

**The 21<sup>st</sup> Century's impact on the technocrat's  
brain- A retrospection into Chetan Bhagat's male  
personalities in *Five Point Someone-  
What not to do at IIT***

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**Abstract:**

*"Life is not a bed of roses" it is to be accepted without any humiliation. The distressful condition in life makes oneself weak and paralyzed to face the challenges in life. Humans experience stress, or perceive things as threatening, when they do not believe that their resources for coping with obstacles are enough for what the circumstances demand. When we think the demands being placed on us exceed our ability to cope, we then perceive to take the help from the other. But sometimes this lack of confidence in oneself makes them a parasite and fall in trap of the other and undergo humiliation in life. The conflict occurs when a person is choosing between two equally attractive options, i.e. whether to go ahead with one's belief or to go with others thoughts. In Chetan Bhagat's novel Five point someone the students face an external events which create a form of pressure to achieve, engage in, or experience a troublesome situation creates a fear within rather to make an attempt of interpretation and response to the potential threat; this is when the coping process begins.*

**Key words:** *Identity crisis, humiliation, impulsiveness, loneliness, trepidation*

**Introduction**

The writers of 21<sup>st</sup> century novelists started to concentrate on the individual's quest for the self identity in their environment. Individual identity crisis in one self start when one feels frustrated with loneliness,

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nostalgia for parental love, psychological, emotional and social stress and yearnings to fulfill the urge of innate feelings arises. Chetan Bhagat has tried to make a positive endeavour of the mindset of the upcoming youngster in the society and has written six novels, with major themes of love, friendship and corruption in it. His style of writings has attracted the people of all dimensions of age especially youth. *Five Point Someone- What not to do at IIT!*(2004 ) is an estimable novel written by Chetan Bhagat, a serious social commentator and a popular novelist who made young India read a lot. His novels remained to be one of the bestselling novels published in India. It is partly an autobiographical novel as the writer itself is a student of IIM. It has a well-constructed plot with captivated incidents taken from the life incidents happening in and around us. Though he doesn't apply or create any theory he designs his stories from slice of life incidents and presents as they are. The novel deals with the fears and insecurities of the students especially students in one of the country's top institutions. The narrator takes up the issues of three students who have joined in IIT Delhi-a prestigious engineering college for pursuing their studies. They desired to fit into the institution. But their expected visions, wishes and hopes all shattered due to their illicit behavior which they acquire and fall a victim for the sufferings. Five point is the theme of the novel which eventually points out someone named- Hari Kumar, Ryan Oberai, and Alok Gupta the students in IIT who become friends and they together ironically prone to this dubious distinction. The novel reminiscent readers back to their student's life - past is felt from the present. The novel moves round the three students namely Hari Kumar, Ryan Oberai and Alok Gupta. The three main characters hail from three different parts of Northern India, with different family background and with diverse aspirations towards life. Hari is one of the important characters as well main protagonists of the story as it is evident from the prologue. The three characters undergone a tough time to get into IIT, as it is understood from the writer's words: "if you lock yourself in a room with books for two years and throw away the key, you can probably make it here." (2) Ryan's rank was 91 while that of Hari and Alok were 326 and 453 respectively. Ryan's parents are rich; they have an international handicraft business which often demands them move abroad.

