biggest selling English language novelist in India’s History**” by the New York Times. Bhagat is seen more as an Indian Youth Icon than just as an author. His issues were discussed in Parliament. Two of his best novels had an international edition. He won several awards, while studying in IIM Ahmedabad, including “**The Best Outgoing Student of IIMA**”. **He got the Publisher’s Recognition award in 2005.** It is worth noting that **Chetan Bhagat received GCCI Youth Icon Award** from the chief Minister, Narendra Modi at the Gujarat Young Entrepreneurs Meet on Sunday, April 17, 2011. The high profile event took place at the Gujarat University Convention Centre.

Chetan Bhagat has presented a unique rendition of history in fictions of modernity from the international perspectives. His stories are about the real life situations of the people, especially the youths of India

from Ahmedabad, Delhi, Varanasi, Chennai and Punjab. Bhagat puts his views about pretty girls, jealous, love life, men and women and about various attitudes, pains and pleasures of the worldly affairs. The author makes the readers understand the underlying factors through his quotations, numerous similies and metaphors that are woven in between the story lines.

Bhagat wrote about the life in IIT Delhi as he had been a student, having a lot of experiences in hostel, classroom, in the canteen and the harsh treatments of professors, burdens of assignment and project works the youth in their teenages are thrust. He has depicted a real life story '**Five Point Someone**' in 2004', as his debut novel, Hari being the narrator. Bhagat's tales of Indian life basically are portraying individuals who are deeply rooted in the Indian social order and Indian reality. His works reflect the perpetual class between tradition and modernity.

In all his five novels Chetan Bhagat is mostly concerned with the imbued western culture, where both boys and girls during their college studies and their work places show their strong will to have drinks, chat, dine in costly restaurants and sleep together in hotel rooms before their marriage. Thus, the modernity is quite visible, where the old culture of the elders is vanished. It may not be the fault of the author, but for the present scenario in life style of the youths, as a keen observer of things Bhagat cannot but discuss in between the man-woman relationships to portray the real picture of the modern society.

At the same time Chetan Bhagat, it seems, nowhere speaks of rapes or molestation of the feminine gender whereas he only states the closeness of both the genders out of their own whims and fancies that cannot hurt anybody. Chetan Bhagat had made his language reworking to make it more dynamic, more modern and imbued with variety of patterning would wreak on the fictional world its basis, beings, values and ambience.

In keeping with the middle class milieu of these novels, Chetan Bhagat adopts a pedestrian style of writing. His style is not rigorous, sensational or colourful but Bhagat mirrors the daily rhythm of life of the middle class Brahmin family of Chennai and other men and women of Gurgaon, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Varanasi.

All his block buster novels, their plots, their chief characters and other related matters, incidents and pains and pleasures were concocted by Chetan Bhagat with all the actual historical elements, places of historical importance, holy rivers of religious sanctity, the renowned educational Institutions and about the various sports of International importance.

The realities of life at the call centers, the classical Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and the Indian Institute of Management Studies (IIM) Ahmedabad, the hurdles faced by the students, the tiresome projects and assignments thrust by the professors in IITD and IIMA, the severe and harsh works extracted by the bad Boss in the call centers have been narrated in the readable novels of Chetan Bhagat with all the historical themes since the foundation of the Institutions to the present century phenomena of the bad bosses and the easy-going professors of the IITD and IIMA.

The other information like how Chetan Bhagat's name appeared in prints, how his debut novel 'Five Point Someone' sold 1.2 lakh copies are explained by Bhagat as a turning point in writing of stories since 2004, where the name of this novelist sold and his novels thereafter also were sold in lakhs of copies. Bhagat became the twenty first century's blockbuster novelist and an author of celebrity and turned to be a script writer to Bollywood films of his novels, which relate to the elements of historical importance.

Bhagat tells his hard days in IIT through the character Hari but he disclaims that he has planned his own story into book, namely 'Five Point Someone'. Hari describes how these three guys entered into IIT

getting through an entrance examination with untold difficulties which is referred to an affair to felling half of the trees in the world.

### **Indian Institute of Technology**

Chetan Bhagat introduces Indian Institute of Technology abbreviated as IIT Delhi or IITD, which is a public engineering institution located in Delhi. It is one of the IITs along with other Indian Institute of Technology institutions in India.

