

## **Angst of Indian Youth depicted in Chetan Bhagat's One Night at the Call Centre**

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### **Abstract**

One Night at The Call Center, written by Chetan Bhagat, was published in 2005 and is the second novel by the author. In his writings, Chetan Bhagat successfully conveys the modern reality of the average person. The story's six characters, Shyam, Varun, Esha, Priyanka, Radhika and Military Uncle all highlight different problems faced by the Indian Society. They are all discontent with their lives but are afraid to step out of the comfort zone and change their surroundings.

This all changes when one night, a mysterious call comes from a divine power, motivating them and helping them to overcome their difficulties. The author subtly points out the ugliness of Indian society and suggests innovative solutions to overcome the problems.

**Keywords:** India, youth, problems. Society, social, financial, pressure, call-centre, corporate, anger, material, family, God, intervention, divine

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### **I. Introduction**

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most prolific writers in India today. A rising figure in contemporary modern Indian literature, Chetan Baghat is a multifaceted individual. He writes novels, columns, speeches in public, and screenplays. The majority of Baghat's writings deal with challenges that Indian youth face and their goals, earning him the title of a youth icon.

The title book of this paper, 'One Night at The Call Center' is written in the perspective of the protagonist. A young girl is making her way from Delhi to Kanpur. She finds Chetan bhagat seated on her front as soon as she climbs on the train and takes a seat. This girl did not know Chetan Bhagat at all, yet she was quite familiar with him because he was a well-known author. She criticises his writings before engaging him in conversation. This girl tells him that she didn't enjoy his writings because they always had certain elements in them. She then discusses how college, IIT, and love stories are incorporated into his writings. She also complains to him that his writings lack any connection to reality.

While Bhagat patiently ignored her initially, it is this girl who suggests the idea for this book. It would include God as one of the main characters she claims, which Chetan Bhagat could not resist to hear.

### **The Story**

In the story, there are six main characters who work at a call center. They have different lives, different backgrounds and different aspirations. The different problems faced by different sections of Indian society are depicted through these protagonists. Shyam Mishra, who narrates the story, is called Sam Mercy by his boss. His friend, Varun Malhotra is given the name Victor Mell. Radhika Jha is called Regime Jones by her boss, and Esha Singh is called Eliza Singer. We do not learn the unique code names of two people in the circle, Priyanka and the old man they call Military Uncle.

Shyam Mishra, or Sam Mercy can be called the main protagonist. His boss, 'Bakshi' has delayed his elevation to the post of team leader for a year because he believes he lacks the necessary skill set. The people who make up Bhagat's characters are not individuals who have accomplished much. Since all of Shyam's cousins are either physicians or engineers, he holds no significant position in his family. When he quit working on the creation of a website due to company politics, he acquired the moniker "black sheep of the family." However, he saved himself by working at a call center. He claims that when you have money in your wallet, people respect you more and give you more room to breathe.

Bakshi takes advantage of Shyam and does his work without consulting him, but he works quietly since he wants to advance to the position of team leader. Vroom responds violently when the call centre right-sizes its workforce, but Shyam stays silent. Actually, the only reason he wants to marry Priyanka, whose mother wants her to marry a settled person, is that he wants to become a team leader. Shyam responded like a complete loser

when Vroom and Shyam realised Bakshi had taken credit for the handbook and website they had created after six months of work, in contrast to Vroom's aggressive response.

It's also clear that his romantic life is difficult. He rushes to see Shefali at the outset of the book. It appears that he is dating her. But readers later come to understand that he has feelings for Priyanka. His truth emerges through his chat with Vroom. He suffers with the job simply to gain his promotion to lead the group so he may prepare to wed Priyanka.

Shyam represents the students that often find themselves in the center of Bhagat's books. Lost, pressure from family, an unsuccessful love life and in general unhappy with life. Most of the youth in India today take decisions not for their personal happiness, but because of pressure from their parents and hence struggle to keep up with others in their respective fields. Shyam is also manipulated by his boss, which represents the hierarchy of the corporate world, where personal affections are kept aside and well-being of employees is totally neglected.

Varun Malhotra is the next protagonist and he wants to be a journalist but his side job does not pay well like his current job in a call centre. His businessman father does not care about his mother or him. He needs to stay at the call centre in order to keep up with his high society buddies, who he tries to impress. When dealing with clients who frequently abuse the agents and his colleagues, he often loses his temper, but reluctantly remembers he must be courteous and must explain why he behaved in such an embarrassing manner. He believes that corrupt politicians are to blame for our nation's poverty and the lack of openings for young people in their positions. When his boss takes credit for their laborious efforts, he also loses his cool.

As employees sacrifice their blood to develop innovative plans, ideas, and thoughts, the boss reflects the brutal truth of their frustration as individuals like Bakshi convert them into mere resources, not human beings. Even after recognising the manager's arrogance, no one can be held accountable to retort because, if they criticise, they would only be fired.

Here, Varun Malhotra represents the fun-loving but ambitionless youth, who have no future goals but are just staying afloat to have a good time. Bhagat also points out the peer pressure that forces many people to waste valuable time and money on things that would have no benefit, other than to impress a few people in their circle. Varun also highlights the problem seen in many nuclear families, where business has taken over love, seen in his father's negligence of him.

