

## CHAPTER-2

### CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: POLYPHONIC DIALOGICS IN CHETAN BHAGAT

#### 2.1 CHETAN BHAGAT: AN INTRODUCTION

Chetan Bhagat was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1974 in Delhi in a middle class Punjabi family. He is an author, columnist, speaker and writer. He is the author of blockbuster novels - *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* (2014). Other works include *Revolution 2020* (2011), *What Young India Wants* (2012) and *Half Girlfriend* (2014). Some of his works have made into Bollywood films. He is taken to be a youth icon and a role model by many Indians. He got his education from IIT Delhi & Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad. He is voted as one of the hundred most influential people in the world by Time magazine. He writes columns for the Times of India and Dainik Bhaskar, the leading dailies of India. He left his job & settled in India to pursue his career as a writer.

Chetan was born & brought up in Delhi. His father was an army man, while his mother was a government employee in the agricultural department. He did his schooling from Army Public School, Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi. Then, he went on to study Mechanical Engineering at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi & MBA from Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad. He chose banking as a career & worked in a bank in Hong Kong. Soon, he realised that he was made

up for something else. So, he quit his job and settled in Mumbai to pursue his passion for writing. Presently, he is married to Anusha, an ex-classmate from IIM. They have twin sons - Shyam and Ishaan.

His books have been the best sellers. They deal with the national problems as well as the young brigade. His *Five Point Someone* is a story of three friends who are not able to cope up with stress and work schedule at IIT. As a result, they secure low grades. Alok, Hari and Ryan try their best to make amends. They have a five point GPA grading out of ten, which means, they rank near the end of their class. The plot unfolds as to how the grades affect their friendship and love life.

*One Night @ the Call Center* is the story about six people working in a call centre in Gurgaon. They fall into a tricky situation with no way out. They receive a mysterious phone call from God, which changes the course of their lives and forms the base for much of the action in the novel.

*The 3 Mistakes of My Life* deals with three friends- Govind, Ishaan and Omi. Govind dreams of a luxurious life. He plans for opening up of a cricket shop along with his friends. Govind wants to make money, Ish is involved with cricket and he aspires to train young Ali, as he was born with a rare gift. Omi just wants to remain in the company of his friends. Life becomes difficult for them as they need to face a series of problems like earthquake, riots, religious issues, power-politics and the blunders which they commit.

*2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is the work inspired by the author's personal life. It is all about Krish and Ananya who belong to two different states.

They fall in love and wish to marry. The problem is the disagreement of parents, the North-South divide which is the cause of altercation in their matrimony. It forms an interesting study, how they convince each other and their parents into accepting their relationship.

*Revolution 2020* depicts three childhood friends Gopal, Raghav and Aarti. They struggle hard to find love and success in their lives. It is a very difficult task to establish oneself in a corrupt and unfair society. Gopal and Raghav understand this bold truth but Gopal becomes a part of the system while Raghav becomes a fighter.

*What Young India Wants* is prose writing and not based on fiction. It deals with author's experiences as a writer and a speaker. The author tries to raise difficult issues facing India and tries to explore possible solutions. He invites open discussions from the audience to bring about a positive impact in society.

*Half Girlfriend* is the story of Madhav and Riya which is set in rural-urban India. Madhav falls in love with Riya during the college days but Riya is interested in friendship only. So, she becomes his half-girlfriend. Later, they part ways to face their set of struggles. They are finally united and lead a comfortable life.

Besides these novels, he writes columns for newspaper, where he voices his concern for the issues which are of national importance. He is also, actively involved in giving lectures in various educational institutes, government organisations, corporate houses and other related agencies.

His novels have been successfully adapted into films. *Five Point Someone* has been adapted into '3 Idiots' which was released in 2009. *One Night @ the Call Center* was made into a movie 'Hello' which was released in 2008. *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* was transformed into 'Kai Po Che' (2013). *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* has been made into a movie with the same name and was released in 2014.

Chetan Bhagat has won many awards and recognition for his commendable work. He has been presented Society Young Achiever's award 2004. Publisher's Recognition award in 2005, Time magazine's list of hundred most influential people in 2010 and Filmfare award for Best Screenplay 2014 for the movie 'Kai Po Che.'

Awards galore, many people have found faults with the type of work, the author is presenting. The critics have found faults with the expression and literary style of his work. Critics believe that some technicalities are involved while writing a work of art, which have not been followed by Bhagat. Very many impossible and ludicrous situations are integrated into the narrative. The style is humorous and full of masala is incorporated in his novels which can be easily shaped up into a film.

Still, the masses are reading and enjoying his works. He creates a familiar setting for the reader. He has created a culture of campus novels using the language which the youngsters can relate with. He has said in *Snapshot* "We have supermarkets. I want my books next to jeans and bread. I want my country to read"(n.pag.). He convinces by employing witty dialogues, illustrations, and

punches and brings around his set ideas on a particular subject. He wishes to become a vehicle for change, for reforming the society of ills for the betterment of citizens. His ideas about writing are dealt by Amrita Dutta in her article which explains, “The reason I do what I do is first to get people’s attention by entertaining them, whether it is in the form of a book or a film. And then I talk to them about what needs to change in the country. I do that by writing columns about current affairs”(7).

No author has been able to sensitise the readers as Bhagat. He has been able to touch the nerve of his readers. No doubt, his writing is much superfluous and incongruous yet, he deserves the respect and admiration for the effort he has put forth.

## 2.2 LOCALE

The metropolitan life expresses the changing graph of society, which has its own share of pros and cons. The modern Indian society influenced by western values is experiencing a cultural shock and political changes. Fiction is an extensive medium to represent and explore the changing faces of society in the present century. The novels of Bhagat are a reflective study into the patterns and ideologies in the present times and give a peep into the culture of metro cities. These novels give a glimpse of society where modern and new culture is catching up i.e. mall culture. New trends, lifestyle, shopping complexes, new kinds of jobs, hectic routines, stressful and complicated lives, adultery and new set of relationships can be witnessed. Some of the locations which have been described by the author and which form a part of the study are Delhi, Gurgaon, Ahmedabad and Chennai.

Delhi forms the part of study in his two novels- *Five Point Someone* and *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*. Delhi lays its claim as the site of the fabled city of Indraprastha, which was the city of Pandavas as per mythology. Delhi has seen the rise and fall of seven major powers. It was founded by Tomara ruler, Anangpal who was influential in Delhi after the twelfth century. The city was occupied by Qutub-ud-din Aibak in the year 1193. The Delhi Sultanate period was from 1206-1526 AD, which was followed by the Mughal rule. In the year 1803, Delhi came under the governance of a British administrator. As Delhi became a commercial centre, British made Delhi as a capital in 1911. Since, it was ruled by the Mughals, khiljis and Tughlaqs, it presents a beautiful blend of the varied cultures which can

be observed in the beautiful and picturesque monuments and sculpture available in Delhi like Jama Masjid, Red Fort, Qutub Minar etc.

Delhi is the national capital territory of India; it is the largest city in India as per land area. It is jointly controlled by federal government of India and the Government of Delhi. It is surrounded by Haryana on the north and Uttar Pradesh to the east. During the British period, it was a province of Punjab. It is the largest commercial centre in northern India. Key service industries available in Delhi are information technology, hotels, banking, telecommunications and tourism industry. It has got one of the largest and fastest growing retail industries. It has a large consumer market what has attracted foreign investment.

Gurgaon city has been portrayed in the novel *One Night @ the Call Center* where Bhagat has primarily focused on it, as a business hub. Gurgaon is situated in the National Capital Region of India. It is a ten kilometre run from Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi.

The district derived its name from Guru Droncharya of *Mahabharata* fame. The village was given to him by the Pandavas and hence it came to be known as Guru Gram, which in course of time got distorted to Gurgaon. It is surrounded by Delhi and Rajasthan. During the Mughal rule of Akbar, the district was under the subas of Delhi and Agra. Then, it was divided into Paraganas by Britishers and later they held it under their direct supervision.

In its present state, it is thirty kilometres away from the national capital Delhi. During the last decade or so, the city has undergone massive reconstruction

and re-planning. It is one of Delhi's foremost major satellite cities. It is also the second largest city in Haryana and the industrial and financial centre of Haryana. It is the IT hub and has the third highest per capital income.

Ahmedabad forms the part of the novel *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. Bhagat uses this location as his backdrop since he did his MBA from Ahmedabad. Naturally, he used a known area to explore his ideas into a book.

Ahmedabad is the largest city in the state of Gujarat. It is located in western India on the banks of the river Sabarmati. The city has been a former capital of Gujarat and has been home to the most important leaders like Gandhi and Sardar Patel during independence. It is also the cultural and economic centre of Gujarat and the largest city of India.

The city was founded in the year 1411 by Ahmed Shah who invited merchants and traders to the city which led to its becoming a commercial trading and industrial city with textiles as its chief product. The city was dominated by Hindu and Jain merchants. An efficient system of banking developed in Gujarat which was followed in other parts of the country. It was conquered by Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1573. He made Gujarat as a thriving centre of trade especially, textiles. The British East India Company gained control over it in the year 1818. Railway link was established between Ahmedabad and Bombay and the merchants and the industrial elite took advantage of the situation and supported new technology. Education came at a very late stage in the region. Gandhi established two ashrams in the city and also started his salt struggle from Gujarat in 1930.

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2001, an earthquake centred near Bhuj rocked the city where many multi-storeyed buildings collapsed and many people lost their lives which has been related in the novel under study.

