



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Indian Youth: Impressions of Daniel Goleman's domain of Self Awareness and Chetan Bhagat Traits in his Novels

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

*The recent emergence of Emotional Intelligence as a subject has involved scientists, academicians, psychologists and philosophers to explain their findings through various theories. Though Wechsler, Thorndike have written on social intelligence in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the most popular and widely accepted model of Emotional Intelligence has been proposed by the former Harvard University professor, Daniel Goleman. Among all the theories on EI, Goleman's theory covers both the personal and social competencies of an individual. This theory includes five main competencies which also comprise of sub competencies. The first competency, self-awareness relates to the ability of an individual to recognize a feeling like anger. This competency includes the abilities of emotional awareness, self-assessment and self-confidence. This article focuses on Chetan Bhagat's portrayal of youth in his novels with the impressions of Daniel Goleman's first domain of Self Awareness. It also throws light on the three traits Bhagat tries to bring out through his characters in the novels. Chetan Bhagat's novels have known to shake Indian sensibility, by giving interesting bits of knowledge as a result of diving into the regularly changing ideal models of human conditions that think that it's trapped in the labyrinth of affection, corruption and desire. It has been rightly observed that while children constitute the future of the country, youth constitutes its present.*

**Keywords -** Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness, Youth, Traits, Characters

## I. INTRODUCTION

The study of emotional intelligence is a relatively new field. Plato wrote, "All learning has an emotional base," about two millennia ago. Since then, researchers in the fields of psychology, philosophy, academics, and science have attempted to use a variety of hypotheses to explain their findings on emotional intelligence. Theorists like David Wechsler and Robert Thorndike wrote on social intelligence and non-intellective factors in the first half of the 20th century. These are necessary for a person to interact with his environment in an efficient manner. Other academics were unaware of their preliminary findings until Howard Gardner introduced the concept of multiple intelligences in 1983. He asserts that humans possess a variety of hidden skills in addition to being subjective to a single form of intelligence (IQ alone). Daniel Goleman, a science journalist for The New York Times for almost a decade, a former Harvard University professor, and an author, has suggested the most popular and largely recognised hybrid model of emotional intelligence. As a writer, he has covered a wide range of subjects, such as creativity, mindfulness, social and emotional learning, and more recently, environmental issues like ecological crises and eco-literacy. His writings on emotional intelligence include the books *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (released in 1998), *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can Matter more than IQ?* (1995), and *What Makes a Leader?* (published in the Harvard Business Review, 1998). He brought emotional intelligence to the attention of the business community. This concept views emotional intelligence as a blend of social and personal competencies. While

empathy and social skills are under the category of social competencies, self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation fall under the category of personal competencies. Four components were introduced in the subsequent version of this model: relationship management, social awareness, self-awareness, and self-management.

Goleman's theory is the only one on EI that addresses a person's social and personal abilities. The five primary competencies in this approach are further subdivided into sub-components. The first competency, self-awareness, has to do with a person's capacity to identify emotions such as anger. The skills of emotional awareness, self-evaluation, and self-assurance are included in this competency. The capacity to regulate emotions and reroute unfavorable ones is included in the second competency, self-regulation.

Among the sub skills are self-control, reliability, conscientiousness, flexibility, and inventiveness. The third competency, motivation, is the capacity to use feelings to propel oneself towards objectives via initiative, drive, dedication, and optimism. Feeling other people's emotions is the next skill in empathy. Understanding others, growing others, service orientation, leveraging others, and political awareness are the skills included under empathy. Managing interpersonal and professional interactions through emotional regulation and empathy is the fifth competency, or social skills. The ability to persuade, communicate, handle conflicts, lead, and effect change are all regarded as social skills.

## II. CONTEXT

Daniel Goleman cofounded the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning at Yale's Child Studies Centre after getting his doctorate in psychology from Harvard University. He added emotional self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation to the four branches of Mayer et al.'s (2004) emotional intelligence model, which were: recognizing emotions nonverbally; using emotions to direct cognitive thinking; comprehending the information emotions convey and the actions they generate; and regulating one's own emotions (Resilient Educator, 2020). One of Daniel Goleman's four domains, self-awareness, is the ability to identify and comprehend one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others, as well as the impact of one's own actions and moods. Stated differently, "conscious knowledge of one's own character and feelings" is the definition of self-awareness. Self Awareness is "knowing one's internal states, preference, resources, and intuitions," according to Daniel Goleman in his best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence* which was published in 1995. Emotion tracking, recognizing various emotional responses, and accurately identifying emotions are all components of self-awareness. Being self-aware also entails understanding the connection between one's actions and emotions as well as being conscious of one's own advantages and disadvantages. It is linked to learning from social interactions and being receptive to new experiences and ideas.