### **History of IIT Delhi**

The concept of these IITs was first introduced in a report in the year 1945 by Sh.N.M. Sircar, then member of Education on Viceroy's Executive Council. Following his recommendations, the first Indian Institute of Technology was established in the year 1950 in Kharagpur. In his report, Shri Sircar had suggested that such institutes should also be started in different parts of the country. The government having accepted these recommendations of the Sircar Committee decided to establish more institutes of Technology with the assistance of friendly countries who were prepared to help. The first offer came from USSR who agreed to collaborate in the establishment of Institute through UNESCO at Bombay (Now Mumbai). This was followed by the Institute of Technology at Madras (Now Chennai), Kanpur and Delhi with collaborations with Germany, USA and UK respectively. Indian Institute of Guwati was established in 1995 and the University of Roonkee was converted into an IIT in 2001.

The Government of India negotiated with the British Government for collaboration in setting up an Institute of Technology in Delhi. The British Government agreed in principle to such collaboration, but was inclined initially to start in a modest way. It was therefore agreed that a college of Engineering & Technology should be established in Delhi with their assistance. A trust called Delhi Engineering College Trust was established with the help of the UK Government and the Federation of British Industries in London. Later H.R.H. Prince Philips, Duke of Edinburgh, during his visit to India, laid the foundation stone of the college at Hauz Khas on January 28, 1959.

The College of Engineering and Technology was established in 1961 and was declared an institution of National importance under the "Institute of Technology (Amendment) Act 1963" and was renamed "Indian Institute of Technology Delhi". It was then accorded the status of a University with powers to decide its own academic policy, to conduct its own examinations, and to award its own degrees.

The College of Engineering & Technology was registered as a Society on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1960, under the societies Registration Act No. XXI of 1960 (Registration No. S1663 of 1960-61). The first admissions were made in 1961. The students were asked to report at the College on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1961, and the College was formally inaugurated on 17<sup>th</sup> of August 1961, by Prof. Humayun Kabir, Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs. The College was affiliated to the University of Delhi. IIT Delhi is an autonomous statutory organization functioning in terms of the Institutes of Technology Act 1961, amended vide the Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Act 1963. The Board of Governors functions through its Standing Committees Finance Committee, Building & Works Committee and such other adhoc committees which are constituted by it from time to time to consider specific issues.

### **Campus of IIT Delhi**

IIT Delhi is situated in Hauz Khas, South Delhi. The campus of 325 acres (132 ha) is surrounded by the beautiful Hauz Khas area and monuments such as Qutub Minar and Lotus Temple. The campus is close



to the other educational institutions such as the Jawaharlal Nehru University, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, National Institute of Fashion Technology, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and Indian Statistical Institute. The inside of the campus resembles a city, with gardens, residential complexes, and wide roads. The campus has its own water supply and back up electricity supply along with shopping complexes to cater to the daily needs of residents. The IIT-D campus is divided into four zones: They are: Students Residential Zone, Faculty and Staff Residential Zone, Students Recreational Area, that includes the student Activity Center (SAC), football stadium, cricket ground, basket ball courts, hockey fields, lawn tennis courts and Academic Zone that includes department offices, lecture theatres, libraries and workshops. The student's residential zone is divided into two main sector-one for men's hostels and another for women's hostel.

### **Hostels in IIT**

There are thirteen hostels (eleven for boys and two for girls). There are two apartments for married students. All the hostels are named after mountain ranges in India – Karakoram, Aravalli, Himadri, Jwalamukhi, Kailash (Kumaon), Nilgiri, Satpura, Girnar, Shivalik, Udayagiri, Vindhyaachal and Zaskar, of which Himadri and Kailash (Kumaon) are for girls. The residential apartments are named after ancient Indian Universities-Takshila and Nalanda. Girnar House has the hugest number of residents in 2011 with more than 700 students. Each hostel has its distinct culture of sports and cultural activities. Hostels compete in inter hostel events to bring home various trophies which claimed by Jwalamukhi in the year 2010, Kumaon in 2011 while it was shared between Kumaon and Shivalik in 2012. Academic year ends with an annual function of hostels known as 'House Day' in which the passing out batch and the fresher's give various cultural performances and awards are distributed for outstanding contribution to various hostel activities..