Chennai and Delhi are the two locations which have been dealt in the novel- *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*. Delhi has been earlier referred to in the chapter and Chennai as a metro city has an important place in the country. Both cities play a pivotal role in highlighting the North and South gulf portrayed in the novel.

Chennai, formerly known as Madras, is the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu and is India's fourth largest city. It is located on Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. It is the thirty first largest metropolitan areas in the world.

Originally, known as Madraspatnam, it was located in the province of Tondaimandalam. It was ruled by Portuguese, Dutch and French. The modern city of Chennai arose from the British settlement of Fort St. George. Many settlements and villages were merged into the city of Madras. It is recorded that British applied the name Madras to a new large city which had grown around the fort. The geographical limits of the city have been changed several times due to the plunder caused by Hindu and Muslim rulers. Madras progressed during the East India Company. Their period witnessed the development of trade and increase in wealth, setting up of educational institutions, ports etc. In the eighteenth century, it became an important British naval base. With its progress many companies started their operations in Chennai like HLL, Spencer and Co. etc.

## 2.3 THE ISSUES

Due to globalization and movement across the countries in 1990's and saturation of markets at their domestic places most of the developed countries of the world have become the MNC's (multinational companies), which have found their new locations and destinations in developing countries. It has provided job opportunities to many people. As such many people from villages came to settle in cities lured by money and rich lifestyle. This diversity included the co-existence of people from many cultural backgrounds within which are organisations created with various cultural factors such as ethnicity, race, colour, gender, physical ability etc. The metropolitan cities portray before us the traits of new culture which have found their way into the Indian society.

The issues which rock society are an integral part of the society and rooted deeply in Indian culture. They present before us a true picture of India in the new millennium where the culture of Bharat and India are intertwined and open before us a discourse about the impact of new ideologies on Indian culture and society.

**Ragging Menace:** Ragging is a practice in educational institutes and colleges where senior students subject physical and psychological tortures and harassment to new entrants. Physical and sexual abuses are the most common forms of ragging which has been practiced with the students. It is deplorable and shocking to watch people supporting these kinds of activities in the name of interaction. The basic concept of ragging was introduced with the idea to make juniors shed their inhibitions and acclimatise them with the new environment but the situation has become clumsy. At times, the agony and shame becomes too much for the students

and they cannot bear it and take an extreme step. On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Aman Kachroo, nineteen years old and a first year student of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Medical college, Kangra was ragged by his seniors who were drunk. He was attacked so brutally in the hostel compound, that the very next day, he was rushed to the hospital where he died of brain complications. He had repeatedly complained to the college authorities about the boys but no action was taken. His death led to the introduction of new guidelines at colleges across the country to protect the students from ragging.

Highly reputed Indian colleges have a wistful history of ragging. It has become unpopular due to several complaints of serious injury to the victims and strict laws against ragging. As per directions of the honourable Supreme Court, a National Act-Anti-Ragging helpline was launched by the Indian government. The complaints and emails are checked by the helpline and action is taken accordingly.

In the novel *Five Point Someone*, Ryan, Hari and Alok are ragged in the hostel. They are made to cast off their clothes. Very inhuman treatment is meted out to them and indecent activities are performed with them. Alok is on the verge of tears, Hari is not able bear it but then, good sense prevails upon Ryan who because of his physique and body, challenges the seniors who run away and Alok and Hari are saved from further humiliation and embarrassment.

Even, the top notch IIT's and medical institutes are facing the problems on account of the practice, which is an offshoot of the modern world. It forces a student to accept the subjugation and conform to the circumstances. A student experiences loss of self-esteem and self-worth. His talents are suppressed and take

a back seat. He loses out his sense of creativity, spirit of enquiry and his thoughts lead to revenge mode which he unleashes on the next coming batch.

**Examination Blues and Menace of Copying:** Most students experience major stress in and around exams. With education requirements becoming rigorous, stress is also increasing. With all the assignments that need to be handed on time and jam packed schedules, students may shorten their sleep time to cope up with these demands. Students experience some level of anxiety during an exam, however, when anxiety affects the performance, it is a cause of serious concern. Too much anxiety during an exam can block thoughts, create a negative mindset and lead to panic and poor exam performance.

In the novel *Five Point Someone*, the students are being burdened by the loads of assignments, quizzes and lectures. They are on the verge of breakdown and their mental peace is disturbed. The protagonist Alok is not able to digest his failure. When he comes to know that he has been suspended for one semester and his career is ruined, he is shattered. He is a sensitive guy bowed down by the pressures at home which lead him on the verge of suicide. Even, in the novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, both Krish and Ananya face the pressures of studying at IIM. Ananya takes the help of Krish to find solutions to certain problems.

Another problem which is related to exams is the copying. The main aim of education is to teach certain concepts and ideas but in some cases, if you find a student cheating, it means he fails to understand the material. Cheating includes the acts of copying, plagiarism, and the use of unauthorised materials and notes.

Cheaters lose that pride which one experiences when accomplishing any work himself. They lose the chance to learn something complex and intricate. The same thing happens to the three friends in *Five Point Someone*. All the three friends want to rise from the level of five pointers and as such, they think of a plan of using unfair means to get good scores. Ryan discusses the plan which he named as 'Operation Pendulum.' Hari wants to raise himself in the eyes of Professor Cherian, the father of Neha. He knows about his shortcomings that he can't face the viva, so he falls for the plan backed by Ryan to steal the papers. Alok also, gives in as his friends are all ready to take charge. They plan out their strategy. First, they get the duplicate keys of Cherian's office through the car which was used by Neha, his daughter and Hari's girlfriend. Then, they forge out on their mission. They reach the appointed place and get hold of the question papers in Chairman's room. While, Ryan is busy, opening the seal and then reorganising it, Alok makes a phone call to his home but he fails to understand the system as to how it gets operational. The network gets connected to the few external lines and campus telecom switches the line. A green light lights up. The security guard who is sitting at the system gets alarmed and overhears the communication. He asks the patrolling guards to check the room. The three friends get caught red handed. They have to face the disco, the official enquiry and have to work really hard to clear the semester.

Copying in examinations has become a common practice. Students who do not wish to work hard find an easy way out through this medium. This way, their real talents and hidden capabilities do not come out in open and their personality or

real traits remain subverted or hidden. This is in sharp contrast to the practice followed in the idealised world of Ram Rajya where the word of Guru (teacher) was considered supreme and one could never think of cheating him.

However, copying can become a pattern or habit, if not curbed. If one cheats and gets away, he will be tempted to cheat again and one day or the other the practice will create trouble for the student. Students need to inculcate how to face the challenges of their lives, they need to acquire the art of time management so that situation like the use of unfair means never arises and stress and anxiety would be warded off.

**Politicisation of Education:** Indian education system is flawed as it suffers from the political influence and corruption which is meted out through politicians. The trend threatens the achievement of good quality education that could put the future of students at stake. The educational institutions are the chief agents of discovery, research, economic progress, cultural heritage, mentors of new generations and lead to social transformations.

The politicians bend the rules and regulations in order to enhance their vote bank. The policies of educational institutes are framed by the state governments. They don't understand the need of value education provided by the institutes. Every now and then, the news is heard about fake universities, where students take admission in various courses. They do not enquire information about the authenticity of the institution. The political and influential people support these institutes without any heed to the norms but the real victims are the students who lose out their valuable time and hard earned money of their parents. They do not

bother to check whether the institute is approved as per UGC norms or is it providing the basic facilities like food, teaching services, labs, research projects, staff etc as per the established rules. Whether the institute is supporting the approved course material or not; if it is at par with other universities or institutes; or the students find it too difficult to handle the courses. The students and the teaching faculty can contribute in easing out the situation where a new type of curriculum can be opted which gives students a chance to explore themselves without being bogged down by stress and tension. Recreational or stress relieving programmes can be introduced but nobody is ready to take the risk or move out from the established pattern.

Yashpal Committee report of 2009, has pointed out that Indian Universities are one of the most undermanaged and badly governed organisations in the society. If modern subjects are being introduced, modern research facilities and curriculum should also be made operational where the students come face to face with the competitive world.

Examination system followed in IIT, as narrated in the text is hackneyed and traditional. They have a very tight schedule and the students are overloaded with work. They don't have any time for self activity. Everyday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. they have to attend the lectures, tutorials and lab work. During evenings, they have to spend time in libraries. They have to work for their tests and assignments. As a character points out, "The professors kept up the pressure and the overworked students worked even harder to beat the average, thereby pushing the average higher"(23). The system still believes in the method of mugging up to clear the

exams. As Ryan declares “you know guy this whole IIT system is sick”(34). He believes, “This system, it is not fair”(35). They are faced with the problem of “continuous mugging, testing and assignments where is the time to try out new idea”(25).

Teachers are bully and don't believe in experimentation. Except for a few of them, the rest are happy with the routine set of teaching and questions. If any student presents an innovative idea, they try to suppress it. As Professor Dubey, Mechanical Engineering Department in *Five Point Someone* asked students to define machine. Since, students did not reciprocate, he himself provided the answer “It is anything that reduces human effort”(9). Ryan questions him that a gym machine doesn't reduce the human effort so there is something wrong with this definition. The teacher is not happy with the query and rebuffs him.

Ryan is depicted as an extrovert guy who is smart, creative and always exuding fresh and innovative ideas but throughout the narrative, his ideas are not appreciated by IIT'ians. Even, the lube tube project is rejected by Professor Cherian in first instance. Later on, in another lecture, he prepares a new design of a car jack to lift the chassis in case of flat tyres. He makes a modified screw jack, which one could attach in a motor on the traditional jack and hook it up with the car battery. If the ignition is switched on, the motor could derive the power but yet again it is disapproved.

