

ONE INDIAN GIRL: AN EXEMPLIFICATION OF BE WHO YOU ARE AND SAY WHAT YOU FEEL

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Abstract: Bhagat, as a writer, needs no introduction. The well-liked fiction novelist holds the credential of being The Best Seller right from his debut novella *Five Point Someone* to his newborn publication *One Indian Girl*. In the literary cosmos he has left his mark successfully. His literary works leave no stone unturned to explore human relationships on the ground of societal, political and economic standards. This is, unquestionably, one of the reasons why he has grabbed hold of across-the-board critical acclaim in addition to a just about equal share of blame. His latest novel *One Indian Girl* (2016) is no exception to this. Whereas some reviewers are admiring the novel as a psychological conquest, at the same time many are there who possess the mind to put the author on blame for vilifying Indian womanhood. The present study is an attempt to examine the feminist element in view of the plot, characterization and overall ambience depicted in the novel. This present paper focuses on feminism and the rapidly changing shades of female thought process who are emulous and tech savvy. The protagonist, Radhika Mehta represents the girls of modern India who even though pressure from society, often vigorously execute what they prefer without raging an external battle, without giving a single ray of thought to what society anticipates or considers is apt for a woman of the time

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In bygone days, Women were seen with the bigoted spectacles which mark men superior and women inferior. They did not own right of any kind and were confined within four walls of the houses tossed aside and molested by men. Notwithstanding of the excruciating isolation and discrimination, women, each time, stood up with new courage and raised voice for being an indispensable member of the society. Women struggled every moment to make the world believe that just due to women and men's biological differences and its reflection in the organization of society, women can't be treated lower to men. The inception of Feminism brought in its

trailacompletely changed image of women projecting her as beautiful queen, successful leader, innovative artist and sensible teacher.

Feminism addresses the disparity between gender and sex and advocates that sex is what we are born with, whereas gender, the roles allied to it, and perception about them are developed by society and can be distorted. A great number of the societies have one gender that is dominant, which is, beyond the shadow of doubt, the male gender. Feminist literature challenges the society by raising the voice that to have well balanced society, all it needs to provide equality to women.

The protagonists in feminist literature are the women who even though pressure from society, often vigorously executewhat theyprefer without raging an external battle, without giving a single ray of thought to what society anticipates or considers is apt for a woman of the time. What they are is matter of their own choice rather being based on what people aspire them to do.

Twentieth century is the age wherein feminism, as a movement, documented its political growth. Equality with men in regard of constitutional rights & perks and the contemporary technological advancement rendered a big help in uplifting the bar of women's status. Mounting globalization andurbanization have unveiled number of opportunities all across the globe resultant into amplifying the women's realm and by dint of their acumen and competency; they are recording their presence and efficiency in all domains: politics, society and economics.

Since Literature mirrors the society. The contemporary English Literature delineates the norms, taboos prevailing in the society, urban comfy refined life styles and its influences Indian English Literature owns a galaxy of writers who have been elevating a strong protest against the male-dominated society wherein women were lagging behind in enjoying the liberty to proceed and live in accordance with their will. The literary works of many novelists reflect the changed strata of women's social status distressing greatly the Sexual and societal benchmarks prevailing in the society.

Beyond the shadow of doubt, Chetan Bhagat hails from the category oflegendary writers who are renowned fortheirfreethinking and unbigoted thoughts. The writing of Bhagatdepicts the emotions and feelings of the present generation especially the female characters in his novels. Through the portrayal of the characters, he exposes the contemporary reality, challenges and opportunities Chetan Bhagat is seen more as a youth icon than just an author.2008 was the year which added another feather 'the biggest-selling author in India's history'to Bhagat's cap and he,

till the date, has maintained the same reputation to his credit. He is so popular among the youth that almost all his books have been tailored into Bollywood flicks. Bhagat commits to paper columns, revolving around youth for the chief newspaper.

The protagonist, Radhika Mehta, a luminous intellectual, works in an investment bank, Goldman Sachs. She is proficient in heading business meetings and her professional efficiency fetches popularity among colleagues and bosses, lucrative salary and handsome incentives for her. She is unlike common traditional Indian girls for whom society decides everything. She, guided by her inner voice, is a free bird whom no net can ensnare.

She does not mind what the people talk about her. She was involved with Debu. But Feminism, for Debu, is no more than a fascia for conventional male chauvinism which limits women to household roles only like bearing and rearing up a child, offering hospitality and consolation. He imagines his life partner as a mother-figure, the one who can console him and quench his sexual desires. He is unable to digest an intellectual as a spouse. Debu is, somewhere, scared of having a partner with intelligence and practical competence.

‘I am being calm, okay? But I have an image of the wife I want. The mother of the kids I want. I am not judging you, but I think I want a housewife’.

‘What?’ I said. My fork almost fell out of my hands.

‘It’s what I have seen growing up. I go to work, make the money. Wife takes care of the home. Simple needs happy family’.

I am being calm, okay? But I have an image of the wife I want. The mother of the kids I want. I am not judging you, but I think I want a housewife’.

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... I don’t know. Maybe not. Maybe I could. But you made me think about marriage and I did. I visualized a future home. I would like my wife to be there for me and my kids’. (99)

With wrecked heart, Radhika buries the past and makes mind to get settled in different city where the destiny fetches another man named Neel Gupta for her. She comes into a contact with a married man named Neel Gupta at her new office. Nevertheless Neel, being married man, is not willing to welcome her in his life as a better half.

