



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## POSTMODERN ASPECTS IN THE WORKS OF CHETAN BHAGAT

Shambhavi Dubey

Research Scholar

Ranchi University, Ranchi

Jharkhand, India

### Abstract:

Postmodernism in Indian English Literature refers to the literary works produced after 1980. While Raja Rao's "Kanthapura" (1938) represents modernism, Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" (1981) and Nissim Ezekiel's "Latter-Day Psalms" (1982) signify the emergence of postmodernism. Chetan Bhagat, an influential figure in contemporary India, has gained recognition as a prominent writer in the realm of postmodern fiction. Although he may not have received prestigious awards, his name is widely recognized among college students throughout India. While the global literary scene often focuses on India's past, Bhagat has successfully embraced the present and captivated readers with his humorous yet gritty portrayals of life's realities. Through his writing, he has brought about a revolution in postmodern literature, reflecting its essence. Bhagat believes that literature serves the purpose of showcasing society, and this paper aims to demonstrate and justify why he is considered a postmodernist writer, drawing evidence from his works.

**Keywords:** Reader involvement, reader response, contemporary elements, real-life situations, and Post Modernism.

### Introduction:

To date, Chetan Bhagat has published six works of fiction and two non-fiction books, all of which prominently address the concerns of today's youth. He delves into the problems, despair, hopes, and aspirations experienced by young individuals. Despite grappling with harsh realities, his works maintain a genuine sense of humor. In many ways, his works resemble parables, conveying moral messages, offering divine guidance, and providing technical suggestions. Due to these characteristics, his works can be described as a postmodern interpretation of parables. Chetan stories often revolve around the triumphs and setbacks young people encounter in the current generation and era. Accordingly, this paper focuses on these themes and issues.

### Post-Modern Aspects in Chetan Bhagat's

#### Five Point Someone:

"What Not to Do at IIT!" is the first novel written by Chetan Bhagat, an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology. The story is primarily set at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, spanning the years 1991 to 1995. The central theme revolves around three mechanical engineering students named Hari Kumar, Ryan Oberoi, and Alok Gupta. The narrative is presented through Hari's perspective, insights from his friends Ryan and Alok, and a letter written by Hari's girlfriend Neha Cherian. Throughout the book, the trio faces numerous challenges related to the academic grading system, while Hari also navigates his romantic relationship with Neha, who happens to be the daughter of Prof. Cherian, the authoritative head of the Mechanical Engineering Department. While the overall tone of the novel is humorous, there are occasional dark moments, particularly when it delves into the protagonist's family dynamics. The book not only delves into the problems faced by engineering students but also emphasizes the hardships they endure to secure admission to IITs. It underscores the idea that while it may be difficult to gain entry into an IIT, it is even more challenging to succeed if one's heart is not fully committed to the endeavor.

### One Night @ the Call Center:

Chetan Bhagat's second work of fiction, titled "One Night @ the Call Center" and published in 2005, revolves around a group of six employees working at Connations call center in Gurgaon, Haryana, India. The novel explores the anxieties and insecurities faced by the emerging middle class in India, addressing concerns about careers, inadequacy, marriage, and family conflicts in a postmodern society. The story takes place during one eventful night at the call center, where an unexpected phone call from God occurs. This romantic comedy unfolds in an office setting, where bored young Indians attempt to handle the mundane inquiries of American technophobes from the Midwest. The main characters include Sam, who sits next to the girl who recently betrayed him; Esha, who is just two inches shy of becoming a model; Vroom, an idealist aiming to change the world; Radhika, who struggles to balance her job and her demanding mother-in-law; and Military Uncle, who constantly worries about his family and longs to live with his son and daughter-in-law, although they do not allow it. The novel portrays these characters as suppressed individuals grappling with their problems, with each perceiving their issues as significant challenges. As time passes, a phone call from God brings a message of hope and motivation to lead a happier life, marking an innovative element in Chetan Bhagat's storytelling. The use of a mobile phone as a means for God to guide his devotees in times of crisis is a unique feature of the novel. Through this phone call, God advises his friends-cum-devotees on how to escape the clutches of death and empowers the survivors to confront their boss. Bhagat introduces a spiritual interlude and modernism into the narrative with the surprising intervention of a phone call from God on Shyam's phone.

### Three Mistakes of My Life:

Chetan Bhagat skillfully captures the fervent enthusiasm and the highs and lows, hopes, and disappointments remarkably experienced by his generation. His novel ironically exposes some harsh realities of human life, where passion often takes precedence over emotion and ambition. In this particular novel, Bhagat's vibrant storytelling is enhanced by his mature perspective and sharpened sensibilities. The story revolves around the passionate ambitions of three young boys: Govind Patel, Ishaan, and Omi. Govind, the narrator, possesses a talent and inclination for business. Ishaan is passionate about cricket, while Omi's religious devotion is shaped by his parent's strong connection to the local temple. Thus, the lives of these individuals are influenced by the realms of business, cricket, and religion. Bhagat examines the characters of these three protagonists with an ironic detachment, as he refrains from taking sides. His characters are young, driven, and passionate, grappling with moral, social, and religious dilemmas that many young Indians face today. The novel is grounded in real-life events and touches upon themes of sentiment, social commentary, business, relationships, religion, and even cricket.