Ryan had worked really hard on the lube project. He did his research in fluid mechanics, scoping and budgeting, applying, working on past research and finally derived certain positive results but he is not taken seriously.

When the students are caught in the stealing of question paper fiasco, Professors show no mercy towards them during the enquiry. They do not wish to deal with the reasons which led them to commit such a grave blunder. They were also not concerned about the family situation of Alok, who tries to commit suicide later on as he could not bear it.

The institute of the calibre of IIT follows the monotonous system where innovative and fresh ideas are side tracked. One who has done something extraordinary needs to be awarded his due credit. If the work has a potential then grants, facilities and encouragement is to be provided to the student so that he could reach for higher glories.

Although, the novelist has presented an exaggerated picture dealing with certain facts but some parts indeed, give a glimpse of the quality of education in the Indian universities. The government is involved in planning and framing the policies, they are least bothered to check out their implementation. The educationists have to be given a free hand in planning and moving education from elitist strata to mass orientation, upliftment of the infrastructure and making education on areas of choice rather than forcing a particular set pattern of options, instead value education should be introduced, focus on skill enhancement and quality to ensure employment should be catered to.

**Hostel and Mess Facilities :** The quality and standard of food served at the mess is really pathetic and deplorable even in IIT institutes. The novel presents a glaring picture of the quality of food served at various institutes. The food is prepared and served in unhygienic conditions. At one stage, in *Five Point Someone*, students are

served a variety of dishes- rice, noodles, french fries, toast, mushroom soup etc but the noodles stuck in the neck, french fries were cold and under cooked and tasted like coal while the soup tasted like muddy water. If this is the picture of a mess in a top bracketed institute, one can very well imagine the situation in average institutes. The students are forced to eat outside at the road side dhabas or stalls though, they have paid the full amount for mess facilities.

Even, the character Ananya in *2 States : The Story of My Marriage* complains about the quality of the food and hospitality at the mess. The authorities need to look not only at the quality and standards of teaching but other facilities and refreshments should also be taken into account as each and every aspect is associated with the reputation of the institute. In the year 2013, students of IIT Chennai organised a hunger strike to protest against the low quality of food served in the hostel mess. The news was reported in leading dailies, and reflects the glaring problems and issues of hostel and institutes.

**Consumption of Liquor and Smoking:** Drinks and cigarette smoking has become a fad in the metropolitan lifestyle. The drinks and other beverages are specially marketed to woo the teenage audience, although they have proposed health risks. In India, the marketing strategy adopted by the liquor brands is to publicise their product through eminent personalities. Earlier, actors from cinema and television were depicted on the labels and advertisements of the product to lure the potential customers.

Youngsters have been imitating and adopting the western culture not knowing the dangers they are being subjected to. In the novel *Five Point Someone*,

the three friends are openly drinking, smoking and watching porn magazines and movies and reading objectionable stuff. In another episode, Hari drinks to ward off his nervousness and goes for viva. Naturally, he is caught and asked to move out. Even, the daughter of Chairman, Neha is depicted as taking drinks.

For that matter, the characters in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* are openly taking drinks. *One Night @ the Call Center* presents a modern situation, when the characters are working in their offices during the night shift. They visit hookah bars, smoke and drink to refresh themselves. Going to the bars and clubs to enjoy is no longer a taboo. In *2 States : The Story of My Marriage*, Ananya is quite modern who drinks beer and enjoys life. She has no reservations adopting the modern lifestyle.

Strong measures need to be taken to educate students about the evil effects of alcoholic and narcotic substances. Simply apeing west and considering oneself modern is not the end of it. As per the orders of the honourable Supreme Court of India, smoking has been publically banned in India. The warning is indicated on the packets. Moreover, the celebrities depicting taking liquor and promoting through media has also been banned.

**Financial Problems :** When one is unable to satisfy the basic needs and services, one can be termed as poor. The situation arises when there is low income and an individual can't satisfy the need of survival with dignity. This leads to mental and physical breakdown. The bread earner of the house can't provide a decent meal to the family which leads to stress and frustration.

In *Five Point Someone*, Alok's family is going through a rough patch. His father is bedridden. The sister is of marriageable age, while he himself has been studying. His mother is the only earning member of the family. She works in a school and her income is meagre as compared to the expenses. Their only hope is Alok who, they think will get a decent job and will support them.

The financial situation and consequent problems can be viewed from a different angle also, like in *One Night @ the Call Center*, Priyanka's mother wants her to get married to an NRI who has successful job down there and financially stable while Priyanka wants to marry Shyam who is working in a website department and is not very rich. Similarly, Ananya's mother in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* wants her to marry an NRI. The meeting is fixed with the guy Harish and Ananya have to go through the formalities associated with it but then, she manages to annul the marriage. Krish's mother is depicted selfish as she has faced hardships throughout her life. She wants her son to marry a rich girl whose father has petrol pumps irrespective of girl's education and qualification. Still, she wants the marriage to be fixed and expects some gifts from the family. *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* deals with the deeply cherished dream of Hari, to be a rich and successful man. He invests his money in shopping mall and then in the cricket shop. The only purpose is to enhance his financial state and standard. Thus, financial status has important role to play in the modern life, though patterns and aspects are varied.

The gap between the two classes is quite distinct. The masses representative of Bharat are trying hard to establish themselves in modern culture.

The lure for foreign locales and grooms is evident but choices if proved wrong can be tough to handle. The need for financial stability is a harsh reality which forces one to commit mistakes.

**Modern Psyche:** The modern lifestyle is very challenging and highly demanding. There is no time to relax while the situations are becoming complex. The pressure becomes so strong that it is difficult to control oneself. Stress may be explained as a form of anxiety syndrome due to work pressure. It is caused by emotional physical or mental tension, which is visible not only in adults but also children and adolescents. Many people have called it a curse of modern life, where man is suffering from identity crisis. One does not want to be brow-beaten, humiliated and deprived of his right of independence. One is struggling to find the right direction and as such suffers from various complications like inferiority complex, obsessive-compulsive neurosis, hysteria etc. Some of the issues have been explored by the novelist by delving deep into the psyche of the characters.

Hari in *Five Point Someone* is not able to face the viva and suffers from inferiority complex. The background of his problem lies deep down his past. He felt insecure at his home. His father was a dominating personality who used to beat his wife while the mother did not interact with him. Ryan also, pines for his parents, who are busy with their business and have no time for their son. In *One Night @ the Call Center*, Shyam is bogged down by the pressures of job. He is doing all the hard work and completing the project but the boss takes the credit. Vroom has a tortured childhood. His parents have sought a divorce and often fight

with each other. Esha wants to enter the modelling world for which she had to make compromises. She has her own guilt complex.

In *2 States : The Story of My Marriage*, Krish and Ananya are unable to meet each other because of their job pressure. Krish becomes a workaholic when Ananya rejects him. He falls into severe depression while in *3 Mistakes of My Life*, as the chapter opens we come to know that Hari has tried to commit suicide. He is disturbed by the avoidance of his friend and finds himself responsible for the mistakes and takes the extreme step.

The psychological pressure in an individual is the after effect of new culture where one is facing the dilemma of identity crisis. He is not able to understand his position whether he is in a progressive mode facing new experiences each day or he is succumbing to the tortures and struggles of new competitive life.

**Religious Fanaticism:** A religion is an organised collection of beliefs, cultural systems and world views that relates us with the higher order of existence. Religion in India exemplifies a diversity of beliefs, ideologies and practices. Throughout the history, religion has an important role in the country. Cultural-religious diversity and religious tolerance are both practiced in the country by law and custom but this tolerance is being disturbed by the fanatics who go against religious preachings.

The rift between Hindu and Muslims forms a major part of study in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. The novelist has over elaborated the concept of religion that it

has overshadowed the main issue of the novel i.e. cricket mania. Some of the characters portrayed in the novel are staunch Hindu believers. The Ayodhya issue has been raked in by the novelist; the Babri Masjid demolition; and the construction of Ram temple has been touched upon in the novel. The author is extremely careful and does not share his views about the issue. He exhorts the individual to be rational instead of blindly following the religious propaganda. One should believe in God but not a deaf and dumb believer. One should open one's eyes and observe the reality.

The Muslim leaders are portrayed as secular and democratic. The novelist doesn't explore their ideas much and they have been provided a short space in the scheme of narrative. The views are reflected in the form of dialogues between Omi and Ali's father, who is a Muslim leader.

It is not the case of difference in religion or a gulf between Hindu and Muslim. It is actually the gap or void in the mindset. One has to be democratic in the views and work for the benefit of mankind rather than be engrossed in petty religious issues. The ideas of divisions on the basis of religious principles, the belief in religious gurus and other dogmas are still very much dominant in Indian culture.

The incident of Godhara carnage where the bogies of Sabarmati express were burnt down in Ahmedabad has been used by the novelist to present the political situation in India where the politicians use their means to exploit the poor and extricate maximum benefits from their situation. They try to oppose one religion over other or glorify one religion over other and take it as an opportunity

to reap the benefits. In the study, the self proclaimed Hindu missionary Parekhji fuels the anti-Muslim sentiments amongst people. The character Bittoo mama loses his son in Godhara carnage. Parekhji makes him believe that his son died for a noble cause and his death should be avenged. Mama is so numbed down by grief and liquor that he loses his mental equilibrium. He gathers like minded people and fuels them to kill Muslims, where Ali's father and step mother also have to pay the price for no fault of theirs. He also guns for little Ali but Ali is rescued by the intelligence and courage of the three friends. Ali is saved but in the confusion which prevails, Omi loses his life. The riots like Godhara carnage do not result in anything productive rather many innocent lives are lost.