## III. THE POSITION OF YOUTH

India's youth are fighting to make ends meet and overcome life's obstacles. Politics, religion, communalism, racism, caste, and discrimination are the causes of this situation. Since they are the first generation to have lived fully in the transformative environment where media culture, computers, and other rising technology are drastically changing every area of life, today's young are privileged subjects of the postmodern era. Multimedia technologies are fundamentally altering the nature of employment, education, and daily living in this planet. A comparable shift can be found in Chetan Bhagat's writings, which are largely regarded as speaking for the Indian entrepreneurial community. His works have all been best-sellers and have greatly expanded their global popularity. His writings have a reputation for upsetting Indian sensibilities by delving into the endlessly shifting idealized conceptions of human existence that hold that people are enmeshed in a maze of desire, corruption, and affection. It has been correctly noted that youth make up the country's current, while children represent its future. "The youth population is an important asset for any country's accelerated development because of their energy, enthusiasm, dynamism, innovative ideas, and creative thinking." (Bhagat, xxvi) Bhagat acknowledges that he mostly writes his novels for this particular segment of the society.

The number of Indian youth, or those between the ages of 13 and 35, makes up over 38% of the nation's total population and is predicted to grow to 574 million by 2020. In 2009, there were 333 million literate youth in the country, or nearly 73% of all youth. This represents a 27.4% share of the overall population. Between 2001 and 2009, the population of literate youth increased at a rate of 2.49 percent, which was greater than the population growth rate of 2.08% overall. India's urban areas saw faster annual growth (3.15%) than its rural ones (2.11%). The fact that 62% of all literate kids (206.6 million) reside in rural areas and the remaining 32.1 million in urban areas is noteworthy. (Sukla 10).

## IV. THE NOVELS

The protagonists of Chetan Bhagat's works, which describe the political journey of a contemporary young middle class Indian involved in several conflicts with both himself and the outside world, are easily recognizable

to readers as members of their own families. His heroes conflict and diverge from the system; they debate with society and challenge accepted conventions; they hold fast to their own beliefs and principles; and ultimately, they move on to find a deeper meaning in life. The middle class world, which is the true engine of India's economic expansion and holds the key to his own prosperity, is the focus of the novels. In his novels, he presents the hopes and fears along with the depressing situation of the middle class from the perspective of an all-knowing insider. As a member of the same social class, he shares in his novels the experiences that he or people he knows have had in real life, blurring the lines between fact and fiction. Among the topics he has covered in his works are corruption, unemployment, people's materialistic outlook, and the flimsy love-hate relationships among young people. His works also highlight the highest values and ethics of Indian democracy, which are truly at a crossroads right now due to pervasive corruption and self-destructive tendencies in society, as well as the middle class's regret over the sorry state of affairs in the nation.

## V. THE CHARACTERS

The novel, *Revolution 2020* by Chetan Bhagat discusses the suffering of young people in Indian society. Gopal, Aarthi, and Raghav are rooted in the middle class. Gopal's father is a weak, resigned teacher who isn't biased to spend all of his money on medicine because he cares more about his child's success than himself. Despite his diligent efforts and transfer to Kota, Rajasthan, a renowned centre for foundations, he is unable to pass JEE. This wretched failure learns to live a realistic life and makes his way of making money. Having become friends with Shuklaji, the dishonest local MLA, Gopal amasses enormous wealth and immerses himself in corruption. Shuklaji has been portrayed as someone who mostly conforms to the stereotypes found in Indian movies: he is dishonest, has a lot of wealth lying around or is considered "black money," and is ruthless. Shuklaji is the epitome of corruption. In *Revolution 2020*, crooked politicians are the main subject, and politics is portrayed as a place only fit for criminals and crooks. He continues by drawing attention to the fact that a significant number of crimes are now associated with race.

