
Subjugation and Transformation of the Major Female Character in Chetan Bhagat's *One Indian Girl*

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Abstract

Chetan Bhagat is a popular Indian writer. He exposes the various issues being practiced in society. All his novels present the problems of youths, their hopes, aspirations, dreams and frustrations. The Present novel *One Indian Girl* is acclaimed for his stance on female issues. This novel is presented from the female perspective. Radhika is the major female character in the fiction. She is victim of the male chauvinism. She undergoes many tribulations but in the end she takes her own decision. She doesn't accept the male choice. After much emphasis she accepts to do arrange marriage but at the she realizes her own importance and refuses to marry. She determines to live life according to her own terms. The writer presents her expedition in a fantastic way.

Keywords: Subjugation, Female Perspective, Chauvinism, Feminine Feelings, Gender Equality, Transformation

Introduction

Chetan Bhagat is a popular fiction writer writing in English. He has written nine fictions and three-non fictional books. He was born on 22 April 1972, in the middle-class Punjabi family in Delhi. He completed his secondary education from Military School, Delhi. He is graduated from IIT, Delhi. He also completed his MBA at IIMA Ahmedabad. He joined prestigious job at Goldman Sachs. He wrote his first fiction, *Five Point Someone* during his service. He was not satisfied with his banking job. The writing was his passion. To pursue his dream, he left his job in 2009 and became a full-time writer. Time Magazine has listed Chetan Bhagat in the list of the world's 100 most influential people.

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All his fictions are related to some issues in the Indian Society. He writes about the problems of youths, their passions, struggle, dreams, and aspirations. In the interview given to The Hindu newspaper, Chetan Bhagat admits that all my books are about issues. In *Five Point Someone*, he presents the problem of students in the higher institute of the nation. *One Night @ Call Center* is concerned with corporate exploitation of youths. *Three Mistakes of My Life* presents the communal riots and passion of youths. *Two States* tries to bridge the gap between South India and North India. *Revolution 2020* exposes corruption in the education field. *Half Girlfriend* presents a different problem. It brings out the difference between urban and rural India. In the world of technology and postmodernism, there are two types of the nation within India. One is shining India and another is backward, rural India. *One Indian Girl* presents the problem of highly qualified and high earning girl. These two fictions are different from the rest of the fictions. In all the fictions, male characters play a major role but in this fiction female characters play a major role. The writer presents the problem of women in the postmodern age. They are educated, independent; still, society compels to confine theme in the traditional roles. These characters are shown as rebellious women.

In his fictions, he has emerged out as the wonderful social critic, an ardent motivator and moralist and above all an excellent representative of contemporary modern generation (Sing K. K. 7)

All his fictions are narrated from the male perspective. Hari is the narrator of *Five Point Someone*. *One Night @ Call Center* is narrated by Shyam. *Three Mistakes of My Life* is presented from Govind's point of view, *The Two States* is narrated by Krish, *Revolution 2020* by Gopal and *Half Girl friend* is narrated by Madhav. The stories of all the consecutive six fictions are narrated by the male protagonist. Chetan Bhagat was criticized for not using the female protagonist as the narrator. He washed out this blame by producing a fantastic fiction *One Indian Girl*. It is narrated by the major character, Radhika. She narrates the story of the fiction. She is a bold Indian girl. She confesses everything. She boldly admits her sexual relationship with her ex-lovers. In the end, she rebels against the male chauvinism. Chetan Bhagat takes a feminist stance in this fiction.

Subjugation and Transformation of Radhika

One Indian Girl in a seventh popular novel by Chetan Bhagat. It was published on 1 October 2016. In this novel, the writer presents the struggle of a young girl in the contemporary scenario. It is a story of a highly educated girl, Radhika Mehta working in Distressed Debt group of Goldman Sachs. She is an overachiever girl. This overachievement brings her into trouble. Despite her brilliant success, she is forced to follow the norms, customs and old age traditions. Her mother is always worried because of her whitish complexion. She always compares Radhika with her elder sister. Radhika never bothers this thing. She is interested in the study. She gets a job having a huge salary. Instead of becoming happy, the mother is upset. She thinks that no boy will marry Radhika due to her high income. It indicates over achievement is also a problem for girls. Old age mentality still prevails in the postmodern age.

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The fiction opens in a dramatic way. Radhika is an IIMA Graduate works in a reputed firm Distressed Debt. She earns a huge salary and bonus. She is going to do an arranged marriage and destination is at Goa. She herself organizes everything. It shows her skill in the event organization and financial matter. The extract on the back cover on the fiction proclaims her bold nature and her take on the female perspective.

Hi, I am Radhika Mehta and I am going to be married this week. I work at Goldman Sachs, an investment bank. Thank you for reading my story. However, let me warn you. You may not like me too much. One, I build a lot of money. Two, I have an estimation on everything. Three, I have had two boyfriends before. Now if I was a boy, you would be okay with all of this. But since I am a girl, these three things don't truly make me too likeable, do they? (7)

She is the narrator of the story. Her statement proclaims her bold and confessional nature. She is not afraid of admitting her past to love affairs. She also comments that people are ok if a boy does these things, for a girl they are not acceptable. She brings out the different perspectives of people looking at the same behaviour of boy and girl. Radhika is against this behaviour of society. Radhika cares for the arrangement of the guests. She wears jeans and her mother asks her to behave like a girl. Radhika takes initiative in the arrangement. Her mother doesn't want that boy's side should suffer from any difficulties. It's a protocol. Radhika says her not to mention boy's side and girl's side again. She reminds her that protocol is protocol. Radhika calls it the sexiest protocol. She doesn't care for all these things.