### **Historical Themes of Chetan Bhagat's Novels**

Almost all novels of Chetan Bhagat suggests mainly the adolescent quest which is so serious that belongs to the teenage group. The protagonists namely, Hari Kumar in **Five Point Someone (2004)**, Shyam in **One Night @ Call Center (2005)**, Govind in **The Three Mistakes of my Life (2008)**, Krish in **2 States: The Story of My Marriage (2009)**, and Gopal in Chetan Bhagat's **Revolution 2020 (2011)** the names that represent Lord Krishna are the chief narrators of the stories themselves in the first person, which reveals the religious faith of the author.

Each of the above characters try to woo with certain girl friend whether studying in IIT Delhi or IIM Ahmedabad or working in BPOs as in the debut novel, Hari Kumar known as Hari with Neha, the daughter of the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Prof. Cherian, Shyam with Priyanka a call center agent, Govind Patel with Vidya in *The Three Mistakes of My Life* and Krish in *2 States: The Story of my Marriage* with Ananya, a Tamil Brahmin girl and Gopal Mishra the Director of Ganga Tech College and Raghav, the journalist who published the newspaper, *Revolution 2020* with Aarthi, the daughter of a District Magistrate, working in different offices.

The quest for thirst in lust is burst out in these lovers when they were in privacy in hotel rooms or in hostel rooms. That is their age and Bhagat in this connection may not be enquired and criticized about their characters and style of living, which sometimes seems to be a western style of life that he cannot but delineate their real life instances.

During Bhagat's delineation of his stories, Chetan wants to recall the Indian's nobility, the marriage ceremonies carried out by families in North India and the South, their food habits and the various cultural differences that are seen in his novels. The customs and conventions of people which prevail in India were presented by Chetan Bhagat all throughout his novels. Bhagat portrays all important places, institutions like IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad and their locations, infrastructure as it is found and their names of the locations are stated without any alternation in the story lines.

When Krish finds it very difficult to pacify the two parents one in North and the other in South, he wants to take Ananya to a Sadhu for getting solace and to hear to his fore telling of events. Chetan Bhagat describes the abode of Sadhus, sannyasis and the common man and the Vedic teachings. Bhagat identifies the vast Brahmanical values, aloofness of women, eerie silence that Brahmin ladies maintain within families and puts them in his writings. Thus, one can find his study of femininity capturing the indispensable components of his visions.

Bhagat's world of families of the Punjabis and the Brahmin families of Madras are woven around the innumerable Hindu values of patience, faith and acceptability of morality and cross-cultural differences of the individuals especially of teenage girls and women.

The corrupt state of politicians in our country is mentioned in Chetan Bhagat's **One Night @ Call Center** "Why don't the politicians commit suicide?" A call centre employee points out that even though housewives, businessmen, employees and film stars commit suicide but politicians never do so because they are never hurt, They don't feel anything and unfortunately this nation is run by people who do not feel anything (One Night @ Call Center, 47). Thus Chetan Bhagat's select novel touches the historical themes of the politicians too.

**Five Point Someone**, Chetan's first book is a novel about three boys Hari, Ryan and Alok, who join IIT Delhi and try to cope with the notoriously heavy workload of the institute. The IIT, is the country's leading engineering college and a graduate from IIT is on the whole expected to be super-brilliant and academically excellent.

The character study of Bhagat is so great through whom he communicates ideas in simple English. Bhagat, not only an observer of individual character but also is an observer of institutions, their structures, various departments and the behavior of freaky professors working in IIT and IIM of Delhi and Ahmedabad.

### **The Legend of Varanasi**

The block buster novelist writes about the historical places like Varanasi, its surroundings and the seven sacred cities (Saptapuri) and he says that Varanasi is the holiest of all the seven sacred cities. Varanasi is also known as Banares, Banaras or Kashi. It is the city on the banks of river Ganges in Uttar Pradesh. Many of its temples were plundered and destroyed by Mohammed Ghaur in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The temples and religious institutions in the city now are of 18<sup>th</sup> century vintage. As a reader of Bhagat's novel one has to study about the historical importance of such religious cities, temples around them. The Kashi Maharaja is the chief cultural patron of Varanasi, and an essential part of all religious celebrations. The culture of Varanasi is closely associated with the Ganges. The city has been a cultural center of North India for several thousand years, and has a history that is older than most of the major world religious. Many prominent Indian philosophers, poets, writers and musicians live or have lived in Varanasi. Gautama Budha gave his first sermon at Saranath located near Varanasi.

