

Portrayal of Women in Chetan Bhagat's Novels**Md Shahbaz Khan**

Research Scholar,

University Department of English,

TMBU, Bhagalpur,

Bihar, India

DOI: 10.53032/tcl.2020.4.6.08**Abstract**

Chetan Bhagat presents the realistic pictures of modern women. He delves into the themes of the empowerment of women. He talks about women empowerment in realistic manner. His women characters are educated girls, loving daughters, passionate students, faithful friends, enthusiastic workers and dear beloveds. They are ready to face challenges, situations and risks. The present article explores the concept of the social reflection and concept of modernity and how through the delineation of the various characters he portrays the contemporary women and their struggle and well as situation in the society and world.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Feminism, Independence, Modern life-style

Chetan Bhagat has his reputation more as a youth icon than merely an author. He also pens down columns for prominent newspapers. He focuses on youth and national development. His characters have been appreciated as social rebels and his female protagonists are known for their vitality and instinctive female nature. The setting of his novels is set in the commotion and confusion of Metropolitan Indian cities.

Men and women are no more seen through the old spectacle which marks men as superior and women as inferior. In this global atmosphere, so far belittled women are given their due place and respect. With their own intellect and abilities, they are seen to be working shoulder to shoulder with men. As one notices in *One Night @ the Call Centre*, the number of men and women working in call centers is equal and women choosing to work in night shifts is common. They earn their own living and make career choices. For instance, Esha, in the same novel, resides in Delhi leaving her home in order to make her modelling dream come true.

Thus, in Chetan Bhagat's world, men and women appear to be equal. In Bhagat's opinion, girls are in no way substandard to boys. They are equal to them in all respects. He is a supporter to the liberation and empowerment of women, but the pity is that he has equaled them only in doing the wrong things and taking wrong turns like Neha enjoying her loss of virginity and thanking her partner, which shows her hunger and want for sex. Even in case of

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marriages, now girls assert their own opinions and choices. As the tradition was in the bygone era, a marriageable girl was obliged to marry the match of their parents' choice and that was considered as their sacred duty to pay back the debt of parenthood. But Bhagat's characters are different. Priyanka, in *One Night @ the Call Centre*, makes her own choice in case of marriage quite opposite to her parents' expectations. Also Ananya in *2 States* tries to persuade her parents till the end in order to marry her lover Krish. Thus, Bhagat's writing appear to be more feminine than masculine. He gives voice and shows his concerns more to his ladies than to his heroes.

Bhagat considers life as more valuable than anything. For him happiness should not be but the occasional episode in the general drama of life. He observes and considers the worthlessness of the human life and he finds nothing wrong in accepting what one thinks is good. He describes his women as the true revellers of the human life. Adversity does not stay with them for long. It does not subdue their will to enjoy life. They very soon emerge out of it and start delighting in the life. All the women characters of Chetan are intelligent and have the capacity to make their own choices and ready to accept challenges and risk no matter what their decision is. Chetan succeeds to make the young men and women honestly agree to the truths and realities and deal with it as a mutual need for the betterment of the society nullifying the aspect of hypocrisy. He advises the youth to listen their heart. Bhagat robustly puts emphasis on the freedom of women. His woman characters have faith in 'an absolute, a perfect, a pure and a noble freedom'. For this reason, Bhagat has decisively employed youth calling approach in his novels, most likely to bring some revolution and put an end to hypocrisy through his writing. He beautifully imagines the changing frame of mind of the women of big cities. Bhagat's views that girls are by no means lesser to boys, they are equal to them in all respective. He speaks in favor of to the liberation and empowerment of woman.