‘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. Do you want to get married? Or are you feeling stressed only because your mother wants you to get married soon?’

‘Eventually I do want to, Neel. How could you think I won’t? I want marriage, kids, family’ (206)

Disheartened by the approach of Neel Gupta Radhika feels affronted and decides to moves to London parting her ways with Neel. In London she gets a marriage proposal from Brijesh’s family.

Some assessors feel that the piece is not feminist on adequate amount for the reason Radhika Mehta, the protagonist, settles down with the boy, Brijesh, chosen by her parents, is not less than

compromising with tradition in the opinion of some reviewer. But her decision on marrying with Brijesh is entirely her decision as she is struggling within to find the best match for her

It's your life, Radhika, take control of it, a voice inside me said.

The voice was calm, unlike the hysterical mini-me who usually yelled. 'Who is this?' I said to myself.

It's me. Your inner voice.

The critic inside me? The one who thinks I am a total bitch?'

No, the one who thinks you deserve to be happy.

'Really? I have a person like that inside?' I said in my head and chuckled.

We all do.

'Well, so what do I do? Who do I choose?'

Stay still, Radhika. Stay still. The answers will come (216)

Many nights were going sleepless for her as she says

What do I do? Who is it going to be? Debu, Neel or Brijesh? Oh, Radhika the great distressed analyst, how do you analyse your way out of this distressed situation?(215)

Ultimately, Radhika Mehta, after weighing the pros and cons of the three men in her life, makes her mind to tie knot with Brijesh Gulati. She dropped an identical message to trio *'Meet me for breakfast. 5 a.m. Hotel coffeeshop'* (216) and fixes a meeting with them to clear her heart and to tell the decision, the action plan she is about to take. She, as a sensible and dignified lady, explains reason to Debu for saying no to him:

Debu, you say you will be supportive, but the fact that you couldn't handle even a bit of my success means it's an intrinsic part of you. You can't change that. And I plan to be a lot more successful than what you saw. So, sorry, no.' (220)

Oftimes, the first and foremost thing which the people perceive about anyone is the look he/she carries. Since first impression is last impression wherein, undoubtedly, physical beauty plays a chief role. Generally, people own the mindset that people who have physical beauty to their credit, are additionally get more attention and are measured superior to those who are unappealing. All over the globe, it is a general myth that what is beautiful will be good at the same time. In society today, people get themselves dressed in the most modern designer clothing,

put expensive makeup and pair these with trendy footwear in order to confirm the idea of physical beauty.

But Physical beauty, to be precise, glowing cheeks and coral lips come into existence in the crucial hand of time only, and with the passage of time they fade away and get withered. Radhika accepts this unlike those ladies who put utmost efforts to maintain physical beauty anyhow and get depressed after realizing that their beauty is decreasing as the time flies.

This is the ground, on which she refuses to marry Neel saying,

But you know what; you love only half of me. My other half is Kusum, the woman you left. You want a party girl. Someone young, who allows you to cling on to your youth..., Well, I won't be this young girl forever. I don't know what Neel Gupta will do with me then. He likes Radhika, his young vice president, but will he like Radhika, the diaper-changing wife and mom? (221)

This well portrays that she is a girl of her own kind. She is the one who does not escape from the situation but masters in facing the hurdles and solving them with a reason. In fact, She is free human being with an independent will. Being educated she chooses to work and go out into the world. She has no time to think what people will think about her as a consequence of the three "three disqualifications".

Although, Women are heading in each and every career and in each But when comes the question of marriage, they are expected to quit the jobs in view of the fact that they are supposed to be daughter-in-law and mothers, and being mothers, they have to give birth to children and also to rear them up. Being exception to this, Radhika is not at all ready to pick one out of two since she owns the mind why to have one when she is competent to handle the one. Equality with man, in her views, means to deserve same rights rather than having same things.

Equal rights means giving women the same rights, not the same things? Equal rights to get what they want, rather than equal rights to the same things men want. (219)

She considers that it is fallacy to assume that a lady needs to opt in between a career or domestic life - that it's a black or white. She feels that she is meant for more than just one or the other. There is third way, a golden midway, wherein she can have both a gratifying career and a healthy happily conjugal life to her credentials. She elaborates on the true definition of feminism to Debu and Neel that a woman aspires to be a wife and a mother on the top of everything. But in conjunction with this, she wants to be herself at the same time.

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? "Hey honey, choose. Either fly or sit in the nest. (220)

Unlike common Indian submissive girl, Radhika gives the impression of breaking shackles of the long rooted social traditions & taboos. Hardly paying any attention to what people will say about her, she dislikes to keep secrets. She boldly talks about herself as written in the back cover blurb, **Hi, I am Radhika Mehta and I am getting 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 make a lot of money. Two, I have an opinion on everything. Three, I have had a boyfriend before. Okay, maybe two. Now if I was a guy, you would be okay with all of this. But since I am a girl, these three things don't really make me too likeable, do they? (One Indian Girl,7)**

CONCLUSION

The novel *One Indian Girl*, beautifully, unveils the fake ideology of society wherein girls suppress their will to live the way they wish for. Chetan Bhagat is aware of the fact that women are enforced to make absurd choices in life and are all the time judged notwithstanding how high they are flying in the sky of success. The novelette, a faithful record of individuality, reflects how central character Radhika Mehta is in hunt of the realization of her true self and how she succeeds in her quest. The way she is portrayed in the novel entirely shows her as feminist in her own way. Her success towards the closure of the novel authenticates her as active chooser rather than passive victim of circumstances.

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