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So, Ryan is forced to be in boarding school when he was in six. This ultimately developed in his a deep seated grudge in his mind against his progenitors. He felt a deep insight of loneliness, frustration, which accelerated a rebellious attitude within him. He devises a new perspective view towards the life and behaved accordingly. On the first day of college Ryan, Alok and Hari were being ragged by their seniors Anurag and Baku. Ryan's exhibited a heroic rather rebellious attitude against them. "Come, you bastards," Ryan swore, his face scarlet like watermelon slice. It's not fun for me, growled Ryan, "Just get the hell out of here." (6) Anurag warned Hari and Alok to be careful with Ryan, he said that "One day he will take you guys down too" (6). Among the three Alok is from a mid class family. Alok is supported by his mother as his father had met with an accident that permanently paralyzed him. His mother's income is not sufficient to give good treatment for her better half. He has a marriageable sister who is neither beautiful nor talented, so the whole family has aspirations on Alok getting a degree and a good job. Being taken care by a loving family, Alok is very weak, sensitive by nature but a hard worker, obedient and friendly natured boy of lovable parents who qualms to do outrageous things. Hari being brought up by a strict army officer, who always lined his family with his whisk in his hand: "no TV, no music, no laughing loud. It is all fro discipline"(216). Hari was treated like a cadre, who is not allowed to open up his mouth before his father who assumed himself as a colonel and mother always remained silent for years. This had created a phobia in Hari who still never tries to open up even during his viva exams also. So, the milieu of these two characters has been spellbound by Ryan's confident, smartness and creativeness. Ryan named Hari and Alok as "fatso" on looking at their physical appearance. Ryan a boy who always aspires to do diverse things using a creative methodology started to disparage the educational institution system in IIT and enforced his concept of theory against Alok and Hari. Ryan says "I mean this is supposed to be the best college in Indian, best technology institute for a country of a billion. But has IIT ever invented anything? Or made any technical contribution to India?"(34) "This system of relative grading and overburdening the students. I mean it kills the best fun years of your life. But it kills something else. Where is

the room for original thought? Where is the time for creativity? "(35). These mesmerizing new revolutionary thoughts influenced Hari and Alok and started to zealot him blindly without deliberation of consequences. Ryan framed a policy of decentralization of education in which he tells: "We can study two-three hours a day, but do other stuff, day sports, have you guys every played squash? Or taken part in events- debates, scrabble and stuff, an odd movie or something sometimes. We can do so much at the institution" (40). Hari and Alok flogged a dead horse and started to enjoy their life in IIT campus without giving much importance for their studies. Ryan loves to do things which he loves a lot and never cares about the other. Ryan's enjoyed doing practical test in physics lab. When they had a viva practical for two hours, Ryan spent most of his time in designing a radio connecting the resistors, capacitors and switches which is unconnected to their viva experiment. It created a panic condition in Hari and Alok who were his partners. Ryan made through the experiment only at the last twenty minutes. "Ryan ripped off his circuit and looked at us in disdain as if we were tone-deaf listeners who had rejected live Mozart."(55) Ryan the impudent male lead of the novel devised a plan for the completion of the assignment and decided to break away the problematic examination questions; he gives it an attractive title: "The C2D plan" that is "co-operate to dominate" (107) To fight against the system Ryan brings out 'The C2D Plan' that appears to be ridiculous, that nobody would like to emulate but Hari and Alok accepted it not with contentment but with trepidation, as they were being marked as five point in the first semester. The dogma of the 'The C2D Plan' was-to divide and work together which neither burden or benefits one another:

- 1."All assignments to be shared- one person will do each assignment by turn. The others will simply copy it. Saves times, saves duplication of effort.
2. We will divide up the course responsibilities. For instance, if there are courses in the semester, we will take care of only two each. One must attend all classes that one is responsible for but can skip all others.
3. We share lab experiment observations.

4. Our friendship is above GPAs. With all the new spare time, we live our lives to the fullest.
5. We combine our hostel rooms into one living unit-one common bedroom, one study room and one fun party room.
6. We split the cost of Vodka regardless of how much drinks each person has had.”(108)

When his acquaintances questioned Ryan about the consequences of this plan, he just swayed them to sign with blood on it without proclamation. “It just takes a second,” Ryan said and flicked the blade on my forefinger and blood spouted out of me before I could form my denial.”(109). One who frames the convention is the breaker of it too. Ryan who divided the project, assignments, records etc among the three, had to copy down the screw jack of Hari instead designed a screw with his new ideas. He never listens to the others and never accepts antagonism too. Ryan keeps the ball rolling to complete things which he likes but never tolerate others to do the equivalent. He makes the other fall in desperate thoughts about education but he keeps working out things in a good mannerism which attracts his superiors. When Hari questioned Ryan about how he had time to work out a separate paper, he just frantically replied that he had time to do what he wanted to do. Ryan exhibited his selfish attitude again when he was asked by Prof.Veera to submit a project proposal to Prof.Cherian for his acceptance, Ryan immediately jammed all his plans and said “I’ll do my courses, but no partying or movies,” (120) His altering attitude made them feel sick but they were not in a position to oppose his words. Nevertheless when Alok called him to be a mugger he snapped promptly and termed that “Iam not a mugger. You are the mugger, Venkat-boy,” Ryan retorted. Ryan made Hari to drink Vodka for his viva and made him as an offender before Prof.Cherian who happens to be his girl friend’s father. When Alok questioned Ryan about his action, Ryan serenely said that “I thought it would work but the shots were too big.” Alok fury rose when he saw Ryan playing with a basketball after messing up Hari’s education life and love life. Ryan was silent without saying any further commentary words for the work he had done. Ryan got sixteen out of forty in quizzes and