In his one of the most popular novels, *Five Point Someone*, Chetan delightfully portray the relationship between Hari and Neha. She is elegant and self-reliant. She has her own personality, thoughts and ambitions. Neha presents ice-cream to Hari and asks to spend time with her, but he is too quiet in approach towards women. Neha's moral fiber gives a picture of women in Bhagat's novels who make the first move courageously. They are audacious and it shows that modern women don't kill time for others permission and they suitably know their best prospects. In the classic fiction, *The Three Mistakes Of My Life*, Vidya offers pizza to Govind and she takes him out on one or the other causes. Vidya's character is revealed as a women of 21st century with a daring approach towards the relationships in her life be it Govind her friend and her math teacher or her brother Ishan. Vidya is so anxious to lose her virginity that she chooses to do it right on her birthday. Moreover, she decides in favour of her tutor and her brother's best friend Govind for that reason. She is younger, but bolder than all other lady characters of the novelist. Govind is a sensible man he comprehend that it is immoral, but Vidya doesn't let him think anything at all. She is a nice-looking little

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seductress. Govind regrets his action after it is over, but Vidya is happy. She thanks God for making her mature and feels contented and pleased after losing her virginity.

Thus, Vidya is successful in persuading Govind that he loves her. She was the one who was confident enough to convey her feelings and emotions towards Govind. Vidya's character in his novel demonstrates that the women of 21st century are capable of doing things their own way without any regrets for the future. Her daring approach in expressing her love for Govind led them towards a lifelong relationship.

In the novel, *One Night @ The Call Center*, We can see Priyanka's as an intelligent and realistic girl who is too preoccupied with her mother who played a crucial in Priyanka's life. For her mother she breaks up with her boyfriend Shyam and marries an NRI named Ganesh who was chosen by her mother. On the other hand things turn out in a different way at the end and she settle on to go with her ex-boyfriend over her mother's wishes for the sake of her own contentment and delight. Here Priyanka's character is represented very boldly as a woman who can make her own choices even if it meant to go beyond the facades of the Indian society. Bhagat illustrates his women emotionally strong through the character of Radhika Jha, in one night at the call center. She tries to adjust herself in an traditional family against her desire but when she comes to know about her husband's unfaithfulness she make her mind up to go away and rather breaks free. There is lot of demonstration of freedom in the women of his novels.

Vroom in *One Night @ the Call Centre* loves Esha, and proposes to her many times, and she keeps rejecting him all these times. Even though it is so, they work together and maintain quite a healthy friendship. Shyam and Priyanka had been in relation ever since their college time. When they felt that they should break up, they formally come together and put a break to their relationship.

Eventually, after all said and done, they come together and make the decision to marry, but the things that happen in between confirm us the altered relation equations of our time. Shyam as he says, wanted to "move on" a new term in the subject "Love", develops a casual love relationship with another girl at the call center. A marriage proposal of an NRI working with Microsoft, entertains Priyanka's fancy for the time being but when she comes to know about the baldness of the man, her affection turns once again towards Shyam.

In Chetan Bhagat's novel, *Two States*-The story of my marriage-Annanya Swaminathan, who is a Tamilian Brahmin girl, unlike her orthodox family, is a girl of open-minded thoughts. For her caste and cultural differences do not make a difference over her preferences. Ananya the woman of 21st century is ready to prevail over cultural differences, pride and prejudices, diversities, age old traditions for the one she loves. Her character is that of a strong girl who has the capacity to heal her relations in her own way to achieve what she desires.

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In this novel, Bhagat enjoys the virginity of his beloved Ananya in her dormitory room before the pictures of her family members. In this novel he is somewhat on the ground and his heroine is not very anxious to lose her virginity but she is satisfied to begin it. She says after finishing, "This is my first time." [2 States: 26] In this novel Bhagat presents two scenes of premarital sex. In his former one where his lady loses her virginity he imagines the impossible meeting breaking the security of the IIM-A. Nevertheless the trend has changed a lot and the same has happened with the mindset of the youth, no youth would still afford to pick up a girl as his wife who has already had sex with someone else in her college days. By this story Bhagat has invited a big sign of interrogation on the chastity and fidelity of the girls studying in IIMs. Bhagat calls himself an advocate of the youth concerns but at the same time unknowingly he invites troubles for them.

Riya's character in Bhagat's *Half Girl Friend* is also an example of a very strong lady. her character shows the contemporary era existing among youth that, to be flourishing you need to have a strong sense of individualism, because if you don't, you may get confused by other people's point of view, one has to be confident, have a clear vision of what one desires in life.