### **Varanasi and its Historical Facts**

In Chetan Bhagat's latest novel, Revolution 2020, one can get familiar to the holy city Varanasi, the city of Temples and Ghats having historical importance. Students from nearby towns like Kota Lucknow, Saranath and other places study in Ganga Tech College for engineering and Management studies. There are temples such as Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Dashashwanath Ghat and one can come across Vidhyapath road, Ramada hotel and other famous locations, in Varanasi, there are many coaching centers like Kota, Bansal and Resonance. The students from several parts of the city come to Ganga Tech Engineering College for writing entrance examinations of IIT of JEE. There are institutions like Banares Hindu University (BHU), NIT Delhi and NIT Allahabad. The traditional, cultural beliefs are found through his select novels. At the same time due to the inflow of tourists in these religiously famous cities, the spread of western pattern of life has captured the minds of college goers and teen age youth.

Outside the city of Varanasi one can see the Lucknow Highway leading to Ganga Tech College. Varanasi is one of the oldest cities on earth. The two rivers that flow through the city are Varuna and Assi, and they both meet the river Ganga.

### **Varanasi as the Spiritual Capital**

Varanasi is the spiritual capital of India. Scholarly books have been written in the city, including the Ramacharitmanas of Tulsidas. Today there is a temple of his namesake in the city, the Tulsi Manas Mandir. One of the largest residential University of Asia Banares Hindu University is located here. People often refer to Varanasi as,

**“The city of temples”,  
“The holy city of India”,  
“The religious capital of India”  
“The city of Lights” and  
“The oldest living city on earth”.**

In 1897, Mark Twain, the renowned Indophile, illustrates the glory of Varanasi as,

**“Benares is older than History,  
Older than tradition,  
Older even than legends,  
And looks twice as old as all of  
Them put together”.**

The Ramanagar Fort of Kashi Naresh is situated to the east of Varanasi, across Ganges. Ramanagar Fort and its museum are the repository of the history of the kings of Banares and since the 18<sup>th</sup> century has been the home of Kashi Naresh, deeply revered by the people of Varanasi. He is the religious head and some religious people of Varanasi consider him the incarnation of Sihva. He is also the chief cultural patron and an essential part of all religious celebrations. Annie Besant worked in Varanasi to promote theosophy and founded the Central Hindu College which later became a foundation for the creation of Banares Hindu as a secular University in 1916.



### **A Well - Knit Story around Varanasi**

The protagonists Raghav, Aarthi and Gopal Mishra, the narrator all joined JSR Coaching classes in Durgakund to prepare for the engineering entrance examination. In Bhagat's revolution 2020, the novelist gives the details of JSR Engineering college which conducts AIEEE (All India Engineering Entrance Exam) and IIT JEE (Indian Institute of Technology Joint Entrance Exam). The AIEEE attracted ten lakhs of students annually for thirty thousand seats in the National Institutes of Technology (NITs) across the country. Every engineering aspirants took these exams.

### **Historical Status of Varanasi**

The city of Varanasi lies in the north shores of the Ganges bounded by its two tributaries, the Varuna and the Assi, with the Ganges being to its south. Another speculation is that the city generally disregarded by historians, though there may be some earlier texts suggesting it to be so. Though the ages, Varanasi was variously known as Avivukthaka, Anandakanana, Mahasmasana, Surandhana, Brahma Vardha, Sundarsana, Ramya and Kasi.

In the Rig Veda, the city was referred to as Kasi or Kashi, "the luminous one" as an allusion to the city's historical status as a centre of learning, literature, art and culture. Khasikhand described the glory of the city in 15,000 words in the Kanda Purana. In one verse, the Hindu and Siva says "The Three worlds form one city of mine, and Kashi is my royal palace therein.

### **History of Varanasi**

According to legend, Varanasi was founded by God Shiva. The Pandavas, the heroes of the Hindu epic Mahabharata are also stated to have visited the city in search of Shiva to atone for their sins of fratricide and brahmanahatya that they had committed during the climatic Kurukshetra war. It is regarded as one of seven holy cities which can provide Moksha: It is said the seven cities around Varanasi, namely, 1. Ayodya, 2. Mathura, 3. Gaya, 4. Kasi, 5. Kanchi, 6. Avantika, 7. Dhwaravati are known as the givers of liberation. Chetan Bhagat's 'Revolution 2020' digs up the magnanimity of the holy city Varanasi at page 108 of the story in chapter 14.