Chetan Bhagat expresses what the younger generation thinks. His characters are not elderly; rather, they are young blood. While the majority of the characters in *One Night @the Call Centre* are a bunch of Call Centre executives, the author discusses three IIT convicts in *Five Point Someone* and three pals in *The Three Mistakes of My Life*. The spark in those around him is something the author adores to witness. Bhagat writes more about talking to and addressing the Bermuda and Capri generation than he does about rural folks and the seamy side of their existence. The urbanised, cosmopolitan milieu is shared by all of the characters in his first two novels, *Five Point Someone* and *One Night @ the Call Centre*. In his third book, *The Three Mistakes of My Life*, the author introduces some characters from the traditional middle class and sets the scene in the outskirts of Ahmedabad. In *Five Point Someone*, Alok stands in for a perpetually troubled lower-class family. His aspirational friends Neha and Hari strive to take advantage of every opportunity to indulge in sensual pleasure from their bond; the girl does this under the guise of providing solace for her beloved late brother, who is the victim of the harsh educational system and, naturally, the brutality of his father Prof. Cherian's careless, career-focused attitude. The reader is kept engrossed in *Five Point Someone* by its remarkable pace and the author's statement that "This book will not help youngest into IIT." The events are logically showcased one after another.

(17)

Chetan Bhagat has definitely struck a chord with young Indian readers with his book *Five Point Someone*, which details what not to do at IIT and has virtually become a cult classic. Although some reviewers view his works as works in progress, the younger generation of readers now needs him. These types of entry exams are causing an increase in psychological issues among students, and young adults are being forced into complex emotional environments where behavioural, emotional, learning, or mental diseases such as anxiety and depression can readily flourish. A student's mental health may be impacted by parental pressure to do well and gain admission to prestigious universities like IIT. Poor academic performance, a lack of enthusiasm, difficulties interacting socially with classmates, and even self-harm are common manifestations of mental health challenges.

The goal of the book *Five Point Someone* is not to aid those who try to get into IIT or even assist those who are already enrolled there in their successful departure. On the contrary, it addresses a highly sensitive topic about today's youth: why should students at elite institutions forfeit their childhood in order to reach a viable adulthood? It's common knowledge that graduates of India's elite advancement institutions receive amazing jobs, benefits, and are in high demand as marriage assistants. In any case, according to Chetan Bhagat's book *Five Point Someone*, they wind up in a Faustian bargain, meaning that they could commit suicide or destroy their calling in addition to their life. The book tells the story of Hari, a real man of his word, and his two buddies, who consider themselves to be underdogs because of their five-point something GPAs and their academic achievements during their four years at IIT. It describes their tenacious battle against a system that they believe stifles human creativity and evaluates everyone based on their GPA. They therefore set out to take advantage of extracurricular activities offered by the school by creating plans that will enable them to maintain their five-

point average with only a few hours of study time. The extra time that results is spent in boyish activities, such as playing squash, exploring the city, or trying to win over the instructor's daughter. In this vein, everything they ought not to do at IIT. In any case, the question "will they make it?" irritates them all. In addition to being humorous, the book addresses the reasons behind understudies' trepidation and fears at one of the best universities in the nation. By all accounts, its portrayal of students' experiences at IIT or other elite educational institutions, like NID or IIM, is accurate. Harvard may be there, next to affluent neighbourhoods. IIT provides a backdrop against which the plot might be developed, but it also could have been another elite university, one that matched the goals of its students but differed in terms of their social and financial networks.

Chetan Bhagat dives headfirst into understudies' motives and desires in the intense environment of IIT. Characters' distinct presences are also exquisitely integrated throughout the record. More than a few giggles can be heard in the legend's integration of his instructor's daughter's casings, worship edge of the narrative, and their warm existence. Her father's unique style doesn't need to be met by underachievers; rather, it enhances performance. Thought is kept subdued but not minimized in order to convey the glimmer of friendship or associational ties. The idea that IITians "have it made" in every way is frequently mentioned in the book. The applicant learns that life at IIT is extremely regimented, with endless notes, assignments, addresses, and so on. It also subtly addresses the GPA system, which stifles students' creativity.

The book's characters realize that IITians' everyday grind is precisely what defines them. Events like Hari breaking down a large portion of a vodka container to "bolster his sureness" and sneaking into a teacher's house in the middle of the night to wish his kid a happy birthday are just a couple of the incredibly captivating moments that pepper the record. The dialogue is youthful and vibrant, and the language employed is intriguing. The amiable, direct flowing language lends itself to easy examination. Bhagat is credited with dispelling the intellectualism that IITs are associated with. The ordinary compounds have been so thoroughly woven together that they don't transport you to a wonderland; instead, they successfully direct you towards substances that are entrancing and enjoyable.

