



Feminism in Chetan Bhagat's *One Night @ Call Centre*

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Abstract

The term 'feminism' has been derived from the Latin term 'Femina' that means 'woman' and 'ism' is a stream of thoughts. Thereby the movement that raises the issue of woman's equality and rights and champions liberty, equality and rights for woman in all walks of life: literary, social political familial and economic, is called feminism. This term was discussed by Alice Rossi, an American writer, in *Athenaum* on 27 April 1895. Ever since it has been widely used. It is raised by west female writer in literature that women have the same talent as to write as men. The male writers showed male characters dominant and female submissive in their writings. Feminists believe that the work that is written by a man can also be written by a woman with the same capacity and skill. The male patriarchy limits the creative power of a woman assigning her domestic duties within walls.

Keywords: Feminism, Ethnic Group, Sacrifice, Exploitation, Oppression, Expenditure

Chaman Nahal defines feminism definitely in his article "Feminism in Indian English Fiction" "...feminism as a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is a dependence syndrome, whether it is the husband or the father or the community or whether it is a religious group, ethnic group. When a woman... leads a normal life, my idea of feminism materializes." There is no identity of women, for they depend on parents when they are unmarried. After marriage they depend on their husband and on being mothers, depend on their sons. In India a woman must necessarily be virtuous, chaste, submissive, homely and devoted to her family as she is considered to be an embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, faith and knowledge. In religious books *The Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat* women have been shown as sufferers and victims. Sita is abducted by Ravan. She has to go through an ordeal to prove her chastity and it is she who has been banished



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from Ayodhya while she is pregnant. In *The Mahabharata* too, an effort has been made to ravish Draupadi's dignity Dushanan.

There is a biological difference between male and female, but it is a gender based Indian culture that is dominant in the society and makes the male master, exploiter and female mistress to be exploited. So the exploitation, oppression and suffering for woman are due to male oriented traditions, customs, norms and forms of society. It is due to the culture that the birth of a daughter brings the lines of worry and anxiety on the foreheads of the parents, whereas the birth of a son becomes a matter of pleasure for them.

In India many female writer have raised a voice against the exploitations and the oppressions that are in the root of Indian systems, customs, and traditions these female writers have touched the female sensitive core of heart and brought their female agonies and plights before the society. Nayan Tara Shahgal, Jhumpa Lahri and Arundhati Roy are those names that enjoy prominent places in the galaxy of feminism, even a male writer who supports women's rights, is a feminist. Chetan Bhagat exposes the feministic protest in his novel *One Night @ The Call Centre*. It is replete with feminism Chetan has exposed the feminism on the following points:-

1. Females' Liberty of wearing clothes.
2. Their self independence and enjoyment of outside world.
3. Their freedom to perform sex.

In Spite of having freedom, they are under exploitation. The exploitation is conducted sometimes by female to female, other times by male to female and the female herself invites to be exploited sometimes.

In this Novel there are three modern females — Priyanka, Esha and Radhika; and two traditional ones; Priyanka's mother and Radhika's in-law. Priyanka and Esha are unmarried, whereas Radhika is married. They are flesh and blood of modernity and wear T-Shirts, Jeans, and Top Skirts. Esha's navel is always visible as she puts on the fashionable garments whichever she likes. By wearing the Pants and T-Shirts, they want to break off the custom of putting on Salvar, Kurta and Sari, for they are inclined to be equal to males in wearings.

They are not the females who are bound to encircled walls but are desirous of enjoying the lives of outside. They are educated and are eager to earn money to run their expenses so they do job in a call centre and relish the pleasure of outside world

Sometimes they go to bar and club and take wines for their enjoyment. They are independent earning creatures. Priyanka and Esha are not dependent on their parents and Radhika on her husband for their daily routine expenses. They are fully aware of the era as an age of money. Esha has come out of her parent's home to be a model beauty but her one inch less height prevents her being so. Priyanka is a slap on the male patriarchy. She is non-traditional performer of sex. She believes that before marriage the sexual relationship can be made, for the sex is a physical



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appetite and it can be satisfied. For her it is only enjoyment. It is she who takes steps first to start copulating with Shyam, his lover. Shyam says: "She unbuttoned the top, few button of my shirt"

She remains conscious of sex performing result, so she does sex safe. Esha is also an attack on phallocentric society. She believes in the attainment of goal at the cost of virginity because the objective that is secured, gives money, pleasure and luxury; while to keep the virginity alive is of no use it does not provide facilities to life and hence in order to be a model, having left her parents at home she sleeps one night with a designer and gets her virginity deflowered. Chetan has pointed out that in Indian society the exploitation and the oppression are still persisting, however, the society may be modernized. The exploitation sponsors from male made culture. It subordinates female and holds superiority of male over female and even older female on younger one.