As Gopal and Aarthi one day had a walk along the steps of Lalitha Ghat and looked at Manikarnika Ghat. It is said that Lord Shiva's earring was dropped by Shiva while he was dancing in this place namely, Manikarnika, which is considered to be the holiest place for cremation. Both Aarthi and Gopal were looking at the funeral pyres flickering in Manikarnika Ghat.

Generating a dead body was easy in Varanasi as there is a death industry to cremate bodies. The electric crematorium at Harischandra Ghat, which is now revered as Manikarnika Ghat burn nearly forty five thousand bodies a year, or more than a hundred corpses a day. Only small children and people bitten by cobras are not cremated, their bodies are often duped straight into the river. 'Kasyam maranam mukti' goes the Sanskrit saying, which means dying in Kashi leads to liberation. Hindus believe that if they die here, there is an automatic upgrade to heaven, no matter what the sin committed on earth.

Varanasi is only the city on earth where death is a tourist attraction. One can get firewood, priests and urns to ensure that the dead person departs with dignity. Now Gopal makes ready for the cremation of his father and organized a couple of pujas. Gopal called the old students of his father and few friends of him and Dubey uncle and his wife for the cremation rituals. Gopal's uncle paid ten thousand rupees to the priests as the cremation charges. Arthi and Raghav too came and participated in the last ceremonies. Thus the story 'Revolution 2020, goes depicting the awes of Gopal in the legend city, Varanasi.

### Special Features of Varanasi

Varanasi grew as an important industrial centre, famous for its muslin and silk fabrics, perfumes, ivory works and sculpture. Varanasi was the capital of Kasi, during the days of Gauthama Buddha. A road from Taxila to Pataliputra connects Varanasi. Varanasi remained the centre of activity for intellectuals and theologians during the middle ages, which further contributed to its reputation as a cultural centre of religion and education.

### Cultural Themes represented in The Select Novels

In the journal of Post colonial Writing Vol: 46 Nos 3-4 July/September 2010, 279-290 Liam Cornell a writer, a critic and a senior lecturer in Literature of University of Winchester, U.K. in his e-mail: [liam.cornell@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:liam.cornell@winchester.ac.uk) has discussed about the use of language of terror in Hari Kunzru's 'Transmission and Chetan Bhagat's **One Night @ Call Center**. "It identifies how both these novels apply the language of terror to the actions of exploited Indian workers and considers how this use of the patterns of contemporary labour within a global economy. It suggests that the proliferating use of terrorism as a discourse of dissent functions to mask the structures of power and privilege. It goes on to propose that both these fictional texts present characters who appear to use terrorists acts as a means of resisting the certainty of such structures..... It argues that while Kunzru depicts terrorism as a radical new writing of the implementation of contemporary technology, Bhagat's novel confirms to contemporary Indian nationalism by representing terrorism as part of India's national struggle against LIS economic dominance. In contrast to Transmission, Bhagat's novel appears to propose a relocation of power within the structures of international capitalism rather than a revolution in the very structure themselves.

The data bodies guaranteed job opportunities to the programmers in United States and most of the Indians as IT workers are hired by foreign national to utilize their labour practices commonly known as body-shopping. Terrorism has been one of the associations that have historically attached itself to hacking and this has been often combined with ideas of international networks and, more diffusely of foreigners (Taylor, Hackers 10). In Softley's film Hackers (1995), the connection between hacking and terrorism is made explicitly by secret service agent Richard Gile who opines that 'Hackers penetrate and ravage delicate private and publicity owned computer systems infecting them with viruses and stealing materials for their own ends. These people there, they're terrorists (Softly)'.  
In this context, it is notable that the Terrorism Act 2000 has been interpreted by legal advisors as being the first piece of UK legislation to make "the threat of use of computers hacking a potential act of terrorism" (OUT – LAW - NEWS).

### Terrorism and Indian Nationalism in One Night @ Call Center

Taking this suggestion that Transmission narrates the use of terrorism to challenge the lines of privilege between high-income and low-income economies as his starting point, the senior lecturer and in Literature at the University of Winchester wants to turn to Chetan Bhagat's highly successful English language Indian novel One Night @ Call Center to consider another fictional representation of e-terror that is more actively focused; upon India's economic relation to the United States (2005). Published in the same year as Kunzru's novel (Transmission) but marketed solely for the Indian – English Language market, with little attempt to penetrate the English Language markets in Britain or the United States.