The main characters in the book understand that in order to try to overcome their shortcomings, they must dismember them. Life is what people make of it. If they put in a heroic effort, the best will happen to them. Hari understands that, in any case, he has lost confidence and that it is necessary for success. It ought to go to him. Alok acknowledges the fact that his mother is the major career and that a significant portion of her income is constantly used to support her partner's medical care. Alok's elder sister is getting close to qualifying age in the meantime. Even though Alok believes he should be a painter, he understands that a family needs money more than scenery, and becoming a designer is a necessary step towards escaping poverty. Ryan can work in this industry and possesses a large amount of knowledge. Regardless, they have all tampered with their lives by ignoring hard labour.

## **VI. LACK OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

The younger generation's lack of emotional balance and poor impulse control has contributed to a surge in mental health illnesses, including depression, an increase in suicide thoughts, divorce-related instances, and hate crimes. While people of both sexes deal with these issues, women are disproportionately impacted. The incapacity of women to regulate their emotions and their lack of self-awareness are the main causes of their incompetence. As such, it will become increasingly necessary for women to acquire the abilities necessary to address these issues. The combination of self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills found in emotional intelligence offers the necessary means of resolving the incompetence issue. In order to effectively manage emotions and comprehend the importance of emotional attachment in controlling women's ideas, behaviours, and decisions, emotional intelligence is crucial.

## **VII. SELF AWARENESS AND BHAGAT'S TRAITS**

The primary skill, Self-awareness is the capacity to identify emotions such as rage in oneself. The skills of emotional awareness, self-evaluation, and self-assurance are included in this competency. The threats from the inside and outside put the modern man's resistance to the test on a daily basis. External dangers such as disease outbreaks, war, and unstable economies seriously disrupt peaceful existence. Together, human effort can mitigate these extreme hazards to some degree. A person's internal disturbance is the most harmful of all the disturbances they may experience. Internal problems such as emptiness, loneliness, boredom, and occasionally doubting one's own existence result in an unfavorable outcome. These internal disturbances, which suggest that the person is exposed to a state of crisis, are caused by the stressful character of modern life.

The ability to confront and overcome emotional hijacking determines a person's reaction to a crisis and their level of awareness of it. Strain on the body, mind, and emotions results from a crisis, which is made worse by incompetence. Even while it's crucial to overcome aptitude, doing so puts a great deal of emotional burden on

the person because it takes initiative to stop emotional hijacking. The ability to comprehend negative feelings is essential for overcoming emotional hijacking. According to the renowned Greek philosopher Socrates, "*knowing oneself is the beginning of wisdom*" (46). Because modern life is so demanding, it is essential that people understand who they are. Life-skill gurus refer to this understanding of oneself as self-awareness. The road to great potential for personal development is self-awareness.

Bhagat's novels challenge us to consider and critically analyze the prevailing socio-political and economic structure rather than accepting customs that have been followed for many years. They also highlight a variety of everyday concerns. These issues are so deeply ingrained in our daily lives that we frequently forget they are issues at all. Through his works, Bhagat does not provide any policy solutions to these issues. He pinpoints the primary issue driving Indian society.

'Even though regional cultures are different; all Indians want the same thing- a better life in a good society.' (Bhagat, xviii)

Particularly, he believes that three traits are ingrained in the Indian psyche and impede the development of the individual while being detrimental to the nation's progress. Three distinct sources provide each of these: our household, our environment, and our school. His initial reference is made to the quality of servility. In his analysis of the nation's education system, he alludes to the fact that it kills our natural creativity and stifles our individual voices in the classroom, transforming us into servile, coarse material captives. This characteristic is alluded to in his novel *Five Point Someone*, along with the repressive system that attempts to mechanize students, depriving them of delight and the simple pleasures of life. Children in India are severely penalized, especially when they disagree with the instructor, and are discouraged from asking questions in the classroom. Additionally, they are not permitted to elevate their voices. The educational system in India promotes a focus on memorization rather than imaginative thinking, with only a limited number of subjects fostering creativity and innovation. In India, instructional materials for courses are created with a no-debate approach in mind. If structured in such a manner, children's self-awareness will be enhanced in their minds.