It is family oppression that is in vogue in society. The mother treats her daughter unequally in comparison with son. The mothers-in-laws also exploit their daughters-in-law. Priyanka describes that her mother is an exploiter to her. She treats her in another way in comparison with her son as Priyanka grows the objections of her mother over her dresses, likings and dislikings, manners and companies. The-priority is given to the son instead of the daughter in family by mother. By sex such characters as priyanka's mother are females but culturally they are representative of male dominated mind, the dominance of males overrules them. They are governed by male patriarchy in which girls are undervalued. The female doesn't think of female but of male. Priyanka utters:

"She had different rules for me and my brother. And that began to bother me. She would comment on everything I wore, everywhere I went, whereas my brother.... She would never say anything to him"

Another phase of exploitation is perceptible in the shape of mothers-in-law to daughters-in-law; Radha's mother-in-law to her and an incident of cursing by mother-in-law to daughter-in-law in Have more Resturant, Pandora road. The Woman follows tradition in family under pressure of her mother-in-law. In-law of Radhika is traditional. She (Radhika) loves to wear Jeans and Pants but under pressure she has to wear Sari, sometimes she puts on Pants and T-shirts. The writer describes restaurant scene. He tries to show that it is a family oppression pervading in the society. The mother-in-law exploits her daughter-in-law to hold her superiority over her. She curses her as an ill omen and considers her arrival to her home as a misfortune. She says-"Since the day this woman came to our house, our families fortunities have been ruined" In Indian society girls are regarded to be a burden and an object of expenditure because money is gathered from the very beginning for their marriage's dowry. Therefore they are kept subordinate to boys. Mother-in-law curses to the birth of Grand daughters by daughter-in-law. She says: "Who will pay for these curses?"



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The males exploit the females. This note is present in the form of Radhika and Esha. Esha is tempted by a designer who seduces her. Further Esha is said by vroom. She is called a slut and he has no interest to have an affair with such girls. Vroom utters: "I wish I'd known before I proposed to a certified slut who will bang for bucks"

Chetan has presented nicely that the betrayal is in the nature of males and females get victimized. The male deceives the female even after getting married. They do so because they want to enjoy the life of love affair and expect their wives to be devoted to themselves. These dual roles of males exercised in the society are the very cause of frustration and exploitation of females. Radhika is deeply shocked while she comes to know that her husband has another beloved. Shyam describes Radha's heartbroken conditions in these words: "She just cried and cried. In between, she lifted half knit scarf to wipe her tears"

Sometimes females themselves are responsible for the exploitation for this either they wear too short garments or they are mad for money to be exploited by males. They have excesses of liberty that leave them to the worst condition. The girls dancing in a bar in half clad clothes invite youths to perform sexual assault. Shyam describes the scene of 'youth special' programme on MTV: "A girl stripped off such successive items of her clothing as the song progresses." Indian female of new generation is against oppression and exploitation that are conducted against them whether by male or female. It is exercised to hold his/her superiority in the society. The characters, like Priyanka take action against the exploitation which she sees before her eyes. She makes it correct. She slaps on vroom's face while he abuses Esha. Priyanka rebukes him: "Learn how to talk to women, you say one more nasty thing"

Priyanka is not a puppet in the hands of phallocentric mind. She loves Shyam still she is not agreed to marry him, for he is not a settled man and nor of high income. She knows that in addition to love, money is also the very basic need. It fulfills the hopes and desires of human beings and makes life better and luxurious. Shyam expresses his frustration about girl in this way: "...Girls go round rejecting man like it is their birth right. They have no idea how much it hurts us ... female of the species has to bear their offspring with a lot of effort. Hence they choose their mates carefully."

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