One Night @ Call Center deals with similar concerns but in a more overtly propagandist fashion that both echoes and critiques speak the rhetoric of the India Shining Campaign. Set predominantly in an Indian call center in Gurgaon, a satellite of Delhi known for its concentration of multinational call centers, the novel traces a group of six call center agents over the period of one night. The climax of the novel is a near-death experience in which God intervenes to save the six from certain death on condition. The treatment of terrorism in this text is interesting both in its relation to nationalism and to the idea of work. At one point it is suggested that the call centre location in India is an asset to the United States because “India has faced terrorism for years” (256). ‘The invocation of India’, history of terrorism may align the notion of terror with Islam in ways that map onto the new discourses of terrorism following the attacks on New York and which were clearly exploited by Indian politicians in the years since 2001. (Rai and Simon; Brown). However, in contrast to this use of terrorism in the South Asian context the language of the text implicitly moves the designation of terrorist onto the call centre workers themselves as the idea of terror resurfaces in relation to their calls to US customers. Once the plan has been put into action the protagonists become busy “Scaring Americans out of their wits” (Bhagat 261). Even more pointedly, the narrator, Shyam, explains that he “made a few calls and terrorized a few more Americans”.

Thus Bhagat in this select novel One Night @ Call Center persistently draws parallels between US behavior and the behavior of India’s governmental and managerial elites, pointing out historical happenings and changes.

### **Penetration of Western Culture in India**

There are two kinds of people in India the ordinary folk who dress in their own way, speak their own dialects, behave in their own way without sophistication or without affectation, while the minority wear the older Hindu or Muslim aristocratic costumes, speak both English and the standard forms of Indian languages. But in a cold country in England everybody had to wear a certain amount of clothing and that gives an impression or uniformity. No dictionaries between the classes and the masses are felt in England.

The physical beauty is largely associated with a fair complexion in India. The majority of beautiful women in India are very self conscious. Their relatively dark complexion makes the lipstick rough and other aids to national beauty more obsessive than on the faces of Western women. All women in India or more especially those who have pretension to fashion are comparable to those to be found in painting or sculpture. The Europeans have made art expression of the spiritual in man.

In India noise is an essential condition where as in English people the silent habits in them is a good example to be followed, where in, the noise in India is observed as a cheerful condition just as the warmth of the sun. Even the clubs are the most silent places of all in Western Countries. Whereas the transport system in Delhi is very illuminating in this respect. There will be pleasant conversation on public and in private affairs, with pretty jokes interfered in between them. All sorts of incidents happen, which makes the bus in Delhi a microcosm of our national life. The Universities, in their parental behavior of giving instructions to students to do and not to do this, that and the other things in India exactly resembles England. They are proud of the appearance of their country. The English language was introduced in Indian Universities and felt as an essential requisite of the learners.

Delhi being the capital of our country, foreigners from western countries flourish frequently which paved the way for the observance of culture of the western people slowly begins to penetrate in the

minds of Indians especially in youth. English weather has fostered a pronounced degree of sensitiveness to nuances and makes both men and things more mellow.

From the moral point of economics the westerners do not have a God for money but they worshipped Christ, whereas Indians worship Gods to help them in their economic and technological ventures. The banks and shops in England are very trustful and spending in the positive urge of the English people. The privilege of the upper clans was only to live in style and to be careless about money spent on their needs.

Love seems to be a primary motivation of human beings in England. It makes English people forget their dignity and French men their intelligence. The Westerners cannot understand the Indian system of marriage and Indians do not understand theirs. Whereas, the tradition gradually gets lost to respect the feminism. The annoyed marriages in India according to the parental wishes and love making a practice among the westerners creeps inside the meadows of Indian culture. Adults, not giving more attention and importance to the disciplines of the Universities try to have girl partners of the institutions, which slowly develops as a serious love affair and ends in marriage or failure.

The Western people live a life of loneliness and at times very unhappy, grumbling about everything from food to social customs. They are proud, cold and even snobbish people. All Indians get a poor impression of the English man's sociability. Leisure is a torture to the English people whereas Indians love physical labour to rise in status of their life. The English people select a career with their main interest in life into account. But in India, it is just a drift. Our students with a forced intention become engineers and doctors with their parental pressures which would cast shadows in their career as that of the five pointers in IITs. What makes us feel is that how the practice of consuming vodka and other foreign liquor among students in colleges, as we see in almost all novels gets into their life and we understand that it is due to the admixture of the cultures of the West and the East. Here the students are caught between the traditions of the institutions and modernity and they are not able to adjust with their modern and the westernized culture.