### Two States:

The story revolves around a couple belonging to different states in India, who face numerous challenges in gaining approval from their respective families for their marriage. The tale begins at the mess hall of IIM Ahmedabad, where Krish, a boy from Delhi of Punjabi descent, is captivated by the beauty of Ananya, a Tamil girl from Chennai. Over a few days, they become friends and develop a romantic relationship. After completing their studies, they make plans to formally engage.

Initially, Krish attempts to win over Ananya's parents by assisting her father with his first PowerPoint Presentation and providing IIT tuition to her brother, Manju. He also convinces her mother to participate in a concert organized by his workplace, Citi Bank, fulfilling her long-standing dream of singing alongside renowned artists. Subsequently, they endeavor to gain approval from Krish's mother. However, complications arise when his relatives express disapproval of their engagement, arguing against Krish marrying a Tamilian. The situation takes a turn when Ananya successfully helps one of Krish's cousins find a suitable match, which leads his relatives to change their stance.

With the support of their parents secured, Krish and Ananya plan to introduce their respective families in Goa. Unfortunately, their dreams are shattered when Ananya's parents become suspicious of Krish's relationship with his mother. As a result, Ananya's family decides against their marriage. However, in a surprising twist, Krish's father, with whom he had a strained relationship, ultimately helps them overcome this hurdle and successfully convinces Ananya's family to accept their union. This experience leads Krish to realize the depth of his father's love. The novel employs a first-person narrative perspective and adopts a humorous tone, often poking fun at both Tamil and Punjabi cultures.

**Revolution 2020:**

The novel explores a love triangle, corruption, and a journey of self-discovery. It sheds light on the exploitation of aspiring engineering students by private coaching institutions offering courses like IIT JEE. The story delves into the hopes and aspirations parents place on these coaching institutions, hoping their children can succeed in professional exams and change the fortunes of their families. The book uncovers the harsh reality of this coaching industry, which thrives on scams, corruption, and various criminal activities.

Within this backdrop, the narrative follows two friends who find themselves separated by their ambitions and passions but connected through their affection for the same girl.

What Young India Wants:

The novel examines the intricate challenges that postmodern India grapples with and presents potential solutions to improve the country. It offers innovative remedies to pressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, violence against women, communal violence, religious fundamentalism, illiteracy, and more. Bhagat has introduced distinctive elements in Indian English literature, capturing the attention and interest of the younger generation.

**Half Girlfriend:**

The novel depicts the emotions and linguistic challenges faced by a young boy from a rural area in Bihar, who speaks Bhojpuri-laced Hindi, as he enrolls in the prestigious English-medium St. Stephens College in New Delhi and falls in love with a wealthy, English-speaking girl named Riya Somani. Despite Riyas's lack of interest in a committed relationship, she agrees to be his "half-girlfriend." The story follows Madhav Jha, who hails from Dumraon, Bihar, and faces initial difficulties at St. Stephens due to his village background and poor command of English. However, his talent as a basketball player secures him admission through the sports quota. "Half Girlfriend" is an engaging novel that not only inspires young people to strive for success but also encourages them to be confident and rational when confronted with challenging circumstances. According to Chetan Bhagat, temporary setbacks in life hold significance as they hold the secrets to eventual success. Bhagat emphasizes that life is not solely about money, but encompasses greater values such as respect, which can be earned through dignified living and selflessness.

**Conclusion:**

Chetan Bhagat presents his characters as individuals who make their own decisions, in contrast to past writers who depicted protagonists who were solely guided by their parents or superiors. Bhagat encourages the youth not to follow the instructions of their parents or bosses blindly, but to critically evaluate what is right or wrong. His revolutionary stance is evident in his statement that progress in humanity would not have been possible if people always listened to their parents. When examining all of Chetan Bhagat's novels from a postmodern perspective, it becomes clear that a significant generation gap exists due to technology. It is not necessarily a matter of parents being wrong, but rather whether their advice is applicable in this technological era, which requires careful consideration.

**References:**

Bhagat, Chetan. Five Points Someone. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2005.

Bhagat, Chetan. One Night@ the Call Center. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2008.

Bhagat, Chetan. The 3 Mistakes of My Life. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2009.

Bhagat, Chetan. 2 States. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2011.

Bhagat, Chetan. Revolution 2020. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2011.

Bhagat, Chetan. 2012. What Young India Wants. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2014.

Bhagat, Chetan. Half Girlfriend. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. 2015.