'For example, we ask: how many states are there in India? 28. Correct. Next question –how is a country divided into states? What criteria should be used? Since these are never discussed, children never develop their own viewpoint or the faculty to think.' (Bhagat, p 23)

The second trait that Bhagat identifies as a source of concern and endeavours to rectify is apathy towards injustice. In the compendium of his columns titled "What Young India Wants," Bhagat describes this characteristic as an intrinsic component of the Indian psyche. According to Bhagat, the fundamental characteristic of apathy within our psyche is an environmental trait. Young Indians, who are accustomed to witnessing corruption since infancy, develop immunity to it and, unknowingly, become complicit in the gradual engulfment that ensues. To qualify for a free ride, nearly all Indians misrepresent the age of their children to the train TC, alleging that their children are under five years old. It instills in the infant the belief that "anything goes" as long as it is permissible to do so. A small amount of deceit or dishonesty is considered permissible. As a result, youngsters develop a mild apathy towards corruption. To date, not a single prominent individual in India has been incarcerated on charges of corruption. In spite of widespread demonstrations and protests against corruption, little progress has been made thus far. This may be due to the fact that, to some degree, the majority of Indians are unconcerned with current events. The majority of individuals are motivated solely by self-centered personal interests and objectives. As a result, discussions and debates over coffee rarely delve into matters of national significance.

"Divisiveness" is the third trait that delineates Indian society. This is frequently acquired at home, especially from family and relatives, where one is exposed to the complexities of human diversity. The concept of the 'other' as an entirely distinct entity becomes ingrained in a child's consciousness as he is instructed to honour his religion, culture, and language. Not only are others distinct from us, but it is frequently assumed that they are also inferior. This attribute engenders a prejudice based on region or community, and it is this prejudice that acts as a dividing line, causing lives to become fragmented and ultimately undermining the aspiration for a unified India akin to the Tower of Babel. According to Ramachandra Guha, in his examination of the authentic essence of Indian democracy, "one can assume that the absence of an Indian nation in the past and its non-emergence in the future are consequences of these distinctions."(Guha, xiii.) Chetan Bhagat alludes to this partiality or preconception in his works of fiction, including *The Three Mistakes of My Life and Two States*.

As a solution, Mass self-psychotherapy is advocated by Bhagat as a remedy for the ills that plague the nation. This is evident in his novels. With the intention of instigating a transformation within the established framework, he portrays a limited number of individuals who possess the courage and conviction to scrutinize and shape it. He beseeches a paradigm shift in the collective consciousness of the populace. He discusses a novel conception of a youthful India, and the title *Revolution 2020* bears resemblance to *India Vision 2020*, a work authored by A.P. J Abdul Kalam. To provide an example and precept for the next generation, Bhagat discusses tearing down barriers, speaking out, and protesting.

'Our children should think creatively, have opinions and speak up in class. They should learn what is wrong is wrong – no matter how big or small. And they shouldn't hate other people on the basis of their background. Let us also resolve to start working on our own minds, right now. A change in mind-set changes the way people vote, which in turn changes politicians.' (Bhagat, 45)

### VIII. CONCLUSION

Bhagat kindles the interest of innumerable youths. Young people in India are the key to the nation's future. Young Indians have the capacity to transform the nation. Policymakers cannot divide the youth of India from India. The nation will only attain colossus status when its youth demonstrate initiative. India is preeminent due to its youthful and physically healthy populace. An educational system that undergoes a fundamental transformation is what Bhagat suggests. To combat decadence and corruption in politics, it is necessary to eradicate corruption from the educational sector. Chetan Bhagat exemplifies how the most effective resolutions to contemporary challenges can be employed to eradicate corruption from both society and the nation. Bhagat argues that individuals desiring to eliminate corruption from society must abstain from engaging in corrupt practices themselves. They could only then effectively motivate others to refrain from engaging in corrupt practices. In order for Bhagat's books to purge the nation of corrupt individuals, it is imperative that all individuals priorities equality, truth, and justice. This could be rendered practical with the self-awareness that Goleman describes. Self-Awareness, one of the four domains identified by Daniel Goleman, pertains to the ability to identify and comprehend one's own emotions as well as the impact that one's own behaviours, dispositions, and the emotions of others have. Chetan Bhagat's novels and characters faithfully represent the realm of self-awareness.

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