Chetan Bhagat has presented her character very dexterously and carefully with preciseness with female whims and ambitious mind in his novel 'Half Girlfriend'. One important thing about his characters is that they are different than other girls. They have some exceptional qualities such as strength, braveness and beautiful. His most heroines are beautiful and capable to attract others especially boys. So Riya Somani was the same. She was tall with long neck, long arms and long legs held ever guys attention. She was a basketball player and a part of the sports- quota applicants' team. She was a good player. When Madhav Jha from Dumraon, Bihar, admitted through the sports quota in the same Stephan's College in Delhi, saw her at first time on the ground while playing basketball, he fell in her love. He felt something in heart but he couldn't express. He thought that he should speak to her at least once in his life.

Madhav was concerned more and more towards her. He wanted to make friendship with her, but he was worried about that he was from a rural area. He could not talk in simple English. Moreover he had his Bihari accents. He knows only Bhojpuri Hindi and even it was in Bhojpuri accent. In that some mixed Hindi and English language, he familiarizes himself with her. She appreciates him and becomes ready to be his friend because he was a state level basketball player and he was aware with the game and its rules. They used to play on the ground. He was coming closer to her gradually, but the problem was of communication. One day he asks her that she was able to speak Hindi, she laughs loudly because that question was very foolish for her. A language was common for her, but the matter or message was important for her. Chetan Bhagat presents here her as an up-to-date and globalised girl when Madhav notices her delicate eyebrows. When she spoke, they moved slightly. They had the

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perfect length, thickness and width. He thought she would win a 'best eyebrows' contest as modern girls do. So Bhagat has presented her through the perfect spectacle of modern girl. So Madhav always tries to say to her that he never saw a girl more beautiful than her but he had not courage to say that and even he was not controlling himself from her.

Riya was from a rich family. Her father was a big business man and a wealthy person. She came to college in a BMW car in the college. She enjoyed everything that rich girls do, but she never attached importance to it. She did not value money much. She considered the magnificence of mind more important than the wealth. She believed emotional security was more important.

Chetan Bhagat has presented the same features of both Riya and Aarti that they don't value the money because they are already from rich family but they both valued only the wealth of mind. They feel only the need of understanding and the broadness of mind. Chetan Bhagat indicates that this is not applicable only to Riya and Aarti but to the whole class of women in the world. Because they are very touching and they want the mental satisfaction and mental security. His heroines are ambitious but greedy for money. They give the stress on relationship not on the means of dissatisfaction and disengagement. So his women characters live in the present-day world, they live in globalised and modern world but they know the value of cultural particularly Indian culture.

In Madhav's mother, Ranisahiba Durga Jha, Bhagat has portrayed a strongly determined woman. She ran the Dumraon Royal School, where seven hundred kids from nearly villages used study. Bhagat has always tried to show that if any woman makes a decision to do anything, she can do certainly. She has same power and intensity as the man can have. She is equal to fight and make effort as the man. She successfully runs her business as well as her family.

Riya is also determined girl. She is ambitious. She is not interested in conventional way of life to marry and beget only children. She wants to be something different than others as a modern girl. She wants to be self-reliant and self-supporting. But she has a doubt whether she would achieve it or not.

In her case, Bhagat presents the issue of Indian marriage system where Girls have to marry sometimes without their consent. They have to obey their parents. They have no rights to decide on their spouse on their own level or they are not asked about their wish. She had to leave her college in middle for her marriage. No one thought about her career. Her husband told her that she would study in some reputed college in London. Riya let go all her career for him but in front of affluence and busy timetable, he forgot all. Later she gets the divorce from her husband due to the domestic violence from her husband and her mother-in-law. Chetan Bhagat has not presented the feminism or spoke for the rights of women directly, but he has presented the feministic attitude through her characters like Riya.

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So Bhagat's heroines or female characters are the denizens of a modern world but their modernity is deeply rooted in the culture and traditions of society. Therefore they suffer more and more. They express their mind and they have faith in their confidence, clear imagination, ideal and dignified freedom.

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