People who play Guruji or saints like Parekhji serve their own ends. They themselves lead a life of luxury and bliss. They lure people like Bittoo Mama by party tickets so that, he could maintain his status and reputation. Mama does all the hard work for the party while Parekhji himself enjoys on the patronage given by people. Towards the end, when the situation is grim Parekhji is nowhere in the picture as Ali's father sums up, "The problem in Indian, Hindu-Muslim rivalry is not that one is right and the other is wrong. It is...the lack of reconciliatory mechanisms"(71).

In the concluding pages, Omi, Bittoo Mama and his son are presented as martyrs. It is ironical that people like Bittoo Mama, responsible for killing so many people is being worshipped.

India is a country of fake beliefs and faith where people like Asaram Babu flourish. Asaram Babu, a saint or missionary in Rajasthan was arrested by police

on charges of sexual assault. The spiritual guru, who started preaching in Gujarat, owns many ashrams in the country. Many political leaders and business class are his disciples but presently, he is in jail, serving the sentence.

India is a secular country where all religions are treated equally. Any altercation induced or forced upon by certain misguided individuals towards innocent humanity is crime. Such types of practices need to be curbed. The actions reflected in the works present a rather grim picture of what ideal situation should have been in a country like India. The dream world of the key political leaders and freedom fighters has been shattered and poses a gloomy future for India.

**Changing Faces of Women :** Though the issues related to women do not occupy a substantial space in *Five Point Someone* and *3 Mistakes of My Life* but in other two novels, they provide the glimpse of society which is undergoing transformation and accepting women in their new roles.

Earlier, women were confined to the four walls of the house, looking after and taking care of the family. Her feelings, interests, aspirations and desires were all suppressed due to family responsibility and family inhibitions.

In the present scenario, the situation is different, with education and modern outlook, women have become self reliant. She is ready to come out and find her own niche. Women characters in the above given novels, portray traditional as well modern ideology as per the taste of the changing times.

In *Five Point Someone*, there is Alok's mother, who is the only earning member of the family as her husband is paralysed. She keeps track of the stock of

medicines required for the husband. She wants her daughter to get married as she won't find a proper match, if she crosses a certain age. She also has to make arrangements for the dowry to be given to the bridegroom.

Another character Neha, in the same novel is a blend of tradition and modernity. She is one character who is rooted to tradition and still expounds her horizons. She has all the love and respect for her family and it is because of this feeling, she tries to adjust with the bossy ideas of her father. She has come to know the truth that her father is responsible for the death of her brother. She doesn't want to see her father, a shattered man. She dresses herself in Indian dresses but her approach is modern. She wishes to have an open lifestyle, sheds all her inhibitions and drinks liquor. When she is caught by her father along with her boyfriend Hari, she confesses her guilt and stands by her lover. When he gets the job, she is ready to settle with him but she doesn't want for herself a tag of housewife. She wants to be a self reliant, working woman. She has done a course in fashion designing and makes herself employed.

Even Ananya, in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is an independent woman who is a blend of tradition and modernity. She respects her family values but does not believe in sexual taboos. She is career oriented and has firm opinions and mindset. She is highly educated, doesn't believe in fake standards and doesn't wish to marry unless the parents from both sides give their nod. The women of today are ready to try out new vistas, experiment with new kind of jobs while, Neha in *Five Point Someone* is a fashion designer, *One Night @ the Call Center* gives a glimpse of working women in night shifts, Ananya in *2 States : The Story*

*of My Marriage* is a working professional. Esha in *One Night @ the Call Center* wants to make modelling her parallel career. The powerful women of today are economically sound. It is under the impact of globalisation and liberalisation – the coming of western ideas that she has come up on her own.

The dowry system has been practiced in India from times immemorial. As per Indian system dowry is the payment in cash or kind given to bridegroom along with the bride at the marriage ceremony. This includes jewellery, furniture, money, utensils and other household items which lays extra burden on bride's family. In the novel *Five Point Someone* Alok's family is struggling to find a suitable match for his sister. A match is found, the deal is struck and an engagement ceremony is arranged but on the final day, the groom demands his share of money. Alok is guilt ridden that he could not arrange the money and the marriage is called off.

Similarly, in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, Krish's mother Kavita is portrayed as a greedy woman. Since her son Krish is earning handsomely, she wants a rich bride for him who can fulfil her demands and she should have a standard which is appreciated by her relatives. Later, in one of the episodes, Krish's cousin Minti is getting married. The groom's family demanded an accent car. They are adamant and not ready to go on with the marriage rituals, unless their demands are met. Ananya handles the situation perfectly and the marriage is solemnised.

In modern times also, women have been the victims of exploitation. Women are facing problems in every sphere of life whether employment, access to health care or property rights. Women are being trafficked for sex, harassment at

workplaces and tortured in family or society. Esha and Radhika in *One Night @ the Call Centre* undergo harassment and exploitation which tortures them psychologically. Esha has to compromise for her modelling assignment while Radhika has to face domestic violence. Neha, in *Five Point Someone* suffers emotionally on account of her father while Krish's mother Kavita, in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is also a victim of domestic violence.

Working women are juggling between home and job, switching their roles. In the metropolitan society, it is very difficult to survive on one salary, women are also playing the role of bread earners. They are empowered since they are earning and independent but now they have to perform the double duty i.e. to manage their homes as well as their office which is a difficult task unless the family members are cooperative. Radhika, Priyanka, Esha, Neha, Ananya-all women characters are happy to be employed, and independent.

Extra-marital affairs in the modern society have become a common practice. The novelist has tried to provide a glimpse of the situation through the character Radhika in *One Night @ the Call Center*. Radhika's husband has been in a relationship with Payal, his girl friend. He has been leading a double life. He has been enjoying himself while his wife has been dutifully doing her part. When his mother complains him about Radhika, he reprimands her. They have a strained relationship and she wanted a divorce.

Extra-marital affairs are relationships outside the marriage which continues even as one of the partners to that affair is married. A spouse may engage in extra-marital affair to fulfil a need which can be physical, emotional or mental that is not

being fulfilled in a relationship. The affairs can damage trust in a relationship, same is the case with Radhika.

Thus, women characters are portrayed in variegated hues in the novels; some are portrayed convincingly and highlight the prominent issues facing women in Indian society. The society is accepting the role of working women but the traditional notions of division of labour is still not practiced in India. The changes in Indian male mentality are visible but they are slow to catch up whereas the evil effects of west – affairs, divorce are fast to catch up.

**The Use of Supernatural Elements and Superstitious Beliefs:** In the novel *One Night @ the Call Center*, the part of God is conducive to the action of the novel. All the six important characters are stuck in a pit facing imminent death. Just then, a call is received, it is God who hears out from each one of them and guides and motivates them to face the situation of crisis. It is described as the inner call which is the most important call from conscience which explains four lessons, a person needs for success (a) a medium amount of intelligence (b) invigilation (c) self confidence (d) courage to face failure.

God asks them to mobilise themselves and channelize their energy in the right direction and get rid of their autocrat boss Bakshi; “A bad boss is like a disease of the soul”(234). One should not ignore the inner voice and if it is ignored, “you get engaged in your own web of comfort. And then you reach a point like today, where life brings you to a dead end, and there is nothing ahead but a dark hole”(227).

All the six employees learn the lesson, chalk out a plan, get rid of Bakshi, save their call centre and work ahead for future in the new scheme of things.

The story concludes from where it began, the lady sums up the narrative while Bhagat thinks her to be one of the characters of the story. Then, there is a bright light and lady's smiling face is visible. She has got the book beside her, a holy text and the lady is gone while the novelist lay there motionless and amazed.

Superstition is a widespread social problem in India. It is any belief or practice which is explained by something which is not natural and which is against the laws of science. Even the educated people have been observed to follow these beliefs. In the twenty first century, when we look for modern ideas and are scientifically mobile, we still have space for these fake beliefs.

## 2.4 NOVELWISE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS

A character forms the backbone of the narrative or a work of art. The characters guide readers through their stories, helping them to understand plots and themes. Different characters have been dealt in the narrative each trying to play the part concisely in the scheme of the plot. The characters portray or reflect the traits and personalities which can be observed in common people when facing difficult situations. They present the gloomy picture of a modern man facing the struggles in a metropolitan culture.

The novel *Five Point Someone* presents different character personas which are representative of Bharat or India and are part of the modern political and cultural propaganda.

**Hari :** Hari's character has been efficiently explored by the novelist. Right from the beginning, he has been portrayed as suffering from some complex. He is not able to face the viva. He tries out hard to stand out and give reply to the queries put by the teachers but fails. Whenever a teacher used to look into his eyes, he felt handicapped and unable to reply although he knew the answer very well. The root cause of the problem is related with his family life, which has been sketchily mentioned in one of the chapters. His father had an army background, was a strict disciplinarian. His mother used to remain silent for days. His father used to beat him with a belt if Hari answered him back. His problem of insecurity lay in his home environment, where his parents were not normal people and they did not interact with him for days. He yearned for soothing and comforting environment of his family and felt neglected and deprived. He grew up facing the torturous

environment which complicated into a bigger problem. He could not interact with his seniors face to face or shied away from direct contact. In an episode, during the course of the narrative, he admits that he wants to be like Ryan who is confident, smart and has good physical attributes.