In many of his stories, Chetan Bhagat uses a variety of people to describe the madness of the post-modern life. Esha, one of the protagonists, is the clearest illustration of this because she is wholly committed to her dream of becoming a model. She believes she is the most attractive and worthy choice for showing. She wants to do anything to achieve her goal, even engage in prostitution because one of the professional directors has promised to use her as a model. She concedes to him and forfeits her sanctity. Unfortunately, the director takes advantage of her by denying her any opportunities.

She then makes an independent attempt to succeed by working as a call centre agent for Connections in Haryana in order to support herself.

Esha always imagines herself as a model with big dreams, living in cloud paradise. She regularly erects castles in the sky. For her this call centre 'gig' is entirely apprehensive and she feels she is above the mechanisms of the call centre. Even though she is under stress, she works to provide support for her finances. She is meticulous about her appearance, including her hair, makeup, and clothing. Vroom would accuse her of worrying excessively about her appearance, saying Isha's 'Calvin Klein' fragrance fills the entire car, and remarks that her hair looks like telephone wires since it has artificial curls that were added to her hair at the salon rather than natural ones. He also claims that the amount of money and time spent by women at beauty salons is a complete waste of both.

In his writings, Chetan Bhagat successfully conveys the modern reality of the average person. One of the characters, Radhika, serves as one of the examples supporting this assertion. Being a lady, Radhika manages to work night shifts at a call centre while still taking care of all the domestic duties during the day. She also takes care of her mother-in-law by providing her with meals and making shawls and mufflers for her. She frequently discusses her mother-in-law, which Varun did not like. Radhika consistently provokes Varun's ire by remarking how she is being criticised for showing excessive concern for her in-laws. According to him, a woman who works in a call centre has too many issues to handle on top of caring for her mother-in-law, which is a hardship for her.

Despite all of this, she blindly trusts her husband, who neglects to look after her. He doesn't even look after his own parents. Despite being in a love marriage, Radhika appears to be an arranged marriage daughter-in-law around her home. She treats her mother-in-law's contribution to household duties with the utmost respect. She makes an effort to fit in with the in-laws' family, despite the fact that she used to be modern in every respect, including food, dress, and culture. She occasionally tells Isha, "I truly do remember my teenage days with low waist jeans and blouses," after noticing Esha's attire.

Here, Radhika represents the unhappy housewife, who is ill treated by her in-laws despite all her efforts to love them, and is stuck in an un-loving marriage. She does her utmost to support her husband's family, while the husband himself seems to show no affection towards her.

Chetan Bhagat goes to great lengths to highlight the human interaction gap, particularly in today's internet-driven society. He uses the role of the Military Uncle to highlight how, while posh society is in place, relationships are gradually getting worse. Joint families were surpassed by nuclear families. The recollections of huge homes and joint families with grandparents, grandmothers, in-laws, paternal and maternal uncles, and other relatives have become vivid memories for today's youth. As all of this family members go in the morning and return after dusk, his arrival as a guest even for only one day becomes a monumental undertaking for the various families. As a result, they are unable to care for or spend time with them.

Aside from this, the day-to-day workings have become so important for the family that even the parents, as they age, are not permitted to be with their children due to their hectic schedules. This is the cause of the sporadic increase in the number of senior housing units. It is unexpected to say that parents who sacrificed their entire lives for their children's development don't even have the freedom to be with them when they get older. Chetan Bhagat's portrayal of the Military Uncle, who was abandoned despite having a son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren, makes this point very clearly. Military uncle lives alone, and earns his living by working in this call centre.

Here we can see the coldness of current Indian society, so much so that even parents cannot be taken care of and loved.

### **Intervention of God**

The novel *One Night at the Call Center*, written by talented author Chetan Bhagat, enabled the blending of fiction with real-world circumstances. He developed a character that is so bizarre that it would be impossible to deny that it is none other than God, who wishes to call stressed-out individuals to encourage and uplift them. All of the friends—Varun, Shyam, Priyanka, Esha, Military Uncle and Radhika—were stressed out by their jobs and annoyed by the system.

Since the systems were down, the colleagues decide to go out and have a good time at a nightclub during their off-duty hours in order to freshen their thoughts. While returning for work after a period of enjoyment, they encountered a potentially fatal predicament on the way to their office when their car crashed into a building site that was dangling over a mesh of iron construction rods. The rods started to tremble as they slowly started to surrender. Since there is no mobile phone service there, they are unable to call for assistance, but to everyone's surprise, Shyam's phone begins to ring. Surprisingly, God makes the call and uses contemporary English.

God himself, which is the depiction of the author, suggests to the characters how they can improve their current conditions, with belief and courage at the center of all. The author makes the notion that creative approaches must be used to advance society through the character of God. The traditional educational model forbids students from engaging in creative thought. His academics oppose even his novel ideas. Additionally, if an average student doesn't earn good grades, life won't end tragically. How one lives their life to the fullest without harming others is what matters most. His characters are able to breathe and exist in dire situations. Thus, one will begin to reflect on the meaning of life and how education fits into it. They work at the call centre for other motives, primarily financial ones, rather than out of a passion.

The call from God enlivens and revitalises their outlook on life in such a hopeless situation. These six individuals serve as a direct or proximate representation of Indian citizens in general. The inner voice of a person, which aids more than anything else in coping with issues in life, is essentially the call from God. Humans always have an inner voice, but they don't have time to listen to it, so they ignore it until they find themselves in a variety of sticky situations. The dialogue between God and each of the six agents inspires readers' faith. Both the audience and the characters respond favourably to his summons.

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