The chatting in the ice cream parlours, smoking cigarettes, drinking liquor of all kinds within the premises of educational institutions, wooing with teenage classmate girl students without the knowledge of both the parents of these guys, exposing hardships out of these cultural damages which exhibit themselves as bad symbols of educational landmarks in Universities.

But on the other hand, we should not still hang upon the old customs and beliefs speaking about the Indian tradition and all that as spoken above. The readers cannot blame Chetan Bhagat as he alone is not responsible to be blamed as the trends and the life styles are changed day by day; the modern man has to play his role according to the psychological forces and the mental traits of the youth wherever they are. What Chetan Bhagat finds, experiences, enjoys and focuses, he wants to portray them in his writings not for fun to muse the readers but for, at the same time to inculcate indirectly the moral effects on man in the societal milieu of the present, Indian Institution to highlight the hopelessness and deterioration in education system.

## Conclusion

The author of these select novels, Bhagat is a young man writing for the youngsters and this makes him popular with the youth of today. Bhagat believes in friends and loves talking about them. His art of writing stories consists of the culture of IITians of the present days and that forms part of his experiences from such a great institution. In his select novels, **Five Point Someone (2004)**, **One Night @ Call**

center (2005) and 2 states: **The Story of My Marriage (2009)**, nowhere Bhagat forgets the IT world, the crazy youth of today, the money-minded world, including friends which seem to be a fabulous idea. In **Five Point Someone (2004)**, Bhagat's debut novel he emphasizes that friendship is the most important thing the youth of today believes in. The youth can do anything for the sake of friends. The characters all, namely HariKumar, Ryan and Alok grow with friends as well as fall with them. The three friends reside in the same room together, chat together, gossip together, eat together, go to ice cream parlour together, drink liquor together and have fun and love their life to the full.

Similarly the six protagonists in Bhagat's **One Night @ Call Center (2005)** are sorted out once they join hands together and become a team. In **The Three Mistakes of My Life (2008)**, again one finds that all the friends Govind, Ishaan and Omi start their business together. Finally a tug breaks out that shattered their ambitions, which can relate to the present youth culture anywhere in the world.

In all of Chetan Bhagat's three select novels, the friendship of the youth is depicted to resemble Chetan Bhagat himself in some form or other. Hari's character, the emotions he goes through and how he handles them reflect is exactly the way Chetan Bhagat went about things while at IIT.

In the other novel *One Night @ Call Center*, though Shyam is a little different, Bhagat Says,  
**'Most of the thoughts that Shyam goes through – self doubt, dealing with a bad boss, going through a break up are those that all of us go through at some time or the other in our life time!**

(Bhagat Chetan, *Five Point Someone*, 2).

Regarding the characters, youth culture is visible in Ryan with no scruples but Venkat in the neighbouring room in the Kumaon hostel of the IIT Delhi, it seems that Venkat has scruples to stay away from other group of friends. Venkat is a book worm, wants to study whenever he finds time and scores more than nine points.

The protagonists in Chetan's debut novel moved as friends, did all the silly things in the hostel as exceptional students, who hated their studies and however by hook or crook got their degrees at the end, showing their maximum skill, fully exhibiting their modernity.

With the IITs unfair system of learning the three characters Hari, Ryan and Alok were trying to mess up with the system and the result was that they themselves were ruined with the poor grade of five points. As Bhagat himself puts it:

**“You can't screw with the system  
Too much, it comes back to screw you”**  
Bhagat Chetan, *Five Point Someone*, 23.

*One Night @ Call Center (2005)* Bhagat's second novel cites the parallel in India of today in cities like Gurgaon in Delhi and Bangalore which have been prospering with the establishment of BPOs, call centers and the I.T. sectors and we find there is a migration of a large portion of the village dwellers to these cities in search of better opportunities for livelihood and better standard of living. Thus the rural



culture gradually vanishes giving room for the urban or the culture of the cities, where the attitude avarice and attributions of the people find a drastic change from traditional etiquettes to the modern superficiality of the city life.

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