Hari believes that Ryan is intelligent enough to handle any discomfoting situation. He considers Ryan as his role model. Later on, in the disco which the three friends faced, prompted by his friends, he realises his self worth and understands that Ryan is not always right. He tries to overcome his speech disability in panicky and stressful situations. He successfully and satisfactorily answers the questions asked by the committee and is relieved that he has tried to defend himself and his friends whatever be the end result.

Very many people suffer from insecurities, lack of interest, loneliness at home. Hari is one of the kinds who suffer from inferiority complex but in the company of Ryan who is an extrovert, he sheds of his inhibitions and tastes success in untrodden zones which had been earlier discomfoting for him.

He is in love with Neha, but doesn't have the courage to convey his feelings to her. As a true friend, Ryan helps him out, he gains courage to propose her and come out of his shell. He goads him to take a step further in his relationship.

**Alok:** He is a soft guy who is bowed down by pressures of domestic issues. He has a paralysed father who needs medical attention. There is a sister who is of marriageable age. The only working member in his family is his mother who is a

school teacher. Alok cannot help his mother, as he himself is studying in IIT. He has forgotten all about his dreams and aspirations as he wants to help his family. He has shunned all his dreams of becoming a painter and an artist from his mind. He still carries a box of brushes and colours as a faint memory of his dreams. Throughout his life, he has been studying, diligently and nursing his ailing father. He doesn't know how to enjoy life. His whole world revolves around his family, getting into IIT, helping out his parents, supporting them financially but in his struggle he has to face a lot of hardships and has lost his true self, the real Alok.

Whenever, he does something wrong, he suffers from guilt complex because of his situation. He realises the true meaning of friendship only at IIT where he meets Hari and Ryan. He is an indecisive person. Whenever Hari and Ryan plan an adventure or for that matter some misadventure, he is unable to take a stand on his own. He teams up with them only with the guidance provided by his friends. He puts up a fight with Ryan not knowing about his family circumstances and shifts to another room. Later on, he realises his mistake and makes amends. He enjoys and takes pleasure in eating. He relaxes in the company of his friends but when he has to face tight situations, he breaks down. He has suicidal tendencies, when he gets to know that he had to lose one semester and his chances of getting a job were grim, he takes the extreme step. Luckily, he is saved and comes out from his inner lacunae with the effort of his friends who support him unconditionally.

**Ryan:** He suffers from his own set of problems. His parents are in pottery business. They sent him to a boarding institute when he was young and later on he

joined IIT. His parents shifted out of India and used to shower him with gifts and money. Ryan never used to discuss his family whenever prompted by his friends. His parents wrote to him but he never replied. He yearned for motherly love and fatherly touch. He believed that his parents have neglected him and they are after money and business. A child needs the love and affection of his parents at all stages of life. He wanted to feel the protective environment of his parents but he felt that, they were not with him when he needed them.

His friends, especially Hari understands the loneliness of Ryan and his relationship with his parents. Hari makes him realise that his parents, do care about him and he should understand their part. As Ryan is passionate about certain things in life, like his lubricant project similarly, his parents might have been passionate about their pottery business which left them with very little time.

Hari sends a letter to Ryan's parents under the name of Ryan which is a detailed account of Ryan's life. His parents take keen interest and reply back. The situation somehow melts down. Later, Ryan is able to get a job in the same institute as a research assistant under the guidance of Professor Veera; his father provides a helping hand and invests in his lubricant project.

Ryan is an extrovert guy, good looking handsome, body builder frame and full of jest for life. He is innovative in his ideas but his ideas are rejected by the superiors. He can't think himself to be following the tight schedule at IIT. He feels that there is no scope for any creative activity. He feels stressed out and frustrated. He suggests a plan to his friends to ease out the pressure at IIT. They would be studying for limited hours after the classes and then spend the time in outdoor

activities or movies. The whole paper and period schedule is divided amongst the friends whereby the classes of one paper would be attended by only one of them. The same one only has to prepare notes of the paper and share it with his friends. The plan fails and they all fall into the category of five pointers. They score poorly in the exams. Ryan's next strategy- 'Operation Pendulum' is also a flop show. Their planning to steal papers gets them caught and punished but it is the lube project initiated by Ryan which saves them all.

Ryan is frustrated with his life, his family, professors in the college. On account of his complexes, he is not able to concentrate on his studies. He tries to find ways to ease out of his problems but all his strategies prove to be a dumb show except for the lube project. His creativity, his boldness, free spirit is suppressed by the cold and harsh treatment at IIT. At the disco, which they face, it is Hari who becomes the saviour and not Ryan. Alok is not able to digest the news of debarring and tries to commit suicide. The situation lay heavily on Ryan but Hari comes to rescue. They study together on lube project, an idea of Ryan and try to save themselves by earning credits.

Ryan who is described as an easy go lucky guy comes to face the heat in the concluding chapters. He realises his mistakes and devotes himself to the project creatively and productively.

**Professor Cherian:** He is the head of the Mechanical Engineering department, is gripped under his own stereotypical ideology. He himself had been an IIT topper. He did not move anywhere else as he wanted to do the research work while his other mates who got lesser scores than him had excelled in their jobs. They headed

the software companies and he remained a Professor. He wanted his son to carry forward his intellectual tradition but his son failed to get into IIT. Unable to bear his failure and his father's displeasure, he committed suicide. Cherian's son wanted a life different from his father's ideals which he was not allowed and hence he took away his own life. When Cherian comes to know about suicide, he could not control himself and all his pain, grief, guilt comes out in the form of tears. The kind of catharsis and his guilt leading to his son's death melts him a little and he shows leniency towards the boys and makes them appear for the interviews on the basis of their project.

The sadness and frustration experienced by Professor Cherian finds a channel. When he realises what he had done to his own son, his remorse is directed towards the boys. He grants pardon to them and clears their way out.

**Neha:** She is Professor Cherian's daughter, a sensitive girl, modern yet homely. Hari comments, "There are two kinds of girls in Delhi... the second is the traditional type who wears salwar kameez, multicoloured bindis and large earrings"(44).

She represents a true picture of traditional Indian girl having modern ideology. She was deeply attached to her brother and she knew the bitter truth that her father is responsible for her brother's death but she loves her father too, realising that if her father discovers the truth about her brother's death, he would not be able to take it. That's why, she conceals the letter from her father.

Neha's father, Professor Cherian has been a dominating and over-protective parent who doesn't want her to interact with the boys. When she is outside at a bookshop or a store, she maintains her distance from Hari, her love interest. She feels suffocated by her home environment and whenever she gets an opportunity she enjoys her freedom. She likes drinking, cigarettes, chatting with Hari's friends and gets intimate with Hari. She genuinely feels for Hari and at a later stage is ready to take up job in Bombay as Hari is also working in Bombay.

The characters of *One Night @ the Call Center* present a glimpse of fast paced society, imbibing and following the western ideals and traits, modernising, catching up with new culture but also not letting away with the traditional concepts.

**Shyam or Sam Mercy:** He is the main protagonist of the novel. The plot moves from Shyam Mehra or Sam Mercy as he is called at his work place, to his getting ready for his night shift at the call centre. He worked in the website department of an ad agency before joining the call centre job. He is not at all attractive or good looking. He lacks the skill to impress or influence others. He wants to start his own business and set up a web design company with Vroom, his friend and a colleague. He is in love with Priyanka, who also works in call centre. He wants to get settled with a girl like her who can blend love and friendship. They work together in WASG- Western Appliance Strategic Group which deals with customers of home appliances, refrigerators, ovens and vacuum cleaners. It is called strategic because they specialise in troublesome and painful customers. They part their ways during the course of the plot. Priyanka gets an NRI match and is all set to marry him.

Shyam is heart broken and commits one blunder after another in an effort to get her back.

Shyam suffers from inferiority complex. He faces the extreme conditions in his life. On one side, he is not able to get his lady love back and on another front at his office, all his efforts and hard work is not appropriated. He has not been given a promotion which was overdue. His troubleshooting website which he has developed with Vroom, has been sent to the high office by Bakshi, his boss, with his own name imprints. All his efforts to lead a comfortable life have been in vain. His personal and professional life is in doldrums. He is exploited by Bakshi but he could not quit as he needed the job. Priyanka and others, taunt him for his inefficiency but his meeting with God gives him a lesson for success and boosts his self confidence. Once out of the pit, he saves the call centre from crisis along with his friends and later floats a web design company with Vroom.

**Varun Malhotra or Victor Mell:** He is also called Vroom because of his love for anything on wheels. He has been a problem child. His parents were divorced and still they were in contact and fought regularly. He had been working in a newspaper office as a journalist trainee. He dealt with global and social issues. His article ‘Why don’t politicians ever commit suicide’ was weird. The article said, “All kinds of people students, housewives, businessman, employees, and even film stars-commit suicides. But politicians never do. That tells you something”(49). He was a kind of activist that’s why he did not get along with his bosses. He has been represented as a person who is never serious in life. He loves speed and therefore loves biking. He is not stuck on one girl friend. His carefree attitude and love for

speed proves fatal for him and others, as the car he was driving along with his friends fall into a pit, but they are saved miraculously.