Radhika is busy in the arrangement of the wedding. There her first ex-lover Debu comes and gives her a surprise. Her arrival reminds her past and her love affair with him. She goes into a flashback. She gets a magnificent job and salary after her graduation. She shifts to New York. She comes in contact with Debu and she is impressed by his nature and free thoughts about women. She describes openly her sexual relationship with him. In the first year, she earns a huge bonus. She is excited and wants to share with Debu. He is not interested in her income and success. Actually, he is nervous as his female partner earning more than him. He thinks that Radhika should quit this job. Radhika and he argue over it.

Yeah, Debu. I love it. I am good at it. It's exciting. I am learning so much. It's a great firm. I am paid well. It kills me at times with work but I love it.

I don't know. Just doesn't feel right. I hope the job doesn't harden you.'

Harden me? What are you talking about?

You were this sweet, innocent girl when I met you. You had a soft side.

I still do. I am the same person. This is a job. I am more than that. I do it and come home to cuddle with you Don't I? (ONG 94)

Radhika has a dream to marry with Debu. She always tries to convince him for marriage. She is ready to quit her job for him. Debu is not convinced and he leaves her. She becomes the victim of the male mentality. He doesn't want working women as his wife. Debu wants the mother of his kids at home. He has no problem while doing sex with her. He kept a physical relation with her but when the time comes to marry he wants a housewife. It is a

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satire of male mentality. They want a woman just for pleasure and comfort. Debu doesn't want a woman powerful than him in respects of money and success.

Radhika leaves New York and settles in Hong Kong. She comes in contact with her senior and business partner Neel Gupta. He is twenty years senior to her but she is attracted by his vitality and caring nature. She has sexual relations with him. He has a wife and kids. Radhika also wants family and kids.

What do you want, Radhika?' Neel said.

I kept silent.

'A future? I am twenty years older', he said.

'You said age doesn't matter in love. Didn't you?'

'I am married. I have kids. So much baggage.'

'Exactly. So what am I doing with you?'

'Aren't you happy with just what we have?' Neel said.

He seemed to be genuinely confused.

'Would you be? If you were in my place?' I asked, looking him squarely in the eye.

'We have our work. We have love. We have excitement. We have friendship. We don't have the predictability and monotony of a married couple'.

'You make marriage sound so bad. You are married.

The whole world gets married'. 'Clarify this for me. (ONG 206, 207)

Neel thinks that Radhika is not marriage material. She should work, earn money and indulge in sexual activities only. He fails to understand her feminine feelings. He only needs to satisfy his sexual urge. Radhika's dreams are shattered. Again she becomes the victim of male chauvinism. She is disappointed and disturbed. She takes a decision not to leave in Hong Kong. She goes to London. She decides to do arrange marriage. Her both ex-lover come to Goa and claim to marry her. Radhika her plays an astute role. She calls both together and courageously presents her view before them.

Neel, you loved me as the flying bird. You wanted me to fly higher and higher.

Of course, Neel said.

But you know where you went wrong?

Where? Neel said

You didn't want me to have a nest.

Neel didn't have an answer.

I believe in equal rights. You know that, right? Neel said.

Did you realize that perhaps I did not want to fool around? Perhaps equal rights mean giving women the same rights, not the same things? Equal right to get what they want, rather than equal rights to the same things men want. (ONG 258)

Debu and Neel think that they have given her a choice. In fact, both try to subjugate her tender feelings. They both derive sexual pleasure her company. But when the time comes to give her equal right, they both turn their faces. Radhika talks about the difference between equal rights and equal things. Radhika says,

No, it is still unfair, because here's the deal. You know what women really want? We don't want to choose. We want to fly and we also want a beautiful nest. We want both. Do male birds tell female birds to choose? He honey, choose. Either fly or sit in the nest. (ONG 259)

Her Radhika criticizes the views of men towards women. They don't give choice to women. They want women to live according to their own choice. This is the discrimination done by men.

Neel makes an argument that working woman can't handle office as well as family and kids. Radhika points out the hegemony of the men in designing the work and office culture. The designers were men and they design it from their point of view.

Because men designed this world. They decided office timings, 9 to 6, five days a week. Women weren't in the workforce then. They are now these office timings works well for men. They don't work for mothers, for instance. What are we going to do about it? (ONG 259)

Radhika brings out the common problem of working women in the world. She rejects the request of her both ex-lovers. She undergoes an incredible transformation. The story is shifted at various places and various pieces. The writer has skillfully fabricated the various stories into a comprehensive plot. The suspense, flashback and dramatic happening bring interest in the story. Chetan Bhagat uses irony, humour, exaggeration and sarcasm to make a satire of the male attitude. The first person point of view and Mini me character is the brilliant creation of Chetan Bhagat.

Conclusion

Radhika is born and brought in a middle-class family. Her mother is worried about her whitish colour. Mother thinks that her colour and behaviour will create a problem for marriage. Radhika never bothers this colour complex. She was a nerdy girl in her school and college life. Despite her tremendous success, she undergoes many tribulations due to her bold nature and rebel against the social canon. She falls prey of her tender feminine feeling but she makes a proper balance and discards the male motivation to tame her according to their choice. Radhika rejects the male mentality and she gains self-knowledge and self-actualization. She rejects the psychological burden and brings a substantial change in her behaviour. The writer wonderfully depicts Radhika's journey of change. He successfully handles the contentious issue of gender equality.

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