aero in viva and Hari got thirty three on forty, needed forty seven on fifty on majors to get an A in his sheets and to get Neha Prof. Cherian's daughter. Ryan thoughts of repeating the core course, and being screwed up by Cherian made him to bring about with an illicit plan of stealing the question paper in order to get good marks in the Semester exams. He designed a plan and named as "Operation Pendulum" to steal the question paper from Prof. Cherian's office. Ryan's obdurate nature always made Alok and Hari to face risk pledging their career, education and life at par. But Ryan who never cared or shared his feelings with any one or with his parents started to create an environment of his own where he ruled his friends made them as his inferior to him and never treated them with humanity or with affable attitude. "But that is how Ryan is, he decides, and then he proposes, and then he does whatever he wants to anyway." (159) Ryan again uses his weapon of friendship to convince them by saying that Hari could get Neha if he gets an A grade and Alok could get a decent job which is his need of the hour. The friends are again trapped with his words of colourful and bright future and he is the one who is laying the path for their success. As steered by Ryan, Hari bamboozles Neha and takes away the keys of Prof. Cherian's office and makes a duplicate of it. Alok advised Ryan not to execute the plan of action and fall at risk. Ryan kept aside his vulnerable words and arose with anger against him pointing out his Achilles heel. Hari being under conviction of Neha's love accepted Ryan's words without any perseverance of his action against him. Alok was forced to be a part of it without any change of escapism. Ryan, Alok and Hari took this dangerous endeavour to steal the paper and were caught red-handed by the security officer when Alok tried to make a call to his house from Prof. Cherian's office. They were compelled to face disciplinary action which puts their future life in IIT campus at risk. All the three felt embarrassed about what had happened, Ryan and Alok started to squabble words of mortification against one another. Ryan in order to escape being marked as F in the mark sheet, he strained Hari to reveal Neha's name before the DISCO. Hari pledged his love to escape from being debarred by the members of DISCO. The problem comes to end with the intervention of Prof. Veera a member of Disciplinary Committee, who acted in their favour and

prevented them from being expelled. Alok the deceased on hearing the news of being suspended for one semester commits suicide by jumping from the roof of the institute but escapes from death with heavy injury. The lesson that the erring student Ryan learnt from the result of his action are Alok's suicide attempt and barred from exams made him to believe sorry for his penalty. Hari's attitude towards other especially Ryan has been changed which he tries to say like: "Somehow, the Disco had changed my attitude toward Ryan. It had become easier for me to tell him things he didn't want to hear. He didn't argue much either" (221) Hari's self confidence development after he saw Ryan's plan fail, Alok jump and Cherian cry, the whole wide world didn't intimidate him anymore. Hari, Ryan and Alok felt the essence of life as happiness only from one perspective point of life. When the felt it had something to do with sufferings and troubles they tries to withdrew themselves from it and started to settle a crooked way that could reach the Adam's apple. But they understood the life not only making friendship and love but face the problem of it with utmost courage without getting aback of it. This very essence is important in for the existence of life in the society. Here in this novel all the three characters Hari, Ryan and Alok had undergone trauma in their life which psychologically disturbed them and their happiness. Ryan attitude to enjoy life in different spheres attracted Hari and Alok towards his passion of life. They both started to look the world through Ryan's eyes and blindly walked on his way. So, when one's Achilles heel is known to the other, the superior inflicts his power and strength against the inferior and makes him as his slave.

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