He has become unemotional and unmindful in his life because he had a tortured childhood. The constant fights between the parents made him stressed out. This made him frustrated and in the phases of sadness, he used to de-stress by driving out, dating with girls, going to hookah bars etc. He finds a true friend in Shyam and confides his mental state to him who understands his problems. At office, he along with Shyam has designed a website manual but Bakshi takes the credit himself to impress his bosses.

He is sick of his tomboyish lifestyle, and his agonised childhood, he wishes to settle down. He wants to give a new meaning and direction to his life and wants to settle down with Esha, a colleague in the call centre. He proposes Esha but she has not accepted his proposal because she has her own situation to deal with. She wants to be a model and is in struggling phase. She is not ready to commit. When Victor comes to know, the actual reason of rejecting his proposal, he could not accept the position of Esha. He rebukes her because he was seriously thinking about her. Finally, he understands the guilt and dilemma which Esha is facing and apologises to her.

Throughout Victor has been a rebel who can't accept the prejudiced idealism. He had to leave his first job because of his straight forwardness and pointed remarks on politicians. He is against any kind of racialism. When an American calls him and gives racial comments, he could not digest it.

The traits displayed by Vroom very significantly point toward the dilemmas and strains of modern life style which one experiences in life, thinking all pains and struggles will be overpowered in fast paced lifestyle but which inadvertently leads to nothing. After his meeting with God and accident, he realises his real worth, his capacity and capabilities. He knows that he has to build his future and that too a secure one. "I would work days and nights for that as long as I know that I am doing is helping build something for my country for its future"(209). For him, "Progress is building something lasting for future"(228). He gets even with Bakshi, settles scores with him. He helps the people at call centre by saving their job, quits his own job and opens a web design company with Shyam.

**Priyanka:** She works in the same call centre as Shyam. She is a team member and reports to Shyam as he was the team leader. Priyanka and Shyam had a serious relationship but due to some misunderstandings they broke off. Shyam is still in love with her. She also has a soft corner for him but pretends otherwise. It is Priyanka's mother who has complicated the situation. Here we witness an unusual bonding between the mother and the daughter. They have arguments about petty issues like wearing gold. Priyanka says at one stage "You know my mom and her obsessions for an NRI match for her rebellious daughter"(62).

Priyanka's mother wants her to settle down with a rich and intellectual person. She wanted an NRI match for her daughter and not someone who is doing a call centre job. Throughout the narrative, she showers a marked influence on her daughter. She is the root cause of break up between Priyanka and Shyam. Priyanka understands the nature of her mother but she is also attached to her mother. So,

when a marriage proposal of an NRI Ganesh comes for Priyanka, she accepts him leaving Shyam in the lurch. Somehow, the truth about Ganesh is revealed and she cancels the marriage plans with him.

She is critical about Shyam and prompts him to take an action against Bakshi who had been exploiting him. She wants him to stand for all the hard work which he had put in and give a befitting reply to Bakshi. She is a well-wisher of Shyam as far as professional life is concerned.

In all, Priyanka is a sensible girl but still, she disapproves Shyam because her mother wants her to do. Later, when she realises the true worth of Shyam, she goes all out for him, rejecting the claims of her mother. She is a symbol of empowered woman who is not ready to give in come what way. She stands up for what she feels for. During the course of the text-‘Past Dates with Priyanka I and II,’ the novelist presents this facet of her personality. During a date, Priyanka and Shyam are sitting and enjoying refreshments in a restaurant. There a family was sitting- husband, wife, mother-in-law and two daughters. The mother-in-law was dominating and criticising her daughter-in-law at every point while the husband was relishing his food and not at all supporting his wife. Priyanka stood up for the meek daughter-in-law and taught a lesson to mother-in-law. “Harassing woman is punishable for three years. Quick trial no appeal”(91).

She is an open-minded and outspoken lady. She drinks openly and has also a wild side to her personality. She could even sit with truck drivers and have tea. She is a determined lady who can stand out for herself as the occasion demands.

She questions Shyam about his passivity. She says, “Why can’t people stand up for themselves”(81).

She is very emotional also, as is visible in her relationship with her mother. She accepts Ganesh’s proposal because of her mother but when she realises that Ganesh has lied about his physical appearance. She could not accept the deception. She does not accept the improvisations of her mother and breaks off with Ganesh. She continues with her job and intends to do B.Ed. and get married with Shyam after two years.

Priyanka is a multifaceted personality which is displayed through her actions. She truly represents the picture of modern Indian woman who is empowered, mature and delicate.

**Esha Singh or Eliza Singer:** She works in the call centre and was considered the hottest chick at connexions. She had moved to Delhi from Chandigarh, against the wishes of her parents. She earns her living by working at the call centre during the night shift and goes to find modelling assignments during daytime.

She aspires to become a model. She is 5-5” and twenty two years old and is considered a little short for the fashion world. She also has participated in the fashion shows but they were low profile. She visits various modelling agencies to get new assignments. Her nature of job related to modelling is very hard as she had to make adjustments as per their demands. Her dressing is perfect. She dresses beautifully with earrings, mascara, eyeliner, lipstick etc. Her fashion sense is impeccable. She attracts everyone with her stunning looks. She supports a naval

ring. Her road to success is laid out with thorns. In order to get good opportunities, she gives into the physical advances of the sponsors and contract managers. She is not able to get the assignments even after compromising. She is guilt ridden and a tortured soul. She explains “Real pain is mental pain”(155). She is not able to accept her exploitation and rejection. She reflects, “Everyone has a dark side to their life...something you don’t like about yourself, something that makes you angry or something that you fear”(156). Vroom proposes her but she rejects it because she doesn’t want to cheat him. She confides her guilt to Shyam and other girls.

Towards the end, after her meeting with God, she comes to realise that her modelling career is not worth it. She doesn’t wish to compromise on her views any longer. She continues with her job at the call centre and intends to visit her parents’ home at Chandigarh. Exploitation of women continues unchecked in the metro cities & there is spurt in the cases of harassment against women.

**Bakshi:** He is the boss of Shyam and manages the services at the call center. He is around thirty but looks like forty and speaks like as if he is fifty. He has done his MBA from some university down South. His physical attributes are summed up as, “The oversized face resembled the Ravan cut-out at Dusshera”(54). Vroom believes that “Bakshi is just a silly but a harmless creature.”(59) There are cheeky lines spoken by Bakshi which are used to create humour in the narrative as he says, “... aren’t we comparing ourselves to oranges here?”(79)

He is portrayed as a character who doesn’t have the knowledge but who wishes to scale to Boston on the hard work done by others. He loads the

troubleshoot website in his own name to his superiors although he has no role in person creating it. He is bossy and dominating. He is ill managed and is deficient in handling the affairs at the call center. He has been termed as an idiot. “He is a scary one. He is like a blind snake: you feel sorry for it. But it still has a poisonous bite”(153). He also has the habit of watching porn sights on the net and makes use of his position but Shyam and his team members outwit him in the end. They blackmail him on account of a mail delivered to Esha. They arrange for a talk with the bosses & clarify the whole situation. The matter is resolved and he is shown the door.

Characters like Bakshi are a common sight in the society who wear mask to hide their true identity. In the competitive world of today, people like him surge ahead of others but ultimately they fall on ground as their mischievous acts get revealed.

Rajiv Gandhi’s liberalisation policy helped to get computers and it has provided jobs to millions at global level but to take an unlawful advantage of technology for own purposes is highly deplorable as is exemplified by Bakshi.

*The 3 Mistakes of My Life* gives a glimpse of life and culture which is based on false religion and values seeking a division of society, instead of planning to create a world which is devoid of division and fractions which segregate and destroy the world.

**Govind:** He is the main protagonist who is a true businessman, and very calculative. He is the best mathematician available in the town. Amongst the three

friends, he is the one, who maintains the account and proposes what kind of business they should start supported by Omi & Ish. Govind manages business, all orders and deliveries. Later on, along with his friends, he analyses the business at the sports shop. He is the most vigilant of the three but he commits the three mistakes which shakes his world upside down. The first mistake which he commits is the purchase of a new shop in an upcoming mall at Navrangpura but all his efforts come to naught as he loses all his investments in the shop because of an earthquake. He has taken loans, multiplied with his savings and collections from friends, all were all lost. All his hopes & desires of expanding his business are dashed to ground. Still, he gathers courage to stand all over again after the initial setback.

He repays all his loans & debts through careful planning and hard work, with the support of his friends. He gets order of sports equipment from the school and establishes his rapport.

Bitoo mama always coaxes him because of the shop which was in temple premises and lent out to the three friends but he takes care to pay his rent on time.

Meanwhile, Govind gets hooked up with Vidya, Ish's sister. He starts giving her maths tuitions as she wanted to give medical entrance exams. They plan to get medical books from the shop when they visit a parlour for refreshments. They open up and become friendly. When Govind and his friends take a trip to Australia, he realises that he is in love with Vidya. He comes back and gets intimate with her. This is the second mistake which he commits. He knows that

Vidya is Ish's sister and Ish would not like his relationship with Vidya. He takes the risk of losing his friendship.

All the three friends love cricket and want Ali to become a successful cricketer. Govind is fussy about spending money because of a hard life which he had faced in his childhood. His father had left him & his mother when he was just a child. His mother had made every effort to make him a fine gentleman. When his father left his mother alone many years ago, she kept on crying and was consoled by the women of neighbourhood. She had to suffer a lot in her life but the setbacks had made her strong. Govind grew up watching the pain and suffering of his mother. He has pent up feelings against his father & is tormented by his neglect. He has come to know that his father had a second wife across the town. His mother is taking care of the snacks business and now they have learnt to live their lives alone without him. Govind has grown up to an intelligent man who can handle the burden and responsibilities of the household. He is good at mathematics and very calculative but he is fussy about spending money. On their trip to Australia with Ali, he chalks every bit of program as to how much financial strain they can bear out. He takes care that Ish and Omi don't overplay their parts and spend on unnecessary articles.

He makes his business increase threefold and hence the gains. He successfully repays all the loans and earns good profits. He commits the third mistake in the bank when the riots break out. When Mama is on the verge of attacking Ali, he reacts, a little late which causes wrist injury to Ali and he loses his ability to strike the bat. Moreover, Ish comes to know the truth of relationship

between Vidya & Govind & he falls in the eyes of his friend. Omi dies in the struggle and Govind is left alone. Govind realises his mistake but Ish stays aloof from him. He tries to help Ali but to no avail. He consumes sleeping pills but the matter is resolved by the timely efforts of the novelist.

Govind's business instincts & self interest makes him lose his true friends but the acceptance of his mistakes & financial help given to Ali makes him patch up with Vidya & finally Ish. The friendship reflected by the three friends is exemplary. Though each one is individualistic in his approach and is different from the other but it is their friendship which eventually wins.

There is adoption of many aspects of new culture and modern values like investment in malls, training a Muslim boy, moving out to Australia but still the age old cultural practices, religious diversities and caste distinctions are surviving. In the novel there are reservations in accepting the love affair and also the stereotypical religious ideology. The thinking has not undergone much transformation.

**Omi:** He is a Brahmin boy. His father is the priest of the Swamibhakti temple which is owned by Omi's mother's family for generations. Omi was not good at studies. He barely cleared class twelfth exams, after repeating the maths compartment exam twice. There are gossip theories round the corner which suggest that Omi has become stupid because a cricket ball had hit him. He did not want to become a priest of the temple so he gave in for opening up of a sports shop in the temple complex. He arranges for the shop convincing his mother as the shop was owned by Omi's maternal uncle. Omi likes to enjoy with his friends and

watching cricket. He supports his friends in all their adventures. He has been going to gym of his maternal uncle. So, he also gives fitness classes along with cricket classes. Bittoo mama tries to influence him to join the saffron brigade or become a votary of Hindutva. He along with his friends attends the feast given by Parekhji, the religious guru who is an influential man. Omi is a foodie and relishes every kind of food. He seems to be under the spell of religious ideology practiced & followed by Bittoo mama and Parekhji for some time.

They enjoy together in Australia where they go for Ali's training. There Omi realises Govind's attraction for Vidya, Ish's sister. He reprimands him and asks him to stay away from her. Later, he is in great sorrow when he comes to know that Bittoo mama's son, Dhiraj has been killed in the Godhara carnage. He tries to remain calm but owing to the sensitivity of the situation, it was difficult to self control.

Riots break out as an aftermath of the incident. The three friends meet at the bank where they carry out teaching and practicing. The boy Ali is with them. The Hindu mob with Bittoo mama comes to that secluded place to kill Ali, the Muslim boy. Omi, in a valiant effort, sides with his friends in saving the little boy and in turn loses his own life.

**Ishaan:** Ishaan is a friend of Govind and Omi. He ran away from NDA where he was a trainee. His father works in a telephone exchange and has the modest salary. He loves cricket and has been playing it along with his friends when they were together in Belrampur Municipal School. Ish cannot handle any domination over him so he ran out of the army as he could not see himself following the orders of

someone. His father used to scold him for leaving the army. He was the team captain for all municipal schools in the area. He is passionate about cricket. He played at district level but could not make for state level. He is the best cricketer in the town. When Ali comes into picture, Ishaan sees the potential of the little child and plans to train him for free. He takes him to the doctor to inquire about his health. The doctor diagnosis him to be having hyper reflexes which strains him out after few shots. Ishaan confides to his friends and also Ali's father about the training. He takes him to Australia in an effort to procure a scholarship to train him. He believes in God and religion but is against any false propaganda. He comforts and supports his friend Govind when they lose their shop in the mall at Navrangpura. He is very protective about his sister Vidya. Once a guy follows her up, he gets a severe beating from him. Ish requests Govind to teach maths to Vidya because she wanted to sit for medical entrance exams. Govind is attracted to her and falls into a serious relationship with her, knowing well the repercussions. When Ish comes to know the truth about the relationship, he stops talking with him and behaves as if Govind is non-existent.

With his courage and intelligent tricks, he along with his friends save Ali, from impending death at the hands of Bittoo mama but he loses his friends. Omi is dead while Govind is barred from any communication because of his proximity to Vidya. Towards the end he acknowledges his friend Govind and his love for his sister.

*2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is an interesting study as one witnesses the rich culture of North and South India. The traditions, ideology and glittering

picture of love relationship which turns sour and finally the happy ending are all part of the scheme.

The plot revolves around Krish and Ananya, the main protagonists. They belong to different states and want to get married. The problem arises when the parents disagree. The narrative moves through the Punjabi neighbourhood in Delhi to the high brow culture down the South. It involves emotions, fat Punjabi weddings, breakups and patch ups, jerky mothers, witty dialogues to the happy ending.

**Krish:** The narrative opens with the character Krish discussing his problems with a psychiatrist. The author has enlisted the conversation in italics. The story moves through flash back when Krish relates his side of story to the doctor. He used to study in IIM at Ahmedabad where he first met Ananya Swaminathan, the best girl in the fresher's batch. He points out, "Good looking ones were rare; girls don't get selected to IIM for their looks. They get in because they can solve mathematical problems faster than 99.9% of Indian population and crack the CAT"(3). Both fall in love with each other after initial hassles but they have other problems to look up to, their conservative parents. Krish's parents are North Indians and practice and idolise their set of culture. Krish has done his IIT from Delhi, his mother is a housewife and he is close to her and not on talking terms with his father.

Earlier, he was in relationship with a girl, who was a Professor's daughter at IIT. He had to leave her under the influence and pressure of her father. He longs to become a writer.

He is very protective and caring about Ananya. He doesn't want her to wear shorts. They stay together in the hostel room and are comfortable with each other. He takes his time to decide about his future with Ananya. He faces the interview, has imaginary conversations with God and then proposes to Ananya.

Krish knows and understands that his mother would not accept Ananya as her daughter-in-law because she is a Tamilian. Together, Krish and Ananya plan for the meeting of their parents on convocation but the plan fizzles out. Later on, the trip to Sabarmati Ashram also sulks. When Krish comes back to Delhi to meet his mother before joining the bank, his mother wants him to meet Dolly, a potential bride and tries all sorts of tricks to convince him. Krish knows the uncanny attitude of his father towards his mother. So, he cannot altogether ignore her opinions and ideas about her future daughter-in-law. He wants to protect and save her. When he has the option about deciding between Chennai and Delhi for job, he wishes for Chennai as he would be closer to Ananya but out of guilt and responsibility towards his mother, he gives Delhi, an equal preference. It is by sheer luck that he gets a posting for Chennai.

It is for Ananya that he has opted for Chennai as his workplace. This is absolutely new surroundings and situation for him. His new boss Bala goes with the logo "Citi never sleeps, we make our customers weep"(110). Officially, the bank starts at 9 a.m. but the trainees were supposed to report at 7:30 a.m. and he used to get up at 5:00 a.m. in the morning. Krish was asked to sale out the internet stocks to the Citibank customers including the housewives. The stocks went into the loss mode and investors closed their account. When the explanations were

demanded by the high command, Krish was made the scapegoat, although he only followed his boss's orders.

Krish's relations with his father are strained. He has been abused by his father in his childhood. T.V. was not allowed at home and he did not treat his wife well. His father did not approve of his relationship with the girl of an IIT Professor. Krish releases his piled up emotions by slapping and punishing his father. In the end, the tension between father-son duo is resolved. Krish's marriage to Ananya is solemnised with the efforts of Krish's father.

The spiritual side of Krish is also given a footing in the novel. Krish visits Pondicherry with Ananya. There he goes to the ashram and meets a Guruji who helps him confront his emotional self. It helps him heal his personal problems to some extent and gives him clarity of vision.

Krish along with Ananya tries to fix up the problem of North-South divide by impressing Ananya's father. Krish visits Ananya's home on the pretext of taking tuitions for Ananya's brother. He makes every effort to guide and provide coaching to her brother. He rises early at five in the morning, dresses and goes straight to Ananya's place to teach and then to office. Finally back to home at night and yet again, he prepares his lectures for the next day. He also helps Ananya's father, Mr. Swaminathan with his presentation at the bank. He realises about Mr. Swaminathan's fondness for drinks and music. He even stays at her home and wears a lungi when Ananya is away. He helps out Ananya's mother by suggesting her name for a music concert organised by his bank officials. So, Krish wins over the family of Ananya.

One gets a picture of modern hectic lifestyle in the private sector. The idea is to exploit the consumer. Carefree attitude and no taboos as far as drinks are concerned; changes in life style, dress all are markedly visible.

**Ananya Swaminathan:** She is a South Indian girl who is studying at IIM. She has perfect features and she is the best girl in the fresher's batch. She likes to have non-vegetarian food and beer. She is a Tamilian Brahmin. Her father works in the bank of Baroda at Chennai. Her mother is a typical South Indian wife. She has a brother who is studying. Ananya is proud of her looks as she acknowledges that she has got many proposals at IIM. She is an economics graduate from Delhi University. She is an open-minded and flexible girl but is a bit touchy as far as her parents are concerned which is natural on her part. She has unconventional looks i.e. she has a fair complexion which does not go with the South Indian image of a dusky woman. She is unconventional in other ways also; she is a Tamil Brahmin but open to non vegetarian food and liquor otherwise restricted in their family. She is bold and defiant, wears Indian and Western dresses and is fluent in English.

She shares a comfortable equation with Krish. She boldly accepts her relationship with him. She stays with Krish in his hostel room, gets physical with him. She has a modern, independent outlook towards life. Her equation with Krish's mother is not in a comfy zone and like many modern girls, she doesn't know how to cook as she has all the time remained busy with her studies.

Modern woman has empowered herself with financial and economic independence. Ananya is a just example of that empowerment. At Krish's cousin, Minti's wedding she stands for the righteous thing; she convinces Minti's husband

that their demand for dowry is unjustified. She is a highly ambitious lady and career oriented. That's why she studied at the top institute and got herself a good placement in HLL (Hindustan Lever Limited).

Although she has been portrayed in a bold avatar, she has certain grey overtones which are not highlighted yet they form a certain part of her personality. She is open to drinks, sex and having a boyfriend, still she wants to marry only with the wishes of parents. She hides many of her personal details from her parents which she should have pointed out. She stops talking to Krish after Goa episode and indirectly becomes responsible for Krish's depression and mania. She could have followed a more honourable course to handle the situation.

Her humane side is also reflected in the novel as she wants the parents from both the sides to attend the marriage. She understands the gap between the two families but with the help of Krish, she tries to persuade her parents and also get into the good books of Krish's family. The traits of her personality have been ably represented by Krish when he admits that, "She is different. She is confident, independent and intelligent. But she is caring and sensitive too"(229).

**Mr. Swaminathan:** Ananya's parents are very simple minded and have a typical South Indian mentality. Like all parents they want their daughter to be happy and comfortable and want her to marry a qualified person and that too, a South Indian. Mr. Swaminathan has been a senior in the bank but his credentials and seniority have been overlooked. He is not given his due promotion instead, his junior gets the promotion. This is a setback for him. Krish enters the house to help out Swaminathan's son and provide him tuitions. Meanwhile, Mr. Swaminathan is

assigned a new task of working on a presentation which provides details about the growth of the bank but he is not very good at computers. At first, he is too shy to share his problem and doesn't ask for any help but when he finds no way out, he accepts Krish's offer of helping him out and together they work on the presentation. This intimacy makes Krish realise Swaminathan's tastes and culture. The slides are made out and Krish convinces him to go for the presentation himself which he indeed does, and wins accolades for his performance and efforts. In this way Krish wins over Mr. Swaminathan.

**Radha Swaminathan:** Ananaya's mother Radha Swaminathan has a love for knowledge, hatred for showing off, has earthy ways of eating food and loves carnatic music. She is looking for well bred, educated South Indian match for her daughter. When Krish comes to know about her love for music, he recommends her name for a music concert organised by his bank. She is terrified at the prospect of participation and singing songs but she yields to Krish's pleadings. She gets much appreciation for her performance and Krish is successful in his efforts.

**Kavita:** She is Krish's mother; a typical Punjabi housewife who has suffered throughout her life bickering and violence at the hands of her husband. She has accepted her fate and treats her son as her saviour and future. She is a link between the son and the father. She always takes sides with her son when the tussle takes place between the father and the son. She is very possessive about her son and wants him to marry a girl of her choice, pretty but minus credentials. She always points out that Krish should marry a girl having rich parents as it would add to the cumulative wealth she would bring in.

She disapproves Ananya for Krish as she is a South Indian, not a Punjabi or of their caste. She believes that “North Indians are fairer. The Tamilians have a complex”(56). She makes nasty comments on Ananya and her family during the course of the plot which makes the reading funny. She blurts out, “These South Indians don’t know how to control their daughters. From Hema Malni to Sridevi, all of them trying to catch Punjabi men”(48). During the visit to Sabarmati Ashram along with Ananya’s family, she asks questions on Dandi Yatra and Ananya’s parents get a taste of her knowledge. Things don’t work out between the parents.

Ananya takes a short trip to Delhi to fix the situation but Kavita totally ignores her at the airport. She doesn’t like Ananya’s presence at her home and leaves her alone for cooking dinner which turns out to be a disaster. Kavita comments on her not being able to cook and using her son as bait. Later when Ananya apologises she says, “Its fine, you modern girls are like this. That is why I want Krish to marry...”(195). She leaves the sentence incomplete which can be interpreted as North Indian or a rich girl. All the time she has been discussing potential brides. She discusses about the amount spent on Minti’s marriage and the money Krish can get as a groom. She tries to rationalise her statement every time. She is little greedy but this can be accepted from a woman who has been deprived of the little joys throughout her life. She has been waiting for this moment throughout her life and yearning for little riches. She has not experienced a peaceful and comfortable life and her son is her support system and she wishes to fulfil all her dreams and aspirations through him.

**Krish's Father:** Krish did not have a comfortable relationship with his father. He hated his father for bullying him and his mother. He was an ex-army man and whatever occupations he had tried his hands turned out to be a fiasco. He poured out his frustrations and anger at his family. He did not help his son Krish when he needed his help in marrying a girl of his choice which further complicates the matter between them.

During the course of the narrative, he showered beatings on his wife but Krish could not tolerate it and he raised his hand on his father and after that, there was no conversation between them.

He hates and condemns his wife Kavita's family as they all the time convey to Kavita that she has made a wrong choice in her life. At one stage, Krish helps his father in some paper work which somehow melts the father in him. He realises that he has a responsibility towards his son. He undertakes the journey down South and meets Ananya's parents and try to resolve all misunderstandings. Finally, he becomes the man responsible for solemnising the marriage of true lovers. He suffers from inner complexes and failures which are tearing him apart. He needs an outlet to pour out his frustrations and tormented soul and the family is the one who bears the burnt.

There is also a reflection of the generation gap between the older and younger generation. Their divergent thinking, together with the changed scenario and new ideology and culture has further promoted the gulf and differences between them.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

All the four books under study present a life style which is exemplified in the modern Indian society. The lives in big cities, humdrum, struggles, exploitations, divisions, cut throat competition to excel, stagnations, diversions are all very real and striking. This is a society where new culture is breeding up, in addition to age old traditions and heritage. At times, one is torn by the demands created by the two.

*Five Point Someone* ably points out the serious gaps in our education system. The system has been politicised, the need to come out at the top, to match the honchos in the western countries, the pressure on the students is immense. There is another front, where the students are using other medium to tackle the problems related with exams. The use of unfair means and practices is on the increase, there is general deterioration in the standards, and the real talent is in the hibernation and not given a chance to blossom out.

*One Night @ the Call Center* gives a glimpse of metropolitan society. The Call Centre, night life, pizzas discs, drinks have become common. The exploitation at the workplace, excessive working hours, pressure to deliver- all has been focused. We get to visualise the upbringing in the new culture - the relationship between mother and daughter, mother- in- law and daughter- in law, the divided families, the effects on children and then the modelling profession, racial dilemma, the western impact have been thrown open. In fact, there is an imprint of multicultural lives which people are experiencing. The supernatural elements have also been tossed up. The idea about belief in God and the virtues which he expects

from the man, the faith in him and coming out of near death experience has been left open to us. The unusual meeting of the writer with a lady in the train and ending with a bright halo leaves one open mouthed and speechless.

*The 3 Mistakes of My Life* poses serious questions about the authenticity of Hindu fundamentalists, whether they are for the betterment of society or fomenting trouble between different cultures. The Hindu-Muslim divide and sports mania form the main theme but many episodes from the real life situation form a part of the book. They seem to be forced upon- Bhuj earthquake, Godhara carnage, the religious meetings of Parekhji, love angle and as such they mar the interest of the study. The search of Bhagat to find someone who is about to take his life through internet all seem to be impossible but then, the search is rewarding after all.

The study as such brings out the polarisation of religion at the hands of the superior few, mall imbroglio, the gifted cricketer, coaching for competitive exams, lure for money- present a society which is not ready to leave the past but also diverging and inching towards new culture.

*2 States: The Story of My Marriage* delineates a society which is still reeling under the rift of North and South divide. The issues of women empowerment, the stresses of modern day jobs, domestic violence, failed marriages find a prominent place in the folds of the book. The common problems, the ways to handle them, the issues with parents, the work-culture, the mania all have been meticulously tackled. The serious questions related to political propaganda, the elite creating the gulf between the masses have been left open for interpretation.

The low class and middle class are trying to get sanskritised to raise their levels while elite are getting westernised and modernised. The chain reaction continues to spread but with the possible side effects. Indian society has become more prone to negative tendencies and adopting them in their lifestyle. The author has concentrated on youth lifestyle and their slang in order to highlight modern trends. He has hinted at possible reformation but provided no authentic solutions.

On one side, there is a glimpse of society which is mod and rational and on the other, the society which is stereotyped, superstitions and irrational. There is a set of multiple cultures and voices projected in the texts where each one of them is trying to supersede the other. The Bharat or India which has been envisioned was to be free from dogmas and actively charging towards the progressive and rational ideas, rampant in the new world, adopting them with élan devoid of negativities. Nevertheless, Indians are still searching for the patterns which they can relate with and also which can offer some solace to their soulful stirrings. The ideas related to changes in Indian culture have been further explored in the third chapter of the study.

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